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Overland

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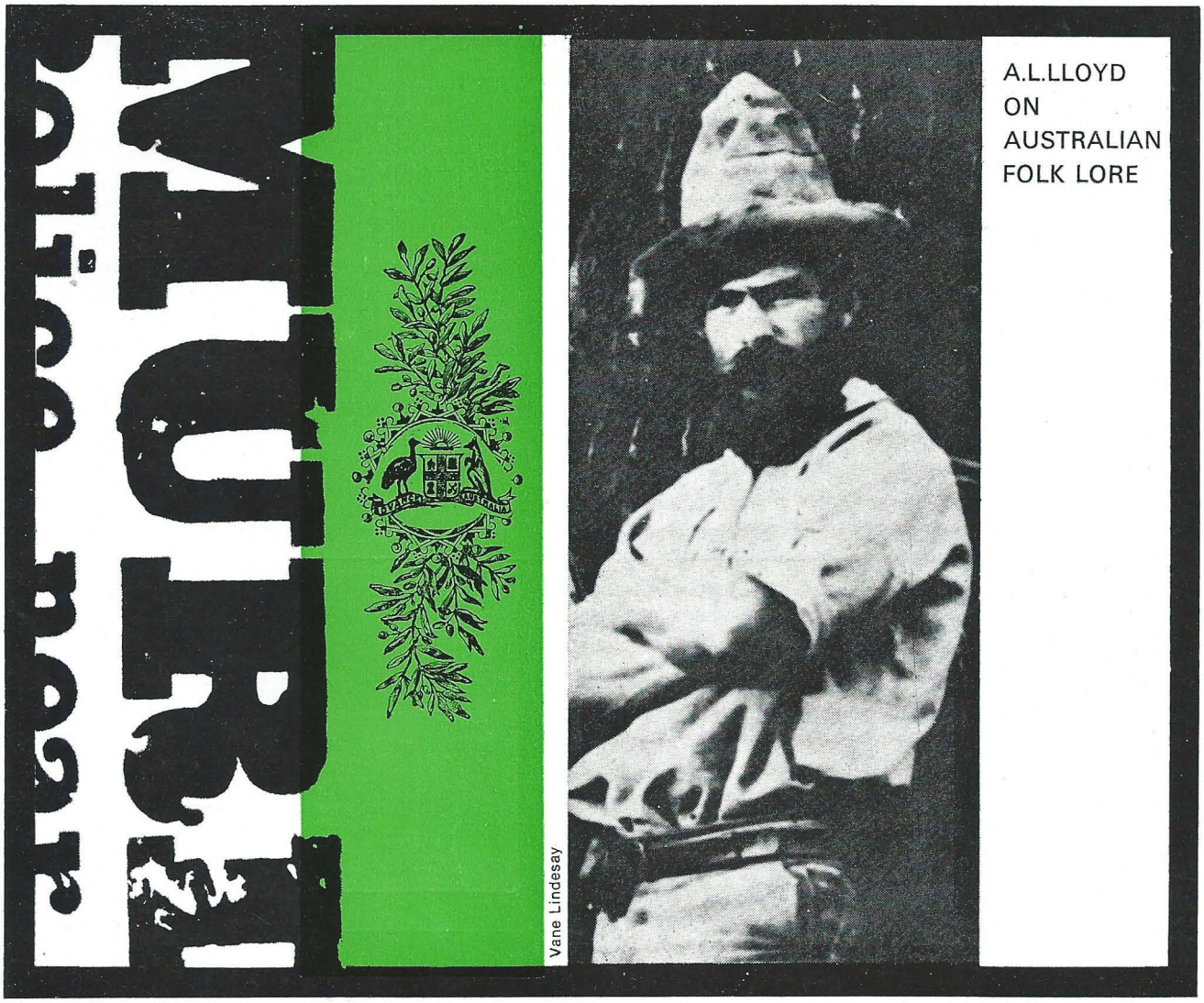
David Holbrook: Impressions of Australia

Max Harris: The Classical Tourists

Owen Webster: Australian Literary Life



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Overland

Temper democratic, bias Australian

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Autumn 1970

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ALAN MARSHALL

Hairy Legs

I remember the time when a man's status was based on the quality of his horse and the price of his buggy. The well-bred horse bestowed upon its owner those qualities of breeding which set it apart and stamped it as an aristocrat amongst its kind. Men of lowly birth were lifted by the ownership of such horses to altitudes of importance they would never otherwise have attained. In keeping with the breeding of their horses they were regarded as well-bred men and could speak to squatters in terms of equality.

Which brings me to Mrs Jane Bryce-Forbes.

She was the wife of the local baker but had the formation of a woman of breeding. She walked with an S-bend, the result, so my father said, of whalebone corsets so tightly laced that Sandow himself couldn't have got another hitch in them. My sister informed me, speaking in whispers, that her underclothes were of the finest calico but heaven forbid that I should ever show an interest in the mysterious back country of Mrs Jane Bryce-Forbes. To me she existed as a dignified exterior and only darkness lay beneath her floor-length, pleated skirt of tweed. The coat of her tailored costume was lined with silk and trimmed with oriental braid and cream lace. Fountains of lace burst beneath the cuffs and partly concealed her white-gloved hands. A lace collar reinforced with whalebone held her head in a permanent position of disdain.

But it was her hat that impressed me. It featured a stuffed bird—eyes, beak, legs—the whole bloody lot. I spent an hour with old Mick O'Shaughnessy who had a set of Gould's bird books

but I'm damned if we could track it down. Mick concluded, and I agree with him, that it must have been a bird from some foreign country where birds with red heads and yellow bodies were as common as sparrows are here. That was Mick's opinion anyway and he knew more about birds than anyone I've ever met.

Mrs Jane Bryce-Forbes' hat, though evidence of impeccable taste, would never have convinced me of her high breeding unless I had not heard her described in these terms by men whose breeding was undeniable.

Mr Charles F. Robinson, the owner of the district flour mill, who frequently visited Mr Bryce-Forbes carrying an order book, was once talking to him in my presence. I was standing a few yards away eating a licorice strap and I heard him with my own ears.

He said, "You have a remarkably well-bred wife, Arthur". That's what he said. Arthur, who was badly bred, gave him a look like a crow looking up a hollow log. He was a bit touchy about cracks that suggested his bread was crook. But Mr Robinson didn't mean anything, I could see that. He had confirmed what I had already felt about Mrs Jane Bryce-Forbes and I told father about it to show him how I understood women.

He was straightening a stanchion of the wagon at the time and I didn't quite catch what he said but I think he said, "S'help me God!" Anyway I was disappointed in what he said.

There was another well-bred man who drove up with an Abbott buggy and pair. He talked to Arthur about land or something. He gave me a penny to sit in the buggy and hold his horses and when he came out he said to me, "That's a fine, stylish looking woman in there. What's her name?"

"Mrs Jane Bryce-Forbes."

"Shit!" he exclaimed.

I immediately realised this man's breeding only came from his Abbott buggy and pair.

It was a horse that convinced me of Mrs Jane Bryce-Forbes' breeding. He was a six-year old gelding though father, after examining his mouth, said to me, "He'll never see eight again." He also claimed that he'd been down and told me to look at his knees where the hair had grown awry. But they looked all right to me. She drove him in an expensive rubber-tyred jinker with long hickory shafts. It was exciting to see him in action with his free stride. He was by Warrior out of Gay Girl and had inherited some of his sire's spirit. His mane was clipped and his tail was docked and he had a high lifting gait that suggested pride in movement. A martingale held his neck in a dignified arch and he often reefed at the bit and snorted when under restraint. Under the whip he could do a mile in three minutes.

This was all evidence of his aristocratic lineage and it lifted Mrs Jane Bryce-Forbes and set her apart so that one imagined she must have been by Warrior out of Gay Girl herself. She always recognised me even when she was driving her horse, and though this was little enough it did succeed in increasing my importance. In fact several people saw her talking to me from the gig. She might only say, "Hello" or something like that, but it put me on the map, so to speak. That was until I started riding Hairy Legs.

Hairy Legs was lent to me by a farmer who wanted her exercised. She was in foal and trotting would do her good, he said. But I wasn't to gallop her. I could understand that. She would have galloped badly even if she wasn't in foal, but in foal she moved like a sailing ship in a rough sea. But trotting! There was never a trotter like her. She had won a trotting race down at South Ecklin, the farmer told me, and though this was only a bush settlement it lifted her from obscurity to a position of respect. However, no one believed this story except me. I think it was her appearance that made people discredit such a claim. She was what was known as a "light delivery" type, a horse by a half draught out of a bush hack and gave the impression of being humiliated by her breeding. Her legs were feathered like a draught and swung beneath her as if they were weighted. The straight line of her back continued along her neck to her ears. Her eyes were heavy-lidded, undisturbed by the promises of her condition. She stood perfectly still when being mounted and only returned to reality when the rider, after settling himself comfortably in the saddle, brought his heel against her side. According to the urgency of the heel she either set off at a walk, a trot or a canter.

Hairy Legs had one peculiarity, the discovery of which came as a great shock to me. I was trotting her at a moderate speed when, to catch up with a school mate riding ahead, I urged her with heels and voice to a faster pace. She suddenly sank lower in height and broke into a pace and I found myself travelling at a speed of which I had never imagined her capable.

Hairy Legs was not a natural pacer. She always walked, never ambled. A pace was a gait she had discovered she could do when the speed demanded of her was greater than a trot. It explained how she won the trot at South Ecklin. It was a delightful gait for the rider. One did not have to rise to the trot but just sat there moving swiftly while looking down at her speeding legs describing sweeps each side of her, first to the right and then to the left, that gave the impression of swaying to those who watched her.

One day in early summer I was riding her home from school. She was walking with her head down

and the reins slack on her neck. I concluded as I sat there that life was indeed hard on boys who rode disreputable horses. The drivers of the buggies and gigs that passed me with their spanking horses tossing contemptuous heads, hardly noticed me as I plodded along in the dust by the side of the road. I decided that some day I would own a horse like that of Mrs Jane Bryce-Forbes and I would drive it in a rubber-tyred gig with gleaming harness just as she did.

I was considering how low you can get when burdened with a horse like Hairy Legs when I became conscious that a horse and gig were slowing up behind me. The vehicle drew level with me then the horse dropped into a walk. It was Mrs Jane Bryce-Forbes, stuffed bird and all. The bird was partly obscured by a white gossamer that went round the hat and was fastened in a loose knot beneath her chin. She looked better bred than I'd ever seen her. I tightened my reins to lift the head of Hairy Legs into a position that would suggest she still had some interest in life, but she quickly dropped it again. Hairy Legs had no quality whatsoever. She liked her head down.

"How are you, Alan?" said Mrs Jane Bryce-Forbes as her horse pranced beside me on the metal. And although I say it myself, no woman could have been more gracious.

"I am well, Mrs Bryce-Forbes," I said.

I never forget my manners when speaking to a well-bred woman even though I was in a highly nervous state owing to her having spoken to me.

"That's a funny old horse you're riding," she said. "What's its name?"

"Hairy Legs," I answered, and I can tell you it cost me an effort to get the words out.

"Dear me!" she exclaimed. "It certainly suits the horse doesn't it. But I can see he's quiet, that's the main thing isn't it. Ride carefully won't you."

"Oh, I'll do that Mrs Bryce-Forbes," I said, but I was getting fed up with this "Ride carefully" business. What in the hell did she take me for? I was eleven years old and had ridden for years.

"Well, I'm in a hurry and must be going," she said. "Look after yourself."

There she went again.

"I'm in a hurry myself," I said. "Goodbye Mrs Bryce-Forbes."

I kicked Hairy Legs into a trot. She flicked her bay with a whip and we trotted side by side. She smiled sweetly down at me. "My, you are riding well," she said.

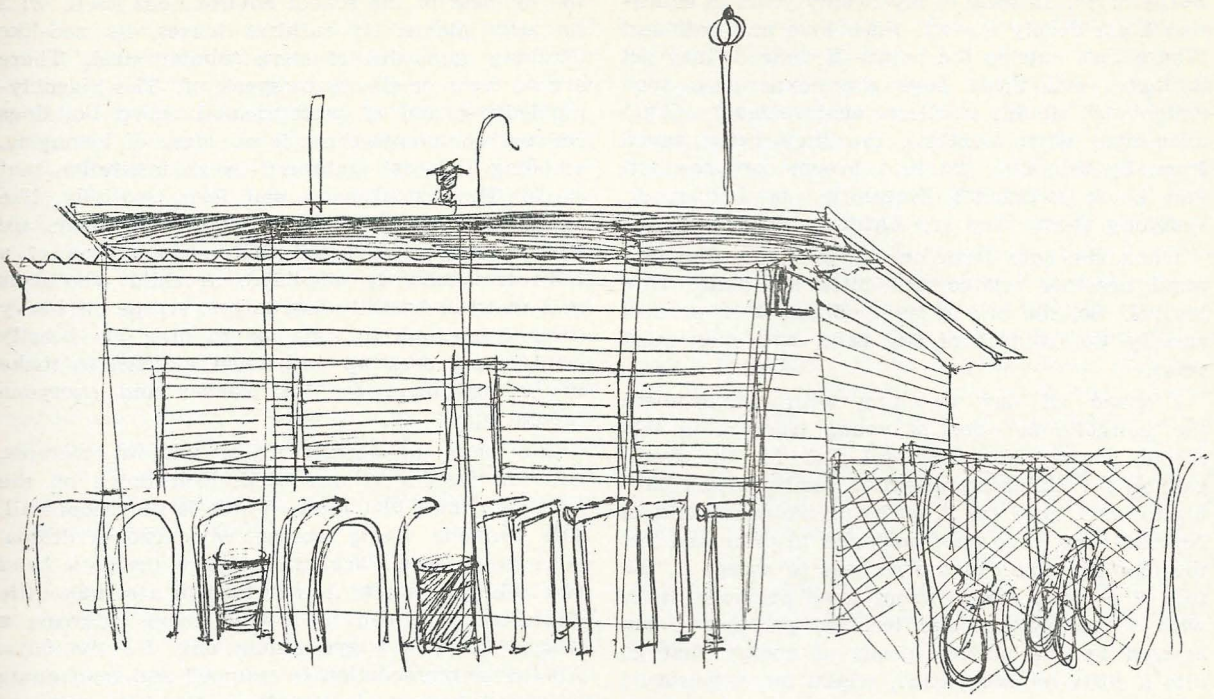
Hell!!

She touched her bay with a whip and he really got down to it. I shoved the boots into Hairy Legs and she suddenly flattened into a pace. I didn't give a damn whether she foaled on the road. I left Mrs Bryce-Forbes for dead. I covered her stuffed bird with dust and went down that road like a bat out of hell.

Behind me I could hear the swish of her whip and the pounding feet of her bay. Then I was speeding on in silence and she was far behind me.

She never spoke to me after that.

Anyway, bugger Mrs Bryce-Forbes.



DAVID HOLBROOK love and barbarity

First Impressions of Australia

Day after day I watched the wallowing grey-blue sea slide past, with sometimes a glimpse of strange, barbarous shores, or the prinkling lights of a great city. At last I found myself in the Antipodes, gloomily inspecting possible—or, rather, mostly impossible—furnished flats in Toorak and Moonee Ponds. Strangest of all were the grotesque flat palm trees in the streets with their untidy mops of leaf, sometimes hiding hordes of birds that screech like starlings in England, and are perhaps starlings?

Eventually I find myself feeling really at home. I am looking over the shoulder of a young woman in the Remedial Room at a technical school. Patiently she is going over the scrawl of a restless youth in jeans and holey pullover. Garry has written:

> On the week-end I went don to my thens plac and we mad a hut and we went don to the trash and trecher and we went up tow the trash purt and we thand a littel stoth and we wet and arsd the block can we tesd it out so we went other to the pas wer you tesd it out and it word and we wer sow glard thereat we went back to the man and we siaid we will tack it and we pard the man and we went hom on the tran and we got it on and we got to Glenroy and we grogd it off the tran and we cared it hom to the hut

"A good story, Garry", she murmurs and writes as much at the foot of the page. She moves over to another pupil, a plump boy with thick spectacles. Hanging over him with patient attention, she catches each word from his lips as it painfully emerges. "In . . spector . . (Good!) . . Hanson . . took . . up the . . tel . . e . . telephone (Good,

Bernard!))". In spite of my twenty years in education I am deeply moved. Such love and patience! Where else, outside the home—if, indeed, they get it there—will these boys ever experience such delight at their smallest achievement? What alienation, what isolation, are they being saved from, by this slim girl in a brown corduroy suit and black stockings? Naturally, as I discover, watching them, they are furiously possessive.

When she goes from one to the other the first pupil becomes restive and bites his nails. He's jealous. So, she has to try to make them all feel equally the subject of her care, with her quiet voice.

I spend all day watching with astonishment the energetic devotion of young teachers in this school, some with a forceful flair for the work, gaining the children's attention easily, others having to work hard for it, suffering badly sometimes, because they have good material to offer and yet the children come in too restless to accept it, too full of nervous energy from some previous battle with a less sympathetic teacher, perhaps. I am amazed by the umteen poods of energy that go into a forty-minute period, where an enthusiastic teacher is doing her turn. It seems to me these girls are working as hard as coal-miners.

An electronic gong goes, and now comes the lunch recess. The children scuttle out into the grimy and untidy yard whose dominant feature is the incinerator. I follow a teacher into the staff room. Being English, I had expected to be taken to a dining room. With a falling spirit I realise there isn't one. I haven't ordered my pie, but one is fetched for me from the canteen that looks like the ticket booth at the entrance to a football stadium. It has steel crowd barriers, against which the boys' boots clank. We sit at a grubby table in the staff-room, puddled with tea-rings, and eat our factory pies. Now I am not at home. I am all too evidently in Australia, and the realities of Victorian State education crowd in on me, not least as I talk with my young teacher friends about their 'bonding', their postings, the conditions of their work.

There are some things I cannot say out loud in their shabby staff room because the words I would want to use, like 'love', can hardly survive in that atmosphere. Yet what they are doing is only described as love—as an effort of human civilised endeavor, day after day. And it is no exaggeration to say that this tender task is done in conditions of barbarity, of hate. There is hate sometimes in the next room, where the strap lies on the desk. There is hate in the system that hives off 70 per cent. of the brighter children to the high school, and leaves the 'duds' in the tech. There is hate in the ugliness of the school environment itself, with its ashy plains, its ruthless fences, its zoo-like climbing apparatus of stark tubular steel. There are no trees or shrubs to speak of. The higgeldy-piggledy sprawl of prefabricated cheap buildings conveys contempt—there is no sense of belonging, of being 'indoors', embraced by an institution that cares. The school looks and feels, spatially, like an open prison. The floors of the classrooms are so cunningly constructed that every scrape of a chair is resonantly amplified. A child who feels in a mood of hostility has only to scrape his heavy chair from time to time, or to drag his beastly iron-framed desk up and down a little, to make life a nightmare for his teacher and everyone around him.

The bare, unadorned walls, without pictures, color or frabics of any kind, bear down on the soul with their blankness. There is no school hall. The dynamic young woman who teaches drama, with her intense black eyes under a dramatic head of black hair, has to do her turn in a scruffy little classroom in which there isn't room to swing a ruler. There is a gymnasium only for the boys. All the accommodation is cramped and inadequate —except the principal's office. No room conveys an emphasis on the value of the disciplines of learning, or on the beauty of discovering oneself. The teachers have struggled, here and there, to jolly the rooms up with posters or displays of children's work. But the view out of the window is of unrelieved networks of overhead wires tied to hideous stark poles, and inside the whole spatial meanness conveys a grudging and skimped attitude to education. Education, the building says, is a dole we dish out because we couldn't get on without it. Yet, bi gawd, we don't believe in it.

The conditions under which these teachers are supposed to work put me into a black rage, because I am concerned with English and the humanities. But when I recover my breath, I am astonished at the utter impracticality of it all. I am thinking now of the masters of industry themselves, the commercial-industrial men, whom the politicians are supposed to be serving. For, surely, when Sir Henry Bolte makes one of his coarse and hostile remarks about education, he must suppose he is speaking for those who have commercial and industrial interests primarily at heart. But is he?

I wish I had time to talk to a few of the influential people in Australian industry and commerce. I think I would find that such individuals recognise that in a highly-technologically sophisticated community it is nothing less than madness to neglect education, at whatever level. That lesson has been learnt in America and England, certainly.

When I went to America, I went with funds provided under the National Defence Education Act. The Russians had put up a sputnik, and the Americans suddenly realised that they were behindhand. They were behindhand because their education was derelict. So they began to pour money into **science** education first. But this proved useless, for it simply does not work to support the teaching of 'practical' subjects, expecting a direct 'practical' return. This must fail unless support is given to the development of an overall, deep literacy from which 'whole' training may come individuals with foresight, vision and personal effectiveness, as citizens, as workers, and as members of society. So, funds were made available under the NDEA, to seek revision of the English syllabus; and at Dartmouth in 1966 we spent much of our time discussing the fostering of creative English, and improving work with less able and 'disadvantaged' pupils.

In England there appear nowadays big advertisements in the national press, asking for contributions to new universities from industry and commerce. Vast sums are contributed by these organisations. Of course some of them seek direct returns, in terms of scientific research in subjects related to their enterprises. But none of these organisations would consider for a moment resisting the development of parallel humanities departments, and schools of education. They realise that the more our education, at all levels, is improved, the more they will be able to rely upon a 'labor force' which consists of individuals who can show initiative, responsibility and effectiveness, both in their work situations and in their home life. How people behave at work, they realise, cannot be separated from their whole lives. Employers recognise that leisure is now fast becoming a problem—a problem which can take its toll of productivity, if it becomes a source of apathy or frustration, or leads to absenteeism and continual unrest.

Of course, I am now talking as the devil's advocate, in a sense. As an educationist, I want much more to come from education than 'adaptation' to the demands of industry and commerce. I want to foster a creative vision in children that will impel them, when they grow up, to seek to change society at large, and make it more human. But, even from the employer's point of view, nothing but loss, inefficiency and even disaster is to be gained by him, within the narrow field of his own interests, by the neglect of education. Where there is anti-intellectual prejudice, as there is in Australia, it is industry and commerce that suffer as much as anything. Where the school conveys an atmosphere of rejection, and bears down on the child with a dehumanised ugliness, as so many Australian schools do, then the effects may be felt in all walks of life.

There is a dismalness, a slothfulness, and lack of ebullience that pervades life in Melbourne. The public services drag, and a certain depressiveness bears down on one in the atmosphere, at times. There is a lack of a happy sense of one's personal value at large among ordinary people. I have no doubt that this dismalness is bred in the schools, and is a consequence of that raw ugliness that lowers at one from pretty well every State school building, with their dreary numbers: "State School No. 2356". While this inculcated depreciation of human potentiality goes on in this unhappy way, Australia must remain a second-rate nation in the world, and will simply never be able to realise its vast potentialities. So, when a new oil strike is found, I sigh—because I know that no country which neglects its education, as Australia does, will ever reap the benefits of such wealth at large. A few individuals may; but, overall, the dull and primitive barbarity will remain essentially unrelieved.

The barbarity shows most, perhaps, in Australian driving traditions, on the road. Here I do not have a car, and have had to use the trams. The public transport system, as in so many places, is in a state of collapse. To rely on trams puts one in the area of forgotten people—the old, the poor, the migrants, 'New Australians' who cannot yet afford cars. Life down here is pretty grim, and, standing in the cold of a dark Melbourne winter night, one feels bitterly the winds of the contempt of primitives like Sir Henry Bolte for us underdogs. As my tram approaches I walk forward into the road. With blank schizoid faces, the motorists drive at me. Oh, yes, they are supposed to stop, but they don't. And, because the Victorian citizen has been conditioned by his schooling to accept that he is an underdog, hardly human, the public at large think this barbaric use of a vehicle is acceptable—even funny.

Having read James Bond novels, the jolly boys (and girls) in their old bombs think it is great to drive over your toes with their exhaust pipes nearly falling off, belching stink and noise into the air. Ha! Ha! They are so droll with their antics, making their tyres squeal around corners—oh, so manly, to startle wretched old women and blow children off the pavements. So bold—oh, such pioneers—to press their bonnets towards blocks of tram passengers, and to curse the poor old Italian woman having trouble with her basket. So dinkum to overtake on the wrong side, and to fight out the priorities of the intersections! Then one sees them, lying under their overturned car,

being given a blood transfusion. So much larger than life!

The intersection rule is almost a symbol of the paralysis of the Australian will, when it comes to deciding what is the most human thing to do, in spheres of public morals and public law. The answer, so often, bred presumably in the past out of bitter feuds between pioneers and state with the police as instruments, is 'nothing'. Nothing is to be done—about bald tyres, about the insane intersection procedure, about testing cars, or brakes, about drink laws, about motorist brutality. In this area, how far Australia is from Europe! In Denmark a neighboring motorist once left a note on my windscreen, "Please park more tidily next time."

When I drove there as I do in England, everyone on the road tapped their heads, and shook their fists at me. Every day black flags are flown for fatal accidents, and one feels the chill of the epidemic. In England now, road regulations are becoming increasingly severe—and many are still alive in consequence. Still alive! A life: one should let the word rest on the surface of one's imagination for a moment. Bare feet on a beach, holding up one's children, the joys of sexual love, laughter over wine, one's ambitions, keenness and zest for the world one is to create for oneself—suddenly wiped out. Why? A think wall of rubber bursts; a driver has had four glasses too much; it seemed 'tough' to make a burst for the lights as they were changing. Yet all these are 'socially acceptable' —we laugh. We're not 'chicken' at any rate. By analogy with English rates, Australia kills what would be in the U.K. 25,000 people a year—that is, five thousand dead in a population one-fifth of the U.K's. At what point do you begin to care? Is the concept of 'what it is to be human' so low in Australia that it permits maiming and death to this horrifying extent? Surely, the cost is so vast that it must mar the very efficiency of the economy? Can Australia afford to have such blood-soaked roads, such filth-choked air, such noise-polluted communities? How long will it take this message to reach those who can bring pressure to bear on the politicians? By now, in England, as in many European countries, it is realised that barbarism and the toleration of barbarism threaten a country's economic and social well-being disastrously. To be truly free, we must be restrained from our worst false solutions.

I feared, when I came, that Australia would be as violent as America, and that one would have to defend oneself at every moment against exploitation. The first thing that happened to us when we landed in New York was that a taxi driver, taking us from our hotel from the docks, accepted a five-dollar bill and drove off, cheerily waving. Later we found that the trip should have cost just under two dollars. Here, the other day, as I was getting out of a taxi at La Trobe University, the taxi driver called after me, "Hey! Are you an absent-minded professor?" When I bent down into the door he presented me with the rest of my change—a two-dollar bill. Last week my wife had no change one day and a taximan said, "I haven't any either—I guess you'll have to have that one free!"

So, all around me in Australia I find a degree of honesty and warm-heartedness that is reassuring—and makes the barbarities of politicians and of the environment all the more terrible, and puzzling. How can these people, with all their kindliness and generosity, put up with the way they are treated—by public authorities and by 'them'.

Perhaps they won't, for much longer. It is obvious that things are on the move. The Moratorium against the Vietnam war in May was a dignified and powerful manifestation of genuine concern. That was obvious to us, coming from overseas, especially after having last year witnessed the anguish of those protesting in Prague against the Russian invasion. There is a growing anger all over the world at the inhuman way in which those in authority tyrannise over us. Yet at the same time, 'they' become, like Sir Henry, in his parochial mongrel-like way, more barbarous and seemingly unmoved. How long can they last?

Where I live, in Carlton, there seems another and gentler revolution that is permeating Australia —the revolution of the culture of food. I gather the changes have been sudden and are very recent. Taste in wine, coffee, cheese, must have suddenly improved out of all recognition in Australia. This in itself surely belongs to a new discovery of 'what it is to be human'? Being discriminating about what I take into myself implies that I set a higher value on myself, and the presence of Italian and Greek shops is carrying this human message into the Melbourne suburbs. At Murrumbeena last week, as I waited for someone, I stared around dismayed at the ugliness of it all—the rash of display signs, the dreary railway station, the sky full of wire, till at last my eye lit on the Italian fruit shop. The colored items of his greengrocery trade were set out in such a loving way, such an imaginative, such a creative way! He brought beauty and grace to the whole environment. Such a message can't be ignored. The Greeks carry with them into the heart of scruffy areas like Carlton their traditional dishes—Baklava pastries, Fedr sheep cheese. From my flat in Drummond Street I can walk to shops where I can buy twenty or

thirty kinds of cheese, from Jarlberg to Port Salut. I can buy fresh ravioli and an infinite variety of pasta. I can choose from twelve kinds of superb coffee, and be faced, in shop after shop, with varieties of food (dry salt cod, black beans) of which I am still ignorant. Add to this the variety of superb Australian wines, the splendid quality of Australian vegetables, the Murray River cod, crayfish and oysters in the fish shop, and the excellent meat available from Italian and Australian butchers, and one has a richness of food culture unequalled anywhere in the world. Only the Australian sausage remains uncivilised and inedible. But in this sphere of international culture there is surely a relish for life that may spread, with other refining influences, throughout the continent—even perhaps to the railway refreshment rooms on Ararat and Ballarat stations? Even, perhaps, into the school staffrooms, where, surely, those hard-working young men and women should have a decently served and civilised meal to sit down to, in the middle of the day?

An international mingling has brought its own problems, of course, not least the further problems of self-realisation. The influx of immigrants may have brought the promise of a richer and more ebullient civilisation, but it has also brought difficulties that seem insuperable. What does a teacher do, when faced with a Turkish boy who writes like this:

> a em in holeday monin ap 8.00 kolok. and Hot day govin suvem o kold day sitay hom and redin book o raytin o pilayin insay and in the nayt wiare govin torkis sam vans pilay and theye tokin bat 10, 11 ni kolok bektidi pilays and 4-2-1970. bektidi school the end

The answer is that she toils away patiently over his shoulder, leading him towards the possibility of becoming a dynamic member of the Australian community. Meanwhile she must not, of course, neglect the native Australian boy next to him, who shyly admits in his folder that

> I like things that amaze me and things that puzzle me. Ten years ago I was half pride and joy and half horrible brat . . .

What will he finish up as? We hope more pride and joy. But even as the young teacher battles on to draw his pride and joy out of him, Sir Henry abuses her in the background, and cheats her of the backing, in terms of accommodation and equipment—and support from the community—which alone could make her task possible and rewarding. If the giants of industry and commerce had foresight they would contribute to a fund to provide one hundred language laboratories in Melbourne schools by the end of the year. And that would only be a beginning.

RINGLETS

Kiss this golden circle of hair, my Love,
For it is the rough approximation
Of me and of my being here: brutish,
Surprised painfully, like a child trying
To catch a flame with budding fingers,
I see rainbows, know what it might have been
If only, only if I hadn't had
To carry around this handbag body . . .
And so we are. Pining away like dead
Lovers at extremes, we have enshrined all
Our straight senses: relics of saints at some
Church party we mistakenly came to,
We have perverted the natural rite
Of beasts to find comfort in each other.
So kiss my bones. We can pretend there are
No circles of hair, Love, and enjoy it.

PETER STANSFIELD

THE CLASSICAL TOURISTS

The world is blanker than this verse. Pace Hope.
Up yours McAuley and also that of Pope Who the Which.
Less free what's more; or less. The trot and trip of time.

Each spring, to the hour, like the Nile crane, to the Grande Bretagne,
Mister Phillips. Moi aussi. Bless us. That's order? Rhyme?
Laxette regularity? That's scansion? Bum, and bum again.

That's the sad lingering lonely thing. Ask Greek or Turk.
The Nile cranes perch silent on the ravaged chimneys of Anatolia.
The tourists doom it in Agamemnon's tomb, treasury of nothing.

Play your piccolo, Kraut, to the Epidaurus echo. Clap. Clap.
The Peloponnese rots with oranges and the fish-smell of discarded time.
Schliemann gouges his gouts of jewels. Back beasts, to your bus.

On, on. Osios Loukas. Crypt like a Ballantyne stage, set
For the bony-fingered saint to point a Byzantine nail
From the dank dome at the sacred Polaroids of the passive pilgrims.

Delphi? Navel of the Universe? My God! Sorry. Non-God!
Back to the arse-hole area, the taverns of toppling Arachova
And the celebrated black wines. Like goanna piss. Superb.

Does it matter what we ingest? Crust of the Mass (holy Mary)
Or mess of the mind (noble Socrates). Each brings the certainty
That all is the nothing we were pretty certain about anyway.

Why come? Why go? The Turks shrug. The Greeks conceal
The pitch of their Colonels in the grounds of their sickly cups.
Disgusting habit. They know the answer which is: Why stay?

Graham Greene and Eric Ambler stayed, counting Enterovioforms,
at the Park Hotel, Istanbul. Raskolnikov brought lime tea.
The sorry spies sat like sclerotics crouched over their teas

In a dimness grimy enough to turn plot into play. Tears
Into sinister longings. Exotics into, of all things, wordless cliches.
Fancy that. Boggle on to Pergamon. That's the best,

Because exactly the same. Hi Graham. Hi Eric. Hi Mr. Ho.
Now the long Roman Kalgoorlie of Ephesus, where Paddy St. Paul
Found his golden nugget in a neglected outcrop of his skull,

Held it aloft. "Development. Onwards. Progress. Soul. Salvation".
The Ephesians hissed, howled, stamped, yelled for Diana,
Raelene, Mum, revenge or Joe Whoever. But all, all, no matter.

The colonnades crashed down. The gendarmes closed down the whore-house
All to serve the dour purpose of Mister Phillips, the cranes, the
Black winds that blow to dust the marbled perfect tourists.

Summation Troy. Besieged and shivering site. There meet
And trade the past and present. Hector and Mister Phillips,
Exchanging signs of fraternal import. There are language difficulties.

The old fabled ones survived. (Blessed be their carrion!
A Turk beer for Schliemann!) The wandering ones may too,
When their dreaming bus drives on and past the endless pits of hell.

MAX HARRIS

Mark Gregory, an Australian folk-singer, recorded this interview with the famous British folk-singer and folklorist, A. L. Lloyd, in London in December 1969. Bert Lloyd learned his first folk songs as a young immigrant in Western New South Wales about forty years ago. From this experience, and from his later acquaintance (in a practical way) with whaling and other work songs, he developed a general interest in folklore studies. He has made many records and published several books of and about folk songs, and is today perhaps the most distinguished folklorist in the English-speaking world. He recently revisited Australia, for the first time since 1934, on a lecture and singing tour. While here, he went back to the station near Condobolin (N.S.W.) on which he had worked as a young man. An A.B.C. crew made a half-hour film, "Ten Thousand Miles," of this visit, and his impressions of the changes which had occurred in country life.

A. L. LLOYD folklore and Australia

When did you first go to Australia?

It must have been 1924 or '25 or thereabouts. What happened was that my parents and my two sisters had died, and nobody knew what to do with me. I was still at school, so they thought that the best thing to do was to ship me abroad, particularly as the family had mostly died of TB, which was a common thing to die of in those days. Perhaps they thought it would be safer, as well as conveniently solving the problem. My father had been a devoted ex-serviceman, so the people in whose care I was left went to the British Legion, and they arranged a sort of assisted passage for me to Australia. So off I went with a whole mob of kids, sent out by the Salvation Army and various other charity organisations.

When we arrived in Sydney, we were herded together, and a mob of cockies had their pick of us as cheap pommy labor. As assisted migrants, we were more or less doomed to work in cocky country, because bush workers generally don't much like cockying. They thought it was good enough for the poms but not good enough for the native sons, so it was rather handy for the cockies to have a regular supply of underprivileged poms.

I got employed by a cocky in the Cowra district first of all. But I was a bit fortunate in so far as, to make up for my other deficiencies, I had a fairly sharp ear and a natural tendency to imitate; so, quite involunaritly, I acquired an Australian accent within a few months. When I'd finished with this cocky in Cowra, I fell ill and I had to go into hospital. When I was better—the cocky in the meantime had filled my place—I went to the Labor Exchange. Fortunately, they took me for an Australian, so it wasn't difficult for me to get jobs on bigger stations.

I went to work on a station not far from Cootamundra — Bethungra was the mailing address. Actually, it was about fourteen miles from Bethungra; there was a boy used to ride the mail out twice a week from the Bethungra P.O. After I finished there, I went to work on a station called Bogandillon, about twenty miles from Condobolin; and then I went further west to a station near White Cliffs.

I left Australia in 1934. Not that I had any quarrel with the country but, by the time I was eighteen or so, there were so many things that I was inquisitive about—books and pictures and music and such. I could acquaint myself with

these; it wasn't difficult to educate yourself in the bush. The Sydney Public Library system at that time had an arrangement whereby they sent people in the bush a sizeable catalog and you could pick your books out—non-fiction books, a dozen at a time—and they paid the postage one way and you paid the postage back. That was a godsend, because the catalog was a very decent one, and in the bush you had any amount of time for reading. There wasn't much else to do in the evening. I was able to read books about pictures and about music.

I already had quite a reasonable view of the modern music of the time, even of composers like Bartok, without ever having heard a note of it, just on the strength of the books. And the same with painting; I was going by black and white illustrations in the books, but still I had some acquaintance with modern painting as well as with classical painting through the books. Then, too, although by modern standards gramophone records cost the earth—I remember HMV Red Label, the twelve inch records, cost 10/6; there was only eight minutes music on them, and 10/6 in those days was an awful lot of money—still, as I hadn't had much to spend it on, I used to buy gramophone records too. Mostly on spec, out of the catalog. Some titles seemed very attractive—"L'Apres Midi d'un Faune", an absolutely irresistible title; I felt sure it must be smashing music even though I didn't know what was in store. Stravinsky, I understood, was an interesting modern composer, and just at that time the "Firebird" was issued. And I understood Mozart was a melodious composer, so I thought that he should be within my reach. HMV had just issued a cheap set on Plum Label, their cheap label—three records of the G Minor Symphony, the 40th. So I sent for that and found sure enough that I could grasp it; it was very charming music, too. And then there was big publicity for a Bach record conducted by Stokowski—the D Minor Cantata and Fugue, arranged for orchestra. Looking back, it seems very flashy, but it had big publicity, and I thought—well, I ought to try Bach, even though I'd heard that he was rather difficult and severe. So I got this Bach thing. It wasn't difficult and severe at all; it was very exciting—flashy, but exciting. So there it was. I was educating myself.

The only trouble was that I was a bit short of conversation, because my fellow station hands were not really interested in the same things that I was, and when you're young you're a bit intolerant. You don't adapt yourself so easily as when you're older and mellower. In consequence, I found that I got impatient because their interests were different from mine. Actually, their interests were very interesting ones. The only thing was that they were mostly connected with work and with bush techniques. By the end of the day, when we'd ridden home, I wanted to exercise my mind on more fanciful things than merino sheep or the peculiar nature of the stock horses and so on. So I thought, well, I'll leave this country and try somewhere else, and around 1934 or '35 I left Australia and went to Africa. I'd had several years' experience with merino sheep, and they were just starting with merinos in the Transvaal, so I knew I could get a decent job there. But the country was so horrible I only stayed there just over a year. I preferred to face unemployment in Europe, rather than stay there any longer.

How did you become interested in learning the songs that you heard in the bush?

Simply because my fellow station hands—particularly the shearers coming through—had a sizeable repertory of songs. Indeed, wherever I was, in the relatively densely populated parts of the bush like the country round Cootamundra, or in the less populated country like that round Condobolin, or in the parts barely populated at all, like the back country around White Cliffs, I found that station hands and shearers did a lot of singing. A great many of the songs caught my fancy, and I wanted to learn them. They amused me; some of them struck me by their poetry, some struck me by their tune, and I began to write them down. Not at all as a collecting thing—at that time, I'd never heard of the business of folk song collecting. That was a piece of sophisticated information that I only acquired later. So it was entirely to suit myself that I used to write the songs down in exercise books.

At that time I couldn't write music, so I used to memorise the melodies as best I could. I must have had many lapses of memory, and a complete absence of discipline, because I wasn't concerned as a folklorist, I was concerned mainly to take the songs into my own cultural baggage. What with lapses of memory, the tendency to tinker with the stuff, and also the fact that when you've been singing a song for a long time, you find the song has undergone a lot of involuntary changes as well as the voluntary ones, I'm sure that the songs I learned in the bush now emerge melodically (much more than textually) fairly different from what I originally learned.

For instance, the "Lime Juice Tub". That was a song I learned by just listening to it when I was rouseabouting, on this station near Bethungra. We had a mob of shearers come through one day—it must have been 1926, I suppose. One of them was a short, squat, slit-eyed, extremely cheerful, bald-headed shearer named Turnbull. He used to sing all the time he was working. His repertory

wasn't large, and I suppose it was about a three-weeks' shearing in the sheds, so Turnbull ran through his repertory several times while I was there. So, without having him dictate the songs to me, I picked them up fairly easily. "Lime Juice Tub" was one of the songs that he sung. I memorised the words and more or less memorised the tune, but I didn't think a great deal about the song until rather later. Then, when I came back to Europe, I used to sing it now and then. I was never sure to what extent I had reconstructed that melody. However, I put a version of it—I imagined that it was reasonably close to what Turnbull had sung — on a record for an American company, Riverside, around 1954. And since then the song has appeared in sundry publications identical with the way I sang it on the record. As I say, I had grave doubts about—if you like to use a big word —its authenticity, because I have a feeling that I only remembered rather vaguely what Turnbull sang. But there it is, this song has cropped up several times both on record and in print—sometimes with the accreditation, "Collected from" this, that and the other geyser, in rather remote parts of the bush where I doubt if the American records had ever seeped. That's one of the oddities. Now it seems to be accepted as the standard version. John Meredith recorded a version, too, but the old boy from whom he recorded it hadn't much of a tune for it. Perhaps he was not the kind of singer who carries a tune well. He sang it as a rather featureless recitative, whereas in the version I vaguely remember, the melody was very distinct and rather compelling. I rather like to think in some way that it is to a certain extent my composition, because I'm rather fond of it; but how much is Turnbull's and how much is mine, I don't know. Anyway, it's now accepted as standard. That's one of the hazards of folklore, I guess. And I suppose, even if it is a reconstructed version, what difference is there between that and the folk process in the classical sense?—because there was I, a bush worker, learning the song orally, and it is understood that it is one of the processes of folklore that songs undergo transformation in the course of oral transmission. Certainly my alterations to the song, if any, were involuntary, made while I was a bush worker and not while I was a conscious folklorist, so it would be very difficult to say this is a piece of spurious folklore.

What criterion did you use for choosing the songs you wrote down?

The simple criterion of attractiveness. I had no special interest in songs for their social or folkloric content. I was oblivious of that while I was in Australia. I was attracted to the songs for their poetic vividness, or for some special quality of melody; but also, of course, as the collection began to get larger, I began to collect songs rather as one collects stamps. Simply, another song to bung in the old book. So already I was becoming what you might call a collector, but without taking it seriously as folk song collectors do.

Were any of these songs associated with specific kinds of work? Under what conditions were they sung?

I suppose a great proportion of those which attracted me were the ones connected directly with the work of station hands, of drovers and of shearers. Particularly those categories. I didn't come across many songs of swaggies. A few bush-ranger songs which were interesting to me because often they're rather swift in poetry and rather exciting. But generally it was the occupational songs that interested me most. Rather by chance I suppose; it is probably the case that these were the strongest part of the Australian repertory anyway, the part that produced the most natural poetry and often the best tunes, too.

Shearing time was the time when the most singing went on. It was likely to happen any time during the day; the lads would sing snatches of anything—of pop songs, the "My Blue Heaven" type. "My Blue Heaven" was on the go then, I remember. Or hymns or popular operatic arias, anything like that. The lads would have a big jumble of stuff in their repertory. Sentimental parlor ballads, "Just Before the Battle, Mother" kind. A certain number of Australian songs and ballads, too, but the only time they were sung all through, more or less as a calculated performance, was very occasionally—in the evenings, on the verandah of the men's barracks on the stations. Sometimes we'd arrange something. Yes, sometimes of an evening on the verandah we'd have something almost approaching a formal sing-song. Occasionally there would be an instrumentalist or two among us. Of course, the population inclined to be a very shifting one, because the fellows got bored rather easily—if you're on the station for six months, you're the oldest inhabitant; so we were always getting new fellows, some of whom might bring new songs, and occasionally we might get a fellow who played an instrument—that would help to stimulate the organisation of a sing-song. They weren't very formal, but the lads would run through a few items of their repertoire. Not only on the verandah; sometimes around the table in the room that we'd use as a kitchen, a leisure room, a common room, in the barracks. We'd just run round the table two or three times; might produce eighteen songs or so in an evening.

As far as instruments were concerned, we had from time to time fiddlers, jews' harp players,

mouth organ players. I don't remember us ever having a concertina player, although it was quite a familiar instrument in the bush at that time. Melodion—we had a melodion player once. One was always hearing of concertina players, but I certainly never heard of anybody playing the guitar at that time, although one or two of the lads coming from Victoria would talk about guitar players, but mostly Germans. German saddlers, cockies and so on. They seemed to use guitar—probably for German language songs, I guess. A banjo I never saw in the bush; I suspect that by that time, the late twenties, early thirties, it may have been less common than it had been a bit earlier. I have a feeling that the banjo may have come to Australia and passed into bush use partly as a consequence of the success of minstrel shows during the nineteenth century, and then perhaps gradually diminished in use. Again, I couldn't be sure, because I can only go by direct experience. I wasn't an investigator of bush music. But certainly fiddle music, mouth organ music, jews' harp music and melodion music I was acquainted with. I heard of one or two vernacular bush instruments like the tea-chest bass, the fence-wire triangle. But again, I never encountered that fence-wire triangle. It may be a Queensland specialty. The tub bass, too. I never saw or heard a tub bass at all until the skiffle days in London.

What about the lager-phone?

The lager-phone—it may have existed here and there, particularly perhaps on the fringes of bush towns rather than in the bush itself, because on the edge of the towns you get small instrumental ensembles which you never got in the bush simply because there were hardly ever enough players together to form an ensemble. It was all solo playing.

Further west, between Condobolin and White Cliffs, there was quite a lot of gum leaf playing. In those days in the bush, at football matches in small bush towns, if there were many Aboriginals near, the Aboriginal gum leaf band would be a feature; they'd trudge all the way round the pitch, before the game and during half-time. Playing pops mostly—hardly ever a note of Australian music, never Aboriginal music. Mostly standard jazz numbers out of the Paul Whiteman repertory, adapted for gum leaf purposes. "Tea for Two" was a great gum leaf production number, I remember. Very mournful, it sounded.

Which were the most common songs that you heard?

"One-Eyed Reilly", that was very common in the shearing sheds. It's seemingly very good to shear to. "Click go the Shears" quite often. Ben Hall songs—there were quite a number of songs about Ben Hall, especially in the country between Parkes, Forbes and Condobolin. That seemed to be a good area for diffusion of Ben Hall ballads. Kelly songs were not common—one or two Kelly ballads, mostly to different tunes from those the folk-song revival people are now acquainted with, but they were generally better tunes.

I'm disappointed in many respects with the melodies that are now attached to a great many of what are considered standard bush songs, because I've the feeling that in the twenties and thirties the standard of melodies was rather higher. When the collectors came onto the scene in the early 1950s. too many of the good singers were no longer available; consequently, quite a number of more or less broken singers, singers who weren't so adept at carrying a tune, were recorded, and their versions passed as standard. But another factor may be this: the outback generally was probably much richer in songs than the coastal areas, and much of the recent collecting has been done in cockie country which doesn't produce, on the whole, such good versions of the songs either for poetry or for melody as those which might be obtained from further outback. The cocky territory, the coastal territory, is in closer contact with town music, with printed music—that may partly account for it. The further outback you go, the more the fellows are thrown back on their own resources. Rather than taking ready made models they have to create their own; so, quite often, you get more surprises and more secrets in the melody and poetry from further outback. Most of the collecting has been done rather late in the day. It was already late in the day in my time, I guess, and bush music had got rather too close to conventional popular music—old time Music Hall and Hillbilly, anything between those two poles.

There is a theory that the singers had a kind of ownership agreement about the songs, that they "owned" their songs and would not allow other people to sing them while they were present. Did you find that at all?

I think that only applied, for example, in small bush towns or settlements where there were four or five singers who lived there practically all their lives and who appeared at sing-songs, and everybody associated certain songs with them. On the stations that didn't apply, because the population was too floating. A fellow arrived on the station; he worked there for maybe six months and then he'd be off somewhere else; he wasn't there long enough to establish "ownership" of a song. Very likely he knew songs that the others didn't; they were "his" in the sense that nobody

else had learned them on that particular station, but even so there was no suggestion of proprietary rights, either formally or out of politeness.

Did you look up any of the songs in printed sources?

Yes. Rather late I bought—in Condobolin, I suppose—a copy of Banjo Paterson's "Old Bush Songs". But that was later on, shortly before I left Australia, and I found there versions of several songs that I'd known, which I'd acquired and which were in my exercise books. Some of them were very close to the Paterson versions and may well have been learned from print. The first edition of "Old Bush Songs" was published in 1905; I think there were seven editions between then and 1930. There's quite a good chance that several of the songs I heard were learned from print or adapted as a result of what the Americans call "exposure" to Paterson's printed set. I've never seen Paterson's book in the hands of bush workers —apart from myself—although since I was able to buy it in Condobolin, it must have been very easily available by, say, 1930. So, while I never encountered it as a bit of essential bush furniture, there must have been quite a lot of copies floating around the bush, and a lot of people must have learned songs from it.

How has the collection of folk songs in Australia compared with that in England and the United States, for instance?

What has happened in Australia is that the songs have been collected piecemeal, a sort of vacuum-cleaner operation, and not always a very thorough bit of vacuum cleaning at that. Except from good vacuum cleaners like John Meredith, who absorbed a lot of songs even from a relatively limited territory. If Meredith had had the chance to go further outback, I think he would have added considerably to the interesting songs that he did get. But generally speaking, all the collectors merely collected songs. The big difference between the Australian collectors and collectors in Europe and to a certain extent in the United States is that the activity in Australia is limited to collecting, whereas in other countries of course collecting has been much more systematic, it is only considered as the first part of the operation. The important part for modern collectors happens after you've got the stuff on tape—the business of analysing, of arriving at the background of it, of investigating precisely what the song is about. What its relation is to other parallel folk songs, what the relation of the melody is to other, sometimes quite remotely related, melody families, and so on. The really folkloric work has still not been done in Australia. One or two people have shown considerable curiosity of a scientific kind—especially Edgar Waters, who is probably the best commentator on Australian folk song so far. But, on the whole, commentary on Australian folk song is very weak. Scientifically, the study of Australian folklore is at a very primitive level; I suppose that's the big difference.

In North America, of course, there's been an enormous lot of collecting for collecting's sake, and the level of commentary is not always very high. American folklorists often have an inflated notion of how good they are. They're quite often, by European standards, especially East European, still like 19th century romantic folklorists rather than modern scientific folklorists. Folklore is a complicated matter. It is a relatively new study which is only just beginning to become a science proper; but the more scientific folklore becomes, the more we find that its frame extends beyond a consideration of the poetics, of the structure of the poetry, of the structure of the melodies. Not even the beginnings of formal folklore analysis has been done in Australia so far.

Even more importantly, the frame of folklore nowadays has been enlarged to include sociology, psychology, this, that and the other. No attempt has been made so far to relate Australian folk song to the psychology of bush workers. Indeed, precious little attempt has been made to arrive at what the psychology of bush workers was.

Incidentally, it seems to me that a particularly sadly neglected area has been the collection of folk-tales. In my time, the bush tale was in a much better condition than the bush song. There was more occasions for the telling of bush tales than for the singing of bush songs. There were always certain inhibitions attached to singing—except in the shearing sheds, where it was presumed that there was no audience, where the bloke was just singing to keep himself going. Singing for an audience in more or less formal circumstances on a station tended to be a little embarrassing, even for a good performer. I don't suppose that applied so much in township singabouts and pub singabouts, but we never got much of that because, being stuck out on the stations, we seldom heard other singing than what was done on the verandah or in the kitchen.

But tales—there was any amount of opportunity for tales. We used to tell tales to each other while we were mustering, or on similar jobs. Riding along, rather slowly once the mob was together, moving from one paddock to another, or to the shearing shed or the railway yards. We would often ride together instead of being spread out, if the mob was moving comfortably, and we would spend hours in yarning, telling strings of anecdotes

with sometimes quite complicated stories, lasting a quarter of an hour or more. But I never see those yarns in Australian folklore collections. There are one or two publications which have skeletal tales, short anecdotes, like some of the publications of Bill Wannan, for example, which are very flavorsome and very characteristically Australian; but the kind of tales we used to swop were considerable, sometimes almost epic, enlargements of that sort of thing, and so more interesting. It may be that one or two collectors, like Alan Marshall for example, have manuscripts of this kind; I have the feeling that he is the kind of collector who must have bumped into the longer tales that we used to tell. Again, the territory over which most of the Australian collectors have worked may have something to do with this. In that part of the country where the properties are much smaller, in cocky country for example, you didn't find those long tales. There were any number of anecdotes, often very funny, but not the long tales —perhaps partly because time seldom hangs on the cocky's hands, in the way that it does on the outback stockman's.

What used to happen often was, because we were bored and most of us had little to read or to fill our minds with beyond talk, somebody would tell an anecdote, and that would stick in our heads, and perhaps three or four such anecdotes would begin to form a little cluster; and, lying in your bunk, you'd think it over and make an extended story with several narrative threads to it just simply by putting anecdotes together and giving them an overall form. So that from, say, three two-minute stories, you'd make a ten or twelve-minute story simply by embedding them in a kind of cocoon of nonsense, and you'd trot it out as an extended tale. That used to happen over and over again.

There were quite a number of Speewa stories on the go, for example, especially in Western New South Wales. I suspect that Queensland is probably the great place for Speewa tales, but there were a lot in Western New South Wales too, and of course they're ideal for stringing together. You can make a big fairy tale by putting a number of Speewa tales together and establishing a single character for them. Well, there is already a whole cast, a whole pantheon of Speewa characters. What with Uncle Harry and Crooked Mick and all the others, they're sort of god-like figures; it's easy to attach specific adventures to them, according to their characters. That used to happen with us, and the telling of tales was certainly a livelier pursuit than the singing of songs.

I never tried to write tales down in order to remember them. I always reckoned that I would recall them and re-create them. I used to fancy myself as a re-creator of tales; of course, an enormous lot of them have quite naturally dropped out of my head. But I still like to recall quite a number of the kind of tales that we used to tell. Those that I have in my head I have not as objects of received folklore, but as objects of reconstructed folklore. That is, I still tell many of them, but I don't tell them in the form that I got them.

How are Australian tunes related to other bodies of folk music?

The tradition of native Australian songs being a relatively recent one, the tunes are as a rule of relatively recent character. That doesn't necessarily mean that they are entirely devoid of quite archiac elements of folklore, as we realise now. Characteristically, a great many of the tunes attached to native Australian balladry are of a 'Come All Ye' type; ABBA, 6/8; tunes which are sometimes modal without the singers knowing it. We presume that the 'Come All Ye' type of melody began to evolve in the Irish towns and cities towards the end of the 18th century on a previously existing base. Some of them were probably modernisations, formalisations, of quite old Gaelic tunes; but this ABBA, 6/8 form began to evolve, we think, as a street-song type in late 18th century Ireland, and it's very easily memorable because, once you've got the first two lines of the song, you've got the whole song melodically, since it is generally ABBA, and the run of these songs is very simple. It's a kind of song style that had enormous influence in Scotland, and in the United States, especially in the North-east among fishermen and forestry workers, and in Australia. I suppose the convicts from Ireland, from Scotland, and perhaps from England too, because it became a common form in England, were already bringing out 'Come All Ye' tunes in the very first transports. And still more must have come with subsequent settlers. I should imagine that, by the 1850s, the standard Australian song type was of the 'Come All Ye' type; and of course American miners were likely to bring that sort of thing onto the goldfields, as well as the miners from Britain.

Station hands' songs, bush-ranger ballads, a good proportion of songs of bullockies and such people, droving songs—those were more likely than not to be attached to that sort of tune. Some of the melodies were of Irish origin, some of them perhaps Scots, some probably of English origin, but with these 'Come All Ye's' it's terribly difficult to disentangle what's Irish, what's Scottish, what's English about them. They mostly sound pretty Irish; and I should think as far as one single folklore influence is concerned, the thumb-print of Ireland is heaviest on Australian songs. The

influence of Scotland—especially of that kind of Scottish song that's caught midway between folk song and parlor song—is also very considerable. The influence of English folk song proper is not nearly so strong in Australia—perhaps because English folk song proper was already a bit antiquated, a bit old-fashioned, compared with those new-fangled Irish folk-style melodies, and the semi-folklore Scots melodies. I suppose that the cause was that in England there was still a pretty wide gulf between the popular music of the towns and the strictly traditional music of the villages; whereas, in Ireland and Scotland, there was constant interplay between town music and country music, and in consequence by the nineteenth century that sort of hybrid melody didn't seem so very archaic as the peasant melody of England. It was much more acceptable to people whose backgrounds were mixed—partly urban, partly rural; as a popular vernacular form it was much more acceptable than English folk song proper which, to people brought up on more or less conventional or pop commercial music, is inclined to sound pretty weird. Whereas this 'Come All Ye' kind of melody, even if it's modal, or even if it's pentatonic, doesn't sound strange to ears that are tuned to conventional music.

I suppose it would have been mainly townspeople or semi-urban people who came to Australia?

I suppose so, although I imagine that the migration of country people was fairly considerable too. But still and all, once the rustic English settler arrived in Australia, he would find that his life was so different and his working ways and his psychology so altered that the folk songs he'd brought with him would no longer match his life so clearly; whereas that was certainly less so with Scottish and Irish settlers. Irish settlers from Gaelic districts would find of course that it was a big jolt. They would have to abandon their Gaelic language repertory, but it wouldn't be hard for them to absorb this new-fangled 'Come All Ye' kind of song because their own home repertory has been the foundation, the basis, for that.

What general qualities appear in Australian songs that distinguish them from other English language songs?

That's easier to describe by text than by melody. The big difference between the Australian native song and the British native song is that a high proportion of the Australian songs deal with the working ways and the outlook peculiar to Australia. The first thing you notice, for instance, in the body of Australian songs is the shortage of lyrical songs, particularly of lyrical songs involving women, and even more noticeably, songs that are put into a woman's mouth. There are very few Australian folk songs proper, bush songs, in which the woman is the subject rather than the object of the song. Women's songs are in short supply because women were in short supply, of course. The outback bush worker would lead pretty much a hermit's life. As far as his working week was concerned, if he was lucky and the station wasn't too far from a township, he might get into the township over the week-end. More often he would get in once a month. That's what mostly used to happen to us—we used to ride into town once a month to have our hair cut. We'd ride in, say, at Saturday dinner time, and ride back overnight on Sunday night to be in the horse yard by Monday morning for our orders.

So, partly because lyrical contact with women was not so frequent, the appearance of women in lyrical context in the songs is also infrequent. The preoccupations are mostly with working techniques, and with misadventures, especially comic misadventures, in the course of work. Boasts—there are quite a lot of bush boasting songs, some of which one had the feeling are intended rather to bolster confidence than as skiting. Bush workers, faced with emptiness, with that great nothingness, were inclined to feel that they were at the mercy of something that they didn't quite understand. And that shows in quite a lot of the songs—a certain loneliness, a certain emptiness. The character of many Australian songs lies in their featurelessness; and that's a very peculiar character that does take on a specific artistic quality. Quite often in the outback, when I began to read plays of Chekhov, long before I ever saw them, they seemed to me awfully like bush life, somehow. People were so bored and listless, and a whole quality would arise from that boredom, from having exhausted all conversation long, long ago, and having nothing to say to each other and very little happening in the course of the day. I think that is reflected rather strongly in certain Australian songs.

Are there any significant similarities between the bush workers' songs and the songs of other itinerants like the American cowboys or the seafarers?

Well, the first thing you notice about Australian songs as distinct from native American songs—and when I say native American songs I mean the songs that aren't derived from the British repertory at all but which evolved on the spot as lumberjack songs, cowboy songs, and so on—is how unsentimental the Australian songs are compared with the American ones. Things like the

"Dying Stockman" are rather rare in Australia. The majority of the native Australian songs are tougher, more objective, much more ironic than sentimental; whereas the American lumberjack and cowboy songs often become a sentimental wallow. The result of that is of course the Country and Western thing, which is the last refuge of Victorian sentimentalism. The native Australian song is much more ironic, much more sardonic than the American one. It's interesting that it should be so. One might have thought that the circumstances of the Australian bush worker were somehow psychologically closer to the circumstances of the American back-country worker than shows in the songs, but of course we know that, in fact, the Australian cattle country is very different from—was very different from—what the wild west of the American cattle country was, and that, for instance, it simply is no use for film makers to go to Australia to film the bush in terms of the American West. The two don't match at all. They do it because they don't know any better; they think that it must be the same despite all the evidence; but in fact anybody who has ever worked in the bush knows that it really is very different. Even different mythologically. I mean, we know that the presentation of the American West on the movies is mythology. They not only didn't think like that, they didn't even dress like that. And, of course, Australians invent their own mythology. The picture of Ned Kelly in the public mind is very different from the photograph of Kelly. But both the social-historical facts and the mythology in Australia are different from the fact and fiction of American western life. And the songs are really more different than one might have expected them to be on the face of it. Generally speaking, Australian bush songs tend to dwell more on aspects of actual work in hand than the American ones do. One would really need to put a corpus of Australian song against a corpus of American song to arrive at a proper comparison, but I have the feeling that more important songs in Australia deal with working technique than is the case with important country songs in America.

The shearing songs especially?

Some of them are very detailed, and were considered important. That is, many singers knew them, and they crop up in quite widely differing variants. An important aspect of a song's vitality is to what extent it exists in variant forms. A really vital song will be collected in innumerable forms. A song that's less vital—fewer versions of it will turn up. Fewer singers will have it in their heads. And when they do carry it, it may turn up in identical shape from one to another. That is, no singer has really been sufficiently excited by the song to apply his own fantasy to it. What happens in folk song is that it alters and takes on variant forms either through lapse of memory or through creative singers being sufficiently excited by it to alter it and make it their own. And, when you get a song that exists in a great many coherent variations, where it's been remade with affection, as it were, you can reckon that a number of singers must have considered it of considerable importance or they wouldn't have bothered to remake it.

Do you see any significance at all in the kind of non-Australian songs—say the truly British or truly Irish songs—which have been collected in Australia from people like Sally Sloane and Simon Macdonald?

No special significance. Most of the British songs in the repertory of those two singers are the standard pieces that were likely to be in the repertory of country singers in England or the more closely settled parts of Ireland. That is, most of them are of the broadside kind rather than of the sort whose circulation seems to have been almost entirely oral. Most of them are more or less modern in character, 19th century rather than earlier. Few of them are big finds as far as the deep folklore of England, Scotland or Ireland is concerned. They are representative of a latter day traditional repertory, but beyond that not of special significance. It's quite interesting that a singer like Sally Sloane has such a large repertory of songs and so few native Australian songs among that repertory, but that probably is due to a factor that I mentioned before, namely the shortage of specifically women's songs in the native Australian repertory. Most of them are masculine songs—some extremely masculine, and women may be amused by the songs but can't or don't wish to identify with them so closely that they want to learn them and reproduce them. Sally would conceivably be a little embarrassed at singing a song in which she appears in the character of a shearer. Still more of a drover.

Can you say anything about the relation of printed folk material like Paterson's "Old Bush Songs" and Stewart and Keesing's collection and the material collected in the field?

Most of the material collected in the field has been collected very late, so it's merely an extention of the kind of thing that Paterson collected. Stewart and Keesing's work is made up of material that appeared in print in cheap songsters during the 19th century, or material identical with or parallel to Paterson's. The recent Stewart and Keesing collection could not have influenced revival singers; but, as I mentioned before, I'm quite sure that Paterson's "Old Bush Songs", between 1905 and

the early 1930s, must have had a considerable influence on bush singers; it was usually found in small bush townships in the stationers' shops, next door to cheap editions of "The Sentimental Bloke". Those were sometimes the only two books you could get—oh, and Steele Rudd's books. Because even Lawson's work was not so well known in the bush as the Steele Rudd stories or the "Sentimental Bloke".

Could you say something about other folk material that could be collected?

Yes, folklore studies should no longer be limited to what's called spiritual folklore, that is the song and the tale and the folk speech, proverb, metaphor and so on, all of which is important. One or two people like Bill Wannan have done rather well with things like proverbs, metaphors, vernacular similes and so on, although much more needs doing there and it's a great field for folklore research.

But besides all that there is the recording of oral history from old timers—old timers' accounts of events, their recollections, which quite often take the form themselves of tales and which quite often only have a slender basis in fact because memory lapses have been filled in with imaginative detail. Indeed this may apply to bush workers particularly, because, owing to the nature of their occupation, they are inclined to be more ruminative and to turn things over and over in their mind. Recollections roll round one's head like a snowball and begin to attract all sort of elements which don't really belong to them but which fill the reminiscence up and make it more vivid, so that the accounts one may get from old-time shearers of shearers' strikes, for example, may be filled in with anecdotes from here and there which the blokes themselves have come to believe really happened at that time, even though they didn't. The collection of oral history belongs partly to the world of folk tale. It's up to the scientific folklorists to sort out fact from reconstruction. Anyway, that's a very important aspect of folklore too. The folk riddle—it's very much neglected in Australia, too; but all of those things belong to the realm of spiritual folklore.

Quite apart from that, it seems to me that material folklore of the bush is possibly something that is neglected too. Now, the study of material folklore always impinges a bit on the study of ethnography. And it may well be that this study of Australian material folklore has been carried out much fully than I realise. I have not come across serious studies of this sort but that may simply be a gap in my education. Still, one of these days I would like to see in the Australian cities a big exhibition of bush culture. This exhibition could well show first of all the spread of pastoral civilisation in Australia with pictures by amateur bush artists, for example, of bush life. Also some pictures by serious professional painters of bush life. Illustrations from bush calendars. Carvings made by bush workers, some of whom were good wood carvers. A collection of old time bush songsters should of course be part of the spread of bush civilisation; then, too, working gear, all manner of portable equipment, of the people who worked sheep and cattle, illustrations of methods of catching sheep, of throwing cattle, general stockyard techniques. The bush knife and its use as a castrator, hoof-parer, this, that and the other. Ways of signalling used by bush workers, calling to each other. After all, Australia used to be famous for bush signals. "Coo-ee" was the great Australian hallmark sound at one time—a signature tune—although I must say I never heard anybody cooeeing in the bush, but perhaps I wasn't in the right part of the bush for it. Anyway, forms of signal used from one bush worker to another. The kinds of sounds, cries used for mustering and for general stockyard work. Whistle signals to cattle dogs, sheep dogs, etc. The whole business of the sheep dog as a breed and the cattle dog as a breed, and the working techniques of sheep and cattle dogs, that's all part of it too. The horse—very important, the folklore of the horse—with tales of particularly knowing horses. Sayings about horses. We used to say, of very clever stock ponies, "I reckon that pony was sired from the second strand of a five-wire fence". Which is in itself a sidelight on a number of aspects of bush psychology.

Harness gear. Forms of saddle which are specifically Australian. Stirrup patterns, kinds of bridles, bridle bits (many of them have their own specific names, barcoo bits for example). Stock whips, the construction of stock whips. Various ways of cracking stock whips with the names attached to the various ways—"Queensland Flash", "Canandra Popper" and other such ways of inducing single or multiple cracks by various gestures, overarm, underarm, fore and aft and so on. General equipment like branding irons and brand shapes. Earmarks and earmarking gear. Sheep marking stampers. Pack saddles and pack harness and the pack horses, a separate folklore of the pack horse as distinct from the stock pony. Bush domestic equipment. Quart pots, pint pots. Different shapes of billies. Different kinds of home-made spoons, fork substitutes. The various sorts of shelter constructed for themselves by drovers and such. Various types of shelter for sheep. Various types of yard construction for both sheep and cattle. Shearing techniques. Very important crafts relating to bush life. I mentioned wood carving.

Whip plaiting. As an extension of whip plaiting, we have a great many different ways of making crackers. For example, poppers for whips, made of various materials. Some liked horse-hair poppers, some liked string poppers. One or two fancy people liked cat-gut poppers, though they're a bit hard on cattle, you can cut them a bit deep with a cat-gut popper. You make poppers of different shapes—plaited, twisted—and of different proportions. Sundry carved utensils. Bush beliefs; fortune telling books that circulated almost entirely in the bush usually had in the back various rather folkloric ways of treating sheep illnesses. Quite unscientific often, but still an interesting sidelight on pastoral folklore.

Different forms of musical instruments particularly associated with the bush, including things like the fence wire triangle, the jews' harp and the other instruments we've mentioned.

Bushmen's clothes at different times of history. The introduction, spread and diffusion of concertina leggings, for example, is quite interesting. Where you find concertina leggings and where you don't. And when they were introduced and when they became popular. Quite interesting for example, is the latecoming of the broad-brimmed hat, the American cowboy style hat. In my day in the bush, even in the hottest, driest parts of the bush, you only wore something with a brim the size of an ordinary trilby. You didn't wear those fancy five-gallon hats that now seem to have become quite common—first of all in Queensland, incidentally, then spreading into New South Wales, but they're an American importation. Conceivably their diffusion corresponds with the diffusion of Country and Western music; I wouldn't be surprised.

All these things are aspects of folklore, and are well worth considering; they are "folk life" studies as well as folklore studies, and to my mind any Australian university worth the name should have a department devoted to that kind of investigation.

ITS OWN REALITY

The haiku-maker would have said

> "black tulips in the dry gorge
> deep fumes of the scorpion's breath"

the haiku convey, do not state,
present statement without comment.
Intellect resides in the branches of the written characters.
The solid-state city presents its own reality.
Above the city the heavy smog
begins to collapse against bluestone
walls of empty canyons.

MARC RADZYNER

the literary life of Australia

OWEN WEBSTER

The temptation is to leave the page blank and sign it: a sample of derriere garde in more senses than one. (Derriere garde is avant garde Down Under.) But the situation is too desperate for experiment, too serious for silence. It struck me like the sight of a quarry in a beloved landscape when I read an article by Thomas Keneally in the Spring 1969 issue of the Australian Author. Keneally was describing the poisonous nonsense talked by intellectuals and others, to the detrimental intoxication of the novelist, that the best way to read a book is twice.

"As for me," he concluded, "damn form . . . Damn shape, damn tone, damn style! . . . What avails it a writer to produce a novel shaped like an hourglass, a side of pork, or even Diane Cilento? He can't take it to bed with him."

Setting aside for the moment the question of what Tom Keneally does in bed with a side of pork, and also the confusion between "book" and "novel", one is left with an even more revealing confusion: that between "form" and "shape". Some writers may use the two words synonymously, but when they do so in this connection they mean "form". Shape is spatial; form (in literature, as in music) is abstract. Abstract qualities are very difficult, and perhaps sometimes impossible, for verbally orientated people like writers to imagine. The question of whether a sense of the abstract can be imparted is peripheral to my present purpose, so let us agree for now that either you have it or you don't. Keneally clearly doesn't, but why must he try to make a virtue of it? That is the crucial question, and it is one that concerns us all.

The most noteworthy thing about the Keneally article is that nowhere else but in Australia or perhaps one of the emergent African countries would an established novelist be likely to write it. Any who did so, in a moment of aberration, would surely be advised against publishing it. Keneally was self-revelatory to the point of embarrassment because he was not self-consciously so; the article did more to confirm the suspicions of those who have thought its author an overrated talent than any other single utterance of his. (In an article by Margaret Jones in the Sydney Morning Herald of 25 October 1969, he was quoted as saying: "After 'The Survivor' I didn't know what I was going to write. I had six months dark night of the soul." That reveals something else: trivialisation. If he calls six months of not knowing what to write next a dark night of the soul, how will he manage to describe the dark night of the soul if ever he reaches that far into himself? The back branches of the brain-tree boggle in the garrulous gales of such a night.)

If Keneally is an entertainer, like Morris West or John O'Grady, I have no quarrel with him, except insofar as he gives himself airs with metaphysical allusions and investigations of conscience like a David Frost of the printed word. But if he shares the aspirations to being the man of letters to which his spiritually hungry countrymen have so prematurely called him, then he needs to learn and listen for a good deal longer before he can sit comfortably on the pedestal that stands outside Patrick White's ivory tower. My quarrel then would not be with him at all but with the tinny pandemonium which is all he will hear when he listens.

Third time lucky, Keneally hit the local jackpot with an averagely competent minor novel that enraptured reviewers like a mirage to thirst-crazed prospectors and brought larks and heroes to the author's underfertilised hedge, putting most of the plums of our frugal literary pie into his belly. At that juncture, I suspect, none was more surprised than he, who probably knew the measure of his achievement better than most of his critics and patrons. But as he kept on pulling out the plums, Little Jack Horner began to overreach himself. First, he reneged on the option clause in

his publisher's contract and changed publishers. Doubtless he had plenty of good reasons for doing so at the time, and must now be still more thankful that he did so, but it couldn't have done much good for the cause of authors who have plenty of ground for complaint about crook contracting on the part of publishers. Then, with a cheer and a half for James Maitland and half a cheer for the Paraclete, thrice seven formless episodes found him passing unchallenged such blood-stained specimens as "a last dribble of organ music stirred beyond the window." There followed the unacknowledged scandal of the 1969 Moomba awards, when the Paraclete was given the fiction prize in preference to Frank Dalby Davison's veteran tour de force, "The White Thorntree", which the overladen judges couldn't have been able in the available time to read adequately. (Some there are who would assert that Davison's language is dated. Perhaps; but consistently so, like Richardson's or Richardson's. Keneally damns style, and produces a cerebral kaleidoscope from off-White to purple.)

His Australian Author article deserved to be seriously answered. For Keneally is often to be seen trailing his coat, perhaps in the hope of stimulating someone to try to trip him up and so start some altercation that might relieve the dun flatness of the Australian literary landscape. We need some literary pamphlet wars like highways need bends in them, and Keneally sometimes seems to be doing the best he can to deviate; but what we get instead is some such tight-lipped exchange as that between Keneally and Judah Waten in the correspondence columns of the Melbourne Age, in which K. explained the rule that authors should never answer reviewers and then proceeded to do so, abusing W. (the reviewer) for his "stodgy literal-mindedness", and W. defended himself with stodgy literal-mindedness, explaining that he had read K's book thoroughly, quoting page numbers, and adding that K. had "no right to be grossly insulting to the reviewer". There, there.

Keneally, however, is merely a symptom which, though relevant, is incidental to my present concern. No matter what he produces today, he is home and hosed, to quote the editor of his first four books. Damning form, shape, tone and style, the only dark night that now need trouble his soul is the one on which his investments totter. And good luck to him—providing he can sustain it. But that, once again, is the question.

Let me emphasise that I am not blaming Keneally. Ignorance is not blameworthy, though wilful ignorance may be. I have no reason to suppose that Keneally is wilfully ignorant of whatever it is he needs to grow into a major writer. It is probably not his fault that his experience of life amounts to little beyond the swaddling of a Catholic seminary, and at least he had the spunk to kick off his soiled nappies. In any case, novelists are not noted for extensive life-experience, as Lawrence Durrell observed once in an interview in the Paris Review. Keneally's ignorance is the ignorance of his culture: that is the sole reason I have singled him out as a symptom of it. And I must presume that ignorance to be collectively wilful, otherwise there is nothing to be done.

Wilful ignorance is that which says, for whatever reason, "I would rather not know". It is the only immorality, for all other immorality stems from it. The Australian culture pattern is infested with it; the national image is blurred by it; the lucky country's luck is that it has won its prosperity in spite of it. Yet the obverse of that ignorance is a kind of innocence that bodes so well for the nation's future as a truly civilising exemplar that I find myself returning again and again to the conviction that Australia needs its writers perhaps more than any other country.

But in a country whose writers are inevitably thin on the ground, where most of them, merely by virtue of the economics of population and demand, cannot hope to make a living as writers, they not only need as much protection as koalas; they also need more than an ordinary measure of aid in reaching their readers. It is not enough that books should be published: they must be seen to be published.

As a teacher of developmental reading to adults, I am unusually—perhaps as a professional writer uniquely—placed to observe the literary scene from the reader's point of view. My samples, I confess, are confined to Melbourne, but since they come from a section of the community that wants to read maturely and is aware enough of incapacities thereanent to take corrective measures, I think I do not generalise unreasonably. What impresses me, then, is a widespread hunger for information, stimulus and direction; a consequent malnutrition of potential ability and intelligence; and a continuing failure among the responsible sections of the community to ameliorate it. In fine, I am convinced that good books are being written in Australia, that many of them are not published, that many more never germinate because of our wilfully impoverished cultural soil, and that there is almost as big a potential market for good books as there is for bad books. (Now you'll think I'm awful.)

If Australian literary life is to play an integral part in the shaping of our culture and the delineation of our identity—a primary industry producing food for thought—the effort to make it so must be a concerted one from all capable sections of

the community: governments, publishers, the mass media, and the writers themselves.

Governments' function should be a dual one, as both exemplars and patrons. I have it on fairly good authority that the present incumbent of the Prime Minister's office can read, though the evidence that such an accomplishment is shared by politicians generally is not entirely conclusive. Public patronage of literature which also encourages emulation by industry, the universities, and perhaps wealthy individuals (as a mode of tax avoidance) is about as much as we can hope for. The signs are not completely discouraging, although the need for a Public Lending Right, whereby authors are compensated for library borrowings of their books, is as imperative as it has proved to be in Scandinavia (and for similar reasons); and sponsorship of literary competition creates a situation which is not necessarily conducive to healthy literature merely because it appears to be so to healthy commerce.

The other sphere of necessary government patronage ought to be one that goes without saying. That is the direct patronage of enlightened readership in the community at large, something that would result in time from a flourishing education system, concerned as much with leisure as with vocational training among all age groups in the community. The Danish Folk High Schools are a model we cannot afford to ignore if we are to contribute anything worthwhile to the civilisation of the twenty-first century.

Publishing in Australia is bedevilled by so many malign influences that it is a wonder there is such a thing as Australian publishing at all. Even what little there is diminishes annually as more local houses are devoured by some corporation dominated by the fallacy that books are a consumer commodity like soap. (Why is soap always the simile employed in this connection? An unconscious infantile association with something unpleasant but necessary?) In fact, books as a commodity are not consumed. Their contents may be said to be, but the metaphor does not stretch far because the consumption is non-material and inexhaustible. It is not difficult to argue that the consumable content of a book increases the more it is consumed. (Pace Keneally.) What is it that the more you take out of it the bigger it grows? ...

The metaphysical difference between soap and book is such that fundamentally different criteria must be applied to the marketing of them. If old-fashioned publishing "flair" is now as inadequate as it is rare, some imaginative re-thinking of the entire publishing structure is urgent and imperative if we are not all to remain children beguiled by the trivia of the Pied Piper of Hamlyn.

In fact, I can find too little evidence to suppose that enough talent exists in Australian publishing for such re-thinking to be possible. The "middle men" between author and reader are more often obstacles than intermediaries; and the increase in "manufactured" books, in which publisher sub-contracts to writer as he might to printer, designer, binder, to manufacture a preconceived product, suggests that publishers feel they have been frustrated authors for long enough and intend to assume the author's mantle themselves. More than one publisher's editor has confessed to me when challenged that if his superiors could find a way of doing without authors, they would. (Give them time. Give them time.)

Since an author's only concern is to reach those to whom he addresses himself and to make the money by which he can continue to do so, it might profit him more and the cause of literature generally if he used his freer wits to find ways of doing without publishers.

Too many publishing houses are managed by people who would be better employed selling soap. Their incompetence is concealed, if at all, by frustrated and grossly underpaid editors; their frequent failures blamed on the vagaries of the market. Many of these houses, despite a nominal autonomy, are merely branch offices of London firms and distributing outlets for London publishers. And they become less significant with every new British or American takeover.

Perhaps it requires a refugee Pom to appreciate the complex magnitude of British indifference to events in this limbo. In London, London is not only the centre of the universe, it is the universe. Books exported, or published, Down Under are not reaching the other side of the world, they have dropped over the edge. I would try to make out a case for some kind of quota system were I not ruefully aware that we have enough fair average quality literature as it is and in literature FAQ is inexorably a reducing quality.

In support of my assessment of the publishing scene and my judgment that readers' needs are not being met to the extent that their purses are being tapped, I am in process of establishing a small author-owned publishing house, initially to publish some of my own works but eventually, I hope, to publish books of merit rejected by other publishers.

One of the most pernicious of the premises on which much orthodox publishing is based is the presumption that the judgment of the kind of people who constitute the world of publishing (agents, editors, critics, readers, academic mercenaries, etc.) reflects the judgment of ordinary readers, and that such people are therefore suitable intermediaries to bring the writer's message to his

readers. Some even presume a knowledge superior to that of the writer about how his readers should be addressed! In fact, there is no evidence whatever to support this premise; and a certain body of evidence, in fact, points the other way, and suggests that people who read professionally differ psychologically from those to whom a writer may wish to address himself, in a manner which is crucial to the proper function of literature in a modern society. (A therapeutic function, to put it briefly.)

To consider one sequence of events that help to determine policy decisions to publish or not: on arrival at a publisher's, an author's manuscript is glanced at and, if it is not patently illiterate, may be considered worthy of a few dollars' risk on a reader's report. (Rates vary among publishers between five and ten dollars for a report.) An author who has already been published may be read by an experienced reader or one known to be sympathetic to his work. Otherwise, except with manuscripts of a specialist nature, the choice of reader is fairly haphazard. The reader is usually asked to state whether he or she recommends publication. If not, the manuscript is returned straight to the author with thanks and other polite noises, unless there is some peculiar reason to question the reader's opinion. If it is recommended, it will be read by someone else, and may be read by as many as three people before the publisher's editor decides to test their favorable recommendations by reading it himself. If he is favorably disposed towards it, he may still seek a second opinion as to its saleability from a friend in the book trade before submitting it to his management who may dip into it and reject it. An author who is kept waiting six months for the return of a manuscript, as happened to me recently with Heinemann, may presumably take what comfort he can from the knowledge that (supposing it was not lost) it was taken seriously.

Who are publishers' readers? Usually, they are products of the English Departments of universities who have either graduated out or back in again. Some are married women seeking pin money and time consumption, either ex-publishing (and therefore also graduates) or having established themselves as being "rather good at that sort of thing". The chances are, in Australia, that they will be serving publishers in the same city as the university they attended.

For example, at the University of Melbourne the Chair of English Literature is occupied by Professor S. L. Goldberg, who is widely known to hold his staff, and some generations of students, in an intellectual thrall comparable (colonially speaking) to that of F. R. Leavis in Another Place. Doubtless similar situations prevail in some other English departments. The point is that in Melbourne there are many Goldbergians, and the chances are high of a novelist's manuscript being judged by one. Hence the Australian novelist who is trying to establish himself might do well to study form in the English departments before sitting down at his typewriter, unless he has the genius and tenacity of Patrick White with which to bring the academically trained, screaming, to heel.

The mass media in their present condition are for the most part either hostile or indifferent to literature. Time may demonstrate that literature—perhaps a new kind of literature—is a medium for the mature mind wearied to satiety with the fare of the mass media. "A new medium," says McLuhan, "is never an addition to an old one, nor does it leave the old one in peace. It never ceases to oppress the older media until it finds new shapes and positions for them." Too few men of letters have assimilated this fact, and the gulf between literature and the other media is wider than it need be. The book as a medium of communication is an act of intercourse between consenting adults in private.

At the same time, the operators of the mass media have a social responsibility, which may even be in their long-term interests, to ensure that their immense resources are better employed to foster a more literate consciousness in the community. Among the print media, this responsibility seems to be acknowledged. Australia is at present particularly well served by newspapers and other publications giving information about books and literary events. One may sometimes question their priorities, but at least their literary editors appear to be given a free hand and their book columns reveal no more political bias than that to which any individual editor or contributor has a right. They provide casual employment for authors, though too commonly at sweated labor rates, so they can hardly be said to patronise literature. The overall quality of book reviewing may leave much to be desired, but in fostering a literary life any reviews are better than none at all.

It is in television and radio that the betrayal of a potentially literate community can be seen at its most culpable. The commercial crapshooters are so busy selling soap that it is too much to expect them to raise their eyes from their coffers and their ratings for long enough to notice that public taste tends to improve slowly and some acknowledgment of the fact might even sell more soap.

At this point, indeed, they come closest to the publishers, brothers in bondage to flow charts, victims of the Communicator's Fallacy. This states that culture equals commerce equals what the

public buys equals what the public wants equals what the public says it wants before it gets it to market researchers who interview a sample of it. (Newsday, Melbourne's latest second evening newspaper, was wrecked on that fallacy and it is still uncertain whether its parent will survive it.) Those who attach themselves to what Osbert Sitwell called "the vast, headless, collapsible, rudderless mob" should not be surprised if their enterprises founder.

In fact, public taste must be guided (not dictated to: guided), otherwise the pursuit of sales and ratings becomes an ulcerated quest for more and more exquisite forms of banality. This is not, however, evidence of declining public taste but rather proof of Webster's Law, which states that in the absence of guidance most people will put up with whatever is offered and blame something else for their attendant dismay and frustration. Public affairs programmes have almost disappeared from commercial broadcasting not because they are not wanted but because the audiences for them did not increase commensurately with other ratings.

Guidance of public taste carries risks plus the compensations of social responsibility. Auntie ABC has no need to watch her ratings, so is better placed to take risks and perhaps, in time, to challenge the commercial broadcasters to raise their sights. But if I say, off the cuff, that thirty hours a year are devoted to books and writers by all channels of our public broadcasting service, I am confident that I am erring generously and the Commission is in my debt.

Riffling through my memory for an illustration, I find my favorite is that of Stephen Murray-Smith in a television studio grunting under the weight of a suitcase packed with illustrated books. There were thirty-five of them, and he hoped to "review" as many as he could in the three and a half minutes available. He must have realised that at six seconds per book he hadn't allowed for breath-drawing time, so he seemed rather pleased when he found he had managed to deal with nineteen.

No understanding of the peculiar chaos, corruption and cantankerousness at the higher administrative levels of the ABC is possible without some frank acknowledgment of two interacting characteristics. One, a bureaucracy of faceless men, creates situations in which nothing can be done because no one is responsible. The other is the peculiar timidity that develops in people who become highly paid administrators, exacerbated by the administrator's jealousy of the creative man.

Dr. Clement Semmler, the ABC's Deputy General Manager, a pre-Gutenberg man of letters whom one would have hoped knew better, recently replied to a request by the Australian Society of Authors for more television time about books and writers by saying that such material would not be televisual. True; unless money were spent to make it so. I could demonstrate him wrong, but I would never be given the chance. For timidity and jealousy produce a kind of tribal insecurity wherewith outsiders are unwelcome. Hence radio and television provide neither patronage of serious local writers nor a viable market.

The writers themselves tend to embody, like a metaphor, many of the flaws of their setting—which perhaps is as it should be. Such casually self-revealing utterances as that of Keneally cited above are all too characteristic of Australian literary life. Compare this admission of defeat by Barbara Jefferis, writing in the July 1969 issue of the Australian Author: "Living people are useless to the novelist . . . too many-facetted, too complex, too crazy and too unpredictable for the novelist to deal with". Authors can hardly expect a flourishing literary culture if their primary concern is to express themselves—that is, indulge their own fantasies and exercise their intra-psychic conflicts at the expense of communicating with their readers.

This is one of several symptoms of amateurishness; and although one can understand why so many Australian authors must be amateurs, they are unlikely to improve their lot unless they turn their spare-time activity into their professional one and give to their employers only the fag-end of their energies. It's a question of priorities, and it may be that the living the world owes everyone has to be taken, by authors, through cunning exploitation of employers. Where patronage is not freely given it must be taken.

Too many writers at present are doodling through lack of stimulus. It is sometimes difficult to avoid the impression that the most professional and committed of the authors' organisations, the ASA, is largely a game people play: a management committee heading a dead weight of apathetic membership and perpetuating itself by subtle and unconscious insurance that it should not be too conspicuously successful in revolutionising the author's lot.

One of the more farcical aspects of Australian literary life is the proliferation of authors' societies. I know of five, which is four too many; and a little of the bickering between them, which leads me to suspect that there could be others—splinters off a worn old crutch.

A seminar was recently held in Melbourne under the joint sponsorship of the ASA and the Fellowship of Australian Writers on the theme of writing in a pop-culture world. It opened up more ques-

tions than those I have raised here, in spite of a dismal reluctance among its organisers to seek out new talent in untried speakers. The "draw-card" phenomenon, in which the name is more important than originality or eloquence, again resulted in a sadly predictable program of speakers. But the most significant fact about the event was that two authors' organisations did something jointly for the first time in Australian literary history.

The literary life of Australia is a turmoil of old love-hates, of unburied hatchets and unextinguished torches, of unconfessed prejudices and indiscreet gossip. Withal, it is unhealthy, and we cannot expect a healthy literature to emerge from it. Unless some therapeutic or cathartic stimuli come from somewhere and foster, inter alia, a conviction among Australians that the centre of the universe is here, we may find ourselves with the literature we deserve. None. Which will mean that as a nation we shall drift where we deserve. Nowhere. "I am Down Under, therefore I am not."

THE TRAIN

The moon is in the sky, 3:4.
The shadows leap and jump, quagmire down,
Broad shimmering, flying fast beside me.
And I am half asleep.
I am a train.
I am a curled blanket, hair and floss, tired on a mother's shoulder;
I am a long finger slowly extending abroad an abdomen to nestle snug in pubic hair;
I am a drunk's walk, splayed alley walk, hand rest;
I am medicinal wonders, gift-like embroideries of stomachs and heads and legs and chest;
I am balloons of smoke, quaking light, coughing and running in swaying pools;
I am heavy heads, shattered dreams, tired breaths, children's whimpers, sailors' hats.
I am a train at night half asleep.

RON GRAY

miscellany

MELBOURNE FILM FESTIVAL 1970

BERNARD RECHTER

Once again, the drama surrounding censorship outshone much of the drama on the screen, and the heralded 'more liberal' approach proved illusory when the Festival was under way. It is clear that the battle for a more rational and adult censorship policy is far from over, even if one grants the Melbourne Festival Director's belief that the Minister for Customs and Excise has his heart in the right place and is fighting our battle on his side of the barricades. Certainly there was no stinting of violence and nudity, which made the interference with "A Married Couple" even more incomprehensible.

The demand for tickets and the continuing interest throughout the two weeks of the Festival, despite an evident flagging at some of the night sessions towards the end, indicate that the Festival is in no danger of losing its audience, despite a nostalgia expressed by the older patrons for the festivals of yesteryear—1958, now that was a Festival, with "Paths of Glory", "Don Quixote", "Kanal", "He Who Must Die", and goodness knows what else!

Looking back, after a span of a month or two, at this year's offerings, one finds the highlights persisting in the memory. The opening night is always a special occasion—expectations heightened, a glow of hope for the delights to come—and this year's opening major film, "My Night with Maud", had been heralded by much critical acclaim from overseas reviewers. The amalgam of talk, Marxism and Jansenism proved a little overwhelming even for a reviewer with an unflagging interest in all three. Certainly it was a welcome change to find a film treating its audience as intelligent as well as adult and exploring the world of its characters unsensationally and with a great degree of subtlety. The Marxist philosopher and the Catholic engineer were superb foils for each other and the acting was flawless and unobtrusive.

For me the most exciting film of the Festival, and the one I would really like to see again, was "Goto, Island of Love". Last year's short grotesque "Gavotte" by the same director, Walerian Borowczyk, was repulsively fascinating and provided little hint of the masterpiece to come.

Borowczyk has created here a totally convincing world which can be read either as an allegory of an authoritarian state or as a nightmare version of the tales of the deaths of princes and kings beloved by our greatest dramatists. Somehow the whole structure is turned inside out and reveals the cancer within.

Ostensibly the drama is played out on a fragmentary island, all that remains of a country overwhelmed by an earthquake in the nineteenth century. The few survivors—one does not realise immediately how few—play out their scenario in this microcosm of a world with all the intensity of a power struggle for a mighty kingdom. In choosing this truncated fragment for his setting Borowczyk has provided a masterly comment on the human condition. It does not matter, he seems to be saying, whether we take a mighty empire or a totalitarian state or a small group of petty and degenerate criminals: man is everywhere the same, moved by the same lusts and hatreds and, on scrutiny, is not a particularly wholesome example of the creator's art.

The film's meaning is never explicit and interpretations of the director's intention will vary. One cannot doubt however the intense absorption with which the audience accepted this bizarre comment on man and Borowczyk's mastery of his medium.

"Boy", a Japanese film of a family paying its way by the stratagem of having a young boy trained to fall in front of cars, and subsequently collecting 'hush' money from gullible drivers, was notable particularly for the fine performance of its star victim and his younger brother. A marked reaction among many in the audience was a feeling of distaste that such things could happen in this age, albeit in a foreign country.

From yet another age and another country came "The Cremator", one further comment on the Europe of the Nazis. The macabre hero, who is in charge of a small crematorium somewhere in Sudetenland before the Second World War, is proud of his skills and his technical prowess and obsessionally involved in his work. As the Germans move in, the local Nazis convince him of his German blood and begin the process of preparing this

ineffectual little man for the greater demands to come—far larger crematoria beckon as he begins his dreadful descent into madness.

This film, from the Barrandov Studies in 1969, eschews realism and achieves its points by means of a macabre comedy which makes its subject bearable and far more 'real' than a straightforward telling ever could.

A simple, unpretentious yet very moving study was Gianni da Campo's "Closed Pages"—a study of a little boy growing up under the shadows of his parents' parting and imminent divorce. He is sent to boarding school where he finds as little love or affection as at home. The cold inhumanity of the Italian school is portrayed as subtly as the boy's growing rebelliousness in the face of a cold adult world. This film, shown at the last of the day sessions, was far more impressive than several of the films reserved for the major screenings.

Two of the films from the major screenings deserve special notice. "Antonio da Mortes" was clearly not to everybody's taste—partly because it defied classification into one of the accepted categories. Yet this was one of those films which justifies a festival such as ours—for probably under no other circumstances would it be shown to an Australian audience. Shortly after seeing it I read a report in the New Statesman of the crushing poverty, backwardness, corruption and police terror in Brazil; and only in terms of some feeling for its origins can one appreciate this stylised legend—part musical, part grand opera, part farce, an always fascinating story of bandit heroes, saints and starving squatters. It is in fact a people's epic on the grand scale, with a glow of astonishing and varied music.

The class struggle, pre-revolution, makes for better cinema than post-revolutionary contradictions, as is evident from the episodic "Lucia", a loosely tied triptych from Cuba. The first two episodes, technically brilliant, described the revolutionary struggles of its heroines, before the Castro era. Here was film full-blown and melodramatic and none of the worse for that. The last episode, a moral tale on the overcoming of illiteracy in a backward village, inevitably lacked the fire and passion of the earlier episodes.

The shorts and documentary films were a mixed bag, ranging from a dispassionate look, by Louis Malle, at the slums and human degradation of "Calcutta" to "The Dove", a marvellous farcical skit on Bergmann and the Swedes which made one wonder why it had never been done before.

"In the Year of the Pig" was this year's contribution to our thinking about the Vietnam War. Much of the footage was intended for television and reflected the immediacy and urgency of that medium. Explicitly anti-war, it aims to educate as well as to convince emotionally.

Overpraised, to my mind, was "Test of Violence", on the paintings of the Spanish artist, Juan Genoves. This film won a gold medal at Moscow and a first prize at Cork as well as a mention at Melbourne. It seemed overly self-conscious and full of gimmicks. The juxaposition of violent effects—machine guns, warplanes—to heighten the violence illustrated by Genoves was artificial and unconvincing and made it impossible to capture the feeling of the paintings themselves.

The few Australian shorts impressed by their professional competence and their relative scarcity. One hopes that several, including Phillip Adams' "Jack and Jill", may be viewed by a far larger audience than that at the Festival.

A final thought: the concentration on 'festival type' films for a period just longer than two weeks is a severe strain. Are our resources and interest still insufficient to maintain an all-the-year round repertory film theatre at which non-commercial films of interest and importance can be seen at leisure and under slightly more pleasant conditions than the annual mid-year deluge?

MEMORIES OF WALTER MURDOCH

CLIFFORD CRAIG

In the early years of this century there existed in Melbourne a small circle of people, closely related by marriage, who derived the greatest possible pleasure from their contact one with the other. The circle consisted of Mr and Mrs Walter Murdoch and their young family, Dr and Mrs Craig and their young family, Mr Will Hughston, who was then not married, and Miss Annie Hughston. Other more occasional members were Dr and Mrs Bob Hughston and their family. Walter Murdoch was then lecturer in English at the University of Melbourne. His reputation as an essayist became Australia-wide in the 1930s, but it never became higher than it was in Melbourne in the years before the first world war. Every Saturday morning many readers would turn eagerly to the page of the Argus containing the essay by "Elzevir".

Walter Craig, my father, was a doctor practising at Box Hill. Apart from his practice he had two great pleasures in life—one derived from reading the great writings of English literature and the other from watching (mainly on the Melbourne Cricket Ground) the great exponents of cricket and football. At the end of the last century Melbourne was full of excellent second-hand bookshops. During his student days he collected all

the great books of English literature, many in the shabbiest bindings. Will Hughston was a schoolmaster and was one of the first to establish an open-air school in Melbourne. He was very interested in the teaching of French and was one of those who established the journal Petit Francais at the University. Miss Annie Hughston founded Fintona, the well-known girls' school at Camberwell.

Children take everything for granted, but looking back it can be seen that this was an enchanted circle. All the members were what would now be termed 'intellectuals'. Had they known that such a term could be applied to them they would have been astonishehd. They were completely unselfconscious of their gifts. Most fortunately one gift common to all was that of talking well, and all were great talkers. Their talk was fascinating. Apart from the fact that each was well-informed, they spoke with so much zest and with such light-heartedness. As his readers know light-heartedness was one of the characteristics of Walter Murdoch's essays. His talk was very much the same as his writing. He made his points with tact and with humor. Curiously enough, the one fault that he obviously feared and often referred to in his essays—that of preaching too much—never appeared in his talk. He was in fact the last person in the world to tell another how he should comport himself.

These golden years came to an end in 1912 when Walter Murdoch was appointed Professor of English at Perth. Fortunately, however, all members of the circle lived for many years and again and again there were opportunities for a renewal of the pleasures of the early years.

For the information of anyone wishing to study Walter Murdoch's works it should be known that the writer prepared a bibliography of Murdoch's writings to 1912, which was published in Meanjin Vol. 9, No. 1, 1950.

FROM SIR DARYL LINDSAY

Sir,

I have just finished reading "My Mask", a recently published posthumous autobiography by my brother Norman Lindsay. Although he and I held widely differing views on art, literature and many other things, I admit I was unprepared for his vicious attack on my parents. As the book has received a good deal of publicity, I am concerned by the totally misleading accounts of my father and mother, both of whom I knew much more intimately than my brother did.

My father, Dr. Robert Charles Lindsay, who for many years carried on a flourishing country practice, was a robust Irishman with a delightful sense of humor, beloved by friends and patients in all walks of life. He is still talked about in the Creswick district as "The dear old doctor". Norman, however, depicts him as a more or less continuous "boozer" (a hateful word of the nineties). My mother is likewise held up to ridicule as a narrow-minded religious bigot. For the enlightenment of anyone who may be interested in the Lindsay family, I feel impelled to refute his distorted descriptions of my parents. My father certainly enjoyed his glass of whisky, and claret at dinner. Only once in my life did I see him 'under the weather', when he took me to a local banquet and we came home arm-in-arm singing Irish songs. As for my mother, considering her generation and a strictly orthodox background as the daughter of the missionary Thomas Williams, she showed a remarkable tolerance and human understanding of her temperamental brood of ten children. A devout Methodist, throughout her long life I never heard her laying down the law as regards her religion or anything else: except perhaps the making of strawberry jam.

My brother's book is entirely successful in revealing not the shortcomings of his parents and family circle, but the adolescent frustrations and complexes, never wholly outgrown, of the mind behind "The Mask".

DARYL LINDSAY,
Mulberry Hill,
Baxter, Victoria.

BRITAIN'S SMALL POETRY PRESSES

MICHAEL DUGAN

During this century private presses in England have played an important role in the publishing of new and experimental poetry. The names of Fortune Press, Hand and Flower Press and Fantasy Press will be familiar to any student of contemporary British poetry.

In the past decade or so poetry press activity in Britain has been extremely widespread and there are now probably a hundred or more small, poetry-orientated private presses. The publications issued from them range from a few duplicated, stapled pages to the beautifully printed volumes of Edward Lucie Smith's Turret Books.

In recent years these small presses have had a tremendously vitalising effect on British poetry. They were the first to publish the Liverpool poets, long before Patten, Henri & Co. had been collectively described as such. People like Gael Turnbull, Spike Hawkins and Barry McSweeney were also first published by small presses, although their later work has been issued by established publishing firms. Other poets like Jim Burns, George Dowden and Dave Cunliffe have preferred to bypass the commercially orientated publishing houses and continue to publish their books with the little presses they find aesthetically and idealistically to their liking.

One of the first small presses was Gael Turnbull's Migrant Press which was very active during the 1950s. Among many other poets this press introduced Roy Fisher, Matthew Mead and Ian Hamilton Finlay. In 1965, in association with Morden Tower Book Room, it issued Basil Bunting's "The Spoils", which helped re-awaken interest in this almost forgotten English poet. Migrant Press still continues but is not as active now as it was a decade ago.

The year 1963 saw the first issue of Poetmeat, a bulky, duplicated quarto magazine that contained poetry, prose, book reviews, polemics and information about other small press activities. Its editors were Dave Cunliffe and his wife, Tina Morris. Although Poetmeat ceased publication in 1967, financially crippled by printers' bills and legal expenses following an obscenity court case, the Cunliffes still produce books and pamphlets, newsletters and posters under various imprints.

Poetmeat published William Wantling, Anselm Hollo, Christopher Logue and countless other less-known poets and writers. Opinionated, idiosyncratic and unfearing in its choice of material, it was inevitable that it would run foul of the law. The blow eventually fell when Arthur Moyse's book "The Golden Convolvulus", published by the Cunliffes, was found "indecent but not obscene" by a Blackburn (U.K.) court.

Cunliffe's other publications include books by himself and his wife, Jim Burns, Arthur Moyse and others. At the time of writing he is preparing a new magazine to be called Global Tapestry.

Tarasque Press, in Nottingham, is another lively press which produces a large number of poetry pamphlets as well as a little magazine named after the press. Tarasque is edited by Stuart Mills and Simon Cutts and operates from the Trent Book Shop in Nottingham. Tarasque has become a centre for young Midland poets and the small pamphlets it issues are well printed and visually pleasing as well as being of considerable poetic interest. Among the many publications issued by this press, Roy Fisher's "Interiors" and Gael Turnbull's "Briefly" are worthy of particular note.

Many of the small presses are situated in provincial towns and Newcastle, a city of dreary industrial grime, holds one of the liveliest poetry centres in the world. This is the Mordern Tower which was founded four years ago by the then teenage Tom Pickard. Pickard hoped for a centre where the greatest poets of the age would read, and his expectations were justified. Among many poets who have given readings at Mordern Tower are Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, Gregory, Corso, Hugh MacDiarmid and Herbert Read.

As a publisher the Mordern Tower Book Room has issued pamphlets and posters by various poets, many of local origin. Recently Pickard joined forces with another Newcastle poet, Tony Jackson, to produce a magazine, The Lesser Known Shagg. The first issue of this publication would give Australian custom officials burnt eyeballs for months ahead. Tom Pickard's own poetry, as revealed in his book "High On The Walls", is sensitive, lyrical and often very evocative.

"High On The Walls" was published by Stuart Montgomery's Fulcrum Press, in London. Fulcrum can no longer be called a small press; its books are well designed and produced in editions of several thousand with world-wide distribution. With poets like Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, Basil Bunting and Edward Dorn on his list Montgomery is perhaps the most financially successful poetry publisher in the world today.

From Cardiff in Wales comes Second Aeon magazine, edited by 22 year-old Peter Finch. Its duplicated pages contain a mixture of well known Liverpool and American poets and less known English and Welsh poets. Second Aeon receives a grant from the progressive Welsh Arts Council, which has also recently awarded Finch a bursary to continue his work in the field of concrete poetry. Finch himself is a witty and sensitive poet whose work reflects very much his involvement with his Welsh environment, which he satirises in a long poem, "Welsh Wordscape":

> To live in Wales,
>
> Is to be mumbled at
> by re-incarnations of Dylan Thomas
> in numerous diverse disguises . . .
>
> . . . Is to be told
> of the incredible agony
> of an exile
> that can be at most
> a day's travel away . . .

One of the most prolific small presses operating in Britain today is Gordon and Helene Jackson's

Grosseteste Press in Lincoln. In addition to the tri-yearly Grosseteste Review, this press produces folders, pamphlets and some beautifully printed books. Its publications include translations from Holderlin and early Welsh poems, poetry books by J. H. Prynne, Michael Grant and John Hall, and a book of short stories by Jim Burns.

Another prolific press is Andre Crozier's Ferry Press in London, which over the past few years has issued many small publications by Thomas Clark, Jim Burns, Peter Riley, Nick Wayte and other poets whose work had previously appeared only in small circulation magazines. Crozier, himself a prominent poet in little magazines, is a publisher genuinely and fully involved in the promotion of new poetry.

It is small, one-man presses like Crozier's, run by dedicated people, that have managed to survive a number of years and in some cases to profit. Some have managed to keep afloat by selling first editions, signed copies, etc., on the collectors' book market, others by producing signed limited editions. The exploiting of the collectors' market by some firms has led to a certain amount of ideological conflict between the publishers who wish to distribute as widely and cheaply as possible and those who produce tiny numbered and signed editions at very high prices. A few presses, like Grosseteste, compromise by producing collectors' as well as 'trade' editions, but there is still a considerable amount of criticism levelled at them by people like Dave Cunliffe, who are not interested in publishing for profit.

In spite of such disputes the small press scene in Britain is healthy. With a large, geographically compressed market, distribution is relatively easy and sales of poetry pamphlets are relatively high. Dave Cunliffe prints his poetry pamphlets in editions of 800, Fulcrum in editions of 1,500 or more. In Australia selling new poetry in such quantity is almost unheard of. Small press activity is just beginning here; whether its impact will be as great as it has been in Britain and in the U.S. remains to be seen.

BEWARE THE WARDROBE-COLORED LION

Beware the wardrobe-colored lion
but do not fear his mouse-skinned colleague
with bones of celery
and teeth of aluminium.

At best he lusts for strong drink;
stealing bitumen from public roadways
he boils it in copper kettles
and quaffs it hot.

At worst he blows his nose on Europe
careful to avoid injury on a meridian
or damage to Madrid
or Luxembourg.

Beware the wardrobe-colored lion
but do not fear his mouse-skinned colleague
with teeth of aluminium
and bones of celery.

JOHN PHILIP

What we did do when we could
Was neither right nor wrong but good,
Others come and others go
Ignorant of me—or you
As the case may be, yet I
Think of you again today.

Think of you today, with her
Lying here while you lie there.
As I'd think of her with you,
As you think of me with who-
Ever, I don't know, may be
Lying with you instead of me.

And I wonder whether you
Would think of him now if we two
Lay together where I lie
Today with her, and whom she
Thinks about while lying here
Being thought about elsewhere.

Furthermore, I have no doubt
That fellow whom she thinks about
And that other fellow who
Lies with you are thinking too
Of and lying too with lovers
Who think of, lie with yet others.

It would be agreeable
To fill this little bed bung full
With everybody anybody,
In the whole wide wicked bloody
Miserable mucked-up confounded
World that all of us are landed

With, has ever even once
By just so much as half a chance
Thought about or got laid by.
I won't say this idea has made my
Day. I don't say that we should.
Though, as ideas go, it's good.

BRIAN MEDLIN

PUSHING

Into one pocket to
another, a white ball
popping; phoning one
after another; a bookie
backing losers; laying
one after another, a wasp
spiking: each meeting
pounds against the bathroom
mirror like some fighter's face—
strung out on his own reel
spinning, spinning, out

Hair an inch longer,
a new tie, a new tan: out
pushing again, overpowering
with the threat of what you're
missing; with the challenge
of needing which he feigns—
easing the way to becoming cocaine:
until they succumb to his
weakness; to his need; to his
threat; to his challenge; until
they are strung out; until
they turn tricks for his bag; which
he sells occasionally; which
he witholds.

ALLEN AFTERMAN

INTRUDER

When I walk
I do not know
what ancient sacred place
my foot may desecrate
or if my tread shall fall
where some cult-hero bled,
or shed blood,
or gave fire to man
in the far dreamtime.

Vanished elders
of the long-dead tribe,
forgive
my taboo-breaking,
my uncicatriced intrusion;
and do not send
kadaitcha men
to haunt my dreams.

Surely you can guess
my conscience
is uneasy enough
already.

IAN MUDIE

Last night
feeling your legs beneath my hands
you tested them for length
and then with the added
strength of being able to rest
on my shoulder you planned
your first bold step.
Last night
you choreographed a strange routine
and when you thought
you were tripping
you leaned lightly on your heart,
listening to it keeping time
stopping . . . starting . . . listening
to it listening to mine.
Last night
you danced for the first time
without a mask and realised
how caught you were . . . how caught I was . . . how
we'd been blind . . . and
how beautiful it was to ask
that our bodies provide the rhyme.

R. J. DEEBLE

PRISON ALPHABET

Behind the walls
the walls begin,
behind the bars
are bars . . .
A can make a knife of tin
B can cut out stars
C can get you what you want
    a needle drink or smoke
D can laugh through broken teeth
E can tell a joke
F can fake a heart-attack
G can throw a fit
H can write a letter home
    as quick as you can spit
I can con the chaplain
J can con the "con"
K will know someone to ask
    just where your wife has gone
L can keep an eye out
M can pass the word
N can hear the gospel truth
    and then forget he heard
O will know which warder
    can be got at—**and** the price
P will offer nothing
    but a lot of free advice
Q will want no part of it
R will not be told
S will roll a cigarette,
    and shudder with the cold
T will hum a lonely tune
U will turn his back
V will lie as still as death
W will crack
X will read his bible
    day by holy day
Y with eyes like torches
    will burn the bars away
and Z, poor Z, will think the walls
must end where they begin
and that a man, outside, will be
the same as he went in.

BRUCE DAWE

THE RELAXATION CURE

To get shot of it all,
lash out with iron-shod hooves
and rip the soft bright fabric

cocooning us all
into a web of rags;
to be sick to death of those

goggle-eyed
self styled monogamous
hypocritical heads

crowning our nay-sayers;
to burn incredible piles
of mineral stocks con amore;

to touch and take
with a whistling air
of manic banditry;

and then, confronting the great
thumb-sucking chieftains
on the steps of their longhouse,

to bow politely
and address them with
The devil f——k you dead,

never taking
that brilliant smile
off your face for a moment:

to have done all this
is no more than to have got
one foot on first base.

CHRIS WALLACE-CRABBE

BOOKS

THE SQUATTER PERSPECTIVE

DAVID DENHOLM

Thomas Francis Bride: "Letters from Victorian Pioneers", edited by C. E. Sayers (Heinemann, $10.50).

Rolf Boldrewood: "Old Melbourne Memories", edited by C. E. Sayers (Heinemann, $6.50).

Mary Turner Shaw: "On Mount Emu Creek" (Robertson and Mullens, $4.95).

Bobbie Hardy: "West of the Darling" (Jacaranda Press, $6.75).

To paint these four books in bold outline, the first is a collection of letter-answers by pastoralists to a circular from the retiring Governor of Victoria, La Trobe, in 1853; the second, written as sketches in the 1870s, constitutes Tom Browne's pastoral idylls of Victoria in the 1840s; the third traces the history of a related group of Victorian pastoral families since 1850; and the fourth is a history of all of that part of New South Wales "west of the Darling", from the 1840s virtually to the present time. Bride's and Boldrewood's are reprints in the Heinemann Pioneer Series: Miss Shaw's and Mrs. Hardy's are new writings.

The four books can be viewed collectively. The pastoral theme makes a group of them, and particular characters cross from one book to another. The Victorian emphasis self-evidently facilitates this unifying effect with three of the books, and subsumes Hardy's because of the strong Victorian interest in the land west of the Darling. To these dimensions, the two histories give space and time. Thus the four books collectively are like four parts of a jig-saw puzzle which are not only key parts, but fit together, sufficiently to say important things about the whole. And the most important thing that is thus said, or rather disclosed, is the cohesion and continuity of the pastoral age in eastern Australia.

It was an age which flowed naturally out of the cohesion and continuity of colonial hierarchic society—who has not seen (or at least heard of) "government house", with its attendant cottages for the jackeroos and other secondary respectables, with its more distant barracks or what-have-you for the 'hands' and, according to time and place, with its camp for the blacks down by the river? Mrs. Hardy discusses this explicitly, its ethos permeates Boldrewood and the makings of it are all very neatly mapped in Miss Shaw's endpaper cartography of "Wooriwyrite about 1900".

Yet if, so to speak, the melody still lingers, it was a way of life which was being eroded even in Boldrewood's day. As much as it dwindled before liberal and democratic attacks upon it, it dwindled from within, eroded by environmental and pragmatic problems: it is, for instance, generally fair to say that the pastoral magistrates voluntarily evacuated their power bases on the country benches because, one by one, they found attendance at court a bloody nuisance (the important exception to this trend being, of course, the upward movement of a number of magistrates to the legislatures).

The fate of the hierarchic pastoral age as a power structure was finally determined in the 1890s. It is fitting that both Miss Shaw and Mrs. Hardy lead us to Yancannia, from whence Burke had sent Wright back to Menindee in the days of Boldrewood's idylls on Squattlesea Mere and of La Trobe's not knowing that he would go blind before he turned his squatters' letters into his history of Victoria. Yancannia will serve to remind us that there are different but equally valid perspectives of the same object. To reach Yancannia, Miss Shaw tells us, "was to slip back fifty years to the Wooriwyrite of the pioneering days". In the last years of the century, the grandchildren at Wooriwyrite in Victoria "were entranced with the tales of the camels" that worked on Yancannia; and the grandchild visiting Australia Felix from Yancannia reputedly enquired of his cousins as to "what was the funny green stuff all over the ground". Yet, literally over these children's heads, society was in turmoil, and policemen rode on Yancannia, while pastoralist and shearer advanced the contending values of freedom of contract and mass union. It was a battle which the pastoralist won in a war which he lost.

After that, the form of the hierarchic society might linger (in some places it lingered into the 1950s). It was finished as a cohesive power structure; what remained was a style of living, a style in which the Shaws of Yancannia still dressed for dinner, the Kennedys of Wonnaminta drove out with eight matched greys, and Peter McGregor of Glenlyon was piped to dinner by his own piper.

It was a style of living that Boldrewood understood, because he was born to it. The essence of the matter was inside the man and, in an outward sense, he had to eschew it, because his ultimate failure as a squatter, and the relatively modest salary he thereafter earned as a magistrate and official, denied him the grand scale. With men of his kind, it is dangerous to write-off his "old Melbourne memories" completely as a product of nostalgia (it is something else to establish a sound point of balance between nostalgia and the reality). The New England squatter, John Everett, once made the point in a letter to his sister in England

that the squatting life was a matter of looking at sheep's faces and at human faces: the second was an antidote to the first.

Boldrewood's (or Browne's) "memories" are, in fact, mostly about human faces; and critics of the squatters' "rampant materialism" are mostly talking about sheep's faces. We need to be watchful in either direction. We have to watch other squatters, an Everett, or a Hobler, who balance one set of faces against the other. Then we can begin to measure what nostalgia (or the desire for a well-told tale) has done to the reality. Like a well-turned report of a car accident, for instance, Boldrewood's account of how the native police dealt with the local blacks is bland, and so the blood doesn't show.

It is the great virtue of La Trobe's letter-writers that, speaking metaphorically and literally, the blood does show. The writers were near enough in time to minimise the danger of nostalgia, and there were enough of them to provide La Trobe, and then us, with a Gallup poll of squatterdom at one point in time. And what comes out is exactly what one expects to find in a sample of the human mind—disagreement. Colin Campbell, for instance, wrote to La Trobe:

> From a good many years' experience, I can bear witness to the intelligence and good feeling of the blacks, and believe their capabilities to be almost equal to those of Europeans . . .

On the other hand, Henry Dwyer (in a letter which the editor of the new reprint has omitted) tore into mankind:

> As for me, I suppose, as I made a fool of myself by going home for a wife, I must also make a fool of myself a second time by going again with her . . . I have had many a scrimmage with the whites, and the niggers once took a mob of my "jumbuks" . . . I recovered all but 44 sheep with the assistance of Captain Dana and his since much-despised black guard.

If it was an editorial error of judgment to omit this letter (it has the earliest reference I know of to the blacks as "niggers"), editor C. E. Sayers has more than compensated with his homework: the letters are heavily annotated with explanatory data and, just as usefully, they have been grouped partly by time and more so by region. There is some disorder in the index, and the occasional phantom footnote.

Actually so much editorial work has gone into this reprint of "Letters from Victorian Pioneers" (as into the Boldrewood by the same editor) that it all rather poses a problem, or at least a question, common to the four books under review here as to all history books to be reprinted or newly published in the future. Is it not time that publishers reconsidered their objection to full indexes? A random sampling of the four indexes here leaves a perfectionist somewhat cheerless, and perfectionists publishers must surely have to be since the Hakluyt Society issued Aurousseau's "The Letters of F. W. Ludwig Leichhardt" two years ago. The argument has peculiar force with a book such as Mrs. Hardy's which is not foot-noted; and with the two Heinemann books which self-evidently aim to be class productions, books on which infinite editorial labor and much money has been already spent. Why stop two hundred yards from the finishing line?

THE GAME

IAN TURNER

Barry Oakley: "A Salute to the Great McCarthy" (Heinemann, $3.95).
"The Royce Hart Story" (Nelson, $2.95).

As far back as 1882, the respectable, conservative Melbourne banker and literateur, Henry Gyles Turner, was commenting on "the widespread devotion to holiday-making, sports, and amusements" which he noticed in the Australian community. Most commentators since then, and quite a few before him, saw a special quality in the Australian devotion to sport. Some condemned this, believing that it distracted attention from higher and more important matters; others praised it as conducive to healthy bodies and therefore to healthy minds, but all agreed that it existed. And no sport has aroused such passionate involvement as has Australian Rules football in the southern states.

Yet surprisingly there is only a very small literature—either creative or critical—concerning sport in general, or Australian football in particular. For the latter, the catalogue was until recently exhausted by one novel (Alan O'Toole's slight, romantic "The Coach from the City"), one play (Alan Hopgood's "And the Big Men Fly"), one short story (John Morrison's "Black Night in Collingwood"), a handful of biographies of star players, and the various club songs, of sadly indifferent quality. (Painters have done better: the spectacular visual qualities of the game have attracted at least Arthur Streeton, Noel Counihan and David Armfield.)

So Barry Oakley's novel, "A Salute to the Great McCarthy", is the first serious attempt by an Australian novelist to come to terms with this major social phenomenon, and—quite apart from the fact that it is a very good and a very funny novel—welcome for that alone.

The Great McCarthy is the boy from the bush who, for a brief moment, makes it in big-time Melbourne football. He soars rapidly to the heights reached by the great Roy Cazaly ("Up there, Cazaly!"), crashes spectacularly to the ground (after being tackled while not in possession of his faculties by a rich, neurotic, sexy bitch), and retires hurt.

On the surface, this is a picaresque novel: McCarthy is victim-hero, subjected to a series of trials by a godlike P.T. instructor; a scrum of football coaches and administrators; a camp TV producer; an intellectual night-school teacher who drags him more or less screaming to demonstrations, chamber-music concerts and art shows; the media men; and the sexpot. But really the novel is comic rather than picaresque. McCarthy is a very human victim—rather too articulate perhaps (the story is told in the first person) for a lad with his scrappy provincial high-school education, but a proper person.

This makes an interesting contrast with novels and stories by English (David Storey) and American (Bernard Malamud, Ring Lardner, Snr.) writers about sporting heroes. Their protagonists are also part of the mass entertainment world to which spectator sport belongs, and generally they are destroyed by it. But McCarthy is a survivor—he has copped most of the knocks that the game

can hand out, and has lived to tell the story. One wonders whether this has to do with something beyond the difference in perception of particular writers; the Australian culture suggests that ill-fortune can best be met with sardonic laughter. However that may be, Barry Oakley is an individual, extremely perceptive and entertaining writer. In sporting parlance, he is a goer, and fair set to get a guernsey in the First XVIII of Australian novelists.

Of course, as with all good novelists, Oakley's hero is the creation of his own imagination; but it was fascinating to read "The Royce Hart Story" along with the "Great McCarthy". I should say immediately that Royce Hart has had no great fall; he is a star of the game, and he wears his stardom well. But so many of the aspects of the game which McCarthy encounters are also part of Hart's story—what it means to be the idol of thousands of dedicated football fans, the conflict of interest between players and club administrators, the pressure on star players of the media, the way in which the demands placed on those who entertain vast crowds in spectator sport inhibit the pleasure the players can take in the game.

This is a young man's book; it will be interesting to see what Royce Hart makes of the game, and his own part in it, in ten years' time. It is often roughly written. Hart acknowledges the help of two Melbourne sporting journalists, and it is unhappily true that the standard of sporting journalism has declined considerably since the early days of football. But Hart is a sharp observer; his comments are often acute, and, for the careful reader, he offers important sociological and psychological insights into that extraordinary phenomenon, the Great Australian Game.

LATE HOUR STOCKTAKING

JEANNETTE HOPE

W. D. L. Ride: "A Guide to the Native Mammals of Australia" (O.U.P., $7.50).
L. J. Webb, D. Whitelock, J. LeGay Brereton: "The Last of Lands" (Jacaranda, $6.95).

Conservation has recently become a cause in Australia and, as with many causes, some of its outspoken proponents do not always have realistic proposals to support their emotional cries for action. What should be conserved and why? How are we to go about it?

These books attempt a stocktaking of what in Australia we need to conserve, and what is already being done—little and too late though it may be. "Native Mammals of Australia" summarises what is known of Australia's mammals and is valuable for anyone with an interest in wildlife. The stress is on conservation, particularly with regard to the twenty-three marsupials, thirteen native rodents and twelve bats which are on the rare list, that is, which have been recorded from ten or less specimens or sightings this century. Yet another eleven marsupials and at least two rodents are now common in only a fraction of their former ranges; thus making a total of thirty-two per cent. of the native mammals rare or nearly so. And this does not even include the larger kangaroos, whose future is uncertain as long as uncontrolled exploitation continues. Complete protection is not always the only solution; Dr. Ride suggests that the kangaroos would be in less danger if pastoralists took greater advantage of their commercial value—"in Queensland during the recent drought sheep were worth thirty to forty cents apiece while a large kangaroo would fetch $2.50"—and began to farm them.

It is not known how many of the rare species are in fact gone for ever. This lack of knowledge about most of Australia's mammal fauna is clearly brought out because Dr. Ride has not burdened us with the usual unreliable anecdotal accounts but confines himself to the results of recent research. Consequently he can find little to say about some groups, a mere hundred words or so about rock-rats, three kangaroos and several groups of bats. The commonest phrase in the book is "little is known about".

How can we conserve the fauna when so little is known about it? Dr. Ride suggests several ways in which the layman can help:—

1. By bringing pressure on legislators to increase and improve reserves and sanctuaries.
2. By supporting conservation societies.
3. By joining in the surveying of the still existing species, e.g. sending specimens to museums and other wildlife organisations, and particularly by campaigning for an Australian Biological Survey. This has been recommended by the Academy of Science for many years; a full plan for its staffing and operation already exists, only the money is lacking.
4. By building up state authorities responsible for wildlife.
5. By insisting on careful controls for industries cropping the fauna.
6. By questioning the present usage of land. Why alienate more if full use is not made of that already in production?

Ride's book is the best stocktaking of Australia's mammals to date. The 261 species are presented in fifty-five groups for ease of identification. Each group is based on one or several closely related genera and each is illustrated by a full page black and white drawing by Ella Fry. Monochrome was chosen both to emphasise the underlying form of the group which color could obscure and to reduce the cost. At their best, as in some of the illustrations of the smaller marsupials and rodents, the drawings show the delicacy of fine etchings, while all are a vast improvement on past attempts to crowd as many pictures as possible onto one page. The book includes useful lists for further reading and a separate section of technical references makes it a useful research tool as well as a general introduction.

While this book represents a detailed study of one aspect of Australian wildlife, Webb, Whitelock and LeGay Brereton have edited a more general account of our natural resources and have particularly emphasised the mechanisms of conservation. "The Last of Lands" arose out of a Summer School on National Parks and nature conservation held at the University of New England in 1964. Because of this, there is a certain amount of repetition and

the cluttered illustrations do not relate directly to the text.

The elements of the environment that should be conserved are dealt with fairly generally in the second of three sections. This leads to an emphasis on the unusual in the flora and fauna—plants with medicinal properties and the living fossils among the animals. Still, it does cover the conservation of "unpopular" animals such as worms and insects, which are usually overlooked in favor of the more appealing birds and mammals.

The first section of the book contains seven chapters which study the economics of conservation. The drawback of multiple-authored books appears here, since the information could have been used more succinctly. But there is plenty available to the reader prepared to put it together.

The third section (and the last chapter of section two) discusses national parks as the major tool of conservation. Derek Whitelock points out that park rangers are the key to effective parks and public education. Conditions are so bad at present that we are very lucky to have anyone at all to undertake these lowly-paid jobs. The remaining chapters list the reserves in each state and give recommendations for future action. It is clear that time is running out and each year the chances diminish of reaching the point where even the very modest target of one per cent. of each state is reserved. Tasmania, New South Wales and the Northern Territory already have a larger proportion reserved, but the latter two are special cases, because each has one very large park, Kosciusko and the Tanami Desert respectively.

A useful map showing the distribution of present parks, reserves, forestry land and crown land is provided in a map pocket. This is invaluable to all us prospective park planners, particularly as the remaining unalienated lands are indicated. The lack of reserves in some areas is striking; north-western Australia, Cape York, the Nullarbor Plains, the Victorian Alps, the salt lakes of South Australia, and particularly the absence of significant coastal reserves anywhere.

Since this book was written, some improvements have occurred; the new National Parks and Wildlife Service has come into operation in New South Wales and several parks proposed in these chapters have been finally declared. But there is no room for complacency as long as the legislative protection for national parks and, even more importantly, for fauna sanctuaries, remains inadequate. The Commonwealth Government, for all its pious calls to the States to use the powers available to them for conservation, reserves for itself the right to take any action in any park. Vincent Serventy, writing about Western Australia, makes this point clear:

> A classic use of Commonwealth powers was shown in the atomic explosion at the Monte Bellos. Although a Class A reserve, there was no prior consultation with the state government departments most concerned. The pre-explosion biological survey carried out by the British Government was pitifully superficial and amateurish compared to the careful work done by the United States in the Pacific. The protests of naturalists were dismissed in contemptuous terms by the Prime Ministers concerned.

Lesser acts of the Commonwealth Government can be equally arbitrary, as those who have contrasted the eyesore of the P.M.G. road at Wilsons Promontory National Park with the carefully planned and contoured work of the Victorian Country Roads Board elsewhere in the park will realise. In most states, mining acts have overriding priority, as often do the state authorities for public works, forestry, fish introductions, vermin and bushfire control. National parks authorities usually come a poor last. In Victoria, particularly, the national parks legislation has been written with an eye to profit: provision exists to lease fifty acres for seventy-five years in any park to any business concern prepared to spend $200,000 on buildings to accommodate tourists. However, the success of the Little Desert campaign last year is an example of the effect organised public opinion (with the press behind it) can have even in the strongholds of private enterprise. Both these books provide ammunition for further successful campaigns.

PARTY HISTORY

J. D. BLAKE

Alistair Davidson: "The Communist Party of Australia" (Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, $7.00).

To anyone acquainted with the subject Davidson's treatment gives the impression of a through-the-looking-glass-world: Aarons perseveringly working for nigh twenty years to take the Party out of the hands of the Stalinists; Blake—sectarian, Italian roader, national communist, Miles-Sharkey man; Gibson, the only old-guard communist to free himself of sectarianism. The "strange quirks of communist terminology" are noted (p. 118). but many of the terms and labels are still taken at face value. Cecil Sharpley "defected and sold his 'story' to the Melbourne Herald" (p. 109), but many important judgments are based on Sharpley's hearsay.

Probably some of the difficulty is due to the limited focus of the author: the notion of the CPA as part of an international conspiracy, limitation in this context to an 'institutional' history, and the selectively sectional nature of the people interviewed.

We become involved and our knowledge is increased when a writer reveals characters doing their thing in the circumstances of their time, and with understanding of how the participants saw their times. Davidson's treatment of communist concentration groups in the early 1930s (p. 54) does the opposite—it makes the people and times unreal. These concentration groups were not made up of communists in factories. The overwhelming majority of communists at the time were unemployed. The concentration groups were small groups of unemployed communists (together with say, an employed teacher) who undertook concentrated work on a given factory—generally within walking distance. There was no money for fares. They prepared and handed out roneoed leaflets, and talked with workers who came outside the gates at lunch-time. The object was to break out of the predominantly unemployed membership

situation, find 'contacts' in the factory, recruit employed workers and build party organisations in the factories: a logical aim in the circumstances.

When the commitment is to an institutional history all sorts of movements have to be fitted into the institutional framework. So, every movement inspired or influenced by communists is dubbed with the cold war term 'communist front'. One is reminded of a sign recently extensively painted on pavements in Sydney: "The Moratorium is a Communist Front".

That communists have from time to time tried to manipulate non-communist movements and organisations is not in dispute, but the 'communist front' approach makes it difficult to separate the positive from the negative in the work of communists in such movements; it hinders investigation of manipulation where it did take place, what the aim was and how it was distorted by the means used, what internal party differences there were on these matters and who were the protagonists of differing policies. When all are termed 'fronts' all are manipulated and all communists are at all times manipulators. Yet the tension between the notion of a vanguard party and the need for self-activity of the workers has been a recurring source of differences throughout most of the history of the CPA.

Davidson sees the anti-fascist activity of the 1930s as alien because there was no fascism in Australia: there was only Hitler in Germany, Mussolini in Italy, and Franco in Spain. But in spite of the many errors in the process of trial and error, communists have no need to reproach themselves for having been among the pioneers of the anti-nazi, anti-fascist movement in the 1930s in Australia; nor need they apologise for their activities in the interests of unemployed and employed workers, or for their consistent campaigning against war. What is needed is deep probing and critical assessment of the Stalinist degeneration that accompanied and marred these activities.

When divorced from their class and social background, such terms as "Stalinism" and "national communism" lack precise meaning and their use becomes a source of confusion rather than enlightenment. What is meant by "national" in the Australian Labor movement? Davidson argues that the Labor Party is the epitome of all that is national, but this begs many questions. It was largely unskilled and semi-skilled workers who played a major part in forming the Australian ethos and tradition. The influence of these workers was evident in the sharp conflicts in the 1890s of the last century when faith in the union blossomed into a religion. This collectivist union consciousness affected the nature of both the ALP and the CPA.

It was workers of this kind who also provided the social base for the extensive influence of the IWW during the First World War. As the social base of the Communist Party of Australia their ethos gave social credibility to Stalinism as it later developed. Stalinism has its roots in a working class which is compelled by its culturally deprived situation in society to rely solely on its organised collective strength, on the use of solidarism and collectivism as a physical force, on an extremely narrow level of political culture.

Within limits this reliance on collective physical strength gives some power to those who rely on it; but it also involves the delegation of authority to leaders who, in the circumstances, tend to become bureaucrats and help to perpetuate the cultural narrowness and the reliance on the only kind of force available. In a movement of this sort the absence of any profound conception of cultural hegemony gave rise, among other things, to the anti-intellectualism which permeated both the ALP and the CPA. Seen against this background, Stalinism is not merely an importation from abroad. It is also one of the products of this national tradition, and reflects a primitive stage in Australian working class development (a stage which is only now beginning to be transcended).

Davidson's thesis of a protracted struggle in the CPA between supporters of the Soviet Union (Stalinists and internationalists) and "national communists" will not hold water. It has no relation to the reality and there is no evidence to back it. Communists were both "nationals" and Stalinists at one and the same time in degrees which varied as the changing Australian and foreign reality produced their impact on communist leaders and members. The Comintern interventions in the early years can be treated in a too simplistic way as a conspiracy. Comintern directions had relevance mainly to the degree that they crystallised internal Australian trends. The communists of those years did not feel they were under foreign orders: they were trying to solve problems of revolutionary advance in their own country without the necessary cultural theoretical equipment, and they saw the experience of the Russian revolution as providing the ready-made answers. Most intellectuals who joined the Party adapted themselves to this ethos and idealised the working class.

Australian communists became Stalinists, not because of some international conspiracy, but because the primitive level of working class consciousness they represented called for an intellectual godhead. This became available in the shape of Lenin's party and the Russian working class who made the first successful revolution against capitalism. This godhead function was later attached to the person of Stalin, with tragic results in Australia as well as in Russia (the search for godheads still goes on, today among students more than among workers: witness for example the worship of the figures of Che and Mao).

The basis of the Soviet-oriented direction in the CPA was the reliance on the collectivism and solidarism of the bulk of the workers, the weakness of political culture, let alone of general culture, in the Australian workers' movement, and the anti-intellectualism which was reflected in the ALP as well as the CPA.

There is evidence of similar things today in sections of the New Left, who do not follow the Soviet Union but who reveal many signs of neo-Stalinism: reliance on physical force, the State, instant revolution, the label "social fascism", and neglect of the fundamental problems of cultural hegemony. Old attitudes transposed in the new circumstances are noticeably recurring. Such attitudes which ignore cultural hegemonic problems quickly degenerate into neo-Stalinist dogmatics.

Some of the material needed for the kind of historical analysis and theoretical generalisation so badly needed by Australian socialists has been gathered together in Alistair Davidson's book and we must be grateful for that. (He needs to check his facts: e.g. Jack Blake was born in 1909 not

1905. Audrey Blake was in Sydney in 1950, not in Paris attending a peace conference, nor did she attend such a peace conference in any other year.) Apart from checking of facts, most of the fundamental work of analysis, interpretation and development of theory remains to be done.

IDEAS FOR AUSTRALIAN CITIES

RUTH AND MAURIE CROW

Hugh Stretton: "Ideas for Australian Cities" (published by the author, $1.95).

Well the planners have asked for it, and now they have got it. But this is not a book for planners only. It is a book for everyman.

Enlightened planners for some years have stressed the dual need of inter-disciplinary planning and public participation by everyman.

Firstly, they have warned against plans based on one discipline only, even if that discipline is planning itself. This is so because good plans can derive only from integration not only of all the physical elements—the "infrastructive" services, the buildings, the transport, the economy and the ecology—but the non-physical, the aesthetics of the landscape and townscape, and above all the sociological understanding of the effect of the plan on those for whom the plans are made.

Flowing from this sociological concern, the best planners have warned that no plans can expect to be really successful unless they are made with the participation, in the ideas phase, of those who are to live with plans once they come to life.

Hugh Stretton supplies both of these elements in one mammoth exercise. He brings to bear on planning the insights of the discipline of a student of the humanities, normally not associated with planning, and ranges over many of the disciplines which are so associated. More than this. He is a humanist, and as such, although he probably does not consciously conceive of himself as a participant in planning, he has made a great contribution at the highest level by a searching examination of various philosophies, often unspoken and undisclosed, which really determine the direction of planning decisions, and by a fearless, thoughtful exposure of the administrative weaknesses which make it difficult to change this direction.

Then, there is a third element. Mr. Stretton has obviously "spoken out aloud" what many planners think but are precluded by their jobs from saying. These three elements will surely make "Ideas for Australian Cities" a watershed of understanding to the urban life lived by the majority of Australians, and what should be done to improve it.

In a book in which every chapter, every page and often every second line teems with fresh ideas, it is nearly impossible for any review to give a fair impression of what Stretton himself describes as an "impressionist essay".

To mention one or two of the questions dealt with may be more useful than to attempt a description of the width and depth of the answers. There is a fascinating description of Adelaide's "radical right" administrative leadership, which evolved, amongst other things, a Housing Trust on entirely different lines to the Housing Commissions of say, Victoria or New South Wales, which were in origin designed to succor the desperately poor. The Housing Trust, by contrast, was an instrument to provide cheap labor and cheap industrial land to attract big industries to Adelaide. To provide the cheapest housing in Australia meant that wages and costs could be competitively lower than the Eastern States. So the Trust builds no less than one-third of the total housing stock, its houses are for sale to all comers without a means test, and their universal popularity has removed the stigma of "income ghettos" which are beginning to develop into nasty problems for Melbourne and Sydney.

Then there is a long and frank excursion into a taboo subject: "Who is my neighbor?", or more precisely, "Who should have to put up with me over my side fence? Who should be allowed to share the public places and services of my neighborhood or city?"

Should there be some suburbs for the rich, others for the poor? Some want "segregation by race, religion, occupation, education". "Some segregations are defended as good in themselves, others can be defended as avoiding the need for worse ones. For example, if rich people can have plenty of private land behind high fences, they may be more willing to live in mixed streets. If you give them segregated streets and schools, they may be readier to tolerate mixed neighborhoods. Racial immigration policies are sometimes thought to preserve some internal racial tolerance and willingness to mix."

Typically then, Stretton throws himself into the fray: "Among planners, the segregationists love to talk of freedom and democracy: 'people should have what they want'. They always mean rich people should; what the rich want to buy the law should provide: indeed the law should help them get it below cost. What the poor might vote for, the law should not ask. If the rich use their money to segregate the poor that is democratic freedom. If the poor use their money to desegregate the rich, that is tyranny." It is interesting reading to see how the Canberra planners have tackled this problem on the quiet with two different solutions in two different periods.

Stretton makes a devastating critique of the low ebb of the Victorian public service and reminds impatient critics of Melbourne's urban planning that a revolution "can't be worked simply by turning a few bright ideas from the central planners into a few dashing decisions by the State Cabinet, with or without Commonwealth money. A shortage of skills takes longer to cure; a shortage of education perhaps longer still."

Perhaps Stretton overstretches his pessimism on this score. His own description of the emergence of the better policies of the "radical right" in Adelaide, or even more so of Sir John Overall of the National Capital Development Commission in Canberra, do not seem to imply the passing of a whole epoch in order to overcome the unimaginative, finance-starved efforts of generations of public servants.

His advocacy of a long thin corridor development of Melbourne beyond Dandenong and "a fine new city at the gates of Gippsland" instead of a "fat" Melbourne is held back surely more by the pull of investors in the west and north of Mel-

bourne on the Government, rather than the lack of skilled men to implement new policies.

Breaking new ground, this book will create a thousand arguments in a field too long the prerogative of planners and lifeless official reports.

The planning of cities calls for the participation of its citizens. Here is a book eminently readable, full of human attitudes, practical examples, good and bad, which takes a big step in throwing out the absurdities, both official and popular, that have too long encrusted the art of planning. For far too long this conservativism has masqueraded behind algebraic equations derived from computer-derived "models" fed with trends based on a status quo suitable to the rich.

REVOLUTIONARY SIMPLIFICATIONS

CARL HARRISON-FORD

Pavel Litvinov: "The Demonstration in Pushkin Square" (Harvill, $3.90).

Robert Taber: "The War of the Flea" (Paladin, $1.10).

Martin Oppenheimer: "Urban Guerilla" (Penguin, 85 cents).

Che Guevara: "Venceremos" (Panther, $1.85).

Frederick Engels: "The Condition of the Working Class in England" (Panther, $1.25).

In the days of the Stalinist purges the People's Commissariat of Justice of the USSR published volumes of verbatim reports of the cases of the "Anti-Soviet 'Block of Rights and Trotskyites'" and the Western intellectuals were tickled pink. It was at this time that Harry Pollitt told Stephen Spender he ought to go to Spain and get himself killed as the party needed a martyr for its domestic image (it contented itself with Cornford and Guest, both of whom would surely have contributed more to poetry and mathematics alive than to martyrdom dead) and that the Left Book club, under the influence of currently unfashionable but very sound writers like Strachey and Laski, was not so much a book club, more a way of life—with discussion groups, Russian lessons and tours of later 1930s Russia.

In some ways the tables have been turned so unbelievably neatly since then, one imagines little must have been ventured for so little to have been gained. Now, the Soviet Union gives next to no publicity to the trials of "anti-Soviet" artists and demonstrators (and tends to stack its open hearings) though these trials do at least have the distinction of being constitutional within a framework of convenient, contrived legislation. Meanwhile the left in the west has given itself a new tag, invented a "third world" that tends to separate us and them, and is so keen to dissociate itself from events in Russia it somehow eschews internationalism and ironically gets lumbered with a Stalinist tag of socialism in one country.

"The Demonstration in Pushkin Square" is Pavel Litvinov's surreptitiously published trial transcripts, now in the hands of a reputable publisher. The book records the trials of four young Russian poets and thinkers who, on 22 January 1967, demonstrated against the arrest of friends who had been demonstrating against the arrest and trial of Sinyavsky and Daniel. The issue of meta-demonstration aside, the demonstrators also wished the authorities to hear their objections to articles 190/1 and 190/3 of the RSFSR Criminal Code which were introduced in September 1966 and dealt with "dissemination by word of mouth of deliberately false statements derogatory to the Soviet state . . ." and "group activities involving a grave breach of public order . . ." The book's chief value lies in its demonstration of the implications of these laws.

These two Articles constitute a pramatic extension of the "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" provisions of the well known Article 70 and also help the prosecution use the "two stones to kill one bird" policy introduced into the prosecution of artists by the Zhdanov decrees of 1946-68 and never really dropped. (Note, for instance, Zhdanov on the film "Glowing Life" in 1946—"faulty in its ideological and political aspects, and of an extremely low artistic standard"—and the line taken against Daniel and Sinyavsky.) The laws are important in an understanding of the method by which the transition to a state that needs no laws has been subverted. With the final scrapping of what was later called a nihilist attitude to law in 1937 legislative trends developed a pragmatic base that de-Stalinisation was not to avert successfully. In 1964 a Soviet legal journal indicated a principle that underlies the ambiguous attitude to dissent in contemporary Russia:

> The transition to Communism will be accompanied by a strengthening of repressive measures not only vis-a-vis bribe-takers and murderers but also vis-a-vis all other criminals because intolerance of all crime is growing.

So near and yet so far. This means that in a country that condemns the rule of law all legal definition tends to be rooted in political criteria and its ironies, ambiguities and great complexities emanate from a basic conceptual split. In the case of the trials of the Pushkin Square demonstrators, the prosecution simply cannot transcend outrage as a tactic.

The trials themselves are of the type that give warm glows of satisfaction to authoritarians on both the left and the right, for they are fine examples of thwarted debate and bulldozing. (Special constable Dvoskin says that his men identified themselves before making the arrests, and then that he didn't, but the matter is not followed up despite its leaving other matters crucial to the defence wide open.) More interesting than the standard of the exchanges are attitudes underlying the whole case. As two of the defendants' mental stability is questioned, we are given a fleeting, legalistic, glimpse of the crisis of conscience in modern Russian psychiatry, though the clash between personal and social problems is not followed up and no psychiatrist is used by either side. At another point we have a factory worker defending himself in terms of Rousseau's "Social Contract" and Kant—only to have the judge question his educational standards and say, rather cryptically, "You would have been better advised to read something closer to our own time".

As a result of these trials two demonstrators were given three years, two received suspended sentences of one year and the charges against a fifth, whom the prosecutor had accused of previous and "equally serious" offences, were dropped for lack of evidence. One of the three-year sentences was reduced on appeal. Of associated interest is the

subsequent gaoling of Litvinov, this book's editor, for his role in Moscow demonstrations against the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

One of the chief dangers of this kind of book is that it is liable to be taken as representative of the Soviet legal system, and this can only be done on trust. Despite its casual interests I feel "The Demonstration in Pushkin Square" will eventually find its level as a footnote in a more specialised study rather than as a strong and authoritative indictment of the Soviet way of life, which Karel Van Het Reve's introduction tends to suggest.

Turning to the western world, we have books with overlapping theses but frequently contradictory conclusions on the revolutionary possibilities of the third world and of the USA itself. As I suggested earlier an unwillingness to throw in one's lot with the Soviet bloc, understandable as it may well be, leads many theorists into an unnecessary provincialism and its attendent evil, elitism in the superstructure. In Robert Taber's "The War of the Flea" this tendency has him look, presumably on the strength of their having succeeded, at Guevara, Castro and the ambiguous Grivas. Taber's thesis is that the guerilla fights the flea's war against the dog of the ruling class and that if the war is fought well the dog cannot defend itself and may even find it impossible to isolate the enemy. In general terms the thesis is correct but the commonplaces of guerilla warfare have to be tested against more aspects of the ruling class and the geography than Taber is willing to acknowledge. This makes for a book that becomes pragmatic when it should be more respectful of theory, and for generalisations that a closer look at his models renders inadequate.

There is, for instance, a total avoidance of the fact that guerilla warfare may often necessitate brutalities and terrorism and that, though the guerilla ideally should be loved and trusted, he frequently has to set up "examples" to civilians unwilling to comply with his wishes. The second problem the book raises unintentionally is the question of guerilla warfare's relative value. The chapter on its failures lists only the Philippines, Malaya and Greece. To these could have been added Bolivia (to date), Burma, Southern Africa, India and Ghana, in all of which either guerillas were successfully put down or non-guerilla style harassment proved successful. Furthermore, with reference to the failures Taber cites, inadequate attention is placed on the guerillas having been well and intelligently fought.

Most generally it must be ceded that Taber's study is not as complex as its subject material demands and that consequently many of his assertions jar. One could hardly rush to call Vietnam an example of successful guerilla warfare. Nor could one find the Vietnamese situation analagous with that of any other suppressed country without ignoring its long frontier with China and North Vietnam's increasingly less hostile attitude to its powerful neighbor. Once more, Taber ignores the differences between fighting an invader and a corrupt but indigenous regime that cannot be forced to withdraw in the same terms.

Martin Oppenheimer moves discussion of guerilla warfare into an interesting test situation; that is, to the city, in which it was not meant to be able to flourish. Despite this supposition the Underground in World War II, the Vietnamese and the Algerians all put urban guerilla tactics to some use and the unclear "example" of France in May 1968 was found upsetting in the extreme by the world's urban conservatives. Further, whole trends in the politics of dissent, both black and white, in the USA have conservatives and revolutionaries alike thinking of urban revolution and that disorder that is so often misnamed anarchy by our politicians.

The first three quarters of the book are sound and unromantic, subjecting revolutionary theory to a sound and thorough analysis from which three important issues arise. Firstly, there is the inadvisability of trying to conduct an urban guerilla insurrection until general social disenchantment has reached a significantly higher level—Oppenheimer cites urban struggles since the Paris commune of 1871 and analyses the enormous toll of defeat. Secondly, he points out the elitist tendencies in third world guerilla theorists (such as Debray) and leaders (Castro, Guevara) and bases his arguments on a very firm comparison between what may be called Marxist-Leninist principles with some reservations and the "revolution from above", involving a magic moment at which the peasants join the minority force. Thirdly, he discusses the mystique of action and the accompanying danger of seeing action as having a value all its own. This last issue, Oppenheimer continues, moves much revolutionary thinking into a raport with the equally mystical group identity lauded in national socialism and runs the risk, especially in black power groups, of prompting merely adventurous revolution.

But Oppenheimer is not really a revolutionary biding his time or using a "things have got to get worse before they get better" policy to postpone action. Rather, he is a believer in nonviolent action, who has preceded his attempt at finding a path to the solution of problems in US society that he cannot see being solved by the current administrators with an analysis of why violent revolution will also fail. In this, which takes up the bulk of the book, Oppenheimer is most successful. However, he is totally unconvincing in his attempt to justify his alternative concepts.

With the initial analyses aside Oppenheimer attempts to establish his points through the use of scenarios. The scenario seems to be a highly suspect sociological device in which the points established in earlier analysis are put to the test in a fictional test situation. Quite simply, the author holds all the strings. Oppenheimer, however, having demonstrated how a fictional ghetto uprising could be easily put down (by tactics which include cutting off the ghetto's water supply and then firebombing, and the role of rascist vigilante groups) goes on to give a rather idyllic urban-pastoral view of the nonviolent successful strategy:

> Resister-diggers held at least a dozen massive marches into rural areas to "capture" crops destined to be destroyed by farmers due to the bumper harvests. The commodities were carried and trucked into ghetto areas and distributed free. That fall, the returning students literally took over dozens of colleges and, together with sympathetic faculty, ran them "free university" style. All became training centers for further non-violent resistance and revolution.

This is not just nonsense, it is mere nonsense. The language changes: crops are "captured" rather than stolen, supposedly so one doesn't have to imagine the farmers' reactions or the nonviolent methods that could have as conservative a group as farmers hand over their surplus without a struggle, armed or unarmed. When dozens of colleges are taken over "literally" I can only conclude Oppenheimer has to be kidding.

If Guevara is a relief after the evasions of the previous authors, he remains a mystery and, in my reading, a far from successful revolutionary who is more likely to fade with time than remain as a symbol of all he fought for. "Venceremos" collects speeches and writings on guerilla warfare, capitalism and imperialism, human values and socialist man, economic theory and policy. It is a valuable book to have available in paperback since the hard covered edition was prohibitively expensive. It is also incisive in its unfolding of those characteristics that cost Guevara the realisation of his insurrectionary aims.

This is, generally, the problem of being too much the romantic hero as well as the socialist one. In too much of what he says and writes bravado tends to win over analysis and charisma tends to dominate, as it does in John Gerassi's introduction. In Guevara's writings "will" dominates to the partial exclusion of tactical commonsense and the partial exclusion of far ranging and varied theory: and this is not in the guerilla writings alone. There was in fact much of the puritan in Che and it is this streak that has him use the word "moral" so often, introduce heroes of labor and leave Cuba.

But of course Guevara cannot be left here. His charisma, which continued wearing of guerilla "uniform" must surely have fostered, was not his only contribution to the revolution (though that alone was considerable if ultimately short lived). The writings are riddled with astute comments on international and domestic affairs, particularly in relation to Kennedy and his reactions to Cuba and the nature of involvement with what amounted to 'earmarked' aid from communist countries. However, the insights fall short of the image (though that is hardly Guevara's fault). Ultimately Che Guevara seems to have vacillated between being a moralist of the heart and one with a firm foundation of Marxism and its rather special relations with issues such as the moral incentives he advocated.

This said, it is difficult to tie in Engels at all succinctly. Writing under the privilege and responsibility of being the first Marxist, Engels seems one of the few capable of trying to popularise his master (and colleague) without sacrificing his rigor. All the books reviewed above involve simplifications: the pragmatism and ambiguities in the Soviet legal amendments, the lack of a broad view of the particulars of guerilla warfare in Taber, the move into fancy of Oppenheimer and the moral uncertainties of Guevara. In comparison, Engel's youthful study has a depth that renders it still a classic of Marxist literature and a book that bears reading after 120 years.

TOWARDS RESPECTABILITY

IAN TURNER

"Australian Dictionary of Biography", Volume 3, 1851-1890, A-C. (Melbourne University Press, $18.00.)

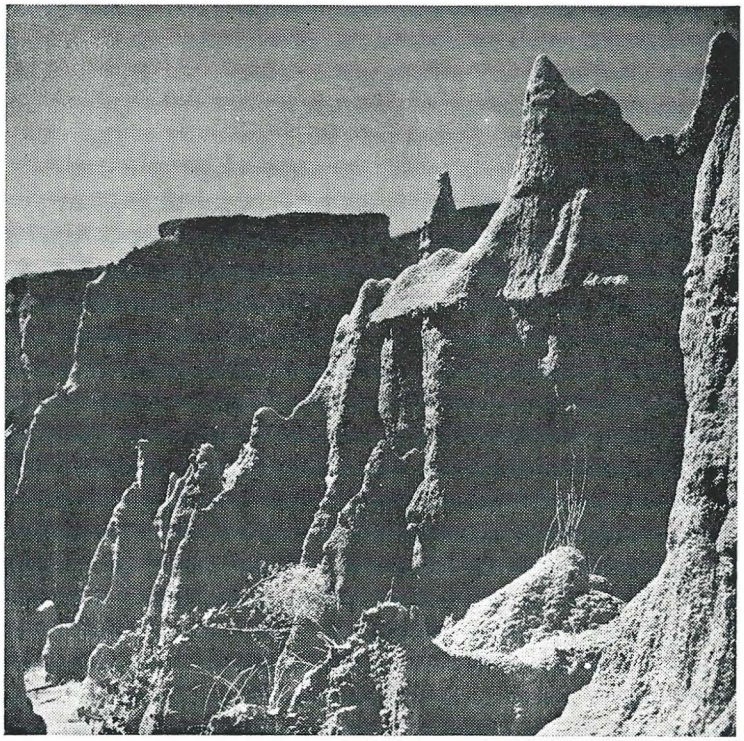
The third volume of the A.D.B. is just as good, just as fascinating, just as welcome, and just as unreviewable as its predecessors. Unfortunately, it is fifty per cent. dearer to buy; but the price is not excessive for 516 pages of biographical notes on 500-odd distinguished or representative Australian colonists, written by nearly 300 contributors, whose services were given free.

By comparison with the earlier volumes, covering the years to 1850, one notes that, to the colonial officials, pastoralists and merchants who then predominated, are now added new kinds of men—those who made their fortunes from gold, colonial politicians, manufacturers, trade unionists, naturalists, scientists, engineers. The colonies had passed beyond the convict and pioneering days; a stable and "progressive" society was in process of creation, and most of the men and women who appear in this volume are its representative figures—dignified, respectable (despite some recorded misdemeanors, such as Sir Redmond Barry's de facto wife), prosperous (at least till the bank crashes of the 1890s), solidly bourgeois.

One notes, too, the growing number of men and women who were Australian-born; and it is now becoming possible to trace the development of some of the great families of Australia—for example, one can move from the disreputably acquired fortune of W. J. T. Clarke (in Vol. 1) to the grandeur of the life of his son (Sir William) at Rupertswood and Cliveden.

As with the earlier volumes, there are many entries which are justified not so much by any special claim to admission as by their part in the "Australian experience"—among them, the "last chief of the Yarra Yarra tribe", William Borak; Thomas Cawker, a coach-driver; the jockey Tommy Corrigan; the circus proprietor, Henry Bruton. Overland readers will perhaps be particularly interested in the entries for J. F. Archibald (written by Sylvia Lawson, and, with that on Sir Graham Berry, the longest in the volume); Francis Adams (by Stephen Murray-Smith); Barcroft Boake; Rolf Boldrewood; Marcus Clarke; the famous Melbourne bookseller, E. W. Cole.

And as with the earlier volumes, there are rich rewards for the browser. I did not know, for example, that the famous cricketer, Charles Bannerman, who played in the first test match against England in 1877 and scored the first test century, saw Don Bradman make his 452 n.o. for New South Wales against Queensland in 1930; nor that G. F. Belcher named my boyhood town, Nhill, in 1844; nor that "Price Warung" (William Astley) once worked on the Nhill Free Press; nor that Joseph Bosisto made his famous eucalyptus in the 1870s just around the corner from where I now live in Richmond.



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