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Overland

Temper democratic, bias Australian

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Winter 1971

48

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(And, incidentally, watch what we're doing with Readers Union, which we have recently taken over and are re-vamping. With, among other things, an exciting new Victorian (and Modern History) Book Club which the editor of this journal has just joined himself! Send for details of that from Readers Union Ltd., Dept. 919.)

DAVID & CHARLES
NEWTON ABBOT – DEVON – ENGLAND

JOHN MORRISON

the moving waters

I've just had a letter from a life-long friend in England, a letter in which, apropos something I'd asked him, he quotes two lines from Keats:

The moving waters at their priest-like task
Of pure ablution round Earth's human shores.

They set me thinking back into the days of my childhood and youth. I was brought up within sight and sound of moving waters, the grey and turbulent North Sea. My native town was Sunderland, whose proud and legitimate claim was that it was the greatest ship-building town in the world. It was also the chief coaling-port for the coal-fields of County Durham, which meant that the countryside immediately behind it had precious little of the restful green beauty of the south.

But we did have beaches. Roker, to the north, and comparable to some of the best around Port Phillip Bay, was the most popular, but it is the beaches south of the ancient docks, Hendon, Grangetown, and Ryhope with which my happiest memories are associated. Each of the three had its own special features, but the entire foreshore, albeit at different periods, was always just "the beach". It was the great playground, even secretly for a few early years before we learned to swim; when, unaccompanied by adults, it was forbidden territory.

Hendon, Grangetown and Ryhope. Lines of delineation were not, and are not now, clearly drawn, but I think of Hendon in childhood, Grange-town in boyhood, and Ryhope in youth. Hendon in childhood because it was closest to home and approached by several small areas of wasteland, beginning with the favourite "Burn", which were not forbidden. Wastelands where we played our first games of football with tightly-bound bundles of rags, our first games of cricket with fruit-cases for wickets and torn-off boards for bats, and over which we got involved in our first stone fights with rival "corner-boys".

Hendon was a rough beach, where the shingle extended out almost to low-water mark and could be pushed up into a steep ridge in wild weather. Sometimes deep pools lingered behind the ridge long after the tide went out. One day a school-mate was drowned in one of those pools. I didn't witness the tragedy, but word got around to where my brothers and I were playing, and we were in time to reach the neighboring street and see Bobby Barnes come home: a long-shafted painter's handcart trundled by several men, and on it something covered by an old overcoat, something which was fearfully still, but from which dangled two familiar little legs when it was picked up and carried into the house through a group of weeping women. It scared the very daylights out of us, and kept us away from Hendon beach for weeks afterwards.

We were forbidden to go even as far as the nearest cliffs, which were quite low, gently sloped, and all scuffed soil. I remember that there was a flight of wide wooden steps for the convenience of elderly people and women with prams, but it was demolished early in the First World War as a precaution against a German landing. A purely theatrical gesture by the local military Brass, which was hotly resented by Hendon people, and which I look back on as my first glimpse of the stultifying Colonel Blimp mentality. The steps would have been ignored by any invading force.

Grangetown, however, was the beach on which we really grew up, where we learned to swim, where we became "real little beach-rats", as Father affectionately called us. It was a beautiful beach, where low-water left a magnificent stretch of level sands running up to fine shingle, then to great heaps of limestone slabs tumbled from the eroded cliffs, cliffs which rose sheer in places to 100 feet and more. Deep caves had been eaten into their base, caves into which women bathers could retire to change. Men had a technique of changing

decently on the open beach. Swimming togs were all shoulder to knee in those days.

Ours was a strict Presbyterian home, with Father and Mother both Sunday-school teachers, and chapel again for the whole family every Sunday night. Nights which were horrors of boredom, and which no doubt laid firm foundations for my ultimate agnosticism. Only the mornings made Sundays bearable, because only rain or snow then kept us away from the beach. Soon after breakfast the dispensable five of us—Father, sister Mary, brothers Ronnie and Alec, and myself—would troop off, leaving Mother to get on with the household chores and preparation of that Sunday dinner which hardly ever varied: steak and kidney pie with potatoes and Yorkshire pudding, followed by baked rice and custard. Father was a telegraph construction foreman, and fare was chosen largely for its filling qualities, just as our clothes were chosen largely for their lasting qualities. Always enough, but never anything to spare for frills and furbelows and toys and holidays.

Those Sunday mornings: they began with a sedate call on widowed Granny Morrison, who, with two bachelor sons, postman and telegraph linesman, lived on a direct road to the beach. Usually there were half-pennies all round from either Uncle Tom or Uncle George (they must have had an agreement to take turnabout) and ginger beer and ginger-bread from Granny. And a tedious hour or so during which we sat fidgetting while the grown-ups talked family, telegraphs, and other nonsense.

Then the beach. Winter and summer each had its own special attractions, as had low-tide and high-tide. I can never think of the low-tide scene without recalling a passage out of Conrad—"Lord Jim"—where, in characteristic sonorous prose, he writes of sea and shore lying quiet and mysterious under the great dome of the heavens. To my childish eyes the yellow sands were immense. Often we had it all to ourselves except for the screeching seagulls, and perhaps a stray dog whose excited barking echoed against the towering face of the columned and straited cliffs. Father, a beach-rat himself, entered wholeheartedly into all our games. We ran races, played leapfrog, constructed intricate irrigation systems in the firm wet sand. Sand which was sometimes rippled, sometimes, after a storm, strewn with straps of leathery kelp, but more often as smooth and unblemished as a vast sheet of pale brown paper. It was at low-water, too, that we first paddled, then learned to swim. Not a single stone to stub our toes on, and a walk out of many yards before we were in deep enough to wet what we called our "belly-buttons".

At high-tide, when we had to keep a look-out to see that we weren't cut off by the advancing water, there were other games, mostly stone-throwing. Competitions, when the sea was calm, to see who could make a flat stone rebound most times before sinking. "Dollies" of rocks built up at the foot of the cliffs and brought crashing down from distances worked out by Father on a handicap basis. I, for one, became an expert, and the wonder is that nobody was ever maimed in the continuing battles across The Burn as we all grew older.

Under Father's watchful eye (he really did have only one eye) I also became a fairly good rough-water swimmer. "Brokenwater" he called it, and in which he revelled. He was a handsome man, well known along the foreshore, and whose equal as an open sea swimmer I have yet to meet. Once he arrived at the beach nothing would deter him from going in. Sapper John Morrison of the Royal Engineers in the First World War, he was stationed for a time at Boulogne, and among my documents is a letter from his commanding officer thanking him for "demonstrating to the French people the courage of British troops". Father had just received a medal, not for killing, but for carrying a life-line out to a wrecked sailing-ship one night in a great storm.

In those early days at Grangetown he had gathered around him a group of young men who idolised him, and who shared a common ambition to go out as far as he did. I recollect only one who ever did. Often we'd lose sight altogether of his bobbing dark head in the waste of tossing white-caps, and there would be rivalry among us as to who would be first to glimpse him coming in. We could lose him for upwards of an hour, but were never touched by the anxiety of spectators staring out from vantage points on the high rocks, declaring that he was a goner this time, that he would never get back, and yelling for somebody to call out the lifeboat. Father was Father, the best swimmer in the world, and more than a match for anything the sea could turn on. There were some proud moments when, after a particularly spectacular performance, we joined in the cheering and clapping as he came in, hanging back at the last for an outsize wave in which he would ride right up to the high-banked shingle and scabble out on hands and knees before the next one could drag him back. That was one skill I never quite mastered; all too often I'd finish up with skinned knees and a belly half-full of salt water. But going in was a trick you had to acquire if you wanted to be one of the boys. You just waited for the big one, and as it ran out again you followed it, close enough to get head first down and through it just as it backed up, stroking for the

lick of your life to surface in time to glimpse and dive under the next one, and the next, until you were out far enough to be clear of the real curly-tops.

They were good days, when you could smell salt, taste salt, when your skin itched with salt as it dried on you, and when the foam at the water-line was just bubbles that vanished as you watched. The North Sea is never blue, but, gloomy grey or angry green, it was always clear so that you could make out pebbles on the bottom even at six feet. They were the days for us growing boys when Hendon, close to the heavily built-up east end, was forsaken as a place only for family parties. The days when parental supervision was relaxed, and mates took the place of brothers. More significantly, they were the days which saw the shaping of a special friendship with Walter McLachlan, a boy who had gone right through school with me, a friendship which still lives in the form of letters exchanged over 12,000 miles. For all the pranks we got up to, there was a poet in both of us from the beginning. Walter, always the more daring spirit, used to risk his neck going after sand-martens' nests near the top of the great cliffs, but was no less alert than me to the stern beauty of the massive boulders heaped below, to the drum-roll of the sliding shingle as each successive wave fell back, and to the clouded horizon of tumbled waters. My sentiments were Byronic, Walter's more Keatsian, but he could share the smug assurance with which I used to quote "Childe Harold's Pilgrim":

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain.
Man marks the Earth with ruin; his control
Stops with the shore . . .

Perhaps. But they were healthy enough sentiments for two boys just starting out to read and think and question. At fifteen we were both writing: Walter, poetry; I, short stories. Often in the evenings we went for long walks in the darkening countryside, talking of books and writers, and arguing, in the immemorial way of youth, about ways in which the world could be made a better place to live in. We knew nothing, thought we knew everything. We were both working by then, Walter as an apprentice marine engineer, I as an assistant to the Curator of Sunderland Public Museum, but with both of us the shore remained first love. (Until Walter, earlier and no doubt wiser than me, got caught up in the charm of girls.)

Grangetown, like Hendon, had receded into the past, and we moved on to Ryhope, which had a rugged beauty better tuned to our restless moods. There the land came out to meet the sea, so that

IT'S IN THE AIR

On the non-commercial channel tonight a full naked breast and profile of a woman's pregnant belly: it's a poster, and "this breast may be an unfit container for infant's food, containing more DDT than cow's milk."

We begin the driven seventies with pollution on everybody's mind. All the big words are in the papers and the telecasts: environment, ecology, biosphere, conservation, pollution—

we drive our minds out watching fantastic metal animals gouge our earth before their death. We're in a sort of hell, hothouse biosphere with near visions of the icecap thaw and phasing coastlines. Our minds are driven back to earth. The driven seventies have begun: pollution, it's in the air.

MARC RADZYNER

there was hardly any beach at all. The upper heights of the cliffs, where the limestone ended, were pitched in grassy slopes on which, a keen naturalist, I collected my first wild flowers and netted my first butter-flies. But far below, instead of golden sands and polished stones, there was a great area of ancient bed-rock, exposed only at full ebb-tide, covered with olive-green kelp, and which was full of crannies and pools where we found crabs, star-fish, shrimps and sea-anemones. It was a place which from a distance was just a black waste, but became rich with every shade of green once you got into it, and packed with waving and scurrying life.

When a really big sea was running Ryhope was the most inspiring spot along the entire local shoreline. We used to spend hours there, perched on the cliffs, watching the great combers rolling in and smashing themselves to pieces in a smother of foam streaked with waving kelp. It was about that time that we discovered Conrad's magnificent short story "Youth", and a voice we recognised in the rhapsodies of old Captain Marlowe:

A moment of strength, of romance, of glamor—of Youth! Youth and the sea! Glamor and the sea! The good strong sea, the salt, bitter sea, that could whisper to you, and roar at you, and knock the breath out of you . . .

What could ever hurt it? What could ever sully its purity? There was so much of it. Didn't it cover seven-eighths of the surface of the planet?

Knock the breath out of us? Well, perhaps, in a slow and subtle and relentless way that we never dreamed of, that is precisely what the sea is going to do. Let me quote now in full the relevant part of that letter which Walter, still a poet at heart, has written to me in 1971:

The once magical way along the beaches where the tridents grew, Neptunians locked behind seaweedy rocks and low-tide, meant a hundred yards walk out on clean yellow sand before you got your naval under water.

I'm afraid the magic has gone out of all that, and to walk that way now is to suffer complete disenchantment, and to know, besides, how disgusting an animal Man is. Because where once there was bright sand there is now a slimy morass of oil and human excrement, so that to stoop to pick up a stone to throw for the dog is to defile your fingers, so thickly is the beach overlaid with sewerage.

As if to complete the ruin, that other spillage, oil, comes in, tide-born, with even more invidious results. Of all forms of suffering, oil pollution of sea-birds is the worst and most pitiable. To see the clogged and feathery mass that still has life, dying with poisoned guts from swallowed oil makes one despair of Man and God. The shape and being of sea-birds, those aerial allegories of Blake's angels, disintegrating into a messy pulp without shape or function—except that the bundle shifts and mews in agony—would move anything other than Man to grief and tears.

Guillemots mostly, but also little auks, razor-bills and puffins, these are the main sufferers, and their loss in numbers over the next few years around the British coast is going to be staggering. Oil-slicks from carelessly spilled

or deliberately discharged oil when big tankers are washing out, besides that from disasters like the Torrey Canyon, will wipe out sea-bird life in a quarter of a century at the present rate of decimation.

Your sand coves and caves, the pools that harbored crabs and shrimps when the tide was out, these are now defiled, and almost devoid of marine life. Even the ubiquitous seaweed gives up and melts down into a glutinous mess of oil and sewerage that stretches over the present no-men's-land that we once knew as a golden pleasure beach.

Remember how the beach extended into the Ryhope headland, with the Dene breaking the high wall of cliff so that the whole content of country and sea-shore met in a magical dichotomy of nature for two young fellows out for a day's ramble.

Then, the water was fit for swimming, a sharp and salty tang was everywhere about, and even the sea-coal that marked the high-water line was washed bright and clean. Now, with the flood coming down [the coast] the wide arc of untreated sewerage of Tyne and Wear sweeps along the foreshore, and what it leaves behind on the ebb-tide is a devil's brew indeed.

The sea is giving up; its function of assimilation for Man's good is beyond its power. I think now with doubt and fear of those lines of Keats:

The moving waters at their priest-like task
Of endless ablution round Earth's shores . . .

Next time I write to Walter I must ask him where the children of Sunderland play now. As I am already beginning to ask myself where the children of Melbourne are going to play in the years to come.

NANCY CATO **cooloola**

The Cooloola hearing is over. After nine days of evidence and summing-up, of busy comings and goings by mine managers and conservationists, the dignified old Court House at Gympie has reverted to its normal calm.

Those nine days in May did not shake the world. But they were of vital importance to every person who cares about the quality of our environment and that of our children's children.

For here at Gympie Mining Warden's Court in southern Queensland, the question was being debated: are we going to sell our mineral assets down the drain to American business interests; and at the same time let them acquire what is virtually the last unspoilt strip of open beach on Australia's north-east coast?

Against the conservationists, who want to see the unique Cooloola sand mass turned into a National Park (apart from some forestry operations in the centre), there was marshalled the whole weight of two large American-owned sand-mining companies: Cudgen Rutile (No. 2) Pty. Ltd., and Queensland Titanium Pty. Ltd.

The million-dollar companies took over the small Gympie Motel as headquarters. They briefed a Brisbane Q.C., Mr. E. S. Williams, and he and his junior called an army of witnesses (all in the employ of the companies) and produced enough printed maps, color photographs and diagrams to paper the entire walls of the courtroom.

Parked Customlines and Monaros filled the road outside the Victorian-Colonial Court House, with its fancy clock tower and austere white columns.

On most days a cold wind blew through the courtroom, although the sleepy town outside was bathed in autumn sunshine among its ring of hills. The mine executives and their henchmen dined in hotels or motels. The party of conservationists and their witnesses and lawyer picnicked in the park. Most of them drove from 40 to 100 miles each day to be present.

By the end of the hearing the transcript ran into nearly half a million words, yet the two Court reporters were still smiling and cheerful, apparently enjoying the unusual interest of the case.

The Mining Warden for Gympie (Mr. E. K. L. Buchan, S.M.) remained alert and interested throughout, often interposing to ask pertinent questions or to clear up some point. As the urbane Q.C. remarked obsequiously, "Most of the intelligent questions at this hearing have been asked by your worship."

The benches at one side of the courtroom were filled with mining company officials and executives, smart younger men in pin-striped suits and impeccable collars. The friends of conservation clustered at the back of the room, straining to hear every word. Their hearts as well as their pockets were involved in this struggle. By the end of the hearing their lawyer (Mr. L. Wyvill), not before particularly interested in conservation, obviously had his heart in it too.

The fight to influence the Queensland Government to declare the area a National Park culminated here. Earlier, a shower of "Save Cooloola" and "Queensland needs the whole of Cooloola" cards descended on the Premier (Mr. Bjelke-Petersen), already on the defensive over the Barrier Reef.

The poet Judith Wright and the wildflower artist Kathleen McArthur have been in the forefront of the fight from their bases at Mt. Tambourine and Caloundra respectively. The home of Dr. A. G. Harrold at Noosa Heads became the unofficial headquarters; he had resigned his medical practice and was giving all his time and energy to coordinating the forces of opposition.

This small but dedicated band, backed by the Australian Conservation Foundation and the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland, lodged their objections along with those of the Australian Institute of Foresters, the Noosa Shire Council and numerous individuals.

They did not have large funds behind them, but they were implacably opposed to mining of the high dunes. The leases asked for include the beach at the northern end of Laguna Bay, from the famous Teewah Coloured Sands up to Eight Mile rocks just north of Double Island Point. Behind them lies the whole Cooloola sand mass, a rough triangle of sand and peat, wallum and rain-forest between the Noosa River, Tin Can Bay inlet, and the sea.

According to the miners' consulting geologist, the mineralisation occurs along the top of the dunes to a depth of 200 feet. This would mean removing every trace of the natural vegetation, now a thick cover.

Any mining in this area, it is claimed, could destroy the whole of this unique eco-system of great natural and botanical interest. No dunes of such height and complexity have been mined and "re-habilitated" before. And without the protecting sea-ward dunes, salt winds could come inland and kill whatever rain-forest and stands of blackbutt and cypress the miners left.

It was also feared that the underlying peat beds, once disturbed, might let the water-table drop through to a lower level. This could mean that the Noosa River and its chain of lakes could dry up. They are fed almost entirely from rain seeping down through the giant dunes and being held in storage in their spongy mass.

Since the lakes and river are at a higher level than the beach, the rain could all run away in the form of freshwater springs on the seaward side of the fringing dunes. This already occurs at places where "bubblers" and bores reach the surface on the beach.

The amount of time, money and manpower put into the application for mining rights by the two companies was some indication of how importantly they regarded this hearing as a test case. Even then the Mining Warden could only make recommendations to the Mines Minister (Mr. Camm), who had the final decision.

The vigilant local secretary of the Noosa Parks Development Association (Dr. A. G. Harrold) first discovered the mining companies' intentions from a prospectus issued by one of them claiming a "mining tenement" in the area. (This term was discussed in court; in legal terms they held only an "exclusive right to prospect" over some 60,000 acres.)

They had proved, according to their evidence, mineral resources worth \$150 million. They were seeking the right to mine eleven leases with a total area of 14,000 acres, which could take more than ten years. They claimed that rutile exists to the amount of 791,000 tons (note the accuracy of that one!).

The companies called evidence of spending \$60,000 a year each on "rehabilitation". But it was clear from the evidence of their two experts, Mr. Arnold Griffin and Mr. G. F. Balderson, that what the companies mean by rehabilitation was in fact only stabilisation or re-vegetation; not the return of the original flora to their original condition.

This was only an idle hope according to the Queensland Government Botanist (Mr. Everist) and the C.S.I.R.O. ecologist Dr. L. J. Webb. Dr. Webb said he would treat with "extreme scepticism" any suggestion that the high sand dunes of Cooloola could be re-habilitated if sandmining took place. The area might recover in time, since nature was resilient, but it would take hundreds of years.

He said Cooloola was a unique eco-system which should be preserved for future study. It also contained the only area of evergreen vine-forest of its type left in eastern Australia. In the south, removal of dunes between Kingscliff and Cabarita had resulted in damage to a rain forest area behind, which had practically disappeared after a couple of years.

He described the dunes in the proposed mining leases as "surprisingly high"; they were pure sand dunes ranging from 200 to 700 feet. There were no higher dunes in Australia or the world than those at Cooloola. He did not want to see one scoop of mineral taken out; economic expediency had gone crazy and should be replaced by planned restraint.

Mr. Everist, under cross-examination, said he had visited the sandmining areas on Stradbroke Island, where high dunes had been mined; and the re-vegetation programme appeared to be "not at all successful".

His Department had given advice to the re-vegetation officers of the mining company concerned, but he was not convinced, even if there had been complete success at Stradbroke, that it was possible to extrapolate evidence from this that it could be successful at Cooloola.

Mr. Williams (for the mining companies): Mr. Everist, didn't you say earlier that you were pleased at what had been achieved at Stradbroke Island?

Mr. Everist: I never said that.

Mr. Williams: Well, shall we say that you approved of what had been done?

Mr. Everist: I did not! I certainly did not say I approved.

And Mr. Everist, resisting the blandishments of the suave Q.C., stuck to his guns. He emphatically did not approve, and it was clear that he would like some more time to make botanical studies

and experiments among the unique Cooloola flora before it was all dug up and raked over by mining machinery.

Kathleen McArthur, giving evidence instead of Judith Wright (president of the Queensland Wildlife Preservation Society, who was not called) said that the bird life of Cooloola was unique, that the honey-flowering trees were important both for honey-eating birds and for bee-keepers, and that the area was a winter refuge for many birds from other areas.

She said that 9,000 signatures had been obtained on a petition to have Cooloola declared a National Park.

Counsel for the mining companies suggested that Cooloola was no longer a wilderness or a wildlife area. Photographs from the air showed sand "blow-outs" which were denuded of vegetation, and numerous forestry tracks criss-crossing the dunes.

On cross-examination it turned out that these were all for four-wheel drive vehicles only, and that many of them had been made by the companies' own prospectors. The sand-patches had existed in Captain Cook's time and were recorded by him.

Counsel for the objectors caused a laugh when he tendered an exhibit to the Magistrate, which in effect meant presenting Mr. Buchan with a large bouquet of grass complete with roots. Mr. Buchan, holding the bunch in his arms, sniffed it delicately. Its syrupy smell pronounced it molasses grass, a pest in Widgee Shire, which the miners have been planting to stabilise sand on each side of their new bitumen road to Inskip Point.

Mr. Balderson, mines manager for Queensland Titanium, who has conducted a successful experiment in re-growth at Inskip Point, said that \$30,000 a year was spent on the company's nursery for native plants, and another \$30,000 on bulldozers for replacing topsoil and men to work them.

He admitted he had no experience of re-vegetating such high, steep dunes as those in the upper Cooloola area and along the beach, where they are more like sand-cliffs. He had worked among low dunes up to 50 feet.

He did not know how they proposed to skim twelve inches of topsoil off these dunes and "put it aside" for replacement after mining, nor how they would get it back to the top.

He did not think there would be any funnelling action from prevailing south-east winds along the mined strips between standing scrub. He had made no study of wind-velocities in the area, the salt-content of winds, rainfall patterns, nor the temperature of exposed sand under the midday sun.

Some "other scrub" would have to be cut down to provide shade and protect the slopes, he said,

until grass and trees had been established. There were at present no plans for follow-up work in later years to make sure re-growth had not died. He had never seen rehabilitation carried out successfully on a slope greater than 20°.

Dr. Harrold, a dedicated amateur botanist, who has discovered two completely new species in the sand-dune country south of Noosa, said mining would be detrimental to the last remaining large, untouched area of coast.

"The sandminers," he said, "have had an open go all along the east coast; and I feel it is only right that certain places such as this should be left.

"The market for the minerals could easily be satisfied if the Cooloola area were left unmined. If the leases are granted, the companies will have carte blanche . . . and Cooloola could be destroyed.

"Even if stabilised, and it has not been shown that it could be stabilised, the area would never be restored.

"If not stabilised, wind and water erosion could take over, and even the Noosa River, an invaluable navigable waterway which never dries up and is in many places 30 feet deep, might be silted with sand."

"Ye-ers," said Mr. Williams with the peculiar downward inflection implying scepticism, which he used against opposition witnesses.

"If even one lease were granted among the 14,000 acres applied for, the area would be doomed as a National Park," added Dr. Harrold.

Mr. Williams (silently): So, if say the Epsilon lease were granted, you would no longer be interested in the Cooloola area as a National Park?

Dr. Harrold: That is so.

Mr. Williams: You would give up the rest? Silence.

Mr. Williams: Come now, doctor, feeling as you do, wouldn't you fight to hold the rest?

Dr. Harrold: I suppose.

Mr. Williams: Even a dying remnant?

Dr. Harrold: It wouldn't be just a dying remnant.

Mr. Williams: In fact, you wouldn't give up as long as there was one remnant to be saved? You would fight for the remainder, wouldn't you doctor?

Dr. Harrold (reluctantly): Yes, I must admit, I would.

(Unfortunately the Australian Conservation Foundation's witness, Mr. Piese, had said the opposite in his evidence: they wanted all or nothing. But Dr. Harrold was on oath, and could not honestly answer otherwise, even if it made a split in the ranks. Mr. Williams smiled like a Cheshire cat.)

BY THE MOUTH OF GROPER CREEK

The sky is held in place by a small
and lustrous pearl button:
the moon, past full,
centrally placed but a little out of round
like the top of a Braque jug. Beside our boat
pale moons of jelly rise to the surface, pulsing
with something which must be life
and yet is deadly:
opening and closing like silken parasols
or mushrooms in the dew rising.
The sea is calm; but out there in the rolling
Pacific Ocean, a monstrous mushroom rises
and shakes the firmament . . . How can we be sure
this piece of pearl will keep the sky from falling?

NANCY CATO

One point against the conservationists was that they could not point to any great concentration of wildlife in the area, apart from birds and reptiles.

One witness had seen emus there, another a single kangaroo near the Noosa River. Also, there appeared to be few waterbirds such as swans and ducks on the upper river. "Only," said Mr. Williams, "a few dove-chicks, I understand."

He was obviously not up on ornithology. Junior counsel whispered in his ear, and he corrected himself. "Er, dabchicks."

"Yes, they are what I call waterhens," agreed Dr. Harrold. "But I am not an authority on birds."

He described how, after a severe bushfire south of Noosa in similar sand-dune country two years ago, he had made a study of recovery and re-growth. Some plants had shown new growth within days, because their root-system had not been damaged, although immediately after the fire they appeared lifeless.

This could not occur after sandmining, when plants had to be uprooted. The exposed sand would have to be kept cool enough for seedlings to survive, even if natural seeds in the top-soil germinated after replacement. Rain would have to come opportunely, yet for six months of the year the local climate was notoriously dry. In a recent drought period there had been no rain for ten months.

It would take years of after-care to make sure that the re-vegetation programme ultimately succeeded.

Next, the Q.T. Co's consulting geologist (Dr. Layton) was called. Cross-questioned about the company's prospectus, he became very reticent and refused to comment on his written report.

He gave the average height of the water-table at Cooloola as five feet above sea-level, and said that if the peaty bottom were pierced it would soon re-seal itself. There would be no loss of water through mining operations except from evaporation.

Asked if salt carried in damp winds would reach as high as the top of the dunes, he said that much of the salt content would be lost when the wind struck the dunes. He agreed that a fringe of trees at the top would tend to protect the country behind.

He said there was no proposal to mine the Coloured Sands, as the grade of heavy minerals in them was too low to be economic.

The hearing ended with the "surprise" witness, Mr. Everist, the Government Botanist, and the summing-up of the two lawyers. Mr. Williams made great play with the words "emotion" and "hysteria". Mr. Wyvill, for the objectors, said that to allow this mining would mean an ultimate benefit to America at the expense of a unique piece of Australia.

Footnote: One of the frightening facts to emerge from the hearing was that improved processing methods and high prices for rutile, zircon and ilmenite have made it possible to mine concentrations as low as 0.17%.

This means that it might be profitable to re-work already-minded areas—just beginning to recover some greenery—into newly-bare moonscapes of flattened dunes and withering shrubs and grasses, such as now stretch from just north of Newcastle to the Queensland border.

Under the Queensland mining laws, re-contouring of dunes to a 20° slope is called for, plus re-planting and stabilisation of worked areas.

Since the threatened Noosa River in the Cooloola case is the centre of the tourist industry in Noosaville, Tewantin and Noosa Heads—also famous for its surf—the local Shire Council briefed its own counsel to watch its interests. The name Tewantin, meaning “place of dead trees,” was given by the Aborigines in the early days of logging, when rafts of timber were shipped from here.

The river, rising near Tin Can Bay to the north, winds southward between wooded sandy banks and tropical greenery through a chain of brackish lakes to the sea. One of these, Lake Cootharaba, more than 20 square miles in extent, is the centre of a \$1 million mullet-fishing and school-prawn industry.

The river and lakes form a playground and amateur fishermen's mecca, drawing visitors from the southern states in winter and from Brisbane throughout the year.

In holiday time the wide tidal estuary, with its clean sandy spits and blue water, is so crowded with yachts, speed-boats, water skiers, houseboats, ferries and rowboats that it is like a miniature Sydney Harbor. The only drawback is the shallow and dangerous bar leading to Laguna Bay.

The small beach at Noosa Heads faces north, so that it is sheltered from the cold south-easterlies and looks across the Bay to the colored curve of the Cooloola sandhills. The thirty-miles of golden beach they enfold can be reached by vehicular ferry, and form a highway at low water right up to the lighthouse at Double Island Point. Four-wheel-drive vehicles can cross to Wide Bay and the beautiful lagoons and colored cliffs of Rainbow Beach.

According to the legends of the local Aborigines—all now vanished—the long curve of dunes around Laguna Bay was formed by the Rainbow Serpent.

He was killed by an enemy with a magic boomerang; and as he lay along the beach, broken and dying, the stripes and colors of his body formed

the high dunes with their colored sands, tapering away to his tail with its shattered pieces forming Double Island Point.

Now the serpent is threatened again, not by magic stone-age weapons but by modern technology and greed for profit. But if the foreshore and the sheltered forests and scrubs behind are destroyed, they may turn into a boomerang which could come back and sweep the present Queensland Government from office.

POSTSCRIPT: JULY 1971

Now, just a year later, no National Park has been definitely declared at Cooloola, and the Queensland Government will set no deadline for the fulfilment of its promise made late in 1970, following its refusal to accept the Mining Warden's and Mines Minister's recommendations to allow sandmining.

The whole issue has been brought up to date by the announcement on June 22 that two sandmining leases are to be granted on Fraser Island (Great Sandy Island), the largest sand island in the world, just north of Cooloola. The Fraser Island Defence Organisation has called for a Royal Commission and a comprehensive land-use study. The secretary of the organisation (Mr. John Sinclair) pointed out recently that the only areas to be kept for recreation are those already tested by the sandmining companies and found to have insufficient mineral content; they will not include the famous Cathedral coloured sands or the unspoiled surf beaches.

The Save Cooloola Committee has brought out an attractive tourist brochure on the Cooloola area, showing the boundary of the proposed park, and pictures of the scenery and wildlife.

In company with the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland, the Noosa Parks Development Association, the Queensland Littoral Society, and the Queensland Conservation Council, the F.I.D.O. took an advertisement in a national newspaper to advise electors in the Merthyr (near Brisbane) by-election to vote against the Government candidate, because “State Cabinet has seen fit to approve of sandmining on the island after a limited departmental inquiry and a visit by the Premier . . .”

The fight is not over yet.

charles buckmaster

LIFE IN THE FIFTH ROOM ON THE LEFT, CORRIDOR 43

IT'S IN YOUR BLOOD—THULE MAYBE?

(left me in a room with everything i could possibly need and walked out and locked
the door hell what is this?
ha! a few occult classics—the egyptian book of the dead—hieroglyphics too . . . and
the complete works of Thoreau—and Blake!
ah . . . and flowers—a bucketful of earth and a to-scale miniature mountain—wow!
fifty tins of Campbell's soup—twelve varieties . . .
a typewriter—hot-plate in the corner—seven pounds of dehydrated beef stew and
water to mix
a first-edition copy of 'Howl', two hundred packets of drum tobacco
seven out-of-print works on alchemy,
a sack of geranium seeds,
a life-size statue of Fulcanelli, and twenty bags of adulterated heroin (and these are
just a few of the things i noticed) o my god what is all this about? . . . well, i
guess
i can get going and work it all out)

OUR BLOOD IS YOUR BLOOD—GET TOGETHER AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS

(and after the seventy-fifth day i had visitors—
two hundred and thirty-eight of them—
and existence didn't seem so much like trial and error anymore (to this day i still
don't understand why they let them in—didn't seem to be their way of doing
things at all . . . but i guess they thought it necessary).
well,
we sorted everything out amongst ourselves . . . a guy named Steve and i got to
talking about Jacolliot
which whiled the time away . . . and i then struck up some kind of a relationship
with a girl named Alice who had long legs and black hair—and whose sister—
she said
was a witch, and so this was an interesting point of conversation when not screwing
—the both of us being—in the least—vaguely interested . . . and Alice always
says she'd take me down to meet her in K62 . . . if it could be 'arranged'.)

WELL WE COULD WORK THIS OUT FINE IF WE CHANGED THINGS 'ROUND A BIT

(and it came to pass—that
Alice and i were talking one day [. . . or it could've been night—it was always hard
to tell the difference in there]
and together we decided
that if we knocked out the north wall and maybe put a few windows in on the east,
life would be a little more tolerable.
during the course of the conversation, Steve happened along . . .
and Steve—having done a little thinking along the same lines [and further—
being the most observant of any of us there in Block 5] said that something would
have to be done about the water situation
or we'd all be dead of thirst within six days!
and not to mention that we now had thirty-five dope addicts and that the sewerage
drains were blocked.
so we got together—
something had to be done/we did it.)

WHERE NOW? WELL I THOUGHT THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN OBVIOUS: BUT IT
DOESN'T SEEM YOU'RE PREPARED TO LET US GO THAT EASILY . . .

don't leave me here like this i said my god it's getting worse every day and i do be-
lieve that if we go on like this we'll all be dead before the month
is out . . .
we can't go on!—i . . . can't even be a part of this any longer
i would rather you put me up against the wall
and cut my heart
from my red and white body
. . . kill me now!
and they did . . . along with eight others.

The first of a series in which distinguished Australians submit their own obituaries. Any suggestion of their actual death is vastly exaggerated.

C. B. CHRISTESEN **autobituary**

We are discussing no trivial subject, but how a man should live.—Plato.

With the death of Clement Byrne Christesen at his Eltham (Victoria) home, the United Communes of Australia have lost one of their best-known eccentrics. In recognition of his services to the Third Republic, the President of the Presidium announced that the coveted Order of the Golden Hawke had been conferred upon him posthumously. The flag on top of the Union of Writers' premises at Collins House, Melbourne, was lowered to half-mast as a token of profound respect and affection.

The award to Christesen of the nation's highest distinction was made not so much for his literary contribution but rather in recognition of his amazing scheme which not only helped to prevent the total destruction of mankind but also led to a dramatic transformation of Australia's entire economic, political and cultural life.

When his "Modest Proposal for the Disposal of the World's Waste" was first published every contemporary megalopolis had a garbage disposal problem of gargantuan proportions. City after city was being buried under billions of tons of household and industrial waste, and the nations were heading for utter catastrophe. Total shock was imminent.

The great and urgent issues confronting mankind at that time were the military control of the United States following the notorious October Putsch of the military-industrial complex, violent race riots and the triumph of Black Power in most Western countries, an unprecedented population explosion and poverty amid plenty, the widespread destruction of the natural environment. But those and other monumental issues were insignificant when compared with the world's garbage disposal problem, with its associated problem of pandemic disease. A satisfactory solution had completely baffled the most brilliant scientific minds of the era.

Although Christesen was not a qualified garbage disposal engineer, his "Modest Proposal" offered what was (in retrospect) a relatively simple solution. In brief, all countries were invited to containerise their waste products and ship them to Australia upon payment of a nominal service charge of \$100,000 per container.

The world's response was immediate, electric. Massive garbage processing plants were then quickly built at all of the main Australian ports. The processed garbage—non-reusable material ranging from plastic and rubber goods to nuclear waste—was loaded into monorail trucks by means of computerised hoppers and railed first to rural areas, then farther inland, and finally into the desert regions. The nation's entire workforce was mobilised to spread the waste product evenly over every square mile of vacant land.

But when the shipping fleets of the world kept on arriving and the processed garbage became waist-high over an enormous territory a serious crisis arose. Complex networks of automated railways and freeways were extended farther and farther into the Centre. First Alice Springs was inundated, then Mount Doreen, Altunga, Wave Hill, Victoria River Downs and Katherine. It was not until the crests of Eyre's Rock, the Hartz Ranges, and Central Mount Stuart disappeared from view that a final solution was achieved: the world's non-reducible shit was then emptied into the vast and near-bottomless craters which had been excavated by the mining corporations. And that procedure continues to this day.

As a result of Christesen's fiendishly ingenious scheme Australia's affluence reached staggering proportions. At one dump, all of her fiscal problems were solved. Astronomical defence expenditure, which had crippled every nation, became unnecessary; for while envious eyes were often cast in her direction, no nation dared risk upsetting the garbage disposal scheme by attacking her or

each other. In effect, shit became the ultimate deterrent, and peace among the nations was permanently achieved. Efforts made by the Republic of Britain and the Spanish Soviet (following the collapse of the European Economic Community) to turn the tables on Australia by offering to become better garbage dumps came to nought. World governments recognised a prime dumping ground when they saw one.

Christesen's scheme of course provided Australia with many side benefits. For instance, problems blighting the wool industry, the beef and dairying industries, and all agriculture were immediately solved: for nothing at all could grow in this plastic and/or poisoned wasteland except along the eastern fringe of the continent. And the railways made handsome profits. The student revolt petered out; indeed most of the universities finally closed down and superannuated vice-chancellors became garbage consultants. However, generous funds and skills were directed towards the Communes Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) which applied its corporate mind solely to perfecting garbage disposal techniques. Pensions were increased to \$10,000 p.a. for all citizens not directly engaged in garbage disposal. Each harbour installation technocrat became a Hero of the United Communes; and all garbage employees (the nation's elite)* were so well cared for by society that they had no need of personal incomes. Indeed, for most purposes money became redundant. The world's leading writers and artists and sportsmen of all kinds were not only invited to live in Australia tax-free but were paid handsome subsidies to do so. Thus Australia at last began to develop a distinctive culture of her own. Certainly the torrid climate, the massive dust problem, the abominable stench, and lack of green vegetation troubled some citizens, but such irritations were minor compared with the enormous advantages of living in a materialist utopia where even the beer was free. The island continent truly became "Australia Felix".

So immense was mankind's gratitude that Australian citizens could travel the world as honoured guests. But the most important of all side benefits was that Christesen's "Modest Proposal" led directly to the creation of the Third Republic.

Clement Christesen was born at Townsville in 1911—his first act of eccentricity; for who could then have visualised that such a rich and varied

* As Christesen predicted, both Pareto and Marx proved to be correct. See his theses, "The 'Circulation of Elites' and 'Power to the People!'" and "La raison de l'Histoire: Qualitative change and the elimination of producer/consumer conflict of interests in a post-revolutionary society".

talent would grow from the barren slopes of Castle Hill. His early North Queensland boyhood—those frangipanni-scented days along The Strand, on Magnetic Island, and on Inkerman Station south of the Burdekin River—is described in matchless lyrical prose in the first section of his autobiography, "The Island".

His family moved to Brisbane just before the end of World War I. The second part, "The River", graphically records that halcyon period north of Capricorn: his schooling (such as it was), his athletic prowess, his ramblings by mountain-side and surf-beach, on far inland plain and among the thronging islands of the Barrier Reef. Christesen's first ambition was to become a pastoralist, later to study medicine, but during the First Great Depression he entered upon a journalistic career which was to last until the end of World War II. For several years he was publicist for the Queensland Government—a Cabinet appointment—and later served on London and New York newspapers. Upon his return to Brisbane soon after the outbreak of war, he found that all cultural activities had been disbanded for the duration of the war—and he promptly set about reviving them.

It was then that Christesen's eccentricity—always present during his precocious youth—became most noticeable. In 1940 he founded a curious journal with an even more curious title, Meanjin Papers, which was a modest attempt to provide a medium for local writers. His decision to launch such a venture at such a hazardous time dismayed friends and colleagues, but oddly enough the magazine developed over subsequent years into a literary review of some size, scope and influence. From the late 'seventies, however, whatever value Meanjin Quarterly might have had during the previous forty years had obviously begun to wane; yet its editor/publisher stubbornly continued publication in opposition to the debased mass media of a techno-society, until it gradually dwindled in size to the original eight-page handsel. Anyway, by then few Australians were capable of reading anything above the level of the daily press.

Christesen's Melbourne years are recorded with immense bravura, wit and pungency in "The Hill", the concluding and most important section of this coruscating essay in self-biography. It deals with the invitation in 1945 to transfer the magazine from Brisbane to the University of Melbourne; his work as manager of a holding company of sixteen London publishers; his press, radio and television work; his travels throughout Australia and in many foreign countries; the years he spent with his wife Nina on their hill-top estate at Eltham; and portraits of the many and varied

types of people he met, the organisations and movements with which he had been associated. His reminiscences are full of accurately pouncing judgments, the colour and spirit of his sense of life and justice, and of portraits memorable and entertaining. There are here, also, the warmth, valour, humour, and affection valued by those lucky enough to have known him in the fullness of his tilt with the Petrov Commission and with the dark forces of philistinism.

That mid-century existentialist writer and intellectual, Jean-Paul Sartre, wrote: ". . . in life a man . . . draws his own portrait". Rich and memorable as is Christesen's portrait of himself and of an age which has now passed—the trilogy has been likened to Konstantin Paustovsky's "Story of a Life"—it cannot be compared with the wealth of detailed information contained in Meanjin's archives. Throughout his long and quixotic life Christesen was a prodigious correspondent. Few of those letters might now be considered epistolog-ical masterpieces—there was scarcely any leisure time in such an active and varied career to indulge that long-outmoded art form—but the enormous day-to-day correspondence files do contain detailed (and often explosive) information relating to contemporaries and to literary, social, and political events.

Christesen grew to maturity during that period between the industrial age and the post-industrial or technetronic age, in which society was being shaped culturally, psychologically, politically and economically by the massive and murderous impact of competing technologies. In his later years he witnessed an era of increasing curtailment of democracy and liberty, of crude political technique ranging from blatant public deceptions to corporal and emotional savageries, and betrayal of the true traditions of civility so gross that they constituted utter abnegation of humanity. But somehow he managed to survive the second and most profound social revolution, during which the crucial dilemmas of the age became manifest most starkly.

In essence he was a life-long social critic whose concerns were to identify, to analyse, and in his own quiet way to help overcome obstacles barring the attainment of a better, more humane, and more rational social order. His was at least an intellectual attitude, a philosophical position the fundamental principle of which was continuous, systematic, and comprehensive confrontation of reality with reason. He never ceased warning his contemporaries that basic social and political reform could not be achieved unless there existed an alert and informed public consciousness of the issues involved. He never ceased opposing manifestations of wilful ignorance and apathy within

his community—ignorance of the causes of national and international conflict, ignorance of the need for social justice and the preservation of civil liberties, ignorance of the world beyond the island frontiers: he was never an islander, an insular man. And he never ceased opposing the separation and loneliness of people and groups, sterile materialism, the cruelty of mindless corporations.

It was his misfortune to have lived, during the middle years, under a government which not only condoned but encouraged blindly selfish men, which ignored the common welfare in the interests of autocratic power and material avarice. In a sense his Australia died after the fall of the Chifley government. During the ensuing era of the Big Grab, followed by the era of the Corporate State, he took an uncharacteristic Hobbesian view of life and became increasingly cynical about political motives. The massive onslaught of mediocrity masquerading as organisation and centralised authority dismayed him. But oddly enough, through the long years of travail he managed to retain an affirmative attitude to life when life-denying tendencies permeated the entire community following the appalling consequences of the Indochina war. During those bowel-twisting years he held fast to his motto: "Non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari, sed intellegere" (not to laugh, not to weep, and not to curse, but to understand).*

However, the utopianism of his youth, his vision of the Good Society, was at last to burst into flame again upon the advent of the Third Republic, when options for humanity again became possible.

To have founded a literary magazine in such a primitive pastoral-mercantile society was odd enough. To have developed it into a journal of international standing in the face of rampant deep-rooted anti-intellectualism was indeed an extraordinary act of eccentricity. But to have remained his "own man" throughout those grim years was even more quixotic. At a time when most individuals were increasingly subjected to regimentation and conformity and loss of self-respect, he preserved a fierce independence of body and mind and spirit. The very nature of his various posts of course gave him an unusual degree of autonomy, whether he was working on newspapers, for government, as a University Extension lecturer, or in publishing and editing, but to have remained in effect his own man throughout his entire working life was an astonishing personal achievement which few of his contemporaries fully recognised. However, as he was the first to admit, this independence could not have been maintained without the

* He originally adopted the motto following his repeated failures to persuade the university to pay for Meanjin's secretarial services.—Editor.

unfailing support of his wife Nina Mihailovna, who was herself a life-long Tolstoyan disciple.

Christesen had many personal eccentricities, but one in particular: he believed, even during his arthritic old age,* that he was a stylish cricketer. This strange delusion was a sore trial to his friends, particularly during the annual Overland-Meanjin confrontation on the Mornington Peninsula. He insisted on captaining the Meanjin 'eleven' year after year against all advice to the contrary: and the fact that his team consistently retained the engraved emu-egg trophy was due less to his skill on the field than to the ineptitude of the rival team.

In his personal relationships Clement Christesen evinced a kindly and generous nature, with none of the crankiness which often characterised his editorial activities. He was inclined to remain aloof, detached, and did not have a markedly wide circle of intimate friends, but all who experienced the hospitality of his Eltham home were pleasantly surprised by the relaxed gaiety of a gracious and considerate host. Being part-Danish, part-Irish,† and part-English, he lived in relationships, the more human the better. Although often oversensitive and quick to take offence, he as quickly forgave his enemies. His purity of heart and almost childlike innocence were among his most endearing qualities. Most unforgettable was a certain kind of moral quality, a quality of self-forgetfulness, whether in private life, in public affairs, or in the pursuit of truth. He had a Tolstoyan largeness of heart and a profound concern for the travail of humanity. Argumentative, stubborn, even

* In his advanced years Christesen's body was peppered with dozens of tiny lentil-like sensors which monitored transplants of testes, aorta, spleen, pancreas, kidneys, anus and pituitary gland. On one notable occasion, while he was delivering the S. Murray-Smith memorial oration, the sensors went haywire and the resonant feedback caused a medley of beeps which sounded like an early Duke Ellington recording.—Editor.

† It has been argued that all his adult life Christesen continued fighting the battles of 1798. Not so much in religious terms, nor even political, but rather philosophical. An ancestor was one of Robert Emmett's three captains. With other Wicklow martyrs he was buried in the Waverley cemetery, Sydney.—Editor.

markedly pig-headed on occasions, but never wrong-headed, he always remained unshaken in the conviction of his own rectitude. A talented painter, he discerned more colours in the earth than most artists do in the sky, but most of all in people.

He was totally lacking in any belief in the myths of orthodox religions. His early education was Roman Catholic, but his mental agility and a tendency to ask awkward questions caused endless conflict and he broke with the faith at the age of eleven years. Later he was to reside in a university college and the presence there of a score of Methodist theologians caused him to become an "unimpassioned agnostic". In the 1960s he was appointed a director of the Rationalist Association of Australia. But in that ground of being which underlies all intellectual structures, he also sought the key to creation in this image or that. A true Brahmin, he was aware of life as a mysterium tremendum, and his fellows as unbounded beings rather than finite creatures. Although he scarcely knew the difference between a chlorinated hydrocarbon and a suntan lotion, Christesen retained an immense respect for the scientific intellect. And yet, to quote Jorge Luis Borges, "He knew that at the hour of his death he would scarcely have finished classifying even all the memories of his childhood".

Clement Byrne Christesen was cremated at Springvale together with a copy of the Little Red Book, a complete set of Meanjin Quarterly bound in grained calfskin, a replica of the first garbage container, and a silver-mounted emu-egg, to the accompaniment of the cavatina from Beethoven's B flat quartet, op. 130, played by Peking's Tien An-man Philharmonic Orchestra. His former secretaries formed a guard of honour, and the proceedings were beamed via Telstar to Cosmograd. The Executive declared a day of flowers throughout Southern Commune. On the Lilydale marble plinth were inscribed his immortal words: "I came just in time—I marked the way for others to follow".*

* We believe the correct quotation (from Paul Cezanne) reads: "I came too soon, but I mark the way and others will follow."—Editor.

JOHN PHILIP **physics and biology**

I am going to try to say something about the general nature of the relations between physics and biology. This is, of course, rather foolhardy. As I discovered not so long ago, in circumstances which were fundamentally comic, our scientific establishment believes that scientists shouldn't fuss about the philosophy of their science; and that there is something rather suspect about those who do. On this view the scientist is like Hilaire Belloc's water beetle:

The water beetle here shall teach
A sermon far beyond your reach:
He flabbergasts the Human Race
By gliding on the water's face
With ease, celerity and grace;
But if he ever stopped to think
Of how he did it he would sink.

Physicists love to annoy chemists by saying, "Of course, chemistry is just a branch of physics." And some physicists go further and bait biologists as well: "Of course biology is just a branch of physics." Some of them are really quite serious about this, and some biologists believe it too. On the other hand, the extreme opponents of this view, the vitalists and the finalists, flatly deny that biology is ultimately reducible to physics.

The issues involved are difficult and subtle. I can't offer you a neat and tidy answer which purports to settle the matter: but it does seem useful to draw attention to certain general aspects of physics, on the one hand, and of biology, on the other, which shed some light on how the two broad sectors of science relate to each other.

The great task of science reduces ultimately to the search for order: to discern the regularities in the bewildering universe around us—firstly, so that we may gain understanding of it and of our place in it, and secondly, so that we may use this understanding to manage both our world and ourselves more wisely.

It is hardly surprising, then, that the two great generalisations of science are concerned with order. In physics the second law of thermodynamics deals with physical order; and in biology the principle of evolution by natural selection is intimately bound up with the notion of biological order.

The first of these, the second law of thermodynamics, asserts that free energy, or energy capable of doing work, is constantly decreasing. Every natural physical change entails the totally irre-

trievable loss of a definite amount of free energy. The bets are never called off in Nature. The game of the physical world is for keeps. Boltzmann and Willard Gibbs, the founders of statistical mechanics, saw that whether energy is "free" or not depends on the way the energy, and the matter in which it resides, are organised: and that the Second Law is essentially a statement about order: namely, that the order of the universe is always decreasing.

Imagine a well-run library of 100,000 books, all catalogued and shelved according to the Universal Decimal System. Let's suppose it's a really busy library. Readers take down 10,000 books a day from the shelves and the attendants put them back at the same rate.

But now let's suppose the library workers suddenly get tired of returning books to their right places and just shove them on the shelves at random. Imagine the growth of confusion in the library over the first month of the new regime of random return of books to the shelves. That is quite like the breakdown of order in a closed physical system left to itself. Everything smears, gets lost, gets muddled. The lump of sugar dissolves in the cup of tea; the tea loses its heat to its cooler surroundings; the marble statue weathers away.

Biology is usually considered to be in a more primitive state than is physics; so it is rather curious that the Second Law and the theory of evolution emerged at about the same time. Clausius made the definitive announcement of the Second Law in 1865: Darwin's "Origin of Species" had appeared in 1859.

Natural selection is the process whereby organisms automatically evolve into ever more highly ordered forms of ever-increasing complexity. Let's consider briefly how evolution by natural selection works. All that is needed is that an organism should be able to duplicate itself and to multiply its numbers, and that the process of duplication should involve some variation. The possibility of variation is an essential ingredient: it arises primarily through mutations (or "copying errors", in the homely phrase of the molecular biologists), but is helped along by sexual reproduction.

As the population increases, the time must come when the environment can no longer support such a large population. Then many organisms will be

eliminated and only the survivors, the "fittest" variants, will produce descendents. The tale of the talents is indeed the parable of evolution through selection: "unto every one that hath shall be given . . . but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath". The organism with the talent for coping with the environment automatically survives and has descendents; the one without this talent automatically disappears.

In the long era since life first began on earth, new forms have succeeded new forms, each more highly organised than the last. As we go up the evolutionary scale from virus to man the increase in organisation is manifest in many ways; the organism develops more parts and envelopes and these grow more complex in their configurations; the functions of the parts become better coordinated; the organism becomes better able to exploit its environment.

We see that, on the one hand, order tends to decrease continuously in physical systems; and, on the other, living organisms tend to preserve order, to multiply order, and to construct ever more complex forms of order.

Can we resolve the seeming contradiction between these two great and well-established truths? Many aspects of the puzzle are cleared up when it is recognised that the organism is an open dynamic system which, quite literally, feeds on the free energy and the order of its environment. All life on earth depends ultimately on the sun for its supply of free energy and order. There is no doubt that the system organism-plus-environment satisfies the Second Law and that, indeed, the organism is as obedient to the laws of physics as is non-living matter.

Granting all this, some difficulties remain, however. It seems to me that these arise because there are some subtle differences between what the word "order" means to physicists and what the same word means to biologists. Thermodynamics and statistical mechanics have developed the notion of physical order at the molecular and sub-molecular level. The technical name for the measure of this physical order is "negative entropy" or "negentropy" for short. It is a plain fact that negentropy, taken by itself, is not a sensitive index of biological order. The negentropy of Marie Antoinette decreased only imperceptibly when the guillotine fell; she would have lost a great deal more negentropy by simply missing lunch.

Biological order is manifest and effective on a whole hierarchy of scales. We are just beginning to recognise the problems of specifying order meaningfully on all scales—and the even deeper problems of understanding the relations between order on different scales.

Thirty years ago in Melbourne, recalcitrant freshmen were sometimes called on to measure Collins Street with a banana. In some ways present-day approaches to biology through physics have reached the level of measuring Collins Street with a banana. The development of approaches at other relevant levels and on other relevant scales are tasks which, for the most part, lie ahead of us; but these approaches will not contradict what physics tells us and will depend on the same spirit of sceptical enquiry which has brought physics to its present stage. Whether these developments will be called "biology" or simply "more difficult physics" is perhaps no more than a matter of taste.

You might think, from what I have just been saying, that science is the product of cold rationality. Indeed, it is very easy for science to give this impression. For example, Judith Wright not long ago remarked that "the world that science gives us [is] waiting to be realised by the imagination, as well as by our rational faculties; waiting to be made part of art as well as science". People seem automatically to make the connections: science—reason; art—imagination. But you must not suppose for one moment that science stems from reason alone. The facts are very much to the contrary.

The achievements of science have come about, and continue to come about, only through the most powerful exercise of human imagination. It is true that science does insist that the fruits of imagination survive the tests of reason and observation. But, alas, how many non-scientific imaginative constructs lie in ruins today simply because they do not survive these tests!

But I join wholeheartedly in Judith Wright's lament that, whereas the arts seem generally unable to assimilate the deep and beautiful insights science has to offer, "the merchants of death" (in her phrase) eagerly grab from science whatever technological goodies serve their ugly purposes.

Finally, here is some verse from an obscure Australian poet of the 1940's which uses, though rather too glibly, one of the ideas we have just considered:

Memory simplifies.

The dream can mitigate
miseries of separation,

though usage dissipate
splendours of conjugation.

Loving and not loving,
intent on living,
self-possessed but not possessed,
self-indulged with giving,

we discrete particles
inexorably diffuse apart:
thermodynamic principles
govern the matter of the heart.

HUMPHREY McQUEEN

reply to russel ward

In commenting on Russel Ward's review of "A New Britannia", it will be necessary to make a lengthy and often tedious reply since Ward made a number of minor points and built them into a conclusion about the worth of my book. By refuting these one by one I want to demonstrate the value of his review and ask why he ignored the major issue?

Ward says I have an argument with myself "occasioned by [my] misunderstanding or misinterpreting" of the work "of most previous Australian historians". Of all the historians I mention in "A New Britannia", Ward is the one who best fits the composite picture painted on p. 15. But it has indeed been difficult to know what Ward thinks. Since the publication of "The Australian Legend" we have been confronted with a Dutch weather clock: when someone says that Australia was not like the picture in Ward's book out pops a little man who tells, "That's right, it's all a legend"; but when somebody praises Ward for capturing the essence of Australia's past out pops a little man who says, "Thanks mate". But those who have read A. A. Phillips' preface to "The Australian Tradition" know that Ward had chosen this title for his book but had to change it when Phillips' book appeared. Undoubtedly it would have been more convenient if Ward could have had a rotating cover and title as well.

Ward offers an example of all this when he claims that I have invented a strawman on the issue of the convicts. But it is simply a fact that on p. 30 of "The Australian Legend" Ward claimed that "all we know about the convicts shows that egalitarian class solidarity was the one human trait which usually remained to all but the most brutalised". When I first challenged this in Labour History, Number 15, Ward replied in the next issue that he had commenced the paragraph by using "group or class . . . to make it clear that . . . the convicts . . . were . . . not a class in any

Marxist sense". But if this was his intention why did he use the words "egalitarian" and "solidarity" to describe the class? As always, he tried for two bob each way. I agree, though, that it is difficult to hit a moving target—especially one that slips and slides.

Further, Ward says I am wrong to say that any historian "ever said, wrote, thought or I dare guess dreamed, that Australia was a socialist society . . ." But I never said they did, as is apparent from the sentence which Ward quoted immediately prior to this: ". . . if socialists are ever to realise that Australia is a capitalist society and is not possessed by some natural socialist ethos (mateship) . . ." My point is about the ethos of the society (i.e. hegemony) and not, as Ward pretends, about the society as a whole.

Ward claims that I emphasise ways in which Australia did not differ from its British prototype. This is untrue. The book is concerned to show these differences. The nationalism differs because of Australia's geographic position in the empire; the radicalism differs because of Australia's favourable economic position in the empire. The former produced new fears while the latter helped fulfil old expectations. But, unlike Ward, I do not forget that Australia was a willing part of the whole Anglo-Saxon empire.

I am pleased to agree with Ward that the purpose of history is political and that the Viet Cong and the Chinese have been successful by becoming the guardians of their "nations' true interests and honour". But to repeat this for Australia is to bypass—not disprove—one of my central arguments: Australia was not an exploited colony in the sense that Vietnam is; rather it was (and largely is) an outpost of empire more like a Roman colony. If this is so, is it politically advantageous to appeal to nationalism in our context? Is it counter-productive? This opens up an important question of the nature and role of nationalism for

NIUGINI SONGS

I am hungry.
I will cook
My banana.
It's cooked.
I peel it,
And I eat it.
And I am full up.

CHRISTINE VARVATANG
Kuanua language
Ngunguna village
East New Britain

Every night we slept together
Only one pillow under our heads
Your hand to my hand
My hand to your hand
No one will see us and make us marry
Gee! Gee! my girl friend, let's go.

F. KURUHAN KASAU
Worei language
Londru village
Manus District

For a very long time,
I have left my relatives.
I want to see their faces,
Oh mother, what shall I do?

The moon is above Pariva beach
and it is shining brightly.
The brightness of the light has made
the sea calm.
Oh mother, what shall I do?

RONNY K. IVARA
Toaripi language
Hoveave village
Malalaua sub-district
Gulf District

imperialist countries. It is a problem with which Enoch Powell is grappling. At this stage I can only suggest interested readers consult three articles by Tom Nairn in *New Left Review*, Numbers 49, 50 and 51. Hopefully they might make Ward more discriminating in the nature of his anti-imperialist propaganda.

Yet even if we accepted Ward's politics on this issue his history is unlikely: did the young Wentworth and Parkes "represent the most democratic and 'progressive' forces of their time and place"? There were surely more democratic and progressive men in New South Wales between 1810 and 1860?

On the question of Lawson's fascism, Ward agrees that Lawson had all the opinions I attribute to him, but says that because fascism did not exist formally until 1922, and because everybody else held these views, the charge against Lawson is ridiculous. Ward's first point is scholastic formalism: was Mussolini not a fascist until 1922? The second point is just untrue as not everyone held these views. Some had a class view of their society and of the world. And even if everyone did hold these views that would simply prove that everyone was fascist, not that Lawson wasn't.

Ward's defence of Lawson's militarism is also wrong. Lawson saw war as a good thing in itself, irrespective of the cause; but when he advocated a cause it was race supremacy. Talk of Lawson's faith "in the decency and potential of the common man" is no less misleading since this faith depended upon a strong ruler to uplift the common man and a war to cleanse him of the goulsh strife of peace.

We now enter into the realm of what Ward calls factual errors. Of the ten he offers only one is a factual error—the date of the sinking of the Russian Fleet. The date for the second Intercolonial Trade Union Congress was a typographical error as he could have seen by checking the index. Two others are matters of interpretation—the role of the Salvation Army in ideologically preparing the working classes for militarism, and the importance of temperance in the early labour movement—and I still hold to my original views and will do so until somebody offers evidence rather than disbelief.

Three other errors depend on Ward's strained or careless reading of the text:

1. It was 2,000 miles shorter to Europe through the Torres Strait in 1883 from Queensland which were the "when" and the "where" of the context.

2. Some German possessions in the Pacific were not seized by Australia in 1914 (as Ward admits) which was all I wanted or needed to show to make my point.

3. There is no doubt that the £30,000 from Australia saved the London Dock Strike and at no point do I deny this. What Engels and I denied was that this money came solely from unions and for internationalist reasons; it is not the size but the source and the inspiration of the donation that is in doubt.

My alleged contradiction on the militancy of the Queensland shearers is no such thing since the quotation on pp. 210-211 about Spence and his organising officials appears in a footnote designed to show a contradiction in Spence's account and specifically to cast doubt on his claim that "Unionism came to the bushman as a religion". I never denied the militancy of the Queensland bushworkers. I denied the militancy of the Australian Labour Federation, and I suggested that the Queensland Shearers' Union's militancy had its sources in small-holders' frustrations rather than in the well-springs of what Ward called "the bush proletariat".

I accept his claim that "about 2 per cent." is too few for the number of political (in any sense) convicts; the second printing has been altered to read "fewer than 3 per cent." His point about payment of members in Victoria is petty beyond belief.

Ward adopts a particularly vile method of avoiding my criticism of his misuse of John Manifold's poem "The Tomb of Lt. John Learmonth". In "The Australian Legend" Ward uses this poem as evidence that the mateship ethos has penetrated to "the most conservative and 'aristocratic' social group in Australia". I pointed out that Ward was naughty in neglecting to tell his readers that the author was a communist and so not a typical conservative. Ward's response is that to have

called Manifold a communist in 1958 would have been McCarthyist. Two things need to be said of this: one, Manifold did not conceal his membership of the CPA; two, even if we accept Ward's point about McCarthyism this does not absolve Ward from the failure to indicate the exceptional position that Manifold occupied. Ward could have been less specific than mentioning Manifold's communism, but by keeping absolutely silent about Manifold's leftist views Ward deliberately misled his readers. Once it is clear that Manifold was even as left as Calwell, Ward could not have used the poem to clinch the "Apotheosis of the Nomad Tribe". Having deceived his readers in 1958 he now compounds his misdeed by clothing it in righteous indignation and a little underhand insinuation about police pimps.

Yet it is not only a matter of what Ward attempted that is significant. There is a vital omission. Having spent pages on typographical, grammatical and spelling errors, on convoluted criticisms based on a misreading of the text, and on other insignificant points, Ward says nothing of my challenge to his view of the Australian Frontier and of its effects on the collectivist tradition. There is none of his high-minded disbelief that I could be so silly; none of his low insinuations and shoddy misreadings; even his middlebrow and largely fallacious pedantry fails him. There is nothing. The longest chapter in the book, and the most significant for its criticism of "The Australian Legend", is avoided. Perhaps this helps explain why he found "A New Britannia" difficult to follow?

The great virtue of Ward's "The Australian Legend" is the synthetic view of Australian society that it offers. Ward finds "A New Britannia" "loosely, not to say, fecklessly, constructed". That Ward cannot perceive my synthesis about the nature of the Labor Party speaks volumes for the sterility of the marxism of his generation. As for his attempt to "disprove" the chapter on the pianists, the less said the better. How could Swift have explained "A Modest Proposal" to Titus Oates?

JOHN JAMENAN

my mother was a brave woman

I was born at the end of 1943, at Nimbihu Village, East Sepik District. I am currently a student at the University of Papua and New Guinea. This article is based on what my father, Waibagola, and my mother, Sodua, told me.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki had been bombed, the battle of the Owen Stanleys had been won by the Diggers, and the allied troops were advancing east from Djajapura (then Hollandia), but the Japanese between there and Wewak did not know what happened in the outside world. One thing they were sure of was that the allies were advancing on them. Their means of communication was cut off and their food supply routes were closed. And so their monstrosity and cannibalism increased.

At first my father was assisting the Japanese in their struggle against the allied troops because he did not know the reason for the struggle. He was a fine machine-gunner and could use a hand-grenade efficiently. As far as the Japanese in my village, Nimbihu, were concerned, he was a man they could not afford to lose. He had a lot of influence in the village as well as in some surrounding villages. In the pre-war days, and also during the war, he was a Tultul, an office he still held until it was displaced by the council system established in the late 1950s.

Because the Japanese were short of food, they turned to stealing. They robbed the villagers' gardens, killed their pigs and forced the people to work for them.

My father could not tolerate the sort of treatment he and his people were receiving from the Japanese tyrants. He began to hate them and work for their overthrow. He decided to leave for Dagua on the coast, which was about ninety miles from my village. My father left the village with a few other men without giving notice to the Japanese living there. His absence caused some bitter worry in the minds of the Japanese. They tried to trace his whereabouts. They sent messages to other Japanese in the neighboring villages, urging them to find out if anyone had seen my father. Villagers in a number of villages were lined up in front of a firing squad and questioned on his whereabouts.

In my own village, the villagers were marched up and down the village and then paraded before an all-Japanese firing squad and interrogated about my father. It was at this time that one of the villagers, out of his own fear, and his fear for the security of the rest of the village people, admitted seeing my father leave the village under cover of darkness. The villager admitted to the Japanese that my father was going to lead the allies back to the area to kick them out.

What about my mother and me? My father had told my mother that he would leave for Dagua to bring the Americans and Australians back to our area to liberate all villages from the Japanese beasts. He revealed this to her a few weeks before he was due to leave. She did not like the idea of his leaving us behind in grave danger. She knew that once the Japanese found out that my father was going to the allied troops they would kill us.

After a week of constant persuasion, my mother gave in—my father could leave home. She realised the constant danger we would both go through in his absence, but she also thought of our relatives, and the whole village, the neighboring villages and the whole area still occupied by the Japanese. She realised that it was a good thing that my father went and she was prepared to take the risk, even, if necessary, of death—but, at all costs, I must be spared. I must live should my father and she face death. She was working out ways she could pass me into the hands of another relative who could care for me till I grew up to be big enough to inherit my father's property.

The agreement between my father and mother having been reached, the day came when he and the few others under him were to leave. They were to leave at midnight under cover of darkness when all the Japanese in the village would be asleep and only a few of their sentries would be around.

The night of my father's and his group's departure came. We were in the same house that night. We stayed up till 11 p.m. My mother decided we should not see him go, as this would be too much for her. She decided we had better retire to bed in another house. She was very young then. I was a tiny baby, not yet able to speak or to recognise my father as my father. I was not able to understand the cause my father was to fight for, the burden my mother was to bear. Like any young mother, my mother did not like to see my father leave us in danger while I was still in her arms. But although the future for both of us was uncertain without him, she was prepared to bear the strain in his absence and this she did, knowing that we both would be left alone in the world.

My mother and I were fast asleep in another house when midnight came. It was at this time that my father and his group left for the coast, in a northerly direction. It would take them about four days to get there. He hoped that we would still be all right when he returned.

My mother wanted to avoid capture and interrogation by the Japanese. She did not want to betray my father, even in front of a firing squad. I was still asleep, when she woke up very early in the morning and cooked some food for herself. She had to eat in order that I could be nourished. She packed what she could take with her and, when all was ready, came for me. She picked me up from the bed in her arms and placed me in a string bag where I still lay asleep.

We departed for our hiding place and stayed there till towards evening. This was the time when my mother thought that the Japanese, who were wandering around in the bush or stealing from the people's gardens, would be arriving back at the village.

Darkness was coming. We went to a house my father had built in the bush and took some yams and taroes and then returned home. However, the Japanese had been looking for us and for my father all day, and had failed to find us. All the villagers were harshly treated to make them reveal where my father and mother and I were.

We returned to our house, where we were to stay for the night and then make off for the bush again in the early hours of the morning. We would not stay in the bush because it would be too lonely for us. When we got back to the village we could not visit our relatives because we might be found and arrested. My mother realised that we could not avoid capture for long. However, rather than staying in the bush, she decided that we should take the risk. That was why we returned home.

My mother prepared a hasty meal for herself. Although it was quite dark, I did not go to sleep, and as though an instinct was warning me of danger, I did not cry.

We went to bed early but my mother did not sleep. (I was fast asleep, of course.) She was thinking and planning for the next day. She was hoping that we would be able to slip out of the village at the first call of the "kahluh" (morning bird), but little did she realise that the Japanese already knew that we were home. Anyway, she eventually went to sleep.

The morning came, but we were not woken up by the "kahluh" but by human voices and a loud knock at the door of our house. My mother was alarmed, but it was too late to escape. She enquired what those outside the house wanted. She got dressed very quickly, and then dressed me too and put me back on the bed while she quickly packed some of our belongings. She then picked me up into her arms and made for the door.

When she opened the door, she saw the Japanese all dressed in their uniforms, carrying rifles and bayonets. She asked them why they came for us, pretending to look absolutely innocent of what my father was doing. A reply came from the senior officer. "We are here to arrest you, because your husband has left the village for the coast in order to bring the Australians and Americans here to kill us." We were ordered to walk to another village where we were to be court-martialled. We were in the middle of the soldiers. Some marched in front and others behind us. We were led away. My mother requested that a relative of ours should accompany us. At first the Japanese refused, but later they allowed a relative to come along with us.

In the meantime, I was still asleep in my mother's arms. When I woke up it was already broad daylight. As we were walking along I turned and saw the Japanese. I became very frightened and tucked my head into my mother's arms.

The village we were heading for was ten miles away. We were to cross a river and then climb a few hills in order to come to it. When we eventually got there, the Japanese immediately started the court case, where we were to face the charges as my father's scape-goats. My mother was called upon to give evidence against my father. She said that she did not know where he had gone and what he was to do. Witnesses were called upon to admit that he had left for the coast to lead the allies back to kick out the Japanese. We were found guilty of my father's activity, and were told that one of two things must happen. Either she had to get our relatives

to kill three big pigs and obtain three "rings" of native shell money to give to the Japanese, or we would be executed.

Our relatives in the village were contacted within a very short time. We were kept under strict guard. But things turned out in our favour. Three pigs were killed and three "rings" were collected and presented to the Japanese. They were pleased, and we were released.

We returned to our village. The news about my father's leading the allies to liberate us had reached the village, but it was never disclosed to the Japanese. The Japanese cruelty increased

and the situation in the village became worse. The people were not safe any more.

A private meeting was held and it was decided that all the people would have to leave the village for another village where my father had brought the Americans and Australians. By night we deserted our village. The next day, we reached security.

My father had liberated us, and we were happy. But my mother had played the greatest part in the liberation of all the people of my village and also the people of the neighboring villages. She was a brave woman . . .

The Paradise One

(This is an old traditional love song and it's usually sung by a married woman if her husband has left her and their children for quite a long period.)

Oh where is my dear husband, the paradise one?
Oh where is my dear husband, the true golden one?
Have you forgotten me? My dear darling I need you
and I long to see you once more as my heart is
burning with flame and sorrow will never die unless you come back.
Oh don't forget me and your dear children as our hearts are troubled
for you. I have never stopped dreaming about you. Oh dear,
when will you be back?
Darling there is no light in the house to give me warmth and comfort.
Oh dear it is now dark and barren.
Oh husband I will never stop crying until you come back.
What would happen if your dear children were in trouble? Do you expect
me a woman to protect them? Wasn't I married? Have I got a husband
of mine? Has he died?
Dear darling, when are you coming back? Do you ever think of us,
dear husband?

GERRY K. POIUI
Yili language
Yili village
West Sepik District

There's a Merry Place

There is a sweet, merry place,
The sands of Siki.
It is so warming,
When the skies are blue.
Shadows are falling, over the sea.
Oh! my dear mummy, it's a good dwelling place.

MIKI YAMALI TARABI
Kate language
Dzivewaneng village
Finschhafen
Morobe District

A Chimbu Love Song

I know what you've said
Understand what you say;
I know what you've said
Let's forget it all now;
Okay.

Did you mind what I said
Then that's all right
I know how you feel.
Do you understand this?
Then both of us do.
Okay.

SIMON KUAKAMBU
Kuman language
Wandi village
Chimbu District

Love Song

Darling you are a Bird of Paradise
You are a special Bird of Paradise
Take all your possessions and come with me
Today you and I will make a home for ourselves
I am handsome
Today you will laugh and play in my house
People from north and south, east and west
will hear you and say
He is the man of the day among us in Magamo
for he won the heart of the lady

TONY PAUL DIMI
Burui language
Burui village
East Sepik District

Beautiful Girl

You beauti—beautiful girl
You beauti—beautiful girl
When I do something secretly
You don't tell anyone else.

BENJAMIN KARU
Orokaiva language
Kepara village
Popondetta
Northern District

As I sat on the bank of the River

As I sat on the bank of the river
In the moonlight,
It was very calm in the middle of the river.
Mother what shall I do?

All my relatives are
Not very good to me.
It's a long time now, and
I am a poor fellow.

My mother, my beloved mother.
This time of my life
Is very hard, and now I am
Living in a poor place.

KATI PENI
Orokolo language
Auma village
Gulf District

Night Song

Two moonlit nights
They have disappeared
While I sat on the mountain
top and I heard
The birds of the air
singing their song
Tamino ra ulaulale

Oilele iole, oilele iole
Tamino ra ulaulale

DORISH TUTI
Kuanua language
Ngatur village
Rabaul

Children's Clapping Song

My daddy hit me,
But my mummy doesn't know.
My mummy hit me,
But my uncle doesn't know.
My uncle hit me,
But my aunty doesn't know.
So granny took me,
Laid me down near the tree,
As if I was a little bird.

DAIRI KONIO
Motu language
Lealea village
Central District

CHRIS MARJEN **The miraculous parrot**

Once upon a time there lived an old widow who for many years had lost her only son. Since the death of her son, the widow remained an unhappy and lonely woman. When the tide was low and the young men of the village went fishing, the old widow used to cry, thinking of the old days when her son was amongst them, coming home in the evening with fish for their meal. After his death, she had to labor from sunrise to sunset to obtain her food.

One afternoon as she was returning from her garden, she noticed she was followed by a young parrot. She did not take any notice at first, but as the bird kept on following her, she recalled her people's belief that parrots are messengers of good news. As the mirror-image of her son was still very much in her mind, she thought the little bird might be a sign of his possible return. She caught the bird and brought it home with her putting it in a specially made bamboo cage which she carried with her wherever she went.

She came to love the parrot as much as she had loved her deceased son, and the little bird formed one of the very few possessions she had, sharing food from the same container. She taught the parrot how to talk and at night, if anybody approached their house, the little loyal parrot would warn the widow. The bird was a valuable possession, and had established itself in a position of more than just a bird.

One lonely and quiet night, the bird again performed its duty by warning the old widow of approaching danger. The bird warned of someone wanting to kill the two lonely occupants of the house, but the old widow did not pay any attention, telling the bird to keep quiet so that she could go to sleep after a very tiresome day. The faithful parrot continued to make a noise but the widow quietened the bird and went to sleep.

The next morning when she woke up she found to her surprise that the dear little parrot had died. She wept in sorrow for the loss of what she had now come to regard as the substitute of her beloved son. She felt this was the severest blow in her life; she had lost her only son and now she had lost her parrot.

Carefully, she wrapped the dead parrot with the only cloth she had left and buried it in her backyard, just a few feet away from her son's grave. She would clean the grave two or three times a day.

One day as the Wambarek (the west wind) blew, she again visited the graves. While cleaning, she saw a small plant growing out of the parrot's grave. She took great care of the plant and it grew very rapidly into a tree.

Towards the end of the season she noticed the young tree bearing fruits, but they were most unusual fruits—consisting of clothes, rifles and many new types of equipment she had never seen before. She was at first scared, but as she was standing at her son's grave she heard a voice, saying: "Beloved mother, this wealth is all yours; I left you in loneliness and heartache, but I returned in the shape of a parrot. But you were too old to realise that. I have died and you have buried me twice."

The news of the tree spread quickly to other villagers, who came to ask for the unusual fruits, but the old widow refused to give them any. One night, while she was fast asleep, some men from the village came and cut the tree down. The noise of the falling tree woke her up and when she went out to check she saw that all the unusual fruits had disappeared.

Her sorrow was now unbearable for she had lost her son, her parrot and now her unusual tree. She could neither eat nor drink and as she was weeping she heard a voice saying: "Beloved mother, I have taken all the wealth with me. I am now going to the west. From now on you and your fellow-villagers will labor hard from sunrise to sunset with a lot of sweat to obtain your food. I will return to this land but only to your great-grandchildren and I will bring with me all my wealth

to give to them. You will continue to lead a poor and lonely life and you will die in poverty."

The poor old widow wept, but what else could be done? She had lost her son, her loyal parrot and her rich tree. Tension was too great for her, but everything came to an end when on a peaceful moonlight night she took her last breath and died amidst her sorrow. And this is the reason why it is believed that the people from the west (the Europeans) are wealthy while the people in the area from which this story originated, are poor.

Down at the River

Hey you, come and we'll wash
In the river of Warangoi
And we are from two
separate churches,
Catholic and Methodist.

CHRISTINE VARVATANG
Kuanua language
Ngunguna village
East New Britain

A Guitar Song

I will go down to Madang,
I will go down to Madang,
I will go down to Madang,
I will go up to Chest X-ray.

I will go up to Chest X-ray,
I will go up to Chest X-ray,
I will go up to Chest X-ray,
But I am ashamed to take off my blouse.

I am ashamed to take off my blouse,
I am ashamed to take off my blouse,
I am ashamed to take off my blouse,
For your eyes might see my breasts.

MALDIAD KUNZE
Graged language
Madang

Song

On the soft sand of Pariva
When our six string is struck
All people who hear must listen happily
You mustn't be cross
Don't worry and fight
Leave your jealous ways
Listen with happiness

FARAPO OPA
Toaripi language
Iokea village
Gulf District

Our story comes to us from Djaul Island. Djaul Island is the only big island on the west coast of New Ireland, approximately four miles from the mainland, and about 30 miles from Kavieng. The island is inhabited by people of the same type found in Papua and New Guinea—the Melanesians. The island is 16 miles long and four miles wide, and has an area of about 64 square miles. The population is approximately 900, all living in six large villages scattered apart from each other. The villages on the east are Karia, Piliwa and Laci, and on the west coast of the island Pantegom, Sumuna and Leon. Our story of the mysterious tree comes to us from Sumuna village.

A. S. BART The mysterious tree

Not long before mission and Administration influence came to be felt on the island, the Chief of the Sumuna village called a meeting in the meeting place. The meeting place was in a specially fenced area with a large boulder in the middle which served as a seat where the Chief seated himself, and about twenty or more other stone seats, like the Chief's but much lower and smaller, were arranged in a position facing the Chieftain's seat.

The Chieftain stood up in front of his seat and explained the reason for the meeting. This is what he said: "My noble warriors, I have called this meeting for a very special reason. I called you not for war, because the white man and his god will not be pleased and we will all die if we go to war again. But I have called you to find out from you the best tree that we can chop down to make me a good, long and fast canoe. If anyone here in this assembly has seen or knows of a good tree suited for my canoe, I will be pleased if he can lead us to the place."

After some discussion the village elders made a recommendation to the Chief, then one of them, bowing low and making sure that his head was not above the Chieftain's head, told the Chief of their discussions and pointed out where the tree was, and gave a description of it. The tree, the elder said, was a Milky Pine. It was just the tree for making a Chieftain's canoe. The place where the tree was, was about two miles inland. But it could be chopped off and thrown into the river and floated down to the canoe place where the log could be dug out and shaped. He added that the whole village should go to the place where the tree was so that when the tree fell and was chopped into a log it could be pulled with lawyercanes to the

bank of the river, where it could then be pushed into the river and floated down to the canoe place. The Chief was very pleased indeed and suggested that as the whole village was to go, people should prepare plenty of food, betel-nuts, lime and mustard, and bring all the strong stone axes along with them. This was done as the Chief had said.

The time came and all the young men went first to make sure that there was no danger for the Chief, the elders, the women and children, and a few dogs. They arrived at the place and cleared the surroundings. The young men made a temporary shelter for the Chief and the women and children. A few hours later the main force of the people arrived. Platforms were made on both sides of the tree about five feet from the ground. It was not long before the silence of the deep forest echoed with the sound of the stone axes chipping at the huge, tall and majestic Milky Pine tree. They chopped and chopped until it was getting late in the afternoon, and the Chief decided to call it off for the day, and the big crowd went back to the village for food and rest for the night.

The next day they came to the same place and found that the chips that had come off when the tree was chopped had miraculously attached themselves back to the tree again, making the tree as large again as it had been the previous day. However, no mention was made about what had happened for fear of the Chief who was sometimes quick-tempered. The young men started chopping again. They chopped and chopped at the tree until it was noon. The working party was certain that the tree would fall before sundown. They chopped and chopped until the core of the tree was appearing, but as the sun was sinking in the west

the Chief called his young men off for the day with pride, knowing that the next day would be the big day when the tree would certainly be chopped down.

The next morning, the women took plenty of food, betel-nuts, lime and mustard, and went to the site where the tree was, to see the tree fall, for then a feast would be made to reward the fine axemen who were hard at chopping the tree. These young axemen, however, had gone a little earlier. The early arrivals noticed that the portion in which the cut had been made was again whole—the chips had come back and attached themselves on to the chopped area of the tree again. Once more, nothing was said about the happening. The young men continued chopping. They chopped all day. Evening was drawing nearer. The people decided to make torches of dried coconut leaves. They chopped until there was just a little of the middle part of the tree remaining, but the tree would not fall. They chopped until each stone axe could touch each of the other blades.

Just then a strange thing happened. Instead of the tree falling the usual way, it went up, and then folded all its branches like an attacking eagle, then swooped down some fifteen feet from its original site, and ploughed its way through the earth, branches and all, leaving a huge hole in the ground.

This was too much for the Chief and his men; they each took off for his or her life. They ran away without looking where they were going. Stunned mothers forgot their children. Even husbands took off without their wives. Some left their food and betel-nuts; others made their way by running backwards, bumping into trees, but quickly turning and running as fast as they could away from the place.

A few days later a group of young men from the village were fishing. It was a cloudless morning and the sea was calm. They were paddling along and suddenly came across some leaves floating in a column. The leaves were those off a Milky Pine tree. They followed the column of leaves for about half a mile. Not far from the coastline they came to where the leaves were bubbling up from. They looked down and believe it or not, that same tree which had disappeared twelve miles away was standing there in some 25 fathoms of sea water.

The tree is still to be seen to this day. If you are interested, go over, put on your diving glasses and see the tree, which is now turned to stone or coral. And in the place where it disappeared, sea-weed can be seen floating there. You cannot miss either; they are there. Visitors to the island are told about it, but it is hard to believe what has happened. But it has.

Canoe Song

Paddle, paddle, children, Oldio,
Paddle the canoe hard, Oldio,
The sea is breaking, breaking,
You'd better not cry, cry,
Oldio, Oldio, Oldio.

The sun is shining, shining,
Paddle the canoe hard, paddle hard.
It's calm again, again,
You'd better not cry, cry,
Oldio, Oldio, Oldio.

HELEN WAKONA
Selau language
Anake village
Bougainville

ALOYSIUS F. AITA Joy is like the rain

With the coming of Western civilisation, many of our ancient customs and traditions have undergone a gradual decadence. It is inevitable that, with the lapse of time, such ancestral customs which are on the verge of extinction now will be completely forgotten. For the benefit of those who have never witnessed a typical Goilala singing, the following is a bird's eye-view of one such occasion.

The paramount time of festivity in the area is what is known as "kiava". It is not just an affair of a month or two, for it can take as long as a year or two. For this occasion, not only one clan or tribe is involved—it usually involves a couple of clans.

When a clan's number of pigs has seen a rapid increase, the elders of that clan hold a meeting in which they decide to invite another clan or tribe to come and dance. There are two types of invitation: a clan or tribe which had formerly invited another is usually invited, or if the debt had been paid already, on the agreement of everyone a different clan is invited. Having decided on whom to invite, a deputation of ten or twelve men is selected to carry the invitation to the future guests.

For the invitation, the deputation takes such things as dried tobacco leaves, betel-nuts or the leaves of a certain garden plant called "elaivi". Tobacco and betel-nuts have the significance of peace and friendship, while the "elaivi" is a token of solidarity. These tokens mean that if the invitation is accepted, there will arise a new friendship which will last forever.

When the deputation arrives in the guest clan, the invitation is given in each and every village. A pig or two is killed for the visitors to show good-will, friendship and acceptance of the invitation. The deputation spends a couple of days in each village to get acquainted with their future guests. When it has visited all the villages, the

deputation returns home to bring the result of its mission. This is usually after five or six weeks.

On reaching home, another meeting is held and the result of the invitation is publicised. If the answer is affirmative, the number and sites of the gardens for the feast are discussed and taboos are placed on such things as betel-nuts and pandanus. Then preparation for the great event starts in earnest. The men work on clearing the sites for the gardens and fence the area, while the women-folk concentrate on fattening the pigs. If the work-force in the clan is insufficient, what is known as an "akaruvai" or "army" is invited from the neighboring clans to help. These, for their reward, either get a couple of pigs on the completion of the job or, if they so wish, decide to get their reward on the actual day of the feast. Every now and then, a fresh deputation is sent to remind the guests of the invitation.

In the meantime, the guests are not idle. At a public meeting, the dancers in the clan are counted and, in case of deficiency, what is known as "ailavai" or "tails" from the next clan are invited to join. Although not officially invited, the "ailavai" share the same status as those invited in the first place. Each dancer gets the essentials for dancing, namely, drums and decorations. There is a general spirit of co-operation as those who have more lend to those who have little or nothing.

It would be false to say that the primitive New Guinean had no idea of business principles. In the case of a "kiava", this assertion would be false. After the invitation, each guest reckoned on his ability to raise pigs for a counter-invitation. If he was unable, he had to excuse himself. In preparation for the dance, a man had to pay an interest for borrowing things. This could be done by supplying the lender with what he did not have, or by giving a share of his meat after the feast.

Two different types of head-dresses are prepared for the dance; one is for the day time and

another for the night. The frame of the head-dress for day time consists of a fan-like structure. For this, two or three good strong sticks, measuring five or six feet, are cut and dried to get out the juice which makes them heavy. When they are dry, they are tied to a head-piece which consists of canes and which is made to the size of the individual's head. To balance the heavy framework, the canes are extended down to the hips and there they are fastened round the body. The head-dress is then decorated with the feathers of white cockatoos, dogs' teeth, elaborately-worked shells and, most of all, the plumes of the bird of paradise. This last item is the pride of the dancer and each one tries to get as many as he can on his head-dress. There is a general pattern in the making of them and each one tries to make something which will enable him to be exceptional in the crowd. If a woman is a born dancer, too, the husband has the double task of making two for them.

The head-dresses for night dances are similar to the above except that instead of a fan-like structure, they are rectangular, measuring about two feet by ten feet. Slivers of bamboo or reeds are tied to the uprights and the whole structure, without decorations, looks like a jetty sticking out into the sea. While the men are thus occupied, the women get the bark of a certain tree and beat it to get the juice out. When they are dry, the barks are dyed yellow. Then comes the task of making elaborate designs on them. The only colors they use are red from the fruits of certain flower plants, black from burnt wood, and yellow obtained from the root of a certain plant which belongs to the ginger family. The men, when they complete the head-dresses, then dismantle them and pack them for carrying to the site of the dance. And they start making armlets from the fibre of a certain bush vine, which are all for decorations.

Life in the host tribe is one of constant activity. More houses are built and fences around the village are strengthened. Platforms for storing food are built around the village and multi-branched trees, varying from ten feet to forty or fifty feet are cut and brought into the village. At least two big ones are planted at each end of the village while the smaller ones are planted along the sides of the street. Foodstuffs like yams, taros, bananas, betel-nuts, potatoes, sugar-cane, and pandanus are hung on these when the time is ripe—that is, when the guests are on the outskirts of the village.

When everything is ready, a final deputation is sent to accompany the guests back. As they come, the guests put on dances in all the villages they come to along the way. There, pigs are killed for them and food is given to them. When they reach their destination, they occupy the houses built for

them on the outskirts of the village. There they assemble the head-dresses as they await the word from the hosts to dance. The hosts supply them with food. If the food they get is insufficient, they invade the gardens of the hosts and get what they want from there. The waiting sometimes takes as long as a month.

At last the great day dawns and there is great activity in both camps. The guests wash, smear their faces with paints and adorn themselves with all sorts of decorations from leaves and flowers to their giant head-gears. The hosts put on their best attire and wait in the village or line the road and watch the guests enter. The latter enter the village to the rhythm of drum beats like an orchestra playing at random without the conductor. Once inside, they line one end of the village and wait quietly—they are like a calm sea before a storm. The chief of the host clan moves out into the centre of the village and gives an address of welcome. As soon as he finishes, all hands go to the drums and the air is filled with a thunder-like resonance.

Soon male voices begin to roll like thunder over the excited atmosphere. The formidable human tide bursts down the street. Swift and sombre, it flows towards the unconquered end of the village on a regular beat of drums and chants gushing from coppery throats. When the dancers leap aloft in unison, the voices also rise, shrill as fifes, and when, still united like some vast wave thundering down, they drop back to earth, the beats of the drums and chants also sink to a deep reverberation, as if the bodies are really of bronze and ring to their depths with shock.

The moving mass of brown bodies rolls to the very end of the street, breaks and whirls about like an angry tide and sweeps back to where it started. There the figures re-form and return to the charge, still borne along on that magnificent chant. With their head-gear, their ornaments of dogs' teeth, their slivers and clam-shell like ball-pens thrust through their noses, they present an orgy of whirling, clashing colors, in a wild abandon of rhythmic beats and voices.

As the voices of the hosts rise in awe and admiration, the frenzy of whirling arms and legs, and muscled torsos rippling and gleaming in the sun also redoubles, and the voices of the guests rise to a new pitch. All is submerged in this barbaric wave of exaltation, bursting with a savage joy of life.

When the climax is reached and the dancers pause for breath, the hosts close in on them from all sides with flowers, crotons, betel-nuts, tobacco leaves and human skulls or bones, and each host having picked a particular man from among the dancers, he presents him with them. The sig-

nificance of this presentation is that when the time of pig-killing arrives, the host will give his pig to the man whom he had picked. Those prominent villagers who have more than one pig to kill can pick any number of men. When this ceremony is over, the hosts withdraw and the dance continues.

In the meantime, the women and children of the dancers evacuate the camp on the outskirts of the village and move into the village itself. There they occupy the houses built for them. When the dancers are tired, they disperse and join their families. Food is then distributed to the guests, and preparation for the night's dances start. The head-dresses are assembled again. At about seven or eight o'clock, the dancers emerge from their houses. Again the village chief gives an address and the dance is on again. It goes on right through the night until five or six the next morning. At the break of day, the dancers retire to their houses and spend the day sleeping and resting for further dances the next night. These continue every night as long as preparations for pig-killing are in progress. The performances are illuminated by the light of long dried bamboos or reeds. Men, women and children of the host clan or tribe light these and carry them around, following the dancers and going before them.

The pig-killing day arrives! The pigs are bound and lined along the street. At a given signal, the men of the host clan grab wooden clubs and after a joyous and triumphal burst from one end of the village to the other, the killing starts. Pigs are clubbed on the foreheads, as each man tries to kill the biggest pig in the line. There is a general squealing of pigs, mingled with the shouts of the slaughterers, the wails of the women who had worked so laboriously to rear the pigs and the yelps of dogs eager for the blood of the pigs.

As soon as the killing is over, the pigs which need cutting up are butchered and then the distributive part of the festivity takes place. The guests are lined along the side of the street and the host brings his pig and lays it at the feet of the man he had marked earlier. If a man so wishes, he gives half of his pig to his man and divides the other half among his private guests.

In pre-contact times, such big gatherings used to be ripe times for fights. The fights occurred between the visitors and the guests or even among the hosts themselves. Each party used to be well-prepared for such occurrences and when the fight started, equal forces were at hand to combat. It only needed a small matter such as the quarrel over the size of the pig to start the fight. Once it happened, there was general confusion in the village. Each man sought his personal enemy and fought it out with him. Weapons used on these

occasions included axes, clubs, spears, bows and arrows, and anything else available. In the confusion, the women and children of the guests were led away under a strong bodyguard.

When fights like these started, a complicated set of negotiations were needed to restore peace and order in the village. One of the means of restoring peace used to be the killing of a dog by the chief of the host clan. Once the dog was killed, everyone was expected to stop fighting. Anyone behaving in a riotous manner after that was liable to a very heavy fine of a couple of pigs to the chief, or he could be killed on the spot by the chief. As chieftain status was not very outstanding in the area, in the latter case this would lead things from bad to worse, and the feast might end with a couple of people killed.

Another effective means of restoring peace was the splitting of a bunch of betel-nuts by the chief. If the guests were departing for their homes in the confusion, the planting of a bunch of betel-nuts on the road always turned them back to the site of the feast.

When peace and order had been restored and compensations had been made in form of shell-money and dogs' teeth, the feast would continue. The guests now carry their share of the pigs out to the houses on the outskirts of the village. There, they cook them and get ready to depart. When they have cooked the meat, relatives and friends back at home are remembered and portions of meat are marked for them. Meat is also set aside for the people from whom drums and decorations for the dance were borrowed.

Finally, the guests depart for their homes, heavily laden with food and meat. Sometimes the hosts give them a hand in carrying their things part of the way. When they leave, peace and quiet settle on the village. The joys and festivities for which long preparations were made are over in a few days. Joy is like the rain. It comes and goes, leaving just a trace of its coming behind.

These festivities usually end with the elopement of the women and girls of both tribes. Women and girls from the guest tribe find attractive partners in the host tribe and decide to stay behind. Of course the men have their share of the blame too. However, the main problem of these feasts are women and girls of the host tribe. They are so strongly attracted by partners from the guest tribe that they elope with them. In this case, only the married women are sought and brought home. The single girls are persuaded to return home, but if their love is genuine, neither the appeals and persuasions nor the threats from their fathers and brothers can move them. Thus the friendly relationships of married ties are formed and they look forward to similar happy gatherings in the future.

MARY PAULISBO

"Wamorola— the morning star"

This story comes from the Toaripi speaking people of Kerema in the Gulf District of Papua-New Guinea.

A long time ago, there lived a young man called Wamorola. He was handsome beyond description, and all the young maidens fell in love with him whenever he cast his eyes upon them, or smiled at them.

But to the dismay of the young maidens, Wamorola would only visit their villages in the evenings. He would come laughing and singing through the villages, and all the girls would put on their best grass skirts and rub coconut oil on their hair and bodies, and run to sing and dance with Wamorola all night long. When dawn appeared beyond the horizon Wamorola would say "good-night" to his play-mates and wander off through the villages out of the fence and disappear.

Every day and all day long, the maidens would sit and dream and sigh, wishing for their play-mate to appear.

Every evening he would come laughing and singing through the villages, and there would once more be happiness in the hearts of the maidens.

People wondered, trying to guess from whence this young man came.

Fathers and mothers got so worried they asked their daughters, but the daughters could not tell them anything, as they had sworn not to reveal anything about their lover.

The maidens were scared that if they talked about him, they would lose him forever.

One night when the moon was coming over the horizon, the young girls were out much earlier than usual. They saw an unusual and frightening sight.

Because, for generation after generation, Wamorola had been a mystery, now the maidens could only gaze in wonder at the sight before their eyes.

For up above the villages was a mountain range, and above the highest mountain, known as Uari, the maidens could see a form of a man.

This man sparkled like the stars, and he was trying to throw silver lines down to the coconut palms around the villages.

At last, having hooked his lines to the coconut palms, Wamorola came gliding down. He threw light, laughter and song to the hearts of the maidens waiting and longing down below, so that they forgot what they had just seen.

Wamorola continued to play his love games to the thrill of the maidens and to the annoyance of the young men.

People wondered why he never grew old, but his play-mates, the maidens, knew the reason.

And so one evening when the moon was round and yellow, Wamorola cast his last silver lines to the coconut palms below.

Though the maidens waited and waited, they never saw their lover again.

For a flying fox, flying through the night, had bumped into and cut the lines.

Although Wamorola tried hard to come down, he never did succeed.

And there he remains today, much to the dismay of the young maidens.

You can still see him today for he is known to all the people as "Wamorola" or the Morning Star forever looking down and longing for his lovers and play-mates.

PETER MALALA

Tertiary students and politics in Niugini

I am neither an academic nor a gentleman, and therefore this article will neither sound academic nor gentlemanlike. Rather, I am writing as an individual member of the generation which we call students.

One honorable member of the House of Assembly characterised us students as: “. . . ol i toktok olosem ol liklik pikinini karai long susu”. He went on, “Ol i save long karai tasol wok i nogat”. Incidentally, that MHA once declared at a public meeting that students are a danger to the community.

I am not an expert on the subject “Tertiary Students and Politics”, and my knowledge of the subject, and students’ involvement in politics, is limited only to the university campus. Much of my generalisation here will be from the university political scene, with which I have been associated since 1967. So you see I am quite a professional student.

To talk about students and politics, one must first have a clear idea of who the students are and what they do. We must look beyond the “liklik pikinini” description given by our narrow-minded politician, to get an accurate idea of what a student is.

At the 34th Summer School of the Australian Institute of Political Science, in 1968, Mr. E. P. Wolfers described the students as “. . . young sophisticates . . . now in the Territory’s high schools, technical and teachers’ colleges, other specialist training institutions and at the university”. Martin Buluna, a student at U.P.N.G., has described students as a bunch of educated elite who are less thwarted in ambition. They are popularly described as “hot heads” and are commonly thought of as anti-white. They are being accused all the time of their lack of experience and their impatience in demanding responsibility which they are not ready for. What we Papuans and New Guineans do not seem to realise is that

we are politically a source of criticism in the Australian, New Guinean and international political scenes. Economically, we are a burden to Australia. And most importantly, our color is a shame to the White Australia policy. And, therefore, it is natural that she rather wants to get rid of us. Time is therefore not premature for us (at least should not be?) to take over these responsibilities while Australians are still here to be advisors. Unless you know how to use the spoon now, mum may not be around to teach you in the distant future.

To rational and unbiased people, students are seen as very selective in their accusations against the colonialists. They, for example, do not adopt the same attitude to the white academic as they would towards a planter. But quite often a planter is not much different from the missionaries. A planter is revealed as the architect of the system of human exploitation, and religious leaders are exposed as condoners and justifiers of all the evil deeds of the white exploiting force.

Papuan and New Guinean students of today are extremely aware of the cheap labor force this country can provide, and, I must say, they have begun an active search for the roles they could play in repealing this sick society. One can only hope that the elders will not discredit the students for their search for identity and destiny.

The Papua-New Guinea students of today are born into a world where the political, economic and social realities, in which the natives are constant victims, are very different from our boasted liberty and equality. Christian brotherhood, along with “political education”, all used to cover up the gross injustice against the natives. I find it rather hard to comprehend how the very people from whom the Australian Aborigines are still seeking equality and identity, after two centuries, can come up here and preach the gospel of equality and liberty of which their own society has not heard. While

in Australia, I had the honor of attending the meeting of the Aborigines' League, in Melbourne. The chairman got up and, to my surprise, declared: "We the black people of Australia are still being regarded as sub-human beasts of burden". If Mr. Gorton cannot clean up his own backyard, I see no reason why he should come up here to try to preach the gospel of how to clean up our backyard first.

Students of today are constantly watching their people being manipulated according to the whims of the white people. One has only to look at the plantation and urban slums to see this point.

While economic power is virtually in the hands of the foreigners, predominantly Australians, the indigenes control practically nothing. The administering authority is not doing enough, and does not seem interested to do much, to get our people to positively and actively participate in the economy of our country. When they talk about native participation at this stage, it merely means a cheap labor force. Our so-called Five-Year Development Plan contains nothing new or radically different. It seems to me that it is a mere projection of what the government has been doing in the past years and will be doing in the next five years. I still doubt the beneficial result the native people will derive from it. We'll wait and see.

The administration, through its agencies such as the Development Bank, should be prepared to take risks and lend large capital to the indigenous entrepreneurs, and supply them with managerial advice. However, it seems to me that, through some strange equation, the black man cannot be imagined to achieve the efficiency and output of the white man. It is, therefore, painful to the expatriates to hear natives like John Kaputin and A. Maori Kiki talk about possible expropriation unless natives own a significant part of our country's economy. When the students of today become the leaders of tomorrow, they too will want to see part of this country's economy locally owned. Expropriation could become a painful reality, unless our economic experts change their attitude and do something to help Niuginians.

Neither is political power in the hands of our people. We have here a section of the community who like to think of themselves as almost the creators of this place, and, for a considerable period of time, have enjoyed economic and political power, and social prestige. There is a tendency for these people to feel that these benefits are theirs "by right". And in order to rule, they have divided our people and they are now the rulers. These are the planters. I repeat, they have successfully divided our people in order to rule. We have now reached an era of "divide and rule" and

the House of Assembly should be deplored for condoning such a stage. Let's face it, who can deny the fact that the "B4s"* do rule now effectively!

Students of today are being confronted almost daily with dirty racial discrimination, by the white people—right from religious to governmental institutions—and with gross injustice against them and their people, in their own country. At the beginning, the students, like the older generation, seemed to accept the status quo and were psychologically made to feel inferior to the white man. This is especially hard to bear when the native Niuginian is discriminated against in the name of "civilisation", in his own country. Students should no longer tolerate this, and must take this as a challenge to their human identity and dignity. Our MHA's have deceived us and prefer to remain the "boot-lickers" of the colonial masters. There is no more place for the master/boy relationship in Papua and New Guinea, and students who are the best educated lot in the country must fight for their rights and the right of their subjected people. We must show our people that white men are not some sort of celestial creatures that should be obeyed accordingly.

The paternalistic attitude of some people is projected at us and has the effect of making us feel almost totally dependent on those who exercise control over us. A white man is regarded as a perfect creature who deserves a "thank-you" all the time from his natives, who should look to him for examples.

Students of today have no more time for the paternalistic attitude of the white B4s. Rather, they want to take up the challenge and shape their country the way they see fit, not the way Mr. Gorton and Mr. Barnes see fit. To do this, the students are demanding two things: (a) they want to participate in making the decisions that affect them, and (b) they want society to be aware of the artificial racial "harmony" that supposedly exists. The students of the world are fighting for the equal distribution of wealth and power, and in this country, too, we are trying to get our share of the wealth and power.

Students are extremely aware of their unavoidable role as future leaders. They have been told this so many times that words like "leaders" have become as familiar as friends now. With the country, they are going through a great period of political, economic and social transition. Being leaders of tomorrow, it should be their duty now to take part in shaping the country that they will one day build or destroy.

* Colloquial term for planters and other Europeans who have lived in Niugini since "before" the Japanese occupation.

contributors

Aloysius F. Aita from Goilala is a tertiary (theological) student at De Boismenu College, Bomana. His story was a prize-winning entry in the 1st Port Moresby Eisteddfod Literary Contest.

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(Mrs.) Mary Paulisbo from the Gulf District teaches at Finschhafen.

The traditional village songs in this supplement come from all over the Territory. They have been collected by students of the Administrative College, Port Moresby. These young people are training as Patrol Officers, Magistrates, Local Government Officers, Librarians and Welfare Workers. The translations are largely the students' own work. The process of collecting genuine traditional village songs is being undertaken, to a degree, by the U.P.N.G., and also by a teacher at Idubada Technical College, Moresby, Roy Helfert, who has teachers all over the country scouting around for traditional songs. His purpose is manifold—for preservation, but more especially for literary enrichment in the classroom, and to give the youngsters a pride in their own songs and poems.

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ROBIN GOLLAN

meanjin's australianism

Ten years ago, on Meanjin's twenty-first birthday, Ian Maxwell remarked that Meanjin was more than a literary quarterly. He pointed to its encouragement of young writers, its stimulation of thought on important public questions, and its Australianism—"at once so deeply Australian and so much alive to the world of ideas". More recently H. P. Heseltine (1965/1) has written more extensively about the role and changing shape of the journal. Consistently, over thirty years, the editor has stated his intentions and less frequently the achievements.

I am looking at Meanjin from outside. Of course I know many of its writers and that necessarily and rightly affects one's reaction to it. But I have attempted the exercise of reading a yard and half of Meanjin as an historical document with a number of questions in mind. The general question is, what does this, the most important Australian literary journal, reveal about Australian society during the last thirty years?

The fact that it has been able to survive for thirty years and still be growing is itself a significant fact. Most journals do not do that. It is even more significant that it has been able to contrive to publish the work of people so diverse in their literary assumptions and views of life as, for example, Vance Palmer, John Morrison, David Martin, A. D. Hope, James McAuley and Jack Lindsay. This could scarcely have happened in Britain and much less so in France. Why has it happened in Australia—how has a journal, so eclectic in character, been able to live for a generation?

The short answer could be Clem Christesen. In the public record and the oral tradition his role has been central—without him Meanjin would have died. But it does not detract from his achievement to suggest that something more can be said. It could be that having established a reputation, Meanjin has gone on attracting writers of diverse

interests and viewpoints because it is a prestigious place to publish. It is that, not only because its standards are high, but also because it is one of the few journals in which academic and non-academic writers can meet (and compete) on equal terms. For academics at least it is a larger world than is to be found in the specialist journal. One could go on listing particular reasons but I propose to explore one general one, the quality of Meanjin's Australianism. By its Australianism I mean both the way in which it has responded to the Australian reality and what it has contributed to Australian opinion.

In 1945 the editor seemed to be charting a course for the journal which was substantially different from the one which it has actually followed. The editorial of the spring number was a passionate statement of social commitment. It looked back on dramatic recent events: the collapse of Germany, the San Francisco conference, the election of a Labour Government in Britain, the exposure of Belsen, Buchenwald and Auschwitz, the bomb, and the end of the six years' war. It was a time for decision about the future, in the light of the past. Meanjin was clear that writers had great responsibilities in this situation. They had a primary responsibility to their art, but their art was not separate from society.

Since by their very existence writers influence their time, they must decide, deliberately, how this influence is to be used. What will be the pattern in post-war Australia? What reforms must be effected? What will be our relationship with other countries, particularly East Asia and in the Pacific Basin? The writer today must be informed on external as well as domestic affairs, and must use his powers deliberately to influence public opinion. No longer can he sneak off to some frangipani-scented gazebo, remaining aloof from the mounting post-war problems. He must identify himself with the aspirations of the people towards community and national reform.

Meanjin it seemed was to be very directly involved in the social and political problems of the immediate future and it was to be involvement on the Left.

The editorial policy did not go unquestioned. A. A. Phillips, who is of Meanjin almost as much as the editor himself, asked, "what happens if his [the artist's] artistic integrity does not happen to permit him the discussion of contemporary social problems?" Phillips believed that the options for the artist had been wrongly stated. ". . . the alternative to 'Art for Art's sake' is not necessarily 'Art for society's sake': it is 'Art for life's sake'." Events were on the side of Phillips' dictum because within a few years it was life, at any rate the life of the mind, which was at stake in Australia.

In 1951 Clem Christesen was writing sadly of the collapse of the post-war hopes.

The collapse has grown progressively worse, until today I believe the social climate is no longer one in which serious writers can work with enthusiasm—unless, perhaps, they are political activists, which few are. The disintegration of a propitious literary atmosphere is part of our Australian situation; but we are by no means alone in this respect.

The reasons for the change in perspective are clear enough. In 1945 it seemed inevitable that a new society must come into existence. The most inhuman social order known to history had finally expired in a bunker in Berlin. That the means by which Japan had been given its quietus were more barbaric than anything it had perpetrated had not yet sunk in. The old order with which a generation had lived had been destroyed. The building of a new world—that was the problem. A new society, whether it was the one seen by communists, still living in the after-glow of the triumphs of the Red Army and not yet forced to face the facts of Stalin's Russia, or that seen by more modest reformers who fixed their hopes on Clement Attlee or Ben Chifley, seemed inevitable. Those who believed in life, in a world in which so recently 20 or 30 million people had died prematurely and violently, knew that life and a new society were an equation.

But by 1951 there was no place for the warm optimism of six years before. The outstanding fact was the cold war with its ultimate threat to human existence and its immediate threat to the conditions under which creative people could function. Meanjin recognised the threat and played an honorable part, at some cost to itself, both financial and otherwise, in alerting people to the consequences for the freedom of all, of the outlawing of the Communist Party and the consequential invasions of the civil liberties of all.

To many young radicals of today the story of the behaviour of the Left during the last twenty-

five years is one of failure of resolve, of compromise instead of confrontation, of seeking common ground rather than marking out areas of disagreement. What they forget, or perhaps simply do not know, is that in the 1950s the circumstances under which free enquiry of any kind could continue were at least under serious threat. It was a period in which, however deeply people might disagree, they felt it necessary to make common cause in the defence of conditions in which debate could occur. This may be a major reason why Meanjin succeeded in continuing to publish the work of writers so divergent in their outlook as those mentioned earlier. There is an awareness that intellectuals have occupied a marginal place in Australian society and that despite their differences they have a common interest in maintaining the conditions under which they can write. Part of the Australianism of Meanjin is that it reflects this fact—more so in the 1950s than in the 1960s.

A more substantial part of the Australianism is in the actual writing. When in 1949 Manning Clark wrote about tradition in Australian literature, most of what he had to say was about the men of the 'nineties and before. The traditions he referred to were mateship, independence, the xenophobic fear of colored men, the harshness of the bush, the hostility to the English upper classes and the squatters and so on. He detected a blank period from the beginning of the twentieth century to the 'thirties—a consequence of industrialisation and the failure of writers to articulate new values appropriate to the new conditions of life. But by the 'thirties, he argued, writers were beginning to draw attention to what had happened.

The centre of life has moved from the country to the large cities. The response of our writers is rather similar to the response of European writers. Some have found in the pastoral era a way of escape from the harshness of the cities, have tried to build up a "Merrie England" tradition, and wallowed in it with assistance from "Waltzing Matilda". Some have recommended the hard life, joy through suffering and submission to a leader—an authoritarian creed. And some have urged the workers to follow all that was best in the old tradition, to use it as an inspiration for the fulfilment of working-class ideals.

The contents of Meanjin in the 'forties and early 'fifties, particularly the prose, bear out this description. The bulk of the prose is in the tradition of Lawson and Furphy or directed to the critical appraisal or re-appraisal of the men of the 'nineties and early twentieth century. For example, there were eight stories by John Morrison between 1947 and 1954; five by Judah Waten between 1948 and 1953; five by Vance Palmer before 1952; and four tall stories by Dal Stevens. With all the

differences between them and the makers of the Australian tradition, and the differences among themselves, they have it in common with their predecessors that they are writing about the common people, their sorrows and the triumph of the spirit of the humble. Joseph Furphy received critical attention seventeen times before 1955, Henry Handel Richardson seven times, and while Lawson was the subject of an article only twice, he is frequently mentioned in more general articles. Until the mid-fifties Meanjin, at least in its prose, is primarily the bearer of the radical Australian tradition. This is much less true of the poetry—McAuley, Hope and Harold Stewart, to name three of the more important poets had, in their writing, separated themselves implicitly from the tradition. In 1952 McAuley made the separation explicit.

In his article, "Tradition, Society and the Arts", McAuley expounded brilliantly a view of the nature of art which was in direct conflict with the main trend of Meanjin. Against the predominant humanism of the journal he argued that the creation and awareness of great art depends upon spiritual experience. He emphasised the importance of traditional form derived in the last resort from the liturgical arts. What he calls the "authentic" society requires a proper relationship between the sacred and the secular.

Human societies commonly acknowledge a realm of the sacred, which they regard as the ultimate source of being and order and value in the physical universe and the world of man. It is by standing in right relation with the spiritual order that man and his society become **authentic**. Not only is the sacred tradition accorded a primacy over culture by those who receive it: it actually does possess that primacy; it does in fact preside over culture, giving form and meaning to men's experience, serving as a principle of coherence and order.

The article was a statement of an artistic position, an assertion about the proper relation between man and God, and an attack on liberal humanism. The abandonment of tradition in art is an aspect of the disintegration of "authentic" society which leads on to totalitarianism.

Thus today, across the twilight Tom Tiddler's ground of shallow humanism, Tradition and Anti-Tradition confront one another, each recognising its supreme antagonist. Wherever the totalitarian reaction triumphs, the arts are assigned their definite place in the inversion of a natural order. They are degraded to the level of propagandist instruments, worn out in servile obedience to ignoble purposes.

Politically the implications of McAuley's position were clear. As against the humanism, liberalism and socialism most characteristic of Meanjin he was posing the validity of the Catholic social order. McAuley continued to publish in Meanjin but in

RECALLING

recalling
always
a
relative
unrelatedness
organic accident
of a painter

remembering
to fit words
together / gather
pieces of
small
screams
of a guitar

returning
after
dead ends
burnt out
to this point
exhaustion
of a city

DON MAYNARD

retrospect the article of 1952 can be seen as the first clear step towards the hiving off of Quadrant, whose political stance would be very different from that of Meanjin.

From the mid fifties onwards the Australianism of Meanjin becomes increasingly complex. While it continues to carry the work of writers who saw themselves, and who were, in the mainstream of the Australian tradition, the arrival of Patrick White in its pages in 1957 may mark a turning point. Its movement was also towards increased weight for criticism and for self-conscious examination of the nature of Australianism.

Ken Inglis' 1965 article on "The Anzac Tradition" may be taken as the beginning of a process of re-evaluation. In exploring the performance and values of the first A.I.F., in particular as seen through the eyes of C. E. W. Bean, he asked fundamental questions about the character of Australian national self-consciousness. He showed that the values which the Australian legend celebrates are exactly those with which the A.I.F. identified. He suggested that there have been in Australia, "two main streams of national tradition, the one radical and the other patriotic", and asks, "Do they flow together or remain apart?"

In a follow-up article Geoffrey Serle explored the theme further, especially its significance for later Australian society. He agrees that the A.I.F.

"was profoundly influenced by the democratic egalitarian tradition. But in the period between the wars the digger legend was taken over by the conservative classes". More recently Humphrey McQueen, in his *A New Britannia*, has argued that it needed no taking over. In his interpretation the myth, whether in the person of the "bushman" or the "digger", developed as an element in the establishment of bourgeois hegemony, and hence was always conservative.

The most comprehensive attempt at self-conscious appraisal was the *Godzone* series beginning with Ian Turner's article in 1966. Turner's title is a summary of his argument—"The Retreat from Reason". He looks at politics, society and culture. Politics has ceased to be a reasoned contest between opposing policies and ideologies. It has become the arena of the image makers: "You pays your taxes and you takes your choice—but whoever you vote for, a public relations man always gets in". He qualifies this pessimistic conclusion by the possibility of the return of reason within the labour movement—but it is a faint possibility. It is a faint possibility because at the deepest roots of society the machine has taken over.

Increasingly, no man can know or control the whole process of production; only the machines can do that. The area of choice and effective decision declines. Man is liberated from nature and enslaved by the machines.

Culturally he sees the response to this situation in the abandonment of reason for sensation. It is evident in pop culture (he compares unfavorably the Beatles with classical jazz), in the film—"All that matters is technique": the camera and the cutting. "Visual sensation—or in the case of the Bond films, which are widely popular among young intellectuals, brilliant technical gimmickry—replaces reason, meaning and emotional response". He goes on piling the evidence of the retreat from reason to sensation in literature, in the emphasis on the sensory aspects of sex, in absurdism and in the cult of the drug kick. What lies behind the pessimism in this picture is the unstated assumption that there was a time when it was possible to believe that by the exercise of reason a fundamental transformation of society could take place

—a transformation which would place man in control of his own destiny.

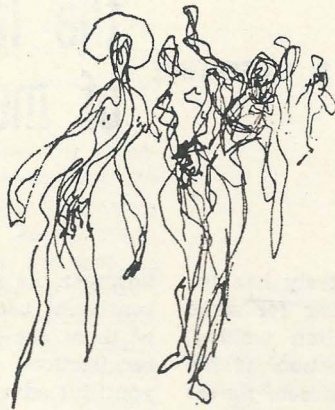
To look at two other articles, those of Geoffrey Serle and Geoffrey Blainey. Serle sees the matter differently from Turner. His title is "Austerica Unlimited", written as he says off the top of his head. In his case what is lamented is not a departure from reason and the possibility of social revolution but the diversion of Australia from the road to independent nationhood. He writes with nostalgia (and some resentment) of Australians' dual attachments in the inter-war years to Britain and Australia. But by the mid 'fifties, he believes, this had changed and there was a real possibility of a genuinely independent Australian nation. Instead we have the dominance of America-Austerica.

Geoffrey Blainey is the most conservative of the three on whom I am commenting, although conservative scarcely sums up the man. He carries on from Ken Inglis' suggestion that there were two main streams of the national tradition—the radical and patriotic. He believes that there is now only one: the radical stream has run dry. His words:

The Australian legend enshrines a valuable ideal but is not necessarily a sound guide to understanding either Australian nationalism or present day politics. The legend usually has an in-built notion of the class struggle and, given the time when the legend arose, could not envisage that modern technology would do more than political protest to raise the standard of living of the common man. The legend assumed that material progress could come only through the struggle of organised labour in shearing sheds and parliaments, and accordingly many followers of the legend are slightly incredulous that the Menzies era should have been accompanied by increasing comfort for working men.

In a sense Turner, Serle and Blainey are all saying much the same thing—for Turner and Serle it is to be lamented, for Blainey celebrated.

It is a long haul from 1940 to 1971, but in important ways Meanjin has reflected the most sensitive thinking of Australians about their changing society. The nature of Australianism is still in question—it is a prize to be fought for, as it has always been.



The Hand of Memory

Selected Stories and Verse

C. B. CHRISTESEN

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H. P. HESELTINE

the hand of memory

The editorial office of *Meanjin Quarterly* has for thirty years now been a clearing house for some of the best of contemporary Australian writing. In "The Hand of Memory", a collection of his own stories and poems, Clem Christesen moves out of the familiar editorial chair to remind us that he was a writer in search of an outlet when he founded *Meanjin* in 1940, and that he is a writer still.

To Clem's many friends, and I am proud to number myself among them, the book will bring immediate delight: it is a very handsome production, but, more importantly, it is a palpable token of his inner commitment to that literary culture he has done so much, in public terms, to promote. But "The Hand of Memory" will be read outside the circle of his friends, and if association with *Meanjin Quarterly* teaches a literary critic anything, it is his responsibility to set down as fully, fairly, and accurately as he can his considered sense of whatever book he undertakes to review. On these terms, "The Hand of Memory" cannot be represented as a major contribution to our current writing; equally it cannot be dismissed as a curiosity of more interest to book collectors than book readers. Quite simply, the collection seems to me to have real merits, of an honestly unpretentious kind. They include, in particular, the display of an engaging sensibility, at once robust and tender, and the exercise of a confident professionalism in the craft of writing.

In the short stories, both the sensibility and the professionalism are often reminiscent of Vance Palmer. "The Albatross", for instance, is a story of adolescent initiation into adult emotion very much in Palmer's best manner. The setting at the sea's edge, the subtle projection of human feeling onto the image of the giant bird, the sense of the wonder in quite ordinary experience: these are qualities which clearly link Christesen's art with that of the elder writer. Just as significant,

however, as shaping force in these stories is the consistent use of a narrative persona. Nearly all of them are given to us through the first person recollections of Hans Knudsen. We learn of his youthful adventures, his love affairs, his excursions into the literary world. But—and this is the essential point if Christesen's art is to be appreciated for what it is—all of Knudsen's experiences are to be apprehended as fictional inventions which permit the writer to bring to bear a very considerable range of response and judgment upon his material.

Thus, in the stories of boyhood and adolescence the creation of a specific personality is largely subordinated to the vivid re-creation of emotion. In other pieces, "The Circling Gulls" and "Orchard for Sale" for instance, the focus is primarily on characters other than Knudsen himself. When the narrator does come to the centre of his own tales, he emerges as a rather wry anti-hero, notable for both his comic ineptitude and his ironic insight into that ineptitude. One thinks in this connection particularly of stories like "The Troubled Eyes of Women", "The Ash-blond Benefactress", and "The Social Failures of a Shy Seducer". Only in stories which directly confront contemporary culture and politics does Christesen's control of his narrative method falter or fade into irrelevance. "As the Time Is" seems to me to have only a shaky hold over the necessary "distancing" of Knudsen. In "The Indomitable One" and "The Long-Stemmed Chalice", awareness of an invented narrator disappears almost completely beneath the kaleidoscopic recollections through which Christesen's own liberal humanism is openly (and very movingly) expressed. In general, however, the cumulative effect of Hans Knudsen's self-revelations seems to me to be the creation of a thoroughly understood fictional personality; memory, to be sure, is the theme, but the hand which traces out its many modes and moods is that of a conscious artist.

The poems collected in "The Hand of Memory" do not offer the critic any such ready-made focal point as the persona of the stories. The principle of arrangement appears to be basically chronological, a principle which has the distinct merit of clearly revealing Christesen's developing powers as a poet. By the end of the book he stands forth as an accomplished, if lesser, lyricist. Lesser, perhaps, only if one thinks of him vis-a-vis those poets who, I judge, bear the same relation to his verse as Palmer does to his prose.

Some of the poems of the 1940's have a somewhat dated, Eliotesque air about them, but the real trig points for Christesen's verse are surely Judith Wright, Douglas Stewart and James Picot. "The Challenge of Your Eyes", for instance, is closely akin to Wright's "The Company of Lovers", and is by no means blotted out by a comparison. "The Epilogue" and "The Ring of Kerry" testify to Christesen's kinship with some of Stewart's characteristic habits of mind. Picot, Christesen's close personal friend, one detects in the imagist impressionist quality of many of his lines. But all of these influences, if influences they are, are assimilated, in the best of the poems, into what I take to be Christesen's personal intention: to capture the emotions of a moment in spare but beautiful images, in metres that will sing.

Within such a general aesthetic, Christesen has worked his way to a number of specific effects. The attraction to the imagist mode has led in, say, "Carnations" to an almost Japanese economy of statement. The candid surrender to passion and erotic pleasure may result, on the one hand, in the small grandeurs of "My Love is a Golden Bough", on the other, in the witty conceit of "Marksmanship". The colloquialism rather self-consciously exploited in the early "Street Scene" has now become the vehicle of political protest in "Cambodian 'Insursion'" or topical satire in "Prophets of Eupychia". Where the lyric and the colloquial meet one is likely to encounter some of Christesen's best verse: I have especially in mind "The Desecrated Valley", which I judge to be one of the most substantial poems in the whole of "The Hand of Memory".

To praise a single poem for its "substance" may seem to impute a certain "slightness" to the rest. And, it must be said, most of the poems in this book are, taken singly, slight. Yet, just as the stories gain cumulative force and stature from the continuing presence of Hans Knudsen, so the sum of the poems seems to me significantly greater than the apparent total of the separate pieces. Where Christesen's prose convinces us of the vividness of his contact with the tangible world, his verse is the warrant for the fineness of his

FRIENDLY PLANTS

in my garden
indicate
that stars are old

by this token
I attend
the god

DON MAYNARD

emotional responses. Finally, however, to separate out the verse from the prose is to do an injustice to "The Hand of Memory". Just as the stories and poems are literally intermingled in the arrangement of the book, so their imaginative effect is, in the end, integrated and single.

In seeking to define the prevailing quality brought about by this interplay of prose and verse, I have found myself coming back again and again to those images of sea, sand, birds, and, above all, sun, in which Christesen establishes his delight in the bodily life of man and woman. Indeed, what I find most to be treasured in "The Hand of Memory" is its joy in the vividness and variety of the outdoors, natural world, in the passion and tenderness of human love and love-making. In searching for some phrase to do justice to its sunny pleasure, I have found none better than that which Yeats used of Keats: "deliberate happiness". And, in thinking of Keats, I have sensed what I take to be the true relation between Christesen the writer and Christesen the editor. Keats, we know, achieved the "deliberate happiness" of his verse only by submitting it to what he called the "world of circumstance". He did not ignore "the wakeful anguish of the soul" so much as absorb it into the beauty of his utterance. Christesen, it seems to me, has reversed the Keatsian procedure. He has steadfastly subordinated the happiness he finds so readily as a writer to the world of circumstance which claims him as an editor. In so doing, he has undoubtedly diminished the quantity and perhaps even the force of his own writing. We can only acknowledge the enormous debt our literary culture owes him, and take pleasure in books like "The Hand of Memory" when they all too rarely appear.

C. B. Christesen: "The Hand of Memory". Melbourne, The Meanjin Press, 1970, 196 pp.

HARRY AVELING

retrospective off-side: indonesian writers and the left

For good reason, Mochtar Lubis is better known in the West as a courageous advocate of press freedom than for his literary talent, despite the publication of two of his novels (with the assistance of the Congress for Cultural Freedom) in English translation. In his "Twilight in Djakarta" (1963) Lubis traces the fortunes of a number of groups of people from different social levels in Djakarta over a period of nine months. Among the characters presented is a poet called Jasrin, who, feeling that there is no chance for himself to grow and develop in Indonesia as a writer, badly wants to go abroad. Jasrin is a "people's poet", his poems always deal with the life and sufferings of the poor, with whom he freely mixes: it is considered natural that his first preference should be to go to China, to "study how a national consciousness can be developed through a national culture".

Although Jasrin is considered by his friends to be "Indonesia's greatest poet since Chairil Anwar" (1922-1949, Indonesia's greatest), and lesser writers have been invited to the United States, England and France, his turn has never come. In November he is approached by the communist activist Achmad who invites him "to plunge into the arena by contributing your great creative power to struggle for our nation's development", by joining with others—Sjafai, the people's poet, Murtoho, the people's painter, and Hambali, the people's short story-writer—in the foundation of a people's cultural movement, Gekra. An extremely militant magazine is to be set up and Jasrin is to edit it, with the others' assistance and at enormous salaries. As well, they are to establish the organisation for Gekra, run book-displays, art-shows and literary-competitions, and create new folk-dances and music. Later, arrangements will be made for them to study methods of cultural organisation in the People's Republic of China, Russia, Czechoslovakia and other proletarian democracies.

Jasrin is flattered: he is to be more fabulously wealthy than he could have ever believed, and his life has a purpose and a goal—the bringing of justice and prosperity to all, the abolition of social classes, and the opportunity for all men to live in happiness. He severs his ties with his bourgeois friends, abandoning their kind of cultural and intellectual activity, in order to devote himself to "the people's culture, among the people". When he separates, one of the group cynically comments that "all (Jasrin) wants is the thousand rupiah salary . . . it is all the same to him whether it comes from Peking, the Kremlin or Washington." As part of the city burns in a riot maliciously fomented by Achmad, Jasrin prepares to leave to attend the Festival of Asian Artists in Peking, prior to flying on to Moscow, Prague and Warsaw. The plane climbs, Jasrin congratulates himself on having broken with his friends at the right time, and settles back to compose a poem depicting the heroic struggle of the masses of China as a souvenir of his trip for his magazine.

The progressive politicisation of modern Indonesian literature after Sukarno's proclamation of Guided Democracy in 1959 is well known. The conflict in those years between the writers in favor of an "art for art's sake doctrine"—generally, but not entirely, those in support of the Cultural Manifesto of 1963, banned by Sukarno in May 1964—and those in favor of a more committed art—generally those associated with Lekra (the communist party's cultural institute, founded in August 1950) and LKN (the nationalist party's institute, founded in May 1959 to compete, quite unsuccessfully, with Lekra)—has been told elsewhere. Lubis is not a subtle writer. Jasrin is a caricature, from the right, of those writers who committed themselves to the left after the mid-fifties. He is recognisably a composite of a number of authors: the poet Rivai Apin (born 1927) who edited Lekra's magazine "Zaman Baru" (New

Era) after 1956; Pramudya Ananta Tur (born 1925), Indonesia's most brilliant short-story writer and vice-president of the literary section of Lekra after 1959, editor of the cultural section 'Lentera' of the leftist newspaper "Bintang Timur" between 1962 and 1964; and Sitor Situmorang (born 1924), Indonesia's leading post-war poet after Anwar, founder and first chairman of LKN and parliamentary representative for writers for a time during the sixties. Through Jasrin, Lubis attempts to show how the elite of modern Indonesian literature in the fields of prose, poetry and drama (Utuy Tatang Sontani [born 1920], the important post-war dramatist was a member of the governing council of Lekra with Tur and Apin) were won over to the left. Basically, men of good intention were crudely bribed and deceived by agents of international communism, who exploited for their own ends the weaker aspects of these writers' characters.

Lubis, that is, refuses to accept that these men could, rationally and willingly, accept the ideas of socialism, in either the marxist-leninist terms of the Indonesian Communist Party or of Bung Karno's socialism "a la Indonesia". Other students of Indonesian literature have tended to agree with him in not taking the commitments seriously. Prof. A. H. Johns views the commitments as psychological aberrations. In "Pramudya Ananta Tur: The Writer as Outsider" ("Meanjin Quarterly", No. 4 1963) he suggested that the communist party "provided the psychological link Pramudya instinctively requires, the 'rainbow bridge' that makes it possible for him, the outsider, to feel part of the whole, and to suppress if not sublimate the explosions rending his inner life" (p. 363). In "A Poet between Two Worlds: The Work of Sitor Situmorang" ("Westerly", October 1966) Sitor is seen as caught between three worlds: provincial Sumatra, modern Indonesia and existentialist Paris; and Sukarno's national ideology as something of a psychological mooring towards which he hurled himself desperately, "like a man caught in a tropical downpour seeking shelter in an uncompleted house which lacks among other facilities, a roof" (p. 38). Several factors are credited with having produced this "loss of nerve", including a lack of strength and stamina, a desire to belong, and an inability to bear his responsibilities as poet and spokesman of his generation. Prof. A. Teeuw in his "Modern Indonesian Literature" (The Hague 1967) describes Tur as "the eternal protestor, the fighter for good causes, which so often were inextricably interwoven with his personal interest" (p. 180). Sitor's social-realist verse leaves a nasty taste in his mouth and "the impression that a great literary talent has been wasted, that an original and sometimes brilliant mind has allowed

British Imperialism and Australia 1783-1833

An economic history of Australasia

Brian Fitzpatrick

Originally published in 1939, this was Brian Fitzpatrick's first contribution to Australian historiography. For the decade or so after its publication this book and its successors influenced most students of Australian history. For some years out of print it nevertheless remains a book which no student of the first quarter of Australian history should ignore. This facsimile impression brings it back into print and will be welcomed by historians, librarians and the general reader.

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itself to be shackled to an ideology of empty slogans" (p. 181). For both critics the ideologies and resultant art are so repugnant they can only be explained away.

"Itu menghina doong!" as colloquial Indonesian has it: that's an insult.

Certainly there were trips abroad: Apin had been to China, Tur and Sontani had visited China and Russia, Sitor had been to China, Japan and Egypt. But Sitor had in the fifties been in Holland and France, in cultural diplomacy, and Tur had spent part of 1953 in Holland. Both had been disappointed. Holland to Tur was "a country without ideals to fight for, far too materialistic and over-concerned with economics"; unlike China, which he later (1956) regarded as "a country of great ideals and achievements". "One gets more realistic as one gets older", wrote Sitor looking back on his Paris experience as an attractive but faded part of his youth, himself:

A bird in a cage

Futilely still singing—I remember

you, dumbly greeting tomorrow

as he wrote in the poem "Kenangan" (Memories) from his collection "Zaman Baru" (1962). In this latter collection, China was a place of creativity and hope, of international solidarity, where peaceful labor, co-operation and the kinship spirit of his childhood was re-established, where:

I meet myself at last
 having returned
 returned from lost wandering
 ("Pulanglah Dia Si-anak Hilang,"
 Return of the Lost Child)

Too there was financial assistance, as well as the provision of facilities for the publication of books other publishers had neither the paper nor the resources of manpower and distribution to handle. In a time of galloping inflation, in a country where a book sold perhaps 2,000 copies over two years and royalties were paid only on copies already sold, writers could scarcely have existed otherwise. As the essayist Goenawan Mohamad, antipathetic to communism although appreciative of the explanatory power of marxism, has written: "It was only the communists who took a serious interest in cultural affairs. The reason is simple, as George Steiner says: Marxist-Leninism and political regimes enacted in its name take literature seriously, indeed desperately so. They have their own literary tradition and criticism, as part of their revolutionary history". ('Contemporary Indonesian Literature', "Solidarity", Sept. 1968, p. 25.)

Yet there is something more fundamental. These writers had come to their maturity in a time of Revolutionary engagement, against the Dutch from 1945 to 1949 and earlier under the Japanese from 1942. The fervor of this time had been recreated during the years of guided democracy. The Revolution had given them hopes which it had not fulfilled and they looked to the 'new era' to fulfil these disappointed hopes. Tur felt as early as 1950 that the Revolution had been a failure, and looking back he saw it as a time of great personal suffering, of meaningless violence between fellow human-beings, not a great struggle but a clash of self-interested little groups of brigands who brought in their wake pain and social and personal disintegration. Sontani too saw the Revolution as a time when the little people suffered without comprehension while their leaders enriched themselves and engaged in erotic and aesthetic delight. The years after were, for him, a time when "whoever could shout loudest got into power". "The nation is free" he said in an interview with Tur in 1952 ("Siasat", 7th Sept.), "But not free of stupidity. And what can you hope from such people? Stupidity has made the people unconscious beasts." Only Apin of the writers of the "generation of 1945" saw the Revolution in optimistic terms, but its beneficial aspects had to await death and destruction, defeat and withdrawal "before freedom can possess the earth" (a quotation from "Dari Dua Dunia Jang Belum Sudah", From Two as Yet Unfinished Worlds). His verse moves between contrasts of sterility and fertility, night and day,

present suffering and future happiness. (See my essay "Poetry and the Indonesian Revolution", "Westerly", No. 1 1970).

They, although not Sitor, had come from rigidly stratified societies, and all felt a profound alienation from traditional Indonesian village society as well as a strong nostalgia for it. Sean Forster in his Melbourne BA Honours thesis, "Alienation and Integration in the Indonesian Revolution: Some Novels of Pramudya Ananta Tur" (1967) has described how, despite his affirmation of the nobility of man through love and suffering found in the Revolution, "the revolution can never restore to Pramudya the fullness, the completeness, the totality of life he knew in his village as a child. The revolution has torn him out of the environment where it was possible to attain the full stature which being human means" (p.ii-iii). Johns in the essay referred to previously describes Sitor as adrift between two cultures, the village microcosmos, the system of faith and morality in which he was raised, and the mental and moral world of the twentieth century intellectual, "knowing that one does not belong to him, and uncertain of the meaning of the other" (p. 30). And in the poem "Anak Malam" (Child of the Night) Apin lamented:

This is not the world I dreamed of
 My world was always green.

Sitor, for his association with the nationalist party, received parliamentary status: Tur, Apin and Sontani, in association with the communist party although never members as far as one can find out, received little. (Tur was in fact imprisoned for a year in 1960 for writing articles and a book defensive of foreign Chinese traders in Indonesia.) They were, nevertheless, men who hungered and thirsted after righteousness, to use the Biblical phrase: who wished to see the world in meaningful, ethical—even utopian—human terms. Tur in his stories of the Revolution returned time and time again to the meaning of "humanity" in a time of war: Sontani's plays have often been seen as an illustration of, to generalise his own words, "the tragedy of humanity surrounded by inhumanity". Apin in his long poem of wasteland "Melalui Siang Menembus Malam" (Through Day Penetrate Night) describes a conflict between "the ordinary man, who asks for a guarantee for his life" and the "extraordinary man" who gives himself fully to the struggle:

Both are the son of man
 Determined by a few hours
 "in the beginning is the deed".

In the teachings of socialism these three found an explanation of their alienation previously expressed in their writings, and a means for overcoming it. Sontani's plays had always centered on

class-conflict: through identification of himself with the people and the Sundanese trickster figure Si Kabajan, he saw himself becoming rejuvenated, as finding a realistic, concrete and humoristic attitude to the world, a solution to the tragedy of humanity through the removal of upper class inhumanity. As Tur's novel "Suatu Peristiwa di Banten Selatan" (1958) revealed, socialism provided him with a means of seeing the re-establishment of the village environment and full humanity. There can be no doubt that their commitment to the left during the mid-fifties was sincerely done, as an act of emotional and intellectual integrity. Sitor (and I think it is possible to have doubts as to the depth of his commitment) joined with them in creating a clearer perspective of their role of 'man of letters' in the modern world, specifically in a newly developing nation, seeing literature as an instrument in furthering historical progress, in exposing and rejecting social and economic oppression, of emphasising the dynamic, dialectical and romantic elements of man, rather than merely the personally neurotic and antisocial. (See his collection of essays "Sastra Repolusioner", *Revolutionary Literature*, 1965.)¹

II

In 1965, the conflict which had been developing between the Indonesian Army and the Communists, came to a head in the coup of the thirtieth of September, and the consequent counter-coup which removed Sukarno between 1965 and early 1967. Figures vary but at least three hundred thousand communists and others were killed in the resulting troubles throughout Indonesia, the densest areas of extermination being those in which peasants had appropriated land in 1964 land-reform agitations. Some additional 75,000 also considered to be involved in the coup to varying degrees were imprisoned. (I am using here figures given in the 1969 *Special Indonesia Issue* of "Quadrant": other figures are to be found in Peter d'Abbs' article on Indonesia's political prisoners in the recent issue (Aug.-Sept. 1970) of the "Australian Left Review".)² Perhaps this was essential to the establishment of what the students described as "Truth and Justice", the repurification of the state ideology of pantjasila and the removal of a tyrannous regime (see the section of my essay on "Poetry and the Indonesian Revolution" which discusses the verse of Taufiq Ismail): one would prefer to think not.

Ten years before Tur had written: "We writers are nothing more than a resistance force, an unofficial opposition. Officially we are writers. Unofficially we are in opposition to the best cooking-pots! We do it automatically, for we speak out with everything in us, we subscribe to only one morality. Which is why when we lose, we

lose completely." ("Djakarta", translated as 'Letter to a Friend from the Country', special *Indonesia "Quadrant"*.) In 1964 the leftist writers' movements were arguably already in difficulty: the world Afro-Asian writers' movement had split, between Peking and Moscow, prior to the third Conference to be held in Bali; a complete loss of verve is discernable towards the end of the year in the cultural pages (Tur's "Lentera" was transferred to other hands and fumbled to a halt in early 1965), and the army had clearly indicated its support of the rightist Conference of All-Indonesian Writers as against Sukarno's early support of Lekra's conferences in 1959 and 1963. Officially, Lekra was scuttled with the communist ship, being banned by the 'New Order' in March 1966: works of specific writers, regardless of content, were also banned. (A convenient list can be found in the appendix to Ajip Rosidi's "Ictisar Sedjarah Sastra Indonesia" (Bandung 1969).

An angry mob had in the troubles burnt Tur's house, and, it was feared for some months, killed him as well. Later, however, he was captured and successively imprisoned at Salemba (in Djakarta), Tangerang (west of Djakarta) and, since the 25th August 1969, on the island of Buru in the Moluccas. Some 2,500 prisoners are now held on this small inhospitable island, engaged in agricultural labor until the time of their release is thought appropriate. Only class-A detainees are to be brought before the courts: Tur is a class-B, as are the others, and is kept in the third camp, reportedly the least productive, reserved for the 800 intellectuals and men of letters. Prisoners are provided with clothing, tools, seed, medicine, a winding-sheet and technical and religious instruction: self-sufficiency is the aim. (There have been complaints that prisoners are better provided for than those engaged in transmigration projects designed to reduce population pressure in Java.) Apin is now thought to be on Buru, as is Sitor, who was linked with the extreme left-wing branch of the nationalist party in 1967. Sontani was in China at the time of the coup, receiving medical attention; he cannot, of course, return to Indonesia.

In late 1968 and throughout 1969, Tur's case was given wide publicity by Amnesty International, who noted that: "It is now more than three years since Tur was detained and no official accusation has been brought forward. It is reported that he was detained because of his membership in a cultural organisation infiltrated by communists, although he is not a communist." Commenting on a visit to Indonesia by Professor Julius Stone in July 1969, to hold official talks on the question of political detainees and the release of nineteen, including Tur, "art and cultural circles in Djakarta" were reported as saying "that Pramudya

cannot just be released. He was arrested and detained not because he is an artist but because he helped ripen the 30th September coup. Thus what is the question is that he took part in betraying the nation with those crimes of his . . ." Support of peasant land-grabs, of the Chinese in 1960 and slanders against the All-Indonesian Writers' Conference, are then listed. The report closes: "In conclusion, these art and cultural circles hoped that we would not be readily caught by the issue of human rights in this connection. The question is not whether he is a great artist or not, but what is clear is that he is a traitor who took part with the communists in trying to overthrow our state. No matter how things may be, Premudya must be brought before the court to answer for his political sins." (Nusantara, 9th Aug. 1969.)

In December twenty-five journalists, Indonesian and foreign, were flown to Buru, to see conditions for themselves. "Seldom," as the "Bulletin" correspondent (January 10, 1970) wrote, "had journalists travelled so far for so brief a glimpse of what they wanted to see. In a tightly packed schedule only one and a half hours were allowed for contact with the prisoners". The Indonesian reporters were said (by Judy Williams of "Time") to have been shocked by what they saw: the ten-foot barbed-wire fences and the guard-towers, having expected something more like ordinary village life. "It's a concentration camp . . ." said the editorial of "Kami" (23rd Dec.) flatly: "not as bad as Siberia, Dachau or Belsen" said "Merdeka" (27th Dec.). Tur was specially paraded for the journalists. Goenawan Mohamad, in his article "A Day in the Life of Pramudya Ananta Tur" ("Horison", Jan. 1970, reprinted from "Kami", 22nd Dec. 1969) described him: his hair was white, his face sunburned, his body sturdy, his eyes were "a mixture of pride and bitterness, active, intelligent and forceful, not dulled, as he looked around unsmilingly, without tranquility and betraying a trace of anxiety." Tur said that he preferred Salemba, that on Buru his whole life was absorbed in labor, that he was not allowed to write. Goenawan concluded: "The camp is not a hell—as people have said, nor is it a heaven—rather it is a possibility. We must not judge too quickly, or from too far away, that's all." And, "Beb Vuyk once lived on this island, and wrote "The Last House in the World". Possibly the Resettlement Centre

will be a last house for Tur and the others. But a house is still a house, better than just dreams and disappointments." That, says Goenawan, is what I wrote in my notebook on the 18th December: "I do not know if I am right or not." The "Bulletin" writer ended his report: "Those who had joined cultural organisations, communist or not, had shown a youthful social awareness and idealism above average, with the blessing of their former President. It seemed a tragedy that Indonesia could not now make better use of such a bright looking lot. Correspondents were left asking what sort of a society it was that could not absorb them".

In May 1970 a theatre group in Djakarta presented, without complaint from the authorities, two plays of Sontani's to the public. Otherwise the matter appears to have been dropped, the Indonesian government happy that face has been saved, and writers of less extreme views than those quoted by Nusantara unhappy with the situation but not confident that anything can be done. Politics for writers can be a very dirty game, and never more so than when the other side not only makes up all the rules, retrospectively, but also provides the referees.

1. By way of contrast, one might suggest that those who stayed on the right (some writers chose the acceptable neutrality of the Muslim writers' association, Lesbumi) and particularly those who were signatories of the Cultural Manifesto were, on the whole, more at ease in the anomic urban environment of Djakarta and with themselves as existentialist men, of superior background and education, less dependant on social collectivities and current ideology and often lesser authors in status and lasting power.
2. d'Abbs lists 300,000 and 1.5 million as the highest and lowest figures of killed he has come across, noting that the "Economist", August 20, 1966, gives one million as the result of a survey by 150 university graduates. His figures for those imprisoned range from 71,905 to 150,000 in Java alone. Professor H. Feith (Politics, Monash University) suggests in a personal communication figures of 300,000 to 1,000,000 killed and 200,000 imprisoned, of whom 75,000 are still in prison. He also cites "Amnesty International's Annual Report" which claims 116,000 individuals in prison, and the "International Commission of Jurists' Review", December, 1969, "Indonesia: a Country Studded with Prison Camps", which lists "between 87,000 and 600,000 killed" and "at least 120,000 imprisoned in the 350 prison camps."

S W A G

The special supplement of New Guinea songs and legends in this issue has been made possible by the generosity of the Myer Foundation. This material was also collected for us by Don Maynard, who provided most of the contents of our New Guinea issue.

*

John Philip's article in this issue on the environment is based on a talk recorded for the A.B.C. in June, 1970.

*

Readers of Overland will be saddened to hear of the death of Maurice Vintner, who has contributed reviews and articles to us, as well as being known for his newspaper reviewing. We still have one article of his which we hope to use in due course. Meanwhile, we extend our sympathy to his family.

*

The Fontana Modern Masters Series, under the general editorship of Frank Kermode, provides a particularly useful introduction to the work of those writers we have all heard about but have not yet got around to reading. Each volume provides a summary of its subject's ideas, together with a discussion of their relevance and validity. Not all are of the same standard. The importance of writers like George Orwell and Marshall McLuhan rests not so much with their general theories as with the actual work in which they grapple with their subjects, and is probably better

approached through their own writing than through a general commentary. On the other hand, the volumes on Chomsky, Wittgenstein and Levi-Strauss not only provide an introductory guide, but also enable the reader to grasp some of the significance of the theories themselves.

*

The recent release by the Russian government of Andrei Sinyavsky marks a small step towards freedom. However, Daniel, Ginsberg, Tarsis and others remain incarcerated. In a recent article in the Anglo-Soviet Journal, Jack Lindsay argues that Alexander Sozhenitsyn is the most important living novelist. Only when the Russian authorities understand the role of the dissenting artist who recalls practice to its ethical foundations will the dreams of the revolutionaries have any chance of realisation.

*

Some democratic socialists have strange ideas of freedom also. When Lee Kuan Yew was at the height of his campaign against the Singapore Herald, he complained that the trouble was that some papers were not content with making a profit, they wanted to influence political thought as well. Apparently profits are preferred to ideas.

—J.M.

*

FLOATING FUND

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BOOKS

PAINTING ALONE

CLIVE TURNBULL

Robert Hughes: "The Art of Australia". Pelican, \$3.60.

A few copies of the mysterious first edition of "The Art of Australia", published in 1965, have been floating around the antiquarian bookshops, but, says Mr. Hughes, when copies reached London, "Penguin Books and I decided that the book, as produced, could not be published" and the rest of the edition was pulped. We are not told why. Author and publisher are still coy. But in the meantime Mr. Hughes has revised the text and he and Penguin are presumably receiving a belated return on their investment.

People who are looking for a *succes de scandale*, based on the Australian reputation of the author for brashness, will be disappointed. Mr. Hughes is no more trenchant than is called for and is indeed kindly toward some nonentities; he has been magnanimous enough to omit others altogether.

The bulk of the book, and its most valuable part, deals with Australian painting from the Australian Impressionists up to the Drysdale-Nolan-Tucker era. What went before is of historical interest only; the current scene can hardly be assessed while we are in the middle of it.

But that does not in any way detract from the value of Mr. Hughes' highly entertaining survey which is factual enough to satisfy the most pedantic, except for a few points open to dispute. It is indeed a *tour de force*. Some of the characters were dead before Mr. Hughes was born and much of the action took place in his nonage. To have projected himself so successfully into this period is a remarkable feat.

As one who knew most of the actors and was to some degree involved, Mr. Hughes' story seems to me to be basically accurate; in general, I agree with his judgments.

At this remove, of course, it is easier to get the picture into perspective. The feuds are over and the cantankerous old men who hated the young painters are dead. No sensible person would contend now that the older Streeton was as good as the young Streeton, that Drysdale based his work on the American regional painters, that Dobell was a caricaturist, or that Norman Lindsay was to be taken seriously about anything.

The isolation of Australia from European art—and from all other art—is now difficult to appreciate. The ignorance and stupidity of too many of the trustees of such institutions as the National Gallery, Melbourne, were a wall against comprehension; people of this kind knocked back a splendid Renoir and no doubt many other works now adorning American museums.

As late as the 1930s inferior color prints provided the only knowledge Australians in Australia had of the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists—there was a time lag of half a century.

It is not surprising that with the Old Timers (who had had all the plums) fighting a rearguard action, the young men discovering Cezanne and Van Gogh, the Meldrumites orating and proselytizing, and the social realists denouncing the whole box and dice, the pot boiled over and we had as stormy a decade or so as you could wish for.

Mr. Hughes deals with all this, I think, very fairly. He is no indiscriminate iconoclast and does justice to such men as Ramsay, Lambert and Bunny on all of whom, of course, Europe had rubbed off.

In his summing up he quotes an Australian painter as saying "The fact is you can't begin to grow up until you've left the place". "Brutal though this may be," says Mr. Hughes, "it represents fairly accurately the way many Australian artists feel about the environment which they have inherited."

This is true. A very small part of the quality of, say, Monet or Van Gogh comes through in prints; it is impossible to comprehend their achievement or that of the Old Masters without seeing the originals. This lack of direct connection with the art of the past means that Australians can be unduly affected by an occasional loan exhibition such as that of the Americans and that its influence can be disproportionate.

For the record, one may query one point. Mr. Hughes says of Nolan's "Boy in Township" (1943), "Nolan had heard about a child mummified by the heat of a bushfire, and in the painting the small body floats, still in its bright clothes, above the wreckage of buildings". But the story as I have it from another source is that "The picture was originally a landscape with a bushfire burning fiercely on the horizon and fires burning all over the hill behind the houses. If you turn the page (of the Pelican book) upside down you will see what Nolan meant. Then one day he was looking at it upside down and, typically Nolan, thought, 'I'll alter the houses about a bit, the fires look like blossom trees and I'll put a boy in that bit of paddock at the right'."

But that is by the way. The book is worth while.

LABOUR ARISTOCRATS AND COMMONERS

L. J. LOUIS

K. D. Buckley: "The Amalgamated Engineers in Australia, 1852-1920". Dept. of Economic History, A.N.U. Canberra, 1970, pp. 318. \$5.00.

Edgar Ross: "A History of the Miners' Federation of Australia". The Australasian Coal and Shale Employees' Federation, Sydney, 1970. pp. 528. \$7.50.

While labour history in Australia has made promising advances, there have been very few published histories of trade unions, though there are more in thesis form. Now K. Buckley and E. Ross offer thorough studies of two important unions, the Engineers and the Miners. Reflecting the twin sources of labour historiography in Australia, one book is by an academic (Buckley) and published by a university department, and the other is by a veteran activist (Ross) and published by a union. For this novel venture the Miners' Federation is to be warmly applauded, and let's hope it will be emulated by others.

Buckley's is an admirable scholarly history of the Australian branch of the British Amalgamated Society of Engineers from its foundation on board the **Frances Walker** in 1852 by 26 immigrant engineers up to 1920 when the Society became the Amalgamated Engineering Union with over 17,000 Australian members. The course of this growth and the activities of the union are skilfully recounted, and always in the context of the state of the engineering industry which is seen at all points to contribute heavily to the shaping of union policy. Indeed, not the least valuable part of the book is a lucid outline of the development of the industry.

With sympathy, Buckley builds up an informed picture of this exclusive craft union. Paying high contributions which entitled them to substantial benefits, the engineers were the aristocrats of labour. Yet as Buckley has occasion to remark, they exhibited "a curious blend of conservatism and militancy". While they tended to stand aloof from the rest of the labour movement, they were willing to provide financial support to other unions involved in disputes, though this was often a matter of self interest. Moreover, these "sober and upright citizens" were themselves ready to strike if necessary. Radical historians quite properly have stressed 'new unionism' and the Labor Party as a break-through for the working class; but this has often involved overlooking the positive qualities of craft unions like the A.S.E. If conservative politically, engineers relied on their own industrial strength. They also preserved a spirit of independence, and they built an organisation which, though exclusive, was better able to withstand the shocks of industrial defeat and depression. Already, however, under the impact of technological change the union was being obliged to make provision for semi-skilled members.

While one might at times regret the limits he has set to his study, Buckley writes exceedingly well and carries out his task in a disciplined fashion. Further tables would have been useful, for example to establish the relationship between engineers' rates and those of other workers; and as, unlike Ross, he provides no index, a list of the leading officials of the union would have been helpful.

Ross in his account of the miners deals with men living in a very different world. Such was the cruel lot of miners for so much of their history that it seems apt that the industry began with convict labour in the hell on the Hunter River. From these origins Ross traces the development of the industry and reconstructs in detail the vicissitudes of the struggles of the miners to organise and wage an unremitting battle to wrest decent living and working conditions from an unstable industry and intransigent employers. Industrial relations in mining have been characterised by a turbulence far in excess of that in any other Australian industry. Not only has there been class war with employers but, as well, with mining so vital to the national economy, disputes have brought down on the union the coercive power of the state, irrespective of the political complexion of governments. These naked struggles were frequently accompanied by violence; yet it ought to be noted that this never approached anything resembling the American experience, and so underlines the relatively peaceful nature of labour relations in Australia. The militancy of miners has been a potent ingredient in the labour movement. Many responded to I.W.W. ideas, and miners were the first to accept communist leadership. Despite the isolation of mining communities, the union has an heroic record of solidarity action and has been in the forefront of many working-class causes. In providing a setting for this influence and involvement, Ross re-states much traditional left wing history of the labour movement.

A brilliant study of the miners was made in 1963 by Robin Gollan in "The Coalminers of New South Wales", and Ross traverses the same ground again. However, in his much longer work, Ross elaborates on the basic story, providing more detail and extending its scope to the whole of Australia. He is also able to add more of the flavor and color of the life of the union as he illustrates with reminiscences, sketches, the characters of leaders, and highlights the hazards of the occupation by describing the far too frequent mine disasters which were usually the result of managements' negligence. Ross has made a valuable contribution in an extended account of the 1950's, when belatedly the industry was modernised and transformed, and the union fought a valiant but losing rear guard action against the consequences of mechanisation and rationalisation. The union had survived the onslaughts of employers and governments for nearly 100 years, but now its industrial strength fell victim to technology—a fate shared by other traditionally militant unions to the extent that socialists today are obliged to redefine the terms of contemporary class conflict. A major disappointment, heightened by his unique qualifications for the task, is Ross' analysis of that most critical episode, the 1949 coal strike. By ignoring the role of the Communist Party he has not succeeded in demolishing the "communist conspiracy", but rather gives an equally inadequate version. Nevertheless, the book embodies an enormous fund of knowledge about the industry and the union, and is warmed by a deep affection for the miners, though unfortunately for future research Ross has not provided any footnotes.

Trade union histories, even comprehensive studies such as these, leave necessarily a feeling of incompleteness—they often seem like a drama in which

only some of the characters can be seen and heard. Nevertheless, these accounts of two important unions do deepen our understanding of the Australian labour movement and offer a salutary reminder of its diversity and complexity. Major themes and problems are illustrated, and the carefully observed behavior of the miners and engineers helps fill out our knowledge of critical episodes. As well, both books have something to say on the contribution of immigrants to Australian unionism which is a vital consideration that has been too much neglected. On the other hand, one cannot but regret that these historians give such brief glimpses of the social lives of miners and engineers. The glaring lack of studies of working class culture in Australia stands as a challenge to labour historians.

CHLOE AND GLAD

RUSSEL WARD

W. Fearn-Wannan [Bill Wannan]: "Australian Folklore: A Dictionary of Lore, Legends, and Popular Allusions". Lansdowne Press, 1970, 582 pp., \$9.95.

This book should be as welcome as it is handsomely bound and printed.

When I was an undergraduate at the University of Adelaide in the mid 1930's, the professor of English Language and Literature was (of course) a Briton, J. I. M. Stewart, more widely known in later years as Michael Innes, the popular detective-story writer. Towards the end of a four-year honors course from "Beowulf" to W. H. Auden, which included some American writing, I ingenuously asked him whether we were to study any Australian literature. "Australian literature", he replied superciliously, "what Australian literature?" He pronounced the words as Her current Majesty does in her homely Christmas broadcasts—"Horse-stralian" with a silent 'H'. Nevertheless, he was a distinguished Shakespearean scholar and I was suitably chastened. It took me years to find out for myself that the work of Joseph Furphy or Henry Handel Richardson, for instance, could be a proper subject of study for educated persons.

Times have changed, though not before time, and in the field of Australian folklore no-one living has done more to bring about the change—to collect, record and popularise our folklore, in the broadest and best sense of that term—than W. Fearn-Wannan [Bill Wannan].

In this book he has assembled, in attractively produced and readily accessible form, the fruits of forty years of living and research in the rich paddocks of Australiana. It is a big book of 582 pages and 200 illustrations. The 1,286 alphabetically arranged entries vary in length from a few words under, say, "Albany Doctor" ("A cooling sea-breeze, the 'Albany', is enjoyed by residents of Albany, W.A., after a hot day. 'Fremantle Doctor' has a similar meaning") to a few pages on the ubiquitous but mysterious "Wild Colonial Boy".

Wannan's preface is an admirably succinct and judicious essay on the nature of folklore and its relationship with society and history. He defines the scope of his book thus:

The Australian Nationalists

Modern Critical Essays

CHRIS WALLACE-CRABBE

A collection of critical essays, focused on the literature of the Nationalist era, which produced works both in literature and painting of a particularly Australian flavour. Included are articles on Henry Lawson, Joseph Furphy, A. B. Paterson, C. J. Brennan, and Bernard O'Dowd. Among the writers are A. D. Hope, Judith Wright, A. A. Phillips, Vance Palmer and John Barnes.

Cloth boards \$9.95 Paper covers \$6

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

We are all inheritors of a large body of phrases, sayings, bywords, fables, "folk history", identification symbols and customary attitudes, and these in their totality form the mythology, folklore, and finally the ethos, of our community. We do not, of course, share all of this lore and these traditional attitudes in their entirety. To many Australians phrases like "the cultural cringe" and "temper, democratic; bias, offensively Australian" will mean nothing; to a fairly large, well-educated minority they are "household words". On the other hand, there are allusions like "Lasseter's Lost Reef", "Chloe" and "Our Glad" which will strike a responsive chord in the consciousness of a vast majority of Australians.

What I have attempted to do is to provide a readily accessible guide to the more persistent, widely-used, or historically important of these references—whether they be ones frequently met with in the present day or those which have left their imprint on the life of Australian yesterdays.

This is a tall order but it has been splendidly carried out. Of course there exist what reviewers are wont to call "surprising" omissions. For example, there is no entry at all under "Jumbuck". The late Harold Holt's mindlessly subservient slogan, "All the Way with L.B.J.", is included, but there is no reference to Darcy Dugan, the contemporary gaol-breaker extraordinary. There is some reason to think that Sir Frederick Pottinger, the police officer in charge of the long hunt for Ben Hall, may have been the original "Blind Freddy", immortalised in the phrase "Even

Blind Freddy (or Poor Blind Freddy) couldn't miss it", but Wannan omits reference to this possibility. Similarly under "Send 'Er Down, Hughie", there is no mention of the late "Duke" Tritton's persuasive claim (in his "Time Means Tucker", published by the Bulletin a few years ago) to have invented the phrase. Under "Bondi" there is a note on "The Bondi icebergs" but no mention of "shooting through like a Bondi tram". And so on. Some "omissions" will occur to almost every reader.

But to say this is not to disparage the book. One compiled by anyone else would necessarily have as many or more, if different, "omissions". As the author justly writes in the preface:

Completeness, however, was not my goal. "Definitive" is a term which is incompatible with folklore and mythology; in fact, there is a contradiction there, for the lore of the folk is as unending and diversified as life itself, and as incomplete as the hopes and struggles and aspirations of the people who make it.

For all that the book is a vast, well-ordered and well-documented treasury of our folklore. It is also the only book of its type in existence. If any other scholar ever produces a more 'complete' or better "Dictionary of Australian Folklore", he will be able to do so only by standing on Mr. Wannan's solid shoulders.

FRIENDS IN PARIS

CLEMENT SEMMLER

Frank Budgen: "Myselves When Young". O.U.P., London, 1970.

In a sense the autobiographer is like a man who stands still in a train and who battles with a receding scene. He is creating not only a past but a design for the past made in the present. For this reason not many autobiographies succeed in holding sustained interest, or indeed in meriting re-reading. Too frequently they are cheerfully and misleadingly colored by mere reminiscence either true or highly imagined. Yet despite this there is at present an extraordinary vogue of autobiography; it would seem that a large number of people, incapable of writing at any considerable level, feel that this is something they can quite easily do. Perhaps it is because we are living through a time in which history and social change make people dramatic and interesting to themselves; we all feel perhaps that we now have some sort of turn on the stage.

The autobiography of the imaginative artist would seem to have its special difficulties; he tends to be interested strictly in his relation to his own art. The temptation again is that he will fall into reminiscence, and even reminiscence will be spoiled because it will be related to himself, and not allow events and people to appear in their independent fullness. If all one's pride and humility are going into the concern with only art, there is nothing left for people. But the most dangerous enemies of the

artistic autobiographer are his own powers of evocation and eloquence. In a few intoxicating phrases the imaginative writer can mislead with a landscape, he can skip great changes of feeling in an image or two, and conceal himself in the words he is unable to resist.

In one of the most attractive autobiographies that have appeared on our scene for many years, Frank Budgen avoids all these things. Incredibly, at the age of 80, he has sustained a unity of tone, investing his best remembered hours, days and years (fragmented yet cohesive) with a rare, imaginative technique. There is no laborious recital of childhood and growing: rather in the first part of his book he has the various episodes of his early life narrated in the third person by a different "self" according to the nickname by which he was dubbed. Thus there is the child Moony living in the poverty of a North London working class home; Jesus, the seaman trainee in the Marine Society; Doctor, the apprentice merchant seaman lurching round the English coast in tramp steamers for a pound a month and all found. Then begins the life of the landlubber—Felix, the G.P.O. clerk, actively embracing socialism and the doctrines of Marx—even representing the Socialist Labour Party at an international congress in Stuttgart. Finally, there is Ethelred—*le dilatoire l'Anglais typique*, "the Unread, the Unhung", who finds his artistic soul in Paris, earning his living as a model, and studying art himself. Here, in his haven at last, his selves coalesce, and his story takes up the first person.

In Paris, in pre-World War II. years, his intimate friends included the painter August Suter, the poet Siegfried Lang, the sculptor Louis Weber and especially the poet Blaise Cendrars—all Swiss, and all important influences on Budgen's life. Under their influence he developed his own art as a painter. And above all there was Paris.

All her lovers are an inch taller walking at her side. She is all things to all men. She has queenly languors for the young and ardent, kickshaws and cancons for daddy with a day off, whips and spurs for the old man who won't give in. Out of strength comes forth her sweetness; luxury is her child by avarice; a million eyes are envious of her magic while she conjures her glittering novelties out of garbage.

Through the hospitality of his friends he lived out the War years in Basel and Zurich—out of harm's way, painting, writing, reading (Shakespeare, Nietzsche and the poetry of Stefan George), even working for a time in the British Consulate. And then he met James Joyce.

Budgen could easily have made his book hinge on Joyce. Instead it is strictly in perspective. The penultimate chapter "Mr. Joyce", details his four years' association with him from 1915 to 1919 in Zurich where (as we know from his "James Joyce and the Making of 'Ulysses'") he helped Joyce in so many ways—researching, getting chapters typed, talking about the book's progress with the master. It is all vastly illuminating. But now in his autobiography, Budgen seems to look from a distance and observe some feet of clay. Once Nora Joyce complained tearfully to Budgen that Jim wanted her "to go with other men so he would have something to write about". (Joyce was writing the Sirens episode and wanted some cuckold-ing.) There were similar literary intentions, according to Budgen, in his affair with Marthe

Fleischmann. He was writing "Nausikaa", and wanted help. Joyce confided his extramarital amours to Budgen and stale and unprofitable they sounded in a bachelor's ears. One night he furtively brought Marthe to Budgen's studio.

My recollection of her is that she was of an agreeable appearance even if no great beauty. As an old shipmate of mine would have described her, she was high up in the fo'c'sle and fairly broad in the beam. She was comely but not at all sprightly, certainly no bleaching lassie of a Nausikaa, no sex kitten, and it was hard to imagine her giving displays of her undies for Joyce's benefit.

But the most revealing of these memories of his Joycean associations is that he became interested in sleep and dreams and tried for a time to recapture in words the incongruities of dreams' events, their timeless sequences, their metamorphoses. He told Joyce of his problem and his failure to solve it. It was only years later, when he read "Finnegans Wake" that he realised that his challenge to a master craftsman had been accepted. "That was the prick of the spindle that gave me the keys to dreamland," writes Joyce in "Finnegans Wake". Well, Budgen concludes, "this entitles me, I think, to claim equal rank with that enlightened apple without whose timely fall we might still be waiting for the law of gravitation".

The book ends with Budgen's return to London in the early 1920's, and the memories of the Jesus he was that come flooding back to him as he looks in vain for his old training ship on the banks of the Thames. One fervently hopes that 80 years or no, there is more to come.

BLACKS GO WEST

PETER BISKUP

P. Hasluck: "Black Australians: A Survey of Native Policy in Western Australia". M.U.P., \$6.75.

"Black Australians" was first published in 1942, and was based on an M.A. thesis for the University of Western Australia. At that time, the author was the literary editor of the "West Australian," and had already demonstrated his keen interest in Australian Aborigines in a slim volume of reportage entitled "Our Southern Half-Castes and Their Condition".

The new edition of the book is to be applauded for two reasons. One can be found in the author's subsequent career. As Minister for Territories between 1951 and 1963, he was in a unique position to apply some of the conclusions, or "lessons of history", which he had himself drawn from his scholarly study of culture contact in Western Australia. The student of Australian native administration during the 1950's, as well as the general reader, will learn much from the book about the author's fundamental values and principles. The young Hasluck, admitted an otherwise unfriendly reviewer recently, "emerges as a man of integrity and idealistic principles, with a strong feeling of compassion for the underprivileged dark community of his state".

The second lies in the book's intrinsic value. When first published, it was hailed by none other than A. P. Elkin as an "outstanding contribution to Australian historical research". The original edition was limited to 500 copies, and has been virtually unprocurable. "As a work of history the book seems to me to have stood the test of a quarter of a century", we are told in the author's preface to the new edition. "The interpretation of events and the conclusions drawn from them still seem to be valid and as relevant today to the discussion of native welfare in Australia as they were when first presented." A glance at the most recent authoritative account of Aboriginal-white relations in Australia, C. D. Rowley's "The Destruction of Aboriginal Society", will confirm this claim—the Western Australian section of the book is based on Hasluck's work.

Hasluck was something of a pioneer in Australian social history. His was the first historical account of culture contact anywhere in Australia based on primary material. In scope, his work attempted to survey not only official policy during the first seventy years of Western Australia's recorded history but also to show how this policy had been applied in practice; more importantly, it also sought to demonstrate the relationship between local public opinion and official attitudes.

If he was not wholly successful in the latter undertaking, the fault is partly due to his arrangement of the material in more or less water-tight compartments (the chapter headings read "The Setting of the Study", "The Intention", "The Performance", "Still Black, Though British", and "Public Opinion"). The result is a blurring of the total picture which alone can bring out all casual factors in any historical account.

One could also criticise the author for his failure to give due weight to public opinion in Great Britain, which shaped much of official policy (as distinct from practice) up to 1897, or for his rather cavalier treatment of the land question, the employment of Aborigines in the pastoral industry, and the emergence of the part-Aboriginal problem.

But much of such criticism would be unfair, for a historian of a generation ago had little or no reason to ask such questions. Nor should it be forgotten that the author was not in a position to draw on many specialised studies (e.g. the pastoral industry, missions) which have appeared in the last fifteen years; indeed, the only general history of the State at his disposal, that of J. S. Battye, was practically useless to him as a social historian.

As for minor factual mistakes, the book has fewer than one normally expects in a study of this kind. A few examples: the legal right of Aborigines to enter unimproved parts of pastoral leases "for the purpose of seeking their subsistence therefrom in the accustomed manner" went back not to 1872 (p. 114) but 1864; the grant voted by parliament to the Aborigines Department in 1900 was £10,000, not £5,000 (p. 119).

One important omission; the author fails to discuss, or even to mention, the "Pigeon rebellion" which shook the Kimberleys in 1894-5 and which did much to perpetuate the "teach them a lesson" mentality among the settlers. Finally, it would have brightened up the proceedings to mention that the Gascoyne pastoralist named Gale, reported (on p. 180) to have said, in 1882, "if the Government would shut their eyes for six months and

let the settlers deal with the natives in their own way, it would stop the depredations effectually," became Chief Protector of Aborigines in 1907.

The 1970 edition is identical with the original edition except for two changes. One is the addition of an index—a welcome improvement which brings together much scattered comment. The second is the replacement of Acknowledgments by a Preface. One of the comments the author makes there is worth mentioning: it concerns "a matter of vocabulary". Terms like primitive, white, black and native, we are told, may "sometimes seem out of place today". One could think of some others: few people would today speak of "corrupting" the Aborigines when referring to sexual intercourse between white men and Aboriginal women. But the matter of vocabulary goes further than that. New jargon, sometimes expressing new insights, has come into general use since the original edition was published. For example, today one would simply refer to "settlers' attitude" instead of explaining, at some length, "why it was that men of decent habit and normally controlled passions were moved to a tolerance of violence and even to its commission" (p. 179). The fact that the author thought it necessary to devote over ten pages to the answer is as much a comment on the period of his study as on his own times.

NEW VERSE

FRANK KELLAWAY

R. J. Deeble: "You". Melbourne, Sweeney Reed, 75 cents.

Michael Dugan: "Missing People". Melbourne, Sweeney Reed, 75 cents.

This is the fourth book of verse by Russell Deeble who has made a name for trippy hippy utterance reading his work widely in South Eastern Australia. "You" is a poem of twenty-four longish lines each broken into three with about forty-two words to a page which makes an elegantly printed booklet, though the cover looks like a pretty ad. for face cream or bath salts. The verse which is in couplets has a pleasant lilt and contrived clumsiness of rhythm which is intended to express emotion. Occasionally it is discretely witty.

You have forgotten that we're us
and there's still something in
between

You are having sauna baths
but it's me that's getting
clean.

Michael Dugan's nine short poems have an easy, relaxed tone of voice. They are lyrical and have some wit and a strong sense of compassion. "The Conscript at Home" manages to make a valid comment on the horrors of war in a quiet key without much pretentiousness, though it is marred by two obvious cliché lines:

Screaming their impotent protest
to a world that can give only hate

"The Actor" is more original but the compassion is qualified by cleverness.

"Pistils at Sunrise", spoiled by the coy pun in the title, is young and lyrical.

At dawn
we fought a duel with flowers
(both winning)
and lay in morning fields
smelling the clover
and holding the sun in our hands.

As manifestations of the "new spirit" in Aust Po neither "Missing People" nor "You" seem particularly revolutionary or avant-garde.

RECENT FICTION

CARL HARRISON-FORD

Barry Oakley: "Let's Hear it for Prendergast". Heinemann, \$4.25.

Owen Webster: "Adam Pilgrim: So". Owen Webster, \$3.95.

Hal Porter: "Mr. Butterfry and Other Tales of New Japan". Angus & Robertson, \$3.95.

Thea Astley (Ed.): "Coast to Coast, 1969-1970". Angus & Robertson, \$3.95.

Barry Oakley is, at present, enjoying tremendous popularity and this, his third novel, was one of the winners of the Captain Cook bi-centenary awards last year. Very much in the slapstick style of his two previous novels, "Let's Hear it for Prendergast" is a chronicle of the hopelessly foot-in-mouth career of six-foot-six proletarian poet, business-world drop-out. The book is episodic, unstructured and narrated clumsily enough to allow the jokes to be glaringly predictable and the farce to degenerate into the schoolboy fantastic.

In a series of wild, unconnected encounters with the world that is Prendergast's private enemy, the poet gets involved with pornographic photography, academic parties, poetry readings to unresponsive proletarian audiences and, finally, apocalyptic student politics. After the disruption of the Moomba festival and the occupation of the Melbourne cenotaph Prendergast becomes even more an outcast and finally dies, a beanstalk Quasimodo, burning down a bi-centenary display at the Exhibition building.

For all the novel's faults there is no denying that Oakley has great comic skill. The trouble is that it is primarily the skill of the raconteur or of the revue writer and, when Oakley pushes his episodic and fragmented jokes into a novel, there is no narrative, stylistic or conceptual cohesion. I would suggest, in fact, that much of the praise that has been heaped on Oakley derives from a sense of relief after reading the tortured styles of Porter, White and Stow.

There is, finally, little to be said for "Let's Hear it for Prendergast" as a work of even the lightest fiction except that it is very easy to read and relaxing and that many of its scattered events are, of themselves, very funny. Beyond that, I can only say that Oakley seems to have little to say

and that this affects his chances of writing a well ordered and unified work of fiction. There are many raucous jokes and loud explosions, but no novel to accommodate them.

Owen Webster's "So", the letter-to-his-daughter of Adam Pilgrim in which Pilgrim recounts his days of courting and the disaster of his marriage, is refreshingly ambitious after the sweet nothings of Prendergast. As he accompanies his book with a publicity blurb maintaining that "So" was the novel Australian publishers dared not print, Webster may be seen as throwing down a gauntlet or two to local publishers. Unfortunately, even the most cursory glance at the novel itself reveals that "So" was almost certainly rejected on the strength of its lack of organisation and its indulgent long-windedness rather than on the daring nature of its contents. One can't help feeling that a bit of effort on Webster's part and a good editor could have combined to make much of "So".

Webster is at his best discussing his courting and the neurotic pursuit of that elusive post W.W. II. English commodity sex-in-suburbia. There is a terribly funny scene in which he tells of his attempt to seduce his fiancée on the family sofa and to stage a hammed-up attempted suicide after his failure in which he seems to get right to the cause of his and his fiancée's problems: their ignorance, their unthinking moralism and their inability to be rational at times when they most need to be. In doing this, Webster is also able to refer conditions of his late 1940s adolescence to those of the permissiveness of his daughter's, and to bridge what he sees as a generation gap through frankness and empathy.

The early scenes are all ambitious in this way and really trying to demonstrate Webster's beliefs through fiction rather than through tract. For at least the first half of the novel the letter device works well and, from a reader's point of view, unobtrusively. Unfortunately the tone is not maintained and Webster lapses into the sermon. He quotes vast amounts of Reich, which may well fit in the letter itself but which, since the letter is the novel, do not ride easily with the reader. Conversely, the criss-crossing between first and third person narrative seems to suggest that Webster was trying to relieve the tediousness of the letter form. The result is a jumble which the appendix of trite aphorisms makes one suspect is a result of a lack of ability to structure a novel.

"So" is not really a good novel, and at times it makes for very tedious reading, but it is at least a novel written with a purpose and Webster can be congratulated on his aspirations. He has produced a novel which is at times very penetrating and should not be dismissed too easily on the strength of its lapses.

It is a great relief to read even the most convoluted sentences of Hal Porter after a session with most popular local fiction. Porter is, in his prose, a poseur but the pose is well defined and not merely gratuitous. What comes across most strongly in "Mr. Butterfry" is Porter's half-comic half-serious belief in the world, or social relations at any rate, as a stage. In each of these stories occidentals come into contact with things Japanese and in each case the confrontation leads to a conflict of roles, of expectations, that reveals much

of the man behind the mask. It is worth noting that Porter, who has demonstrated a near fixation with Japan throughout his writings, entitled his book about that country "The Actors".

This aspect of Porter is best revealed in "The House on the Hill". In this story Perrot (an old faithful in Porter's fiction and an anagram of the author) stays at the home of occidental friends in Toyko while they are on holidays. Tensions arise between Perrot and the three servant-students which come to a head when Perrot arrives home unexpectedly and walks in on a party and binge he was not supposed to have seen. From this point on Perrot merely waits for the revenge to offset the humiliation. When his absent hosts return Perrot is turned out of the house on the strength of a false and damning complaint from one of the servants. The story is beautifully controlled and clearly displays a conflict in terms of actors from different plays wandering onto the same set by mistake: there is a sense of doom, but the players stick to their parts and never understand the other at any level past the animal. This concept is reinforced by the undisclosed nature of the accusation and the lack of fight in Perrot.

The other stories in "Mr. Butterfry" contain a similar use of dramatic structuring and of role playing. In "The Two Baronesses", two ageing women, one in London and one in Toyko, commit identical crimes out of similar loneliness in the midst of plenty. Porter is at times a very irritating craftsman—he often, for instance, seems determined to finish his sentences with prepositions—but his writings have an ornate style that gets subsumed into his stories. Though he may be seen as filling his fiction with asides and bitchy jokes or deliberately quirky observations they are all, on examination, germane to the narrator's vision of the situation.

Finally, Thea Astley's selection of "Coast to Coast" for the last two years is sadly lacking in talent. Most of the stories are either predictable or read suspiciously like the results of creative writing courses in which the writer has been trained to give relevant details and consequently does so in a rush, or to add local color and who does so in patches more reminiscent of a palette than a painting.

Among the predictable stories is the tale of the husband who stays home from the Saturday football because his wife is ill, and when he takes the dog for a walk it reveals the wife's secret lover (T. A. G. Hungerford); and the story of the eccentric landlady with the dead war-hero son and mystery lodger—only the lodger is really the son (Anthony Cam). These are stories in which the predictability is really disastrous since that alone was the point of the story.

As with my preference for "So", my preferences went to the more ambitious stories in "Coast to Coast": G. F. Dean's "The Town that Died", Hal Porter's "My Pal Rembrandt" (which is also in "Mr. Butterfry"), Peter Mathers' "The Henshaws" and Patricia Johnson's "Jose and Mama". Gwen Kelly's "Mini-Skirts" was well and perceptively written but used a strange combination of predictability and trendy violence to force home a rather commonplace observation. Generally, "Coast to Coast 1969-1970" is not really worth reading—it tells us little about the short story in Australia and offers little talent worth examining.

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