

# OVERLAND

NUMBER SEVEN, AUTUMN-WINTER 1956

ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE



The Wreckers.

Pen drawing by Ron Edwards

## WRITING BY:

Lloyd Davies, Leslie Rees, Dymphna Cusack, Hilary Richmond,  
Gerry Grant, Eric Lambert, John Manifold, Vance Palmer,  
David Martin, John Morrison, Eric la Motte, Laurence Collinson,  
Brian Fitzpatrick, Russel Ward and others.



## A FAIR GO

THE newspapers are continually giving boosts to our national ego by retailing rhapsodic stories of the successes of Australian singers, Australian writers, Australian actors, Australian sportsmen—overseas.

This may leave many with a self-satisfied feeling that all is well. Unfortunately these reports hide the real truth, which is that the Australian writer, musician, actor, sportsman, in his own native land, is in a pretty fix indeed.

As is clear from Mr. Grant's article in this issue, the advent of TV in Australia brings forward these issues in a sharper form than ever before.

Many have been aware for some time that the numbers of creative literary works published in Australia have been steadily falling from year to year, that the opportunities for talented, and potentially talented, actors and musicians are diminishing, and that Australia produces sportsmen without giving much encouragement to sport.

So far as writers, actors and musicians are concerned, TV is going to bring into the closest register the problems of creative workers in different fields—and writers should be alert to realise that they are among the first to be affected. Every word that is spoken on TV has first to be put on paper by some writer, somewhere.

But where?

If we did not know it before, we know from Mr. Grant's article that not only was a quota for Australian artists on TV of 55 per cent. of TV time refused, but an appeal even for a guaranteed 7½ per cent. of time was knocked back.

Certainly some Australians make good now, and some will make good on TV. But cut-throat competition on the one hand, and official laissez faire on the other, are no good for culture in any of its forms.

We must ask why the only voices raised in protest at the sacrifice of Australian cultural interests on the altar of monopoly-TV should have been those of Actors' Equity and of the Federal Opposition.

The reason is that those who feel deeply about this matter and realise their responsibility still lack cohesion, co-ordination and co-operation—a situation it must be one of the functions of Overland to help to rectify.

We should not fail to recognise, however, some very positive steps in the right direction for Australian cultural life, notable among them the establishment of the Elizabethan Theatre Trust. We will hope to see Australian plays taking predominance in the repertoire of the Trust and, as Mr. Rees points out in his article in this issue, the Trust is not unaware of its responsibilities.

In urging protection for Australian writers, actors and musicians on TV; in urging an increase in the pitifully inadequate Commonwealth Literary Fund grants; in urging Government support for chairs of Australian Literature in all Australian universities; in urging quotas to nurture an infant Australian film industry—we are not asking for mollycoddling.

What we are asking is that our leaders take the same pride in our national character and cultural achievements—past, present and potential—as leaders do in other similarly situated countries, of similar size and resources.

Into this must enter an appreciation of the role of the literary magazines; they give form and con-

tent, direction and perspective to important sectors of our national life; and the fact that the importance of such journals is out of all proportion to their restricted circulations and financial tight-rope-walking is readily acknowledged abroad.

Meanjin, Southerly and Overland, each in their own way, have proved themselves, and are entitled to public support.

We Australians are unable to shelter behind a deep-rooted national cultural stability; we are still trying to establish it. We have no great population behind us, nor a national language of our own, such as in many lands does protect indigenous culture.

Our bitter experiences in the field of films, radio, publishing teach us that our cultural life needs legislative protection and nurture, just as our industrial and agricultural life does.

Given a fair go, we can work wonders.

★

## IN CONSTANT REPAIR

THERE can be few writers or readers, no matter what opinions they hold, who have not been interested in recent cultural developments in the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe. These controversies and discussions are bound to find their echo, in one form or another, wherever creative people chart their course in these dramatic times. The debate has clearly only just begun.

Overland is a democratic magazine of ideas and literary expression. We ask our readers to espouse no particular political philosophy. But Overland is alive to the issues involved, issues which are far more than merely political. What is on the agenda are questions touching deeply on the fundamentals of art and affecting all of us. We welcome the re-emphasis that is now being placed on creative freedom and responsibility, courage and honesty in dealing with material, variety of approach, the right and duty to experiment, common humanity and the attaining of that degree of tolerance of error that is indispensable in discovering truth.

We have always stood for these things but they need (as Samuel Johnson said of friendship) to be kept in constant repair. We do not doubt that the pages of Overland will reflect the ferment. Writers are men and women who record the storms of history as they rage through the lives and minds of people. They must respond to the storm from whatever direction it is blowing. You cannot face one and turn your back on another.

★

## Song Of The A-Bomb

Suffer, little children,  
to come unto me, in disintegrated  
particles of radioactive dust;  
children of Hiroshima, with the smoke and fire,  
heavenward ascending in a glorious blast.  
They who gathered mushrooms on autumn hillsides,  
who did their morning exercises, singing happily,  
have left  
the earth  
behind them  
and in a  
monstrous  
mushroom  
risen to  
the cruel sky  
where heaven used to be.

NANCY CATO

Overland, July 1955



# THE CASE OF WALTER OGILVIE

by *Lloyd Davies*

MY own involvement in the case of Walter Ogilvie was purely accidental and dated from the day it began. I was seated in a Canberra restaurant and caught sight of him wandering abstractedly amongst the furniture. I called out to him, finally got up and escorted him to my table.

"Ah, Penberthy," he said, "How are you? I don't think I've seen you since before the war."

I confirmed this. Actually we had got to know each other when we were working with C.S.I.R. in 1938. I was on the Administrative side, Ogilvie was doing some research into cosmic radiation.

When the war came I went into the army as a quartermaster and Ogilvie got a back room job somewhere. I heard that he did brilliantly, went to Oak Ridge and later to England to complete his Ph.D. thesis. A thesis which, I understand, was received with great acclaim in scientific circles.

When I'd got him seated at the table and ordered a meal for him I commenced to try to make conversation about the old days with C.S.I.R., but without much success. Ogilvie just didn't appear to hear anything I said. I had to repeat myself several times. At first I took no notice as he'd always been a vague sort of person to talk to socially, completely wrapped up in his work.

It soon became apparent, however, that it was more than absentmindedness; the man was clearly quite worried about something. I wondered whether I should ask him what was the matter when suddenly he volunteered the information himself. He spoke quickly, in obvious agitation.

"A most amazing thing happened to me this morning. Only an hour or so ago. You remember my thesis—or perhaps you hadn't heard . . ."

I assured him I had, began to congratulate him but he brushed it aside.

"Thank you, Penberthy, old history now. But you see the only Australian copy of my thesis is deposited with the library here. That was one of the terms of my grant. Last week I was given an appointment on the new project at Menai. You know the nuclear power plant . . ."

I tried to congratulate him again, with the same response.

"Nothing really. But you see I'm required to do a lot of research. Much of which will entail reference to my thesis material. I applied to the library for it this morning and was told that I didn't have the necessary security clearance. That it couldn't be made available. My own thesis, Penberthy, my own thesis."

He stopped and stared at me as though incredulous of his own words, his fingers nervously worrying a stray dessert spoon on the table.

I looked back at him even more incredulously. "But that's gilbertian, Ogilvie," I said. "There's obviously some slight departmental error somewhere. You'll soon clear that up."

Ogilvie was emphatic that it was more than that—the librarian had been quite firm. Finally, moved by his obvious distraction, I told him that Miss Millard, the librarian, was a friend of mine, that I would personally accompany him to the library that afternoon and straighten things out.

After lunch and a quick check on my staff, I took Ogilvie back to the library. Miss Millard

greeted me warmly, was slightly cooler I thought to Ogilvie, cutting my introduction short with a "Yes, we have met."

I took the line at once that there had been a misunderstanding and that surely, as one of Australia's leading nuclear physicists, Mr. Ogilvie was entitled to look at his own thesis. I purposely adopted a jocular tone.

Miss Millard did not respond. She explained that Mr. Ogilvie's thesis was "classified": that classified material was grouped into classifications in ascending order of "Secret", "Secret and Confidential", "Most Secret" and "Top Secret"; that to have access to classified information one had to have a corresponding security clearance; that Ogilvie's thesis was classified "Most Secret"; that Ogilvie's security clearance only gave him access to "Secret" information. Miss Millard was very much the chief librarian throughout.

During the explanation Ogilvie had wandered away to the catalogue cabinet with the air of one who'd heard it all before. I collected him and we said a not very inspired "Good Afternoon" to Miss Millard.

Quite roused by this time, I assured Ogilvie that I'd see my own Chief about the matter and that he had a way of fixing this sort of mess.

My chief agreed wholeheartedly with me that the whole thing was ridiculous and that he'd take the matter up straight away.

A day or so later he was less confident. He'd checked with Ogilvie's Department and with Libraries; there was no slip-up there, both had referred him to Security. He'd gone to Security. The Colonel himself had confirmed Ogilvie's security rating and said that they would not review it.

"It seems," he reported gravely, "as though Ogilvie got mixed up with 'Sheep-skins for Russia' or something during the war. Bloody fool thing for a man in his position to do. Too deep for us Penberthy. I'm dropping the matter. I advise you to do the same."

Much as I respected his advice, I couldn't follow it; the whole thing seemed so fantastically wrong. Word had got around the academic circles and quite a number of people were up in arms about it.

Ogilvie himself however became less interested in the matter as public concern grew. It wasn't disinterest really, rather embarrassment; he always hated publicity. Despite my protests he left for Sydney assuring me that he could manage without the thesis; it would take months longer, but he could manage.

He was not even at the "Ogilvie Protest Meeting" which I travelled to Sydney to attend. I was surprised at the number of people who were there. I was even more surprised when I found myself elected to the committee.

The work of the "Ogilvie Protest Committee" consisted mainly of informing academic and allied circles of the facts of the Ogilvie case, issuing exhortations to defend academic freedom and collecting written protests from various scholastic people throughout the country.

It came as a shock then, when I read an account of the committee's activities in an evening paper under the heading "Varsity Reds Aid Atom Spy." A somewhat notorious politician had asked in the House (without notice) whether the Honorable the



Prime Minister was not aware that a group of Communist professors and civil servants calling themselves the "Ogilvie Protest Committee" was urging the supplying of secret defence information to a scientist classed by security as a Russian spy?

The Prime Minister had replied that a close watch was being kept on the situation.

My solicitors advised me against issuing a writ. It seems that a fair and accurate report of Parliamentary proceedings is absolutely privileged—notwithstanding that the parliamentary proceedings themselves are neither fair nor accurate.

This question had no doubt been provoked by the fact that the Committee had arranged a deputation to the Cabinet Minister responsible to present the many signed protests which we had gathered, and to press for justice for Ogilvie.

It was decided to ignore the attack and to proceed with the deputation.

The deputation consisted of three persons: The Rev. Raymond Hamilton, a non-conformist clergyman who had circulated the Committee's case very actively amongst the churchmen, Owen Gilbert a young physics lecturer—the secretary of the Committee, a most energetic young man—and myself.

The Minister received us behind a large mahogany desk attended by an alert, somewhat fidgety, young under-secretary.

We were all seated at some distance from the desk and the Minister began the interview with a lofty, condescending: "Well, gentlemen?"

The Reverend Mr. Hamilton began a clear and I thought admirably restrained presentation of our case. He described Ogilvie's plight as "unprecedented and humiliating to Australian science," and put forward a vivacious and knowledgeable attack upon the whole process of stifling science by secrecy.

I referred the Minister to the eminent and reputable people who composed and supported the Committee and deposed from my personal knowledge as to Ogilvie's good character.

The Minister replied with what was obviously intended to be a final summing up. He had little doubt that Ogilvie was personally above reproach, that he was a loyal Australian but that nevertheless he was a security risk and that was that. He added:

"Gentlemen, I have received your protests. I have received numerous other protests. I have received telegrams from a number of ships' crews. I would be failing in my duty if I placed the secrets of this country in danger by conceding to your request.

"Furthermore, gentlemen, I might add that I would be more impressed by your committee if it were not composed almost entirely of Communists."

I must confess I was quite taken aback by this last pronouncement.

"Sir," I broke in with some force, "would you be so good as to name them?" (Mind you, I was



prepared to concede Gilbert, although I'd never asked him and didn't much care, but I couldn't for the life of me think of anyone else.)

The Minister smiled at me, looked up at his under-secretary who sprang into action and began to turn over a file on the Minister's desk. The Minister followed his pointing finger.

"Well, there is a very active Communist, Donald Penberthy, for one," he answered ponderously.

"But I am Penberthy," I gasped.

"And the simple assertion of your identity is sufficient proof that you are not a Communist I suppose?" he replied with sarcasm.

His sudden viciousness quite shocked me.

"Sir," I replied, "as a civil servant of some standing I have made it a rule to avoid political associations. In casting my vote I have in recent years favored your Party, a course of conduct, Sir, I will certainly rectify at the next elections."

The Minister paused a moment, then reverted to his former suavity:

"Well gentlemen, even Cabinet Ministers make mistakes. I will consider the views you have put before me. Thank you."

He closed up the file before him and nodded to signify the end of the interview.

Following our deputation public interest around the Ogilvie case became really active. I was quite surprised by its extent, which I was better able to judge having been transferred to Sydney in the midst of it.

A scholarly letter of protest signed by seventeen senior lecturers at the University was printed in the Sydney Morning Herald. This unleashed a flood of correspondence from every quarter. A number of prominent clergymen raised the case in sermons. Several trade unions passed motions of protest and forwarded them to the government.

I regret to say that the matter was even indirectly the cause of some industrial unrest on the waterfront. Gilbert, with the somewhat reluctant approval of the Committee, had taken to visiting industrial establishments and addressing the workmen in their lunch hour. He always came back very enthusiastic and reported excellent responses.

On one occasion, however, he spoke to a number of wharf laborers. He was apparently so well



received that the men did not hear the whistle and were somewhat late in returning to work. In consequence of this their employers discharged them.

Fresh men were called to fill their places, but those available refused to offer for work and were then suspended by the employing authorities. Apparently this process was repeated and men were disciplined until the entire Sydney waterfront was idle, those not disciplined stopping work in sympathy with those who were.

It was some days before work was resumed, during which time the men engaged in several large demonstrations at which Ogilvie's name appeared on banners, scrimmages occurred with the police and a number of persons was arrested.

I expected this to have a most adverse effect on the Committee's work and had strong words with Gilbert over it. Surprisingly, however, the reverse occurred. The letters to the press increased. I overheard people discussing the case in buses and other public places. Several daily papers ran editorials suggesting a more reasonable line on the part of the government. The Congress of Cultural Freedom suggested that Ogilvie be supplied with excerpts from his thesis after vetting by some responsible and reliable nuclear physicist.

The Opposition moved—unsuccessfully—for suspension of Standing Orders to discuss the case and the Leader of the Opposition made a very strong attack, outside the House, on the Government's handling of the affair.

One evening I received a telephone call from Gilbert.

"Donald," he said, "I think things are coming to a head. We've managed to get Macauley on side and what's more he's prepared to back an appeal to the chancellors and staffs of every University in Australia."

This was really important. Macauley was a University chancellor and the doyen of all the chancellors at that.

"That's excellent, Owen, excellent . . ." I replied.

"But listen, he wants to see Ogilvie, wants to talk to him personally. He has to be sure that Ogilvie's a genuine case. Don't blame him. We all reckon we'd have broken this thing long ago if Ogilvie had shown a bit of interest in it himself . . ."

"I've contacted Ogilvie and the clot says he's too busy with his research to call on Macauley. Macauley fortunately is prepared to visit Ogilvie at his flat to discuss the matter—shows how keen he is. We want you to sit in on the discussion and see that Ogilvie gets his head out of the clouds, OK?"

I readily agreed and we made hasty arrangements for the interview.

On the night arranged I met Gilbert and Macauley in the City and Gilbert drove us out to Ogilvie's flat. Sir Ernest Macauley was a very impressive gentleman. He was large without being fat. Although his hair was snow white his face was surprisingly free from wrinkles. He was not a man for small talk; when he spoke, his statements had the air of judicial pronouncements. Gilbert and I were a little overawed.

Ogilvie was very pleased to see us. Despite my exasperation with him I warmed to his wistful shy smile, his stammered apology about his preoccupation with his work and the untidiness of his flat. It was obvious the man had been busy. A great stack of files and papers covered his writing table, text books were piled on the floor or leant crazily across gaps in his book case.

We didn't worry about this; however, what did disconcert us was the presence of a plump bespectacled gentleman with a brief-case.

Ogilvie noted our surprise and coupled a quick introduction with his apologetic explanation.

"Oh, this is Mr. Cucrov. Sir Ernest Macauley, Dr. Gilbert, Mr. Penberthy. Mr. Cucrov has been assisting me with some aspects of my research."

"Do not worry, gentlemen, I was just going," Cucrov assured us in a heavy Slavonic accent.

"Good evening gentlemen," he concluded, bowing to our nods and moving towards the door.

"Good night, Mr. Cucrov, and thank you again," said Ogilvie accompanying him to the door and asking us over his shoulder to excuse him and please be seated. Through the open door we could hear his final words to Cucrov.

"I would be obliged if you would see that the documents are returned safely. I don't know what arrangements the Embassy made before they left, but there must be some means of communication . . ."

As the conversation progressed Gilbert and I stared at one another unbelievably. Macauley's bushy white eyebrows arched in amazement.

Before any of us could speak Ogilvie returned.

"Now gentlemen . . ." he said.

"Dr. Ogilvie," Macauley broke in with a severe booming voice, "would you mind telling me the nationality of the gentleman who has just left?"

"Cucrov? Why he's a Russian," Ogilvie answered, puzzled. "Was, rather; he's naturalised now I think."

"And to what Embassy were you referring in your conversation?"

"The Soviet Embassy, Sir Ernest, is there . . .?" Macauley rose and cut him short.

"I don't think any further purpose can be served by my remaining here," he pronounced, and stalked out of the room. Gilbert made a despairing gesture at me and followed. I could hear his voice expostulating as it faded away.

Ogilvie looked at me in amazement.

"What a strange way to behave. Surely I am entitled to some explanation?"

"Explanation!" I said angrily. "Don't you think you are the one who should be making the explanation?"

"Really Ogilvie. Here you are, the centre of a national campaign for academic freedom. A campaign, I might add, which could have been assisted considerably by your own active participation. Yet you are quite openly exchanging documents with the Russian Embassy. Haven't you got any bloody sense at all?"

Ogilvie looked at me a little guiltily. Then calmed me with a slight tired smile.

"Good Lord yes, I never thought of that aspect. I'm terribly sorry if I've embarrassed you. Please don't think I am ungrateful for what you and the others have been doing. You know what it is when one gets wrapped up in work and I'm just hopeless in any sort of public affairs.

"Actually, you know, the explanation is simple enough, and there was really no need for Macauley to have been quite so melodramatic this evening."

His voice brightened as he unfolded his explanation.

"You see, while Canberra has the only copy of my thesis in Australia, it's not the only one in the world. Cambridge kept two and sent one to the States, I brought the Canberra copy out with me and handed it over.

"You may have heard that, when it came out, the thesis created quite a bit of interest in international science. I can't imagine why really. Obratsov, he's a leading man in the Leningrad Institute, got to hear of it and applied through the Embassy for access to it.

(Continued next column)



## BOOKS ABOUT AUSTRALIA

Well selected range of best Australian  
Literature always in stock.

★

**The Tree of Man** by Patrick White, 22/6 (1/-).  
**Coonardoo** by Katharine Susannah Prichard,  
16/- (9d.).

**The Fortunes of Richard Mahony** by Henry  
Handel Richardson, 17/6 (1/3).

**Australian Literature** by Morris Miller and  
Macartney, 84/- (1/6).

**True Patriots All** (a collection of broadsides),  
ed. Geoffrey Ingleton, 42/- (1/3).

**Manshy** by Frank Dalby Davison (Twenty-  
five years continually in print), 10/6 (6d.)

Postage in brackets.

★

Send for Lists or Call to

### INTERNATIONAL BOOKSHOP

PTY. LTD.

180 EXHIBITION ST., MELBOURNE

(Continued from previous page)

"Of course there was still a bit of co-operation in those days. Allied unity and all that, and Cambridge made a copy available to the Soviet Embassy in London for translation.

"I knew nothing about this until, quite by accident, I ran into one of the fellows who was running the sheep-skins appeal in Melbourne during the war. Big fellow with glasses—can't think of his name. Starts with "R"—not Richards, some name like that. Doesn't matter anyway.

"He expressed his sympathy at what had happened, asked me if he could help in any way. I must confess I was a little terse, suggested that perhaps his friends at the Soviet Embassy could pass on some of the stuff their fellows were doing.

"It seems he took me seriously. In due course he came back with an enormous volume of material and roped in old Cucrov as an interpreter. A lot of the stuff wasn't much use. Too general, although interesting enough in its way. Imagine my surprise, though, when I got Cucrov to work on a thick wad of typewritten material and he began to translate 'Thesis by Valter Ogilvi, made available by courtesy of the Cambridge University of Great Britain.'

"Cucrov and I have been busily engaged translating my own thesis from Russian into English ever since."

Shortly afterwards the Minister in charge made an announcement to the House that, in strict conformity with the best interests of Australian liberalism, the case of Dr. Ogilvie had been reviewed. In order to facilitate the free exchange of scientific knowledge, while at the same time ensuring that national defence was not prejudiced, the security rating of Doctor Ogilvie's thesis would be reduced from "Most Secret" to "Secret."

## FILMS FROM THE WORLD

Largest 16 mm. selection of Continental  
films in Australia.

Informational, Educational and Entertainment  
films available to any audience anywhere.

★ Coming shortly from the U.S.S.R.  
The famous Gorki Trilogy and  
Alexander Nevsky.

If you want to see or show good films  
we can help you.

★

### QUALITY FILMS

52 PHILLIP ST., SYDNEY. BU 3504

## "SINGABOUT QUARTERLY"

Australian songs and dances.

No. 2 and 3 now on sale. Limited number of  
No. 1 still available.

2/- per copy, 7/6 per year.

★

## "SONGS FROM THE KELLY COUNTRY"

Six authentic Ned Kelly Songs with easy  
guitar accompaniments.

Second Edition in handy pocket size, 2/-.

Trade discount for bulk quantities.

★

### THE BUSH MUSIC CLUB

Alan Scott, Secretary,

57 Crown St., Woolloomooloo, N.S.W.



Gerry Grant

## T.V. and US

**I**F you live in Melbourne or Sydney, and if you are normal, you will have a television set in your home by 1960, and so will seven out of every ten other people. Within ten years ninety per cent. of homes in all Australian capital and large cities are likely to have sets.\*

Reactions to this sort of prognostication vary widely and there is something to be said for most of them. TV is going to do some wonderful things. And it is going to do some terrible things.

And the staple product is very soon going to reach the level at which most people will watch it when they have nothing much better to do—which will include going to the cinema, watching sport, reading, and talking. For children, "nothing much better" will include exercise and play.

We know all about the good things. "Hamlet" was performed on Britain's commercial station, Olivier's film of "Richard III" on an American network. On BBC television gardeners and dress-makers, cooks and handymen demonstrate their crafts, archaeologists and art critics their specialities. "Inventors' Club" has released a flood of constructive energy. The best children's programs invite participation and healthy expression.

Anything you can look at you can televise, and no medium has greater possibilities for helping us spend our leisure intelligently and creatively. Few Australians have seen ice-hockey. Most Australians will see it on television, and they will be thrilled. Many will take up skating as a result.

And there are so many developments and extensions—schools' broadcasts, adult education series, visual telephones, a camera in the babies' room, and so on. TV will come in color, in hi-fi stereophonic sound, in three dimensions. It is only a question of the market.

Programs will be relayed across the world. We shall follow our Test team through their British tour and, perhaps, sit in at the opening night of a Bolshoi Theatre ballet season.

We know all about the bad things too, and if we did not we could guess at them from looking at the sort of people who will be running the commercial stations.

The first four commercial licences have gone to the organisations calculated to make the most money from them and likely to make the worst use. Two have gone to the interstate newspaper chains, represented in Sydney by the Sun and Sydney Morning Herald and in Melbourne by the Sun and Herald. The other daily newspapers have, perforce, combined to exploit the remaining two licences.

In with them are the ubiquitous cinema and theatre chains, the widest radio networks, the major film production studios, the biggest electrical manufacturers—everyone who is anyone, banded in a vast monopoly complex whose components are themselves highly monopolised, and usually more or less foreign-controlled. There is a legal fiction of Australian control of the TV stations, but if the strings are pulled abroad, the puppets will dance.

\* See *The Market for Television in Australia*, a bloodless little booklet distributed "as a matter of public interest" by the Australia and New Zealand Bank Limited.

If you want to try and work out what this can mean, consider that American and British interests have crushed the life out of Australian film production and reduced our daily press to a dutiful backrow in a world wide chorus.

Already, through a co-operating government, they have refused Australian artists the 55 per cent. quota of television time they need for the proper development of home produced programs. They would not accept even a last ditch ALP amendment to the Television Bill asking for a miserable 7½ per cent. quota!

Available to the licence-holders in unlimited quantities and for the most part very cheaply are the off-scourings of American commercial TV's huckster culture.

It is hard for decent people to imagine what this can descend to. Talking mainly about children's programs, Dr. Wertham said in "Seduction of the Innocent" that "TV has taken the worst out of comic books from sadism to superman. Violence is the hard core of what the TV makers want . . . the average child who takes what is offered absorbs from five to eleven murders a day."

There are, it is true, plenty of murders in Shakespeare. But not this kind of unmotivated killing—and Shakespeare's murders are usually played quick and clean. The American Ford Foundation's TV production of "King Lear" by contrast showed Gloucester's eyes being gouged out, a highlight

described by Cue magazine as "the most ghoulish and revolting bit of business we have ever seen on any stage or screen."

We can take for granted the unremitting competitive attempts that the commercial stations will take to degrade their product—without malice perhaps, but without morality—simply as part of the scramble for a bigger audience.

The government has shown sufficient anticipation of public hostility to erect a facade of protection against the dangers to which it has exposed us. In accordance with the Television Act 1953, the Australian Broadcasting Control Board has prepared a set of program standards which will shortly have the force of law.

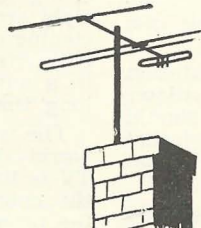
In the face of opposition from the licensees the officials of the Board in all important matters have been able to provide nothing better than a few easily evadable prohibitions in a fog of pious exhortations.

The preamble itself shows some recognition of this when it states that "negative regulations may eliminate abuses; only the goodwill and high purpose of those who actually operate the stations . . . can ensure that television will be used constructively for the welfare of the community."

Who will guard the guardians themselves?

It is worth examining the standards. The most hopeful section deals with children's programs, for it is the only one which goes into any detail at all on what programs should contain as well as what they should avoid. Children, it is recognised, are "very vulnerable to the impact of TV." Therefore, the themes of programs must stress, among other beneficial morals, the importance of mutual respect of one man for another" and there should be "regular sessions designed to foster an appreciation of such cultural pursuits as music, painting, ballet, the theatre and literature."

Unfortunately, few of the programs televised while children will be watching (officially this is up to 7.30 p.m.) will be children's programs as





defined here—that is exclusively for children—and none of them need be. Instead, “family” programs may be presented at these times, for which the few valuable positive recommendations of the children’s programs are waived and we are left with the conscientious but largely ineffective verbiage of the generalised prohibitions.

The loopholes in these will become apparent just as soon as the first protests lead to an attempt at interpretation. “Horror or undue suspense” for example should be avoided. To you and me the application of this seems clear enough. There will be plenty of “experts” to contradict us.

The absurdities of professional testimony in these cases, though commonplace in America where the purveyors of commercialised violence and obscenity are obliged, from time to time, to defend themselves against the public, are still a little more than most Australians will readily credit. However we have had a few local examples.

The Queensland Literature Board of Review has banned a number of publications in the last two years (one of them being an issue of Weekend which is published by Consolidated Press Ltd., the mainstay of TV station TCN Sydney!).

According to a report in The Journalist of June 1956, a “leading Sydney psychiatrist” was found to support an appeal against the banning of one comic book, stating that “he did not think the banned publication would have any effect on adolescents.”

This sort of learned pronouncement for the defence will become sadly familiar.

When the standards deal with news presentation and political broadcasts, they are plainly ridiculous. Imagine telling our daily papers that “news should be presented accurately and impartially” and that “commentary should be clearly distinguished from news”!

Primary responsibility for interpretation and enforcement of the standards will rest with the Broadcasting Control Board, who will for the record be provided with very strong sanctions—far too strong in fact—nothing less than recommending the suspension or withdrawal of the licences of offending stations. It would take very bold men indeed to strip one of these giants of an asset valued in millions of pounds!

This is not to say we must lose hope. Properly interpreted the standards will save us the worst, and a long way from the worst, horrors; but only if those officials of the Broadcasting Control Board who are game to try and apply the standards receive very strong and active public support.

Apart from the outright vicious effect of what we hope will be a minority of programs, the main danger of commercial television will be its removal of another incentive to thought and to the creative use of leisure. “Passivity” is high in this medium—unless TV moves people to activity it rapidly becomes a drug. This suits the advertisers of course, as well as demagogues astute enough to adapt their speech making to it. The worst sufferers will be children who, unless restrained, will watch TV instead of living and growing normally.

Commercial TV cannot of course afford the costs or the risks of experiment. Programs will find a rut and stay there. There will be no room for the gradual development of Australian talent. Advertisers must buy big names, canned.

More than two-thirds of programs will be on film (when the broadcasters were angling for their licences they announced that only one-third would be!) and the staple film will be the imported half-

hour series, of which the keynote will be sheer uninspired pedestrian mediocrity—whether the subject is soap opera or rape, domestic comedy or murder. If you want a really depressing ten minutes, study the lists of titles of American series that Australian broadcasters are dangling as an inducement to the public to buy sets.

Which of these for example will you spend your £250 for—“Superman”, “Hopalong Cassidy” and “Robin Hood” or “Rin Tin Tin”, “December Bride” and “I Love Lucy” or perhaps “Gunlaw”, “Racket Squad”, “San Francisco Beat” and “Passport to Danger”? Or maybe you are all agog for “The Scarlet Pimpernel”, TV style—i.e. slow, hammy, stilted and stupid.

As for the live shows, apart from newscasts and sport, we shall have a plethora of the mean-spirited, agonising “Pick-a-box” type of give-away quiz, or the sort popular with American stations, where people are made complete fools of in public, and occasionally break down.

And, for Melbourne viewers, at any rate, to round off every evening, a superannuated cinema film.

And so to bed . . .

The actual advertisements are likely to be far nastier than anyone can imagine without having seen the American variety, or being struck hard and repeatedly in the eye and ear simultaneously by a big man with knuckle-dusters. Radio commercials are the most horrible part of radio, but TV commercials make them look pale and wheedling. Advertisements will be permitted for two minutes in a quarter-hour program, and two minutes is a long time.

The worst thing about them however is that they work! For the vast majority of consumer goods TV is the most powerful advertising medium. And the enormous cost of the advertising is added to the price of the goods.

The one faint gleam of hope is that the more intelligent American advertisers have started to realise that when everyone else’s advertisements scream, the quieter advertisements stand out. But everyone else’s advertisements had to scream before they realised it!

The commercial stations must be restrained—it is idle to talk of their being improved. There is no more future for commercial broadcasting than there is for any other form of prostitution. Fortunately the ABC will be operating stations, and it can and must explore television’s magnificent possibilities.

This is an immense field for Australian talent, the more so because of the poor quality and essentially foreign character of so much of the imported material. Australian artists have lost the first round—there is no protective quota. The fight is unfair, but, as in sound radio, they will break through.

And what shall we do about it all? Is there too much dirt in the mixture to make it worthwhile spending whatever it will cost to buy a set?

Well, whether you buy one or not, you will be affected by TV, for it will be an integral part of everyone else’s life. And if you have children they had better do their viewing in **your** home, where you can control what they see and comment on it.

And whatever its faults, TV will replace radio as the normal channel for worthwhile items. Why should we be cut off from them?

But keep your powder dry.



# MY REALIST WRITING

by Hilary Richmond

ONE morning not long ago, my home being what I describe as "empty", I decided to sit down and write a short story for our writers' group. The quiet hours stretched invitingly before me and there was only one trifling matter to trouble me—I was quite unable to think of a plot.

A few half-formed ideas were floating in my mind but I was distracted by a rain of slates that were hurtling from the roof onto the garden below. I trembled for my favorite plants and this made thought difficult, so I decided that instead of writing a story it would be easier to describe the plot of the novel I was engaged upon; to put it down shortly in black and white would help me to criticise it.

I must add here that this house is an old ruin and until recently it leaked much worse than the proverbial sieve so that in bad weather one could become marooned in one room because even the duck-boards were under water. It is now being very noisily repaired by two sky-larking boys who charge happily over my garden-beds and shy slates at each other, so that you must imagine an obligato of crashes and bangs throughout this story.

Well, now to the novel. I didn't want to write a book purely about personal relationships for such books aren't worth the paper and ink you have to buy. I wanted to write about people against a social background. The trouble was that my whole life has been spent in the kitchen and the wash-house and if I tried, for example, to write about Industry I would make a fine fool of myself. I have no experience of mass movements or anything like that. However, I do belong to an association—the Peace Council—so I decided to write a novel about that.

I started gaily out, and here were my characters mouldering away in their old mansion in the year 1912. Why that period? Because there was industrial unrest and a pre-war situation and the conditions parallel those today, yet it's easier to write about the past because you can be more outspoken against things that time has proved to be wrong, whereas if I wrote against some of our present policies, for example, as strongly as I feel, Security might nab me and then who'd get dinner for the kids? My characters move about their affairs and engage in as much political discussion as I think I can get away with.

Here I was interrupted by my husband whom I believed to be asleep and out of my way for the morning. He was out of work again. He came in to announce drearily that he thought he might go from door to door and try to get some odd jobs.

"Yes, do, dear," I said heartily. "What a good idea! Go now!"

A few minutes later he sailed past the window on his bike—the old Digger, wearing a battered khaki jacket from his days in the V.D.C., his grey hair blowing in the breeze. If any of you read my novel don't just look at the first part and think "this woman can only write about decayed gentle-folks struggling against the social and economic tide." I assure you that I do know how the poor live, as you will discover if you get to Part Two of the book.

To continue; this family I write of—the Bretons—are gradually losing their money and their social standing as the country (New Zealand) moves from colonial feudalism to a bourgeois democracy. They can't make it out, though you

and I can, and they try to retrieve their fortunes. The only daughter, Jocelyn, whom the book concerns, is twelve years old, and already her awful mother is grooming her for a rich marriage. Unfortunately, she is plain and what's more, though her mother beats her black and blue, she still can't induce her to be clever or good at lessons or able to play her cards shrewdly.

I was interrupted again at this point by my nineteen-year-old Ruth who is a mothercraft nurse working at an orphanage. In she came, this baby-mad girl, with two of her orphans.

"Sister let me bring them to see you," she explained happily. "They've never been inside a private house before and I thought they'd be so thrilled."

And so they were. These four-year-olds ran madly through the rooms, jabbering excitedly. I was glad to note that they are as spontaneous and uninhibited as any other children.

"I don't like that lady," remarked the little girl, eyeing me with distaste. "She has an ugly face."

Ruth had been rash enough to buy them ice-creams on the way here and she glanced nervously at the sitting-room carpet.

"Four-letter word!" she exclaimed. "Just look at that!"

"Never mind, the Youth Club will be meeting here tonight anyway," I said consolingly, and reflected that there are disadvantages in living in an old place that got left all among the shops in Burke Road, right on the tram and train lines. It's so handy . . .

"Have the children ever been into a shop?" I continued with a cunning smile. "Don't you think they'd love to go to Thompson's Self Service and take things from the shelves?"

Ruth approved of this idea. They departed and thank goodness they didn't come back. Mr. Thompson is a Catholic and a devout man and he ought to be glad to suffer little children.

This reminded me of my novel and the poor girl who was her mother's catspaw and I proceeded to explain: I've left out the 1914-18 war and moved to 1920. War stories are stale just now and in any case I wanted to deal with a pre-depression era and point out obliquely its resemblance to the present day, stressing the similarities between that situation and this. I haven't gone right into the depression however as such stories are also stale and irrelevant to conditions now—to most people, that is, though not to all of us. Anyway, to hurry on, Jocelyn is not only completely ordinary and determined to remain so, but when launched in society by a rich aunt she commits the final folly of falling in love, not with a rich boy of impeccable family, but with the grocer's assistant. She leaves home, and that's the last we see of the old mansion . . .

At this point another young girl came into the room. Jane is not my daughter, but one who visits us when off duty, so she sat down and embarked on an account of last night's ball. She elaborated on this theme for half-an-hour and then started discussing her work.

"We have such fun in the theatre. We had a Dropsy in last night. You've no idea of the mess when they opened her up. Where do you think most of it went? In the doctor's shoes! Ha-ha-ha!"

(This isn't very nice but as I want to be a realist I put it down.)



With this Jane went off to the kitchen to make a cup of coffee and there found one of the young plumbers sitting comfortably in the warmth darn- ing his football socks ready for Saturday's match. Though only nineteen, he is the foreman—and also the boss' son.

However this got rid of Jane and I returned to Jocelyn, now married to her Bert and living in a dreadful street. I introduce a new lot of people here, but they are nicer than the first lot. Before I do so, though, I must go back a little and explain that Jocelyn's aristocratic grandmother was a fine character in her way—an ardent Church worker who got disgusted with the war and joined a pacifist society called the Peace League. There's a good deal about this in the first part of the book and I try to show why it grew up and flourished and then mysteriously faded out; but I was interrupted just when I was going to tell you more about it because I remembered that I had put up posters on my front fence to advertise a Peace meeting at the Camberwell Town Hall and I had to go and look at them. Sure enough, they had been torn down so I had to stop writing to put up a new lot.

I had hardly finished that and sat down again when the door opened and a very small hand appeared, brandishing a gun.

"Bang, bang, bang! I kill you!"

"Oh, blank!" I groaned. "So **they're** home!"

How do my tenants keep the child so quiet on those days when they keep him home from the creche and sleep late themselves? Do they drug or terrorise him? Anyway, in came little Tony on this morning and ran round and round the room—bang, bang, bang!—and after him his father, that pale and romantic-looking youth.

"Today I not work. It is too cold. In my country cold is **good**. It is healthy. In Australia cold is **bad**—it makes you feel sick." He works for a large motor firm and I hear that they are hard task- masters, yet this man stays away whenever he likes and his wife, who works in a textile factory, is almost as bad. So I said, as so often before: "Then why don't you go back to Latvia?"

"I wait till socialism goes; then I go back. But the trouble is—socialism is coming all over the world. It will come everywhere . . ." The hand- some boy gave me a hunted glance and I felt sorry for him, seeing him as a pale wraith pursued to the ends of the earth by the hot breath of social change (just like some of the people in my book). So I find a magazine for him describing life in Latvia today. "Could you read this and criticise it for me?"

He is a university graduate and his opinion is worth having, so he went off happily, and being a kind-hearted lad he noticed the pencil and paper I held and took little Tony with him.

Back to the book. Jocelyn and Bert are ruined when the small grocery he works in goes to the wall after a branch of a chain of stores sets up opposite their shop, and Bert becomes unemployed. I try to trace the decay of small businesses at that period under developing monopolies, but you must wait to hear how, because my daughter Betty came in just at that point, having decided to cut all lectures for the rest of the day. She hailed Jane with joy and they went off to prowl up and down Burke Road and look at clothes that they can't afford. Not that they won't buy them of course—they'll put them on the lay-by."

This interruption defeated me and left my writing for a few minutes to make some lunch for all hands.

I had just made a pot of tea and spread food all over the kitchen table when I walked my neigh- bor's son, bearing a large parcel of what looked

like pots of paint which he stowed away in Betty's room along with an immense amount of furniture and china that he keeps depositing there. He just strolls in any time having, apparently, no work to do. He's a storeman in the R.A.A.F. Pretending not to see the parcel I poured him some tea and he went off to the sitting-room and settled down for the afternoon with a Joe Palooka comic.

Half-an-hour later his teen-age wife, Joan, ap- peared wheeling her two babies, aged one month and thirteen months. She wore my only overcoat which she borrowed a year ago, but luckily the girls have some old ones that fit me. This young couple live in one small room and come round here to get a break; and if, says my husband, I dare to bring them to live here this time he'll **really** throw himself in the Yarra.

Jane cast the older child into my lap.

"Who's my sweetheart?" I said without convic- tion, my mind on my writing, and the little mother removed the child. This girl from the slums is ex- tremely sensitive and we all love her. My own girls are sometimes guilty of exclaiming "Blank" when she appears because her conversation is so limited, but I don't agree at all. Her life has been so interestingly different from ours, and beside, I want to be a writer and it's all grist that comes to my mill.

Leaving the young people eating, dropping crumbs, and chattering all round me I return to my writing.

Now the book moves on—far too abruptly—to March, 1954, and here are my characters, or their descendants, come together again under the shadow of the A-bomb. And here are Jocelyn and Bert, back from years in the country. Their children are grown up and she looks forward to happy years spent in coddling her grand-children. Then, almost by chance, she strays into a peace meeting which is like the old Peace League sprung into new life, though conditions are different now and I try to show why. Jocelyn, after a lifetime of hard work has to drop the idea of a little leisure and idleness and get to work again in a different way, realising that it is more to her grand-children's advantage than coddling them.

I had just got as far as this explanation when the young plumber came into the room, just because the girls are here, and behind him came my eldest son, David, though goodness knows why he is not at work at this hour.

"Gee, your boy's like you!" the plumber informed me.

That couldn't be so because David is my adopted child. I got him from a Home for Fallen Women at Otahuhu. It's too much trouble to explain this, however, and I know that I would get the inevit- able answer that adopted children grow to look like you. How could they? However, it reminded me of Love, and I confided in an undertone to Betty, who had just come in from the shops: "I'm still not satisfied about that proposal scene. What would you say if an unsuitable sort of boy asked you to marry him?"

"I'd say—ask me again when you're sober."

"But that's what Ruth said when I asked her the same thing. How dull and uninventive you both are! I'm writing about the year 1922 when young people were sensible and serious."

Betty, that much-proposed-to girl, is always anxious to help me with my book.

"Well, let's see," she said thoughtfully, "there was Bill. He said, 'We'll have a walnut-veneer dining-room suite when we're married, shall we?'" (Perhaps that was why she turned him down.) "Then there was Don. He stayed so late one night that finally I said, 'Well, Don, it's getting late.



# HOW TO ORGANISE A CHARITY APPEAL

by Eric Lambert

Charity can be a very lucrative profession, which helps to account for the number and variety of charities. It has also been publicly acknowledged as a very worthy one. Charity addicts get O.B.E.'s., and the really big time boys in the charity profession get Orders of Garters and sometimes get even higher than the Garter. I know one who became a Viscount and had a seat in the House of Lords and had to keep his coat on when watering the lawn.

Let's suppose you've got a severe attack of the shorts. You've lost at the gallops, been flayed at the trots, done at the dogs, and the bank's given you the cold boiled stare. In short, you must have dough. Organise a charity.

This is the routine and don't try to alter it. It's the best there is:

**A.—Press.** Ring up a pressman. Take him to lunch. Get him tight. N.B. Make sure you get a soft-hearted pressboy. The racket's full of them. When he is nice and mellow, pull the picture out of your pocket and gaze at it with intense and pitying sorrow. (What picture? Just hold on.) When he bites, you say: "This is a photo of a child in Dalmatia, sitting in the ruins and playing with half a brick. Look at the way she is cuddling it. She is pretending it is a doll." You give him the full blast of the sort of gaze Wolfe probably had when he stormed the heights of Quebec. "That child is going to have a doll, if it's the last thing I do."

After the first gush of tears he asks: "But how will you find her?" (He's in! You've got him. Now sink the boot.)

"When I have finished, every child in Dalmatia will have a dolly. In this unhappy country, ravaged by famine and internecine strife, all the toys have been eaten or destroyed. My friend, don't you think you should write a column about the Dollies For Dalmatia Drive, of which I have the honor to be elected Chief Honorary Organiser?"

"Human interest!" he babbles. "Sob-stuff! Terrific! Give us some more!"

You're in the home edition. Your face gazing with inexpressible sadness at the picture. Next to it the story:

Toyless Tots Touch Heart Of Melbourne Townsman.

The paper itself has whacked in with a fiver.

---

I'm going to bed now,' and he said 'Come along then; that'll just do me.'"

"No, Betty, no. I couldn't put that in a book!"

Hard young faces turned towards me, mouths open in cruel laughter at the silly old thing who sat trying to write when she should have been putting on a proper cooked lunch for them in the dining-room, but they were distracted by the entrance of my husband, back from his job-hunting expedition. He had secured a job as a night watchman, he told us. It would mean having such a nice lot of time at home during the day.

Then the elder baby climbed onto my lap and started to cut his teeth on my pencil so I put the exercise-book onto the table out of his reach and decided to give the whole thing away. And that's the end of this story except to say that it's all true and if anyone reads the book and finds it a bit scrappy I ask them to understand and forgive.



They always do. It's good for the circulation, like running on-the-spot.

Your appeal is launched.

**B.—Alderman.** You get an alderman. This lends tone to your appeal. No work is involved here. One will bob up for a moral. Aldermen consider charity appeals their own particular preserve for the following reasons: (a) It puts them in the running for a knighthood. (b) It shortens them in the betting for the Mayoralty. (c) They've got to stick their noses into something anyway. By the time the alderman comes in you've got things organised. You've voted yourself an expense account of twenty a week and the dough starts to roll in. Be careful to explain to the alderman that no work is involved on his part. Failure to make this clear has been known to disaffect them.

**C.—Public.** Here is where you are likely to strike snags. You will get the occasional smart alec who will bring in a talking doll instead of a quid. Get rid of him and have your photo taken holding the doll. The caption should specify that it was bought with **dough** sent to the appeal. You can now begin to rip it off 'em. Melbourne has a large population of female box-rattlers. You won't have to recruit them; they'll flock to the colors as soon as you start. Put the young, pretty ones in the big thoroughfares like Collins or Swanston. Send the bags up the alleys and lanes.

There is really not much more to tell you. As soon as the appeal is closed you are left with a great pile of dolls. Enter the Melbourne Matrons. The M.M.'s. infest the social pages, photographed doing good works. You put the M.M.'s. in charge of the box-rattlers to pack the dollies for Dalmatia. This is your exit line. You are on the point of a nervous collapse. The strain of running the appeal has been too much for you. You think you had better slip up to Surfer's Paradise for a month or two.

There are some very nice dolls up there.





# Australasian Book Society

## A LETTER TO SUBSCRIBERS

17 Elizabeth St.,  
Melbourne, Vic.  
MB 2292

C/o. P.O. George St. North  
Sydney, N.S.W.  
WX 1494

Dear Subscriber,

You, and many other subscribers to the Society, will have asked why production of books by the Society has been so long delayed. The answer is a simple one—the Society has been short of money.

In its four years' existence, the ABS has published twelve books, each of which has made in its own way a useful contribution to Australian literature. In all, 60,000 copies of these books have been distributed. Membership of the Society has been built up to around 3000.

Despite its great achievements, the Society (particularly in its early stages) has lost money. Always it has been held back by lack of capital. The Society is no longer losing money. But we are carrying a past loss—and are short of ready cash.

We know that there is a real need for the Society—that has been proved by the last four years. We know that many more members can be won for the Society. We know that sales of the Society's publications can be expanded tremendously.

So now we are going ahead to raise the capital needed for us to publish our selections regularly, to republish successful past books, and to extend our activities into new fields of publication.

We intend to raise £3000, by issuing £1 debentures, which will carry interest and will be repayable in five years' time. And we will raise this money by the end of the year.

With this capital, we will—

- Publish Ralph de Boissiere's RUM AND COCA COLA (now with the printers) during September.
- Publish our new collection of the stories and poems of HENRY LAWSON, together with Lawson's autobiography, during November.
- Republish THE AUSTRALIAN and THE MIRAGE.
- Publish four books during 1957. (Future selections to be announced in coming issues of Overland.)
- And, we hope, help to enlarge and expand OVERLAND.

We don't expect to do this on our own. We need the support and help of our subscribers—a continuance of your past support, which we acknowledge with deep gratitude. Every subscriber can assist us by—

- Renewing his subscription promptly.
- Introducing the Society and its publications to his friends.
- Filling in the form below, and returning it to us.

The Society can do an even bigger job for Australian writers and readers than it has already done. It is you, our subscribers, who can make it possible for us to do this job.

Yours sincerely,

AUSTRALASIAN BOOK SOCIETY.

To The Australasian Book Society,

Please send me: Further information about the ABS Capital Fund.  
Information about joining the ABS.

..... membership forms for use among my friends.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

WANTED URGENTLY. One hundred voluntary agents to deliver books to, and collect payments from, about six or eight other members in their localities. This would involve five or six calls a year. It's a simple job, but one that will give you a lot of satisfaction. Can you help? If so, send for further details.



# ITALY THE ROMANTIC

by *Dymphna Cusack*

"Oh? how I wish I were seeing Italy with you!" says an Australian friend in a letter this morning. How I wish it too! It is probably the remark that recurs most frequently—that and "Mrs. X loved Italy!" So do I!

Let me begin by saying I am passionately Italianophile. The ordinary Italian is the nicest person in the world. Generous, courteous, gay and courageous in circumstances that would drive most people to suicide—or murder! I love their language well enough to learn to speak it. I love their rich, modern culture: their cinema that (alone in the western world) they have made a contemporary art. Their literature that—unlike English or American—goes to the root of the world's sickness. I love its beauty—old and new—I love it well enough to read its history. And I'm lucky enough **not** to be a tourist since I can stay long enough to clear my eyes from the dazzle of the first week, and live in Italian households long enough for them to let down the mask they—like everyone else—put on for foreigners.

This morning's letter took me back to a meeting I had in Rome with a young Australian student, nice, intelligent, attractive boy. He too was passionately Italianophile. He gave me the usual tourist picture—the gay Italian who doesn't **mind** being poor. (There are those who go so far as to swear he likes it!) The Renaissance frieze in his lecture room that distracts him. Rome—so incredible with its magic, its beauty.

I ventured, after the usual lyric recital, to suggest that there was another side to it. I suggested he might like to talk to an unemployed man I knew—to a doctor whose grief I had witnessed when one of his patients suicided after five years out of work and who, when I spoke of some interesting ruins shouted (I'm glad to say!) "I can show you Roman ruins everyone of which has a starving family in rags living in it." I questioned my young friend's idyllic picture of an Italy without protest: "How comes it then that last election 11 million (out of 50 million population) voted Communist or Socialist? Why do . . . ?" "Don't tell me," he begged. "I'm Italianophile."

I think—since he's a highly intelligent boy—the last month may have converted him—not from loving Italy, but from the romantic tourist myth.

I wish you could see this lovely coast with me! The Horseshoe Gulf with Vesuvius rising in the south and a medieval town of the peninsula beside me. On these mountain slopes Horace wrote odes to the "rich Falernian" that is still made here. Cicero's villa stood beside us and the walls of his garden form our little "vigne." The little port, to which we take our lunch when it is fine, has great grey walls exquisitely made of small diamond-shaped stones which were once part of the castle of Fernando Secondo in the days when the Aragonese kings ruled. Behind us runs the Via Appia, in parts along the side showing the cobbles over which the Roman chariots once travelled. Cicero's tomb is just behind us—he was murdered here by his political opponents, renouncing his intention to fly from the port, because the sea was too rough and he got so frightfully seasick! Gaeta—clinging like a wasp's nest to the high cliffs of the peninsula—has been in its time ruled by Phoenicians, Greeks,

Romans, the Normans, the Pope, the Angevins, the French, the Spanish, the Austrians, and finally the Bourbons. From its cliffs in the shadow of the gloomy fortress (12th Century) one sees the Grotto where Circe turned the mariners into swine! Pope Pius IX took refuge there when the Romans expelled him from Rome in 1848. Mazzini was imprisoned there in 1871.

Gaeta was terribly bombed during the war. The inhabitants were nine months in the mountains. "We ate grass," a fisherman told me, picking it up in his scarred hand. "And I had seven children. One of them—two years—died of cold." In spite of all the re-building that has been done, the peasants and fishermen still live in hovels. The flats are for Signori—so little has democracy touched that the middle-class are referred to as the Signori—the lords, gentlemen! According to a friend who has a Vatican title, all the really high lay posts at the Vatican are held by the old aristocratic families which have, of course by now intermarried with rich industrials in many cases.

Here in the south it is practically feudal. It is beautiful with its mountains coming down to the sea—two and three thousand feet high, many of the peaks crowned with ancient forts, the valleys between crowded with peasants' farmlets and terraced patiently up the slopes. A peasant ties his ass to Cicero's tomb. An interesting side of the feudal set-up is the fact that the poorest Italian shows no signs of the obsequiousness one is accustomed to in England. They don't feel inferior even if there is an unbridgeable gulf between them and the Signori. How could it be otherwise when till this year the school leaving age was 11 and **not** enforced and many villages have no schools at all?

I wish you could visit Gaeta with me—with its superb view of coast. "Ten miles of Capri," the tourist pamphlet says. Its beach—Serapo—was so named because there was an Egyptian temple to the God Serapis there! The road winds up its steep hill, lined by figs and grape-vines, and nearly every garden has an amphora full of flowers—the great containers in which the Romans transported oil and which the fishermen have fished out of the sea, covered with the barnacles of 2,000 years. Here, legend says, Christ stopped (when He came to Italy before St. Peter's death) once at Eboli, near Naples. He shed tears there for unrecorded reason and the wine is called "Lacrimae Christi." (Last week there was an unemployed demonstration at Eboli and people were gravely injured by the Carabinieri.) He stopped also at Gaeta. If He stopped there today He would shed such tears that there would be a Lacrimae di Christi di Gaeta!

Why, you are asking, did I say the last month would have changed my friend's view? I should have said two months, for then the winter closes down on Italy and increases its horrifying permanent two million unemployed to what is officially estimated as 4-4½ million. It strips the laughter with the sunshine, the glamor goes with the golden days. Spend a winter in Italy, if you want to know it. And preferably somewhere where kindly tourism doesn't blind you in your centrally heated hotel in luxury streets.

Gaeta and its twin, Formia (we are between them), were already heart-breaking before the



really terrible weather started. Six hundred unemployed in Formia and they don't bother counting them in Gaeta! Already the shepherds were bringing down their flocks from the mountains. Flocks! I have a friend who pastures fifty scraggy sheep (looking like Macarthur's first flock) along the side of the road—and these fifty sheep keep a family of eleven! The young man (21), eldest son, can't get work. Remember all this is not in some isolated mountain village but in a tourist spot which lives for the influx of summer tourists—less than 90 miles from Rome. And our grocer's brother is a school teacher in a mountain village (60 miles from Rome) to which only a mountain track goes so that he walks for an hour.

He gets £30 a month! The guide book advises you to listen to the fishermen singing. But ours don't sing! They are too busy splitting up a catch that may yield them one shilling a day and may yield them ten. "Watch the peasant women with their strong, graceful stride!" Yes, watch them take off their shoes when they reach the asphalt to save them for the rough tracks. Watch them working in the fields with four children (if they're lucky!) clinging round them, see their poor hands with bleeding cracks to the bone. See them wielding heavy old fashioned tools. Here the men dig fields to the depth of 16 inches, by hand. Be invited into their houses (we wouldn't stable a horse in them!) with courtesy, to talk about the world where there is plenty of work **that is paid for** and have them heap fruit and vegetables on you. Have a man look up from digging and beg you: "How can I emigrate? Here there is **nothing to eat.**" And it is the dreadful truth.

It's literally true! The peasant worker gets 13/4 a day—when he works! One thousand lire and there are at least four months he **doesn't** work. And he gets no unemployment relief. Neither, of course, does anyone else! The family allocations are less than half those of France where prices are similar. If anyone tells you living is cheap in Italy, tell him we find it costs us 4,000 lire a week per person to eat less well than in France or England. Plus **enormous** costs for lighting, water, etc. The fishermen are even worse off as they don't grow anything. At least twice a day men—and women—stop us on the road begging to know how they can migrate.

There's no need for me to tell you of the horrors of the last month. The first snow in history fell here! So picturesque! The Gulf looking like Greenland, Vesuvius in the distance like snow-covered Fujiyama. Gaeta like a postcard with its steep streets each a white-capped irregular terrace. So picturesque! the peasant gardens where everything is killed, where they can't work for weeks; the fishermen in the little port desperately mending nets since they can't go out. And nobody here (government nor municipality nor church) **does anything.**

After twenty days and a demonstration of unemployed in the piazza—with all the police out armed!—they gave 1000 lire (13/4) a **family**—and you know the Italian family, and two kilos of pasta!

Typical is Teresinella, 50 and looks 70, who each day carries a large iron tub on her head to sell me fruit and vegetables from their garden. They were bombed out in the Liberation (oh, sweet word!) and still live in one room—father, mother, unemployed son of 21, 17-year-old son who is trying to learn English, and 8 and 5-year-olds. Two sons in the Argentine who—since Peron was tipped out—can't send money home. Father works so hard he can only look up to smile toothlessly (such wonderful teeth the Italians have!). His garden of half an acre, for which he pays 20,000 lire a year—is

ruined. Lemon crop frozen. Teresinella—she's a woman of dignity and intelligence—cooks and they eat in the gardening shed with no window, earth floor. When I go there she graciously brings out a rickety chair for me to sit on. She tells me that she missed the hand-out. So did numerous peasants and fishermen, because it was given out without notice and when some rushed round and they all crowded in the Council Chambers they heard: "Too late." Perhaps nothing gives so much insight as when I gave old, old Christmas cards to Teresinella for the kids, "You want to sell them?" she says. "They are so beautiful."

If it is like that here in this relatively warm spot—warmest in Europe—what is it like in the mountains behind us? Look on your map for the Abruzzis, the Molise, and run down to Calabria. They have been snowed in for weeks. There have been prodigies of valor by the military—Alpini—sent down to relieve them. The Americans sent loads by great atom-bombers from Germany. "Ah," says Erasmo, our pessimistic fisherman friend, "the price of one of those planes would feed us all!"

I give you reports from Il Tempo—leading Conservative paper—taken at random over a month or more. Before the cold spell—"In putting down a riot near Venosa today, when about 1,000 unemployed day laborers assembled before the Council Chambers, one man was killed and 15 (including a woman with a baby) wounded by the carabinieri who were forced to fire on the demonstrators and throw tear-gas."

There are dozens of such reports, but no more killings. They only wound them or as at Foggia—with the town feet deep in snow and the temperature below freezing point, after the worst week-end—they turn the fire-hydrants on them. They have had no dry change of clothes, a doctor complains. "So what?"

Having lived through one of these terrible periods in France, I was waiting to see all Italy go into activity—human activity as well as official—as it did in France under the pressure of that modern St. Francis, Abbe Pierre. It didn't! I shall never forget listening to Abbe Pierre broadcast the day after the Grand Froid started. "Last night a woman was found frozen to death in the street with an eviction notice in her hand. We are all responsible for her death."

In Italy? After twenty days of unbearable suffering, Il Tempo starts a subscription list called ironically "The Heart of Rome." A week later—typically—the Heart has subscribed £4,000! Signori write in saying the Government **ought** to do something because the "miseria" is being exploited for political purposes! So the Government decides to pay a special unemployment relief to agricultural laborers for the **past** month. They're also providing a little something to prevent widows and orphans from dying on our door-steps. Our postwoman is a widow and she worked till she practically fell off her bike with flu, because her pay of 10/3 a day stops when she is sick. She was sick for a fortnight. "The Heart of Rome" also coughed up a mule for a peasant who—with the death of his mule in a snowdrift—had tried to kill himself because the mule was his only means of work. Il Tempo sent a photographer out to take man and mule's photo because such gestures are so rarissimo.

What stories came every day from the helicopters sent out to drop provisions to isolated villages—indication of their poverty is that all ran out of food within a week of being snowed up. So poor are the houses that they crumbled under the weight of the snow. A child of six escaping with her mother at night from a crumbling house was



*“Understanding through travel  
is the passport to peace”  
As in literature — so in travel*

WE COVER THE WORLD—

Consult the people with over 25 years practical experience.

- ★ COMPLETE ITINERARIES PLANNED TO YOUR INDIVIDUAL SPECIFICATION.
- ★ INTERSTATE AND OVERSEAS AIR BOOKINGS.
- ★ STEAMER RESERVATIONS.
- ★ HOTELS — RAILWAYS — MOTOR COACHES, etc., etc.
- ★ PASSPORTS — VISAE — AND CURRENCY ATTENDED TO.
- ★ FULLY ACCREDITED AGENTS FOR ALL AIRLINE AND STEAMSHIP COMPANIES.
- ★ NO BOOKING FEES.

**WORLD TRAVEL SERVICE PTY. LTD.**

83-89 WILLIAM ST., MELBOURNE, C.1.      Phones: MB 2040, MB 2986, MU 2281

and at 51 COLLINS ST., MELBOURNE, C.1.      Phones: MF 1455-6

snatched and eaten by wolves. Isolated houses are surrounded by wolves. They break into stables and eat the starving beasts.

In yesterday's paper I counted seven requests from little communes, saying the Government **must** do something because public feeling is being aroused by extremists! Not, you understand, by starvation and cold and neglect. Today in the supplement for our Provincia di Latina e Frosinone—fifty miles from Rome—the-great-hearted is a report from a Prefetto (official) of the centre, the strongest I've ever read in a conservative paper. It says:

“It's not only the suffering of the last month. Here it has been **worse**—that's all. Always too many are born, live, die after the continuous effort to find a job that they never succeed in finding. Now we need special aid. May the Government act in such a manner that it does not come too late to relieve the misery, the poverty and the suffering. But remember in these regions always exist inhuman conditions that render a decent life impossible.”

This is a relatively well-off area for the south. What is happening in Sicily and Calabria where the standard of living is even lower, since it is only since the war that any attempt has been made to break up the enormous feudal estates, where the peasants live worse than beasts! (One must keep a mule alive: it costs £40-£70!) The owners live well—and how well!—in Rome on the rents they wring out of the starving peasants. A whole village turned out in Sicily and hunger-struck on the beach, saying it was better to die quickly than slowly!

“Mrs. X likes Italy!” I love its ordinary people, its beauty, its art, country of contrasts. Enormous wealth, inhuman poverty. Country of Mussolini and St. Francis! Where the local church threatens to deprive of the sacraments any woman showing

neck, knees or **elbows**! And in the summer the wealthy beauties from Rome cover strategic places with three pieces of black net that would give a Bondi beach inspector a stroke. This morning Luigi arrived with a present of fish and a bottle of wine—his second day's catch after 27 days. But we had helped them. Do you wonder I love this kind of Italian?

As I write, the grocer's boy brings me Il Tempo. It carries the news of a further tragedy of the unemployed. Yesterday in the town of Barletta on the Adriatic coast two unemployed men were shot when demanding “pane e lavoro.” (No one asks for anything but “bread and work.”) It is the fourth shooting of the year. Guiseppe Spadero, 49, and Guiseppe di Coralo, 29, both “bracchianti nullatenente” (literally: “Arms [where we say ‘hands’] holding nothing.”)

It isn't quite true. Spadero had seven children, the youngest 17 months. He had also three beds and a table and a few cooking utensils. In the last two months he hadn't an hour of work and had been unemployed since the grape-harvest last August. He had £80 of debts and four months' rent to pay for the one room with a wooden false floor built half way across to give the children a place to sleep. He had received from the Commune 4½ lbs. of spaghetti.

Barletta had not yet been given the little aid promised by the Government. Not a penny had yet been paid of the first quarter's family allowance. Only that morning it had been decided to organise some relief work.

Di Coralo was 28. He had been unemployed for two months. His father, 61, was sick and had no pension. His fiancée walked behind the hearse as they do in Italy. They had been engaged a long time and were only waiting till he had a job to marry.

And this is Italy!





*Compiled by Eric la Motte*

(As the main Smoko item in this issue, we print a piece of contemporary folklore. We believe this recitation has been circulating throughout Australia, in one form or another, for many years, but has not been printed before.)

## The Story Of The Greatest Whinger On Earth

I struck him first on a shearing station in outback Queensland. He was knocking the fleeces from a four-year-old wether when I asked him the innocent question: "How would you be?"

He didn't answer immediately, but waited until he had carved the last bit of wool from the sheep, allowing it to regain its feet, kicking it through the door, dropping the shears, and spitting a stream of what looked like molten metal about three yards. Then he fixed me with a pair of malevolent eyes in which the fires of a deep hatred seemed to burn and he pierced me with them as he said: "How would I be?"

"How would you bloody well expect me to be? Get a hold of me, will you? Dags on every inch of me bloody hide; drinking me own bloody sweat; swallowing dirt with every breath I breathe; shearing sheep which should have been dog's meat years ago; working for the lousiest bastard in Australia; and frightened to leave because the old woman has got some bloody hound looking for me with a bloody maintenance order.

"How would I be? I haven't tasted beer for weeks and the last glass I had was knocked over by some clumsy bastard before I'd finished it."

The next time I saw him was in Sydney; he was trying to get into a set of webbing and almost ruptured himself in the process. I said: "How would you be?"

"How would I bloody well be—" he said. "Take a gander at me. Get a load of this bloody outfit; look at me bloody hat—size nine and a half and I take six and a half; get a bloody eyeful of these strides—why you could hide a bloody brewery horse in the seat of them and still have room for me; get on this shirt, just get on the bloody thing, will you? Get on these bloody boots; why, there's enough leather in the bastard to make a full set of harness; and some know-all bastard told me this was a man's outfit. How would I be? How would I bloody well be?"

I saw him next in Tobruk. He was seated on an upturned box; tin hat over one eye, cigarette butt hanging from his bottom lip, rifle leaning against one knee; and he was engaged in attempting to clean his nails with the tip of his bayonet. I should have known better, but I asked him, "How would you be, Dig?" He swallowed the butt and fixed me with a really mad look.

"How would I be? How would I bloody well be? How would you expect me to be? Six months in

this bloody place; being shot at by every Fritz in Africa; eating bloody sand with every meal; flies in me hair and eyes, frightened to sleep a bloody wink, expecting to die in this bloody place and copping the crow every time there's a handout to anybody. How would I be? How would I bloody well be?"

The last time I saw him was in Heaven and his answer to my question was: "How would I be? How would I bloody well be? Get an eyeful of this bloody nightgown, will you? A man trips over the bloody thing fifty times a day and it takes a man ten minutes to lift the bloody thing to relieve himself; get a gander at this bloody right wing—feathers missing all over the bloody thing—a man must be bloody well moulting. Get an eyeful of this bloody halo; only me bloody ears keep the rotten thing on me skull—and look at the bloody dents on the bloody thing. How would I be? Cast your eyes on this bloody harp; five bloody strings missing and there's a band practice in five minutes. How would I be? you ask. How would you expect a man to bloody well be?"

★

In Central Queensland, what is normally a dry, sandy gully often becomes a raging torrent during the wet.

Just before the rains started, the mail truck broke down in the middle of one of these dry beds.

The mailman walked back to the last homestead, a matter of two or three hundred yards.

The squatter, who had been watching from the verandah, said, "You'd better get that truck shifted quick before the rains start, Bill, otherwise you'll never find the flaming thing again."

"Ah, she's jake, Eric," drawled the mailman. "I've tied a piece of string and a cork to her."

—"Rule".

★

Sydney tram conductors have been ordered not to call passengers "mate" or "sport". They must address customers from now on as "sir" or "madam". We notice that the Melbourne Tramways Board doesn't intend to issue a similar instruction.

Quite right. What's wrong with "mate" or "sport" if you get a "please" or "thanks" with it?

We always remember an Oxford Professor telling us that one of the nicest things that ever happened to him here was when he called "Waiter!" in a Collins Street (Melbourne) hotel. And the waiter said, "What the hell's crawling on you, Jack?" (Acknowledgments to E. W. Tipping, Melbourne Herald.)

★

It's dinner time at the abattoirs.

Snow and me is sitting in the sun talking. About the politicians' wage-rise.

All of a sudden, Snow gets a brainwave—the first for years, he says. "Why don't we do the same?" he asks.

"The same what?" says I.

"Grant ourselves a pay-rise like the politicians," says Snow. "Be democratic about it."

I think this is a good idea, and take it a bit further. "Why not grant the rise to all the toilers in the meat industry?" I asks.

Snow thinks this is a beaut. He says straight off that he hereby moves a resolution that all meatworkers get six quid a week more in their pay envelopes—starting next week.

I second it. We vote. It's unanimous. Two to none. So now, if the same law operates for politicians and workers, meatworkers can look forward to a pleasant surprise next pay.

I hope it's there, because Snow will be disappointed if it ain't.

—"Bill S."



# Swag

Relentless economic pressures, backed up by pleadings from our readers not to risk the future of our magazine by continuing to sell it under the cost of printing it, have at last forced the Editorial Board to raise the price of *Overland* to 1/6. Special terms will, however, be available for sales of *Overland* in quantity to trade unions and similar organisations, and "on the job", as an introductory offer. Subscriptions in future will be 7/- instead of 5/- a year, posted. Those who already hold subscriptions at the old rate will continue to receive *Overland* at that rate until their subscriptions expire.

We wanted to enclose a separate questionnaire in this issue to all readers, to urge them to tell us what they expect of *Overland*. But we could not afford the expense. We do appeal to you all, however, to write to us in answer to these questions: (1) What did you enjoy most in this issue (and in previous issues)? (2) What did you like least in this issue (and in previous issues)? (3) What kind of writing do you want to see more of (and less of) e.g. stories, poems, historical articles, critical articles, overseas news, local news, folklore, etc.? (4) How many issues of *Overland* have you seen? (5) Do you like the format and layout? (6) Do you object to the price rise? Please send your name, address and occupation, too.

Walter Kaufmann writes from Germany that, following a visit to Australia at the time of the Olympic Games, he will settle in Berlin. He is re-writing "Voices in the Storm", to be published in September in 20,000 copies. Walter Kaufmann is also working on a second novel and is planning a third.

In *Overland* No. 5 we appealed for action to save Adam Lindsay Gordon's Brighton cottage, dismantled and stored in the back-yard of Melbourne writer Cyril Goode. It is pleasing to report that the Williamstown (Vic.) Council has decided to re-erect the cottage, preserving it for posterity as a historical museum. The vigorous Williamstown Arts Council initiated the suggestion, following on our appeal. Gordon's cottages at Port MacDonnell (S.A.) and Ballarat have already been preserved, and memorials to him exist in Mount Gambier, Ballarat and Melbourne.

A recent visit to William Dobell's home on Lake Macquarie (N.S.W.) gave evidence of a fascinating and most important painting of Dame Mary Gilmore nearing completion. Mr. Dobell has been commissioned to execute the portrait by the Australasian Book Society, supported by a number of well-wishers. A completed small-scale "pilot" portrait brought out superbly Dame Mary's vital individuality.

Over one hundred distinguished Australians endorsed the nomination by the Australian Peace Council of Dame Mary Gilmore and Miss Katharine Susannah Prichard for a joint World Peace Prize recently. Literary figures among the sponsors included Mr. Vance Palmer, Mr. C. B. Christesen, Mr. Brian Elliott, Mr. Frank Dalby Davison, Mrs. Dorothea Mackellar, Mrs. Eleanor Dark, Mr. Alan Marshall, Mr. F. B. Vickers, Mrs. Gladys Lister (Society of Women Writers, N.S.W.) and Mrs. Dorothy M. Catts, as well as such literary organisations as Societies of Realist Writers in several States, and the Australian Literature Society and the Bread and Cheese Club (Melbourne). Among other sponsors were Judge Alfred W. Foster, Acting Chief Judge of the Arbitration Court; Dame Sybil Thorndike; Mr. James Healy (Waterside Workers' Federation General Secretary); Professor Sir Bernard Heinze, Mr. Geoffrey Thomas and Miss Gertrude Johnson, National Theatre Movement.

Awards of the World Peace Prizes, which are determined by an independent Jury of 22 distinguished cultural figures from different countries (including Australia's James Aldridge), and which are worth £7,000 each, were announced in April. Recipients were Nikos Kazantzakis, the Greek novelist; Chi Pai-shih, doyen of Chinese painters; and Rev. W. H. Melish, U.S. clergyman, author, and worker for understanding between the nations . . . In a recent survey of modern Greek literature, the "Times Literary Supplement" referred to the work of Kazantzakis as a "most striking achievement". He is famed for his versatile mastery of different literary forms; and, despite the fact that it is his novels that have brought him most fame, is distinguished also with the authorship of the poem "Odyssey", which has been widely acclaimed. It is 33,333 lines long—reputed the longest poem in modern literature.

There was standing room only when the well-known novelist Kylie Tennant addressed the Sydney Realist Writers' Group recently on the subject of "Propaganda in Literature". Miss Tennant saw no necessary contradiction between propaganda and great literature and advised modern writers to "stop hedging" and speak truthfully of what they saw in life around them—but (a special plea) not to write without humor . . . Nine new members have joined the Group . . . A very successful party was held to farewell novelist Frank Hardy, who was off to visit Rumania . . . The Group is to hold a party to aid publication of Russ (Ironbark) Singleton's verse on July 30 . . . On April 29, Sydney writers were pleased to meet the Chinese trade union delegation at the Henry Lawson statue. Frank Hardy spoke of the life and work of Lawson, and listeners were interested to hear from the delegation that a volume of Lawson's stories under the title of "Send Round the Hat" has recently been published in Chinese.

In Prague, Czechoslovakia, on February 29 a bronze memorial plaque was unveiled on the house which was the birthplace of Egon Erwin Kisch, "rampaging reporter", probably the greatest exponent of the art of reportage and an incisive commentator on the Australian scene ("Australian Landfall"). Kisch died in 1949.

The poems by David Martin in this issue are taken from his forthcoming book, "The Dragon of Bendigo", to be published in October. This book will be a collection of his poems 1938-1956, and will contain about 135 pages. Copies may be reserved on application to the author, 11 Huntington Grove, East Coburg, Vic.



# RED ROSARY

January 1817



BOLIVAR RETURNS FROM HAITI

Forcing the rusty hinges of the year,  
The seaborne Liberator leapt ashore,  
Planted the banner on its fishtail spear,  
And cried: "Arise, ye slaves! Be slaves no more,  
"Be lancer, horsegunner or grenadier!  
"No peace I bring with tyranny, but war.  
"Watered with blood our native soil shall rear  
"A nobler crop than ever grew before."  
He spoke. Along the Caribbean cliff  
A wind caught up his voice, and tremors ran  
From Carabobo to the heights that gird  
The western edge of earth. It was as if  
Some goddess, exiled from the sight of man,  
Had sighed in her millennial sleep, and stirred.

February 1934



SOCIAL-DEMOCRAT RISING IN VIENNA

Midnight; but the guests have left the bar;  
Stoves burn down to ash in silent inns;  
Schrammel's ghost deserts the violins,  
Schubert's ghost abandons the guitar.  
Rats are at a food more toothsome far  
Than the nightly haul from garbage-tins!  
In the dark another day begins  
Under a wintry inauspicious star.  
Snow has fallen all night long, and now  
Covers in a white impartial pall  
More than treachery and cataclysm,  
Broken bodies and a broken vow;  
Deep in this year's snow lies buried all  
Europe's dream of peaceful socialism.

May 1945



VICTORY IN EUROPE

Tiger-striped, maniac, possessed,  
The 8-inch gun crews danced and bawled  
"No targets!" as our column crawled  
Down the dark valley, from the West,  
Over the stream. Then up we pressed,  
Laboring and skidding in the mauled  
Mud, foot by foot, and overhauled  
Our sight of morning at the crest.  
War's bright Antipodes awoke  
Eastward; across the German plains  
The evil thing rolled off in smoke,  
And—vindicating five campaigns—  
Red pennons in the distance spoke  
Of prisoners who had burst their chains.

June 1882



GARIBALDI ON CAPRERA

How shall a King of Italy employ  
The commoner whose legendary sword  
Brought Alps and Etna into one accord  
And, what he once united, might destroy?  
How shall a King of Italy reward  
The man who tossed that kingdom like a toy  
Into his lap, raising remote Savoy  
To Habsburg height as Bourbon's overlord?  
With nothing! Let no lordship blur the name  
Of Garibaldi, no command pervert  
His deeds, no ribbon prettify his scars;  
Lone on his naked island let him flame  
With nothing much about him but his shirt  
And nothing much above him but the stars.

September 1792-1870-1944



LES PARIENNES

One Paris model weathers well!  
The fighting fashions of the poor,  
That clad the tricoteuse, endure  
To clothe a new Louise Michel.  
A powder Coty cannot sell  
Turns faces terrible and pure  
That hold a barricade secure  
Against Versailles or Stulpnagel.  
Mount goosetep guard in rigid state  
With brazen music blowing, proud  
Invaders! History can wait.  
Your lease of triumph is allowed  
Until your boot-heels detonate  
That sober-seeming Paris crowd.

October 1949



THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

"Mantelpiece ornament, guaranteed antique,  
"Rare work of art, bargain, collector's prize  
"Finer than all Egyptian ware or Greek!"  
Was it The Dragon they dared advertise?  
The Dragon, yes, but hushed in bronze; the beak  
Motionless, the great tail inert, the eyes  
Lifelessly beautiful, the sculptured streak  
Of mane at rest—till it was time to rise!  
Look at him now! Five hundred working millions  
Of manpower strong, his muscles heave anew,  
His flanks distend, his eyes revive in brilliance;  
And in first earnest of his wakening forces  
One blast of those rampageous nostrils blew  
The wandering rivers back into their courses.





March 1953

DEATH OF STALIN

North to the reindeer herds, the snowbound dark,  
Mammoth-tusk carvings and enormous pines;  
South to the great canals, the silk, the vines,  
The turbanned heads as brown as wattle bark;  
East where the slant-eyed fishermen embark  
And tigers prow! between the silver-mines;  
West to the wheatlands where the roaring lines  
Of tractors wipe away the invaders' mark;  
Such is his vast memorial's extent!  
Here—like a fighter plane, his petrol spent,  
But straining dauntless towards a friendly drome  
Whilst all his victories yet blaze in air—  
Here at the dawn-lit first perimeter  
Of communism Uncle Joe reached home.



April 1916

EASTER WEEK: DUBLIN

The stone shall yet be rolled away  
And portents horrify the priest,  
And Granuaile put off her grey  
To match the dayspring in the East;  
That which is parcelled shall be pieced,  
And where the unjust landmark lay  
United Irishmen shall feast  
On Ireland's other Easter Day.  
Of green and orange blent there grows  
A deeper scarlet than the rose,  
To folk grown sorrowful and silent  
Restoring heart and voice to sing:  
Fly out, red flag, in the green island!  
Fly home, Wild Geese, to greet the spring!



July 1942

PARTISANS AT KOZARA

Shout Freedom, and the rock replies  
Freedom! shout Tito, and the rock  
Replies Tito! until the flock  
Of echoes in the distance dies.  
Shots get back shots, cries waken cries,  
Bayonet-shock rouses bayonet-shock;  
These echoes come of stubborn stock  
And answer what they recognise.  
They're tranquil now. A single slender  
Ribbon of smoke goes up to sully  
The peaceful sky. But even so  
Be not advised to shout Surrender,  
For every rock and every gully  
Has got by heart its answer: No!



August 1936

GARCIA LORCA MURDERED IN GRANADA

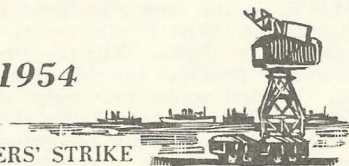
Night by nightfall more benighted  
Folds the gypsy city under;  
Desolation gives a mongrel's  
Homeless tongue to 'the horizon.  
In that skull where lemons ripened,  
Children sang, and water bubbled,  
In that fount of golden numbers  
They have set their leaden silence.  
They whose bullets he attracted—  
Devotees of rigor mortis,  
Black, and lecherous for blackness—  
Could not cosset their deformity  
Save in a Granada lacking  
Federico Garcia Lorca.



November 1954

WATERSIDE WORKERS' STRIKE

Round the night sky the lightning rips  
Igniting thundrously the bare  
Grey river-ribbon, cleared of ships,  
Into a bright magnesium flare.  
Rowse on, dim powers of night and air!  
Menace the earth with bolts and whips!  
Potential generates down here  
To set your splendors in eclipse.  
Man in the mass secretes a storm  
As yet that barely stirs the needle  
And galvanises frogs; but still  
What we accumulate shall transform  
Earth's negative, and wrench, not wheedle,  
Your lesser lightnings to our will.



December 1854

EUREKA STOCKADE

Sundown. The snake twitches  
Its tail. Underfoot  
The blood of men enriches  
Grey soil and gumtree root.  
Sundown. The night encroaches  
Upon the flames new lit;  
The dead around the approaches  
Already live in it.  
Sundown. The cause goes down;  
The snake's last inches die;  
But over the miners' town  
The Flag breaks out on high  
In points of fire to crown  
The dark Australian sky.





# Swag

Many literary figures in all States are supporting the Australian Assembly for Peace, the organisers report. To meet in Sydney in September, it will deal with "Australia's Peaceful Development and Relations with other Countries." Numerous delegates are expected from all States.

★

"So far as the regular theatre is concerned, no more devastating wallop to the cold war could be imagined than Jean-Paul Sartre's farcical comedy 'Nekrassov', which has been packing the small Theatre Antoine for months," comments a recent Paris report. The play is a satire on the devices used by some newspapers in building up international enmity and mistrust.

★

W.A. news: The new Editor of "Westerly" (University of W.A.) is Robert W. Smith, who is a well-known local actor and producer as well . . . Max Brown's "Australian Son" is to have a second edition. It is a biography of Ned Kelly.

---

## ABOUT RED ROSARY

This set of sonnets was begun in April 1947, and completed in June 1956. The MS. drafts and worksheets of Nos. 7 and 11 are preserved in the Lockwood Memorial Library of the University of Buffalo, at the curator's request. Single sonnets have appeared in **China Reconstructs**, **Irish Democrat**, **Masses and Mainstream**, **Our Time**, **Queensland Guardian** and **Tribune**. A fine musical setting of No. 12 was made by Doreen Jacobs.

Nine years' maturing: it requires to be sipped, not gulped! But it was never intended solely for the trained connoisseur. Had it not been for generous encouragement from worker readers, the project might never have been carried through to its end.

The sonnet has stood long usage very well. It is as if the form embodied something almost permanent in poetic thought independent of changing fashions. And what can this something be but the dialectic pattern itself, the leaps from opposite to opposite, the transformation of qualities?

Sonnet-form is a unity of opposites. The sum of the rules that govern it is: **maximum overall unity plus maximum internal opposition.**

That is a closer definition than may appear. It allows, as the strictest French critics allow, the use of longer or shorter (but still uniform) lines as the mood and aim of the particular sonnet may require. It allows certain variations in the rhyming of octave and sestet, provided that contrast is maintained. It allows me, I think, assonance (in No. 8) and swap-tailed rhymes (in No. 12); but not the repetition of any rhyme in the sequence, nor the use of rhymes in short "-y". It excludes the three-rhymed octave, the terminal couplet, and other common licences of the anthology sonnet.

If these appear strange, Alan Bush must take some of the responsibility; for his theory of "thematic composition" taught me more about poetry than ever I could learn about music. If they are good, it is because I had good masters. I offer them at the tomb of Bartlett Adamson.

—J. S. Manifold

Notes from Brisbane: "Hall's Gang" won the Eaton Trophy on 2nd June by a short head from the Moreton Bay Bushwhackers, with a fine vocal and instrumental programme: "John Come Kiss Me", "Lowlands" and "The Codfish" in a very clever and funny contrapuntal setting . . . Queensland University Bush Music Club, showing fatigue after a rapid return from Sydney, ran third. Other contesting teams were: Brisbane New Theatre, Brisbane Realist Writers, The Association of Australian Dancers, Malouf's Mob, The Brisbane Singers, the De Vidas Family, and (hors concours) the Bandicoots Quintet . . . Brisbane Realist Writers were pleased with the results of the visit of S. Murray-Smith and Ian Turner at the end of April. The visitors drew a bigger house to Trades Hall than any other speakers have had for years! . . . Recent MS. nights have shown up some remarkable short stories, and the possibility of local volume-publication is being actively canvassed . . . A team from Brisbane was invited to speak at the monthly meeting of the Building Workers' Industrial Union. After hearing David Forrest's short address, followed by readings of "Dunnage" by Ron Ferguson, "The Map" by J. S. Manifold, and part of "The Lunch Hour" by Eric la Motte, the meeting decided, on a proposal by Mr. Gerry Dawson, that the Union should take out ten subscriptions and circulate Overland to branches. Individual members are also taking subscriptions . . . The Queensland Authors and Artists' Association wants £300 to erect a memorial to the late A. H. Davis (Steele Rudd). Members of the Association searched for the grave of this significant figure in Australia's literary history and found it unmarked and uncared for in Toowong Cemetery in 1953. The Association is offering prizes for the best poems on Australian country life received by September 30. (G.P.O. Box 1871W, Brisbane) . . . Brisbane ballet-master Charles Lisner has bought a city site to build a fully-equipped "live" theatre, thus meeting a long-felt want. The theatre will also be the headquarters for a permanent ballet company based on Queensland. At present there are only two "live" theatres in Brisbane, one devoted to vaudeville and one associated with J. C. Williamson productions. A number of recent companies have thus been unable to stage city productions, and Sir Ralph Richardson's company were prevented from visiting Brisbane because of the lack of a theatre.

★

Some Sydney notes . . . Mr. Leslie Haylen, M.H.R., is the new President of the Fellowship of Australian Writers (Sydney). He last held the position in 1946-7. Former President Gavin Casey has left Sydney for his home State, Westralia. Mr. Haylen spoke movingly at the recent Lawson night held by the Fellowship—a packed house which gave a rousing reception to the Bushwhackers' Band in their presentation of Lawson verses in song . . . A number of Sydney literary organisations are to organise a celebration of Dame Mary Gilmore's 91st birthday in August, in aid of the Chair of Australian Literature Fund . . . Sydney W.E.A. Players, we are told, are a talented and courageous group who expect to perform their first Australian play soon—probably Oriel Gray's "Had We But World Enough". Their last performance, staged against odds in their miniature theatre, was a creditable production of Ben Jonson's "Volpone". As at time of publication their season of Ewen McColl's "Operation Olive Branch" is reported to be in full swing.



Leslie Rees

## NEW HOPE FOR AUSTRALIAN DRAMA

ONE warm evening last spring a group of nine men and women sat around a smoke-filled room in Sydney arguing, weighing, counterweighing and counter-arguing the merits of a dozen play scripts.

These people, members of the Playwrights' Advisory Board and the appointed judges of this Board's latest full-length play competition, might reasonably have been in the last throes of optical and mental exhaustion, for they had recently completed the reading of no fewer than 130 scripts, some of extravagant length, and fiendishly faulty typing. On the contrary, each of the judges was showing a remarkable degree of animation and enthusiasm. Why? The 130 scripts, submitted from all parts of Australia, contained some surprising work. They had been reduced after much brow-furrowing to about 12; and now that select number was to be winnowed down to an even choicer three or two or one.

The hour was late: there had been five and a half hours of perfervid talk when at last it was decided to divide equally the £200 prize-money (donated by a Sydney philanthropist, Sir Edward Hallstrom) between the authors of a period comedy named "The Torrents" and a realistic drama "Summer of the Seventeenth Doll."

This done, there was a rush to open the envelopes containing the (until then concealed) names of the authors: Oriel Gray and Ray Lawler. Both gave Melbourne addresses.

These two plays were not the only ones considered worthy of commendation as practical plays for the theatre. Eunice Hanger, of Brisbane, had submitted "Flood", a verse drama of the times, which was afterwards given a special prize; Gwen Meredith had written "Cornerstone", a domestic drama on the theme of a daughter's responsibilities to her mother; Ray Mathew "We Find the Bunyip", an essay in "poetic naturalism" set in a country pub kitchen; Dymphna Cusack "Pacific Paradise", an anti-H Bomb play enacted on a South Sea island Utopia which the inhabitants refused to leave even under threat of annihilation; and Morris L. West "The Illusionists", a dynamic verse treatment of an artist's effort to keep faith with himself in a world of soul-destroying commercial enterprise.

Within a short time these plays had been submitted to the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, to see what could be done about encouraging various theatre groups, professional or amateur, to put the plays into performance.

The Trust officers, through their chief, Hugh Hunt, took a particular fancy to "Summer of the Seventeenth Doll." The P.A.B. wrote to the Union Theatre, a Melbourne professional repertory organisation associated with Melbourne University, where, by a coincidence, Ray Lawler was the producer-director. Surely here was an obvious opportunity; the author to produce his own play in his own theatre. But Lawler, a person of unassuming nature, failed to see how this could be done: a new Australian play even by himself might be a financial failure and he could hardly take such responsibility. The P.A.B. appealed over Ray Lawler's head to the vice-chancellor of the University; and the vice-

chancellor agreed that the risk could be taken if the Trust would guarantee the production against some loss. The Trust not only did this, but supplied a producer in John Sumner, previously of the Union Theatre, so that Ray Lawler could take the part of Barney in his own play.

The later exciting history of this play—history which is still being made, and vitally—is well known. The three weeks' triumphant season in the Union Theatre was one achievement; but could such success be repeated in the large Elizabethan Theatre, Sydney? The answer is that the play broke all records for attendance and receipts at this Trust theatre; people were turned away by the score, unable to obtain seats. Hugh Hunt announced that in three weeks the theatre made the astonishing profit of £2,500 on the play. Soon an Arts Council company was touring the play with a second company in country centres of New South Wales, later visiting Queensland. Everywhere the tale was the same: splendid houses.

And everywhere the critics, seriously judging the play's values, perhaps at first suspicious of its too easy popular acceptance, were declaring: Here is a fine play, a notable addition to the fund of Australian drama.

Great credit is due to the Elizabethan Theatre Trust in taking up the play with such alacrity and confidence. One cannot imagine the commercial theatre organisations which existed before the Trust came into operation making any such enterprising move, enslaved as they are, body, soul and box-office, to the imported play. But "The Doll" has likewise done significant service for the Trust, thus early in its career. Nothing could have rehabilitated the English-dominated Trust's prestige with the Australian public more truly and signally than such a triumph with a play that could hardly be more Australian in fibre and content and attitude. At one blow, Australian playwrights had won the right to be taken seriously, not merely on their merits as providers of plays, but actually as contributors to the Trust's profits.

Linked as I have been with the public launching of "The Doll" as a theatre piece, I would scarcely find it easy to examine coolly and objectively the play's qualities of craftsmanship and theme were it not that I had had opportunity to study these before the hullabaloo began. There is no more difficult task for any assessor than to judge whether and how a cold cardboard-bound script will take life in the hands of able actors. I do not think that any of us, the Trust readers included, foresaw quite the dramatic impact that "The Doll" was to make, even after Ray Lawler had revised it. But we did realise that here was a work of original vision, observation, comic understanding and emotional truth.

Its surface story-telling is well known by now: the two cane-cutter cobblers coming back from the Queensland sugarlands for the seventeenth successive year to the two waiting barmaid women in Melbourne. The high spirits of arrival and meeting; then the gradual revelation that all is not well: the setting in of doubt, then the dissolution of the whole previously splendid and novel arrangement. That is the range of action: as it proceeds we grow more and more intimately acquainted with half a

Mr. Rees is Chairman of the Playwrights' Advisory Board and author of "Towards an Australian Drama."



dozen clearly rounded and natural-sounding characters who speak largely in modern city Australian slang yet have the capacity somehow to express emotional attitudes in terms which avoid the obvious or trite. There is the barmaid, Olive, whose attachment to her unconventional way of life, as well as to her man, has the quality of a shining faith; and there is the man 'Roo, simple-natured, masculine, a leader-type in a small way, with no moral or mental resources. There is Barney, his cobbler, a born wag and Lothario; and Pearl, another barmaid, but this time with the clear eyes of the sceptic. And, for good measure, Olive's harum-scarum old mother, gin-drinking, cadging, loud but wholesome, a chimpanzee of an intruding female, strenuously addicted to community singing; and Bubba, the attractive innocent from next door who loves them all but is determined to avoid their errors. These characters move in a fluid yet controlled design of drama and comedy, keen-edged, with pathos, spluttering humor, anger, dejection and loss closely conjoined.

It is clear that such characters have the power to evoke a sympathetic and delighted response from many Australian theatre-goers who are, generally speaking, more elevated in terms of education, employment, and social status than the characters themselves. This is something that cannot be said about the fashionable London play, which has been so often our model and which almost always takes its social or intellectual stance among the upper middle classes. If persons of "lower" class are introduced, they are seen through the eyes of a middle-class character and almost invariably patronised. The standard English play (as distinct from the American and Irish, and excluding a few self-consciously "proletarian" dramas and comedies) has a very limited range of true social sympathy, however perfectly it understands people—and it does—**within** that range. Plays professionally produced in London are mirrors of the ideas, attitudes, defences and prejudices only of those limited numbers of people, and classes of people, sitting in the stalls and dress-circle, people who are able and willing to pay fifteen shillings for a seat. Plays that do not reflect the "angle" of these classes seldom have wide success in Britain.

An egalitarian society such as we are lucky to have in Australia can have a potent effect on the nature of the drama that will be written for an Australian theatre. If play-goers will attend a play that is set fairly on any social level, high or low, only asking that the play itself should be exciting and imaginative, then our drama should be free to reflect the whole of life, to establish a rich and worthwhile relationship between any audience and any set of characters. The success of "The Doll" illustrates the feasibility of this, just as did the success of "Rusty Bugles". Australians on all levels have a companionable attitude to the ordinary Aussie, the digger, the barmaid, the cane-cutter, the farm-hand, the factory-worker, and view him or her without condescension—that is without feeling that barbed-wire fences must separate him or her from them. Apartheid is against our national character. From this the writing of drama should benefit.

This democratic tone is one quality of "The Doll", an Australian quality. Another emerges. While the theme of this play is negative and pessimistic—the inevitable collapse of a dream world, a way of life which is not sufficiently founded in solid normality and whose characters are not trained, or have not the strength, to adjust themselves to such a collapse—the author's responses to life are not negative but vividly positive. As in Irish writing, which is



Olive: "Gawd, this'll be happy. You know what we're in for, don't you? She'll start off with 'Goldmine in the Sky' and finish up with 'Old Black Joe'."

From left: Ray Lawler, June Jago, Lloyd Berrell, Ethel Gabriel.

perennially concerned with criticising the Irish personal character and Irish patterns of living, a native exuberance, a warm gusto, offsets Ray Lawler's down-beat trend of situation.

Australians have a capacity for curiosity which sometimes makes us appear naive to visitors, but which, to my mind, is the mark of robust confidence in life. World disillusionment may press on to our writers' themes and moods that are nihilistic, but optimism of nature, possibly at times of the ostrich type, will effect a balance. Lawler owes something to the notable American Arthur Miller ("Death of a Salesman") and particularly to Tennessee Williams (there is a scene in "The Rose Tattoo", the hurling down of a man's bottled ashes, which is similar to, and antedates the scene of the smashing of the seventeenth doll). But Lawler's negativism is far more aerated than any of the sombre and neurotic though poetically sensitive exemplifications found in the Williams plays; it is less sick and wilting than that found in the latest English examples—"A Day by the Sea", with its pallid inertia, like watered Chekhov; "Separate Tables", with its extremely painful and embarrassed comment on the failure of real personal contact



between individuals of the middle-classes, all of them retreating to separate cells; or "The Living Room" with its more stimulating analysis of the conflicts between religion and guilty sex impulse, faith and psychology, ending however in sheer denial of hope. Many recent plays from Sweden, Italy and France are as spiritually deflated. In most of them there is a brooding exploration of disillusionment, the disarray and crack-up of life, but seldom is the subject approached from any strongly sane viewpoint.

Let us be clear on this. Human disintegration may always be a fit and proper subject for a dramatist: if such a dramatist, sincerely looking at life and feeling intensely for his characters, cannot bring himself to agree that "while there is life there is hope", then his tone of interpretation, however drear and dissipating, must be accepted as an honest one.

What will distinguish the vital dramatist from the limp, grey and ephemeral playwright is, apart from the essential question of craftsmanship in moulding a playshape, the degree of imaginative energy, of sheer electric voltage, which flows from his mind into his created world—the sort of energy that Dostoevsky and Flaubert in the novel and Synge and O'Casey in the theatre transmitted while treating of negative themes.

"Summer of the Seventeenth Doll", despite its unhappy movement of events, has quite a deal of such energy—along with the sheer theatricality that Lawler's experience as an actor helps him to impart—and however seriously Lawler intends us to accept his dour ending, few play-goers have been really depressed by it: there is the latent feeling that at least some of his people will recover themselves, and either the mateship of Roo and Barney will endure, or Roo and his barmaid—I imagine her to be the one woman in all modern drama who is indignant at an offer of marriage as distinct from an offer to live "in sin"—will in six months' time find a new contented life together, perhaps with benefit of a wedding ring, perhaps without it. A dream has been shattered, but an acceptable reality may take its place.

So much has been talked about "The Doll"—and will be talked, for the play should have a career overseas, in stage, film or television form, as well as throughout Australia with the Trust company—that the merits of some of the other P.A.B. plays may appear to have been neglected. This is not so. There have been repertory productions in various States of "Flood", "Cornerstone", "Pacific Paradise", "We Find the Bunyip"—in one case as many as four separate presentations. Most of the plays have been given by the A.B.C. in radio versions. The Elizabethan Trust has supported some productions, with guarantees against loss. If "The Torrents" has so far lagged—except on the air—this may be because of casting difficulties. It is a play that needs to be presented with fine attention to the detail of its late nineteenth century picture of a newspaper office in a goldfields town. A well-organised group could make much of the play's charm, humorous understanding of male character, idealistic drive, and portrait of a thoroughly wide-awake young woman.

All over Australia, largely by reason of the inspiring example of "The Doll", there is a warmer public attitude to the question of Australian drama. In Canberra Ric Throssell's "The Day Before Tomorrow", a grimly realistic, unflinching study of what we may expect after the H-bomb has fallen, has received plaudits—it has also been broadcast by the A.B.C. "Ned Kelly", the poetic drama by

## Bagpipes in Hobart

At Hobart in the harbor the pipers are piping  
Loch Rannoch, so sweetly, so bitterly sweet.  
O how sadly, how slowly the drums are lamenting,  
How slowly and sadly and bravely they beat.

For whom the proud march and for whom the  
lamenting?

For the sons of the ploughman, transported for  
bread.

In Hobart the bagpipes are playing Loch Rannoch,  
The dirge of the Isles for the Isle of the Dead.

The plane trees and chestnuts still guard the old  
houses,

And Franklin, the sailor, keeps watch in the rain—  
But too many churches and too many churchmen,  
And not enough pipers to rattle the chain.

DAVID MARTIN

★

## PORT ARTHUR

Tall and dry the summer grass  
Leans above the bitter ground.  
Straggles rose on roofless church  
Whence no sullen voices sound.

Where the tourist buses turn  
Lines of convicts used to be;  
Guilty, guiltless, all as one  
Stared toward the mocking sea.

Downy bee and butterfly  
Grace the air in sunny cells.  
Men lay there, despised, alone,  
Sleepless heard their gaolers' bells.

Past is past. No pity gives  
Life and joy to blanching bone;  
Founders exiled, sorrow-spent  
Yield to time in graves unknown.

Rooted deep in convict clay  
Springs a sapling liberty.  
Children playing now will live  
Shaded by the full-grown tree.

NELL OLD

Douglas Stewart, is to be given professional treatment later in the year by the Theatre Trust, which will bring back Leo McKern, one of the world's finest character actors, to play the lead. Our writers are tackling a wider variety of contemporary, as distinct from historical fields than previously. I hope that there will be fine response on the part of writers to the next play competition, which is being conducted by the Journalists' Club (of 166 Phillip Street, Sydney) with prizes totalling £300. The Playwrights' Advisory Board will again provide the judges and hopes to find material at least the equal of last year's.

With the aid of a renascent theatre, organised both on professional and repertory levels, the drama as a vigorous and sensitive interpreter of life in this country is moving forward.

A number of writers and others concerned with the theatre in Australia are being invited to add their comments in the next *Overland*.



## FOR YOUR LIBRARY

WRECKS IN TASMANIAN WATERS (H. O'May), map illst., £1/3/6; post. 1/-.

DREADNOUGHT OF THE DARLING (C. E. W. Bean), illst., £1/1/-; post. 1/-.

FLOWER ARRANGEMENT (Violet Stevenson), illst., 5/-; post. 5d.

HOW TO CHOOSE AND ENJOY WINE (edit. A. Muir), 15/6; post. 5d.

THE DESPERATE HOURS (J. Hayes), a novel of suspense, 13/3; post. 9d.

CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION AROUND THE HOME (Popular Mechanics) illst., 3/-; post 4d.

NATURECRAFT IN AUSTRALIA (Thistle Harris), Guide for the Nature-lover, illst., £1/5/-; post. 1/3.

FOWLS AND HOW TO KEEP THEM (R. Manning), illst., 5/9, post. 5d.

GARDEN MANUAL FOR ALL AUSTRALIAN STATES (Keith Winsor), illst., £1/5/-; post. 1/3.

THE NUDE (A. de Dienes), Nude Photography, £2/11/6, post. 1/9.

THE HONEY FLOW (Kylie Tennant), new Australian novel, 17/6; post. 1/-.

Lists available (new and secondhand)—Art, Natural History, Australiana, Biography, Gardening, Sex and Marriage, also monthly Penguin Lists.

**N. H. SEWARD PTY. LTD.**

457 BOURKE ST., MELBOURNE (Phone: MU 6129)

Indispensable!

## MAINSTREAM

(Formerly Masses & Mainstream)

AMERICA'S FOREMOST  
PROGRESSIVE  
CULTURAL MONTHLY

Battles in the cultural front for peace, freedom and a democratic people's culture. Brings its readers the finest in articles, essays, literary criticism, stories, poetry, reportage.

★

Enter Your Subscription Through

**A. KEESING,**

**G.P.O. BOX 4886, SYDNEY**

## R. P. R.

The Rumanian People's Republic publishes in English language editions the best work of Rumanian writers and artists. A selection of these publications is given below.

MIHAIL SADOVEANU: The great master of Rumanian literature—

THE HATCHET. A novel ..... 6/-

THE MUD HUT DWELLERS. A novel 1/6

TALES OF WAR. Short stories ..... 1/6

ANCUTA'S INN. Short stories ..... 1/6

MITREA COCOR. A novel ..... 1/6

GEORGE BOGZA: Outstanding Rumanian journalist—

LAND OF STONE. Sketches ..... 1/6

YEARS OF THUNDER. Articles ..... 12/6

P. DUMITRUI: Leading Rumanian novelist and short story writer—

NIGHTS IN JUNE. Short stories ..... 1/6

AL. SAHIA: One of the best of the new writers—  
SHORT STORIES ..... 1/6

REMUS LUCA: Developing young novelist—

ANA NUCU. A novel ..... 7/6

MARIN PREDA: Another young novelist—  
IN A VILLAGE. A novel ..... 7/6

ZAHARIAH STANCU: The author of the great novel "Barefoot"—

HOUNDS. A novel ..... 5/-

### ARTS IN THE R. P. R.

A magnificent journal covering all aspects of the cultural life of the Rumanian People's Republic. Beautifully produced on good quality art paper, authoritative articles, hundreds of reproductions of ancient and modern art, many in full color. 5/- a single issue.

RUMANIAN ARCHITECTURE: A fine collection of photographs illustrating the main features of the architecture of the country. 10/6.

THEODOR AMAM: The best work of this important Rumanian classical artist. Many colored reproductions. 5/-.

CAROL DOPP DE SZATHMARY: A small collection of the work of a most unusual artist. 1/6.

BUCHAREST: An illustrated record of a beautiful city. 5/-.

### AT ALL GOOD BOOKSHOPS

Lists and catalogues giving information about other publications from the Rumanian People's Republic from the Australian representative:—

**JOSEPH WATERS**

**360 COLLINS STREET, MELBOURNE**



# The Praising of Famous Men—CULTURAL EXCHANGES

CULTURAL exchanges seems a rather dead phrase, but there is a good deal of life in its core. At the Helsinki World Peace Conference in July there was a real attempt by artists of all kinds to give it body. Various suggestions for interpreting the life of different countries to one another were discussed, it being agreed that the most effective way of doing this was through works of art—books, drama, ballet, pictures and music.

But there are great difficulties involved and it was inevitable that most attention would be paid to the easiest form of exchange—that of documentary films. They can cross frontiers so lightly, for the language of the eye is universal. Since July, though, there have been developments that could hardly have been imagined then. Chief of these have been the interchanges between America and the Soviet Union of companies of artists presenting drama, ballet and music. It is inspiring to hear about the welcome being given in the Soviet Union to Earl Jackson and the all-Negro cast of "Porgy and Bess," that drama of the Charleston waterfront. And Russian singers and dancers are having a similar success in America.

With literature the exchange is not so easy or the effect so immediate. The roots of literature cling to a particular soil; exchanges involve difficult questions of choice and translation. Though Halldor Laxness, the great Icelander novelist, has won the Nobel Prize for literature this year, is it likely that his works will be widely read in other countries? Perhaps not in our time; yet the fact that the award has been given him is important. It awakens in us an awareness that Iceland is inhabited by people like ourselves, perhaps even more highly-developed than ourselves. Similarly with the anniversaries being celebrated this year of the great literary humanists of the past. I shall probably never read Mickiewicz, the Polish poet who died a hundred years ago, but the knowledge that in the Ukraine today new symphonic works are being based on his ballads and poems gives me a fresh sense of the world's oneness.

It was with some such feeling that I read Sholokov's proposal for a world round-table meeting of writers.

"We may have different opinions," says Sholokov, "but we are united in one thing; desire to be useful to man."

Personally, I think it is too soon for such a world-conference to be arranged: I think it should grow out of, rather than precede, a series of contacts between individuals and groups of different countries. But it would be a sad thing if, in the effort to give creative content to the idea of peace, writers should lag behind. For they, even more than workers in the other arts, can demonstrate two things necessary to international fraternity. The first is that people everywhere are basically alike in their human feelings and frailties; the second is that there is a deep delight to be found in their little national differences of custom, color, and ways of living. The unity of man; his rich diversity! A full awareness of both truths is especially important to us as Australians; it would give a happy confidence to our future relations with our Asian neighbors.

—Vance Palmer.

Cultural anniversaries recommended for celebration during 1956 by the World Council of Peace are those of the Indian poet, Kalidasa; the Japanese painter Toya Oda; Rembrandt (350th anniversary of birth); Benjamin Franklin (250th anniversary of birth); Mozart (200th anniversary of birth); Heinrich Heine (100th anniversary of death); G. B. Shaw (100th anniversary of birth); Dostoyevsky (75th anniversary of death); Pierre and Marie Curie (50th anniversary of Pierre Curie's death); and Henrik Ibsen (50th anniversary of death).

## Burial of W. A. Mozart

5/12/1791

On that day  
The heavens wept drearily;  
And paupers plodded through sodden streets,  
Their wet clothes outlining meagre forms,  
And wet, lank hair matting their faces,  
In silence, total silence. Music was dead  
And lay in the coffin they carried.  
Then the sky stormed, pent full of fury.  
The paupers, frightened, fled, exclaiming  
"The devil is awake!"  
Leaving the hearse in the mud and slush  
And the rain, beating, beating.  
No Unknown Warrior; his name a glory  
Now and forever more, Mozart reposes  
Unfound among his nameless, numberless  
brothers.

MAUREEN McPHAIL.

★

## Adam Mickiewicz

The UNESCO and other world-wide celebrations of the Mickiewicz centenary in 1955 were a particularly fitting tribute to this great Polish poet and patriot. For him, as for Byron whom he so much admired, poetry was no empty pastime, but a means of struggle against tyranny and oppression. Born in 1798, and living in the period of the third partition of Poland, he never ceased to fight tsarism, and was exiled from his own country by the decision of a tsarist court. In 1848 he was inspired to lead a legion of Polish emigres to fight side by side with the Italian revolutionaries. He died in Istanbul in 1855 where he had again taken a Polish legion to assist the Turks in their struggle against the tsar.

Fervent patriot, he was no narrow nationalist but saw the Polish struggle for freedom as part of a universal struggle for man's liberation. Torn with doubts about the quality of his work, constantly depressed by shocking poverty, nevertheless he was a poet who wrote of the unconquerable human spirit. As the great creative artist, as the editor of a revolutionary political journal in Paris and as the soldier on the battlefield he fought without ceasing on the side of justice and human decency.

"Wishes and words are not enough," he said, "one must live up to one's writing." Adam Mickiewicz did just that and today his memory is honored everywhere.

—Joseph Waters



Literature ~ Art ~ Music

Essays and Critiques

LITERATURE AND REALITY	HOW MUSIC EXPRESSES IDEAS
Howard Fast ..... 6/6	Sidney Finklestein ..... 7/6
THE NOVEL AND THE PEOPLE	★
Ralph Fox ..... 3/-	CREATIVE LABOR AND CULTURE
THE WRITER AND HIS CRAFT	Maxim Gorky ..... 1/6
Ilya Ehrenburg ..... 2/6	MARX AND ENGELS ON ART AND LITERATURE ..... 10/-
★	PROBLEMS OF ART AND LITERATURE—Mao Tse-tung ..... 2/-
ART—ITS ORIGIN AND SOCIAL FUNCTION—Paul Mortier ..... 1/6	CHINA'S NEW LITERATURE AND ART—Chou Yang ..... 2/-
FOLK ARTS OF NEW CHINA ..... 2/6	

Wholesale enquiries from—

**CURRENT BOOK DISTRIBUTORS**

**40 MARKET STREET, SYDNEY**

Retail from—

Pioneer Bookshop, 40 Market St., SYDNEY.	Peoples Bookshop, 205 Brunswick St., Valley, BRISBANE.
International Bookshop, 180 Exhibition St., MELBOURNE.	Pioneer Bookshop, 196 Elizabeth St., HOBART.
Peoples Bookshop, 182 Hindley St., ADELAIDE.	Tribune Bookshop, 3rd Floor, London Court, PERTH.



# Swag

International Theatre Month was held during July. The professional theatre, little theatre groups, universities, schools and radio stations again performed plays either in the foreign language in which they were written or in an English translation. On the occasion of International Theatre Month 1955 Australian playwright, Leslie Rees, who is Acting Assistant Director of Drama and Features, and Federal Play Editor, Australian Broadcasting Commission, stated: "What we need is to enter more often and more richly into the lives of people whose folk traditions are quite different but whose elementary love of theatre, comedy and drama can make us all kind, allowing us to live peacefully but vitally side by side. Let us, therefore, have more plays—and films, ballet, books and paintings, for that matter, from France, Scandinavia, Italy, Greece, Russia, Spain, China and India. And let us absorb those influences deeply into ourselves and so work towards the production of our own significant theatre."

★

DONATIONS: Once more we acknowledge with oh, such a deep sigh of gratitude, the following: D.C. £5, D.M. £3, A.M. 35/-, T.T. 26/6, J.H. 21/-, N.F. £1, N.C. £1, J.C. £1, I.G.B. 16/-, F.R. 15/-, A.D. 15/-, S.B. 15/-, N.F.P. 15/-, S.A. 15/-, R.McN. 15/-, M. & K.K. 10/6, P.W. 10/-, S.D. 10/-, N.B. 10/-, R. de B. 5/-, J.G. 5/-, I.H.F. 5/-, F.C.R. 5/-, C.B.O.M. 5/-, P.T. 5/-, E.A. 5/-, J.C. 5/-, J.H. 5/-, J.C. 4/-, M.H. 3/-, R.J.C. 2/6, M.H. 2/-, K.N. 1/-, R.B. 1/-, D.W. 1/-.

★

On June 12 a meeting of writers, convened by Nancy Cato, formed a Fellowship of Australian Writers (S.A. Branch). The officers for the next twelve months are Flexmore Hudson (President), Geoffrey Dutton and Max Harris (Vice-Presidents), Colin Thiele (Secretary), Ian Mudie (Treasurer), Nancy Cato and John Quinn (Publicity Officers). The organisation plans to hold monthly meetings, as well as readings, lectures and discussions. It will enter into any public controversy if, by doing so, it can serve the interests of Australian literature. The Fellows are determined that the meetings shall be distinguished by respect for freedom of speech, and aim for 25 Fellows and several hundred Associates by the end of the year. Among activities will be the provision of lecturers on Australian literature in secondary schools, the establishment of intimate relations with immigrant cultural groups and the publication of a broadsheet and annual anthology.

★

The National Librarian, Mr. Harold White, announces in his "Annual Catalogue of Australian Publications 1955" that up to December 1955 a total of 552 books (containing five or more pages) were published in Australia—an advance of 14 over the previous year. However works of imaginative literature sank from 83 in 1954 to 77 in 1955 (107 in 1952). Works of fiction rose from 28 to 31 (43 in 1952) and poetry dropped from 23 to 16. These include overseas reprints. This interesting catalogue is available on application to the National Library, Canberra.

★

It would help a lot if our readers would patronise our advertisers—and tell them so.

★

The cheapest and best advertising for us is to send sample copies to likely subscribers. Can you send us some names and addresses?

## Character Study

The lovers flew to the peak of the world where they perched and tenderly pecked; the waves and cities and angels swirled about them: a brilliant prospect.

Then when the sexual havoc fled and the frantic firmament stilled one lover turned to the other and said: "My life has been fulfilled."

The other closed an eye and spied at the shivering blue of the sky. thought ten seconds, and then replied: "The stars are very high."

The first exclaimed: "I love you so, your absence makes me weep;" the other watched the rivers flow: "The sea is very deep."

The saddened first: "I wish I knew you loved me." The other sighed and gazed ahead: "Of course I do. The world is very wide."

LAURENCE COLLINSON

★

## ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE

I want a world in which no child  
Shall go without his supper,  
A world in which no honest boot  
Shall flap without its upper;  
In short, I want a world in which  
The well deserved shall be the rich.

I want a world where poetry  
Has equal right with prose,  
A world where prosy pedants shall  
Not lead us by the nose;  
In short, I want a world that's fit  
For men of spirit and of wit.

I want a world that's truly free  
To seek and think and feel,  
A world that knows a manly law,  
But none to make men kneel;  
In short, a world in which no fool  
May force us to frequent his school.

I want a world that even holds  
The scales of truth and beauty,  
A world that not, by some new trick,  
Brands love the thief of duty;  
In short, I want a world that can  
Accept the universal man.

DAVID MARTIN

---

NOTABLE BIRTHDAYS: Frank Dalby Davison (June 23), James Aldridge (July 11), Dame Mary Gilmore (August 16), Marjorie Barnard (August 16), Nettie Palmer (August 18), Eleanor Dark (August 26), Vance Palmer (August 28), Will Lawson (September 2), Walter Murdoch (September 17), Ion Idriess (September 20), Frederick Macartney (September 27). We also remember: E. J. Brady's death (July 22, 1952), Victor Daley's birth (September 5, 1858), Joseph Furphy's birth (September 26, 1843) and his death (September 13, 1912), Francis Adams' birth (September 27, 1862), and his death (September 4, 1893), A. G. Stephens' birth (August 28, 1865), Henry Lawson's birth (June 17, 1867) and his death (September 2, 1922), Bernard O'Dowd's death (September 1, 1953), and Miles Franklin's death (September 19, 1954).



# COMMENT



Hugh Anderson writes:

Mr. Waters, in his resume of developments in Australian song collecting, points to the need for "close and detailed" study of the material available, yet says this must depend upon "much more thorough and scientific collecting" by field-workers.

From his article it appears that Mr. Waters will accept anything as an Australian folk-song which is local in scene and taken down from lips of some person. Not once does he name a song which he accepts as a folk-song, but badly states "though there is no evidence that songs such as 'The Stockman', 'Paddy Malone' or 'New Chum in the Country' ever passed into the oral tradition (i.e. became folk songs), they have points in common with the folk songs . . ." What are these points? Does this mean Mr. Waters would accept these same songs if, by a fortunate accident, a collector happens to take them from the singing of some oldster?

This critic says my book represents a "great deal of serious, detailed research work," but then makes comments that show he has missed the whole point of the book. In the second section, Mr. Waters claims, there are folk-songs. I would like to ascertain their titles and know what criteria he uses to separate popular song and folk-song. Anderson, he states, "introduces unnecessary confusion . . . by trying to decide whether or not 'bush songs' are folk-songs", and adds, he "seems to think" bush songs are not folk-songs. Isn't that what Waters is doing—deciding **which** bush songs **are** folk-songs? As for the second point, what I attempt to show in my book is that what are commonly accepted as folk-songs in Australia are nothing of the sort; Mr. Waters and his fellows are collecting, not folk-song proper, but the memories of popular song.

From his constant reiteration one gains the impression that "scientific collecting" is a magic phrase for Mr. Waters. As I have understood scientific method, Mr. Waters does not pass beyond the first step—collection of data. He is content at this point to accept songs because they are taken down from voice. Following a survey of the facts collected, a hypothesis to explain them is arrived at. In my case, this is a null hypothesis—there is no relationship between certain factors. The hypothesis must then be tested and if predictive, the predictions checked. Again from my standpoint is firm: from a study of Australian history and settlement we would expect the surviving songs of individuals and professionals to reappear in distorted, or perverted if you like, form in the singing of an older generation. Of the songs listed in the last issue of *Speewa*, almost a third were composed by the professional performer, Charles Thatcher.

My null hypothesis has, so far as my knowledge of the results of recent collecting is concerned, stood up to the test, and until Mr. Waters produces some facts for which this hypothesis cannot account, I shall continue to accept it. Mr. Waters begins with a ready-made, cut and dried, definition; because certain conditions applied in England at the turn of the century, they must, he assumes, apply in Australia; because Sharp (whom I have read

very carefully) induces his view from the collected corpus of English folk-songs, Waters, beginning with Sharp's conclusion, deductively tries to populate this country with pure folk-song ("technical devices" and all). In actual fact, our songs are mostly bastard offspring from the popular ditties of last century.

Paterson's *Old Bush Songs* (7th ed. reprinted in 1932) is "the first published collection containing Australian folk-songs." Which songs therein are folk-songs, Mr. Waters? Is it the first? If it is then *The Sydney Songster* (circ. 1869), *Tibb's Popular Songs* (1888) and the *Native Companion Songster* (1889), by implication, do not contain folk-songs. What of the *Queenslander's Camp-fire Songbook*?

It was forty years before another collection appeared, says Mr. Waters. Must we ignore *Swagman's Treasure* (1938) or Will Lawson's collection in 1944? Dr. Jones' work represents the beginnings of "scientific collecting in Australia", but also the Australian Folk-lore Society "represents the first attempt to organise collecting and study in a systematic and scientific way"! I would like to know in what way either of these bodies (individual and corporate) were more scientific than Vance Palmer in his *Old Australian Bush Ballads*?

★

## POINTS FROM LETTERS

"Despite Betty Vassilieff's able review of John Morrison's 'Black Cargo', most professionally covering the ground, I would have hoped that she would have given more honorable mention to the stories 'Black Cargo' and 'The Incense Burner'. To my mind 'The Incense Burner' reflects more of the author's true mind and heart than the other stories, although 'Black Cargo' reveals an incomparable range of characters." (D.J., Tas.) . . . "I enjoyed all of the last issue greatly, and felt Elizabeth Vassilieff's review the pick of the bunch for its sensitive and sympathetic review of 'Black Cargo'. However she appears to have omitted reference to one of the most important stories, 'The Welcome', where wharfies showed that 'racial antipathy' is often only skin deep." (J.M.S., Q.) . . . "Unlike Gerry Grant, I did not think 'Jedda' was a bad film. I thought it was good enough to tell people to go and see it, and I am still telling them to. I did not think that any aspect of the film told a good enough story, but I am grateful that it told a little. And I want people to see an Australian film, no matter what its faults, and I want people to see how badly the Aborigines fare under the benevolent treatment of the squatters." (M.L., at sea.) . . . "I must tell you how much I like the simple set-up and the uncluttered quietness of *Overland*." (F.B., V.) . . . "Ever since I first saw *Overland*, I have been impressed by the standard of its illustrations. I remember, in the spring edition, '55, an old man, drawn by H. McClintock, which deserves special note. Noel Counihan's crayon portraits are consistently good, my favorite being of John Morrison. The most beautiful drawing I have seen in *Overland*, however, is in the summer issue. It is called 'Old Man with a Whistle' and is the work of Clem Millward. The picture's light and shade are well balanced and the lining is sensitive. An absence of detail everywhere but at the main points of interest produces an effect of concentrated power. Millward's style, in fact, is not unlike that of the English master draughtsman, Inigo Jones. Bravo *Overland* artists." (R.H., Q.)



## SCIENCE FICTION AND RAY BRADBURY

IN years to come it will be said, "One of the phenomena of the twentieth century was the meteoric rise of science fiction and its almost complete neglect by literary circles." No other literary form has so many people gathered together in clubs devoted to it. In Australia there are several groups, many of which print their own highly presentable club magazines, often at considerable expense to the members involved. These groups meet annually at a national conference and, this year, one is being held in Melbourne to coincide with the Olympic Games. In England, America and other countries SF is organised similarly, but on a much larger scale.

This type of literature has long been regarded by many people as one of the mistakes made by literature in its ceaseless attempts to find new means of expression. This view is not without justification for most of the SF writers are hacks of the worst kind who merely change their locales from Texas to Jupiter and have their heroes say "Blast my disintegrators!" instead of "Blast my hide!" The lurid covers are usually along the lines of an egg-shaped monstrosity with six arms holding a buxom blonde in its threatening tentacles.

From this apparently unpromising ground, though, have come several authors who have availed themselves of the scope which SF allows the imagination, a quality too often underestimated by writers today. SF has a vision and breadth that mysteries and Westerns never had.

Ray Bradbury, the author I wish particularly to deal with, is one of those writers. Though a big producer for the SF pulps, he yet possesses more of the art of story-telling than the simple ability to work out a gimmick. Much credit for Bradbury's recent escape from the identifying insignia of SF belongs to the critical discovery of him by Christopher Isherwood; but the chief reason is, of course, the style and content of his stories.

Ray Bradbury is basically a short story writer, and one of world class. Though his stories are generally set in the future, they always have something to say to our world of today. In his "The Illustrated Man" there are several outstanding stories in this manner.

One of these, "The Other Foot," deals with a Mars inhabited solely by Negroes. They have shifted there twenty years before. As the story opens, a rocket ship with the first white man in it is approaching. Remembering Earth experiences some of the Negroes organise a lynching party. They change their minds, though, when the ship lands and a weary old man steps out and pleads with them to help rescue the few whites remaining on atom-bomb scarred Earth. It's time for a new start for everyone.

Switching the order of things like this, placing the white man in the Negro's place, and vice versa, has enabled Bradbury to highlight the question of race prejudice in an unusual but effective manner. He is particularly successful in achieving this at the beginning where the Negroes rush around putting up signs in buses: "Rear section—whites only"; and in shops: "LIMITED CLIENTELE: Right to serve customer revocable at any time."

Taken literally, "The Other Foot" is not probable. It is not even scientifically accurate, for his picture of Mars, with its Earthlike conditions, is an impossibility. His aim is not probability, but, by imagination, to throw a searchlight onto a contemporary problem. He has.



"Fahrenheit 451", to date Bradbury's only novel, is set in the future when all books, being considered dangerous, are banned. Improved fireproofing methods having made fire brigades obsolete, they have been given a new job as official censors. Whenever anyone is found in possession of a book, it is the fire brigade's job to burn down that person's house as punishment. Fahrenheit 451, incidentally, is the temperature at which book paper bursts into flame.

There are other Bradbury stories which cry out for mention. "The Concrete Mixer" for its telling satire on American high pressure salesmanship; "The Dustman", "There Will Come Soft Rains", "The Golden Kite and the Silver Wind" for their peace themes; "Way in the Middle of the Air" and "The Man" for their humanity, to mention but a few.

The more serious sort of SF tries, by a logical extension of known knowledge, to predict what the future will be like, technically and socially. The aim of most of this type of story is to help the reader escape from the present into a ivory tower of the future and, in so doing, further divorce him from reality.

Science fiction, however, must not be judged by the average, but by the best, and also by its potential. The best of this group develop a current problem—the atom bomb, economic over-production, fascism—to the logical conclusions of war, crisis, misery in such a way that the reader's knowledge of today is inevitably heightened.

The problem of today's hire purchase systems has, for instance, been shown up by one author who developed it to a point in the future at which it had reached such dimensions that the earnings of the story's central character have been mortgaged to a credit company by his great grandfather 100 years before; and where he, in turn, is only existing by mortgaging, at a high rate of interest, the future earnings of his great great great great-grandsons. There is tremendous scope for satire in the SF field.

There is, as well, another sort of SF which, though not used by Bradbury, still has its importance. This type, educational SF, is probably used more by I. Efremov and other Soviet writers than by writers of other countries. Here the idea is partly, by means of a fictional story, painlessly to pass on scientific information; but mainly to show the reader how interesting a particular subject biology, geology, astronomy can be. Stories like this are no doubt playing an important part in Russia's continuous campaign to make her youth science-conscious.

(Continued next page)



(continued from previous page)

Why, when Bradbury and other authors like him have for so long been throwing their considerable talents into the struggle for a more peaceful and a friendlier world, have so few Australians heard of them? Why do so many (generally without reading it) call SF trash simply because at first glance it does not physically seem to reflect modern life?

There is a tendency to regard writers, if not in theory then in fact, as being simply mirrors of contemporary society, forgetting that a writer's main concern is not what a thing looks like but the struggles that go on within it, and their results. These are capable of many interpretations, even in the form of fantasy.

Stories like most of Bradbury's, though given future or imaginary settings, are still realist because they synthesise the problems and contradictions which surround us. They are like red flags on a country road which warn us of what lies ahead if we are not careful. Because their motivating force is an extension of today's problems the characters in these tales can be very real and moving.

Science fiction is essentially an optimistic literature in that it does admit of a future, and in this perhaps largely lies the explanation of why Bradbury and others like him have, today, an audience which runs into scores of millions. With young people, to whom the imaginative always appeals, it is fast becoming the most popular type of reading.

Ray Bradbury's "Fahrenheit 451", "The Golden Apples of the Sun", "The Silver Locusts" and "The Illustrated Man", all published by Rupert Hart-Davis, are available in Australia. The latter two books are also available as recently published Corgi books at 3/-.



—Harry Reade.

## The Sea Front

On the sea front  
All are one  
About their business  
All day long.  
The prawner  
Water-circled on the sand,  
The weedy cockles  
Down its wooden side,  
The barefoot fishermen  
Upon the shore,  
Anxiously await the tide.  
Children  
Shouting up the beach,  
The sea-beaked bird  
Above his pool,  
Stab at fish beyond their reach.  
Cautiously the purple crab  
Shades himself behind a stone.  
All are one  
Yet each concerned  
With no affairs  
Save his alone.

WENDY SCARFE

## COALS TO NEWCASTLE?

Is it odd that hundreds of people all over Australia buy their books from the remote and dreary little city of Adelaide? Not at all!

Mary Martin Bookshop has a reputation all over Australia among people who prefer the non-merchandising traditions of bookselling; who prefer to be personalities to their bookseller rather than anonymous "accounts." And professional people, doctors, people short of time, as well as country people from New Guinea to Tasmania, find Mary Martin's the perfect answer to their inability to spend time exploring bookshops,

**For Mary Martin Provides the Only Free Complete Monthly Booklist Service**

**Free Booklist Service:**

- **PENGUIN LISTS.** The Monthly Penguin catalogue is sent to each client and also details of all new paperbacks, Pan, Corgi, etc.
- **BARGAIN BOOKS.** Mary Martin is about the only bookseller in Australia to specialise in Remainers. Our clients get tremendous pleasure from these excellent and surprising bargains.
- **NEW TITLES.** A monthly list is issued which discusses, with somewhat startling candour, the merits and demerits of books just arrived in Australia.
- **BOOKS OF THE MONTH.** Britain's best-known illustrated periodical of book reviews is distributed FREE to our clients. But as it bumps up postage costs, you are asked to pay 7/6 per year postage.

**APPLY NOW TO HAVE YOUR NAME PLACED ON OUR MAILING LIST.** Send 7/6 ONLY if you want "Books of the Month" in addition. Other lists are completely FREE.

**MARY MARTIN BOOKSHOP**  
75 RUNDLE STREET, ADELAIDE

## To keep the wolf from the door we present— THE RAMS SKULL PRESS ANTI-BAILIFF SALE

3 IN 2: For 18/- the price of two chapbooks (Botany Bay Broad-sides and Songs of Billy Barlow), you will receive the remaining title (Two Songs of '57) or a set of Bandicoot Ballads.

**GIVE AWAY:** "The History of Ocean Grove" originally 7/6, now 2/-. It was unfortunate for us that most of the residents hated the place.

**BEST BARGAIN:** "An Epistle from Oberea" usual price £3/3/- for only 30/-. This has only been out a short time and is to be reviewed in an early issue of "Biblioweb". Its main feature is a description of Sir Joseph Banks' hectic affair with the Queen of Tahiti.

**THE RAMS SKULL PRESS**  
Lording St., Lw. Fern-tree Gully, Victoria, Aus.



# • Reviews •

## The Quiet American

Graham Greene's *The Quiet American* (Heinemann 17/-) is considerably more than a short (65,000 word) novel of Vietnam in the days of the War of Independence. It is, by implication (although perhaps not by intention), a novel of SEATO in action, of American military advisers wherever they are passing out secondhand Sabre-jets and manuals on the use of the napalm-bomb, of the British in Cyprus, the French in Algeria, the Spaniards in Morocco.

It is a novel of colonialism and colonial war.

The story of the "quiet American", Alden Pyle, a fledgling diplomat in Vietnam on a "secret" mission (which everyone in Saigon wakes up to within a week or so of his arrival) is told by an English reporter, Thomas Fowler, whom press and personal interests alike link to Vietnam.

It appears in the first chapter that Pyle is in fact a "very quiet American", in the funereal phrase of the French detective, Vigot. How, when, where, why and at whose hands the unhappy Pyle meets his quietus is the burden of Mr. Greene's story.

As with most contemporary stories which deal with sudden death, it would be unfair to Mr. Greene to reveal in a review the answers to the above questions.

In any case, it is not really to the point, since the solution of these problems is only the mechanical design of Mr. Greene's novel—a design, let it be said, which carries the reader through the 244 pages of the book at a speed which can't be far behind that of a Delta-winged jet-fighter.

Mr. Greene, in this as in nearly all of his novels, is concerned with matters of far greater human concern than lust or violence or murder. In recent books, Mr. Greene (a convert to Roman Catholicism) has asked himself and his readers some fundamental questions about human morality and behavior and Catholic dogma—and in particular the question: can an act, held as evil in Catholic doctrine, be justified by good, unselfish motives? Can sin be justified in the eyes of God or man?

In his novel, *The Heart of the Matter*, Mr. Greene seemed to have answered the question to his own satisfaction by accepting relative rather than absolute moral standards. But in this new book, the problem crops up again, although this time detached from its dogmatic environment, and with a new setting that is social rather than personal.

At another level Greene's problem in *The Quiet American* is that of James Aldridge in *The Diplomat*: must a man take sides in political and social conflict? Am I my brother's keeper? His answer is for commitment.

The narrator, Fowler, is a "reporter", and not a "correspondent". He records facts for his paper, neither wanting nor trying to interpret them. He is isolated, uncommitted, and wants to stay that way. But his human sympathies, reinforced by his strong personal interest in Vietnam and the Vietnamese, betray his detachment.

He says of the Vietnamese: "They want enough rice. They don't want to be shot at. They want one day to be much the same as another. They don't want our white skins around telling them what they want."

He doesn't like the colonialists, but he likes even less the Americans who come in to teach the old

colonial powers how to fight their wars, fully equipped with wallets full of dollars, brief-cases stuffed with singularly ill-informed textbooks on the Threat to Asia, pockets bulging with plastic explosive, and mouths spilling over with sentimental unrealities about the sacred rights of the individual. ("Don't go on in the East with that parrot cry about a threat to the individual soul," he says to Pyle. "Here you'd find yourself on the wrong side—it's they who stand for the individual and we just stand for Private 23987, unit in the global strategy.")

Fowler's concern for the Vietnamese, and his anger and contempt for the blundering stupidities of American strategy, lead him to commit himself. And his act of commitment is an act that is generally regarded as being in itself evil. (He did not, I may say, murder Pyle.) Yet Mr. Greene evidently considers his act as, in all the circumstances, justified, though a fit subject for regret.

The story and Mr. Greene's treatment of it are exciting; vivid pictures of life in Saigon among the diplomats and correspondents, among Vietnamese who vary from passive support for the colonialists to active assistance to the Vietminh, of the front-line day-time war and the night war behind the French lines, flash past, leaving something behind them, as do the sequences of a first-rate film director.

Perhaps they flash past rather too fast to allow enough time to catch up fully on Mr. Greene's characters, who tend to be men and women of the films rather than of the novel—or maybe the flatness, the lack of depth of character comes from Mr. Greene's concern with the morality of all men rather than the morals on one man or woman.

However that may be it is true enough of all Graham Greene's novels; yet he always succeeds in getting the reader through to the end of the book, and in getting said what he wants to say. What is new in *The Quiet American* is that here Mr. Greene is saying something that he hasn't said before, something that is of major social importance in our times—and something that is of special importance to Australians in this fourth year of our involvement in SEATO and this second year of our active intervention in the British war in Malaya.

—Ian Turner

★

## Slim Volumes

A poet need not be "original," but he must have individuality. Some seem to have it though their work is full of echoes from other men's poetry: it depends on the mind through which these influences are filtered.

Richard Crossland's posthumous booklet of poems, *A Place to Get Lost In* (privately printed by Walter Stone, 64 Young Street, Cremorne, N.S.W.), shows that here was a poet who had read a lot of poetry, but who had a mind, and was developing a voice, of his own. There's a glint of Housman:

It was the good brown ale that cast  
But now the cup is drained at last  
And he is dry forever.

The Pre-Raphaelites, Christina Rossetti or Lenau, the German:

Where you a song I knew,  
Wrought of a poet's skill?  
Where you a rose that blew  
Under my window sill?  
Its glow on his endeavor.

Others borrow music from Tennyson and Browning and there is an occasional sharp, sardonic,



well-turned line which recalls far more modern poets—even Manifold, as in the delightful “The Constant Lover.” (The lover is a flea.) A romantic, then, and not a repressed one either.

But, quotations do him injustice; Crossland had more than echoes. His life must have been harsh, and there is great bitterness in poems like “Epi-alamium for a Golden Wedding” (what is an Epithalamium, incidentally?) and “Endimanche.” Beneath these difficult titles are poems of direct and shareable experience.

The poems are undated, which makes it hard to trace any evolution in skill or breadth of vision, but it is evident that in Crossland, who also wrote **Wainwright in Tasmania**, a considerable and honest talent was lost. The foreword makes it clear that he was a battler.

**Lyric Images**, by R. H. Morrison (Mary Martin, Adelaide, price not given) are equally honest poems, but they do not leave so strong an impression. Feeling and language are fairly conventional and the verse, while usually smooth enough, lacks exactitude—definition.

**Lyric Images** has few poems without some pre-felt, poetic picture: “wrapped in woven slumber,” “the mirrored scene,” “from that deep well of time,” “pristine calm.” Still, some poems—“Chess Men” is one—convey at least a certain classic nobility which is obviously the author’s main objective.

This kind of poetry demands great mastery of form. Otherwise the element of surprise, the sudden taking in of breath, is not achieved and poems blur into each other. And beneath the outward calm there must be real passion. Apart from *New Eyes*, what R. H. Morrison still lacks is intensity.

Resignation is the leitmotif of **Lyric Images**. In **a Place to Get Lost In** we sense rebellion.

In Humphrey Skerry’s privately produced **Hallowed House** we sense sincere striving, but much of what has been said about **Lyric Images** also applies to this book. Alas, if poetic feeling could produce poetry! But while many of the corners in **Hallowed House** remain in the shadow of “verse,” others are better lit. Humphrey Skerry, who is fond of the ideas and gentle imagery of gardens, will appreciate the importance of the pruning hook. Simplicity and directness are the great enemies of the banal.

**Hallowed House** does not shy from reality, though. “Declare for Peace” begins:

Oh! men and women, heed this warning clear,  
Act now to stop destruction’s violent hand,  
Unite for thine own preservation dear,  
Against the threat of war make your last stand.

Maybe “thine own preservation dear” isn’t very fresh and vital, but it is true.

—D.M.

★

## Humor and Satire

In the present dearth of good short stories, **The Man In The Silo** (Angus & Robertson, 16/-) is very welcome. Mr. E. O. Schlunke has a quick eye, a lively style, and few illusions.

He writes as a farmer, a modern farmer at that. He knows the wheat country and wool country of the south, and the many changes they have undergone. He knows the farmer, and the shrewdness, greed, vindictiveness and conservatism which have been grained into the farmer by three or four generations of hard work and bad luck. He has humor and satire, without sentimentality and with-

out pessimism. He neither cossets nor despairs of the people he writes about.

His favorite dodge—and a good one—for seeing his characters objectively and from outside, is to import into the story a character from a totally different milieu: Italian prisoners of war, a new immigrant, a young chap from the city, or an expert from the irrigation department. You can expect a clash, and you get it. Sometimes it is a fertile clash, sometimes not, but on the whole the impression is of a landscape changing slowly and mainly for the better under the steady impact of new ideas.

But there is another side. The old enmity of farmer to foreigner, to the chap from the city—the salesman, the lawyer, the Government—is rooted in fact. Mr. Schlunke is an expert parasitologist, and can turn a very keen eye on the false bonhomie, the Rotarian rhetoric, the sweet words and dirty deeds of commerce. Four stories out of twenty-one are studies of parasites in action, parting the farmer from his money. “Riding The Boom” in particular is a beauty.

I don’t want to make Mr. Schlunke out better than he is. He is more at home with surfaces than with depths; he has not the depth of interest in character that Vance Palmer has, nor the social grasp of John Morrison. Sometimes, as in the title story and in “The Admirable Landlady”, you can feel him shying away from the core of a problem. There is only one story in which I feel that a jet of poetic insight has carried him really deep into things; and in true Australian fashion he prefers to disguise poetic insight as wild comedy. This story, “The Man Farther Out”, tackles the intelligent farmer’s worst nightmare: what happens when the “modern methods” we are obliged by capitalism to adopt have finally made the country uninhabitable?

But, as I said, there is a dearth of really good short stories, and a critic would be a fool to demand of Mr. Schlunke the qualities he has not displayed, while turning a blind eye to those valuable ones he has. You ought to read this book, and see that your local library buys it, even if you don’t feel like living with it.

—J.S.M.

★

## Valuable Selections

**Select Documents in Australian History, 1851-1900**, selected and edited by C. M. H. Clark; Sydney, Angus and Robertson; 866pp., 70/- (following **Select Documents in Australian History, 1788-1850, 1950**).

PROFESSOR Manning Clark’s second volume of historical documents, which is nearly twice the length of the first, sees him most of the way through his grand project of three volumes to give a sufficient annotated survey of the raw and semi-manufactured materials of Australian historiography. Before this comprehensive enterprise, Australian scholarship had by fits and starts sought to provide students with documentary material. But a stop was soon dictated, in the principal instance by failure of official interest and official funds. Once upon a time a student could afford for his library Gwen Swinburne’s useful slight **Source Book of Australian History**, produced in 1919 under the inspiration of the late Sir Ernest Scott, then professor of history in the University of Melbourne, and long out of print. G. B. Barton’s **History of New South Wales from the Records**, out



of print a generation before Miss Swinburne, was pushed only to cover the first few years of white Australia. The uncompleted **Historical Records of Australia** and **Historical Records of New South Wales** went further, but not very far into the 19th century, before Maecenas shut his purse.

Excepting only **Foundations of the Australian Monetary System, 1788-1851**, by S. J. Butlin,\* in

my opinion Professor Clark's two volumes constitute the most valuable contribution which has been made to the corpus of Australian historical writing since the war. (This is not to detract from a great deal of good work which has been published by the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, in the official series, **Australia in the War of 1939-1945**, notably **Greece, Crete and Syria**, by Gavin Long, editor of the series, and **The Government and the People, 1939-41**, by Paul Hasluck, which anyone can buy for the modest sum of 25/- each). For foundations of other subject-matters than Butlin's must be laid also, if our history is at length to be told convincingly, and Clark's industrious selective intelligence has gone far towards providing these.

His second book of documents is divided into four sections, namely, Gold, Economic History, Political History, and Social History. This magazine is not a medium for detailed examination of historical phases, and anyhow Professor Clark's choice of documents under particular headings is not properly challengeable by non-specialists. But I think he could have carried further than 1878, the date of his latest document under The Free, Compulsory and Secular Controversy part of his Education subsection, his story of the sectarian passions, over proposed State aid to denominational schools, which have simmered in Australia since our beginnings. They have often boiled over, as in 1916 and succeeding years, and in this year of grace, and I think they are worth more than the 22 pages Professor Clark sets aside for the presentation of them. In my opinion, the continuity and intensity of sectarian differences are more marked in Australia, and have had a relatively greater influence on the course of Australian social development, than in most other countries, and they have been neglected by our historians.

However, my main adverse criticism of Professor Clark in connection with this book of documents, as compared with his earlier book, is that he talks too much. In the first volume, he was content to let the documents speak for themselves, with only so much comment as was needed to prepare the student's ear. His introductory note in that volume was of less than three pages. In the second volume it is eight pages long, and, whilst I applaud the informal style which he adopts—a refreshing departure from the Olympian air which academic historians have usually assumed in an attempt to distract readers from notice of gaps in their learning—I think he would have done better not to set up Aunt Sallys as he does in the introduction to his second volume. I do not want to make too much of this lapse from Clark's high standard, but I think I ought to repeat here what I have published elsewhere†:

\* Melbourne University Press, 1953. It is only fair to say that I have a sort of vested interest in Professor Butlin's work. For he pays me this compliment in his preface: "Citations of secondary sources are mostly limited to correction of errors and then to those whose authority and standing warrant the trouble. In particular, the frequency with which Fitzpatrick's mistakes are noted reflects my view that, while he is often inaccurate in his narrative and I cannot accept many of his interpretations, his two volumes are the most substantial economic history of Australia yet available."

† In a piece, *The Contentious Eureka Legend*, in *Meanjin*, 1955 Winter number.

"Such a 'romantic' or 'warm hearted' view of Eureka is deprecated, with stern indulgent words, by Professor Manning Clark on the first page of his second book of Australian documents. He writes:

"'What we have in mind is their tendency to inflate the significance of Eureka, to attribute the movement for land reform, political democracy, and the agitation against the Chinese to an unspecified and unidentified group of radicals on the goldfields. Then, with the results of such activities left delightfully vague, and skipping thirty years with a leap only equalled by the ram from Derbyshire, or our own Springheel Jack, we are invited to watch again the activities of these men (presumably their spiritual heirs) for a brief moment in camp at Barcardine in Queensland in April of 1891 . . .'

"As a coldhearted 'Marxist' sort of historian myself, I must have failed to notice the tendency referred to. The radicals of goldfields Victoria are sufficiently identified. The reasons for the democratic and land-reforming zeal of the 1850s and 1860s and later, and the personalities and motives involved, are well understood. And there is no question, surely, of Derbyshire rams or London Springheel Jacks; the seamen's, wharf laborers', building workers', railwaymen's and shearers' trade union activity in the 1870s and 1880s would seem to give us an unbroken line from Eureka in 1854 and the first Eight Hours Day in 1856 to the class conflicts of 1890-95, of which Barcardine was an incident . . ."

On Professor Clark's side, it is certainly just to say that a great deal of nonsense has been talked and written about the Eureka Stockade by left-wingers who have claimed, insupportably, that it "resulted in a democratic Victorian Constitution," and the like. But there is as little justification for the reaction, and Clark is much too useful a contributor to our annals to be allowed to fall for this sort of thing more than once.

This is not the note to end on. The proper note to strike recalls that in the main centres of Australia we have had history teaching, up to university level, for a century, we have produced very few books of history worth tuppence, and of these, Clark's are two.

—Brian Fitzpatrick.

★

## Australians Abroad

Dymphna Cusack's **The Sun in Exile** (Constable, 15/6) will come as a surprise to many admirers of **Come In, Spinner, Say No to Death** and **Southern Steel**. It is a book, written in the first person, in which she takes on the character of a good-natured, sensitive but intensely middle-class old maid, self-satisfied and opinionated.

Alexandra, the teller of the story, is caught in a contradiction between fascination at the developments in the lives of a group of young people a generation younger than herself, and her spinsterish desires to avoid embroilment in anything savoring of "bad taste".

The setting is a kind of "reverse migrant ship", an ancient liner, apparently under charter to the British Government, carrying an assorted collection of Australian, English and West Indian passengers across half the world to England.



What happens when a young person—in this case an Australian girl—falls in love with a Negro? That is the basic theme of the book. Its inspiration has clearly come, however, not so much from the White Australian Policy or the sordid details of British colonial administration as from the color problems of Greater London.

Many young Australians found themselves in London in the post-war years, and they will recognise with what skill and realism Dymphna Cusack has reconstructed the scene—a scene which remains essentially the same today as it did six or seven years ago, the period in which the book is set.

The desperate search by eight or nine students from half the world for somewhere to live; the angry frustration of the young West Indians and West Africans when they come up against the subtle but reef-like English color-bar, the segregation into hostels and the denial to those of British nationality of the right to be treated as Britons; the arrogance of the Mosley fascists which leaves the visitor to London aghast; far more acutely than an English writer could have done, one feels, Dymphna Cusack has caught and held so much that needed to be caught and written down in this form.

There must be admiration, too, for the way the character of Alexandra is sustained right through the novel; an irritating but likable character, not only is she not an advocate for the author's own point of view—how many "first person singular" characters have failed because of that—but she is clearly to a considerable extent, a positive enemy of those views.

Although it was well worth telling the story in this way, and although the device is well handled, it nevertheless remains a device—and as such an expression of what seems to be a general failing in Dymphna Cusack's work—the scarcely veiled hand of the author directing and leading the characters themselves.

Many will hope that Miss Cusack will return to Australia to repeat the first-hand observation of life here and now that made *Come In Spinner* a permanent acquisition to our literature.

However, one must admire the wide canvas of Dymphna Cusack's books, and her sympathy and feeling for human problems. No writer has yet summed up so well the problems and emotions of the exiled Australian, particularly of the post-war era, as Dymphna Cusack in this book, and for this alone it should occupy an important place on the shelf of Australian writing.

—S.M.S.

★

## Revisiting A Well

*Coonardoo* (Angus and Robertson, 16/-), Katharine Susannah Prichard tells us, means "The Well in the Shadow." The book, first published 27 years ago, has just been reprinted. In the interim the well seems to have become deeper and its water purer.

When I first read the story fifteen years ago, *Coonardoo's* devotion to "Youie" seemed rather sentimentalised and improbable. Now it seems that this was because of my own inexperience, and my doctrinaire pre-conceptions.

Of course it is not, and was never meant to be, simply a case of two hearts, crossed, but beating as one. On the contrary, the love of Hugh and *Coonardoo* is an almost incidental, but quite inevitable and integral, function of the ties which bind each, like navel-cords, to the spirit of their native place—a hard and ancient part of earth which breaks or repels all but a few of those who visit it for long.

Europeans who succeed in assimilating to the country are changed by the effort, conscious or not, which is involved. In the process some of them acquire an intimate spiritual relationship with the land, similar to that of its first inhabitants; and they often acquire too—what is more than respect and even understanding—a deep sense of human brotherhood with the Aborigines. I know a highly cultivated and conservative scientist who has spent so much time in the north that he can no longer feel at ease with his fellow academics, but hankers for his real friends "the Blacks."

This man and others have done much to increase our knowledge of Aboriginal psychology, but so far professional sociologists have given little thought to the effect of outback life on white people. For well over a hundred years the field has been left to the writers of travel books, verse and novels, who have produced dray-loads of material. Most of it is romanticised and superficial, or laboriously "realistic", where it is not downright embarrassing; but *Coonardoo* is none of these things. It is to be hoped that sociologists will one day add to the breadth and detail of our understanding; but it is difficult to imagine that even a great anthropologist, who is at the same time an artist as Sir James Frazer was, will add much to its depth.

And this, I believe, is because *Coonardoo* is primarily a true work of art.

The minor characters and their relationships with each other sometimes ring false. For instance after Hugh's daughter, Phyllis, has fallen in love with the bushman, Billy Gales, she achieves by a pure effort of will "a good understanding with Bill" in which "they fraternised, yarned in gay, free, unromantic fashion"—without any apparent awareness, on Phyllis' part, of the precariousness of the situation.

This passage reminds one also of the too self-conscious and sprightly colloquialism which often mars Katharine Prichard's writing. On page 88 Hugh's new wife is described as "a *sonsy* young woman who had *hopped* from the buggy," and she is still "*sonsy*" twenty pages later.

But these are minor irritations, not seriously affecting the moving statement of the central theme. The tragedy of Hugh Watt and *Coonardoo* springs, as inevitably as a desert oak, from the dry soil of the country itself, and from the sub-soil of Katharine Prichard's intuitive understanding of it.

The worst that can be said of the current reprint is that no Australian could mistake the head on the dust-jacket for that of an Aboriginal. Poor *Coonardoo* is made to look like a Hollywood Creole, just about to step into the line of saved sinners at a revivalist meeting. But I think there will be other editions with other dust-jackets still coming off the presses in a century or two hence—if, as Miss Prichard herself might add, presses and people to read their products weather the threat of atomic annihilation.

—Russel Ward

★

## Something To Say

It has become a conviction of mine over recent years that the curse of the young writer today is his preoccupation with form rather than content, his concern more with how impressively he can say something than with the question of whether the thing itself is worth saying or not. He sees words, not people.



## OTHER NOTICES

I don't know if David Lambert is young, but as his **He Must So Live** (Lawrence and Wishart 20/-) is a first novel we are entitled to regard him as a young writer, and a writer of promise he is, because, along with no small measure of literary competence, he has that most blessed of all gifts: something to say, and plenty of confidence that it is worth saying.

The title of the book is out of that magnificent statement of Ostrovsky's: "Man's dearest possession is life, and . . . he must so live that, dying, he can say: 'All my life and all my strength were given to the finest cause in the world . . . the liberation of mankind'."

Lambert's novel is about a number of people who so live.

It has faults. The worst of them stem from his very devotion to his theme, a zeal that leads him at times into over-writing, and into errors of emphasis and selection. There is a tendency to expound too much, to let his people engage in long discussions which become tedious and are not always in character. One such discussion goes on for seven pages, and is followed almost immediately by a one-page description of (what should have been) a lively and important meeting of workers. Throughout the book, indeed, much of the conversation could be cut. Conversation should always be vital in itself, and not merely a bald exchange of news and views between characters.

**He Must So Live** is, however, still a far better novel than many that have none of these defects. The scene is a foundry on Scottish Clyde-side; the story nothing more profound than of a struggle waged in that foundry against the traditional power of employers to hire and fire at their own sweet will. But it is unfolded with all the authenticity of a man moving on ground thoroughly familiar, and the sincerity of a writer cheerfully unconcerned with mere literary devices.

Relations between master and man are much the same wherever exist at all, and even at a distance of twelve thousand miles Australians will recognise there all the familiar ingredients and facets of industrial struggle. There is the self-righteous manager, sensitive to no duty except to his company; the workman, raging at a sudden batch of dismissals, but inhibited from action by lack of faith in their collective strength; the militant leaders, sure of everything if only they can inspire that faith; the whispering weaklings and traitors; the first showdown with the manager in his office; the compromise that gets the men back to work with everything won except a clear undertaking for the reinstatement of a certain old veteran who has long been marked down for destruction; more meetings, more conferences, demonstrations—all culminating in a renewal of the strike by the men with the object of getting their mate back.

A simple and forthright story, worked out against a domestic background which, although it rises to no great dramatic heights, is still rich enough to add to the validity of the main theme—staunch women and women not so staunch, homes divided and homes united, a little romance, a little petty gossip, a little football, the local tavern.

Although a most promising first novel. Another puff of the fresh healthy breeze now blowing into contemporary creative writing. Enjoyable reading, and something to be profitably pushed under the noses of those political snobs who are forever asking: "Why don't the workers wake up?"

—John Morrison

**Introducing Victoria**, edited by G. W. Leeper (Melbourne University Press 30/-). This important book, produced as a source of information for the members of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, who met in Melbourne in 1955, is a model of a work that should be produced in all States. Twenty-five essays by experts range from "History of Victoria" through "Climate" and "Animal Life" to "Population", "Transport" and "Libraries." Considering its academic origin the book is remarkably consistent and interestingly written.

★

**Peter the First** by Alexey Tolstoy (Lawrence and Wishart 18/9) is justly acclaimed the "unfinished masterpiece" of its author. Unfinished though it is, it still runs to 795 pages depicting the vital and ruthless character and background of Peter the Great. It is already a classic historical novel and a welcome sight in the bookshops again.

★

**The Time of the Child** by Elsie Locke, privately published, Christchurch. Elsie Locke sings of, but not for, children. Woven into her tender love for her own children is a greater theme, her love of all children; her anguish for them in war-torn and poverty-stricken lands. These poems have a fine range of sentiment, from the happily lyrical to the fiercely unhappy and stern.

★

**Twenty-One Poems** by Dorothea Dowling, privately printed. Despite occasional lapses into phrases like "breathless hush" which one seems to have heard before, Dorothea Dowling writes poetry that is pleasing because it is simple, straightforward and lyrical. "Re-birth," "Twilight Beach" and "Sweet Peas" are particularly effective.

### OVERLAND

"Temper democratic, bias Australian"

Editor: S. Murray-Smith.

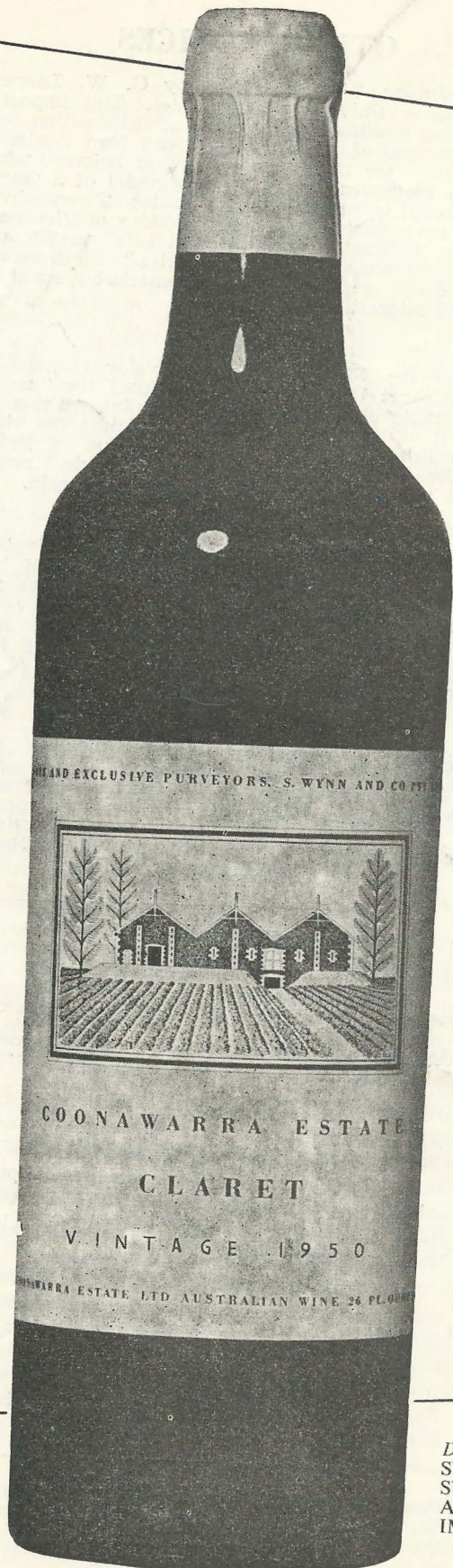
Associate Editors: Jack Coffey, Ian Turner, John Manifold.

Other Board Members: Eric Lambert (Vic.), Eric la Motte (Vic.), Jim Gale (Vic.), Joan Clarke (N.S.W.), Frank Hardy (N.S.W.), Marje Pizer (N.S.W.), Jock Graham (Coalfields, N.S.W.), John Robson (Newcastle, N.S.W.), Joan Williams (W.A.), Lyndall Hadow (W.A.), Brian Fox (N.Z.).

Overland is a quarterly Australian literary magazine, Price 1/6, 1/9 posted. Subscriptions (7/- year, posted) and MSS. to the Editor at G.P.O., Box 98A, Melbourne, C.1. Manuscripts, which are welcomed, will only be returned if a stamped addressed envelope is attached. Please add exchange to cheques.

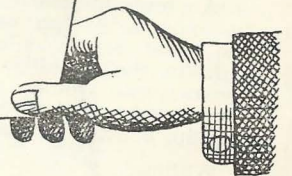
Published by S. Murray-Smith, Mt. Eliza, Victoria; printed by "Richmond Chronicle," Shakespeare Street, Richmond, E.1.





*S. Wynn & Co. Pty Ltd. are proud to announce that the 1954 Vintage (already a 1st Prize winner in Melbourne) and the 1955 Vintage Coonawarra Estate Claret were both awarded 1st prizes at the last Adelaide Show.*

*These great wines, which are assured of a glorious future, are now maturing in oak casks at Coonawarra. In the meantime the older vintages are available.*



**DISTRIBUTORS:**  
 SWIFT & HORNDAL PTY. LTD., 32 Clarence St., Sydney.  
 SWIFT & HORNDAL PTY. LTD., 294 St. Paul's Terr., Brisbane.  
 A. E. & F. TOLLEY LTD., 82 Waymouth Street, Adelaide.  
 IMPORTERS PTY. LTD., 41-43 Campbell St., Hobart.

VC.25

**S. WYNN & CO. PTY. LTD., 155 WELLS STREET, SOUTH MELBOURNE**