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STORIES, POEMS, REVIEWS, ARTICLES



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westerly

a quarterly review

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KENNETH SIMPSON

Between You and Me

"We like the philosophy behind these biscuits."

"Taste, touch and smell, you mean?"

"Mainly smell. You see, the idea is to market a repellent biscuit for campers and those constantly surrounded by flies, mosquitoes and other insect pests."

"What a brilliant idea."

"Thank you—we think so. Not only will it repel but it will act as a deodorant."

"In other words —"

"In other words you may use it as a deodorant stick which subdues repulsive vapours."

"Wonderful."

"Sweaty, smelly campers can emanate odours of orange-blossom, roses, violets, purple-hearts and mangrove-swamps—it depends on their taste—while enjoying essential vitamins and proteins. The repulsive nature of the biscuits not only keeps insects at a distance of from three to four feet but is actually liable to kill fool-hardy insects stupid enough to pass through the barrier."

"An incredible breakthrough."

"It is, isn't it!"

"Does one eat the biscuit before or after using it as a deodorant?"

"Well, it's a matter of choice. If the biscuit is used solely as a repellent it is crisper with a mellow taste—I will dwell on taste in a moment—but if it is used as a deodorant as well, it sharpens the taste—gives it more bite and softens the biscuit—a boon for people without teeth and those who like mushy food."

"I can hardly wait to go camping."

"Good for you. Now as regards taste: there are a number of flavours, all offensive to insects, rats, birds and reptiles. In fact, our biscuits are excellent rat killers if rats are reckless enough to nibble at them—but what a waste! Luckily most pests keep their distance and as you know: Once bitten, twice shy, or in the case of rats—dead. For Australian campers we imagine the most popular flavours will be pie and sauce, fried eggs and bacon, sausage, and fish and chips. You see, we are deliberately avoiding the common biscuit flavours of chocolate, lemon, strawberry, etc."

"How ingenious."

"Exactly. The whole campaign has been carried out under strictest security. The actual biscuits are stored in bomb-proof vaults at a place I can't divulge. I can say, however, that it is far away from human habitation—a testing ground so to speak. Only authorized personnel can get in and then it isn't easy. There are ten check-

points; the first is five miles from the centre. Armed guards with biscuit-proof dogs patrol the grounds. To view the biscuit one undresses and passes through a series of decontamination chambers where the body is deloused, washed, sterilized and sprayed with a solution designed to protect the biscuit from the body's animal greed. Even then the visitor must stand at least ten feet away from the sample which is sealed within an escape-proof metal box with transparent sides. It is an awe-inspiring experience. The biscuit is about the size of a playing card and an eighth of an inch thick—the size of any common or garden biscuit, in fact. But there the resemblance ends. The sample I saw was a 'violet' deodorant with pie and sauce flavouring—rather stronger than our present production model. It actually seemed to be breathing or pulsating."

"How thrilling for you."

"Yes, wasn't it! I stayed for ten minutes—the maximum time allowed—but it seemed like ten seconds. I was utterly enthralled. You may laugh but the succulence of the biscuit—incidentally we must change that name—so affected me that I began slobbering and slaving and actually made a lunge towards the box. The guards restrained me in time however and I was afterwards told it was a normal reaction. Apparently—and between you and me—a well known senator lost control completely, overpowered his guards and broke open the box. On that occasion it was 'Long dead Egyptian' deodorant with the flavour of rotting horsemeat—one of the defence department's biscuit-warfare projects that somehow was placed in the box by mistake. Anyway, the senator ate the biscuit with gusto and showed no immediate ill effects. However, upon leaving, he left several guards prostrate on the ground, overcome by the repellent which exuded from his person. The whole thing created quite a scandal—you may have read about it in the papers: A flock of sheep mysteriously wiped out; the ground littered with dead birds and the complete absence for several weeks of any insects. Of course the government hushed the matter up—even turned the tables on the opposition with just a whiff of the usual red-herring—pretty stale by now but still effective after all these years.

"Shrewd beggars."

"Yes . . . well, the senator was eventually captured by a special force of decontamination experts and confined to a secret defence department isolation centre where they are still attempting to neutralize 'Long dead Egyptian' and 'rotting horsemeat'. It seems a hopeless situation for him but particularly hopeful for us."

"Indeed, yes."

"Yes, indeed. Of course packaging and marketing are the problems. How, for instance, to stop shoppers from wolfing them on the spot, straight from the shelves, or the biscuits from contaminating, or shall we say *affecting* other products? Possibly a timing device operated by the cashier and insulated packaging. . . . Anyway, 'we shall overcome'."

"Yes, indeed."

"Indeed, yes. It's all a matter of advertising, then distribution. We have a team of biscuit disposal experts ready for cases of compulsive eating. These brave men will risk their waistlines every time they enter a home crammed with our biscuits. They will, of course, be paid danger money. There was the sad case of one of our research chemists: He became compulsively attached to 'Carnation' deodorant with the flavour of steak and eggs. He had developed a second formula specially for himself which contained within every fifteenth packet, biscuits with the equivalent of six servings of steak and eggs in each instead of the usual one-twentieth of a serving. When he 'frugally' ate his usual two free biscuits for lunch, he was actually eating twelve servings of steak and eggs. This happened three times a day for six weeks—the poor chap had been getting rounder and rounder—then mercifully he burst and it was all over. Unfortunately thousands of packets of the second

formula were distributed to retailers and many had been sold by the time we discovered the subterfuge. Of course we couldn't warn the public, only hope our special squad would get to the compulsive eater in time . . ."

"Excuse me interrupting but surely there should be some sort of control over a biscuit for which people may develop cravings which could eventually cause them to explode! A bit like certain drugs and fast cars . . ."

". . . and alcohol and cigarettes . . . but you see we have on our board of directors—and this is between you and me . . ."



LEE KNOWLES

Phoebe

A separate kind of innocence
embraces Phoebe in her garden
beneath the old grey drawers pegged on the line,
the hanging baskets.

Once I could watch her for hours—
her hair stuffing from some old divan,
her stockings melting down her bone-stiff shanks.
Then she evoked visions of Miss Havisham,
crumbling wedding cake and dying gown,
a room blind with cobwebs.

Curiously enough
a broomstick bristles from the window
and attached, an old rag to frighten sleepy pigeons.
Shrubs grow past the lower eaves,
jonquils spread among the wrinkled lemons,
cat-shadows flicker, pass.

The bait is there as always.
Lately, though, we lack the clean cruelty of children
(Hansel's bony finger, Gretel handy at the fire).
Fairy-tales turn inwards on themselves and now the weird one,
the hag unparalleled, is a dirty old woman
who talks to snails.

BRAD RISING

The Roach of Kuru

"It smells bad in here!" The thin man raised his creviced nose. "Even the disinfectant is infected? To think I devoted my entire life to survival . . . for this!" Kuru smiled. Now, at the end, he had come to an understanding of the western mind. More than the technique, the mind.

"Who is to say", he said, "who is the decontaminating agent, we or they?"

"You who are steeped in biology!" the thin man snickered. "Exclusive of this, you are through! There is no more life!"

"We should have known", Kuru said.

"Yes", the thin man applied the same condemnation to a different thought, "*you* should have known!"

Four men came and looked at them through the bars. They were small flat men. Their wide faces were phlegmatic; their black eyes, cold; their voices, shrill.

"What are they saying?" asked the thin man.

"That they wish you were fatter", Kuru replied.

"I hope I . . ." The other's emaciated face convulsed. Then he arose and ran to the bars, and shrieked at the small men.

"Cannibals! Disgrace!"

The men opened their mouths silently. They bowed politely, and left.

"You were not fair", Kuru admonished. "It is the only thing they can do. Anything to forestall the end."

The parchment hands on the bars tightened to whiteness.

"Not a blade of grass? Not a worm? Nothing?"

"Nothing", Kuru said.

The thin man returned to his corner. He slumped against the rough wall. Dismally he touched his sunken eyes to his knees and groaned.

"This is not the time for pity", Kuru said, "eternity has snapped a finger."

They were quiet. They listened to the distant sounds of their survivors, and their survivors . . . all who were doomed.

At the sight of them Kuru's thin lips trembled and his body shook in a brief paroxysm of joy. They protruded a quarter of an inch from the long crack in the middle of the stone floor. Waving delicately, they cautiously investigated the dank air. Kuru, his legs folded beneath him, waited patiently. He alone watched in the silence . . .

The degree of oscillation of the gossamer antennae increased with each additional fraction of emergence. Kuru permitted himself one word, a word spoken without sound.

"Orthoptera."

At the end of long minutes two spiked jointed legs braced themselves upon the brink of the infinitesimal canyon; and the beautiful black head of a large cockroach came into view. The antennae moved in apprehensive circles. Kuru heard his own eyes moving in their sockets.

Slowly the roach positioned its second pair of legs upon the ridge. It hesitated, seemingly aware of its new significance, its greatness. The last pair of appendages took their grip; and, finally, the long symmetrical body of the animal teetered briefly upon the edge, and then levelled itself. And there it crouched . . . and waved at the silent man.

Kuru found the familiar strange and wonderful now. It was a magnificent specimen. His trained eyes did not miss the position of the ovipositors, nor the swelling of the segmented abdomen.

Having oriented itself, the roach now proceeded toward the wall, maintaining a path roughly parallel to the crack. Kuru's eyes had not left the animal for an instant. Now he leaned forward to cup his hand over the crawling insect . . .

WHAP!

The roach barely escaped the pounding foot. It scampered into the crevice, and was gone.

"Fool! Fool! Fool! Fool!" cried Kuru, clapping his hands over his eyes and shaking his head.

His long legs astride the crack, the thin man wavered. He forced the words through his constricted throat.

"I . . . my mind is not clear. The old life . . . the old prejudices . . ." Overwhelmed by his mistake, he retired to his corner; and babbled meaningless words about meaning.

One of the small flat men came to the bars and held up ten fingers. He closed his hands, and then opened them again.

Kuru did not tell his bowed whimpering companion what the man had done. He bit into the flesh of his own arm until the blood came. He allowed the liquid to form a little pool beside the crack. Then he went to his wall, crossed his feet, and waited. There was not much time.

At precisely the same instant as the beloved antennae appeared once more before the eyes of Kuru, there came to the ears of Kuru the sound of feet advancing in unison far away. The antennae waved above the blood beside the crevice. The distant feet became louder. The great roach placed its forelegs upon the brink . . . paused. Marching feet drew closer.

If only the creature, so contemptuous of time, would emerge a bit farther, thought Kuru, he would, he MUST, grab for it before the antennae picked up the vibrations of the approaching men, before it became frightened. The roach stopped all forward movement. The delicate stalks turned in concentric circles toward the bars, aware, a slight backward motion. . . .

"Now!"

Executing precise manoeuvres, the squad halted before the cell.

"Why", asked the thin man, "must death always be so formal?"

The prisoners were escorted through the deep tunnels of earth to its surface. The people received them. Their loose dessicated skin hung upon their frames like shrouds, and their eyes were hungry. But even more horrendous was their mother, the earth. It was black, churned, and dead. And her air was dying, for the people panted like dogs used to pant. Their stirring feet were enveloped in clouds of black dust like that of ancient tombs.

An officer approached the prisoners. Kuru opened his fist. The man understood immediately.

Now the orange sun felt good, life giving. The prisoners walked, no longer prisoners. And the eyes that watched them were no longer hungry eyes. Kuru held his hand at arm's length, pressing its contents firmly, but gently, between thumb and forefinger. And the crowd parted respectfully before the roach of Kuru.



JENNIFER STRAUSS

Loving Parents

Sometimes, night-waking, they made love
As if two strangers frantic to be known,
As if unfeaturing darkness stripped away
Affectionate disguises, long-term habits
Which daylight coupling decently assumed,
And laid the fierce nerves of loving bare.

Such times, they moved about their morning chores
Abstracted, in a sensual shadowed glow
Where suckling babies might bask mindlessly
But awkward older children, growing wise,
Looked askance, and bruised their egos' fist
Against that dark complicity which gave them being.

VICKI VIIDIKAS

The Way of the Swaying Lantern

Truth feelings lie under the skin,
at the lake's arena
 where the body slips into vacantness

Sometimes paddling out
in a small red canoe, or a heavy empress liner
 deep into water

Eventually, all vehicles give way,
the heart is left
to its own full device

Inevitably, the lake
pulls the diver down
to a confrontation in time

The body must learn its dance,
 the earth steps of basic love

And it's possible the bones
have a dry walk of their own,
 saluting the dancer when the heat has passed

Inevitably, the feelings
lie in the body's jumble,
 not the head dictating, not
 the persistent reasoning of fears,
 not the twistings of infidelities

But the inner voyage of the self

A total dredging of the lake's source

In the tropics of the skin,
the seasons of emotion, dry
 winter to explosive summer

The slide walk of the mouth
 tasting its inner life

Hands and the fling of muscle,
stamping, the body ships out, all the way, all the way

Finally, the heart
glows like a lantern in its dark cave of flesh

Swaying, the mind released

HAL COLEBATCH

An Old Song

The Hero gained the legendary cave.
The gate's grim guard was gone to dusty bones.
No monsters here, only the sleeping girl,
enchanted, waiting. Water dripped on stones.

After their warnings it has been a matter
of hills and cliffs and ancient mossy stair.
The Hero felt a certain sense of something
anti-climactic in the whole affair.

The quest was done, never a guard remained.
Almost too easy was the prize he sought,
The dreadful warnings proved but blowing dust—
“How first impressions do deceive!” he thought.

The Hero shrugged, and kissed the sleeping girl:
“Arise, princess! The time is come! Arise!”
And something entered from the inner cave
with sabre mandibles and mantis eyes.

D. DEVINE

Long Journey from Pelion

Jason with his laughter used to catch the sun, and I moved warm beside him, safe awhile from autumn ghosts waiting to make their winter in my soul.

Now thunder in the air and the nurse flutters into my room like a large white moth, hovering near the bed a moment before turning back through the heavy door and locking it. Under the rough sheet I lie rigid, my heart hammering out the seconds until the voices begin. Then I sit upright, and am afraid. There is nothing very terrible about night except when you happen to be wearing it, and darkness rests on me like an earth-damp shroud, and smelling of death. I tremble on the bed's edge, weaving and dipping my tobacco wand, to warm the air around me with its glow. From the steel cabinet near my bed I snatch up Jason's photograph, hold its ice-cold glass to my forehead, straining to press his smile into my brain forever.

Father Ambrose never smiled. Lean, gaunt-cheeked, unsated by the holy bread and wine, he sat brooding in his study as I knelt behind the screen parroting the same old sins, but holding back from uttering that strangeness, the alien stirrings that I felt. Did you find meaning in the things I didn't say, pinning my mind like an insect to the wall? Father, you betrayed me, as that dark woman once betrayed Aietes. A Judas you turned out to be, shouting no alarm, no warning of the things you saw there and I with no weapons to fight, only Jason when he came, and that too late. I might still cling to heaven by a thread, but you had a demon of your own, and heaven failed by two. Who was your confessor, Father Ambrose, when you left the rectory at nights, that snowy collar at your throat protesting that you still belonged to God?

Girlhood passed but I remained invisible; no sound when I cried out and those vague shadows in the mind fed well on my aloneness. Then a miracle, a bittersweet irony of god-like dimensions: Jason, Jason like the spring bloomed into my life and my face for a time was pressed in flowers.

Where are you now, Jason, returned to ancient Pelion, with your nature woven like a summer tapestry, all greens and golden and silvered moonlight? Were we not married once, you smiling into the camera, wrapping your love around me like a cloak and I from my need fastening the clasp?

There are times when I hear no whisperings, what peace it is possible for me to know comes when those dark shapes recede, and I believe Satan to be more merciful than God. Father, have you interceded for me? From your lonely bathing promontory can you still see me waiting as you passed? Chalk-faced in the shadows where you walked, I sounded out the currents in your soul, and those pale hands trembled at the morning mass. Who waits for you now, Judas?

"Speak to me", Jason would say, and gentle he was with his eyes sad and a little afraid, but I never could. For those people to whom it is necessary to talk in order to be understood, talking will not help. So I permitted in no light. Instead, fixing myself to his mind, I hoped that through his eyes, his body, his love, I would cease as myself and become the things around me—the goodness that surrounded him. But even he, so fine a fortress, couldn't entirely keep the dampness out, and there were moments when I felt the chill of nightforces and caught a glimpse of doomsday.

Jason, I needed you, no substitute! Then my belly swollen to bursting and a boy-child tossed like a fish from his ocean home onto the sand. Ay, poor fish—sweeping from the womb on a wave of blood and water, and I tasted sulphur as I watched you squirming in the doctor's grip. My beloved Jason, when you saw your child for the first time I knew you were happy, your boys-face beaming as you rushed into the small room where I lay, in blue lace and smiles. And when I held out my arms you were warm in them as you'd always been, but even then I could sense the shifting of those sands, ebbing away from me, and at that small movement I shivered, ice-water lapping at my ankles.

"And she shall bring forth a son . . . for it is he that shall save his people from their sins."

Could he have saved me, drained the poison from me with my milk?

If I seem less than human Jason, why is it an aching in the throat when I think of you, laughter and sunlight, bursting into the kitchen with a kiss for me and flowers, then moving down to your son's room at the end of the hall? I began to be afraid, hating the child because he robbed me of your love, loving him because he was yours. That small thing, that unbelievable part of me clutching with tiny, incredible fingers, mouth eager and twisting to find my breasts' fullness, drawing down in noisy, spluttering gulps the life-milk from me. As if in alarm he would stop from time to time, jerking his head back while the milk spilled over, dribbling in sticky rivulets down his neck. All the while those wide blue eyes shone up at me, peering into my soul and beyond, and I clung to the child, I needing him the more. In that house of nocturnal whisperings only the baby's room was golden and spring sweet. And Jason's dear face, watching me, grew thinner now and older than his age.

Then on a spring morning as I listened to the baby warbling and cooing at his father in the bedroom, I was filled with a knowledge, a sense of purpose, growing out of my strange affection for Jason, and the son he loved so dearly, who was so much a part of him. I was bright, kissing Jason warmly good-bye and I saw it pleased him, watched him move with a lighter step down the narrow concrete path to the street. The baby smiled and bubbled up at me as I bent to reach for, undress and bathe him.

When I had finished I went back into the kitchen.

There are things I can't remember, my darling, some hisses and shouts merely scratch the glass on my mind's window, but you Jason I remember, when you returned home in the evening, delighted and surprised to find me waiting there in my wedding dress and I took your hand, led you to the candlelit table. Was it me standing there plucking at the buttons on my lacy sleeve, nervous giggles trembling in my throat as I watched you, the man I loved, lift the lid from the casserole? Yes, I remember your face, the skin drawing paleness from your bones and that eager half smile melted in slow-motion hideous sequence to an insane terrible scream, a primitive unholy thing that brought the neighbours running while you hurtled round, clawing the air, stumbling along that infinite passage to the small room at the end where you knew the baby wasn't.

Jason with his laughter used to catch the sun. . . .

CHRIS WALLACE-CRABBE

from *The Visions*

The Whale

Then, as I dreamed, my hands were no longer
Full of your smooth breasts, but pulled an oar
In a white boat on choppy inshore waters
Through which there came gurgling up whirlpools like grey roses
And in their wake a whale narrowly hustling
Up to our gunwale, his jaw surprisingly shark-toothed
And there he drifted stilly for what seemed ages
And ominous. Nervously we looked
To and fro, shrugging, raising our eyebrows
Without a clue what to do. And then
I won't say an idea came into my head
But I suddenly reached across the sand-grey water
And stroked the wrinkled brow of the whale
With an oddly Franciscan gesture. Straight off
He swam out to sea, plunged quickly out of sight
And left us bobbing amorously close in
By Albert Park's bluestone wall.

from *The Visions*

The Carnival is Not Over

Across the land literati are fretting about gerunds,
About money, about politics, about the death
And final extinction of iambic pentameters
And whether it is possible to squeeze out
Great art from a dry keg of a nation like Australia,
They worry their brows into little nets of wrinkles
While dismally tapping at smoky typewriters,
They ask, am I happy enough or serious
Enough, am I pulling my weight with the rest,
Can I pay the bills of July late in August,
And all the while this young man with bare legs
Goes haring after the plump pretty girl through a scene
Which is silveryeyed with rivers and lakes
Part-stroked with a late fall of sunlight
Which is really his element—you can tell that for sure—
There, now he has caught her and hoicks her up by the hips,
Still on the move, and she smiles in her blondfall of hair
As he is breathing hard, as her body stiffens
Much as though her limbs were changing now
To the strong dense branches of a laurel
Flickered with light, boldly assertive,
Shadowing her face with triumph.

PETER LOFTUS

high school morning

i passed
a row
of those bright faces
a moment ago
and even though
i am accustomed
to my act
of pedestrian authority
the moral patrolman
that i am
contributing
to my societys
alleged
and brave new
night
of prime
upholstered
valuables
i stopped
inside
the plated
door
before
i let them in
and licked
the white rust
from my teeth
brushed
my victims blood
out of the way
put on
my pedagogic mask
star
protagonist
in this vast
commercial
comedy of knowledge
and prepared my eyelids
for their proper frown

but when
the first new face
spilled
across the door frame
like an aluminium saucepan
on a range of air
i saw the eyes
assembled
of my fourth year
english class
waiting
like a hexagram
of frozen marbles
perforated
by a generations sleet
of boredom
and the holiday recitals
of discarded englishmen
washed up
like paperwrappers
in this silver
southern
sun
and savage spinsters
hibernating
their unwanted thighs
spitting
into childrens eyes
their bitter
unforgiving
interpretations
of failure
in a cultural
disguise

i faced
my glittering children
fresh
with their first
year look
and still suspecting
grace
and holy mysteries
in the temple bell
and i felt
helpless
as an outcast
balanced
on a doughnut
in the gulf of storms
me
left
to deal
with their impossible
trust
and with one
last
illegal
smile
i washed out
my harness
of its dirty
adult smears
wished
my colleagues
an uneventful day
in hell
and lifted up
my hands
in praise of husbandry

BARBARA YORK MAIN

Marginal Country

There grew on a stony knob of country a grove of pines. A dishevelment of pines, dry, grey, acrid scented, their trunks aslant this way and that. It gave you an eerie feeling to stand amongst those trees, the feeling that they had been left over from some earlier time, some previous landscape. From the pine-grown hillock you could look down over the surrounding farmlands. A track ran through the trees, down-slope into the paddocks and to the homestead of the Workmans' farm.

It was here that Wilton Workman grew up, from here that he went away to school, to here that he returned and continued to live and work. As a boy he had often heard it said, that farther east it was no good for farming, that the rainfall dropped off, that here they could just make a go of it. A bad year now and then, but with a run of good seasons they could hold out. It was marginal country.

To get in or out of the Workmans' property you had to pass through the grove of pines, so that to the locals the trees became familiar to the point of being unnoticed. They were simply there and had always been there. But it was these pines which recorded in the whorls of their trunks the long travail of seasons: the good years and bad years were ringed in the boles of those rough, grey-barked trees. Long before Will, the Workman boys' father had taken up his block and begun clearing the clay flats of their timber and to plough and seed wheat and oats, the fluctuations of weather had marked the growth of the trees. They knew in their resilient trunks the poverty of the soil, the vagaries of the seasons.

But the Workmans held out. And look at them now. As well off as any who had come out later and even those who, after the war, had taken up some of the previously abandoned places. The Workmans were doing alright.

As Wilton grew older and settled into the farm life and the countryside of Nungoolin it began to seem that he too had always been there. There would be moments of complete possession by the countryside, as when working through autumn and winter nights. In the sudden quiet moments between shutting off the tractor and starting up the truck to drive back to the homestead, then it would be that the night, huge and still, enfolded and possessed. In the insistent grating calls of frogs and the bleat of sheep, he would sense the dual life of bush and paddock. In the region of their uneasy fusion he would find sometimes, in the headlights, tiny native mice.

"Amazing that they should still be here, but they hang on." Gently he would lift them and place them through the fence.

Gradually acquiescence dulled Wilton's awareness of the landscape. Except perhaps in rare fleeting moments of relaxation. After a day harvesting he would

sink into the summer night, in a chair on the verandah. There would continue the distant, dry rustle of wind-ruffled wheat heads. The dust was crimson in the late afternoon sun. After tea, sitting half-asleep on the verandah, enclosed in the small world of the light's orbit he would be showered by the swirl and fall of insect clouds. The cat would catch crickets on the cement floor. Edging the light was the darkness and the countryside; the land which already was not enough to support the expanding Workman family. The land was worked to the limit. True, agricultural science had brought them a long way, what with trace elements, new strains of wheat and methods of contouring the ground. You could do a lot more now with the same sort of country. Why, they were even opening up country sixty miles farther east. But The Pines was not enough for the Workman family, especially now that Wilton was married—even though the original property had been added to several times while the boys were only children. Small, adjacent farms that had not been profitable enough for other families' needs as they grew up and places abandoned during the depression, had been taken over before Wilton knew the need to spread himself. And now the neighbouring Goodings' place was to be annexed.

* * *

It could have been overheard outside the Nungoolin Co-Op on a particular morning: "The Goodings have gone I believe. All very sudden." No-one seemed to have been aware they were even thinking of leaving. And then there was the sale of farm machinery and stock and household junk and they were gone.

"Sold the place to the Workmans they say. For Wilton."

"What's happened to the Goodings then?"

"The young fellows are starting a carting business in Nungoolin. The farm was too small and they wanted to be off on their own. And the old couple have taken up a little poultry farm in the hills just out of the city. Say they'll run fowls. And grow cut flowers. Old Lorry Gooding had a bad back and thinks he can manage something small like that and they were both keen on gardening. Sort of semi-retirement."

Wilton looked over the park-like stand of jam trees on Goodings' place. They would cut them down for fence posts, all the posts on Goodings were white-ant eaten or the fences even completely down, the whole place needed refencing. And the corner of York gums would have plenty of mallee roots if cleared. Wilton was anxious to get the Goodings' place cleaned up. They got some contractors in and the woodland was cleared. Only the ridge of white gum was to be left—shade for stock. The iron from the house and shed rooves was used to roof a new shed at The Pines. The wormwood hedge, suffering from the inroads of a tractor and a truck hauling out the iron, gradually fell away. The barricade against wind and dust and paddocks collapsed and crumbled. Its fragments stirred and worked into the dusty ground. The paddocks advanced upon the house walls and obliterated them. Until only the stump of a chimney, a square squat water tank and small objects were left to be casually buried and exposed and buried again by the weather—nickel forks, the glass stoppers of sauce bottles, a silver pepper shaker, a brass tap, pieces of willow-pattern china—those sort of things.

And as so often happens on taken-over properties, while the aggregate of sheds, stables and homestead gradually disintegrated, the place lost the imposed aura of the people who lived there. But the land itself (although amalgamated in another place, The Pines of the Workman family) was to retain a certain identity confirmed even in the way it was always referred to as "Goodings' ". "We're ploughing on Goodings' today", or "We start harvesting on Goodings' top paddock next week",

and "The fence is down again across Goodings' creek". The Goodings themselves would be gone and forgotten but years later, try as he might to feel as his own, that stretch of low, grey, salt-scabbed country and the higher slope of stone and rock, Wilton knew with irritation, that it was "Goodings' Place".

* * *

Two dark figures came to the house, right to the kitchen door, and waved towards the paddock—could they pick wool? And so they set off, slowly on foot, dirty sugar bags tucked under their arms; the woman and the child. To search out the sorry remains after the flies and beetles had had their share. Wilton followed them with his eyes until they were well past the sheds and workshop. Ah, the thieving, lazy so-and-sos. Picking dead wool; about all they were fit for. And a damned nuisance, the way they snooped around. He could never understand why that neighbour of his kept them on his place—to be always pestering everyone else around.

But Wilton could not know what they saw, the woman and the child. They drifted over the paddocks, feeling underfoot the mounds of tussock grasses beneath the stubble, seeing the great-toe imprints of kangaroos beneath the chiselled pocks of sheep hooves, the pricks in the ground of a lizard's passing and knowing the stirring of wind in thickets of tamma and hakea, the soft and harsh brush of grevillea and wattle, sensing the wisdom of pines and their sage-grey silences, the listening and fore-warning of silent, prophesying pines. The thin dark figures swelled and vibrated, shrank and vanished in mirages of dry stubble and Workman paddocks.

Wilton drifted through the discomfort of mirages. Through a grey haze of dry bones and tufts of brown, soil-stained wool, of kangaroos and trees that were not and dark-skinned people and stubble paddocks that were; stretching and collapsing concertina-ways, racked in the shrinking and expansion of mirages. It brought the sweat out on him. But did not stop the confusion of mirages. Sylvia, his wife, would say it was the sun. He went inside, into the sudden darkness and clutched at the surety of furniture. In the sudden darkness he clutched at the furniture of his upbringing, the safety of ingrained attitudes.

* * *

In those parts it was the custom as children grew up, married and settled into family properties for the older people to retire, and usually, to the city. One did not argue with custom. Now with their younger son married, there was nothing to keep the Workmans Senior on the farm. And it was really quite the best thing to do, to move out and leave the country altogether. Mrs Workman had to convince herself it was so. Although to give up everything was hard, this her old home, this that after all epitomised a lifetime of hope. No, she must not start being mawkish. "And I couldn't bear living in Nungoolin itself, dusty little town. And to stay indefinitely on the farm would be ridiculous. Look what happens to those old ladies out on the farms. Old Mrs Carlisle. And Mrs Hudleston! What sort of life is it? They just exist. No, it's time we got out." Mrs Workman would forget. She would forget a lifetime. She must be realistic above everything.

The move to the city and a block of flats was, on the face of it, to brighten Mrs Workman's life considerably. Her penchant for joining groups was to be fulfilled. Her days were filled up. There must be no idle brooding. But Will?

For so long had Will 'stuck it out' that he had become a kind of fixture and to persuade him to leave the farm had been like trying to uproot, bare-handed, one of those remnant salmon gums or prise a granite boulder from its socket. Once the Workmans Senior were gone from the homestead, the elder son Wilton, and his family moved into their heritage while it was considered the older Workmans would be more than well provided for in their comfortable unit. But Will shrank

amidst the newness and impersonalness of unknown walls and built-ins. The empty glare of windows, the absence of familiar and moving shadows of trees and creepers, threw him into confusion. What was he going to do all the long summer? And the winter just didn't bear thinking about. Just rain for no purpose. Rain and wet, a weather with nothing to nurture. It fell hopefully on tiled rooves, concrete pavements and sealed roads and was channelled hopelessly away down drains and gutters. But the ground itself, it never touched.

Will Workman, who had never thought or done or dreamed of anything that had not some bearing on coaxing growth out of the ground, whose entire life, which really only began when he took up that block out there near Nungoolin, had been a physical act attuned to the effect of seasons on the soil and its response, who had never felt since a very young man, the rush and tumult of life beyond the dusty horizons of Nungoolin and doubted in fact that the world extended beyond the summer-bounding mirages and winter-enclosing mists which drew in around the vast but minor Wheatbelt shire. Latterly, his sons had managed the affairs of The Pines, while he in contentment knew that crops grew and flourished and were harvested. He could see it all happening, from the broken seagrass chair on the verandah. Even in failing strength, the results of his own initial involvement continued so that it was still his effort that caused the ground to grow green with crop, to ripen heavily. Gratifyingly heavy; the rich even density of wheat. Thus he saw the materialisation of intentions. There was nothing else in life. It was complete, there, on the creeper-shaded verandah at The Pines.

He was to be seen sometimes, fragile and all bent-over, with cap of silver hair, the loose frayed outline of him wandering along the paved footpaths, unknown by the unknown. Through the averted silences of passers-by he heard the greetings of slow Nungoolin voices, the queries about rain, or no rain, the washaway on the corner and the breakdown on someone's tractor and felt the warm acknowledgement in the narrow eyes of sunburnt faces. In Nungoolin, Will Workman was someone: he was Old Will Workman, revered and respected by both young and old. He was a real figure, an identity in Nungoolin's dusty, gravel-edged main street, in front of the Co-Op, the Post Office and the baker's. But on the green-edged suburban pavement, he was become no-one at all.

But they would come and go. A few days on the farms now and then, staying with the young families would mean they need never feel completely detached from the country. It was here that they regained their affinity with a place. Even Edith, who had sometimes balked at the seeming domination by the countryside, knew ultimately that it was through liaison with this same landscape that she attained the deepest satisfactions in her life. Abiding memories, reinforced through frequent sojourns in their familiar countryside were to sustain them in their half-life in the city.

They had built a block of flats and lived in the flat with the river view. Farther away, over the suburbs and beyond the low wall of hills was that vast country of paddocks and woodlands and a stone house, rather grand and pretentious even in its cloak of years and growing shabbiness, with its gathering of sheds and sheep yards. Where this land joined the road there was a stony knoll and a clump of grey-green pine trees. On summer days, on an east wind, there came tumbling over the low wall of hills, the itch and smell of ripened wheat, the dry tang of withered pine. As some kind of remembrance it was suggested the flats should be called The Pines. The name was worked into the stone facade of the building and small, potted, namesake shrubs stood assertively on a balcony—as if to bolster credulity.

* * *

On the stony knoll the perennial pines stood as silent, immutable witnesses to the always-changing landscape spread out below. Farms expanded, bush tracts vanished, paddocks enlarged their boundaries. With the seasons, crops grew, ripened and their stubble withered; wintry floods ravaged denuded slopes, summer winds lifted top-soil. So, too, the seasons left their mark in the ineradicable growth rings of the pine trees. Year after year as always, the mingled patterns of plenty and uncertainty were scored in the grey, knotted trunks of the trees, while the taxing life on the farmlands around and below continued, unheeding.

From the stony knoll, if you had looked beyond the homestead of The Pines and followed up the distant slope you would have seen a red iron house. It stood below the crest of the red, ironstone ridge, all stony rough and red gravel. Some stunted mallees sheltered the house and sheds from the wind which seemed to generate atop the iron hill. It was one of the finest vantage points of any of the farms roundabout and commanded a lookout over all the neighbouring homesteads and grid of roads and tracks. There it stood—a loose-sided red, iron box, unfinished at the front and a slapped-on verandah at the back, a bush-house behind and a brush lean-to on the east side where Mrs Ivy Hudleston had her collection of potted ferns, begonias and green lilies. There was a garden of a sort, unkempt and stretching away down the slope; a riot of wormwood, aloes, statice heaps, marguerite daisies, seasonal bulbs, a thorny pomegranate, fig tree and a wire fence smothered in the noxious trumpets of morning glory.

While her better heeled contemporaries might have scorned Ivy Hudleston in her iron house and tangled garden, when confronted by Clem with his loud-mouthed confidences and bragging stories (all the while his farm falling apart due to neglect and a kind of happy ineptitude)—while deriding him they warmed to his crooked-toothed, dour wife and even occasionally had a cup of tea and scones with her in the twelve-by-twelve sitting room amongst the clutter of furniture, so obviously gleaned from the secondhand shops. The china though—“Really, Royal Doulton! In that tin hut! It’s unbelievable!” So out of context seemed the fragile china with the swirls of delicate green and pale yellow sprays of leaves and flowers. The incongruity aroused suspicions. “They came from South Australia originally”, it was understood, “from a farm north of Port Augusta somewhere, someone said. Of course a lot of people gave up after the bad years there and moved over here. But sometimes you wonder. There are other things, too, besides the china. Her brooches . . . ?” Voices would drop to a whisper.

It was because of having to put on a united front during the war and be neighbourly with everyone, even those whom one had ignored for years, that Mrs Hudleston had more or less been accepted. Well, for certain formalities, like knitting socks and balaclavas together on winter afternoons. Gradually the need for inter-farmstead familiarity lost its urgency and Mrs Hudleston was again forgotten in her iron house on the stony hill. Most of her contemporaries retired comfortably to the city and the younger generation acknowledged her merely as that strangely distant woman with the sallow face and faded yellow hair and grey granite eyes; a bit eccentric, too, but even so, how did she stand living with that old reprobate? That stack of bottles behind the leaning stables? Ah, no wonder the place didn’t pay—with Clem in that continuous state of joyous unbelief that things were not quite as they should be around the place. The Hudlestons’ son came sometimes to straighten out their affairs. He usually did their shearing, if the few miserable sheep managed to sprout sufficient wool. Wilton Workman used some of the paddocks, on agistment and leased some land to put crop on. The Hudlestons ran a few pigs, fowls, turkeys, a couple of cows and subsisted at some kind of level incomprehensible to their now younger neighbours. They persisted anachro-

nistically along with the clump of salmon gums and gimlets, the knot of mallee and thin dejected sheokes.

At the front of the house where there should have been a verandah but wasn't, the mild winter and spring sunshine fell on the slab of stone that was a doorstep. It was Mrs Hudleston's habit, most days, to sit for a little time on the smoothed, pink-grey granite stone and enjoy a cup of tea. The paddocks fell away to the south from below the long narrow strip of wormwood-enclosed garden. Mrs Hudleston and the tin house on the hill would swim and rock gently in the sea of quivering paddocks of shallow green crop and yellow capeweed. Jonquils, freesias, daffodils spilled their yellow scent amongst the barley grass and wild oats and radish. Asparagus fern marched on thorns across the hard clay yard from the lean-to shadehouse to the galvanized iron fence. Nasturtiums and marguerites jostled against the granite step. Mrs Hudleston spilled her black unsweetened tea in the saucer and drank luxuriously, comfortably, undisturbed, and watched the yellow marguerites unfold and nod. Marguerites powdered her lisle stockings with yellow pollen. The air was heavy with yellowness.

Late in the spring when the sun got fiercer and the stone step was too hot for that quiet sit-down, it would be time to lift the bulbs. Not all of them, of course. Not the snowdrops along the west fence beside the house, not the easter lilies spreading under and through the wire-netting fence at the bottom of the garden and around the gate and under it, the wired-up gate that hadn't been opened for twenty years—they used the side gate near the back and left the front one for the rabbits and chooks and easter lilies. But every year, at least some bulbs would need lifting and separating. She would fork them gently from the warm dry ground and shake the lumps of clinging soil from the withered strings of roots and gently part the brown-skinned knobs. She would sit and rest and hold a warm brown bulb or corm and fondly press its whorled store of life. Its warm, wondrous dormant life. The mystery of it all made the deep furrows on Mrs Hudleston's dry, yellow forehead gather over her eyes. Rough, thick fingers would rub the waxen wrappings. They gently squeezed and dusted torpescent corms. Quiescent life trembled and settled softly, like pearls deeper in their layers of nacre. Firm hands touched and blessed and gave assurance to next year's gestating blooms.

The bulbs would be stored in boxes on shelves on the verandah. Some of them would be given out to others in whom an affinity or affection was sensed. Thus every autumn and winter in gardens all over the district there was a quiet eruption of bulbs, beside paths, in pots, in the shabbiest and most orderly of gardens. Through the eruption and recession of bulbs ran threads of continuity. Through each brown bulb Mrs Hudleston would see *all life* regenerated; she would see dry, brown paddocks awakening in an autumnal greenness, and feel most keenly new life throbbing in old, bush trees scattered across the countryside and tremble with joy at the sudden resurgence in heath and thicket. The bulb had become Mrs Hudleston's emblem. In Nungoolin bulbs were tradition.

From her ramshackle house on the stony hill, Mrs Hudleston would embrace the countryside. The great squares of paddocks, green or brown, the shaggy clumps of mallee, the contoured slopes and the straying creek courses, the last few root-heaps humped like strange tumuli here and there beside the distant fences, all the wide country stretched out and down below. It was all here, she willed it so. Even that knot of trees hiding the Workmans' place the other side of the gully, down from the watching pines on the rubbly hill. (Those Workmans with their grand house and ordered gardens and orchard trees, them with their style.) It was all spread out below her, the paddocks and trees and tracks and the moving colours of the cloud shadows, all settling into place just for her. The shape of the landscape belonged to her. That young Wilton Workman could think what he liked.

Sweating his body and soul out, day and night. For more crops, more stock, more pasture, more land. He would tire the soil. It would turn on him in the end. The country would turn on him in the end. It is a strange irony that sometimes it is the lack-a-daisical farmer who, in the long run is kinder to the landscape!

On a clear spring day, with barely a wind to distort the pattern of swelling wheat heads beginning to dot the paddocks, or shake the acrid pollen from the borders of capeweed flowers or irritate the lumps of spread sheep into cohesive flocks, the final arrangements between Wilton and the Hudlestons took place in the fussy, smoke-smearred kitchen of the iron house.

The antiquity of the narrow, dark, unlined room drew Wilton's little girl back into some other period as would some quaint, quasi-historical novel. But here the objects had substance, and you could feel the happenings of past years puffing up around you in escaped smoke as Mrs Hudleston shoved some wood in the stove and banged the flue shut again. The only lightness in the long, low room was the deal dresser (knocked up years ago from kerosene cases when Clem was more handy) and its tiers and ranks of cups and plates gleaming softly from within their showers of tendrilled green and yellow patterns. Out of the dimness Mrs Hudleston's grey eyes softened as she looked at the girl and exclaimed, "How you're growing up, it's a long time since I've seen you". Not that the child had ever been a frequent visitor. Just half-hourly, sort of drop-by visits at the house, when her father had been moving sheep on Hudlestons' or on errands, borrowing or lending a billy of lemons or eggs.

Sensing her unwantedness, she escaped now for a few minutes from the dingy kitchen and the table strewn with important looking papers. Could old Clem Hudleston really write, sign his own name? It was doubtful.

Outside, turkeys (very old) marched in and around the sprawling mallees, picking over what was already picked over. They flaunted shabbily up and down outside the sties, until the frenzied pigs threatened them away, to wander in a crumbling majesty of tattered tails down the stony slope amongst the indignity of scuffling fowls. Their formal roosting places offered little more than a few poles stuck across the lower forks of some mallees, and shaded by a wurley of branches. Clem Hudleston was not one to bother with elaborate architecture for common poultry, nor it would seem for himself and his family. But at least there was the kindly (or economic) concession of a netting fence enclosure to shut away the birds at night from the foxes of former years.

Behind the house yard, amongst the ups and downs of gravel, necks of bottles, dog-chewn mutton shanks and rusty tins, the child found the fragment of china with the green and yellow swirl of leaves and tiny flowers. And glimpsed momentarily a now demolished sanctuary of exquisite furnishings and drapes and gold-framed pictures.

She wandered farther over the bare gravel, past the pigsties and the sheds, all very much on the lean, the iron slipping off, the thatch holed by weather. There was the usual disorder of rusty wheels and harvester boxes, plough shares and shaftless sulkies mossed over with double-gees and the stamp of dereliction which marked all the old and too-small farms.

But it was not the 'plant' or the buildings or the absence of improvements that Wilton was transacting, it was merely the land, for what it might yield. It was not good, of course. Not like new ground (except that hundred acres of wodjil the Hudlestons had never bothered to clear). But with a bit of contouring and the right clovers, much of it could be coaxed into productivity. And it was next to his own place and would consolidate the home property. Anyway it was quite beyond the Hudlestons to work it properly.

And so the Hudlestons left their tumbledown house behind the screen of scrub on the stony hill and moved into a weatherboard cottage on the outskirts of Nungoolin. It was doubted whether Clem would be able to hold down a shire council job, but—"Surely it will be more comfortable for Mrs Hudleston living in town, a bit of life for her at least. They lived like *natives* out there in that tin hut on the hill!"

But for Mrs Hudleston even a tin hut could hold intact a dream. Affixed to land of their own, there had always been the illusion of success glimmering through the thin reality of bare subsistence. But now there was no mirage of a prosperous farm any more. Empty and unlivin in, the tin hut would give in to the weather and insects far sooner than the stone house on the desolate dusty plains north of Port Augusta—the beautiful, pink-stone house with its piano and pictures and isolated elegance. It was no one else's affair how her family had come by all the elegant appurtenances of a way of life several planes above their own. And to the dusty plains west of the ranges Ivy had taken, and indulged in, her share of finery. And flaunted it, with proud silent dignity, in the arid face of the landscape, between the dusty plains and barren, stony hills. But the farm there too, had been too small to be profitable, even apart from the weather. When it was sold along with all the fine furniture there had been scarcely enough money for the smaller-still farm north of Nungoolin. So that finally, all she had retained of the assumed grandeur of her girlhood upbringing, were the jewelled and cameo brooches and green-leafed Doulton plates, crazed and chipped with defiant daily use in a fierce semblance of gentility. Around the roofless stone walls, buttressed by sand drifts, of the abandoned house against the dry face of the Flinders Ranges, and beside the falling walls of iron on the gravel hill and now around the weatherboard cottage (eaten by dry rot and termites), fragile scraps of green-and-yellow-patterned china entered the accommodating soil. Here in Nungoolin, to be scratched over and kindly interred by the workings of fowls and turkeys.

She would sit now in a cane chair on the back verandah which had an oblique view of the road as it turned northward around the granite hill and the cemetery. She would sit here behind the shaggy potato creeper, the lucerne trees and the white-bellied yuccas, because she couldn't bear to be seen on the front verandah. All those people going past and staring at her. Not like on the stone step at her own place where she could see everything and nobody could see her, where she could stretch like a cat and throw the washup water on the pumpkins and not be pestered. She would watch the chooks scratching about under the long trails of white pea-flowers of the lucerne trees. She hadn't much interest in chooks these days though, they seemed to have gone off since the move into town, what with the depluming mite and no green feed except when she let them into the neighbour's paddock and then did they make a gefuffle! As if a few chooks could ruin an oat crop! As though they were a plague of rabbits before the myxo or something.

At least she had her tins of begonias on the back verandah—and her bulbs. Quietly in the autumn after the rains, the green rubbery spathes emerged in unison with the green, spear-pointed wheat piercing upward through the summer-brown blankets of the paddocks. Mrs Hudleston sighed. For bulbs and their flowers and their silent persistence. Sometimes she was nervous that they wouldn't make it. That they would rot or shrivel in the ground. Once the bulbs were up she knew everything would be alright. Life would go on. They restored her faith—in bulbs, if in nothing else. Because what else was there now anyway? Perhaps the china daisies, the mementos of her past, her early life when she was young and the world was one great wonderful promise. When the final swirl of leaves and flowers fell apart on the last plate, then it would be time enough for old Mrs Ivy Hudleston to follow the shattered translucence of her ideals of fine living into the ground across

the road into the Nungoolin graveyard: Mrs Hudleston, pariah in her own community, outcast in her own countryside.

No-one would really mourn the Hudlestons' place on the hill, nor care when the iron cladding collapsed on the termite-ridden frame. Wormwood, morning glory and aloes would over-rule. Marguerites would flourish and flower for a while, then wither. There would be jonquils and nasturtiums and sunflowers in season. Finally, the sheep would take over.

* * *

It had been apparent for some time that The Pines could not support indefinitely the two families. To Kim Workman, standing at the gate beside the long treeless road, the implications were clear. It was he who had to go. He had left Wilton at the tractor, their relationship again dissolving in argument—about webworm and the merits of fallowing and the rehabilitation of wornout ground. But it was really nothing to do with Kim any more. The partnership was to be dissolved and Kim and Joan were selling out to Wilton. He got back into the ute. The east wind blew thin and cold into the cab.

"See you later Wilton." But the only response was a curt, "Yeah!" to the irritations of webworm, brother or the tell-tale warnings in the sour soil of tired, unrested paddocks.

The long treeless road ran on in front. Grass and errant wheat spilled from the summer carting, sprouted in the gutters. Cast out into the bleakness of life and the winter landscape Kim drove slowly down the dismal muddy road.

Meanwhile at the cottage on the sandplain, Joan was lamenting her forthcoming departure. But there was to be no commiseration from Sylvia, "I almost envy you. One gets so sick of all this everlasting work. Cooking for shearers and scrubbing floors. Forever cleaning and washing clothes that smell of grease and sheep!" Perhaps she was not really embittered by the tedium of chores and the uncompromising countryside but, as she said, envious of Joan—remembering the city life she had given up and which was soon to become Joan's lot instead.

Sylvia finished her cup of coffee and looked round Joan's kitchen: the mock-pioneer decor, electric oven discreetly camouflaged in the huge brick fireplace, the heavy beamed ceiling, copper pots and pans hanging on the walls, the glow of earthenware jars and bottles of preserves on high shelves and out through the window to the small, neat, productive garden, and beyond to the wall of sandplain scrub straggling up to the wire fence and tangling with the spindly Cape Lilacs, the tea trees and clumps of Agapanthus. What was it that Joan saw in the place? Why so attached?

"The emptiness of everything here. No theatre or music. Just nothing. No life at all. We're as out of touch as peasants."

But for Joan, life was not an abstract thing. Culture? In her earnestness of living maybe Joan was contributing to their own half-isolated, vaguely formed local lore. Really, she had always felt at ease here in her own place, shaped the way she wanted it. Here, in the cottage in the sandplain bush. There was really no break between her home, garden and the bush tumbling through the wire fence. And from her kitchen window and the side verandah she could look down the track running obliquely through the scrub and see beyond, across the road to the paddocks unfolding and unfolding on the farther slopes. She wouldn't like to live anywhere else. She was born near here, grew up here. Here, was the only place she knew or wanted to know.

Phlegmatic Joan was not usually given to the heat of feeling now smouldering in everything she saw and touched. The flower beds, mounded high, wet and

soggy, hinting at the spring-blooming of old-world flowers (the seed collected ages ago from old Mrs Carlisle's garden), seemed to swell, all ready to explode. All this roused her unaccountably. Flowers and flag paths and stone walls grew to monstrous proportions and crashed through the kitchen window amongst the copper pots, stoneware plates and hanging gourds and wooden spoons. There was no subduing Joan.

Outside the children stopped playing in the heaps of yellow sand under the banksias, listening.

"It's about going away! I heard Uncle Wilton say the other day we'll have to go. It's no use everyone staying. It's *uneconomic* or something. Brr! Brr!" A grimy child charged his miniature bulldozer against the mounds of sheoke cones.

But as the argument ran: of course there was not enough land for both families, especially if any of the younger children wanted to come back on the farm. Wilton had put more into the farm, he was the elder, he worked harder. Wilton was the competent, all-managing brother. He deserved to stay. Thus Wilton took over Kim's place.

Following their move to the city, Kim got a job with a livestock firm. It would be fine for Kim, country trips in the Wheatbelt, including his own home district. Not like an ordinary city job. And with all the feeling of being in the countryside without the arduousness of making a living off it. But Joan? The sudden restrictions of the back yard, the paling fence, the street itself, closing in upon the quarter acre?

"But there's nothing to be gained from moping around the house. And obviously the farm just couldn't support both families. With the way costs have risen you girls would be forever trying to make ends meet. And how would you like to finish up like old Mrs Hudleston—living on the egg money?" This suggestion from Mrs Workman Senior would surely bring Joan to understand a sense of proportion. And surely anyone could see the benefits of city life—the children's education, and for Joan herself the many possible enrichments?

But for Joan the joys of life were in the living of them. Not for her the transposition of experience into—what did they call it? Culture! There was no second-hand way of looking at things, none of this recreation of life through the foggy artefacts of paintings, music, playacting and nuances of poetry. Joan had no wish to feel life through the fake world of imitation or pretence. Life was real and day-to-day, like with your hands in the ground planting seeds and slips. She pushed the bulbs into the ground and rammed the soil tight over the brown blobs, pressed the bulbs deep for the memory of her forsaken, sheep-trodden garden. That there would be some link, some thread of contact with the countryside of paddocks and farmhouses and their winter gardens.

* * *

Wilton referred to the sandplain country.

"Twenty years ago you wouldn't have considered clearing it. Just so much useless land. Not many places are ever without some poor ground, either saltlake or sandplain or gravel ridges. But now, this is prime country. With the low ground going salt, the sandplain if fertilized is fine country. Less than half our cleared ground is really any good now. Either gone salt or eroded and cut about with the creeks." He waved at the paddocks, sour with use. But what did this have to do with his companion, whose boyhood home and former family property had been taken over by Wilton? Cedric Weatherley, as an agricultural adviser in a neighbouring district was seeing over Wilton's properties and discussing progress and possible amendments. What to do about the salt flats, the gullying and the potential

of the undeveloped land. As Wilton pointed out, the cost of developing new land soon pays for itself. You can always get a loan for the clearing and heavy machinery. It all helps. Tax deductions too. And anyhow who wants all that scruffy old bush?

Obviously the days of the small farmer were over. You needed capital and a far bigger acreage these days.

Wilton turned the ute down a guttered driveway. He dropped Cedric off to look around the old homestead while he drove on through the date palms and dense silver-dusted Arizona pines to pick up some tools at the sheds behind.

Cedric and the grey bungalow were immediately in confrontation. Grey mud walls and lichen-coloured iron rooves, grey cement verandah floors; a greyness of buildings and years swelled around him. The garden was gone, the lawns and flower beds, the hedges. At the back the ruins of outhouses; on the east between the wilderness of date palms and eucalypts and pine trees, where there had been fruit trees and lawn and a bean patch, there was only grey, dishevelled grass-matted ground. Against the house, a twisted stump of vine, still hopefully green in the all-pervading greyness. West of the house, a mulberry tree of golden autumn leaves sprawled in a rumple of what had been a vegetable garden. And at the front the scaly trunk of an old palm reared out of the dark mystery of bougainvillea. The flower beds and shrubbery had become a tangle of rose bushes, all reverted on their stocks to single-flowered forms. In remembering the past of all roses, the bloated elegancies of horticulture had been cast off and from the gnarled, tenacious rootage, vigorous suckers had sprouted, which in their rampage through the years had smothered the withered pedestals. Tiny pink and white stars of 'wild' roses sprinkled the waving canes and miniature tangerine hips dotted the thorny stems. The order of paths and flower beds had succumbed. It was the original wild rose which possessed.

From the house an emptiness pushed out through the opened door. There was nothing. Nothing! Empty fireplaces and broken windows, termite-ridden floorboards and door jambs, walls with terrible cracks. There had been leaping fires and smouldering heaps of coals; there had been cold, wind-blown streams of rain washing down the glass of windows outside the heavy blue-green drapes of curtains; there had been rich, red-brown wood floors, deeply polished and strewn with thick, woven mats. There had been voices and singing and quarrelling, joy swelling the rooms and the comfort of known chairs to contain physical weariness. The house had been full of movement or a hush of temporary sleep.

Cedric found only emptiness and stillness. Draughts stirred and hissed in the roof above the pressed tin ceilings with the leafy patterns, but did not move the stillness of the rooms. Nor the dust, the thick lifeless dust. The grey, still dust—memory ground to powder.

How long? How short a time? That people should live and lovingly build then leave in the material housing of their emotions only a dreadful melancholy! Joy, after all is a transitory thing, never to be encased in brick and iron scaffolding. Its transposition was through other minds and not in all this hollow crumbling stuff where draughts coughed like emotions' echoes.

Didn't it bother Wilton, the coming and going about these old places? Cedric looked at Wilton's impassive face above the steering wheel.

Bother him?

Yes, these old houses—abandoned! And the people who lived in them, what the places meant to them, not just the buildings but the whole place, the countryside, the landscape itself? Could Wilton be unmoved? Yes the houses, especially

the houses, seeing them rot away slowly—how did Wilton feel about it all? Cedric was perceiving the dreadful nullity of life. Wilton remained unperturbed. The people? They were no more than phantoms which stayed briefly and passed away, no matter where—that was no concern of his—availing the land for what he considered its proper use, intensive farming. And as for *this* old house? Perhaps he saw it too often. Coming and going around it all the time so that he didn't even notice it, except for the bushes, the bougainvillea and the aloes and the rose bushes as prickly as blackberries. They were such a nuisance, the old garden plants, so thick you couldn't even get down the track to the sheep yards and shed past them!

The trees of course and the rosebushes, they didn't give up so easily. Only the fragile things dependent on a human touch and guidance, it was they that withered away. But of course it had not been Wilton's home. Why should the old house push Wilton away or cry out for him to leave it alone? It wasn't that Wilton was callous. There was nothing there for him to remember or feel. It was to Cedric that the house shrieked in its grey silence.

Everyone hides in his soul, secure against time, the gleanings of childhood complete in a frame of remembered surroundings. But only for the lifelong exile is this blend of being and place indestructible. For the person acquiescent to change because of continual daily involvement in his early environment, the beginning of life is never sealed off as something quite separate. It is the backward venturer, fancying to eclipse time, covetously wanting to match time against illusion, who loses suddenly and irretrievably, that which only unbroken absence can preserve. To search for that memory world in situ, is to touch the moribund.

Banished by the house, Cedric looked out over the assaulted landscape. Could he now, then look at this dispassionately? It would appear that the fated prime land was about all that was left of the original landscape in the confines of the present panorama spreading northward from the old homestead. The ute sped over the paddock tracks and came to the fringe of scrub. This remnant of bush, if left unmolested, this at least would be some atonement for the earlier offences committed against the countryside.

Unseen in the thickets, bell birds flung out their quavering calls. The birds were as hard to find now as they had been years ago. The prickly tangles of grevillea and tussocks, the interlaced sheokes, as impenetrable. They kept to the old cart track, a tamped hard path defying natural reclamation apart from the cones of termites. The sinuous track was almost the only imprint of human interference on this sanctuary. A sanctuary for small marsupials, birds and rare insects. The double-toe marks of kangaroos were stamped across the track, the delicate trails of lizards crossed and recrossed. The farming potential of the land had not earlier been realized so that in his previous oversight, had not Wilton created a sanctuary, a haven, in the quietude of this treed and thicket-grown ground. Wilton's face glowed rather with a vision of wool bales and grain bins.

"This is the clearing where the hermit, that nutty old rabbit-trapper, had his hut." They had come to the old sand quarry and there were the ruins of the hut; crumpled kerosene tins, which when filled with sand had formed wall blocks, a few white-ant-eaten roof poles, twisted sheets of iron and even remnants of jute from wheat bags (in lieu of hessian). Cedric wondered what had happened to him, the poor old codger, harmless enough but nutty. They passed through the sand quarry. Cavernous openings of abandoned fox holes still gaped. The nightmare of foxes lashing about with staked traps on their legs flared again, and the blind horror of the kill.

They bumped on over the termite mounds. A bobtail lizard gawked and zig-zagged its way across the track. Years and recollections were smothered in the soft

whirrings of sheokes and pines and hakeas, until they came almost through the scrub. To the other side, away from their family homesteads, to look right out over the country, over the winding chain of salt lakes and to the sandplain again the far side, and to the small, mottled grey-black smudges of scrub amongst the clear paddocks. Miles and miles. They came out of the dense, twined sheoke and hakea thickets to the more open and high up groves of sprawling woody pear and banksias, brilliant now with orange flower heads. All this formerly had been in Cedric's family. Family circumstances had caused him to forfeit his tenure of the countryside. Yet still he felt it his. And having left it at least in part, was ultimately to give him a fuller understanding of the very landscape he had abdicated; to stay and have remained in physical harmony, would have meant some kind of gross assimilation along with shrub and grass, some benumbed state of being without knowing. To see it in perspective through a distance of time had clarified his vision of it and strengthened his affinity. By simple rite of affection and painful yearning the bush was his. Wilton generally expressed no liking for it. Although now, paradoxically there was an unconscious show of feeling when he uttered, almost without intention, as he looked out across the sweep of scruffy bush, the salt lakes and ups and downs and hollows, and in the other direction to where just visible on the farthest ridge were the spectral outlines of the sentinel, forewarning pines,

"I reckon this is one of the prettiest bits of country round here. You can look out from here, so high up, such a long way, bits of scrub and low hills and paddocks. And when I'm ploughing or seeding down there on the flat, when the ground's all wet, it really looks good and looking up again to this great slope all dark and scrubby, it's kind of beautiful."

They both felt something, poignantly, each in his own way. But what could Cedric say, do, to din home to Wilton that the bush was something to keep, not just remember; that this stretch of unsullied bushland was a buffer against the down-graded adjacent ground. It must not be cleared and rolled and burnt and ploughed in. But he knew; it would be a paddock, and for a time all green and lovely and close with clover. Sheep would putter in its borrowed richness. It was Wilton's land, not Cedric's.

* * *

Sylvia was walking past the old hut and the two nearby almond trees near the sheds at The Pines. She brushed past the blossom-clouded trees, caught by their beauty. And yet at the same time feeling: how they taunted her, that they had been there for so long, and belonged but that she was a sort of interloper. All these old things, trees and bits of buildings with their aura of tradition, seemed to emphasise her own 'newness', unsettledness and made her feel like an outsider.

The mud brick hut was relatively old. Mrs Workman Senior would rather it had been knocked down, instead of being left as a constant reminder of her difficult first years of house keeping. But it had still been useful, first as the men's quarters and later as a chaff shed and for storing seed wheat and super. Now, bulk storage had made the mud hut redundant. Wilton always intended, but never got round to knocking it down. It was not so much sentiment that stopped him; he could not be bothered with these new, locally formed historical groups that kept shouting about restoring the old houses and huts and sheds and repairing carts and harvesters, he just didn't have time when there was such urgency about other things. Those fences to put up on the cleared sandplain. There was so much work to do, things of importance. Let those other incompetents fuss about mud huts and old wagon wheels. You could tell what sort worried about those things, you could tell by the sort of gates they had or didn't have and what they got for their wool and they always ran out of baled hay and had to buy extra from someone else,

Wilton usually. Wilton flourished not only by his own efficiency and energy but by the confused ideals of others. There was not a more competently run property than his in the district.

In front of the bat brick hut there grew the two almond trees. They promised nuts every year—until bitten and pruned again by the parrots. Every winter the white mantle of their flowers glimmered softly, virginal, then richly full against the decaying mud walls and buckled iron roof of the cottage. Barley grass pressed against the base of the walls, chooks passed in and out the open doorways, pigeons nested under the gutterless eaves. Mice lived blatantly in the empty rooms, termites made havoc in the floorboards, feral cats caroused in the rafters. But every July the almond trees gave the hut assurance so that now as Sylvia looked at the hut she saw it transformed, or rather restored. The hut and the gnarled almond trees appeared as a link in the sequence from the hopefulness of early settlement to today's people's uneasy grasp on the landscape. She saw it all fixed up, the chimney mended, the roof straightened and painted, the woodwork and window lead-lighting repaired. A little Georgian cottage! Those two almond trees, carefully pruned and shaped one each side the wooden door. . . . Again she touched the fragile blossoms, petals fluttered onto the wet ground and dissolved amongst the rank blades of barley grass.

It had become suddenly all too much for Sylvia. In spite of attempts to settle into some kind of harmony with the place, no matter how hard she tried, alone and unaided she could not come to a lasting agreement with the countryside. She herself was at that same awkward stage of self-compromisation and incipient assimilation by the landscape, as Wilton's forebears had been over a generation ago. Wilton, so absorbed in increasing productivity, oblivious of what was happening to the countryside, blind to persistence or annihilation of native vegetation and wildflowers and the general depauperisation of the landscape itself, was less noticing still of his wife's dilemma, her desperate effort to gain acceptance in a countryside she was still trying to comprehend—could not even make a gesture of guidance. He was as remote from the 'soul' of the landscape as were his own machines. Since that day long ago, when he had lifted the tiny native mouse from the plough furrow and placed it through the fence near the grove of pines, he had scarcely felt the underlying surge of life implicit in the growth and decline of the countryside, whether of remnant bush or planted crops. The landscape for him had become a thing inanimate. Its 'livingness' no longer touched him.

There was a flurry of packing. The older children now gone from the farm home and the younger ones still at boarding school were thus unaware of treasured possessions and oddments flung ruthlessly into the rubbish pit behind the fowl yards. Sylvia was deaf and mute, retracted somewhere in the past. How did all this start? She remembered how, at first, she had seemed to see in Wilton's eyes a mirror of the landscape. His figure, already bowed in submission to toil on the land and the roughened hands with dust and grease showing through in dark creases, she had accepted as being shaped and marked through some honourable involvement with the earth. She had hoped, through Wilton, to develop affection for the countryside. What, since then, had happened—to Wilton, herself, to the countryside? This man who lived and worked so assiduously, who worked so frenetically *on* the landscape but failed to be part *of* it; who changed it and took what he could out of it, while all the while it settled sullenly into a silent umbrage, instead of richer for the association, impoverished. Sylvia looked back over their lives and with despair saw them stretching away into the future—intermingling but never touching. Because now, between Sylvia and Wilton there was a distance as wide as sixteen thousand acres.

Sylvia looked up from the cases and boxes. Through tulle-filmed windows, the country was softened. Even the weedy garden with its frost-blistered hibiscus, tawdry buddleias and plumbago, the caged rose garden, the evil oleanders—seemed milder, less domineering, less overpowering. The garden she hadn't planted but inherited from Mrs Workman Senior.

The paddocks, too, were softer and deeply green as they stretched away down into the gullies and up the far slope to the Hudlestons' tumbledown shack on the stony hill. The wintry light smudged out all the harshness, all the ugliness in the flung-out tapestry of folds and flats. Even the grove of eerie pines on the stony hillock had a kindlier stance—less scraggy, less severe—and momentarily a false-beneficent aura. "But no. I can contribute nothing to this country and there's nothing here for me!" remembering the dreariness and the absence of companionship. Even Wilton, if he were not working or away at distant stock sales or busy with shire affairs, might as well not be here. Slouched in an old chair, silent and impassive, counting sheep like a man half asleep. Where did she, Sylvia, fit here in all this expanse of paddocks full of winter growth and promise? Sheep and wives, in this country, there was no difference apparently. And so Sylvia, too, with a cast-aside feeling, was shortly to depart.

Meanwhile the great high rooms of The Pines echoed only the heavy booted steps of Wilton and his men. They passed through the rooms but did not stay—the half-lived in rooms waiting for school holidays. Rain drenched the garden and its weedy beds, frosts bit the shoots on the trees and shrubs and blackened old leaves. Clear days of bright sunlight followed, chilled and still. Petals dripped from the spent, blowsy flowers of the almond trees. They drifted against the wet mud walls of the hut and stuck in the rusty lesions of the roof. Dust of summer storms had formed into little clods in the depressions of the iron. A fur of moss and tufts of grass bound mud to iron. Flecks of almond petals fell like snow; they fell and scattered and dissolved in the grey slush and rumpled grass around the hut. The almond trees, defiant, hopeful and resigned; their flowers were as transitory, as frail as individual human hopes and ambitions. As for the trees themselves, they blossomed, grew green and subsided, forfeited their fruit but never died; it was a constant tug-o-will with the worrying, whistling parrots.

* * *

Early one autumn morning, Wilton passed by the almond trees on his way to the shed. The almond trees that he knew so well, their flimsy blossoms and expected nuts. The almond trees which reached back to some other time and place dimly comprehended. In an arid, drab, subtly changing landscape, they meant stability and fruitfulness, a contrast to the woody nuts of the bush with their inedible wafers of seeds. They stood for settled land and houses with their tended gardens. He felt the suffering of the stunted trees, their restraint and their resilience, defiant against the assaults of seasons and parrots. *He had supposed they would never succumb.*

In the dusty shed loose iron creaked. An emptiness, a sense of abandonment, came now over Wilton. For what had he been striving? He began to wonder about his wife. Perhaps he had expected too much of her? Ignored her loneliness, been rattled by her obvious discomfort, her dislike of physical grubbiness, her inadequacy when confronted by the vastness of the landscape? If in his own self-sufficiency, he had ever bothered to try and work it out, what his wife's role was, well, it was probably some subsidiary one, some sort of supporting energy to plough back into the farm. Everything must be ploughed back into the farm. His loyalty was to the farm. Even his wife had not entered his own tight concept of where his allegiance lay. The farm came first, people afterwards.

Now, there seemed to float about the shadows of those other people—relatives, neighbours, small-time farmers, who one by one had dropped away from the countryside as Wilton's hold on it had hardened. And if now he did consider these people apart from their former land—well, he would shrug and for reassurance, mutter over the current slogan, "Get big or get out!" He mumbled the new chant, like a creed in which he only half-believed. Because by now the country itself had wearied and was turning on him so that he felt the censuring landscape closing blankly around him.

The parrots rose from behind the haystacks. In the flutter of iridescent feathers of the "Twenty-eights", Wilton was aware, fuzzily, of a wide sweep of country stretching away into the blue-black distance, a countryside before the collage of farmhouses and sheds, fences and paddocks was even begun. It stretched and heaved, darkly green and brown, black on the horizon, dark in the hollows with their timber, lit lighter on the low rises of sandheath and thickets. *For the memory of this the parrots persisted.* Why had he cheated the parrots, those green free things, those free-flying indomitable fragments of the wild defeated bushland? Therein was his tragedy and his conflict: how to reconcile his own dual alliance, with the inextinguishable parrots and to the almond trees and all they stood for and against which the birds were eternally pitched.

He remembered, too, still fuzzily, the pleasant loose arrangement of irregular, dark bush and pale paddocks. And at last through the morning glare, he realized the stark clarity of a bleached, dust covered, salt-scabbed countryside, its dead trees, its stripped soils. He saw the distant grove of dejected foreboding pine trees and felt the poverty of the soil, the capriciousness of a long established weather pattern. Could he then have known that it is not for man to possess the earth, nor even be its overseer? That unless he aspire and act within the limitations of the landscape, that unless the pulse of his life beat within the ancient rhythm of the landscape, he would be outcast?

The parrots rose from the gimlets and salmon gums around the sheds, rose, and reeling into the morning sky, uttered a shrill alarum. Uneasily the birds settled in the trees farther away. Presently they rose again and reeling over the shed, shouted a noisy, discordant requiem. Flopping into the almond trees behind the old mud-brick hut they began in one great concerted frenzy to peel the green, suede wrappings off the brown nuts.

Spreading out below and around the grove of pine trees on the stony hill, is a grey and sombre countryside. On hazy autumn mornings there is the glint from homestead and shed rooves, sunk in the grey salt-blighted landscape. All around is the sadness of pines and an unquenchable suffering: this is marginal country.



GARY R. LANGFORD

9 o'clock Headlines

Ice works its way over the house,
looking out the window at still deadly vapour
that lingers in the bunkers of the golf green.

Already we are tired, clogged by days
of work beating against skin
& the anxiety of seeking alternatives.

Beyond argument & the furious picking
of words turned sour as they drop
we sit opposite each other staring . . .

The empty coffee cups lie between
& the 9 o'clock news headlines
sound like strange whimpers in the room.

Whales

Shells, concave & smooth,
seears empty of molluscs
& crabs; our steps & years
crunch in pastel fragments,
cool underfoot as the tide
runs up & tugs at skin.

Morning & the sun stationing
itself like a technician
holding the horizon up &
preventing oceans draining out.
The whales had beached
with the moon & nightmist,

beginning to decay & give
off a thick stench of death.
We note the size & mystery,
suicide of a strange world,
tramping slowly up the beach
under the screams of gulls.

NICHOLAS HASLUCK

Waiting for Poirot

Lugubrious—the villainous guest—
came to the party to kill.
He was dressed for the occasion.
His heavy tweed was mantle made
for dismal felonies at Elsinore;
a suit like ancient arras; badly hung,
ruptured by the bare bodkin
in several places.

“Lugubrious has come!”
The word went round as quickly
as the bowl of soggy biscuits
and platter of stale Camembert.
Yes, he had been before.
His ponderous jokes were poison
fit for a sleeping monarch’s ear
and his yawns were cavernous.
Within minutes he left fingerprints
in the only plate of cheese dip
while the hostess, smiling bravely,
murmured: “Lugubrious is here.”

But he was not alone.
Two accomplices, Halitosis and Hirsute,
had also come. The former—
laughing loudly in every face—
cleared the bar with a single breath.
Hirsute, who jangled ivory beads
like jackal’s teeth and claimed
he once smoked pot with a man
who knew Charlie Manson’s cousin
in a San Francisco cellar at dawn
which later wasn’t used as set
in ‘Easy Rider’ or some such,
threatened to drop his gear
in the name of peace.

Other suspicious characters
were on the premises, any one of whom
could have killed the show.
There was Innuendo with his wily tongue.
Female Sophisticate who had been
to better places many times before.
Late Arrival who blocked in twenty cars
with a drunken smile and stayed till last.

Someone (unidentified) who broke three records.
And Tiddly. And Constant Toilet. And many more.

Not unexpectedly, the little Belgian
who rang at midnight to mention
that he was given the wrong address
and could not find his way,
being utterly bored by the conversation,
asked a few perfunctory questions only
and stayed away. So even Everyone—
the slovenly victim—was able to agree
that the party was a perfect crime;
the cause of death, a mystery.



R. F. BRISSENDEN

Building a Terrace

Sentimental nonsense of course to talk
Of the 'living rock' or the 'honesty' of stone—
But the words are in my mind each time I dig
Some stubborn chunk of sandstone out of the earth,
Split, dress and settle it into place
In wall or terrace; and I think of two dead men:
My grandfather, Will Rogers, and Archimedes.
'Give me a lever', he said, 'and I'll shift the world.'
Rocks that a man can't lift can smash a foot—
And when, after crowbar, shovel and mattock have done
Their work, you feel a big stone gently tilt
And shift at a sweating finger's touch you know
In your bones what the old Greek meant. Archimedes
May have been just a name to Grandad, but
He loved stone and worked it till he died.
Seventy-five he was and stood as straight
As when he'd landed thirty years before
With his box of tools, his family and his lodge
Certificate: Oddfellows Master at Bridgnorth
In Shropshire—*Amicitia, amor*
Et veritas beneath the eye of God.
In Sydney it meant nothing. But he worked:
Anonymous flagged paths, hearths, terraces,
Fireplaces that draw and walls that stand
Are his memorial. He whistled, sang,
Was gentle, smelled of mortar, sawdust, sweat
And the open air. 'Drunk again', he'd say,
Laughing under old-fashioned moustaches when
I fell running to watch him split the stone.
He was an artist—he could knock a tune
Out of an old tin can, they said—and when
His sledge-hammer rang on his steel wedges the rock
Broke clean and straight. I touched the fresh
Rock-faces that had never seen the sun.
At home, he said, sinking a well they found
A frog alive inside a hollow rock
Ten feet beneath the ground. He built a wall
The day before he died—surprised by death
Like that old man in Syracuse who fell
Under the ignorant Roman soldier's spear
Face down across his drawings in the sand.

RUTH JOHNSTON

Immigrant and Australian Families

Introduction

"The immigrant family" in Australia is not a single entity which can be discussed as such, because the immigrants stem from such diverse ethnical and cultural backgrounds that there are very few characteristics and reactions common to all. A more expedient method is to select from this mosaic families representing a limited number of national groups, to concentrate on those in detail and let other researchers add to the findings by studying different groups. This approach has been adopted here; three ethnic groups of immigrants have been studied and compared with a control group of Australian families.¹

The subjects of this study were 25 Polish, 25 German, 25 British and 25 Australian families, all resident in the metropolitan area of Perth, Western Australia. These Polish and German families form the entire population of all those having at least one child between 13 and 19 years of age who came to Perth, Western Australia, between 1957-1960. The selected British families are a random sample of assisted passage immigrants of these years with the same qualifications as to children as the two previous groups. Findings regarding this last group of immigrants must be considered with caution because the sample is too small to be highly representative of the great number of such families. The same applies to the Australian families, which have also been chosen at random, but only in two suburbs of Perth, where the concentration of immigrants is fairly high.

A structured interview schedule was used for collecting data and in each family the father, mother and each child of the prescribed age was interviewed. Immigrant parents of non-British background were interviewed in either the Polish or the German language, the children with very few exceptions were interviewed in English. The interviews were carried out by the author with all the subjects in their homes and each was interviewed separately to eliminate any influence in answering questions. In all 150 immigrant parents, their 104 immigrant children, 50 Australian parents and 38 Australian children were interviewed.

Similarities and Differences between Immigrant and Australian Families

Regarding family structure it can be seen from the following table that the German families have the smallest number of children on average. The mean for

¹ The Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia gave full financial support to gather data for this research which was carried out between June 1968 and February 1969.

The article is based on a book by Dr Ruth Johnston entitled *Future Australians* published in 1972 for the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia by the Australian National University Press.

the German families is 2.4, while it is 3.5 for the British and 3.6 for the Polish families. The Australian families in the survey seem to have the highest mean of children per family equalling 3.9.

TABLE 1: The distribution of families by the number of children in them.

NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER FAMILY	NUMBER OF FAMILIES				TOTAL OF CHILDREN			
	Polish	German	Brit.	Aust.	Polish	German	Brit.	Aust.
1	1	3	2	1	1	3	2	1
2	7	12	6	6	14	24	12	12
3	6	8	7	6	18	24	21	18
4	4	2	4	4	16	8	16	16
5	4	—	2	4	20	—	10	20
6	1	—	2	2	6	—	12	12
7	1	—	1	1	7	—	7	7
8					8	—	8	—
9								
10								
11	1	—	1	—				
12	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	12
TOTAL	25	25	25	25	90	59	88	98

Limitations of space do not permit a detailed analysis of the occupational distribution of fathers in the families under study, but it can be noted that Polish and German fathers are occupied in manual jobs, the former engaged in unskilled jobs more than the latter. The picture is slightly different for the British fathers, some of whom have clerical jobs and professional occupations. In contrast, the Australian fathers engage in manual work only in 14 cases out of 25 and the rest work as civil servants, managers, etc.

If occupational differences exist between immigrant and Australian fathers, they diminish fast in the case of their sons. Of the thirty-six boys studied, one-third go out to work and half of these work as craftsmen or are being trained for such jobs. The rest are mainly semiskilled workers and a few do clerical jobs.

There is a visible difference in the ethnic groups in the frequency of mothers going out to work. Of the 25 Polish mothers, 14 work and they are mainly engaged as domestics and office cleaners. Next in line come the British mothers of whom 11 go out to work, doing clerical and professional work mainly. The German and Australian mothers in most cases stay at home, as only seven in each group work outside it. One-third of their daughters are working, being mainly engaged as shop assistants or factory hands and a few, mostly Australian girls, in clerical jobs.

Looking at the immigrant families geographically, it emerges that the British and the German families are dispersed all over the metropolitan area, some occupying dwellings in purely residential suburbs. However, the majority of the Polish families seem to cluster in two specific working class suburbs. Like the Australian families, every immigrant family forms a nuclear family with the exception of one Polish home, where a grandfather shared the same roof with the parents and their children interviewed.

Living conditions for the various families differed considerably and a special note was taken of the degree of overcrowding in the homes studied. Having defined overcrowding operationally, the following table indicates the extent of overcrowding on a comparative basis.

TABLE 2: Overcrowding in Polish, German, British and Australian homes.

HOMES BY ETHNIC ORIGIN	OVERCROWDING		TOTAL
	Yes	No	
Polish—early arrivals	2	8	10
Polish—late arrivals	5	10	15
German	—	25	25
British	2	23	25
Australian	5	20	25
TOTAL	14	86	100

Most overcrowding appears in the Polish homes and next in the Australian homes. It is rare in the British homes and completely absent from the German homes. The Polish homes, where overcrowding exists, belong to families who arrived in Australia from behind the Iron Curtain and who had to pay their own passage to this country. Money was borrowed from sponsors or institutions here and the families involved live under financial difficulties having to budget for the repayments of the debts so incurred. Fathers in these families do mostly labouring jobs owing to language difficulties and the wives generally stay at home, having large families to look after. The overcrowding in the Australian homes was also due to a restricted weekly income and the size of the family.

Family relationships anywhere largely depend on the function of authority in the home. Where authority is strict and placed in the hands of one person, the home atmosphere is likely to be severe and strained more so than in the case of joint authority, which permits a greater exchange of ideas and a more democratic approach to family living. Each father and mother and also each interviewed child was asked multiple questions regarding who has the chief authority in the home. Since answers by all members of the family were almost unanimous they are presented in aggregate in the next table.

TABLE 3: Authority in the studied homes.

AUTHORITY IN THE HOMES	FAMILIES				TOTAL
	Polish	German	British	Australian	
Father's	3	3	—	2	8
Mother's	7	3	2	2	14
Shared authority	15	19	23	21	78
TOTAL	25	25	25	25	100

It follows that shared authority between husband and wife is the main feature of family living both for the immigrant and the Australian homes, but it is most typical for the British and the Australian homes, less so for the German homes, and least of all for the Polish homes. In the last category of homes the mothers have taken over the reins, running the home, disciplining children, budgeting the meagre financial resources, in the absence of the husbands who work long hours on shift work or work away from home altogether.

The mode of living in the four different groups of homes varies. No special attempt was made to investigate the intimate relationships between the marriage partners, since such an inquiry was beyond the scope of this research. However, some glimpses of these relationships were obtained from the interviewed children,

who were asked to comment on the amount of quarrelling that goes on between their parents. Accepting that children's reports may not be very reliable, it was found, that some Polish children consistently emphasised an acute lack of harmony between their parents often leading to intense arguments. This was less noticeable in the Australian homes, reduced to a minimum in the British homes and completely absent in the German homes. The German homes were in every aspect of family living the most peaceful of all the homes studied.

With regard to the relationships between the parents and their children a slightly different pattern emerges, and here the relationships must be divided into those hinging on cultural issues *per se* and those relevant to ordinary matters of family living. Taking the cultural issues first and localising them within the immigrant families, it appears that Polish parents and their children have frequent disagreements on the question of ethnic food and the Polish language. Controversies arise between family members because the children insist on eating Australian food and speaking English at home, while the parents disapprove of such behaviour. In the British homes relationships are strained because the children, and mostly the boys, insist on speaking Australian slang of which the parents, and particularly the mothers, strongly disapprove. In one German family the father disliked the over-emphasis on sport in Australia and felt reluctant to allow his daughters to engage in it.

Turning now to disagreements of a general nature, the Australian homes seem to be most prone to quarrelling, as in half of these homes parents and children are at odds over several issues. This happens only in one-third of the Polish and British homes and in isolated cases in the German homes. However, a common basis for misunderstandings prevails in all homes, parents quarrel with their sons who want to leave school early to get lucrative jobs. The going steady boy-girlfriend relationship was contentious in all these homes, parents claiming that their children were too young for the experience. Bad company, evaluated as such by parents, caused unhappiness in several families, as did staying out late at night and spending too much money on unnecessary items. Discord also arose in many families over food which the children considered to be inferior in quality.

Practically no arguments occurred in any of the homes regarding the payment of board by youngsters earning a wage, and this was for two reasons. First, in the Australian and British homes a tacit agreement exists that working children must pay for the food and shelter provided for them. Secondly, in the German and Polish homes the situation of payment never arises for reasons succinctly expressed by one Polish father: "I take nothing from them while they live at home. I am not an Australian to take money from my children."

More can be gauged about the immigrant and Australian families when they are looked upon in the light of receiving special assistance from welfare institutions in the community. Immigrant families more than Australian families find themselves in situations, where they have to rely on help from outside in meeting daily problems of living. Since the Polish families were the poorest of all and had greater difficulties to face than other families, they turned more often for help to such institutions as the Good Neighbour Council or the local Child Welfare Department which assists families financially in cases of hardship. The British families were next in line, and the German families sought such help only in four instances, while the corresponding number for the Australian families equalled two.

The Assimilation Rate of the Immigrant Families

The most important of all the problems that immigrants have to face in Australia is the question of assimilation to the Australian way of life. In the present context assimilation is understood in the double form of external and subjective assimilation.

External assimilation refers to the degree with which the immigrant has been able to adopt some aspects of outward behaviour which is typical of Australians. So an immigrant who learned to speak English or has been able to establish social contacts with Australians is classified as externally assimilated. He remains externally assimilated in this sense, if he acquired the English language and contacts with Australian for the sake of practical reasons expedient to him in his business transactions. Should the same immigrant psychologically identify with Australians and learn the English language and seek contacts with Australians because he prefers the Australian way of life to his original way of life, he would be also subjectively assimilated. The theme of external and subjective assimilation has been firmly established at the empirical and statistical level (Johnston, 1965) and it has been further confirmed in the present research.

Certain aspects of living in which Australians and immigrants observably differ were selected to gauge the extent of their assimilation. These aspects included food, language, social contacts and leisure. In addition some general questions were asked of respondents to gauge the degree of their psychological identification with Australia. One of these questions read: "Do you feel yourself to belong now more to Australia or Poland (Germany, Britain)?" The next table shows on a three point scale the degree of external assimilation of immigrant parents as evaluated by the researchers.

TABLE 4: Parents' external assimilation.

SCORE	FATHERS					MOTHERS				
	Polish	German	Brit.	Total	Aust.	Polish	German	Brit.	Total	Aust.
All Australian	—	22	11	13	10	—	—	4	4	9
Half and half	13	2	10	45	15	9	23	20	52	16
All ethnic	12	1	4	17	—	16	2	1	19	—
TOTAL	25	25	25	75	25	25	25	25	75	25

The Polish parents differ significantly from the British and German parents in external assimilation, since half of the Polish fathers and more than half of the Polish mothers belong to the category "all ethnic", indicating that they have made little progress in external assimilation. The German fathers seem to be the only ones predominantly in the "all Australian" category, not quite half of the British fathers reach that level. British and German mothers are in the middle of the road in external assimilation except for a few of them who have reached the highest level.

Comparing the external assimilation rate of parents with that of their children, it emerges from the next table that immigrant children on the whole assimilate externally more than their parents.

TABLE 5: Children's external assimilation.

SCORE	BOYS					GIRLS				
	Polish	German	Brit.	Total	Aust.	Polish	German	Brit.	Total	Aust.
All Australian	1	9	12	22	3	—	2	6	8	4
Half and half	13	10	7	30	17	18	11	7	36	14
All ethnic	3	—	—	3	—	5	—	—	5	—
TOTAL	17	19	19	55	20	23	13	13	49	18

It is clear, however, that the Polish boys fall behind the German and the British boys in their external assimilation and the Polish and German girls do not equal the British girls, half of whom have reached the highest level of external assimilation.

When subjective assimilation is looked at, it is found again that the Polish parents identify with the Australian way of life far less than any other immigrants.

TABLE 6: Parents' subjective assimilation.

SCORE	FATHERS					MOTHERS				
	Polish	German	Brit.	Total	Aust.	Polish	German	Brit.	Total	Aust.
All Australian	4	17	11	32	9	—	9	5	14	8
Half and half	6	5	9	20	13	3	10	16	29	11
All ethnic	15	3	5	23	3	22	6	4	32	6
TOTAL	25	25	25	75	25	25	25	25	75	25

As many as 15 Polish fathers and 22 Polish mothers live within the orbit of their own culture and refuse to accept Australian ways of living. Of all the parents the Germans seem most approving of the Australian way of life, as over half have reached the highest rung of the assimilation ladder in the subjective sense. Between the Polish and the German parents are the British parents with the males numerically being more assimilated than the females.

A perusal of figures for the subjective assimilation of the immigrant children shown in the next table indicates that the Polish boys are subjectively far less assimilated than their German or British counterparts.

TABLE 7: Children's overall subjective assimilation.

SCORE	BOYS					GIRLS				
	Polish	German	Brit.	Total	Aust.	Polish	German	Brit.	Total	Aust.
All Australian	3	12	14	29	3	5	4	4	13	4
Half and half	8	7	4	19	13	9	8	9	26	11
All ethnic	6	—	1	7	4	9	1	—	10	3
TOTAL	17	19	19	55	20	23	13	13	49	18

Girls on the whole assimilate subjectively less than boys with Polish girls being less assimilated in this respect than German or British girls. Some immigrant children show a shift from low external assimilation to high subjective assimilation and this can be explained on the grounds, that their external assimilation is mostly imposed on them by the home environment. If parents do not permit their children to speak English at home, as is the case, or refuse to supply them with Australian foods, children have no choice, but to succumb to parental wishes and hence cannot improve their external assimilation. In subjective assimilation, however, they are their own masters and being free of constraint, they identify with Australians inwardly. For some Polish children, as figures in the tables show, the process works in reverse inasmuch as they continue with Australian ways of living outwardly, speaking English at their places of work or mixing with Australians there, but subjectively clinging to their own Polish group.

Taking subjective assimilation alone, it follows that the immigrant parents and their children fall into three distinct groups: those who fully identify with Australia;

those who fully identify with their own ethnic group and those who identify with the two groups simultaneously, taking from each culture and keeping those aspects which best suit their individual needs. An example of the last type of assimilation is the case of a young girl who said: "I am half and half and that does not strike me as difficult. I live one life at home and the other at the Teachers' Training College, where I am a student. I am a different person in each setting and this does not worry me in the least. I manage quite well and have more friends that way."

Parents' Attitudes to the Assimilation of their Children

Immigrant children's assimilation rate reflects the attitudes which their parents have towards their assimilation, in the sense that those parents who have favourable attitudes to their children's assimilation also have children who assimilate, the reverse operates for parents who do not favour their children's assimilation. This is quite easily seen from the next table.

TABLE 8: Parents' attitudes to their children's assimilation.

Attitudes to children's assimilation to the Australian way of life.	NUMBER OF									
	FATHERS					MOTHERS				
	Pol.	Ger.	Brit.	Total	Aust.	Pol.	Ger.	Brit.	Total	Aust.
Favourable	9	18	20	47	17	2	19	22	43	18
In-between	9	5	3	17	—	13	4	3	20	—
Unfavourable	7	2	2	11	5	10	2	—	12	4
No answer	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	25	25	25	75	25	25	25	25	75	25

Obviously the Polish parents are less favourably disposed to their children's assimilation than any other group of parents. Various means were used to tap parents' attitudes to their children's assimilation and one of them was a question which asked if parents would want their children to grow up as Australians. Seventeen Polish parents gave a cryptic "No" to this question, whereas the number of British and German parents giving a negative answer was negligible.

It would seem on the evidence gathered so far that Polish families form the only group which really objects to the acceptance of the Australian way of life. Such predispositions are in no way interwoven with any animosity on the part of the Poles towards Australia. On the contrary, these people have a deep appreciation of their new country and its people. They appreciate the great opportunities that exist here for their children and are grateful for the help that Australians extended to them when they first arrived. Some Polish families have also been able to improve their standard of living in this country and so deprecate the inferior living conditions which they left behind. Above all they see great merit in our democratic ways of living and envisage for Australia a future unparalleled by other countries.

Despite this, they feel a deep attachment to Poland, a country which through history experienced the unfortunate fate of being overrun by foreign powers inevitably endeavouring to eradicate anything that belonged to the Polish culture. Poles abroad feel a sense of mission and duty to preserve and cherish all that is Polish and hence wherever in the world they settle, they nurture and preserve Polonism at all costs and inculcate such attitudes in their children.

Some Polish children, however, do not accept parental pressures towards Polonism and instead strive towards assimilating the Australian way of life, which to

them is more attractive and more tangible than the life of a far away country, the memories of which become more and more dim with the passage of time. Guided by their appreciation of the Australian society and all that it has to offer, some Polish children develop deep feelings of resentment towards their parents often resulting in outright rejection. As many as 18 of these children felt contemptuous of their parents for their inability to speak English, for their adherence to Polish customs, for their religious practice centred around the Polish Catholic Church, for their rejection of anything non-Polish and for their determined attempts to keep the Polish group intact by refusing any disruptive influences coming from outside.

In the other immigrant homes, where pressures towards ethnocentrism are less pronounced, relationships between parents and children are far more amicable and typified by greater mutual respect. So in the German homes only five children showed any resentment towards their parents and only two children in British homes felt this way.

Not only immigrant children, but Australian children also feel uneasy about their parents and complain about their behaviour. Being unable to voice any criticism on cultural differences, some Australian boys resent their parents for their level of education which they consider as inferior to their own. Australian girls are generally critical of their mothers, accusing them of being oldfashioned and lacking understanding of the younger generation. The mothers generally came in for more criticism than the fathers in all families. In the immigrant families, mothers, as shown, assimilate less, hence there is more grounds for displeasure with them particularly in the eyes of those children who have made progress in assimilation.

Prospects for the Future

A perusal of results of the research indicates that immigrant families experience greater or lesser difficulties in adjusting to conditions in Australia depending on their ethnic background. It has been amply demonstrated that Polish families are the most reluctant to assimilate and this has been confirmed in previous studies on parents separately (Johnston, 1965), on children separately (Johnston, 1969) and on whole family units (1972).

Polish parents being as ideologically committed, as they are, continue to cherish the culture of the country of their origin while being at the same time loyal, hard working and dutiful members of the community. With their children the situation can become more untenable for a number of reasons. Those children who have made the break from Polonism despite their parents' wishes, are likely to be subject to severe conflicts with them, conflicts which may leave an indelible mark on their personalities. Unassimilated children, deeply anchored in the Polish group, are likely to suffer from discrimination from their Australian counterparts often impatient with a persistence "in foreign ways". For both groups the road to a healthy adjustment in community living is marred with difficulties which only the strongest personalities can withstand without serious impairment.

Quite a different picture is presented by the German families. Throughout the research it became obvious that these families have an enviable serenity quite absent from other homes. The German immigrants have come to Australia predisposed to fit into the community, to make their contributions by hard work and above all to adopt ways of life typical of Australians. This mostly applies to the German boys who are really enthusiastic about Australia as are some of their fathers. In addition the pressures at home to adhere to the original culture seem to be insignificant and parents and children work in unison in solving cultural and other problems. Intuitively, it could be quite easily said that from the point of

view of an immigration country the German immigrants are likely to be by far the most valuable in Australia.

Turning to the British immigrants, the research has shown that the dissatisfaction with Australia attributed to the British immigrants and particularly to the British women is quite unsubstantiated. British males and females have fitted well into the Australian milieu with very few exceptions and are happy to stay here for good, hoping to visit aged parents in the "old country" or to return there for a while but to settle in Australia permanently. Like the German boys, the British boys are full of praise for the country and its people and this enthusiasm they will carry into adulthood, when they take their place as full citizens.

Although the British families show visible signs of a good adjustment to conditions in Australia, their criticism of certain inadequacies here is harsh and often quite unreasonable. The German immigrants see the same drawbacks, but are more tolerant of shortcomings, explaining them on the grounds of the nation's youthfulness and dynamism. In the British approach one sensed a feeling of superiority coupled with an attitude of condescension towards Australians, coming mostly from young girls, their mothers and some of their fathers. None of these characteristics could be discerned amongst the German immigrants. They paid a high price for coming to Australia and suffered severe prejudice when they first arrived, but what they found later was so much beyond the expectations of some, they have come to consider Australia as their real home.

Summary

An attempt was made in this study to compare 25 Polish, 25 German and 25 British families with each other and then with 25 Australian families. The main difference noted, occupationally speaking, was that Australian fathers seem most frequently to occupy positions in the professional and clerical groups. Some British fathers follow the same pattern but very few German and Polish males do, the latter working mostly in unskilled jobs. The sons from all families have a more uniform occupational distribution, most being engaged in or training for skilled jobs while some work as clerks. Of mothers the Polish most frequently go out to work, followed by the British mothers, but strict similarity in this regard exists between the German and the Australian mothers exactly the same number from each group working outside their homes.

Living conditions seem least conducive to harmony in the Polish homes, where overcrowding is highest and the same circumstances seem to prevail to a slightly lesser degree in the Australian homes. The German homes are free of this malaise and in the British sample overcrowding is encountered only in isolated cases. Authority in the home which is the vital aspect of family living, is of the shared-authority type in the majority of the homes both Australian and immigrant, except for the Polish homes, where some mothers have the chief authority. In these homes fathers are away from home working long hours and the burden of family responsibility naturally falls on the mothers' shoulders.

Home atmosphere also seems to vary in the four groups of homes each of which is characterised by greater or lesser tensions between parents and children. In the immigrant home parents and children quarrel about issues which have a cultural connotation and also on issues of a general nature which form the basis for disagreements in any family. Contentious matters of a cultural nature cover such topics as children wanting to speak the English language at home and parents insisting on the ethnic tongue. In British homes discord occurs over sons being keen on using Australian slang, while parents strongly disapprove of it. The Polish homes are most quarrelsome, next come the British homes and little tension of a cultural nature takes place in the German families.

Looking at disagreements between parents and children on matters of a general nature such as coming home late at night, spending too much money, or wanting to leave school, the Australian homes register tensions of this nature more frequently than other homes, followed by the Polish, British and German in that order.

In terms of general adjustment to daily living, the Australian families seem to cope best, having in only a few cases to rely on community support in cases of dire need. The Polish families, being the poorest financially, have to seek assistance from outside more often than any other families studied. The British families need this help less frequently, and the German families show the best social adjustment of any of the immigrant families.

From the point of view of assimilation, which is so crucial to immigrants in Australia, the Polish families stand out as being the least assimilated and this applies to both parents and children. British families assimilate far better and the German families surpass all the others. A tentative suggestion has been put forward to the effect that these German families are likely to benefit Australia most as immigrants, because of their deep attachment to the country and an appreciation of the things that Australia has to offer them.

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Property is desirable.
It is a positive good in the world."*

Abraham Lincoln,
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REVIEWS

J. W. Davidson and D. A. Scarr (Eds.): *Pacific Island Portraits*. A.N.U. Press, 1970. 299 pages, 8 plates, 7 maps. \$6.50.

... 'each generation of planters criticised those they found on their arrival, which indicates perhaps, that the planters themselves were not entirely successful in maintaining their cultural integrity and the continuous expansion of their own unadulterated brand of civilization' (p. 147). The gigantic monolith of western civilization had not such an inevitable momentum as it appeared to have to later generations whose advantage of hindsight hindered their judgement as much as it helped. *Pacific Island Portraits* 'seeks to show what life in the Pacific Islands meant to a number of people who lived it between the early years of the nineteenth century and the outbreak of the First World War' (p. v).

The work takes the form of a series of nine biographical essays and three interpretive studies of significant groups of Europeans. The biographical essays are distinct from, but supplementary to, the Pacific History Series,¹ also being published by the A.N.U. Press, which take the form of annotated primary material. However, both this work and the Pacific History Series is a product of the Department of Pacific History at the Australian National University. The head of the Department is J. W. Davidson and he and his colleagues are concerned not only with the European sources but also with the vernacular languages of the Islands, and oral traditions. The Department is Island-oriented in its emphasis and the bulk of the authors whose essays appear in *Pacific Island Portraits* are producing work in the Pacific History Series. Most either hold staff positions in the Department or have passed through it on fellowships or scholarships. The twelve essays straddle the dividing line between history on the

one hand and anthropology on the other. Of the nine biographies, four deal with Europeans (including one of a European family) and five deal with Island personalities.

The essays add significantly to the slowly growing body of literature on the Pacific and do help to balance the very heavy preponderance of administrative histories. Prior to the Pacific History Series which published its first volumes in 1968 there were very few works which dealt with the relations between the Island states, or between the Islanders and the Europeans. What cultural studies of the Pacific have been done have tended to be of two categories; work based on archeological evidence, and surveys of current societies by anthropologists and sociologists, mostly carried out on U.S. money and for the greater part done by people working for U.S. institutions. The bulk of the literature concerns the administrators and the constitutional and other arrangements whereby the Islands were gathered within the various European empires. Apart from a few mission autobiographies the list is just about completed by a general two volume survey by C. H. Grattan, a tome by A. G. Price entitled *Western Invasion of the Pacific and its Continents* and an account by a reasonably well known novelist who takes the same line as Price. Almost without exception the literature is European centred.

The theme of *Pacific Island Portraits* is the Island cultures in the nineteenth century. The effect of the Europeans was only one of the aspects of Island life. Island leaders King George Tupou I of Tonga, the rival Kings Cakobau and Ma'afu of Fiji, Baiteke and Binoka of the Gilberts, strongman Kwaisulia of the Solomons and conservative Lauaki Namulau'ulu Mamoe of Samoa are seen affecting the flux of Island politics and the power struggles between the various Island states. The overall impression of the centralizing of power and ordering of government resembles somewhat the impressions of Europe at the end of the Middle Ages. Family loyalties and tributary chiefs become mixed up in the ebb and flow of power groupings and social change. The Islanders emerge as neither fools nor backward in grasping every advantage to be gained from Europeans and only the dregs of either culture succumbed to the total degradation of alcohol. On the economic front, the laws of supply and

¹ See review, *A Cruise in a Queensland Labour Vessel to the South Seas*, B. N. Primrose, *Westerly* No. 4 1971.

demand operated in the Pacific as they did in Europe and inflation is shown to be by no means a new phenomenon. The Islanders may have been primitive in terms of the weapons they used but they showed a disturbing tendency to be machiavellian in their politics and an uncomfortable ability to adapt to the new situation. The Europeans who 'invaded' the Islands found that it was only for a brief period they were regarded as gods.

The three interpretive studies covering the beach-combing communities, the planter communities of Fiji, and the labour traders, are used as the means to fit the colonial administrators, consuls and naval officers into the picture. *The establishment is given little attention in the work because*, as the editors note, it has received substantial treatment already. This approach highlights the theme of the assimilation of European and Island cultures. The other Europeans—planters, traders, and beach-combers—took on, to a greater or lesser extent, the life style of the Islands in much the same way as the Islanders adopted elements of the European's life style. The missionaries and to a lesser extent the administrators tended to stand aloof from the assimilation process which lessened their effect on the process. Chapter Seven entitled 'The Evanescent Ascendancy' deals in depth with the planter community, or more exactly the succession of planter communities, in Fiji. It illustrates the veneer-like nature of 'civilization' and shows the conservative influence of European women on the assimilation process.

'Coming as they did within a comparatively short space of time, the new female arrivals had an impact on the community out of all proportion to their numerical strength. As domestic partners they began to demand the standards of dress, behaviour, and housing to which they were accustomed' (p. 154). This was all very well in the boom years when the U.S. Civil War disrupted supplies of American cotton. There was money enough to import prefabricated houses from Sydney. 'The new houses were soon filled with the distinguishing artifacts of Victorian culture. Mats were supplemented by bedsteads, tree-stumps and packing cases gave way to tables and chairs, and empty corners were filled with pianos and glass-fronted book cases' (p. 155). However, the problems of preserving such hardware in a tropical climate

somewhat removed from the nearest french-polisher were never encountered. Piano tuning never became a lucrative occupation. As the price of cotton plunged with the end of the Civil War, the women either left the Islands or drifted into poverty with their menfolk. Many of the planters went back to native women and race relations improved perceptibly.

But it was not only European women who complicated life. Binoka, High Chief of Abemama found women a stumbling-block in his dealings with the missionaries. In 1881 he announced that in order to become a Christian he had discarded all but one of his thirty wives and had formally married the one remaining. 'Subsequent investigation, however, disclosed that he had merely placed them in reserve and he soon called them back, for in point of fact they were not only essential as status symbols, but also to the running of his household, the care of his extensive possessions and, as palace guards, to the very safety of his person' (p. 216). Compared with Solomon's 'seven hundred wives, princesses and three hundred concubines' Binoka seems small-time, but one can sympathise with his problem nevertheless.

Despite their sincerity and sacrifice, the missionaries failed to scratch further below the surface than their brethren were doing at home. This was partly a result of their being so few in number compared to the scattered populations they sought to influence, and partly because they did not really solve the problem of separating fundamental Christianity from their European culture. Bishop Selwyn, for instance, had visions of establishing English as the *lingua franca* of Melanesia. It was not until Patteson was appointed Bishop to Melanesia and linguistic work was commenced that it was realised how unsuitable English was because of the unusual difficulties in spelling and pronunciation experienced by those Melanesians who tried to learn it. The Anglican clergy were opposed to ordaining Island Christians until they were 'two or three generations removed from paganism and, to avoid instituting a special "native ministry" of inferior status, insisted on a theological education comparable with their own' (p. 192). Patteson was one of the earliest to see the problems of this, but, like Livingstone and many other notable Christians in Africa and the Pacific, he held firmly to the view that the religious conversion of a people was only the

first stage of a missionary's work. 'The second, more difficult task was the quiet formation of a new community which would display in its corporate life the truths and moral imperatives of the Christian religion' (p. 194). By 1871 Patteson was beginning to have second thoughts and to realise that the trappings of European culture were an unnecessary burden for Melanesian Christians but the heart-searching over what to put in their place remained. The chapter on Patteson also contains some insights into the Australian clergy. Australian youths were seen as 'very backward' and Patteson was unhappy at having to recruit missionaries in the colonies, as he felt they would take a superior attitude to the Islanders, hold aloof and have little in common with them. He longed for cultured Englishmen to share his labours.

The rise to power of King George Tupou I of Tonga and the uniting of the various factions of the island into one kingdom under his rule has remarkable similarities to Henry VII of England. Without the wholehearted support of the Wesleyan missionaries it is doubtful if he would have been as successful as he was. The missionaries were not slow to realise who would be the future power in Tonga and were wise enough to back the right side. At the same time, Taufa'ahan, as he was known before he took the more regal appellation at his baptism in 1831, though personally convinced of the superiority of the missionary's God over his traditional deities, applied Christianity as a way of life to strengthen his people and unify his kingdom. Having unified it he set about administering it, and ordering its relations with neighbouring island states as well as the Europeans. In 1839, 1850, 1862 and again in 1875 legal codes were promulgated, the latter becoming formally the Tongan Constitution which set up a Declaration of Rights and a Parliament in which nobles and commoners had equal representation. 'Tongan unity was not a mere empty phrase, for King George created among his people a truly national feeling and pride in their country. Tongans with their national pride and sense of independence from political domination never developed the intense anti-European sentiments which have been such a regrettable legacy of colonial rule. The long period of his reign, with the political stability which the rule of law had introduced, greatly strengthened his hand in his tireless and eventu-

ally successful struggle for the recognition of Tonga's sovereignty by the Great Powers; while the other Pacific monarchies crumbled, the Tongan kingdoms survived into the twentieth century. For these reasons his admirers have honoured him as the greatest of Tongans, and styled him the "Grand Old Man of the Pacific" (p. 75).

B. N. PRIMROSE

Kiernan, Brian: *Images of Society and Nature. Seven Essays on Australian Novels*. Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1971. pp. 185. Hard-bound \$8.75, paperback \$5.25.

Brian Kiernan's *Images of Society and Nature: Seven Essays on Australian Novels* is an interesting contribution to Australian literary criticism and, at its best, also an important one. Some of the material has appeared before in various Australian periodicals, but it is skilfully worked into the overall plan of examining the question of a tradition in the Australian novel. The seven essays deal with *Such is Life*, *Capricornia*, *Bring Larks and Heroes*, Henry Handel Richardson, Christina Stead, Patrick White, and "The Australian Novel and Tradition". The best essay, and the best written, is that on *Such is Life*; but Kiernan also writes acutely on *For Love Alone* and on *Voss*, and his final chapter is most interesting. Weakest are his discursive surveys of Richardson and White and his discussion of *Bring Larks and Heroes*. Kiernan's selection of authors and individual books is a good one, though I find it hard to agree that *The Solid Mandala* and especially *The Vivisector* are amongst the highest achievements in Australian fiction. The striking omission in Kiernan's selection is *The Aunt's Story*, along with *Voss* one of White's two masterpieces, and therefore one of the very greatest Australian novels.

As the chapter headings indicate, Kiernan wavers between a survey of an author and a detailed study of a single book. The survey essays on Richardson and White are not well focused but fall into the "Thoughts on ..." kind of critique; the essay on Stead is better, being confined to only two of her novels. Much of the trouble underlying the diffuseness of the survey essays comes from Kiernan's recurrent temptation to fit the Australian novel into the wider European tradition, so that he is led to

discuss works like *Maurice Guest*, *The Getting of Wisdom*, *The Young Cosima*, and *The Vivisector*, which would better have been omitted in a focused discussion of the Australian tradition. Kiernan never does explicitly link these works to the European tradition, but in discussing them he plays loosely with such terminology as *Bildungsroman* and *Künstlerroman*, a terminology that does not easily transfer to English literature and that actually distorts his discussion of such works as *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony* and *The Vivisector*. When *Richard Mahony* is seen as a *Bildungsroman* "extended to take in all of the hero's education in life", the term no longer has much meaning. One sees too little of Hurtle's personal or artistic development, too, for *The Vivisector* to be seen as a *Künstlerroman*; *The Vivisector* is simply one of the White novels that deal with the isolated man of vision, of which the creative artist is one type. Kiernan's essay on Richardson is uncertain of its focus and unsure of what claims to make for her achievement; his compromise, whereby he calls *Richard Mahony* essentially a Victorian novel, is not quite accurate and does not do justice to her very considerable achievement. The essay on White likewise suffers from an unsureness within itself, whether to consider White's novels as "autonomous artistic entities" (unhappy phrase) or to treat common themes that run through them. Kiernan has it both ways.

The essays on the individual books are better. That on *Such is Life* is one of the best interpretations of the work that have appeared. The essay on *Capricornia* is good, but it turns away from a confrontation with Herbert's pessimistic vision, finding a "comic energy" behind it. The discussion of *Bring Larks* suffers from a drawback of Kiernan as a critic, one however that he shares in common with a good many other Australian critics: a psychological naïveté that is expressed in a need to blind himself to unattractive emotional implications of the authors and works he is dealing with and to remove the discussion to the realms of the rational or the moral. Thus he sees *Such is Life* as facing things as they are "with equanimity and an amused awareness . . . of the discrepancy between the ideal and the actual 'suchness' of life"; but H. P. Heseltine was closer to the reality when he discerned a sense of nihilism in the work. Likewise, Kiernan is aware that the world of *Capri-*

cornia is a distorted image of reality, but needs to exculpate Herbert (presumably from charges of sadism and delight in destruction) by protesting that his world is nevertheless a projection of reality. In particular, Kiernan contrives to ignore cruelty and to interpret scenes where it occurs as comic. Thus he finds supremely comic the scene in *The Solid Mandala* where Waldo calls his brother "sir" and whisks him out of the Library. And he writes of Keneally's "exuberant and comic vitality" in *Bring Larks*, quite ignoring the serene brutality that can make one physically ill. *Bring Larks* is discussed in terms of the conflicts between the individual conscience and authority, but in stressing this moral conflict Kiernan overlooks the more important psychological conflict between Halloran's desire for freedom and his unwillingness to take the freedom that is always accessible to him. The freedom that he wants but will not take represents to him—as also to Keneally's other heroes, Maitland and Damian Glover—an independent manhood that he is terrified of asserting; and it is his own weakness and not just the institution that effects his destruction. To the extent that Keneally's preoccupations spring from his personal problems Kiernan has to fail in his attempt to bring Keneally's novel into close relation with the other Australian novels discussed.

The chapter on the Australian tradition is particularly interesting—a challenging but also frustrating subject in that almost every generalization made has to be relinquished. Kiernan is very aware of the dangers of reading the novels as historical or sociological sources and of not reading them sufficiently in terms of what the writers have achieved outside their social environment. He is better at seeing the weaknesses in earlier generalizations than at arriving at fresh ones of his own, but I should point out in his favour that the subject resists generalizations and that Kiernan's are carefully hedged round with wise qualifications. What he finds in common among the Australian novels is an awareness of the failure of society to make possible a relationship between the individual and nature. Kiernan's generalization, like the generalizations of earlier critics, is contestable: I feel that he overstates the importance of nature (which he capitalizes as Nature) in contemporary literature and life. He approaches the novels from the standpoint of a nineteenth

century Romanticism, whereas most recent Australian (and American and British) novels are mainly urban in their concerns. Even in *The Tree of Man*, which Kiernan uses as a prime text in support of his thesis, the theme of closeness to nature is confined to Stan, and dropped one third way through the book. Concern with the individual's relationship to nature does not play a significant part in the works of Patrick White as a whole, or in those of Christina Stead or Keneally. Christina Stead is fascinated by the sea not as an element in the natural environment but as a symbol of the expansiveness of love in contrast to the confinement of a repressed, landlocked society. Keneally shows nature as hostile in accordance with his view of human society as hostile: he is not concerned with society standing in the way of the individual's productive relationship to nature. Generalizations on a tradition within the Australian novel are difficult to maintain; Kiernan's are at least more interesting than most. If an insightful generalization is to be made about the Australian novel, perhaps it is in the direction of the effect of Australian locales and cultural attitudes upon the characters' attitudes and pre-occupations.

Images of Nature and Society is generally well written in a lively style. Nevertheless Kiernan does lapse more often than he might into Academic-ese: a fondness for abstract nouns, some critical jargon, and a love of terminology for its own sake. One finds here and there a sentence like

The novel both creates and is a world of personally charged images, itself a total coherent image of the experience of life (p. 145)

but such a sentence is fortunately rare. His most irritating stylistic mannerism is his fondness for weak "there is" and "there are" constructions as in

There are some debilitating affinities to fable in this conception: there is some oversimplification, and there are some gestures towards a greater representativeness than is justified (p. 149)

but this is a fault easy enough to clear up.

For the essay on *Such is Life* and the last chapter alone, Kiernan's book is a worthwhile acquisition. And there are plenty of bonuses in between.

JOHN B. BESTON

RAYMOND WILLIAMS' RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

With the publication of "From Leavis to Goldmann" (*New Left Review*, 67) the thinking that underlies *Culture and Society* (1958) and *The Long Revolution* (1961) is clearer.

Williams reacted not only against the quantification for its own sake in much Social Science and the Practical Criticism school of literary study but also against the crude reductionism of early Marxist literary criticism in Britain. It was because he found the base-superstructure model inadequate that he explored the term "organism and organization" to replace the false dichotomy "individual and society" that he found to characterize the main stream of English social thought: Utilitarianism and Liberalism. Now that he has discovered George Lukacs and Lucien Goldmann (neither of whom he had read before the publication of *The Long Revolution*), he has been prepared to admit in plain terms how lonely he felt as late as 1961 when attempting to overcome the constricting atmosphere of English literary criticism. He still preserves his term "structure of feeling" but finds in Goldmann new terms to describe that complex relationship between what used to be called literature and society.

Williams looks back at the debate between Leavis's beloved *Scrutiny* and Marxist criticism of the 1930s. *Scrutiny* won and won easily because the Marxists tried to reduce the slightest lilting cadence to the economic base on which it was built. Williams says that he always opposed the oversimplification of this connection. Moreover, he came to view it as a "bourgeois" theory, more specifically as a central position of English Utilitarian thought.

In more general terms, of course, Williams had attacked the emphasis by socialists on the mere machinery of the ideology. Concern for politics and economics was not enough. Williams developed a view of man that included both family and communications structures. Hence his book *Communications*. Williams says that a special emphasis on economics among the Marxists produced a reified view of society—although the term "reification" is apparently taken from Lukacs, Goldmann and sociology in general. It was, then, because Williams saw the danger of overemphasis on one aspect of

society that he tried to develop a view of social totality.

Williams disarmingly admits that he finds it "extraordinary" that he did not know of Lukacs and Goldmann. Both would have been highly relevant to his explorations, especially because they were working within a more conscious tradition and in "less radical an isolation". This is revealing, even poignant. Imagine Williams reading the Americans G. H. Mead, Ruth Benedict and Erich Fromm—with no one to talk to after his exploration.

The English could accept the local microcosm but would rush to label a term like "reification" no better than double Dutch. It was at least partly because the new Social Sciences were still self-consciously talking about being value free that so much was claimed for English in the area of changing human values through history. However, Williams notes, what began in English as the most general kind of claim—a visibly human process centred on the apparently absolute qualities of sincerity and vitality—ended as a self-defining group.

It was unable to withstand the pressures of the very value free assumptions against which it reacted. The "tradition" became a sort of object, a mark that the critic had to attain as an index of his sensitivity and perception. In reality, this masked the valuation, selections and omissions of other men. Again, the history of literature invited the student to study "variations within a static totality". The same applied to the emphasis on genres as if they had an autonomous existence outside social processes of history. This was a stultifyingly academic and ultimately idealist view of art derived down the centuries from Plato. It remains a fact of irony for Williams that Practical Criticism was the method by which literature had been rated as Leavis's famous "central study" in the Humanities. Williams can write now what he only hinted at in *The Long Revolution*.

. . . That word 'sociology' has only to be mentioned, in practical-critical circles, to provoke the last sad look at the voluntary damned.

This is strong sarcasm, even arrogance. In view of the fears, superstitions, rigidities and provincialism that Williams has had to overcome to develop his ideas, some arrogance is probably justified. Perhaps it is no more than the

confidence of a pioneer in the field of Literary Criticism who, unable to discover an area where he could develop his interdisciplinary interests, has, by his own intellect and determination, created that area. (Williams has his own post-graduate students at Cambridge.)

In Britain, of course, there has been no intellectual or academic tradition of sociology, unlike Europe or the United States. Despite this, and perhaps because of it, Williams gratefully admits his debt to European "developed sociology". He has "learned a good deal" since writing *Modern Tragedy* (1966). Moreover, although Williams will not venture to admit this, *Modern Tragedy* can now be seen as a regression from the careful exploratory theorizing of *The Long Revolution* and the complex socio-historic study that reached its finest subtlety in "The Romantic Artist" of *Culture and Society*. In this latter work Williams refused to see a direct casual relationship between the Industrial Revolution and the special claims that Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley made for poetry in particular and art in general. For Williams recognized that democracy was a complicating factor, contributing to the artists' notion of themselves as commodity producers for a mass audience. "From Leavis to Goldmann" is a formal renunciation of crudities such as this from *Modern Tragedy*:

Bourgeois tragedy, as a creative force, faded quickly, in its original forms. In a sense it went underground, was driven there by its own contradictions. The exploring energy re-emerged, in strange ways, in Romantic Tragedy.

In 1971 he could still say that literary studies needs theory. It has not, in the past, explored in any rigorous way the complex social existence of literature. This is why Williams is so interested in pointing out certain important contrasts and similarities between Goldmann's work and his own. Before going to the texts, Goldmann had a "centre, at the level of reasoning" or method of understanding consciousness that Williams lacks. Williams, like Richard Hoggart, starts with the texts and *also* looks at empirical facts. Goldmann's notion of mental structure relating books to other aspects of society was collective. It *contained* the relation between literary and social facts. It did not search for it.

Williams' intuition has been to look at forms of works (as much as content) in relation to other aspects of society. It has been, however, no more than intelligent intuition. Goldmann had been prepared to look at this relationship even when there was no apparent similarity of content. Neither "The Social History of Dramatic Forms" in *The Long Revolution*, *Modern Tragedy* nor *Drama From Ibsen to Brecht* (1968) could have started from such a hypothesis. For Goldmann, then, mental structure could show the organizing principle by which a particular view of the world (and from that, the coherence of the social group which maintained it) really operated in human consciousness. There are two forms of consciousness in the mental structure: actual and possible consciousness. The former is rich and varied but containing all sorts of illusion and delusion; the latter containing maximum coherence. Possible consciousness is limited objectively to what a particular social group of people can produce before they change into another group. Thus, by definition, Goldmann was not concerned with just an analysis of structures but also with their historic formation and process. He called this genesis of consciousness.

Most sociology of literature deals with the relations between ordinary or popular literature and actual consciousness. The new sociology of literature, however, would concern itself with more than correspondences of content and "background"—a term Williams had already disparaged—more than overt relations between writers and readers, such as ethnic group, religion, class or life style. In what evaluative criticism has always termed "great" literature, the new sociology would study the organizational principles and categories that give the works "their strictly literary quality". This, from one of the literary sociologists that practitioners of traditional kinds of Literary Criticism have refused to take seriously for so long.

Williams had found the idea of world view or background inadequate because relationships between it *and* the literature were difficult to reconcile. Williams:

Indeed I myself had to spend many years getting away from it, in the form in which I found it presented.

Williams says that the world view is often ordinary consciousness and, as well, it is often a

more organized summary of doctrines than most people of a particular period could have perceived. It was in response to this verdict on the notion of world view that Williams developed his perception "structure of feeling" in *The Long Revolution*. Williams' restatement of his position is, perhaps, clearer than anything that he has previously said on this point. He had found relatively organized formations of relationships in contemporary institutions and beliefs. In the "greatest" literature he had found, however, that there was a simultaneous realization of *and response to* these underlying and formative structures. This was, in fact, the imaginative act.

On reading Goldmann, then, Williams has been confirmed in his intuition that creative acts are not just biographically explicable but compose, within an historic period, a specific community. Their *collective subject* is visible in the structure of feeling and demonstrable, above all, in fundamental changes of form which precede actual recognizable changes of organized institutions. Of course Williams does not say *change* but *precede*. Art is an experience of social change, an ordered and transmittable articulation of the feeling of lived consequence.

Williams feels, then, that what he had tried to describe as formal consciousness and new creative practice might be clearer if called actual and possible consciousness. However, Williams sees a major difficulty for Lukacs and Goldmann. They are perhaps most useful with major changes in society such as the replacement of one class by another. More particular changes "within a bourgeois society" may have to be given what can be called "micro-structural analysis".

Thus, although Williams will now feel more sure of himself in working with the concept of mental structures of which changing forms of literature are the best index, he will not explore at the methodological level to the exclusion of any particular work. It is his belief that the necessary defeat of crude Marxist reductionism in the '30s in Britain damaged literary and social study because what followed was more than division of labour.

. . . It is a way of avoiding the reality of the interpenetration, in a final sense the unity, of the most individual and the most social forms of actual life.

GRAHAM ROWLANDS

J. S. Western and Colin A. Hughes, *The Mass Media in Australia*: University of Queensland Press, 1971. \$6.50.

As Western and Hughes rightly stress, in their introductory chapter, Australian political scientists and sociologists have lagged behind their British and American colleagues in conducting research into the social and political role of the so-called 'mass media', that is, the press, television and radio. Thus, the work done to date, by writers such as Henry Mayer and Sprague Holden, (the press), and Ian Mackay and Ross Curnow, (radio), has been concerned primarily with the structure and organisational history of the mass media. There have also been a few experimental studies concerned with the social influence of television, based on samples taken in particular cities, and some brief essentially impressionistic commentaries contained in multi-author publications on Australian society, such as that by K. S. Inglis in Peter Coleman's 'Australian Civilisation'. However, nothing produced in this country has rivalled the research carried out elsewhere by such writers as P. F. Lazarsfeld and J. T. Klapper.

Western and Hughes are doubtless correct in asserting that there is currently concern felt in Australia, though whether "widely felt" or not is a moot point, as to the influence exerted on Australian society by the mass media. They suggest that, as in other countries, such concern may be attributed to six interrelated sources, identified by the 1969 British Television Research Committee, as follows:

First, a fear of the mass media's ubiquity and potential manipulative powers; secondly, a possibility that economic pressure groups can use control of the mass media to induce conformity to the social, economic and political 'status quo'; thirdly, a danger that the mass media, in adapting to a wide audience, may undermine 'critical standards'; fourthly, a belief that the mass media may work in a direction counter to that being followed by groups attempting to achieve social reform; fifthly, a suspicion that the mass media may induce habits of 'passivity' or 'dependency' in some users, or a tendency to violence and delinquency in others; and sixthly, a concern lest the mass media, by 'trivialising' important social and political issues, may work against the preservation of an active 'participatory democracy'.

Unfortunately, no serious attempt has yet been made in Australia to answer most of these questions, which are certainly of considerable interest to many Australians, and Hughes and Western do not go so far as to attempt to break the drought in this respect. Rather, they content themselves with providing what they deem to be an essential part of the preliminary groundwork which apparently must be done before more ambitious research should be attempted. Thus, they undertake a compilation and analysis of the answers obtained in a sample survey conducted in 1966. This survey aimed at producing data which would indicate: first, the extent of adult Australians' exposure to the mass media; secondly, which medium is preferred, and for what purposes; and thirdly, how users evaluated the media, specifically, from the viewpoint of attention devoted by the media to various forms of political information, (whether local, national or international), the media's treatment of the main political parties, and the performance of each medium as to speed, completeness and intelligence of news coverage, contribution to a clearer understanding of political issues and party leaders, and general community service.

Thus, Western and Hughes were essentially involved in a painstaking exercise in statistical analysis, related to the sample's responses to a series of questions not previously asked in Australia in such a systematic fashion. Their sample was selected so as to be numerically proportional to the population of each state at the time and, within each state, so as to accurately represent capital city, provincial town and rural populations. Although the 35 to 54 age-group, Anglicans and males were over-represented, while the 21 to 34 age-group, females and the rural population were under-represented, there is no obvious reason why these imbalances, which were not substantial, should lead one to question the validity of the findings. Further, the occupational, educational and political groupings employed in order to facilitate statistical analysis seem to be quite logical and unexceptionable.

The publishers of 'The Mass Media in Australia' claim that the book will be of considerable interest not merely to political scientists and sociologists, but also to journalists, advertising agents, market researchers, public relations consultants and political party officials. However, this reviewer must confess to some

degree of doubt as to whether many of the findings will be of great value to such people. This may be partly because the questions asked are often of a kind which will inevitably lead to rather mundane answers, merely serving to confirm conclusions which many people would have reached without the aid of sophisticated statistical analyses and mathematical techniques.

For example, this reviewer has never doubted that the great majority of adult Australians have access to at least one daily newspaper, nor that they watch television for several hours on most evenings. Again, we might have guessed that white-collar workers with tertiary education are more likely to read 'quality' newspapers than are manual workers with little or no secondary education. Nor is it surprising to be told that readers of 'quality' newspapers tend to be more interested in political news than do readers of the 'popular' press, and that persons belonging to the professional-managerial category are more interested in international news than are other sectors of the population.

Of course, many of the authors' findings are above this somewhat mundane level, although possibly of limited utility to party officials and public relations consultants. Thus, contrary to conventional wisdom, perhaps, it appears that Australians tend to read their newspapers more for the sake of 'news' than sport, 'women's features' or comics, while Australians in the over-35 age group are more 'news-hungry' than their younger compatriots. In the case of television preferences, news programmes are actually more sought after than are crime and 'drama'. In general, a majority of the respondents considered that Australian television channels gave insufficient coverage to all types of political news.

Hughes and Western are led to the not unexpected conclusion that the same sort of people tend to read 'quality' newspapers, to be interested in international news, to listen to the ABC radio news and to prefer 'current affairs' programmes on television. This prompted a question as to whether there was "some consistent patterning of media taste which reflected an underlying dimension". In seeking to answer this question, they utilise the concept of the 'cosmopolitan' individual as contrasted with the 'local'.

A 'cosmopolitan', as defined by Western and

Hughes, is simply "a person with wide-ranging interests . . . whose concerns are more with the wider environment than the local scene . . . whose main interest in the press was in international affairs, who preferred the quality to the popular press, who preferred ABC radio and television to the commercial variety and who chose informative programmes, rather than entertainment on television". It was found that cosmopolitans were most common among the over 55 age-group, and that education level was probably the most significant determinant.

The authors demonstrate that cosmopolitanism constitutes an important intervening variable in determining a user's evaluation of media performance and preferences, a variable which may often be more significant in this respect than the individual's degree of political partisanship. Thus, cosmopolitans tended to evaluate the performance and utility of the press more highly than that of television, on such criteria as speed, completeness and intelligence of news coverage and general service to the community, whilst locals tended to the opposite view. Given that a majority of 'floating' voters were found to be cosmopolitan, it might be thought, therefore, that the press exerts a substantial influence over the outcome of Australian elections. However, one must bear in mind, too, the findings that both cosmopolitan and locals appear to base their evaluation of party leaders on television performance. This is obviously a worthwhile field for further research.

In their final chapter, Western and Hughes devise a model of media use and evaluation, stressing that 'model' is taken to mean "a representation of the pattern of relationships that have been identified", and that this particular model is concerned with "a quite restricted range of concepts, which are tied quite closely to a set of empirical observations, and the statistical relationships that exist between them". Employing various mathematical techniques with great dexterity, insofar as this non-numerate reviewer is competent to judge, the authors confirm and link their earlier findings, concerning the pattern of relationships existing between their set of independent variables, (age, sex, birthplace, residence, education, occupation, partisanship); their intervening variable, (cosmopolitanism); and their set of dependent variables, relating to the individual's media preferences and evaluation of media performance.

The general conclusion reached is that the press is still favoured by the better educated, those of high socio-economic status, those who are "somewhat older", and those who "pay the most attention to current events". On this basis, it is predicted that the Australian press seems to be "reasonably assured of a stable role in the business of mass communications for some time to come", given that the next decade or so will see "great availability of post-secondary education of all kinds, the likely growth of the middle-classes, and increased involvement in the affairs of state". Hence, it is asserted, reasonably

enough, that "we may perhaps all be living in a global village, but for the time being we seem unlikely to be electronically connected".

Although readers may find it reassuring to have their long-held assumptions on such matters confirmed by exhaustive statistical analysis, this reviewer was left with the hope that the authors, together with other Australian specialists in 'mass communications', will pursue research projects which may illuminate some of those vital problems so aptly pinpointed by the British Television Research Committee in 1969.

R. P. L. HOWIE



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