



Philip Tyler
The *Batavia* Wreck

Hal Colebatch
The Abortion of the Bill

stories
poems

WESTERLY

THE
UNIVERSITY
BOOKSHOP

AT THE UNIVERSITY, NEDLANDS
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Specialists in the Service and
Supply of University Text Books
and organised for obtaining any
work of Literature published
overseas.

FOR PROMPT ATTENTION - - RING 86 5578
86 5579

westerly

No. 2, July, 1970

THE GLASS BRIDGE	5	<i>Michael Wilding</i>
OUTINK TO UNCLE'S PLACE	15	<i>Elizabeth Jolley</i>
IDIOT KID	20	<i>Fairlie Apperly</i>
THE GIRL FROM THE FAMILY OF MAN	25	<i>Frank Moorhouse</i>
POSSESSIONS	32	<i>Shirley Cass</i>
RAW SPIRIT	12	<i>Peter Loftus</i>
STRANDLOPERS	14	<i>Kendrick Smithyman</i>
THE LAST OF GAMES	23	<i>Bruce Dawe</i>
ONE STORMY NIGHT	24	<i>Hal Colebatch</i>
PAINT OUT THE BARS	36	<i>Thomas Shapcott</i>
BOYS AT PLAY	40	<i>Leon Slade</i>
BALTASSAR	41	<i>John Griffin</i>
CHICKEN	42	<i>Fay Zwicky</i>
LAY-BY	44	<i>T. F. Kline</i>
TWO LOVELY GIRLS COME KNOCKING	45	
WATERMELON MAN	46	<i>Vicki Viidikas</i>
OWL	48	<i>Noeline Burtenshaw</i>
IMPOTENCE OF THE INTELLECTUAL	75	<i>Stewart Candlish</i>
THE WRECK OF THE BATAVIA	49	<i>Philip Tyler</i>
THE ABORTION OF THE BILL	63	<i>Hal Colebatch</i>
ENDPIECE	69	<i>Andrew Burke</i> <i>David Ball</i> <i>Leon Slade</i>
PHOTOGRAPHY		<i>Hugh Edwards</i> <i>Fritz Kos</i>

Photographs for The Wreck of the *Batavia* by courtesy
The University of Western Australia.

westerly

a quarterly review

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE: *Bruce Bennett, Peter Cowan, John Hay,
Patrick Hutchings, Leonard Jolley, Margot Luke.*

ADVISORY COMMITTEE: *Professor Mervyn Austin, Mary Durack,
Professor Allan Edwards, Nigel Prescott.*

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE: *Eric J. Edwards (Chairman),
Keith V. Benwell, Leonard Jolley.*

Westerly is published quarterly by the University of Western Australia Press, with assistance from the Commonwealth Literary Fund. The opinions expressed in *Westerly* are those of individual contributors and not of any member of the above Committees.

Correspondence should be addressed to the Editorial Committee, *Westerly*, Department of English, University of Western Australia, Nedlands, Western Australia (telephone 86 2481 or 86 5531). Unsolicited manuscripts not accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope will not be returned. All manuscripts must show the name and address of the sender and should be typed (double-spaced) on one side of the paper only. Whilst every care is taken of manuscripts, the Editorial Committee can take no final responsibility for their return; contributors are consequently urged to retain copies of all work submitted. Payment will be made for all contributions published.

Subscriptions: \$2.40 per annum, plus postage (Australasia 40c, Overseas 80c per annum). Single copies mailed: 70c. Subscriptions should be made payable to "The University of Western Australia", and sent directly to The Bursar, University of Western Australia, Nedlands, Western Australia.

Synopses of literary articles published in *Westerly* appear regularly in *Abstracts of English Studies* (published by the American National Council of Teachers of English).



University of Western Australia Press

THE GLASS BRIDGE

In the mirror her arms stretched up and her hands clasped on top of her head formed an interesting composition: a circle, containing a smaller circle of her head touching its inner circumference, and the two smaller circles of breasts touching it tangentially; and the upper circle of her head containing the two brown globes of her eyes, the two lower circles of her breasts each centred on its nipple's brown disk. It was like a moment's stasis before each wheel should revolve within and around each other, rolling centrally or circumferentially; or if the larger circle of her arms were, like her eyes, less round than ovoid, the movements would be subtler, elliptical.

She unknit her hands, parting the globe like a tulip opening, and her brown hair showered down to her shoulders, cascading down her neck and back, running rivulets from her shoulders to her breasts. She toyed with strands that slid over her nipples, curling them like hooks, making hairy sockets that her nipples poked through, blind eyes in furry brows. She twisted a noose of hair round her throat and then loosed that too, rubbing its spread and parted strands against her neck. The only light was a small bedside one that did not shine directly in the mirror; in the shadowyness her body was reflected a clear white, the hair making streaks of black emptiness like the background of the image.

When she had brushed her hair and put on a bra and sweater, she went across to the window and looked out. Sometimes, at night, late at night, she would look out naked, ledging her breasts on the window sill. But in the early evening too many people might be walking past and looking up; she did not want to know that she was seen, but to receive silently the white light of the sodium street lamp or the moon.

It was not a wide street, and most of the shops were low. Much was still half timbered, and some of the plain plastered facades concealed old external beams. For a mile it stretched, once the main street of the town, reduced to one way traffic now and shops of fishing tackle and second hand furniture. At night, waiting for her to get ready to go for a coffee somewhere, Trevor or Carter would stand on the pavement across the road: Trevor pacing up and down, his hands deep in his overcoat pockets, walking impatiently to the street's end where heavy lorries and big cars swept past on the main road. He would stand, dazzled by headlights, deafened by the motors after the quiet of that street, watching them driving through the night; and then would turn back, and impatiently pace again along the pavement: Carter, wearing only a jacket, swinging his arms round his

chest in great flailing beats to keep warm, like a mechanical scarecrow, the thuds as his hands drummed his rib cage audible in her room on still, frosty nights.

Nobody was waiting tonight across the road or outside the door; but she was worried that someone might be, worried that Carter might be hidden in a doorway, concealed in the lips of a lightless alley. She looked behind her as she walked, glancing round at shadows; shapes might be merged with creosoted beams, or standing flush with the edges of overhanging balconies. The balconies were low in that old street. Shallow shop doorways whose entrance was not a step but a slope, a trapezoid dropping down to and widening at the pavement, could hold a body like a coffin. She was frightened of cyclists approaching her and not confident that some might not come from behind along the one way street.

She walked with long strides, missing pavement cracks but touching the no parking poles as she passed them, just trickling the finger tips of her right hand against them. Her profile was reflected in some of the shop windows. Her hair curled round her neck inside her coat.

From behind, her hips did not sway much. She would turn, look over her shoulder, all the time walking quickly, her shadow stretching out back behind her, and drawing in to her, to reach out in front, as she passed beneath the street lights. The shadows were like arms, whose hands were reaching beneath her skirt, and would pull her down to the pavement and hold her there.

Alleys were labelled, cast iron plaques moulded for No. 3 Court, No. 5 Court like street signs. Paved with black bricks they led to slums, led to gravel paths with grass and dandelion and shepherd's purse and dead nettle connecting houses, shacks, in which people lived, somewhere behind there. She had never walked along those courts.

In second hand shops huge chamber pots and meshed fire guards cluttered the windows; others were filled with coal scuttles and upright chairs. And there were shops now closed, one with three paperback westerns in a window empty but for dust and spiders and dead flies, the pages curled and browned from rare sun; others with windows pasted over with newspapers or blocked with cardboard, padlocks secured on door hasps. At the street's median point and only intersection, she turned quickly into the corner coffee bar, the juke box reassuring after the soundless street.

Trevor was sitting at a table alone downstairs, near the stairs, looking up the stairs and girls' skirts. He always remembered a story about a glass bridge he had been told by a girl in an orchard he was working in, while she picked apples from a ladder above him.

He pictured the glass bridge, fine and delicate and stretching a huge slender arc over a deep gorge. He would sit in the mud flats looking up at the constant procession of women walking from one end of the bridge to the other, all wearing tight sweaters and short skirts and no pants; he wasn't sure whether to think of them as pants or panties. The sky would be blue shining with clarity through the translucent glass. He would need a telescope, the gorge was so deep.

All the girls here were very young drinking coffee, putting coins in the narrow slit of the juke box. A lot of them wore tight sweaters, and most miniskirts. He sat alone, as it looked more cinematic that way. He smoked, and ashed his cigarette and stirred the sugar bowl, shifting avalanches of sand over the grooves of railway tracks he had scoured, obliterating them, then gouging new ones.

Perhaps I am a gouger, he thought. He was not introspective, but he liked finding descriptions for himself.

He was tempted to put his hand up Diana's skirt as she came down the stairs; but he did not succumb. He liked the word succumb, puzzling over how really to

pronounce it. He often filled in time by toying with it on his tongue, spreading it along his lips.

'Didn't you get a coffee?' he asked.

'I wasn't sure whether you'd be here, so I thought I'd look down here first,' she said. 'I didn't want to get a coffee and find Carter here.'

She undid her coat and sat at his table. He wished he had worn shades, so that he could have raised his right hand and with forefinger and thumb have gripped the frame's latitudinal extremities and lowered them to the end of his nose and then looked over them at her. But to wear shades at night was too ostentatious in this city. He looked at her without them.

Her hair lay on her sweater that lay on her bra that lay on her breasts. Unless she was wearing that topless bra. He would pinch her nipples when they were in the street.

She looked round the cellar to make sure Carter was not there. The walls were roughcast concrete; the lights were very dim, except for an illuminated mural of Rome or somewhere, a blown up black and white photograph extended on a wall and floodlit from below like an aquarium, all in a glass case. Carter might be hidden amongst the shades—clamped against a pillar or crouched over a table.

They played kneesies.

He had not known any of the girls to talk to, anyway, so it had been easier to sit alone. Listening to the music which was very loud unsoftened by the bare walls he drank his coffee. He watched limbs and appendages descend the stairs—a leg here there a breast, a lower arm, a severed foot, twin breasts, half a white thigh—the extremities and adjuncts of soft bodies like a necrophiliac's Guernica. He felt as randy as a meat axe. He pictured it.

Then he said, 'I feel as randy as an eel. I can't bear this place. This place just sets me off. It's like swimming up a culvert to lay elvers and never seeing the light, getting in a sewer, with your neck wedged through a grid and unable to get out.

'Let's go to the *Jolly Huntsman*,' he said.

They left the unladen elvers and argued outside. He felt it was the frustration of the place, so many girls, sitting around the walls. It made him desperate, he argued. He had to go to the *Jolly Huntsman*, after being there.

'But you can't,' she said, 'you know we can't. Carter'll kill you.'

'Carter won't kill me.'

'He bloody well might.'

'He might too.' He pondered the sentence. He liked the word ponder. He diverted himself with it, its sound, its shape, its etymology.

They walked slowly along the second half of the street. He kept his hands in his trouser pockets, perhaps for fear that Carter might be watching and see him put his arm around her. He swung slightly from side to side, pivoting inward on the ball of his foot at each step, as if idly kicking a stone or inventing a dance, thinking, indecisive, rather than walking anywhere. Though he walked in the direction he wanted to go.

On this last evening she would have liked to have gone to a quiet snug, one of those still remaining bars that could hold only half a dozen people and that now were usually empty. They could have sat there, each side of a small round table with their knees touching, his trousers rasping against the mesh of her stockings; or side by side on a straight backed settle, their thighs side by side. As the dark wood of the table and chairs and bench sweated, oozed tackily in the dark and secret room. And they could have poked heads through the hatch over the half door to the bar, tapped coins on the hatch shelf or frame to attract the balding stumpy landlord's attention from the other bar where he was talking to the few

regulars. Without leaving that street, they could have sat in several snugs like that, alone, the soft plop of darts, the tiny tinkle of glasses the only sounds, seeping in from the public bar. And they would have been undisturbed as, facing him, she leant down, her breast resting on the soft dark wood, her hand reaching beneath the table top to work along his thigh.

But he could visualise only the *Jolly Huntsman*, image himself standing before the plastic hops girding the bar, the concealed lighting defining his face in bold light and dark, and around him on stools and behind him serving, laughter and talk and gouts of sex fountaining up with the explosion of mirth at a joke, plunging and spraying down round the cleavages clear and smooth in the low cut tight black dresses of the three barmaids.

'The Three Graces,' said a haulage contractor who'd had a private education.

'The Three Faces,' said someone he was standing next to, who hadn't.

(Trevor looked round quickly in case it had been Carter who had attempted a witticism.)

But everyone knew the faces weren't what they wanted at the *Jolly Huntsman*.

(Carter was likely to be there, but when they walked in they went slowly, to see and perhaps draw back, and he wasn't.)

The snug in the *Jolly Huntsman* had been pulled down in the renovations, and no one there merely rubbed knee caps now. It had been old, and dark, and gloomy, and low roofed, and figured in the Civil War—or events of the Civil War were featured near by. Because of that figuring or those events, its shell had been preserved, and its roof was still low, its beams still temple height. Tall men had to bob like corks in a champagne bath a couple of times between the door and the bar.

And then the atmosphere had been carpeted, the gloom softened by dim lights, and three barmaids had been brought down from Brummagem, their breasts as full as Nell Gwynn's oranges, bosoms by the basketful.

When Norma pulled her beer she leant over and showed her deep white cleavage, so white against her formal black dress that the young chartered accountants and the middle-aged haulage contractors and doubtful businessmen salivated. You could not tell whether she wore a bra; perhaps a hidden topless, strapless one. If she leaned over too far her high black bouffant hair would block the vision, and you would need to step slightly to one side, and the angle would still be wrong; and she would be smiling when she straightened up, handing over the beers. Norma was the manageress, and very young.

Trevor leant on his left elbow on the bar, sideways to it, and Diana leant on her right elbow on the bar, facing him. He had his back to the door, she watched it in case Carter should come in.

'I went to see *West Side Story*,' Trevor said.

She did not ask who with.

'I was bloody terrified, all those knives. Christ, when you've got some goon threatening to pull a knife on you, it's not funny on the flicks any more.'

He drew designs with spilt drops of beer: heads and bosoms in a row, till the beer was used. Then he connected the nipples by pistons, smearing the blobs into connecting rods, coupling the bosoms like the driving wheels of steam locomotives: shunting engines, 0-6-0s. Were 0-6-0s shunting engines? He couldn't remember. He would look the next morning when he was at the station.

'We shouldn't have come here,' she said, 'he's bound to come.'

'He's not bound to do anything, except be a prick whatever he does. Whoever he does,' he added, to make her wince, which she didn't, to make his point, which he felt he didn't. 'And besides,' he went on, looking across the bar and half turning to where Norma was pulling beer, 'I like it here.'

She didn't especially, but she didn't resentfully point out the resentfulness of his tone. He would be gone tomorrow; that was why he wanted, he insisted, an evening where he wanted to be, not holed up like a rabbit in some warren of a pub.

He watched Norma pull beer, turning his head. The man she was pulling it for leant over the bar too, as if to sniff at her bosom, and she leant lower, pushing forward her shoulders so that the front of her dress hung further from her breasts, and as he leant lower, she reached up a hand to touch her ear, unclipping her earring, and pinching it on to her admirer's lobe.

Laughter spurted and laughing herself she spilt some beer on her legs, drawing backwards from the glass she held, so that all of her bosom perhaps could have been seen, with her body bent almost parallel with the bar; her admirer was too taken with the earring to crane over, though, putting up a hand to fondle it, probing a thick finger through the plastic loop that it was.

'Bugger it,' she said, and when she had put the glass on the bar she shook the beer off her hands and brushed her shin and thigh where it had spilt, and called Chris, who was blonde and big and at the moment collecting up empty glasses to take over the bar; and with the beer spilling her excuse, she came round the front, and leant on the bar on her right elbow, her bottom next to Trevor's, and the man she was facing offered to buy her a drink, which she accepted and Chris poured her a gin.

'Some rotten bastard went and pinched one of the guns,' Norma told the man she was facing.

And Trevor, to whom she was backing, said to Diana, 'There's only one nut who'd steal one of those bloody flintlocks.'

'What?' she asked, 'whose flintlock?'

'From the wall,' he said, nodding with his head to the antiquarian relics of the Civil Wars hooked up. A gun had been lifted the previous evening. He tried to hear the rest of what Norma was saying, but her bottom rubbed against his and the ecstasy of that occupied his whole being. It was as if he had suddenly been trepanned, from beneath, and had an epiphany of beatitude there in the *Jolly Huntsman*, composed of:

her tight buttocks brushing across his
buxom Chris whom he'd once asked out to coffee but
who couldn't make it that night and whom he never did get round to, he now
regretted, taking anywhere

the antique breastplates and firearms
the subdued lighting
the petty spivs and would be crooks (they can both go on one line)
and her tight buttocks brushing across his.

All this he would bitterly miss, he knew, yet the chill of that realisation gave the moment an added frisson.

'It's because it's so provincial,' he said to Diana, omitting the more metropolitan buttock rubbing, 'so utterly provincial through and through, that it's so right. It's the phoniest,' he said, eyelids dropped entranced.

But it was Diana who was left to live in it. Perhaps if she had been asked she would have gone to Singapore or Sydney or San Francisco: perhaps not; perhaps now she would go to London. For half an hour she thought of her future, while he spoke to her of what he would do when he returned if he did from his exile, sensual tremors shaking those stretches of uncleared bush, ghost gums shimmering in silent undulations as Norma's bottom slid across his, surges seeking rifts and cracks through which to rise, quiet gullies in which to lie.

When the only nut who would steal a flintlock came in, Trevor still had his back to the door, his arse to Norma. But Norma, her arse to Trevor, saw the door pushed open, no one at first entering, and then a gun held by a hand pointed by an outstretched arm.

'There's the bastard who pinched the flintlock,' she said, her voice high and excited and indignant at the theft of her decoration, her arm suddenly shooting to point at him, who was still concealed behind the door. At which, with a wavering arm, he shot. Norma and Diana screamed, and Trevor's arse was suddenly cold.

No one really saw the barrel explode and no camera was there to freeze the details, slivers of iron soaring, turning, tearing into Carter's hand. Simply an explosion was heard, a smudgy cloud puffed out, and Carter stood watching his ripped fingers. He dropped the fragment of gun, muffled on the carpet, and turned, running through the door that swung to soundlessly after him, his lacerated hand dripping blood. The man Norma had been facing ran in pursuit, his shiny shoes slipping initially as he accelerated from stasis, and, striking his head on the low beam, fell stunned.

'Quick, come on,' said Trevor.

Diana resisted, but he grabbed her by the arm and they ran into the street, ducking beneath the beam, stumbling on the felled man, beside whom Norma crouched, her pencil skirt riding smoothly up her stockinged thighs, and taut over her protruding, balancing bottom. She called to Chris to bring a tray of ice from the fridge.

'What about him?' asked Diana.

'Bugger him, let's get out,' and outside they stopped, balanced, on the pavement to see which way the bloodspurts went. 'We'll get the car up here and chase him,' he shouted to anyone who could hear, though probably they were all tending the felled man, and then ran to the street's end, dragging Diana with him, the way Carter's bloodstains did not lead.

At his flat he asked for the taxi to wait a couple of minutes. She stood on the footpath in wonder, islanded among the pavement slabs.

'Why?' she said; and he more lip read than heard her above the taxi's steady motor.

'Look,' he said, putting his hand round her back, moving it down to her arse, regretting the loss of Norma, 'look, you can, if you care to, explain to the cops why he was taking a pot shot at us; I, however, have a plane to catch. I'm not getting mucked up by that sex crazed lunatic.'

And his hand still slipped over her arse, when he had opened the door and was up the stairs, two and a stumbled three at a time. When she reached his room, he was ready to leave. His baggage was packed anyway, only his electric razor and his toothbrush and his vitamin pills had to be flung into a case.

'But,' she began.

He switched off the light, but the bed's image stayed on her retina—or the light shaped like the bed—in blue then yellow then orange then red then mauve till it decomposed into the black background. He pulled her out of the room.

She came to the station with him, stood on the platform for the minutes before the train left.

'What a muck up of a last evening; but you could always catch the train and spend the night in London with me,' he offered, standing on the platform, looking at the slotted iron steps above him, the footbridge crossing the line.

She stood there wondering. She could borrow money off him for the fare, she had no need to go back to her room. She would lose her job the next day because

she would not get back in time to work; especially if cops came looking for her when she was away.

He didn't insist; he let her make up her own mind; the last evening had come to an end suddenly, but the train trip was the beginning of the first morning. He regretted it ending so hastily, but he had no enthusiasm for prolonging it now.

'I regret leaving Norma's bottom, too,' he said.

'It's not that marvellous to look at,' she said.

'You reckon? It's lovely to rub against though; I wish I'd known before.'

'You were rubbing against it, were you?' she asked.

His eyes came subterraneously through the shifting desert dunes, muffled beneath swaying gum trees and shading palms. She thought back to the movements of his thighs as he had faced her, the rhythmic shifting of his weight from leg to leg.

'You crummy bastard,' she said; but he was thinking already of the skirts taut across the crutches of air hostesses; of bikinis pulled off by the force of the southern surf.

And when they kissed finally through the open window, his hands reached only to her shoulders and hair, and her crutch could at best press against the cold carriage door. And that moment passed too; pistons began to pump, wheels to move on steel, and she returned to undress in the white light of the moon and the sodium street lamps.

RAW SPIRIT

Cameras closing in on bored koalas
Wombats shambling in their cowls of mould
While cool grey men dole out stale leaves
Across the adequate fence.
And a dozen lizards
Scattered on a pan of dust
Like scraps of rind.

The tourists amble through pared grounds
Iceblocks leaking violet paste
Deciduous ladies cradle borrowed bears
And wince at the infallible lens
The claws like clamps on their starched breasts
And lathered arms.

An emu by the ticket midden
Stares from its rusty quills.

The haze of summer Sundays
And their drab delights
Shifts its blue breath
Across the careful signposts
And the shreds of flesh
That Visitors and Fauna both inherited
From some dark wound in time
To cover up the alleyways
And lukewarm pipes
Each knot of gristle
The incumbent shroud of blood
Under a dome of skin.

The colour of flesh is a pale boast
When it peers at the afternoon
In its raw mortality
From cage or box
Or under its load of hair
Between chrome shanks
And plastic foam
Or the various pastel cements
Above the shadow of bone.

Across the level of minced lawn
A prim veneered and pearl
Wide scullion of a stall
Leers at the sun
As its cold fudge

And cellophane fluids
Melt and sidle
In drains and dust.

The long and the short
And fat freckles
Stroll from the hot park
And ease their thighs
Under laces of pink steel
And tin cups
And the rubber cogs of their destinies
Out onto long roads
Like strings of tar
And the odd bubble.

And the birds
And grey bears
Settle in gloom.

But at the bottom of the steep drive back
To the city's neon threats
Beside the one bad corner
Where a wattle stands
Under its sprays of gold
And dark gums rise like weathered beams
In a deep drift of green
Forged on this summer day
An image of the tidal fire
Burning from age to age—
By the post with its phosphorus tab
A brace of yellow eyes
Blaze from a curd of red bones, fur
And one precise wide stain.

PETER LOFTUS

STRANDLOPERS

Few miles further we could be
taking off, like old spirits dried tough
in a smoke of feudal ancestors.
They reached from obligation, to the tree
which freed men to go down only
a few miles further north.

We do not lose direction.
Time, as a measured stance, you leave behind
except as the sun inclines.
We play at departing, tasteless
gritty pieces on a tongue of sand
who are not swallowed up or gulped down
nor get spat out, gobs of sweat, bone,
gristle churned in the supernal mouth
of the Dog. Rank as paired lions
on a seascape colour of lion pelt
we are thankful, for shade of a rock face.
We doze, fancying that Rousseau,
le douanier, creates us to some thematic moment
which will have us imaginably matched
with kelp, flax blades, larks' endless singing,
ochrish headland upon which concerts
a band of young Belted Galloway bulls.

Noon burns off responsibility
like old grass from rough grazing.
You change, into appetites.
This sand was highway of the *taua*;
but the country belongs to harriers, *kahu*,
to *kotare* the kingfisher and to larks
whose song thickens midday's air.

On spinifex tableland, a dune top,
bleached past whiteness it rose, blunt as a femur.
Patiently I worked it bare, osseous matter
crumbling as packed grains dribbled away.
We have taken the path to Reinga.
The dune's brow sweated, and the drops were
ovenstones that scattered the slope;
the dune was a head that wailed
where tears lay as long as bone flakes.
Above, hawks coasted, patiently turning.

KENDRICK SMITHYMAN

“OUTINK TO UNCLE’S PLACE”

“How can a man get tired of his food,” Uncle Bernard said at the evening meal. Because of the draught he wore his hat indoors, his white hair showing like a bandage beneath the brim.

Every evening we ate a plateful of macaroni, Uncle Bernard sorted out the packets in his sales case and used a soiled or damaged one. He cooked it in boiling salty water. Already I disliked the macaroni, it bored me and I sighed as I took up my fork, and I could not help complaining.

“Spik English please”, Uncle Bernard said. “Eat!” he said. “Is Good!”

“I gotta get a job” I said and sighed again.

“Yes”, he said. “You gotta. But Eat all the same!”

“I try everyding and there is notting, always notting.”

For a time Bernard did not speak, he just sat there eating. I felt again the bleakness of the ugly room as I had been feeling it for days. It seemed as if I had not had a good night’s sleep since I arrived. I had not expected it to be so cold. Cold air seeped through the thin walls and cold fingers of damp stroked my face all night and I lay uneasily on the edge of sleep. And somehow in the noise of the rain on the roof I seemed to hear my Mother’s voice talking up and down.

When I lay in bed, long ago at home, I could hear my Mother’s voice like a stream running as she talked up and down to my Father. And every now and then my Father’s voice was like a boulder in the way of the stream, and for a moment the water swirled and paused and waited and then rushed on round the boulder and I heard my Mother talking on, up and down.

In these nights of cold and pouring rain and the half remembered voices I experienced painfully the bitterness of homesickness.

“Back home in Holland—” I began, Uncle Bernard raised his fork in warning.

“We got nice room here,” he interrupted. “Beds, stove, cupboard.” He waved his fork in a generous movement. “And Food,” he said. “Eat!”

“Every place I go for job,” I said. “Is gone!” I snapped my fingers to show how quickly prospects disappeared.

“We got nice Room,” Uncle Bernard said. “You find Job. So!” and he snapped his fingers showing me how easily I would find work. “Is always hard at first,” he comforted.

Sometimes when Uncle Bernard spoke, his voice reminded me of the smell of the Bakehouse back home and I longed to be there. I wondered why ever I had come to the New Country. Though I expected a wonderful New life to open before me, I wished all the time for the streets and houses and for the people of my home land. When I saw how Uncle Bernard lived, I couldn’t, at first, believe

it. The room was so cold and ugly, and, straight opposite the door was a noisy cistern. And all the time the landlady screeched at him.

"Mr Oons—your room, look at your dirty room!" and "Mr Oons you owe me! You owe me! When you pay?" She had a shrill voice and it annoyed me that she did not bother to pronounce our names correctly. And always, of course, the macaroni.

I could not think how Uncle Bernard could have written the joyful things he wrote to his wife and family. These letters, like little ships of thin blue paper crossing all those thousands of miles of land and sea, were passed from house to house and all of them were read several times.

Bernard is getting on splendidly everyone said, the climate is wonderful and the people so kind. A Good Life over there! They nodded their heads, plenty of everything especially for the Young People. I read Uncle Bernard's letters too and could hardly wait to make arrangements to join him.

In the morning we had no milk. The milkman never left us any. Uncle said to take the landlady's bottle.

"No troubles," he said. "She won't come out for it a long time. You have time to fetch for her, later." He put ten cents on the table for her milk. He brushed his coat carefully and took up his cases to go.

"Idle Bodies only Busybodies," he said. "Time is Money."

"What about my job?" I asked him.

"Yes," he said. "Your job." He put down the cases. "Tell you what," he said. "I'll give you half my macaroni round."

"But how you bring out your wife and children on half a job!" I pushed him to the door.

"I denk for you," he said. "All day I am denking for you."

"Tanks."

I took the ten cents and bought myself an air letter and wrote the most poetical phrases I could think of so my Mother also could wave a thin blue slip of paper at the neighbours and say,

"Claus is doing all right out there. Very nice Place." It hadn't taken me long to know why Uncle Bernard had sent those letters.

"No troubles," Uncle said in the evening. "I gotta job for you. Chocolates!" he said, and he lent me his other jacket. He brushed the worn cloth.

"Remember, you must ask to put the case on the table—so—," and he gave a little demonstration and then he made me practise, I had to pretend to sell him chocolates.

"Good!" he said. "We sell and sell, Everyding, and then I take you to my Place."

"Your Place Uncle?"

"Yes, we make little outink, you will see. Very nice."

I did not know anything before about Uncle's Place, it was a very nice surprise. The thought of him having property comforted me. I felt quite cheerful. First the job and now the property. I wanted to talk about it to Uncle Bernard, but he was already busy with his studying, and was not to be disturbed.

Every night, after the macaroni, Uncle sat reading, he borrowed innumerable books from the library and he read and copied whole pages into an exercise book. He was studying about the growing of grapes and about wine making. He read aloud to me.

"Listen to the soil!" he said, and he read, "The latitude is thirty-two degrees south, the height above sea level, below a hundred feet and the rainfall about thirty-five inches per annum—temperature ranges well into the high nineties during the summer. The soil is a deep alluvial sandy loam." His voice was deep with the pleasure of the soil. He wrote out the names of the grape families.

"Is like a poem," he said and he read them aloud, "Tokay, Shiraz, Grenache, Pedro, Muscat and Frontignac," he made me repeat the names, correcting my accent which was hardly much worse than his own.

He designed wine labels too. He had another exercise book for these and fondly he turned the small smeared pages showing me the designs which, in red and blue ink, described wonderful growing conditions, rare vintages and exclusive private bins. All were lavishly embellished with inky maidens entwined with grape vines and marked with improbable dates. Some of the names were familiar, I recognized them easily, Claret Bernard, Bernard Burgundy and Bernard Rose Sec. There were others, Aunts and Cousins, whose names took on a delightful new meaning when thus attached to Uncle Bernard's wines.

My Uncle closed his books, snap, study time was over.

"Is bed now," he said. "Then work. Then—" and his voice deepened with the promise of a treat, "Then the Outink to my Place." I could hardly wait to see Uncle's Place. The thought of it dispersed all the dreariness and bitterness of homesickness. I slept well.

"So Claus has chob at last," Mrs Schultz, the Landlady, rose early the next morning for the occasion or else it was to be sure of getting her milk.

"Vait!" she said on the verandah, and she fetched her nail scissors and trimmed my cuffs.

"Gut Lock!" she said.

"She denks of the money you bring home," Uncle Bernard said as we walked together to the bus with our cases, he with his macaroni and I with the chocolates.

My area was a narrow strip between the Railway line and the sea. In spite of the fragrance of fresh cut grass it was a crumbling and depressing suburb. I was supposed to find the shops, exhibit my samples and fill the pages of my fat note book with orders.

As I approached the first shop I prayed no one would be there.

"How you get order then?" I could almost hear Uncle Bernard's exasperation though he was by now on the other side of the town fondly describing his macaroni. I stood on the pavement hesitating. I was afraid someone was peering through the lace curtain at me so I walked on and round the corner where I rested under a tree. The morning was light and cool and the doves were laughing softly to and fro to one another. I thought I would go back to the shop, but after a while I walked on. I envied people who were on their way to work, they seemed so certain about what they had to do.

Across the road in among some tamarisks and eucalyptus trees there was a small shop. In front was a crazy verandah on tottering posts and the name "Sam's Delli Store" in faded paint on the sunblistered board. The cathedral of trees made a trellis of light and shade and relieved the spiritual wilderness of the streets.

I opened the fly wire door and pushed in awkwardly with my two cases, already my shoulders were torn apart.

"Gut mornink," a quiet voice spoke from the darkness. "I am a Dealer in second hand froots and vechetables."

I supposed it was Sam.

"May I rest my case on your table?" I asked, my voice cracked with embarrassment. I seemed to fill up the whole shop with my cases and my request.

"Most certainly," he replied with courtesy. As there was no table I opened the cases on the floor and Sam bent over them and admired everything and said

"Perhaps Next time. . . . Business is Good you understand," he made a sad movement of apology with his hands, "But not so good," his whole body seemed to take part in the apology.

The next place was a Milk Bar "PAM'S PANTRY".

"May I rest my case on your"

"Listen!" she said smoothing back her blue rinsed hair, "I'm up to my eyes in egg and lettuce rolls," she said, "Don't come chocolates at me," she said. "Don't, DO NOT—bring chocolates here. Look at this lot . . ." she pointed at her shelves. "I can't afford to keep the Air Conditioner going and when the hot weather comes chocolates don't keep, they go off. Money down the Drain as far as I'm concerned. Get me? And who around here wants chocolates anyway. Ice-cream, yes, cool drinks, milk shakes yes but chocolates, no. No I'm sorry, like I said I'm up to here," she raised her hand to her forehead, "in egg and lettuce, I'm that rushed! I'm sorry. On your way. If you please!" She drew breath.

Everywhere was the same, all day.

The children were coming from school already. I sat exhausted on the grass at the edge of the road. All day I had not eaten. I opened a case and took a chocolate and ate it. The children were passing with their little school bags.

"Chocolates?" I said to them and opened the second case. "Chocolates," I said. "Take!" But they only stared at me with their school eyes and crossed the road to walk home on the other side.

Uncle Bernard was waiting for me in our ugly room.

"Chocolates," I said. "No Good." I sat on my bed, I felt bruised as if I had been fighting, and so tired.

"Same with macaroni," he said. "No Good."

It was Uncle Bernard's idea to have a party. Mrs Schultz was delighted with the idea, her bulging eyes shone behind her thick lensed spectacles.

"A Partly!" she screeched. "I go tell the Girls and Mr Hubbard. We never had a Partly in years!" and she waddled off to the back part of the house where the other lodgers were. We could hear her screaming the invitation over the noises of the cistern.

It improved our room to have people in it. Uncle Bernard was busy at once with the macaroni. And the Girls, Maureen and Rose, helped me, with their long painted finger nails, to remove the chocolates from their wrappings and arrange them on the table. We all ate as much as we could.

"I have always, how you say—sweet tooth," Mrs Schultz sat back happily. She kicked off her shoes. She turned to me. "I am not, how you say—my beast—till night then my beast comes out, at midnight! Schultzi always said it. My Schultzi was, how you say, a Goof, he buy me present all the time and I never like."

The girls were giggling at Mrs Schultz's mispronouncings, they danced together, dreamily, a tango. And Mr Hubbard, in a cordial manner, shook hands with us several times.

Some time later Mrs Schultz seemed suddenly to see reason.

"Mr Oons!" she screeched. "Mr Oons you owe me, you owe me! How you gonna pay me?"

Uncle Bernard sat picking his teeth with a sharpened match. We all looked at the empty cases.

"Maybe," Uncle Bernard said thoughtfully, "Maybe we sell. Tomorrow is Outink, the day after tomorrow we sell. Suitcase Business now."

And once more we all shook hands with Mr Hubbard. As promised, the next day Uncle Bernard took me out to see his Place. We went together by bus to the wide gently sloping valley where the vineyards lay in neat patterns stretching in peacefulness to the line of low hills beyond. Sand tracks criss crossed the vineyards like pale ribbons and we walked along the softness of the first one. On either side, the vines, just beginning to show little bursts of fresh green leaf seemed to be kneeling on the earth as if praying quietly, row upon row of little praying vines. And at the edges were narrow orchards of trees trimmed just now with pink and white blossom.

"Almond and Plomm," Uncle Bernard waved his hand. He seemed suddenly much younger as he walked energetically, he breathed deeply and his happiness spread to me. We sang as we walked.

The air was soft and sweetly scented.

"Bean Flowers," Uncle Bernard explained. "The beans are growing between the vines and when the pods are picked we dig the bean stalks in to nourish the vines." He sounded like one of his text books.

"Is not far now," he said.

The track came out on a road and there was a great fig tree standing in a sandy patch just back off the road. A rough trestle table stood under the tree and some scales hung in one of the lower branches.

"We sell here, Muscats," Uncle Bernard said. "And melons, in summer of course," he added. Behind the tree was a small shabby weatherboard house with a deep verandah overhung with corrupated iron. And on all sides the vines came up to the windows of the house. "How you like?" Uncle Bernard asked, his smile was too big for his face.

"O very nice," I said. "Very Very Nice Uncle." I was about to ask him when we could move there when I saw a white painted board propped against an old barrel.

"But it's for sale," I said. "Why are you selling?"

"Spik Enklisch!" Uncle Bernard said. "We buy," he said, "as soon as possible we buy!" He stood gazing at the Place.

I stared at Uncle Bernard standing there in the golden tranquility which seemed to drop from the tree. Uncle's Place wasn't his place at all, it was only a dream he had. I turned in my disappointment and began to walk along the road, soft grey clouds had gathered and it seemed darker. Rain winds rustled. Uncle Bernard hurried to catch up with me. We paused on the bridge. The river was aching and swollen, purple brown.

"All that topsoil washed away," Uncle Bernard sighed. The tumult of the flood flowed unseen below the smooth spreading surface of the water. On either side the grass and small bushes lay as if combed down by the recent rushing of the river widely overflowing and now receding.

"We find work," Uncle Bernard consoled softly. "Everyone here find something. Sooner or later. You will see," he said. "Work, Save and we buy Place. You will see. No troubles. Is hard at first, but later—" he snapped his fingers.

I looked at Uncle Bernard's kind face and I looked down from the road bridge to the river. I looked at the water curving between the banks, on either side quiet trees hung motionless. In the quietness it seemed to me that this must have been how it looked to the first men who came to this place and I felt renewed.

"Yes," I said to Uncle Bernard. I agreed with him because I knew that he was right.

IDIOT KID

"Hullo, Simon," the grandfather would greet the boy when he called at the institution.

The vague eyes would remain expressionless as they shifted upwards at the sound of a voice. A thought would enter the thick muddy pool of the mind. A good thought.

And out of the locked gate the pair would go, and in a bus to the world beyond. An incomprehensible world to be sure, but one to be accepted whilst the good thought lay uppermost in the mind.

The old woman would suck in her lips when they arrived home and hand out a bag of fruit and a packet of sandwiches. Down to the sea the pair would go, summer or winter, for a day of fresh salt air.

Today was hot, muggy.

The asphalt steamed as the couple started off slowly towards the beach. When the boy stopped, the grandfather would pause too, and they would examine together a jam tin in the gutter, a parked car or the dead branch of a tree. The boy would touch, sniff and linger on this, his day. A day when the hydrangeas were faded and tinged with brown, a day when blinds were drawn and hoses dribbled weakly on straw-coloured grass. A day when faces and bodies dripped with sweat, and the apathy of exhaustion slowed the gait of the shoppers. A day when the grandfather must pause by the shop in the Esplanade to share a pint of ice-cold milk with his charge.

They hurried across the sand to seek the sanctuary of the shade afforded by an overhanging honeycomb rock.

"Come on, son," said the old man. "Stick your gear down here." He prized the boy's gripping fingers gently from the canvas bag he carried. "Now, what'll we do first?"

The boy was already burrowing in the sand sending up handfuls into the air. He made a hole then dropped his haversack into it. He started to cover it up.

"You don't want to do that, son," murmured the grandfather. "Look, some of our lunch is there." And he opened the bag to show the boy his wife's carefully packed lunch.

After a little the boy stopped burrowing. The grandfather helped him change shirt and shorts for the green striped trunks. The white, gangling legs kicked restlessly about in the sand. Then the boy sat quietly, picking at a toe.

People lay torpid beneath coloured umbrellas. Children and dogs splashed and screamed at the water's edge. Swimmers practised a lazy crawl or lay limpid, floating. A rim of salty seaweed fringed the height of last night's tide; black brittle

twists of seaweed like old licorice. The shark-spotter droned overhead, heading towards the groyne. An occasional snatch of a tune drifted from a portable radio close by.

The old man was fond of the sea. He enjoyed the security of its vast endlessness, the harmony of its rise and fall across the sands, the inevitable dull roar of the breakers. Each day he would walk a mile or so along the sands, staring outwards, at peace within the sight of the sea whatever its mood.

"Wasting time," his wife was wont to comment. She would have preferred that his time be spent shopping, or visiting relations, or watching television with his feet on a stool. Occasionally she would accompany her husband to get the benefit of the sea air, but those times were uneasy, the man thought. It was too blowy, or too sandy, or too cold or there was too much rubbish about when the wife chose to go walking.

Strange how the boy accepted the sea. Simply waded in, in complete trust because it lay ahead of him. Unwatched he'd swallow salty mouthfuls that would set him gasping for breath.

It was too warm to sit for long, even in the shade, so the man guided his charge towards the water. Together they sat on the sandy floor, letting the wavelets ripple round their necks. With a growl Simon ducked his head under the water. He came up spluttering and stupid, shaking his head like a dog.

"We'll go for a bit of a walk," the old man decided. Together they walked a length of the beach stooping to investigate and examine at intervals. They paused to watch the passage of an incoming liner steaming towards Fremantle. In the shade of the rocks the man opened the packets of food his wife had prepared. Simon ate ravenously, forcing the food into his mouth; unchecked he would have eaten the skin from the bananas.

"Hey, quit that!" the old man called sharply, as a lad started tossing pebbles from the rocks above. A bright head appeared for an instant, then vanished. "Cheeky young devil."

The boy dozed when he had eaten, spreadeagled on the sand, ugly. The man lay relaxed, musing, allowing mere wisps of thought to drift across his mind. He sat up when he saw the red-headed young pebble thrower marching with purpose towards him. In his hands he held a model yacht.

"D'you reckon he'd like to help me sail m'boat?" He jerked his head in the direction of the sleeping Simon. "I reckon it'll be a decent day for sailing."

Surprised, the adult turned towards the speaker. He felt inadequate.

"Listen, son," he explained, "Young Simon wouldn't be much use to you. He can't talk or play or do any of the things you can do although he's much older than you are. Even if you showed him how to sail your boat he wouldn't get the hang of it. His mind is still like a baby's."

"Oh." The kid looked thoughtful and disappointed. "Don't you think we could try him? Just thought he might like to have a go, that's all. I know he's a bit screwy. I've seen him down here before."

"O.K., son. We'll try him when he wakes up. He might enjoy it, too."

Simon woke suddenly and squinted at the light. He sat up and made a series of noises in the throat, dribbling. The man was pleased to see the newcomer was unaffected by this.

"Right-oh, Simon. We're going to sail this kid's boat. What's your name, son?"

"Rex." He turned towards Simon, who stared bleakly ahead. "Hey you, what do y'think of m' yacht? I helped make it," he added proudly, "come on, let's try it in the water."

The kid shepherded Simon to the water's edge.

"Look, see, don't you reckon she's a beaut?" The tiny yacht turned flat on its side in the water. "Bit lopsided, I s'pose," he noted critically.

Simon put out a hand for the boat. It was bright, something to be held. And once more the sunlight of a good thought penetrated the shadow of the mind. One must catch hold of these moments of butterfly brightness and endeavour to prolong them. Rex saw the outstretched hand and reverently placed the toy in it.

"Go on, you sail it," he invited. But Simon was shuffling along the foreshore, the yacht held firmly in his grasp.

"Hey you, come back," called Rex. "You gotta put it in the water."

He led Simon back and a couple of feet out into the shallows.

"You do it like this," he said, and forced Simon to release his grip on the toy.

"That's right. Good! There you did it yourself. Gee, watch it, mister, it's a beaut all right."

The grandfather glowed. That this young lad could accept Simon as a fellow human with limitations filled the old man with pleasure. No embarrassment, staring, impatience or bullying.

The swell lifted the tiny boat and carried it out a few feet.

"Aw, gee." Rex looked ruefully at his grey shorts. "Mum'll slay me if I get these wet."

Simon was already heading towards the bobbing toy. He must take hold of this brightness again. The two on shore watched closely as Simon grabbed the boat. The man called out to help the boy with his direction. Close to shore he slipped and fell. He stood up gurgling, his fingers fastened about the boat.

"Good show, Simon," praised Rex. "Give it to me now." Simon stared about him, oblivious of the weight in his hand.

"It's not much good, Rex." The old man spoke gently. "I think Simon enjoyed helping you sail your yacht, even if he can't understand what you say to him."

"Not even a bit?" asked the boy, intrigued.

"Not a word."

"Well, he's not such a bad sort of kid anyway. You can tell he's a bit off of course, just by looking at him, but he's not that bad." Again he held out his hand for the boat.

Simon became aware of a heaviness and relaxed his fingers.

"See, mister?" The kid grinned. "I reckon he kind of guessed what I was talking about anyway. He'd 've given it to me if he'd known how." He stooped and picked up the boat. "Well, I gotta go now."

Rex pulled a large pocket watch from his shorts and scrutinized it. "Good-bye mister, good-bye Simon."

And Rex, the bright-haired, king and conquerer, scampered across the sand to his waiting brother.

I won, he exulted. He gave a hop, step and jump. Twenty minutes exactly. Twenty minutes with the idiot kid, so now he owes me sixpence.

THE LAST OF GAMES

Into the Indian tents they go, into the igloos,
into the caves of ice and the caves of wood
—call all day, they will not be home until evening,
call all day, they will not be listening.

Into the jig-saw puzzle of sun they go, into its fretwork,
whether as buccaneers or fringed frontiersmen, incomplete,
the candles in invisible beards are lit with their breath,
the blood rusts on their cheap-jack cutlasses.

Into the deserts they rush, over the fences,
this is the last of games, to be played to an end;
barbed-wire and bindi-eye speed their raucous trail-craft,
the wind is scratching the leatherette of their names.

Now and again an older kid stops playing,
he gets up dusting his knees and turns away.
“I’ll be back,” he tells them, even though they know better;
his shoulders slope to match the slope of the hill.

They burrow back under the canvas closer than home.
Will they grow? Will their numbers dwindle? Will they run
as fast and far tomorrow? They eye each other,
and falsetto voices arch over them like doom.

BRUCE DAWE

ONE STORMY NIGHT

(for don marquis)

one stormy night i went down
to a nearby beach
to watch the waves and other elements it
was not surprising that
all kinds of eccentrics who frequent beaches on
stormy nights were there one man in
particular was standing on a cement
pile whose top was sticking out of the water he was
wearing a silk jacket boiled shirt and white
bow tie not to mention kid gloves and opera
cloak he stood there in the lashing rain and
spray with the freezing wind beating against
him and draping lumps of seaweed on him as he
stood there he held a conductors baton
and waved it come on he shouted play for me oh cold
dark mother ocean terminal mother of life born of
death send in your messengers you are just
part of the symphony of man and i have been chosen
to represent man crash your black waves drive your
black wind and rain to the tune i
set soon a particularly large wave broke
over him and i
saw him no
more life is
strange

HAL COLEBATCH

THE GIRL FROM THE FAMILY OF MAN

Angela convinced me to go to my first peace march. I guess it was a case of conviction following cant but not altogether because by then I was also some of the way convinced. Even if I hadn't been some of the way convinced I would have gone because of Angela's political steam which gave off a very high reading indeed. I mean also that I don't think demonstrating is a wet thing. I might still do it now but for different reasons. I wouldn't feel I was changing the world for instance. For a short time I thought there was a chance we'd swing it—change the world—but that was just Angela again—she was there to keep the faith—without her my belief in the goodwill of man was really as weak as piss.

It seemed also at the time terribly good to find an American who could find something wrong with America—and a good looking bird at that; different from the other Americans you meet out here teaching.

I met Angela when I was angry about things and a bit shat off with all the bullshit flying around about Vietnam and other things. I found myself hooked by the way she talked—she had that sort of methodical mind which Americans seem to have—they talk about “projects” and “resources” and so on.

“It's great to see an American who sees through it all,” I said to her.

“The New Left's really moving back home” she said. We were sitting in a bar. I was drinking, she wasn't.

“I don't drink” she said, “I find I need all my wits about me to get by in this crazy world.”

I wondered how dumb I became with the grog. Her not drinking made me a little uncomfortable. But I could live with it.

“I'll try not to be a slob,” I said, “I don't usually drink until I fall down.”

“I had enough of that at college,” she said, “and drugs—it ruins a lot of the kids.” She was very concerned.

“A lot of my friends take drugs but it seems to knock them out of the action.”

“Sometimes I think it's the only thing to do,” I said, asking myself what the hell I would know about it. I suppose I'd let Angela think I was more political than I was—I wasn't in the Labour Party or anything like that—just a sympathiser, I guess.

“At least you have a party of labour and a strong trade union movement,” she said passionately, “they must give the Left a dynamic.”

I cleared my throat, “In a sense, yes.”

We sat there talking while I drank three brandies and she had another orange.

“Let's go then,” I said, my voice tentative, but the lust was upon me. Yaaaah.

“Sure,” she said.

"I'll take you home," I said, standing up.

"No, that won't be necessary," she said, "I'll get a bus—I know my way around now."

She pulled a timetable from her Greek shoulder bag. That was typical of Angela—the timetable—and the Greek shoulder bag.

"There's one at nine thirty-two," she said.

I insisted she let me take her home in a cab.

"O.K. . . ." she drawled, guardedly.

We held hands in the cab but she said "Kyle please let's not rush things—sex can become a hassle."

At her place on the wall she had a big picture of an Indian—either Nehru or Ghandi. I took a punt on Ghandi.

"Why you got Ghandi on the wall?"

She looked up at him, "Satyagraha," she said.

"Come again?"

"Non-violence—I worked with SNCC in Atlanta—Students' Non-Violent Coordinating Committee—racial integration—we ran schools on non-violent tactics. Any groups here?"

"We're not that advanced," I said, again wondering what the hell I'd know about it.

"Non-violence is terribly potent," she said.

After the coffee I tried to kiss her. She allowed our lips to meet, but I knew she didn't want to be in it.

"Easy, easy," she said softly, easing me away, "let it come naturally and easily," she said, making me feel like a lecher. I am a lecher.

She moved away from me and picked up the coffee cups.

"I'd like to see some classes on non-violence started here," she said, taking the cups into the kitchen. I wondered if I'd ruined things for myself by being too gropey.

"I'd like to read something about it," I said, which was pretty true .

"I'll lend you a book," she said, going to the books and coming back with Ghandi.

At home I poured myself a big brandy and wondered if perhaps I really was pouring my way to alcoholism—I thought about Angela and her politics—and about her body—about her tits. And I wasn't conning her—I mean about the politics—she was just more advanced than I was, you could say.

I sat there browsing—taking a little Ghandi with my brandy— when I came across a part which said, "chastity is one of the greatest disciplines without which the mind cannot attain requisite firmness . . ." and went on ". . . he whose mind is given over to animal passions is not capable of any great effort . . ." and ". . . when a husband and wife gratify the passions it is no less an animal indulgence".

If it had been anyone else's book I would have drop kicked it into the shit-house. What the hell! I wouldn't see how a girl like Angela could swallow it—she was supposed to be all for free love and so on. For a few seconds I was dead scared that perhaps she was having me on.

I threw a few more brandies down my throat and went to bed.

I saw Angela the following night.

I was scarcely in the door before I was checking her on Ghandi. "What's all this crap about chastity and discipline?" I said, a little more fiercely than I had intended, "you couldn't go along with all that?"

She laughed. "He's a little crazy there," she said as we went into the living room, "but that's his way, I guess."

"You had me frightened," I said, giving her a squeeze. I rather defiantly held

a bottle of brandy I'd brought. I'd debated whether or not to bring it and then thought, "hell, I'm letting her and Ghandi get the better of me." Christ, it wasn't as though I was a drunk.

"I brought something to drink," I said, "I hope you don't mind. Ghandi would."

"Silly—of course I don't mind—please get it out of your head I'm a puritan," her voice rose, "I just don't like it myself," then she laughed, "I'm going to have to get drunk to go to bed with you just to prove a point."

"Alright," I said encouragingly, "let's go."

I drank. She had about one sip or two and then sat on it. I was mad for her.

I took her hand, "I'm crazy about you," I said.

"I like you Kyle," she said. "very much."

We sat there in the half furnished room with the books stacked against the wall, a guitar in the corner, an Indian rug, some beads hung from a peg on the wall, a painting by Picasso—one of the Harlequin paintings, she told me.

We sat on the floor on cushions and talked, non-violently.

We watched a television documentary on New China while I slugged myself with brandy.

"I wrote a poem on China," she said, almost shyly.

Naturally I said, "read it to me".

I praised her. I like a girl who writes poetry—they're usually pretty way out.

"You really liked it?"

"Really liked it," I said, "and I'm just a physical jerks teacher."

We kissed.

"Let me stay the night," I said, trying not to pant.

She shook her head against my arm. "Not tonight Kyle," she said softly, "not yet."

"I'm as frustrated as hell."

She looked into my eyes, "I worry" she said, "I worry that people like us treat sex too carelessly—just because we're the full anti-convention bit—we tend . . . I don't know . . . I suppose we tend to undervalue sex."

Not me, I thought, I don't undervalue it. "But Christ," I said, "I know I want to go to bed with you and you want to go to bed with me . . . don't you?"

I held myself hard against her and wondered how she kept herself so carefully tied up and why she didn't just fall down there and then.

After a while of standing there in each other's arms I said I had to be going—still hoping she'd relent—but not wanting to pressurise her. But she continued to resist my charm and I left.

I got home and had a drink. I realised I had been uncomfortable about my drinking back at Angela's—I'd felt swinish because she hadn't been drinking—as though I was drinking twice as much. But that was unfair. She didn't carry on about it. Not like some bloody women.

But as I sat there having a self complaining drink I griped to myself that what I wanted was not a drink but Angela.

I put on my coat and hat, went outside, got a cab and headed back to her place.

I ran up the stairs knocking loudly, wondering if the shock tactics would work. There was light coming from under the door, "who is it?" she called from inside.

"Me, Kyle." She unlocked the door. She was in her night dress.

"Kyle, what is it?" she asked, smiling but disconcerted.

"I couldn't take it," I replied, "I couldn't sleep—I want to stay the night with you—we both want it."

I took her in my arms.

“You’re crazy,” she said, still disconcerted but friendly, shaking her head. I pushed the door closed with my foot as we kissed.

“And the hell with Ghandi and the chastity bit,” I said.

She was amused.

“Ok, Ok,” she said softly, leading me into the bedroom, “you realise you’re forcing yourself on me,” she said, lightly.

“I know.”

We kissed.

“Let’s just sleep together,” she said, “no sex—for tonight.”

I groaned, “but why?” I could see her full sharp breasts, without any sag, lifting her nightdress, the fall of her nightdress giving their outline and the dark nipples showing through. Raaah! I put my hands on them.

“Because I want it that way—for now,” she said, seriously, “please?”

She pressed my hands onto her breasts and I knew she was giving herself to me—little by little.

In the morning when we awoke, we had sex. She was aroused but seemed to feel a certain shock when I entered her, and her face showed almost pain, but then she relaxed a little. But she was very serious even though she seemed to like it. She watched my face all the time. Watched my eyes.

She was the first to talk afterwards.

“You’re gentle,” she said, “I like that.”

“You make me gentle,” I said, which was true.

“I hate rough men—I had too many rough men,” she said.

I saw her in the back seat of a Pontiac convertible struggling with a college footballer.

We talked a little and then made love again. Then we got up. I danced a little shadow boxing, feeling pretty pleased with myself. I did my exercises while she showered singing folk songs. I watched her fit her slightly overweight thighs into jeans and zipper herself up.

“I usually do the marketing Saturdays,” she said, as she brushed her long black hair, “would you help carry?”

I said I would. “I’m your slave.”

We wandered up the aisles of the supermarket with me holding the bag open while she dropped her groceries in.

“You eating lunch with me?” she asked, nudging into me affectionately with her head.

“Thank you.”

“I’ll get something special,” she said, “what’s your fancy?”

I tried to think of something, “salmon and asparagus salad,” I said, wondering if that was my fancy. Angela always had a ready list of what she liked and disliked—from the temperature of the room to the amount of noise. Americans are like that.

“I must say that despite my profound distaste for capitalism,” she said, “I just adore supermarkets.”

And then, as though obliged, she added, “but they create a false sense of abundance—our income shrinks in real terms but the supermarkets let us think we have all this abundance.”

Back at the flat we unpacked the groceries.

“Oh hell,” she cried, “look at this . . .” she held up a jar of honey—it had leaked into the bag—about a third of it, “It’s everywhere,” she said, “but everywhere. Trust me,” she said, in a soft self accusing drawl.

“You didn’t do it,” I said roughly, “we’ll take it back—make them pay.”

She didn't want to go but I insisted. We reached the supermarket as it was closing.

I showed the cashier. She called the manager .

"You must have unscrewed it," he said—straight out—standing among his stacks of cans and soap.

"Of course we didn't unscrew it," I said, "it was cross-threaded when you sold it to us."

"You should examine your purchases before you take them from the store," he said, like a sign on the wall, "how do I know what you did with it?"

"You better take our word for it," I said.

"Don't threaten me," he moved his shoulders back. If he wasn't careful he'd have his teeth out the back of his head.

"I'm not threatening anyone," I said, "I want the honey replaced and the bag cleaned."

Angela was standing almost behind me. I was rapidly losing my satygrapha.

"You have to accept responsibility for not examining your purchases," he repeated.

"Come on, let's go," said Angela defeatedly, touching my arm.

"We're not going till the honey's replaced," I said to both of them.

"Alright, the honey I'll replace," he said, and went to the honey stacks.

I smiled at Angela, who stood, pale and worried, "the honey he'll replace," I grinned.

She just looked pale.

He came back. "What about the bag," I said, "you'd better pay for the cleaning of the bag."

"I can't accept responsibility," he said.

I saw myself pulling the honey coated bag over his big European head. But I knew then he wouldn't go any further.

"Out," he shouted, "get out—don't come back here no more."

"We won't," I said.

Angela and I walked silently home through the midday sun.

"That was horrible," Angela said, "horrible."

When we were back at the flat she sat down on the floor looking stunned and pained.

"I'll try to clean this honey out," I said, getting up and going to the kitchen, feeling I should leave her alone.

I heard Angela put on a record. Joan Baez.

I tried to wipe the honey out with hot water and a cloth.

"He was an arrogant bastard," I called out to her over the voice of Joan Baez, but Angela remained silent.

"Don't let it all upset you."

She came from the living room into the kitchen, "it was you Kyle, who upset me," she said sadly.

"Me!" I was incredulous.

"Yes—your tone—it was so . . . aggressive . . . murderous."

I was almost outraged. I banged the spoon down.

"I thought I was all self-control," I said, "very restrained."

"You were aggressive and hostile," she said.

"I reasoned with him."

"You tried to stand over him."

"He deserved to be thumped," I said.

"There you go," she said, turning away tiredly, "it doesn't matter," she said, "please let's drop it."

"I'm sorry," I said, "that's just my way of doing things—I thought I was all control."

"Please," she said, "lets forget it."

I was hot with the injustice of it. "I'm surprised you feel that way," I said, "bloody surprised."

Joan Baez seemed to have become even more high pitched and full of damn sorrow. She was giving me a pain in the arse.

"Do we need her?" I said, tossing my head towards the record player.

"See, you're angry again," she said, low and sad.

Holding her in my arms—my honey stickey hands held away from her, I said, "you can't be serious."

"Please Kyle," she said, "no more."

For the first time in my life I really *needed* a drink.

I went back to jabbing and scraping at the honey in the bag. She went into the living room with Joan.

I remembered the brandy and got it from the cupboard and had a quick slug from the bottle, I thought, "this is weak," and called out to her, "Angela, want a drink?"

"Thank you no," she said.

After about ten more scrapes at the bag I washed my hands and gave it away. I went into the living room and said, "I think I'll go home for a while—change my shirt."

"Ok," she said, and then, after a pause, "I'm sorry I criticised you—I'm hyper-sensitive about this sort of thing—takes me back to the States where everyone tries to stand over each other."

She was warmly forgiving, but of course I didn't feel I'd done anything to be forgiven for. I took it as a gesture and we kissed and I said "I'll just have to learn a little more satygrapha from you."

She smiled and we held one another.

I went straight to the nearest pub, remembering that after all, I'd missed out on the salmon and asparagus salad.

After a drink. I said out aloud, "hell, I was all damn satygrapha—too damn satygrapha."

Saturday afternoon horse races galloped over me from the radio. I drank there for a while. I bought a pound of prawns from an Italian with a wicker basket of fish and bottled oysters, who came around the pub.

Another drink and I'd be the man to get her out of whatever it was bugging her. I had a drink and went back to the flat.

She opened the door, "Kyle!" Her eyes searched my face—which was probably twisted with passion.

"Come in Kyle—I was lying down," she closed the door, "you didn't change your shirt."

"I wanted to see you," I said, "I didn't go home."

"You've been drinking," she said.

"Don't start reprimanding me."

"Kyle, I wasn't," she said, taking my hand, "just a simple observation."

I flopped into the chair. The big lover flops.

"I wish you'd backed me up this morning," I said, getting it out straight away.

"Kyle," she cried, "don't bring that up again—nothing more."

I thought, oh my God, something else's happened. It had that sound about it.

"It was bugging me," I said.

She turned away and leaned on the wall, looking down at the books.

"What is it?" I demanded, sensing that she was going to hang something else around my bleeding neck.

"I've been sick," she said, "this morning made me sick."

"You mean threw up?"

"Yes—I mean sick—physically sick."

I was astonished. The mind boggles.

"I was ill," she said, with a high pitched edge to her voice.

"I'm sorry," I said, "if it was my fault."

"You're not to blame for all the smouldering violence in the world."

All the smouldering violence—the way she said it made me feel damn responsible.

Then I noticed something new about the room—a photograph on the wall. Or at least I hadn't noticed it there before. It was large—a blow up about three feet by three feet—of a child's face.

I stared at it and then called out, "who's the photograph?"

"It's me."

I stared at it again.

"How old were you?"

"Seven."

I felt she should say more about it than that. I mean what was it doing up on the wall all of a sudden.

"It has a history," she said. "I put it up after you left this morning—I'd been meaning to since I moved in."

I looked at her for the history, "what's the story?"

"It was in the Family of Man collection."

I said "what?"

She went to the bookshelf and pulled out a book.

"See if you can find me," she said, handing me the book.

I flicked through the photographs, "A camera testament, a drama of the grand canyon of humanity, an epic woven of fun, mystery, and holiness—here is the family of man."

I went through the photographs—it didn't seem nasty enough to be about the people I knew.

"You show me," I said, handing back the book.

She found the page.

It looked a little like her. Of course, it was a much smaller photograph.

"Hell," I said, wondering what to say, "you're a celebrity."

"Hardly," she laughed.

She went back to the kitchen for the coffee.

I stared at the blow up and then back to the book. Jesus.

"Thankfully, I'm not recognisable," she said pouring the coffee, then looking at me said, "you look a little dazed," and laughed.

"I am," I said, reading in the book, "'Every man beareth the whole stamp of the human condition' 'Montaigne'."

"Yes, well, yes," I said, putting down the book. I couldn't take my eyes off the blow up on the wall.

Her being in the Family of Man ruined it. We went to bed that afternoon but I was too careful. As though she was fragile. And that was the last time. But she was a good girl, a really good girl. We still see each other and she convinced me to go to my first peace march. I carried a banner reading "For Humanity's Sake" which was a little embarrassing. I'm not really a big social protestor. I think basically I'm a bit on the vulgar side.

POSSESSIONS

Dead in the morning. Simple chores overwhelmingly complex, like making four sandwiches. It was a relief to get any of them out of the way. Satisfaction in this. She was making survival an achievement. Nothing was underneath her hand where it should have been. The rice bubbles had run out and as she put her hand inside the cupboard, it filled up with the recollection of the child's plate yesterday, topped with the last dust from the empty packet. She pulled out of that despair into a solution of great cunning, which pleased her. Scrambled eggs, a change—chives, parsley. Little One loved that.

Outside, the chives were buried under the builders' rubble and the foreman stood there, grinning. "Too bad," he said, "chives in the morning—wouldn't be good for you." Returning empty-handed, she passed the door which she had begun stripping the paint off the day before. It looked ugly—despoiled, paint still in the grain and messy edges. Anyway, the beautiful red gum panels which had emerged like treasure up the bottom two-thirds of the door, had given no warning that the top panel was blonde plywood. It was just there. She had set herself two hours to do both sides of two doors, have them up again by the end of the day. Saul would be pleased—and impressed. But one door was only half done at the end of four hours and it stared back at her now.

In the kitchen, the children were nearly through a bottle of green lemonade which papa had brought the night before. Saul hadn't stopped them, yet it was right in front of his eyes, and he hadn't looked in the pot to see the egg was burning. The builder was asking Saul to come and see what the plasterer had done, and focussing on the breakfast table, she saw that Little One had dismissed the egg and Big One had let hers grow cold while she ate a doorstep with cottage cheese and honey. The whole chore was a flop. She blamed herself, but to lighten the punishment recalled the occasion when her friend Jennie's husband had accused them all of trying to invest housework with the scriptures.

Saul put his arm around her shoulders and praised her incompetence. It was because of what happened at work the day before. The electric kettle had fused and his female technician had put on a tantrum. "You can get around things", he said, "you won't believe me but I love the way you run the house." "You do it all with such grace", David had said. Where was he now? It must be at least a fortnight since he had come back from Sydney.

She looked at the house after Saul had left with the children. The fridge needed defrosting, there were six shirts to wash, the plasterers had denuded three rooms. It wasn't worth tidying the makeshift beds they were camping in. Everything was a shambles. Everything. A new student was coming on Saturday to rent the spare

room and she had promised her a new dressing table and curtains. There were thirty-three cents in the coconut shell and yesterday's new shoes where she'd put them on display—on the dresser.

In one room yesterday's debris from the men's tea break decorated Saul's desk. It was an old desk but she'd sanded the top and restrained it when the bricklayers left. She was sure, the carpenter, whose approval she had enlisted, would remember and take on its protection himself. Rings from the milk bottles had left new stains and a screwed up lunch wrap sat there without shame. She swooped on their belongings and dumped them in a clump on the floor. She draped an old curtain to read tablecloth or desk protector over everything. She heard them complaining when they came in for their smoko and this gave her a moment of satisfaction.

She got into some warmer clothes. It was raining outside and if she was to get to the river to sketch, she would have to be prepared for the cold. No there was no excuse to remove the new shoes from the dresser. Back in mustard and brown after a frenzied pink Summer, she felt concealed and safer. Brown, she remembered from a talk on painting and mental patients, was for depressives.

The car enclosed her like magic inside a cell of limited decisions: no phone, no chores, no front door. You could be alone without appearing ridiculous. Driving was an activity. Doing was virtue. "What are you doing with yourself these days?" "What work do you do?" "Oh, your children are all at school?" "I'm teaching—what else is there?" "We thought of you because all the other people on the committee are working." What do you do, you do, you do.

Lie on a chaise-lounge all day and eat marrons glace; that's what Ilse said. Look at that gum tree, Dawn had told David when he had danced with her at a party. I do research into Parkinson's First Law. What about that? Of course it was stupid to make cakes nobody ate in the time you saved from a blitz on housework; the officers of feminism said so—Colonel de Beauvoir (lately demoted), Lieutenant Betty Frieden. But if you were paid for doing well that was okay—like making academic pancakes; like saying it seems to me, instead of I (god forbid) think. You could tell where the books had been, who was taking a journey in the footsteps of Doris Lessing.

The hive of shops waved to her, luring the Honda onto the kerb outside her delicatessen. There was just enough room to park and having pulled this off, she felt the weight of the day shift.

She'd buy something for lunch. There it was—Rubinstein's loot: the fattest herrings, the shiniest black bread, the crispest pickled cucumbers which were not sweet. Saul—cucumbers, chopped herring for Little One and Big One—what would she like? Everything—French sticks, onion rolls. Onion rolls. The memory seized her. Precise dream, taste, climate, colour, smell. The last time she was here it was to buy lunch to have with David. He was on holiday then; in the Summer. Cherries, pink dress, peaches, more than they would eat, so he would have some left when she had gone.

Waves of memory rose above her, too late to duck. She was submerged now, and when half way it seemed as if she might still get back on her feet, the under-tow grabbed all of her, like a dumper, dragging her backwards.

The shop door sprang shut behind a large grinning presence. Sophie Green—all teeth and voice. A mouth like Luna Park. "Well fancy seeing you here—don't tell me *you've* discovered Mr Rubinstein's gehachte herring too. Having Mum for dinner I bet." "How are you—no, they never come for a meal." This last, flat as she recalls they used that as an excuse last time not to go to the Greens. "Why don't you drop round—heard you've gone all arty lately—amateur theatre, isn't it?" "Yes, I did a C.A.E. course on set design, we're going to put on a play with one of the acting classes. I won't say yes to dropping round, Saul's terribly busy.

Thanks anyway—better go.” She knows, she thought—that theatre bit—David. Too bad. Luna Park, “just for fun”.

The shopping centre is suddenly a mad place to be—dangerous. Get out! Look at them, the women, so earnestly choosing a piece of sausage, a new Wettex. It *IS* actually a pleasure to open a new Wettex, and throw them out, the old ones, grey and sometimes torn. What loyalty, down the scale of duties from food dishes through frigidaires to stoves and finally, floors. Somewhere there was probably a Wettex graveyard.

She couldn’t go into the delicatessen. A pie would do, and a bottle of milk. She had to get out quickly. A man was making sandwiches in the milk bar and there didn’t seem to be anyone else serving. Mayonnaise, he asked the young man, mustard or pickles with the corned beef? She watched him pick up thin slices of things from bowls with those alligator tongs Saul was always urging her to use, instead of spearing things with a fork. She studied the little piles of sandwich filling. They could get so much out of one tomato. She had a picture of the scrubbed lady who came to work every day to slice it all.

She was studying the penny lollies, tossing up whether or not to buy some for the children, when a middle-aged woman came in and was immediately served. Being invisible to shopkeepers was no novelty; picking up a fistful of Violet Crumbles and Lifesavers, she moved squarely in front of the man who was giving out change. He glanced at her hand thrust ostentatiously over the counter, “Yes, that’ll be . . .” beginning to count; “a pie”, she said, “with sauce, and a bottle of flavoured milk, large—pink”. When he returned she was carefully putting back all the Violet Crumbles and all but one of the packets of Lifesavers. “Just one”, she said.

She climbed in the car and sat. The delicatessen was still full of people. David hadn’t eaten the onion rolls or the cherries—just one peach and a chunk of sausage. Ages later she’d noticed the cherries still in their paper bag in the fridge, shrivelled and going bad. You couldn’t shower him with anything. He made you feel generous if you simply appeared. Because he demanded nothing. No that wasn’t right. Not nothing; the worst—he expected the worst.

The gears had gone mad, they did this sometimes—went into a kind of seizure. It always unnerved her, as if the car was an extension of herself. It ought to behave like a proper mechanical beast—dependable. Saul had taught her to drive. Insanely patient—“keep calm, it’s no good getting rattled, the circuits are all there and you just have to discover them”. She tried this now. Start again, calm down, now don’t shove. Second is straight back, but on this side. The gears shrieked in protest; she went back up into fourth. Her hand was sweating, clumsy—an enemy to peace. She caught sight of the top part of her face in the rear vision mirror as somebody behind tooted her to move over. What she saw appalled her, a frown tangled her eyes and eyebrows and gave her an ugly desperate look.

The car was reasonably well behaved now, on a straight run it was free from having decisions forced upon it. She tackled her pie, surprisingly still hot enough to make eating with one hand a hazard, unless you chewed the paper bag too.

The last edge of suburbia announced itself in an estate of glossy package deal houses called homes. They had that smug look of ladies just out of the hairdresser, freshly sprayed new. She’d rehearsed this journey dozens of times before but the feeling of release at this border never lessened. It was the sound of the engine racing which brought her eyes to a bend in the road which was unfamiliar. She had missed the entrance to her secret river garden and was headed into strange territory.

A car coming from the opposite direction forced her to swerve away from the centre of the road which she now saw had given way from bitumen to earth. It had passed her now and her legs were still shaking and hands dangled like marion-

ettes. It was a double shock. For a second her eyes closed. David, she breathed. She had come to find David. The whole day had been a detour, a blind maze of detours. Not lost now, her destination announced itself confidently, like a zone of sunlight in a dark forest.

Her thoughts trudged over the very tiny map where she could locate him geographically. She was appalled to find that she had so little knowledge of his movements; his habits apart from her. Forgive me, she said to herself. Love! My god, love, heckle me now!

A telephone booth. Find David. Pub, what was that pub? One of his old girlfriends had mentioned the name of a pub where she saw him occasionally at lunch time. Friday, no-one missed out on Friday, she would go there now.

But she was miles away. The morning's incompetence made sense. The alarm had snatched her out of a dream. She had been searching for something. But to find it she had gone off in the opposite direction. It would take a good hour to drive back and to park in town on a Friday—Impossible. She would phone the girl and ask her the name of the pub and then phone and ask to speak to David. No, she would remember the name of the pub herself. She had turned the car around and now the turn-off to the secret garden was here and she took it.

The pines planted thickly to hide habitation always played European fairy tales, lost children and toothless witches. Today the game wasn't on but once through the pines the secret garden spilled over her, and a kind of alarm alerted the whole landscape.

She felt drawn to the path where the striped brown snake had slid on her first day there. Did she invent it? The old lady told her she had only seen one snake in seventeen years. Fear of the snake was nothing beside the sense of ill omen.

The name of the pub sounded official—the Consul, President, Chancellor, Exchequer, Lord Chamberlain? David would be in the most public part of the bar. She was on a magnetised track where he waited at the end. It was inevitable, like those rides at Luna Park which stopped almost violently and thrust you through the exit before you had time to recover.

Speeding now to David's house, she remembered the name of the hotel. But it was way past lunch time . . .

Houses were wise, they told you everything. She was confused at first by David's house, almost without possessions, until she understood how perfectly it suited him. The less he had, the less that could crack or age or be broken by carelessness or time. So in those empty rooms like shells, the few personal gifts he owned sweated an overpowering intimacy.

The house sat so prosaically on the street that she felt reassured, as if the last weeks of her absence from it had changed nothing. The windows were open. She hurried to the back door across the last lap of her conviction and paused at the handle deadly afraid.

Inside it was quiet. Knock—knock, she called out. He must be sleeping. Not in the living room—full ashtrays, dirty glasses. In the bedroom—sleeping. The door was shut. She could write a note and go. But who might read it? Anyone home, she shouted at the bedroom door. And opened it. It was not the yellow dressing gown that said anything—except a borrowed night—but inside the wardrobe a lady had unpacked her life, and it hung now beside David's shirts. The house was full of possessions now. Just like her own.

PAIN'T OUT THE BARS – A SEQUENCE

Paint out
the bars
with first
to hand

then let today
lump through and
lurch in privily
and tonight be
grateful for the
touch of privacy
that paint could
not withhold

then having painted out
of sight the bars your
cage already holds today
captive enough and night
was always that which is
not caged somehow the
room is further than you
thought: space is only
body in displacement air
 little so
 little
 grows
 with
 our
 freedom

but there are times when we wake
midday evening morning with no mark
or shadow of bars upon us and the
cage is birdframe ribs and wings
no bird but man only soars with
something like knowledge but more free
not taken for granted
 a discovery taken not free
 a knowledge
 like something
 outside cages
 outside gliding
 curvetting
 dipping across
 back down
 over to be away
 yet always
 returning
 earth strung
 down holding
bars
bars of cages not painted out not
cages smaller than we are large larger
cages to run freely in as if
we did not need
the sky

in the
end we
define
oursel
ves by
cages

THOMAS SHAPCOTT

BOYS AT PLAY

I have spent the morning
obliterating an old canvas.
Up to now I have put on
three coats of white, but try
as I might, the old picture
still shows through.

Andrew and his mates played
around me. They talked of
their football heroes and the
aeroplane they are making
from scraps of wood. When they
are finished, they will fly away.

The radio in the kitchen
tells me the time. I shift
my snail-like watch the few
minutes it has lost. Blasted
watch, blasted radio; I mourn
those lost minutes.

LEON SLADE

BALTASSAR

joints of a hand that wrote

Mané—
the face is young and holy,
eyebrows plucked and lined;
a novice who is Superman—
Sister Something flies.

Thecel—
sky and elms and sleepy days
have nothing whatever to do
with Constance Mackenzie's latest
neurosis or lover or blues.

Phares—
guitars and lunging pelvis,
rock and scarlet sound;
miming to his record
going round and round.

purple and gold keep for thyself

JOHN GRIFFIN

CHICKEN

Tucked snug behind
Proscenium arch
A baby's stoned to death:
The watchers sit in trembling furs,
Slumped with relief.
Beyond belief!
Come, let's get out before
The peak hour traffic snarls
The bridge. I've got cold chicken
In the fridge for supper—at least
I think I have. Those kids
Will gorge themselves.
Oh go on, you can pass! The light's
Already amber, hurry up!
I'm dying for a
Cup of tea. Don't talk like that
To me, of all people!
Let's not quarrel, things
Are going so well: Ian's done his maths
And Nigel's sure to top his year.
You've worked so hard
With him . . . what's that? I
Had to keep her home.
You know that stomach thing she gets;
She'll be all right tomorrow.
Oh well, the wings have
Had it but the breast's still there. Or
Part of it. You must be starving!
Can't see why we push ourselves to
Plays like that although I feel
The writer has a point
To make. Some cake?
Oh damn, I gave it to
That child next door; I'm
Sure her mother doesn't feed her
Properly. What's the matter?
Aren't you feeling well? It'll pass.

There's Dexsal in the cupboard and
A glass is *right* in front
Of you. All right, I'll come up
Later—what a mess
They leave the place! Did you
Say she was crying? Probably
A dream: it's just a phase
She's going through. I'll go to her.
You go to bed. I can't think
What's the matter with
My head. There, there, the way
You cry you'd think I was
An awful sight. Now be a good girl,
Go to sleep. Good night!

FAY ZWICKY

LAY-BY

We come out, blinking, from a sexy film.
Afternoon gilds your make-up and your dress.
Too soon to dine. We walk, linking our hands;
desire relaxes. I want nothing more
than to walk in the loved city with its budding
chestnuts and limes. You drag me to inspect
a window pregnant with consumer goods.
Saucepans and frypans, sets of fearful knives;
obscene dolls bare their predatory eyeballs.
If I coaxed you to the park to wait for night
you would not come, although you lean against me
with pagan fluency, suburban Dryad!
Your body's right. Only your head is wrong.

T. F. KLINE

TWO LOVELY GIRLS COME KNOCKING

Two lovely girls come knocking
dressed in the uniform
of a most expensive private school.
By chance my transistor is pulsing
with the mindless beat of the latest hit
(I was waiting to hear the time)
and their petrified formality melts.
It seems their school is collecting
for underprivileged children.
They paint in elegant accents
the poverty they have never seen.

I make a small contribution,
and we talk for a pleasant while,
a pencil-chewing writer
and two schoolgirls bathed in the brightness
of a world unshakably secure.

Bless you, my protein-fed darlings.
I see you as if surrounded
by birds, flowers, ivy, angels and hearts
like the children in sweet Victorian books,
towards whom, with unspeakable longing,
the hungry stretch their terrible arms.

T. F. KLINE

Pip, along came a horn
 where birds sit all day
and sit, their niz beaks
they spit
 clawing deep in the dirt
 they jive with the warm soil—
 they must grow and grow
 dig in their tangerine toes;

He must pip and pip
 the watermelon swells, turns
 green ears, tendrils,
 green ribbed skins, the oval skins,
 neck back . . .

I come now and pip
a mouthful of seeds—
 my tongue red
 my mouth tangerine
 wet, catch the teeth
 my white slats
 slat in, back

I'm comin now
a watermelon, body rollin
 ribbed head . . .

Bite!
 juice squirts
 tropical jet, shot out
 pink singe . . . tang!

VICKI VIIDIKAS

OWL

About ten o'clock we pulled out the rubberplug
and climbed into the bird—
(you had to pull me up, because the hole
was three feet off the ground.)
So we sat in the dry darkness, on the money
in the bird's belly.

We had come once before when no coins
lay coldly indolent on each other.
Then we sat on the porous clay, our knees tucked up,
and the whole hollow body of the bird
was quiet like a great cathedral; a ray of light
even fell through the slit at the top.

Holding us like dust-specks in its belly
the brightly-varnished terracotta owl
coloured like the sunflowers, stood
waiting on the wooden table,
staring with its great olive eyes
blank with memories of fire.

NOELINE BURTENSHAW

THE WRECK OF THE BATAVIA:

Insights into the Relationship between Bureaucracy and Government in Western Australia

The safety of the State's scheduled historic wrecks has been the subject of a steady stream of press reports, official and semi-official comment and re-assurances since October 1969. The *Batavia*, once the flagship of the Dutch East India fleet, features most prominently in this mounting pile of documents if only because at least \$280,000 worth of bullion probably still remains in the wreck. On 4th June 1629 this vessel struck the Morning Reef off Beacon Island in the Abrolhos Group and her remains now lie partially encrusted in a sand basin area, seamed by sloping gullies, on the edge of the reef. Neither tidal currents nor depth of water—estimated as about thirty feet at the deepest point of the wreck—present a serious obstacle to plunderers, especially as it seems customary to lay craypots on the wreck itself. Even discounting the bullion, the *Batavia's* remains hold technical and historical information unique in Australian waters and of world-wide importance. If the existing damage and threats to the wreck are minimized or concealed and the public deceived by promises of an active wreck recovery programme which never materializes, the piecemeal destruction of the State's historic wrecks will continue. As it is, unless effective action is taken to protect the wreck of the *Batavia*, the site will cease to be of historical and archaeological importance to Australia within two years.

Part of the W.A. University's contribution to the Cook bicentenary celebrations was to send a survey party to the wreck site financed from its research funds and under the auspices of the Senate Committee for Marine Archaeology. Between the 5th and the 20th May 1970 four

members of the expedition dived upon the site and discovered that the wreck had been blasted within the previous twelve months. Estimates were made that ten cubic yards of encrusted material from the stern section (where seven years before important navigational instruments had been found) had been disrupted or destroyed through a combination of looting and wave erosion.¹ Though the wreck was vested in the State Museum seven years ago, there exists no adequate survey and photographic record of the appearance of the wreck as it was found in 1963, so it is impossible to judge the degree of damage. However, there can be no doubt that it is substantial. Over forty square yards of the wreck have been disrupted by blasting and subsequent erosion and apart from the two main areas of destruction entered on the University's preliminary sketch map of the wreck site (see centre), it was apparent from the gouge marks of hand-worked implements, presumably crow-bars and chisels, that a large part of the waist and stern sections of the wreck had been subject to pilfering since 1964. Explosives had been used near groups of cannon—one of which, cannon 10, has had three feet blasted off the muzzle—probably in the hope of dislodging the chest of bullion which Pelsaert records had to be abandoned as it was wedged under a cannon. In addition to these areas, two excavation drives were noted—one of them about five feet in length—in the vicinity of cannon 8 and cannon 10 (see sketch map). The expedition's recovery of over a thousand coins and coin fragments mainly from this area indicate that these drives were made by looters in pursuit of coin. Just how much of the *Batavia's* coinage has been

lost to looters since 1964 will probably never be known, but reported statements suggest that it is a considerable amount. In 1963, the last official expedition to the *Batavia* wreck site recovered about sixty pieces after nearly a fortnight's hard diving, yet following a series of parliamentary questions in the autumn of 1969, the Press reported that quantities of coinage were being disclosed 'including 800 silver coins from the *Batavia* wreck that were recently shown to police and museum officers in Geraldton'.² Despite this, the Minister for Education was apparently advised not to insist upon the possessors proving their legal title to the coinage as now seems to be the case with coinage from the *Gilt Dragon*. In introducing the 1969 Museum Bill into the Legislative Assembly, Mr Lewis was reported as saying that '... in the absence of proof to the contrary, the possessor would be given the benefit of the doubt and the item would be said to have been taken or recovered before the proclamation of the 1964 Act'.³ The origin of such advice is unknown to the public, but the legal basis of this act and the previous 1964 Museum Amendment Act rests on the State having a claim to 'territorial waters' below the low-tide mark and, in the case of the *Tryall* wreck, up to fourteen miles from dry land.⁴ Even discounting the loss of revenue to the State, partly on the basis of these acts the Museum was encouraged to issue 'ownership certificates' for coin registered by their officials which members of both political parties are now led to believe are *ultra vires* and probably do not convey a legal title.

It might be argued that the loss of a proportion of the *Batavia's* coinage is of little consequence—after all the State has tolerated the loss of bullion tentatively valued at \$250,000 from the *Gilt Dragon* wreck alone⁵—but this can hardly be said of the blast and erosion damage. The Senate Committee's survey group found that cannon number 14 had had its encrustation blown off (see cover photograph) and that the area between this piece and the foreshortened cannon 15 was a wilderness of broken rubble, pottery, brick and bone fragments (see plate 1). Before the blasting there had been an irregular mound of reef-encrusted material here as deep as both the cannon which apparently has now been looted or dispersed. This had been the site from which navigational instruments were recovered in 1963 and was probably where the after cabin of the *Batavia* had come to rest.

Owing to the use of explosive by the looters, this area is now vulnerable to the scouring action of the sea and only time will prove whether it is possible to plug these scars with coral flags to slow down erosion as the R.A.N. diving team has been instructed to attempt. In contrast to this section of the wreck, areas such as that surrounding cannon 13 which have not been subject to blasting (see plate 2) reveal heaps of encrusted material.

The value of the artifacts within the *Batavia* wreck was never in doubt. What is surprising is their quantity, range and, apparently by some coincidence, their excellent state of preservation. So far as one can judge from Pelsaert's *Journal* and the positions of the tumbled cannon, the *Batavia* struck the reef, possibly lifting her bows slightly out of the water, and there remained wedged listing heavily to port. Though most of the cannon were jettisoned from, or burst through, the hull on the port side, the vessel almost certainly broke her back and the waist and stern sections apparently settled at an angle on to the shelving sand basin which composes most of the wreck site. From the chemical composition of a heavy black conglomerate found throughout the blast areas, it seems that when the vessel broke her back and settled, hundreds of gallons of bilge water flooded the stern of the ship, possibly into the lower deck as well, and there remained trapped in the remains of the hull. During the course of time the bilge and the objects swept into it or over which it rose became solidified under pressure and stabilized under the now partially shattered calcareous crust. Protected from the normal oxygenation present in surf conditions, a mass of material has been well preserved, including organic material as delicate as fragments of lace. The survey party raised several fractured pieces of conglomerate whose combined volume was less than one cubic yard and which contained a wide range of artifacts in a surprisingly uncorroded condition. Several black powder measures were recovered (see plate 3) which when subject to skilled treatment can be restored into what was virtually their original condition (see plate 4). Two barber-surgeon's spun brass 'bleeding bowls' were also recovered from the stern section. These objects—at present unique in Australia and extremely rare in Europe—exhibit indentations for upper arm and thigh useful during the process of 'cupping' and were in addition

almost certainly used as shaving bowls (see plate 5). Their relative isolation from oxygen has slowed down corrosion to such an extent that cracks resulting from metal fatigue caused during manufacture are visible in one bowl.⁶ Perhaps more interesting still is that the bowls were obviously used as a repository for some of the barge-surgeon's possessions during the *Batavia's* voyage from Amsterdam. When recovered, one bowl rested within the other, and the shape of the lower bowl was preserved in a conglomerate of what is apparently solidified bilge (see plate 6). As the conglomerate bearing the impression of the lower bowl was being examined it was found to contain a wide range of small articles (see plate 8). A pair of shoes (not illustrated) had been placed in the bowls together with two apothecary's unguent jars of different sizes (the larger still partially impacted), a bone comb, and found in close association with these objects was a small Rhenish stoneware cruet still stoppered and possibly containing some of its original contents.

As all these articles were recovered from less than one cubic yard of material, the loss of embedded artifacts in an area of over forty square yards, and to an unrecorded depth, must be very heavy. The Press gave some prominence to the alleged loss of spit silver bars from the wreck⁷ and was without doubt justified in alerting the public to the fact that a major criminal offence had occurred in the blasting of the *Batavia*. What actually is missing from the wreck at this point is now difficult to determine and what scientific data can be gathered is as yet inconclusive. A piece of conglomerate was raised which exhibited three impressions, the most distinct being of a bar about three centimetres broad at the top and with a pronounced shoulder bearing an incuse stamp of XXXVI (see plate 7). This is consistent with the presence of a spit silver bar weighing 36 troy ounces and possibly the product of the Tower Mint in London. No traces of silver were found in this impression, which in itself is not surprising as silver is a noble metal and this particular bar appears to have been impacted some distance away from an obvious source of corrosion-inducing sea water, though another impression towards the top of this conglomerate produced a slight trace of silver⁸ (see plate 7, the discoloured impression). In many ways the possible loss of spit silver bars is immaterial: the vital point is that had there been an effective

archaeological programme mounted in the last seven years this looting would not have occurred.

Of course it can be argued that the preservation of Dutch cultural relics is of little consequence, even if they do date from the golden century which produced Rubens, Rembrandt and Van Dyck. The State's image can be projected by other means and in other areas—as has indeed been done during the past eleven years. Nevertheless the *Batavia's* looting may continue to have increasing relevance in the West Australian political scene even if only as an illustration of what is now called 'a breakdown in communication' between the government and its bureaucracy.

The failure to safeguard the *Batavia* was only one in a series of incidents whose cumulative effect was to focus the community's attention upon the function of the bureaucracy within the governmental structure. 1970, the year of the Cook bicentenary, has been marked by a growing concern amongst the public over conservation in all its forms. On a number of occasions the attention of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly was directed to apparent lapses in the existing conservation programme which triggered off repeated demands in the Press and elsewhere for a 'Ministry for Conservation'.⁹ In April it was discovered that after an interval of seven years, six areas which had been recommended as National Parks in 1962 were still unprotected¹⁰ and of these, three, including the Bremmer and Mount Manning Ranges, had been extensively pegged by mining interests. Similarly, of 38 areas of outstanding geological importance within Western Australia, only one had to date any form of protection. The list could be extended and usually was as the weeks passed. According to the Minister for Education, in the light of his interstate experience, information on the State's aboriginal sites needed checking and provision had to be made for future re-classification of sites¹¹ and the inclusion of such information as a survey and the grid-reference of each site. Taking advantage of the apparent confusion and lack of reliable information at the State's disposal, a Labor member of the Legislative Assembly accused the State Government of 'indecision and muddling over the protection of Aboriginal sacred sites in W.A.'¹² and condemned the government for the

delay in bringing down legislation to safeguard such sites.

At this point other factors enter into the relationship between the administration and the State Government. As in most modern governments the distinction between the executive status of government departments, in this case the State Museum, and the policy making bodies such as the Cabinet is blurred by a number of factors. Of these the most important is that ministers having to reach decisions must in the normal course of events depend upon information which has been filtered through and assessed elsewhere in the State's administrative structure. However, in such matters as the preservation of aboriginal sacred sites, the whole process is likely to be short-circuited. Irrespective of the truth of the matter, accusations of sloth and ineptitude could influence electoral results in the Kimberley division which has a large number of aboriginal voters and is, in any case, a marginal seat. Any threat to this seat would also jeopardize the already uneasy coalition between the Liberal and Country parties. Not only is conservation an issue which could be decisive in the forthcoming State elections, but such incidents as the looting of the *Batavia* weaken the State's claim to the existing degree of autonomy it enjoys within the Commonwealth structure. At a time when relations between the State and the Commonwealth have been under strain, any State Government's record will come under increasingly close scrutiny and lapses employed in a context—possibly fiscal—far removed from the original. As early as March 1969 it was suggested that 'one of its (the Commonwealth's) most important criteria in extending its powers will be the standard of State performance'.¹³ The implication of this for the State governmental administration could well be that areas such as the protection of the State's cultural heritage in the form of aboriginal sites and historic wrecks—where once administrative discretion seems to have been unchallenged—will become increasingly subject to outside scrutiny and political pressure.

Unfortunately for the State Government, so far as the historic wrecks on the West Australian coast are concerned, the recently-discovered looting was far from being an isolated instance. In 1963, the four co-discoverers of the *Gilt Dragon* wreck and the two discoverers of the *Batavia* transferred their rights to the State

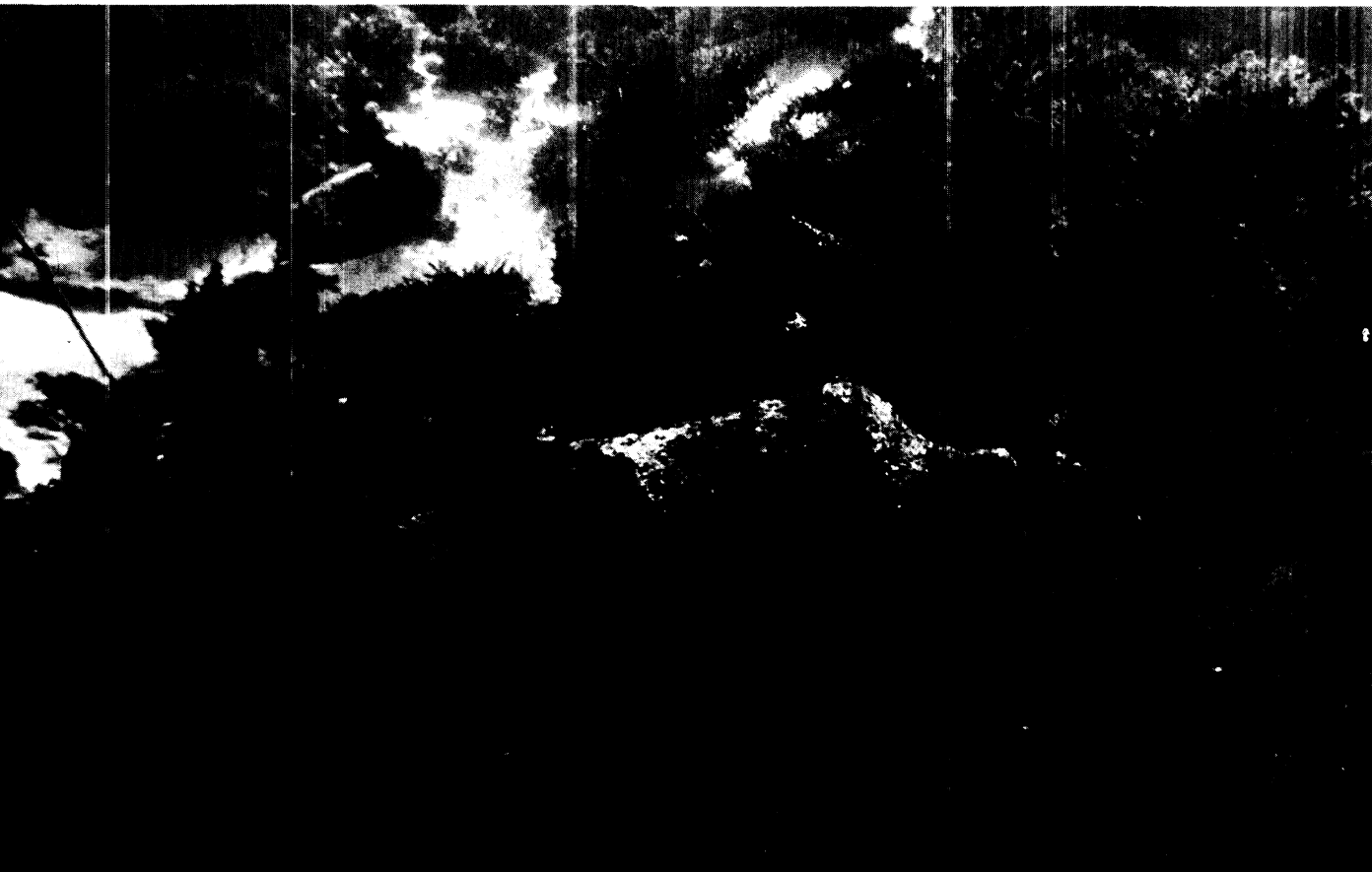
and these historic wrecks became the property of the Crown vested in the Western Australian Museum. Despite this, the *Gilt Dragon* was blasted before any adequate survey was made and a large quantity of bullion was removed leaving behind shattered cannon and a site opened up to wave action. The confusion of the period was such that the Royal Mint, acting in all good faith, melted down nine parcels of unrecorded material during the period 1963/64 and in so doing found that the silver content of the batches ranged from 92.5% to 93.5% fine.¹⁴ Of course there could be differing opinions on the validity of deeds of gift for wrecks lying below low-water mark drawn up by the State's Solicitor General,¹⁵ but it is significant that now the title to coin has to be established not only according to the 1964 Museum Amendment Act but also with reference to the original gift to the State. It seems, therefore, that grounds could have been found to move against the original plunderers of the *Gilt Dragon* whose activities on this wreck alone may have lost the State up to \$250,000.¹⁶ Yet nothing was done—perhaps because the government lacked adequate advice—with the result that there has never been a single successful prosecution for wreck despoliation despite the fact that protective legislation has been in operation for almost five years.¹⁷ The one attempted prosecution which the State was apparently advised to take was seven months stale even before the alleged offender fell ill.

In the light of past experience it is doubly unfortunate that the *Batavia*, the second wreck held in trust for the community, should be blasted by plunderers. One member of the survey expedition 'described the blasting and looting as a national disaster'¹⁸ and this seems to be a fair assessment. The outrage felt by the informed public was voiced in *The West Australian's* editorial on 2nd June 1970. It ran:

AN OPEN GO

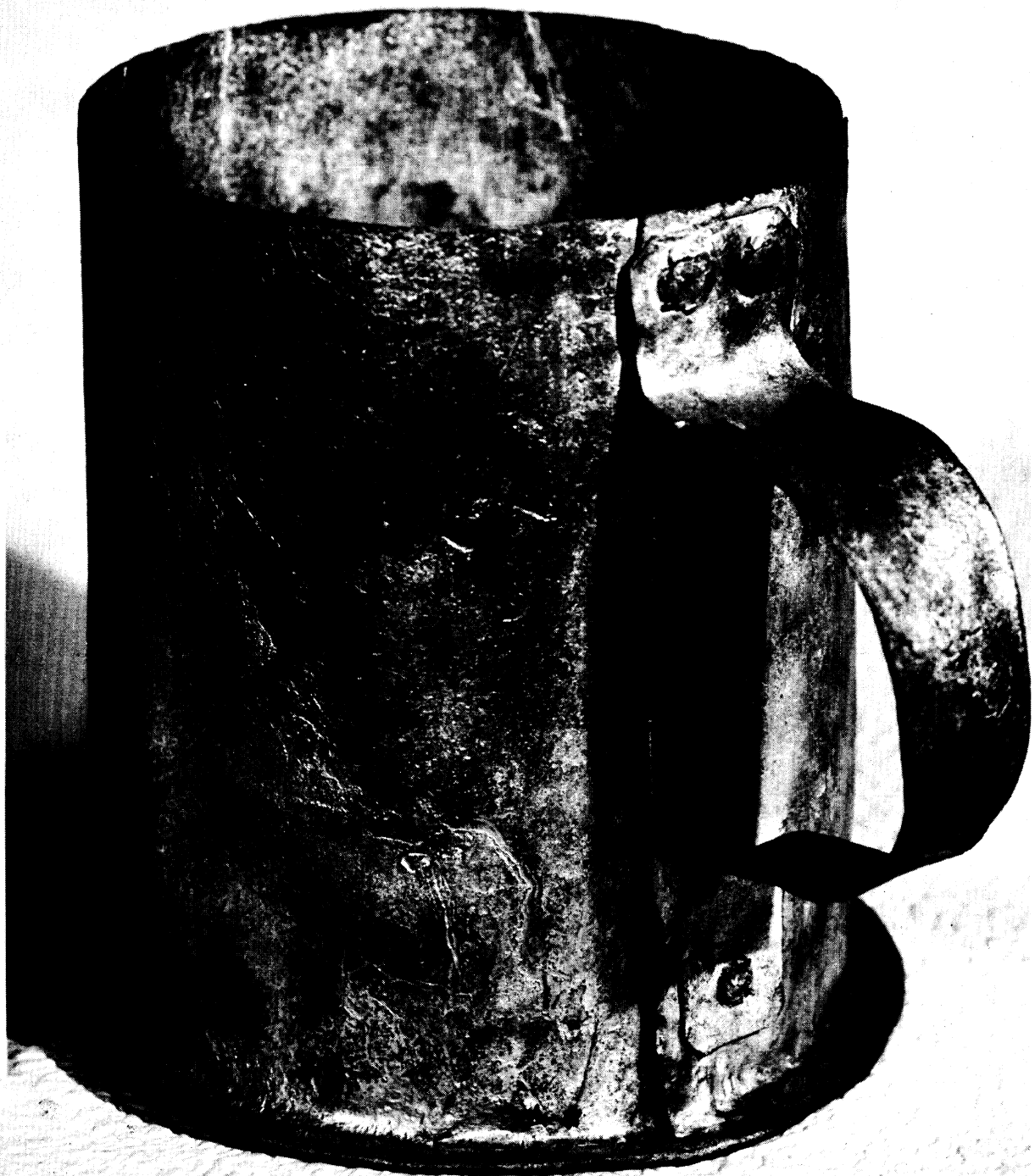
It is deplorable that the 341-year-old wreck of the *Batavia* should have been the victim of plunderers, whose efforts to reward themselves financially deprive the nation of an historic legacy.

It is worse that this should have been allowed to occur because of State Government indifference. The crime would still be undiscovered were it not for a University-financed expedition to the Abrolhos.





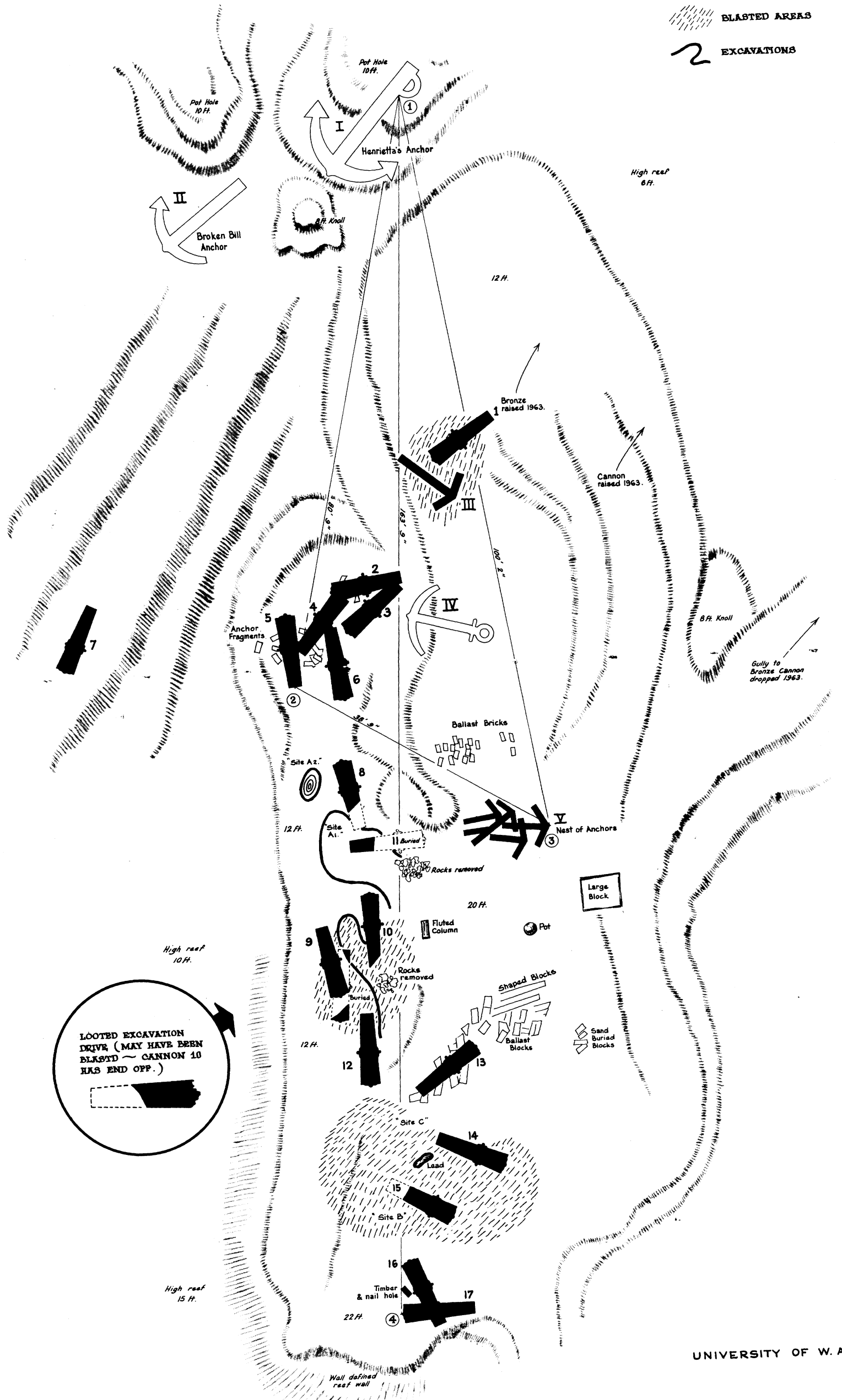
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
CM



PRELIMINARY SKETCH



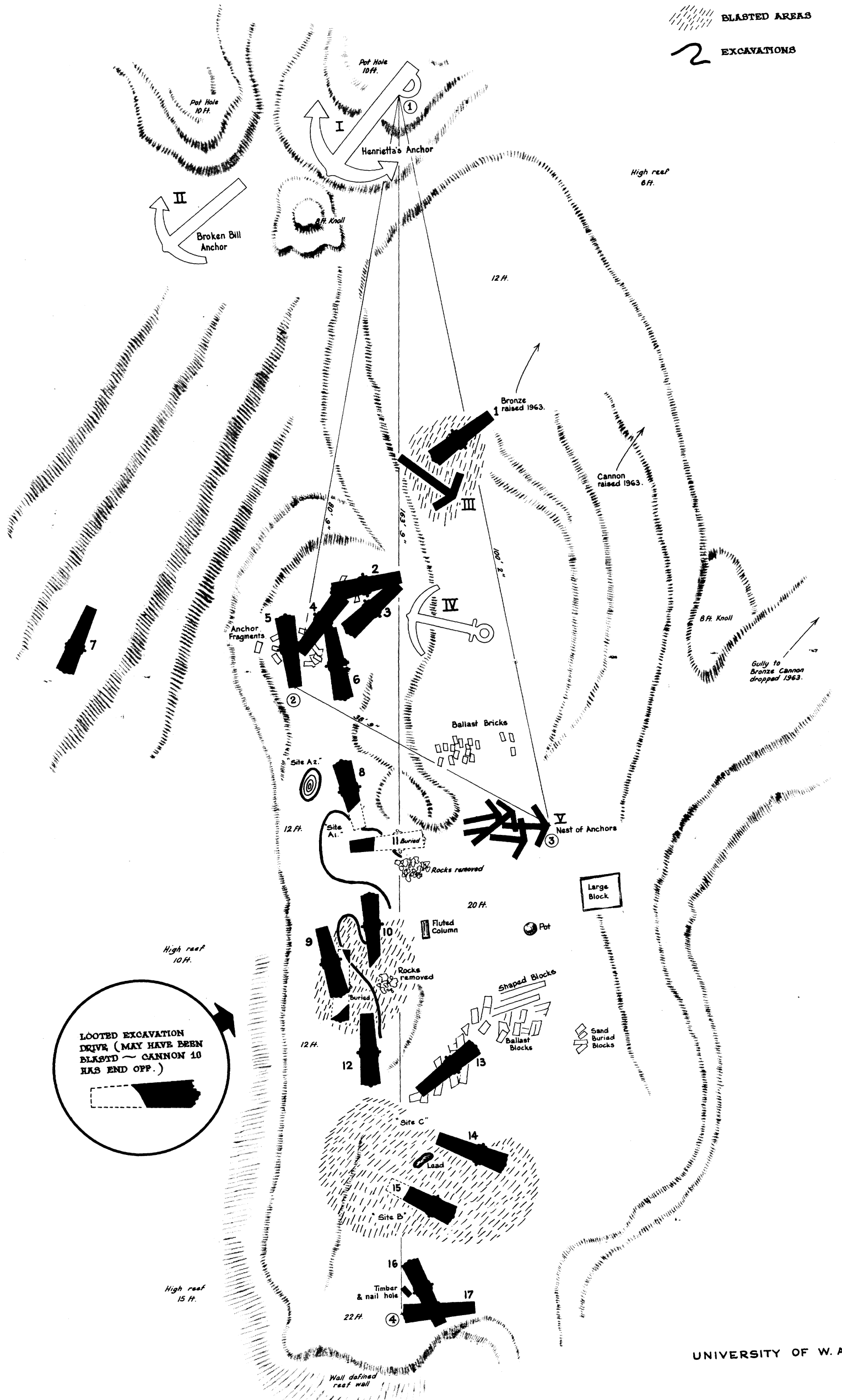
BLASTED AREAS
 EXCAVATIONS



PRELIMINARY SKETCH



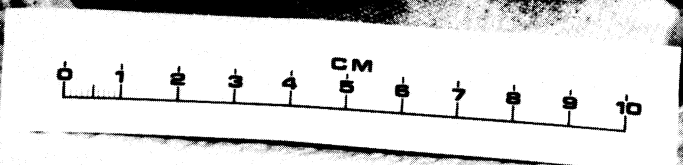
BLASTED AREAS
 EXCAVATIONS



LOOTED EXCAVATION DRIVE (MAY HAVE BEEN BLASTED - CANNON 10 HAS END OFF.)







Legislation to protect historic shipwrecks has been in force in W.A. for more than five years without a single successful prosecution. This field has more legal hazards than the coast has shoals, but the Government's obligations go beyond statutory sanctions which might or might not stand the test of constitutional challenge.

Indeed, the strong suggestion that the State legislation vesting wrecks in the Museum is beyond the State's legislative competence reinforces the Government's basic responsibility. Since its discovery the *Batavia* has lain for seven years unseen by Museum divers.

It has been left to private initiative to explore the *Batavia*. Irrespective of constitutional complications, the best safeguard for such wrecks would be government-financed salvaging expeditions, made promptly.

Since the historic interest of ancient shipwrecks extends beyond State boundaries, it should not be beyond the Commonwealth and State Governments to resolve the legal difficulties. But the prime responsibility rests with the Government, whose lack of interest left the way open to thieves and vandals.

The following day the Premier was the butt of a cartoon (see p. 60) and since then both the public and the State's political parties have been watching the situation very closely. In a further editorial a few days later, on the 15th June, *The West Australian* commented: '... the *Batavia*, *Gilt Dragon* and *Tryall* have a value transcending mere currency. Much of this has already been lost to blasting and looting' and went on to say that: 'though the State's legal claim to the wrecks may be questionable, this is no obstacle to its financing salvage expeditions. The constitutional difficulties could be readily solved with the Federal Government, especially since the wrecks are a matter of national, not merely State, interest.'¹⁹

The West Australian's editorials were both balanced and moderate in view of the fact that this was the second such call it had made to the State Government. Eight months previously, in November 1969, *The West Australian* had pointed out that it was common knowledge that the State's laws to protect historic wrecks, based as they were on the assumption that Western Australia possessed territorial waters extending three miles or more from low-water mark, were of dubious legality. The editor wrote:

'... Legal men—among them the professor of jurisprudence at the University, Professor

E. K. Braybrooke—have cast doubt on the legal basis of the whole scheme.

Questioned is the State's claim to exercise jurisdiction over territorial waters, though the point is also taken that one of the most important wrecks lies in waters outside any area which the State might validly claim as territorial. To the layman it would seem that if this section of the Museum Act can be successfully challenged, much of W.A.'s maritime law must rest on shaky ground.

... the sensible course would be to re-examine the Act after Professor Braybrooke's comments and, if necessary, consult the Commonwealth.'²⁰

This editorial was the result of mounting concern over the safety of the State's historic wrecks which had received repeated attention in the Press and on T.V. during the previous two months. Early in October 1969 questions were asked concerning the safety of the *Batavia*²¹ whose main result was to elicit apparently contradictory answers from the C.I.B.²² but also revealed to the public for the first time that the government were aware that the 1964 Museum Amendment Act designed to protect the wrecks from plunderers had been repeatedly infringed.²³ Then public attention moved to the *Tryall* and fears for its safety were expressed in the Legislative Council. An opposition member claimed that 'the State Government might have to stand idly by while the oldest shipwreck off the W.A. coast was blown to smithereens and pointed out that the government 'had had five years to clarify the situation, but had failed to do so' and that 'it should hold urgent discussions with the Federal Government, which had defined Australian territorial waters, and with the Crown Law Department'.²⁴ After an attempt from within the Liberal Party to have the whole question of the legislation designed to protect historic shipwrecks reviewed by a competent authority, it was apparent that both political parties were offended by the replies of the relevant administrative agencies as relayed by government spokesmen.²⁵ Complaints were allegedly made to the Premier by members of the State Parliament about 'the widening credibility gap in Ministers' replies'²⁶ and it was apparent that ten months later this phase in parliamentary affairs had not been forgotten by the Press²⁷ and may well feature again in another form during the coming election campaign. Even allowing for the fact that ministerial answers to parliamentary question may be 'un-

satisfactory' but not 'untruthful', by early November 1969 the Press was scenting that something was awry in the State's wreck programme. *The Independent* noted what it called 'mounting concern' for the safety of the State's historic wrecks and said that there appeared to have been '... a conspiracy of silence in the constant failure to officially note the pillaging and destruction'. It went on:

'The 1964 legislation vested control of historic wrecks to the museum, but nothing was done to enforce the museum's ownership of the *Gilt Dragon* wreck, north of the Moore River, even though the discoverers had signed a Crown Law Department document in 1963 giving their rights to the museum.'²⁸

A new dimension to the problem was added four days later during the course of a T.V. interview granted by one of the more prominent members of Western Australia's skindiving fraternity. From a transcript of the taped interview it seems that he claimed that the State's legislation to protect historic wrecks had been proved invalid, that the legislation was a bluff forced through parliament, and that the State's refusal to prosecute people caught removing material from historic wrecks indicated that the government knew that its legislation was invalid.²⁹ No official comment on this interview was ever released to the public.

The implication behind these remarks appears to be that two or more government departments or affiliated bodies had entered into a conspiracy to delude the general public, to conceal evidence of pilfering of State property from historic wrecks, and to frustrate prosecutions for wreck despoliation in order to preserve the appearance of the State's legal competence. To achieve this aim the State was willing to connive at the piecemeal destruction of its historic wrecks rather than have its legislation tested.

This rather histrionic interview culminated with a call for a Royal Commission to examine the situation—this was, of course, seven months before the blasting of the *Batavia* was discovered. A superficial knowledge of the State's administrative structure rules out the possibility of a calculated piece of corruption, but even from the facts which the public was allowed to have it was apparent that a puzzling situation was developing in bureaucratic circles. As the months passed opinion was crystallizing until, on 7th

June, *The Independent* published an article which stated:

'A storm is brewing in the wake of disclosures of blasting and looting of the 341-year-old *Batavia* wreck in the Abrolhos.

... Last week Professor E. K. Braybrooke, of the WA University; a Liberal Party MLC, Mr I. G. Medcalf and a Labor MLA, Mr J. Harman, called for Government action to protect historic wrecks and punish offenders.

Professor Braybrooke said that if the State Government claimed its recent legislation dealing with the historic wrecks was valid it should go ahead and prosecute plunderers.

If the Commonwealth felt it had control, then the Commonwealth Receiver of Wrecks should have taken action long ago on any evidence of unlawful use of explosives or removal of material from the wrecks. Both the Commonwealth and State authorities could take action, and this would test the validity of the legislation. But he could not understand why neither should act.

"It looks as if something is going on behind the scene, but it's a complete mystery to me what it is," Professor Braybrooke said.³⁰

If such a storm over the whole range of conservation issues is to break in Western Australia months before an election, it is apparent that, so far as the State's historic wrecks are concerned, it has been brewing for nine months. This is the length of time during which the State Government has had ample warning of the dubious nature of its legislation designed to protect the State's cultural heritage. By early December 1969 the validity of the existing legislation had been questioned in both the Press and on T.V. and also by members of both political parties in the Legislative Council and in the Legislative Assembly. It was all very well for the Minister for Justice to affirm that no challenge to the constitutional validity of the State's wreck legislation had been sustained; as *The Independent* trenchantly remarked: 'What the Minister did not say was that, apparently because of doubtful validity of the legislation, there had been not one prosecution in the five years—despite plentiful evidence of looting and plundering'.³¹

The West Australian, having twice suggested to the State Government that it should seek Commonwealth support to protect the wrecks, and having received no acknowledgement from the government that such a problem existed, was in a strong position to publish a feature ar-

ticle on historic wreck conservation as a whole. This it did on 6th June, within days of the *Batavia's* blasting being announced. The article deserves quoting at some length as an illustration of how one section of the mass media can both inform and mould public opinion by its capacity to correlate random facts drawn from a number of different sources and by its ability to assess the relevance of the issue of conservation within an increasingly critical society. *The West Australian* commented:

The plundering of the State's historic shipwrecks goes on and on and on . . .

People who are concerned about the wanton vandalism report it to the W.A. Museum and complain about it in the press, the C.I.B. investigate it, police protection is occasionally promised, Parliament tightens up legislation.

And still it goes on, despite the 1964 amendment of the Museum Act to protect historic wrecks.

The worst case of plundering so far has been on the *Batavia*, wrecked in the Abrolhos 341 years ago. Mr Hugh Edwards, leader of last month's expedition to the vessel, described the blasting and looting as a national disaster.

But it is only an exclamation mark at the end of a long and dreary sentence.

The highly profitable business of looting began with the *Gilt Dragon* as long ago as 1963. In October of that year an explosion was heard at Ledge Point, several miles away. The wreck was badly damaged and many coins taken.

Another blast was reported in December and the C.I.B. investigated.

Clearly legislation was essential. In November 1963 Education Minister Lewis, who is responsible for the W.A. Museum, introduced in the Legislative Assembly a protective measure called the Museum Act Amendment Bill (Wrecks).

He said at the time: "One of the more readily accessible wrecks is already being exploited for gain with no regard for its historic value."

The Bill, which made it an offence to interfere with historic wrecks, became law in December 1963.

Sharks of many kinds have continued to swim over many wrecks since then with total disregard for the law.

One authority gravely concerned by the persistent looting says that \$250,000 has been lost by the State to the *Gilt Dragon* plunderers. Coins have been sold in thousands

from Bangkok to Rio de Janeiro and have so flooded the market that one of the world's leading coin dealers will no longer handle them. He claims that one skindiver sold 2 to 3 cwt. of poor-quality coins to the Perth Royal Mint. They were 92 to 94 per cent silver.

He is also concerned that reports of the plundering of the *Gilt Dragon* were made to the museum several times in 1966 and 1967 but plundering continued.

BAR OFFER

What appeared to be a particularly blatant case was reported in February 1969, when ballast bricks and coins were offered for sale in the public bar of the Yanchep Inn. The C.I.B. investigated but no charges were laid.

This matter was raised by Mr I. G. Medcalf in the Legislative Council in October. Subsequently, the chief of the C.I.B., Superintendent H. D. Burrows said that the C.I.B. had investigated alleged plundering of the wrecks of the *Gilt Dragon* and the *Batavia* and found the allegations to be unsubstantiated.

A week later in the Legislative Council Justice Minister Griffith, speaking on behalf of Police Minister Craig, said that no such statement had been made by the C.I.B. But he said that it was not intended to imply that there had been no recent plundering of the wrecks.

Understandably the public was confused.

In May last year Dr Colin Jack-Hinton, then curator of human studies at the museum, complained himself that blasting had destroyed relics and part of the *Gilt Dragon's* timber.

In his October speech Mr Medcalf also mentioned the *Batavia*.

He said that one section of it had been stripped to the reef. He claimed that a chest of bullion had been removed and that one cannon at least was being used as a mooring post for boats in the Abrolhos.

This week I spoke to a member of the 1963 *Batavia* expedition. He saw the *Batavia* again 15 months ago and said that anchors and cannon had been taken.

"The chest area was completely excavated," he said.

"I told the museum about it on two occasions—the last six or eight months ago—but I also told them I didn't think there was anything they could do.

"There's no way to stop wrecks being worked, even with heavier penalties."

Despoliation of the *Batavia* is also of concern because of damage already done to

Weibbe Hayes's fort on West Wallabi Island. The island has been reserved for the conservation of fauna but no legal protection exists for the fort, which is the oldest man-made structure in the State and of major historical importance.

The authority mentioned earlier believes that it could be destroyed, stone by stone, by people looking for coins.

INTENTION

For its 1964 legislation vesting old wrecks in the museum the State Government had, as its intention, the protection of wrecks from exploitation for gain. Loopholes were found and amendments were passed late last year in an attempt to close them.

But those who are concerned about looting claim that the validity of the legislation is doubtful.

In question is the State's claim to exercise jurisdiction over territorial waters, where most of the wrecks lie—and whether in fact it could sustain a prosecution.

This, suggests its critics, is one of the reasons why virtually no prosecutions have been launched.

Inspector A. J. Parker of the C.I.B. gave two other reasons for the difficulty in launching prosecutions.

"It is impossible to keep widely separated wrecks in remote areas under constant surveillance," he said.

"Also, divers and crayfishermen are not prohibited from wreck areas. They can work over a wreck as long as they don't remove anything.

"We see them from time to time but they simply say they are fishing."

Mr Medcalf does not subscribe to the theory that prosecutions have not been launched against looters because the Museum Act might be challenged.

"I don't believe the C.I.B. has been able to get the evidence," he said.

"What needs to be done is elementary. These most valuable wrecks must be put under permanent surveillance till the museum can do its work.

"For example the *Batavia* wreck is close to Beacon Island. Men should be stationed there. They should have a boat and radio contact with Geraldton.

"A Geraldton-based seaplane could be contacted and asked to take photographs of any suspicious activity.

"These men could also keep an eye on Weibbe Hayes's fort."

"Eventually material from the *Batavia* could be used to establish a unique museum

in Geraldton. It would be a wonderful tourist drawcard."

But will anything be left of the *Batavia*—and perhaps the *Zeewyck*, the *Zuytdorp* and the *Tryall*—to establish the museum?

Education Minister Lewis admits he is most concerned by the looting.

"It's like sheep-stealing," he said. "It's hard to get a conviction. But I see it as a question of shutting the door.

"I've asked the chairman of the Museum Board to put forward proposals for the recovery of relics quickly so that looters can be forestalled."

Mr Lewis has asked what staff and other resources would be needed.

"If more money is needed, I will have to make representations for it," he said.

COMMENTS

Museum director Dr David Ride had some comments to make.

On the sale of coins to the mint, he said: "I am aware that some silver from the *Gilt Dragon* was melted before the legislation of 1964. But I am confident that no material has been melted by the Royal Mint in Perth since then.

"The deputy-master has informed me that the mint would not melt any material from wrecks unless it has been registered in accordance with the Act."

Of plundering: "There is no doubt that the only way to deal with the problem is with a greatly increased effort to recover material. It is not possible to keep people away from wrecks."

There were two ways of doing this—by involving more institutions in the work and by increasing the museum's own effort.

The trustees had a policy to involve more institutions and giving the university permission to work on the *Batavia* was part of this policy, he said.

Clearly big-scale looting has been going on for years and everyone is concerned about it.

But precious little has been done to stop it.'

All the criticism arising from the obvious failure of the measures to protect the wrecks has so far been directed at the State Government whose apparent ineptitude and indifference has been the subject of much of the Press comment outlined above. Yet is this fair? In so far as the State Government is accountable to the electorate and must bear the ultimate responsibility for the actions or inactivities of its ministries the answer must be yes. Nevertheless,

the interaction between any government and its permanent administrative arm is so complex where policy-making and executive action is concerned that no swift judgement can take into account all the known factors, let alone the imponderables.

It is a truism that any government's scale of priorities and values must be different from many sections of the community over which it rules. Not only this, but in the normal course of events there is always a tendency for the government and its electorate to become increasingly dissociated as both groups have only an incomplete understanding of how the other's reactions change or are developed in a fluid political situation. Of course, any government is supposed to be kept in touch with the fluctuations of public opinion by its own party machinery, but on some occasions—as over the housing problem in 1969—the party's voice is apparently discounted by the government for reasons best known to itself. If only for added security, governments must develop a second source of trustworthy information on public opinion, preferably before opinions become public issues, and here an intelligent and discreet public service with its unique capacity to collect and assess information, exchange semi-confidential information between departments and its ability to provide advice for its ministers, has a great and usually undefinable effect on the government's policy-making machinery. Any modern government has therefore to rely upon its public service to such an extent and over such a wide area that politicians often fail to appreciate the political significance of the latter's rôle in collating and assessing data on which policy decisions have to be based. Closely linked with this function of the public service, but even more important, is that an efficient bureaucracy has to be selfless in order to give effective service to the government in power. The public service must always give advice to the government and recommended action on the basis that the government's priorities come first at all times and in all circumstances. Its discretionary powers—even its ability to carry out a holding action during some passing embarrassment—must be devoted to anticipating pitfalls which, if not avoided, would damage the image the current government wishes to present at home and abroad. Of course, such an altruistic bureaucracy has never existed and all permanent administrations struggle to maintain

as large a degree of independence from outside forces, whether political or otherwise, as circumstances permit. Thus there is always an uneasy relationship between a government and its administrative apparatus each advancing its claims and extending its sphere of influence at the expense of the other as circumstances permit. Under a complacent or inept government a situation develops in which the bureaucratic tail begins to wag the political dog.

One of the major signs of the emergence of a dominant bureaucracy lies in the quality of the advice it appears to be giving the government. It seems likely in Western Australia that the government's priorities have been subordinated to those of the public service in some areas, though it is also true that some of the actions of the government have been instrumental in reinforcing this process. So far as the conservation of the State's historic wrecks is concerned, the lack of an Attorney General for a number of years may have meant that reliable legal advice has not been readily available during Cabinet meetings. Similarly, the absence of committees of account has resulted in there being for a number of years no effective assessment of the scale and direction of the civil service's expenditure of public moneys. The upshot is easy to see. Five years ago, had the State Government been given adequate advice from its legal experts and civil service, it would have been relatively easy to reach an agreement with the Commonwealth Government which would have safeguarded the *Gilt Dragon* and *Batavia*. Now the position is far different because the definition of territorial waters, either State or Commonwealth, has so many implications for both the Commonwealth and State's fiscal positions. The State Government may well have felt during the last ten months that it must ignore requests for some consultation with the Commonwealth Government because this might be interpreted as showing a lack of confidence in its claim to possess territorial waters. The public are now aware that a considerable body of opinion within the State, including that of several Q.Cs, believes that the State's legislation to protect its historic wrecks may be *ultra vires* and that such an opinion was available to the civil service in 1964 at the time when the Museum Amendment Act was allegedly forced through parliament.

Conflicts in law are far from being unusual: what is unusual is the policy which the State

Government was apparently advised to pursue in the circumstances. The bureaucracy, secure in the knowledge that bullion possibly worth over a million dollars together with many tons of rare and possibly unique relics remained in these wrecks, might have been expected to have advised the relevant minister that both on professional and political grounds the wrecks should receive some priority. After all, the State's reputation would have been enhanced throughout the Commonwealth and overseas, the historic wrecks' tourist potential explored, and, in the event of a challenge from Canberra concerning the basis of its protective legislation, the State could have pointed to its active concern in that field. In short, the Liberal Government of Western Australia would have increased its political credit in Canberra, given Mr Gorton another project to add to his conservation programme (which had tended to centre on the Great Barrier Reef) and strengthened its hand in any future negotiations with the Commonwealth Government. So far as any outsider can observe, the reverse has happened, and the government has been laid open to criticism here and in Canberra. Any shortcomings in the public service's handling of the conservation of aboriginal sacred sites and Western Australia's historic wrecks have suddenly been wrenched from their bureaucratic context and thrown into the political area. What will emerge from this is uncertain, but if the uneasy coalition between the Liberal and Country parties finally does break down it may be over such an issue. All three Country Party ministries in Western Australia have been under pressure during the last two years and the problems of all three appear to involve the variable quality of bureaucratic advice at the ministers' disposal.

So far as the State's historic wrecks are concerned, what evidence there is seems to suggest that the State Government may well be only indirectly responsible for the blasting of first the *Gilt Dragon* and then the *Batavia*. Though State funds have many calls on them, lack of money for an effective wreck programme does not seem to be the sole, or even the major cause, of the present crisis. The State is able to provide \$180,000 for a collection of antique imported motor cars over a period of nine years and a sum of \$238,000 has been found to renovate the Fremantle Lunatic Asylum as a Maritime Museum. In such approaches as outside auth-

orities have made to the Treasury with the hope of being able to aid in the programme of wreck recovery, the government has shown a readiness to help.³² From this it appears that the State's administration has in the past given Western Australia's historic wrecks a low priority, minimizing or discarding reports of damage to them, and been instrumental in issuing misleading statements concerning their protection—apparently with the hope of being left free to concentrate upon a building programme. The State Government is culpable only in that it seems to have accepted advice from its senior public servants without seeking an independent assessment of the position. The result is plain to see: the State now possesses two fine museum buildings and also two heavily damaged 17th century wrecks which were unique in Australia's history.

So far as any observer can judge at the present time, the immediate reaction of the administration substantiates this interpretation of its motives. Unconsciously following the lines of classical management theory, it set about repairing the damage to its mystique and status on predictable lines. An independent assessment of the damage to the *Batavia* was precluded by the omission of police divers from the party sent up to survey the condition of what is, after all, Crown property. This did not escape *The West Australian*. Secondly, oblique attempts were made to shift the blame for damage to wreck sites from the administration and on to the State Government. Just before leaving the State last year, a former chief wreck investigator commented on 'the W.A. Museum's disappointing progress in the detailed investigation of galleon wrecks', and called for help from overseas museums,³³ yet recently he was reported as saying that if it became urgent to excavate two historic wrecks 'the State Government should help with money'.³⁴ Thirdly, a statement was released to the Press obviously designed to mollify public opinion: '“There has been no evidence that much looting has taken place since the Museum Act became law”.' Technical opinion was handled with some freedom: 'Laboratory examination has shown that the mould of an object previously thought to have been a bar of silver taken by looters is probably a cavity left by the rusting away of an iron musket barrel'.³⁵ (Apart from the fact that the *Batavia* is unlikely to have carried muskets with octagonal barrels bearing incuse stamps,

the dimensions of a corroded musket found shattered in calcareous rubble on Goss Island were different.)

Nevertheless, it may well be that the previous administrative norms will not be re-established, if only because other factors have now entered the situation. The recent amnesty on materials taken from wrecks may have been disappointing in terms of artifacts taken from the *Batavia* and other wrecks,³⁶ but it brought to light a number of moulded coins. These now join the many scores of similar pieces known to have been recovered in the Eastern States. As the C.I.B. possess coin moulds, presumably commissioned with the intention of counterfeiting Crown property, the whole question of wreck conservation is not likely to emerge from the thickets of criminal law for some time. Also, of course, the intervention of the Press and the increasing attention being given to the problem of conservation by members of both political parties now serve as external monitors. This development may slow down the tendency to revert to the earlier situation where it seems that sections of the public administration were virtually autonomous within the governmental structure.

It would be unduly purist to conclude any account of the blasting of the *Batavia* without recording some impressions of the working of the governmental machinery. The State's experience with its historic wrecks does suggest that, irrespective of the party in power, it may be unwise to avoid reshuffling ministers over a period as long as eleven years. Though this is a point of academic dispute, if an individual minister is identified with one portfolio throughout the whole of a particular administration, it seems that there is a mounting danger that the delicate balance between administrative advice and the minister's own assessment of the situation may be upset. This threat is all the more severe when new responsibilities are loaded on to an existing ministry with apparently insufficient thought being given to the consequences. The present Ministry for Education has probably suffered in this way. The strain of being responsible for the State's educational programme, the advancement of the aboriginal and the protection of the State's cultural heritage must be increasingly severe as the State grows. Any future State Government in Western Australia may find it advisable to increase the num-

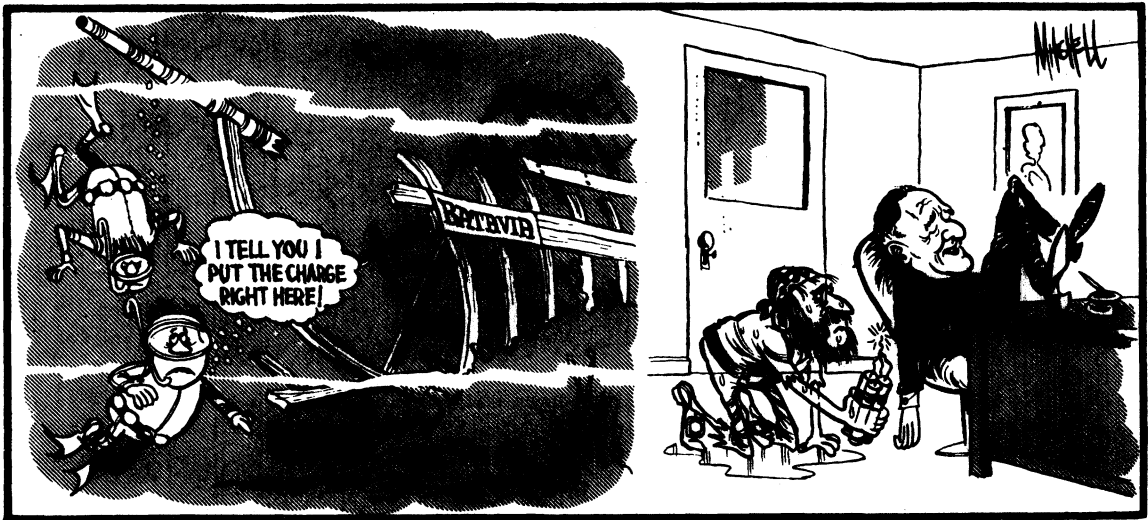
ber of portfolios in the interest of both the Cabinet and the community. Of course, no one underestimates the difficulties inherent in such a move. A balance has to be maintained if two political parties are to form a workable government, though one of the best ways of doing this may lie in creating several new ministries rather than in warning one political party not to contest seats held by ministers of the other party in the coalition.³⁷

If a ministry has fallen victim to the increasing demands of a developing State, sympathy must also be extended to the members of the State Museum's Board whose concern and capacity has come under scrutiny. The process by which a predominantly natural science museum became saddled with the task of inspection (and apparently policing) of the State's historic wrecks seems obscure, but it was certainly beyond the museum's capacity when it accepted the responsibility in 1964. Even discounting the mounting pressure against non-specialist management boards,³⁸ the Museum Trustees are faced with a task which the Ancient Monuments Commission and the Ministry of Works combined find taxing in the U.K. How long this situation will continue remains to be seen, but it is patently unfair that a collection of individuals should be blamed because they were incorrectly or insufficiently advised nearly seven years ago. In view of the damage already inflicted on first the *Gilt Dragon* and now the *Batavia*, a new policy towards the State's historic wrecks seems necessary if the State's heritage and tourist potential is to be saved. The time has passed when a programme of survey, excavation and conservation had to be geared to the capacities of its slowest section. If outside funds have not been sought with the necessary application, presumably because the employment of such sums within the present structure might involve the worsening of existing bottlenecks and an increase in overall expenditure, this policy should now be reviewed. In such matters as these, any non-specialist Board which must base its opinions on information channelled through and filtered by the public service, may find itself becoming increasingly out of touch with a developing situation. The access which such a group of individuals has to outside sources of information can be restricted by a committee system whose function to outside observers seems to be directed more to the preservation of the existing large measure of

administrative autonomy than to a swift and realistic appraisal of changing circumstances. It is one of the ironies surrounding the scandal of the *Batavia* that the Dutch, who were amongst the first nations to work out a system of what we now know as administration by committees, have now had two of their cultural prizes heavily damaged through the shortcomings of the same system.

In yet another way, non-specialist Boards may become increasingly vulnerable as a result of the *Batavia's* blasting. It is only to be expected that government departments will continue to try to preserve or even heighten their status by keeping an aura of secrecy round their activities and especially their relations with other departments and the relevant ministries. In this way the mystique of administrative omniscience is preserved in the eyes of ministers, public opinion is moulded by screened Press releases, and the way is kept open for empire-building. Just as generals like big armies so public servants like big buildings, whether new or refurbished, and as a result are always tempted to claim a greater degree of competence for their departments than pressures allow in order to present the appearance of complete

control to the sources of patronage within the State. Occasionally this temptation may become an obsession because the avenues of advancement open to senior civil servants have never lain within the bureaucratic hierarchy alone. Since the Northcote-Trevelyan report the glittering prizes of professorial appointments, even vice-chancellorships, have dangled before the grasp of civil servants—perhaps having an adverse effect upon their efficiency in their existing positions. In consequence, whereas the successful civil servant may advance through a cross-appointment, lesser figures including non-specialist bodies remain behind to face increasingly violent criticism and to cope with a mess not of their own making. In such circumstances it may be dangerous for the community if recommendations to prosecute any alleged offender against the State's laws should depend upon any public servant or official body whose activities and efficiency may come under scrutiny during the subsequent trial. As R. H. S. Crossman said in the House of Commons during the Philby case: '... the greatest temptation in the world is to use secrecy not in the national interest but in the departmental interest ... to cover up.'



NOTES

¹ 'Batavia silver looting alleged', *The West Australian*, 2nd June, 1970. Ten cubic feet was an error in the account.

² 'Members want answers' *The Independent*, 2nd November, 1969.

³ 'Bid for stricter law on wrecks', *The West Australian*, 10th October, 1969.

⁴ In the case of the wreck of the English merchantman the *Tryall* which was wrecked off the Monte Bello Islands in 1622, the legal position is made more complicated by the fact that maps of different dates show 'Tryall Rocks', where the vessel was presumed lost, in different areas of the archipelago. Their present positioning dates from 1923 when the Admiralty accepted a report submitted by Lt. Gould in which he identified the Tryall Rocks with what had been known previously as the Ritchie Reef or Greyhound Shoals. So far as the definition of Western Australia's state boundaries or territorial waters is concerned, other difficulties present themselves. *The West Australian* summed up the situation on 7th November, 1969:

'An 1890 gazettal of State seaward boundaries—which has never been changed—says they are lines extending from the northernmost, westernmost and southernmost extremities of W.A. . . . which would put W.A. territory within 250 miles of Indonesia.

. . . The Land Act says that crown land ends at low-water mark. And the Fisheries Act defines W.A. waters generally as those three miles from high-water mark.'

⁵ 'Sharks of a different kind around the wrecks', *The West Australian*, 6th June, 1970.

⁶ I am grateful to Eric Car, Technical Officer in charge of the Fremantle Conservation Laboratory, for this information which was gathered by him and his staff during the process of conserving the artifacts recovered from the *Batavia*.

⁷ 'Batavia silver looting alleged', *The West Australian*, 2nd June, 1970; 'Blast-grab haul from Batavia is valuable', *Sunday Times*, 31st May, 1970.

⁸ I am grateful to Dr J. de Laeter, Head of the Department of Physics, West Australian Institute of Technology, for an analytical report on this conglomerate.

⁹ For the latest proposal for such a ministry see 'Council sets down conservation aims' in *The West Australian*, 3rd July, 1970. See also *The West Australian*, 17th April, 1970.

¹⁰ Mr Harman to Minister for Lands. Question in Legislative Assembly, 7th April, 1970.

¹¹ Mr Harman to Minister for Native Welfare. Question in Legislative Assembly, 8th April, 1970.

¹² *The West Australian*, 16th April, 1970.

¹³ *The Australian*, 25th March, 1969.

¹⁴ Cf. 'Sharks of a different kind around the wrecks', *The West Australian*, 6th June, 1970.

¹⁵ Cf. 'The curse of the Gilt Dragon', *The Independent*, 22nd June, 1969. Also 'Members want answers', *The Independent*, 2nd November, 1969.

¹⁶ *The West Australian*, 6th June, 1970.

¹⁷ 'An open go', *The West Australian*, 2nd June, 1970.

¹⁸ *The West Australian*, 6th June, 1970.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 15th June, 1970.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 14th November, 1969.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 2nd October, 1970.

²² 'C.I.B. investigating looting of wrecks', *The West Australian*, 2nd October, 1969; 'C.I.B. says wrecks not looted', *ibid.*, 5th October, 1969; 'Statement on wrecks denied', *ibid.*, 10th October, 1969.

²³ *Ibid.*, 2nd October, 1969.

²⁴ 'Law on wrecks a sham, says MLA', *ibid.*, 6th November, 1969.

²⁵ 'MLC seeks review on shipwreck laws', *ibid.*, 23rd October, 1969; 'Confusion on wrecks deep in murky water', *The Independent*, 9th November, 1969.

²⁶ 'Members want answers', *The Independent*, 2nd November, 1969. This protest made to the Premier appears to have been made a week after an article was published by *The Independent* outlining the conflicting statements on wreck conservation made by government spokesmen. It ran: 'Added to the confusion was the conflict between the statement from the chief of the CIB, Superintendent H. D. Burrows, early this month, that investigations showed no looting of the wrecks, and the denial by the Minister for Justice, Mr Arthur Griffith, that any investigation had been made by the CIB.

There has been no further explanation of this credibility gap between State Government departments'. See 'Legal confusion aids plunderers', *The Independent*, 26th October, 1969.

²⁷ 'Diver's evidence of Batavia looting', *The Independent*, 7th June, 1970.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2nd November, 1969.

- 29 Channel Two, 'Today Tonight' programme, 6th November, 1969.
30 'Diver's evidence of Batavia looting', *The Independent*, 7th June, 1970.
31 *Ibid.*, 9th November, 1969.
32 'Wrecks; help from State', *The West Australian*, 17th June, 1970.
33 'We need help—expert', *Sunday Times*, 15th June, 1969.
34 'Money snag in wreck study—expert', *The West Australian*, 15th June, 1970.
35 'Navy divers to examine the Batavia', *ibid.*, 3rd July, 1970.
36 'WA Museum extends wrecks ultimatum', *ibid.*, 2nd April, 1970.
37 'Sir David warns on election clashes with C.P.', *ibid.*, 8th June, 1970.
38 'Serventy: abolish King's Park Board', *ibid.*, 23rd April, 1970. See also the reply, *ibid.*, 24th April, 1970.

THE PLATES

- COVER: *Cannon 14, encrustation blown off by explosion.*
- PLATE 1: *Cannon 15, foreshortened, showing rubble left by explosion, and erosion.*
- PLATE 2: *Cannon 13, unblasted area shows piles of encrusted material.*
- PLATE 3: *Two black powder unconserved measures.*
- PLATE 4: *Black powder measure after treatment.*
- PLATE 5: *Seventeenth Century barber-surgeon's bleeding bowls.*
- PLATE 6: *Bleeding bowls as found with impression of lower bowl in black conglomerate.*
- PLATE 7: *Conglomerate bearing impressions, one of which may have been spit silver bar.*
- PLATE 8: *Objects found in black conglomerate bearing impression of barber-surgeon's bleeding bowls.*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to *The West Australian* for permission to reprint two articles and to reproduce a cartoon, and to *The Independent*. The University Senate Committee for Marine Archaeology owes a debt of gratitude to D. R. Scott, acting Head of the University Department of Geography and G. N. Ward, chief of the cartography section within the same department, for providing the sketch map of the *Batavia* site to assist the Western Australian Museum's diving team.

I would also like to record my thanks to Hugh Edwards who took the underwater photographs for the survey expedition and to Dr I. M. Crawford and Eric Car for permission to photograph the artifacts whilst they were under treatment in the Fremantle Conservation Laboratory.

THE ABORTION OF THE BILL

The tragi-comic progress of the abortion law reform bill through the W.A. Parliament was instructive on several counts. It showed the government's inability to face emotional and controversial social issues, the intellectual fragmentation of the A.L.P. as a force in W.A. for social reform, and the decline of the D.L.P. from its position as an educated anti-communist voice into sectarian and sexual hysteria. More than anything else, perhaps, the bill illustrated how wide the gap has become between the views of the would-be reformers and the entrenched orthodoxy of all the represented political parties.

But of the whole unedifying spectacle, the most disquieting part was the revelation of the intellectual calibre of West Australia's sovereign law-making body.

Seldom has there been such an opportunity for pet prejudices and irrational beliefs to be paraded before the local community, and seldom has the legislature covered itself with less credit in the process.

The bill—The Termination of Pregnancy Act—introduced during the Autumn session of 1970 by Liberal M.L.C. Dr J. G. Hislop, was the third he had put before the house on abortion. The first had been allowed to lapse in order to give time for its consideration, the second, after having passed with some amendments in the Council in 1968, was ruled out of order on a technicality in the Assembly. By 1970 the reforms it had advocated had been substantially adopted in South Australia.

During 1968, an organised campaign to defeat abortion law reform had been carried on in Western Australia. I attended one suburban meeting arranged as part of this campaign, when my interest was first aroused by the emotional, revivalistic atmosphere and the air of unreality and irrationality, indeed anti-rationality, in which statements were made. "All I know is, I will never allow my child to be *murdered!*" for example, was sure of a heavy round of applause and even cheering, while the reasoned statements in favour of the status quo were heard in silence. "Work on your politicians!" was another catch-cry. In any event, the committed minority had its way. Those, minority or not, who were in favour of reform, remained invisible and did relatively nothing to make their views heard. It was certainly no secret that the Catholic church, either through the hierarchy or through lay organisations, left little undone to oppose reform.

Perhaps two of the arguments advanced at the meeting I attended were worth noting:

Australia needed a bigger population (Why? And what difference would abortion make apart from a drop in or out of the bucket? One is reminded of those somewhat bizarre headlines in the more sectarian newspapers of the 1930s:

ANOTHER DIVISION LOST THROUGH CONTRACEPTION!) and that the abortion of deformed babies would stop researches into the causes of deformity in babies (No, I am not pulling anyone's leg. This was seriously said by one of the panel who had taken it upon themselves to inform the public of the issues).

It is perhaps as well to summarise here the South Australian legislation already in effect, reached after a non-party vote in the State Parliament. Had it passed, W.A.'s legislation would probably have been similar, or more restrictive:

Abortion would be allowed if it was considered continuing pregnancy involved greater risk to the mental or physical health of the mother, or if there was a substantial risk that the child would suffer from such mental or physical abnormality as to be seriously handicapped.

The approval of two doctors was required, and the operation had to be performed at a prescribed hospital. The act allowed doctors and nurses to decline to perform an abortion if it was against their personal beliefs.

It is not my part here to weary the reader with further repetition of the arguments for and against abortion that have been so well aired in recent months. My concern is with the sociological implications of the debate itself.

By the time of the third Hislop bill a group called the Abortion Law Reform Association had been organised to support it (Its most vocal opponents were organised under the name "Generation"). On March 17, the president of the Abortion Law Reform Association, Mrs E. Smyth, was quoted in the "Daily News" as saying that people interviewed in Subiaco had been 5 to 1 in favour of changes in the W.A. laws. A sample of 700 or 800 had been interviewed. An earlier survey in Floreat Park had given a 6 to 1 majority in favour of change.¹

On March 17, "The West Australian" said in an editorial: "Whether Dr Hislop raises the matter or not in the Legislative Council, the Legislative Assembly should be given an opportunity during the new parliamentary session to express its views on abortion reform.

The question is too important in itself to be put aside: In addition, Parliament should not allow it to rest after the unsatisfactory way in which Dr Hislop's bill was dropped last year . . . Abortions will always be performed, legally or illegally. The question is who should carry them out and in what circumstances. There are compelling humanitarian as well as moral reasons for extending the law on the termination of pregnancies."

The Hislop bill was, in fact, an extremely modest measure of reform, which would not have done much more than clarify the mish-mash of existing legislation.

Four days after this editorial, "The West Australian" published a letter from D.L.P. State Secretary John Martyr: "The D.L.P. is appalled that once again attempts are to be made to legalise abortion . . ."²

The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Perth, Dr L. J. Goody, issued a statement on March 24: "I understand that for the second time in 12 months a Bill in Parliament is to be debated which proposes further to facilitate the destruction of unborn children . . . Parliaments in South Australia or in Great Britain or in Japan may pass laws, but these do not change the Divine law. The Roman Catholic Church has her duty to proclaim what she is convinced is the law of God.

All men are bound to obey this law, whatever human statutes attempt to legislate to the contrary."³

On March 24 Dr Hislop reintroduced his bill in the Council with two small changes to overcome the constitutional obstacle on which it had previously foundered—those that involve charges on the revenue of the crown. Provisions that the Public Health Commissioner approve hospitals in which an abortion might be carried out, and that special reports be made to the commissioner in the event of a woman dying as a result of an abortion were deleted.

Dr Goody, speaking in Easter Eve sermons, said: "Australian tragedies in Vietnam are in their hundreds, slaughter on our roads is in its thousands, innocent human lives destroyed by abortion are in their tens of thousands.

It seems the greater the tragedy the more silent and muted is the protest."

Before and after the bill's introduction a fierce exchange was carried on in the letters column of local newspapers. For example, Mrs Doris Martyr wrote on March 30: "The effect of Dr Hislop's bill for legalised abortion to preserve 'The physical health of the mother' would be to give abortion on demand."⁴

On April 7 an Australia-wide Gallup Poll showed a finding in favour of the legalisation of abortion in some circumstances, and on April 25 the bill passed in the Legislative Council. For a non-party measure the voting was on curiously party lines. All the Liberal and Country Party Members supported it, with the exception of Mr T. O. Perry (C.P.), and all the A.L.P. opposed it, with the exception of R. F. Claughton, B.A.

Dr Hislop, by now in poor health, had little to say in the Council debate. From a social point of view, the words most worthy of record were those of the W.A. Parliament's only woman member, Mrs Ruby Hutchison:

"I think the matter before us could have been left alone and I do not admire the person who introduced it . . . I am amazed that a doctor of the standing of Dr Hislop should bring a bill such as this into a House of Parliament to be voted on and decided by a lot of men. Apart from me, there is not a woman here and I am making my protest now.

I repeat that I think this is an impertinence to women. I will not delay the house any longer; however, I am not going to vote on this bill. I am going out to have a cup of tea." (She didn't. She stayed and voted.)

"I am hoping that the bill will be soundly defeated and that men will start to think with a little more reason and realize what they owe to their own wives and families. They take wives and then come here and talk about abortion, which is merely the murder of an unborn child. I do not agree with it and *I think that women who do not want children should not get married and should live a chaste life on their own.*" (My emphasis.)

In the committee stage in the Council, 10 amendments were made to the bill in the Council, with a general tendency to emasculate it.

On April 28 Mr M. C. Williams (Lib., Bunbury) attempted to introduce the bill in the Legislative Assembly. He was stopped on a point of order by Mr J. J. Brady (Lab., Swan).

Mr Williams said he was introducing the bill because he feared it would lapse for want of a mover, and many people had told him it should be discussed in the Assembly and a decision made. He had delivered half his speech when Mr Brady objected on the grounds that he was reading the speech. (Apparently no-one had told the W.A. Parliament that in the Federal house not only are back-benchers allowed to read their speeches, but a lectern is provided for the purpose.)

Mr Brady said back-benchers' speeches were not allowed to be read. Dr G. G. Henn (Lib., Wembley) moved to disagree. He said Mr Williams was doing a service to the house and the community. The Premier, Sir David Brand, and the Minister for Industrial Development, Mr Charles Court, spoke in favour of Mr Williams being allowed to continue, but a division was not called for.

"A miserable point" it was called by "The West Australian" in an editorial on April 30. "The Assembly is master of its own affairs and could easily have found a way round this if members had any heart for the full and decisive debate that such an important social measure warrants . . . that the legislation might have lapsed for want of a mover says little for the Assembly's willingness to come to grips, even on a non-party basis, with an urgent social question. The Government itself should be taking the lead instead of leaving the initiative to a back-bencher."

The bill was re-introduced in a manner not objected to, and the wearisome debate began.

The opposition benches provided the two most notable speeches of the debate. In a way, they summarised the worst and best of the Labor Party's moral conscience. All quotes below are from Hansard for May 13, and may be found for reference between pages 3981 and 3988. (This is not to say there were not many, many others.)

Mr Brady: "I know that one could go on for three-quarters of an hour quoting what has happened in England where even now they are beginning to go back on what has been done because of the number of people going to England for package deals in connection with abortions. One could cite the situation in Singapore where \$1,250,000 has been spent so that people can have abortions at will at the cost of about 50c a time. Just imagine doctors in Western Australia carrying out abortions at 50c a time!"

Mr Brady did not make it clear if he was aware that the Singapore Government's action has also been hailed as a courageous and necessary measure for a City-State with no land, a gigantic population, little prospect for Industrial Expansion or employment opportunities and a small number of people actually starving. Nor did he make clear the relevance of his remarks to Western Australia. He continued:

"It is regrettable that this important matter is so often dealt with in a very flippant manner. One term that was used when I was a young man was, 'Mr So-and-so is travelling for a slipper factory'. That is the type of language used by what I believe to be the uncouth element in our community, the element that has no sense of responsibility and takes every licence it wants. Those people advocate, to justify their behaviour, that these laws to allow for abortion should be brought in."

Dr Hislop's opponents had called him many things, but I believe this was the first time he had been called "uncouth" even by implication. Mr Brady had earlier made some remarks on the "permissive society". He elaborated on these a little later:

"My final word is this: I have read in letters and articles, and I have heard many people state, that the woman should be the final person to make the decision; it is her body and she has the final say. That is a point of view, and people are entitled to express that point of view, but as an ordinary layman—I am not a specialist—I would say this bill will ultimately reduce women to chattels. I do not go round with my eyes shut; I see what is going on. We see houses of ill-fame all over Australia; we hear that people would like to have more of them. We know that various types of medicine are being hawked around. In fact, I heard it said that when certain preventatives were handed out in the army, the young chaps were told 'Make sure you use them'."

Mr A. W. Bickerton (Lab., Pilbara): "What would be the use of giving them to them if they did not use them?"

Mr Brady: "That is just a slant. Many a man has gone through the army and other institutions without having occasion to use them, and some have entered married life without having to use them.

I have actually heard of men coming home from the war and their wives agreeing that their normal marital status would not be restored, briefly, because of the circumstances that would follow an increase in the family.

These things must be considered. They are rather delicate matters, but in my opinion the woman in the community has a standing. There is an old saying that the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. I believe there is a lot in that. I for one, do not want women to lose their standing in the community. *I sometimes wonder whether equal rights are in the best interest of women . . .*" (My emphasis.)

Some of the spectators in the gallery were possibly still trying to work out what Mr Brady meant about preventatives and slipper factories, and what their relation to the bill under debate was, when Mr Bickerton spoke. His speech was possibly the best of the debate, if only by virtue of the open and lucid mind it revealed.

“We do not have a matter of compulsion before us,” he said. “We have before us a bill dealing with the termination of pregnancy, which is a question of whether a female shall decide to discuss with her doctor—there are other provisions in the bill which are more restrictive—whether her pregnancy should be terminated . . . It certainly does not compel any woman to have an abortion who does not think along these lines, or even to discuss it with her medical practitioner.

I often wonder, whether, as males, we are competent to discuss this question. I wonder whether it should not be the womenfolk who happen to be pregnant who should make the decision on this issue, and not us. Are we authorities on abortion and pregnancy? Surely to goodness if a woman can decide whether or not she will have an appendectomy or a hysterectomy, she should be in a position to discuss with her medical practitioner whether or not she should have an abortion. Are we in a position to say that this should not be so? . . . as it is now, I believe the bill is extremely restrictive, and if the amendments on the notice paper are carried, they will make it more so. Nevertheless, once this legislation is on our Statute book, it can be amended from time to time. At least we will have made a starting point to overcome something which in the past has been pushed away into dark lanes and back alleyways.”

Credit must also go to another A.L.P. member, Mr C. J. Jamieson (Fremantle) for drawing attention to something that had been forgotten by many of the representatives: That there was substantial evidence that a big majority of the people wanted a change in the law.

When it came to the vote, of course, the proposed legislation was overwhelmingly defeated. The 14-31 division was by no means as clear on party lines as it had been in the Council, with five labor men supporting the bill. Evidence has since emerged that the Liberal and Labor parliamentarians who voted against the bill did so in defiance of the rank-and-file of their own parties, as well as the wishes of an unknown number, but more than possibly a majority, of their electors.⁵

It is perhaps appropriate to leave the last public word on this singularly depressing episode to Mr John Martyr, writing the D.L.P's political notes in “The West Australian” on May 21:

“Victory for Common law and common sense was achieved in the Legislative Assembly when the foul debris of the abortion bill was swept out.

Parliament and people are not bamboozled by editorial trumpeting and feline strumpetings before or after the throwout.”

(Mr Martyr did not make clear what he meant by ‘feline strumpetings’. I have read a science-fiction novel called “The Wanderer”, in which the hero has a love affair with a giant female cat, one of the crew of a trans-dimensional space-ship, but this can hardly be what he had in mind.)

But on a more serious level, this is not a matter for poking fun at oratorical infelicities. Abortion was and remains an urgent social problem.

A member of the cabinet told me that most Members of Parliament had decided to maintain the status quo as the safest course of action. In other words, it was safest to act as if no reform was necessary. And if abortion could not get a hearing (it is necessary to remember that, despite all that was said so often, the bill was NOT to legalise abortion, but to clarify the law relating to it), what

chance would other, perhaps even more controversial but less urgent (for those not directly concerned) social issues have?

Western Australian law regarding homosexuality and prostitution, for example, is archaic. To the public, it would appear from newspaper letters, the question is whether these things should be legalised, with the occasional rider that prostitution prevents rape. Both practices are at present prohibited, by a law which cannot be enforced, and whose existence therefore brings the law as a whole into disrepute, quite apart from providing opportunities for corruption and blackmail on the part of the police and others. At the same time, provisions for rehabilitating the miserable people forced into these ways of life by personality disorders or other circumstances remain in the dark ages. Indeed what rehabilitation does exist is often considered secondary to punishment (not, certainly, by most welfare experts, but by the community as a whole).

The divorce laws, with their provisions for slow, cruel and often ruinously expensive procedure, should also have been overhauled many years ago, and also seem to have no chance for reform in the immediate future, whatever the example of more enlightened countries.

Within the Australian Commonwealth, the W.A. Parliament is responsible for the laws of a sovereign State. Its powers are clearly defined in the Commonwealth constitution. There is no reason why W.A. should not catch up with more advanced parts of the world in these matters, indeed, no reason why it should not be a pioneer—except the calibre of our legislature and its electors.

REFERENCES:

- 1 *Daily News*, March 17
- 2 *West Australian*, March 21
- 3 *Daily News*, March 24
- 4 *West Australian*, March 30
- 5 *West Australian*, May 29

ENDPIECE

ON THE WAY TO POETRY CITY

Poetry, yes, now you've said it. Well, it comes straight from the head; but a lot is lost / when? When the pen is in the hand, the eye is on the page.

First, the Head. Is boiling all the time. Stewing & Mixing: fact/memory; deceit/truth; money anxieties/other poems. A unit of thought lies in lower consciousness, is acted upon, reacts to, everything that comes in—did this itself at its own level. Lies there for months, weeks, years; then surfaces, a submarine.

Second, the Physical. The head is limited :: by the Page, the Pen. The Physical, moving, of the hand. Education, (could also be in 1st Process. Length of freetime to write. Size, of the page. Very Important, size of the Page. Is very important. The limitations of actual, visual, WORD. So use the Limitations :: write one word on the largest page (butcher or fish'n'chip paper is ideal. Call it a Poem. EXPLOIT THE LIMITATIONS then duck as the cultured ones race in to help, to tell you, Fr Milton considered it of Primary Importance to see more than One Word. & even, that is to say, many.

Third, what the poem Says. Is up to You. Do Not follow fashion / let it be INDIVIDUAL. As the Poet so the Poem. Evolve. Statement and Statement, CO relating. Juxtapose. The Subject is, as you Are, at the Time of the Poem.

Four, the question of Audience. I don't know :: I ask you. Should the Poet write for an audience, or, for Himself? If you write for an audience, you are dictated to by that audience. You lose Aesthetic/Personal integrity. Yet, to write solely for yourself, no need to write at all / just think. (The true poem never gets written, it stays in the head. The use of pen shows a desire to communicate. The use of words.

1

What I do is. Write all and everything I want to write : : send what will communicate enough to a magazine. DO NOT TAILOR MAKE THE POEM FOR THE MAGAZINE'S STYLE, o Diabolical Deed, that you should even entertain such an idea!

My oneword Poems, my Personal Statements, are, perhaps, best suited for my friends. Together / talk about it, or, forget it. (Who cares, there are more. E.G.: my poem—

e

To me that says :: loe, be, boe, bole, elo, ole, bloe—all combinations of B L O and E. I like it visually, too, design. Another example:

5, when cthe Family.

That, to me, is the ultimate. Dadaistic. Chance :: I found it, a printer/s error, in the laneway of the "WEST AUSTRALIAN".

a.

It is possible I contradict myself in this, Statement of Poetics. My ideas are unformulated. Changing, day to day. My poetry may contradict my statement. That is probable. Theory follows the Poem. A Fact.

2

Where am I going? Towards poetry city. Where my head will be pretty. And calm. No money anxiety, no urinal fear. No poses, intentional or not.

Money. Now you've said the other thing. A poet should be a labourer. A poet that writes poetry and that is all, will drift into writing nothing. (Maybe he will still be poet-in-the-head but we won't know.

No need for pick and shovel. A labourer in as much as you work. With other people. That's where it's at :: with Other People. Abstractions are groovy / but built on reality. (Which is real to what person is a complicated question. (And won't get answered.

I work as a Radio Copywriter. I have worked as pick and shovel, furniture truckee, cold store factory worker, auctioneer's assistant, real estate salesman (didn't sell much, I read their books, & didn't sell their houses), sausage roll & pie maker, cleaner in a Police Depot . . . but all this helped. Experience and went through Process One.

(I'm unsure of working with words all day. Creativity sometimes :: Words all the time. Maybe, it drains the energy to use Words when it is the time of the poem. Sometimes the Time of the Poem is the time of Work. That's a hangup. Maybe I should get on a truck again. It is a Question unresolved. What I'd like to do.

Is :: live on Book Reviews, selling poetry/short stories/articles to magazines, and maybe run a little printing press. But I am impractical. Would need an accountant. (Am even now too lazy/impractical to send literature to magazine.

a.

It would have been easier to not write poetry. I could not, as I am, stop writing poetry. Is poetry of Immortal Nature worth attaining to the detriment of my own happiness, in this only life. Or is happiness, fed belly, wife dressed, child educated worth more? Is the conflict of Poetry to Reality only in my head ; and maybe it is the making of Immortal poetry to be in some conflict.

3

My son wears a bib, illustrated. A clown, balancing, juggling in bright colours once but now somewhat faded. This morning I saw it, not as a clown, but, as a poet. Balancing. Juggling. Constantly Risking Absurdity.

ANDREW BURKE

PRACTICES IN THE PRACTICE OF CRITICISM

Come live with me and be my Love.

Here the subtle change of vowel between 'live' and 'Love'—pointed by Love's being with a capital letter—so emphasising which is the more important, and thus imprinting a major theme on our minds—links these two words as denoting—and connoting—similar things, but yet with a slight difference—they are indeed not the same. Life and love are different; and the poet lightly plays with an added richness—that of Love's having two senses: the abstract emotion (implicit) and the woman beloved (explicit).

A gown made of the finest wool.

This is a fine line. Even if we did not know from the facts established in America—that Marlowe was a political agent of Walsingham's and that he met his early death in a people's tavern brawl—that Marlowe was a realist (Eliot would add a comic realist) of a highly developed social and political consciousness, we could nevertheless induce these things from the same consciousness transparent in this line. Marlowe was aware that in spite of horizons expanding to the West, the Flanders wool trade (Flanders wool—finest wool: the alliteration alone would suggest it) was still the basis of England's Renaissance industry. We are now more aware of the continuity between Middle Ages and Renaissance. A gown made in such a way as Marlowe here describes would be a necessity in the English climate, which this Canterbury shoemaker's son would perforce know so well, if only because the Elizabethan theatre was open-air: a highly significant factor still at this stage ignored by the majority of scholars in this field. Marlowe had read and translated Ovid—he was fluent in the classics—he was more Italy-orientated than any other English poet of his period, but he was no blind partisan of Mediterranean elite pastoralism: his feet were firmly planted in his native soil.

Why So Pale by Suckling.

I consider it no part of my task now to demonstrate that Suckling has no place in the true metaphysical line. This has already been ably done.¹ I would instead prefer to examine the consequences of this truth. By ignoring and forsaking the strongest line of development of his age, Suckling has forfeited moral seriousness and verbal toughness. Let us consider the first of these first. We imagine a tired but elegant cynic—the vital sap long since dried and ceasing to nourish—“advising” his young friend, the lover, and passing on to him his own perverse and immature position. This is the basic picture in which we are invited to participate. The young man is advised to simulate: the first verse can bear no other construction. In the second verse he is recommended innane garrulity for the sad silent brooding passion natural to his emotions and best affording the period of apparent stagnation necessary for all true growth in both literature and the moral life. Despair, abdication, a contempt for life, concluded in the form of an idle oath, is the third and final verse. It is to be earnestly hoped that all university departments and examining boards will remove this poem from any English literature syllabus over which they have control; but I anticipate rather that the firmly entrenched forces of academic conservatism will continue to perceive in this feeble effusion a work historically important and one likely to assist in the formation of ‘good taste’.

My love is like a red red rose.

It must be ‘evident to any formal capacity’ that Burns is romantically suggesting Shakespeare's line in *Romeo and Juliet* ‘a rose By any other name would smell as sweet’. (II.II.43-44)

That's newly sprung in June.

This can only remind us of Cleopatra—that great lover—‘like a cow in June’. (III.X.14)

¹ F. R. Leavis: *Revaluation*, 1936, Chap. 1.

My love is like the melodie
That's sweetly played in tune.

'untune that string, And mark what discord follow'. (*Troilus and Cressida*, I.III.109-110) By suggesting Ulysses' famous speech on degree, Burns is building up for us a whole world-picture in which to place his feelings.

Gather ye rose buds while ye may.

This celebrated poem has justly and for long been regarded as the work of a supreme genius. It invites the young maidens not to let slip their opportunities for love and happiness. At the same time it quietly and delicately encourages marriage. It is filled with rich, subtle figures of speech, involving flowers and the sun, which remind us of the good things of life. The rhythm is lilting, soft and musical, pointed by skilful, chiming rimes. The last verse may be paraphrased thus.—Do not be shy; make use of your opportunities; find a good husband while you can. But if you wait until your fair attractions have disappeared, you must then go on waiting for ever. The final impression we are left with is one of tenderness and beauty.

Goe, and catche a falling starre.
Sweetest love, I do not goe.

These are surely a couple of the best of Donne's songs. They don't have the tough sinewy beat of Lennon and McCartney's lyrics of the Beatles, but they gather more moss than the Rolling Stones ever will. The first verse of 'Goe, and catche' is a pan-shot of a new wave director. By his force of genius Donne has anticipated many of the discoveries of the French cinema in the 1960s: that staccato style is the hallmark of them both. In another direction Bardot owes an obvious debt of inspiration to Donne's precepts, and the new pop school of New York painters—Rothko, Johns, Lichtenstein, Rauschenberg—has clear affinities with Donne's ambition to shock. Donne is as modern as the latest soap powder advert. Long may he continue to shock us into an awareness of the tempo of our own times.

DAVID BALL

SAINT JOAN

Shelling peas, in the right hands, is an automatic process; but not for her. Only a few of the pods split cleanly to let her thumb run them into the full grey pot. Mostly she pulls the pod away in pieces and tugs the bald white-green seeds onto the Laminex table. The woman on the wireless is reading recipes and talking with a man who boasts his ignorance of food but persists in telling her what he likes. She twists the dial for music and shakes herself a little to a Beatle tune while she fills the pot with water, adds a little salt, then sets it on the gas burner. The tune trails away and a too-good humored voice asks, for a dollar, who wrote the song. She watches the green peas tumble among the urgent bubbles while a black one bobs on top.

For two: "Luncheon on the Grass" is a work of the impressionist school, at present in the Louvre, Paris, painted by Manet. It raised a storm when first ex-

hibited because it depicts, realistically, a picnic with two fully dressed young men, a nude woman, centrally placed, and a partly clad woman in the background. And in the foreground, the remnants of a picnic lunch. The trouble was not so much the naked woman, though the non-romanticism of her presentation was hard to take, but the mess of refuse. All that was lacking were the ants. We're burning to save you money. Are you having trouble getting rid of all that garbage, are you on the horns of a dilemma? Then you need Dante's infernal machines manufactured exclusively by Diablo Incinerators. Drop in when you're passing and have a look at our extensive range. The picnic lunches were thicker than ants. The grass was rough. Somebody had cut it back for the summer and it felt like a stubble of beard on my cheek. In the end, we settled for the car, but even then we had to shift once. They were thicker than ants.

For Four: Helen of Troy was the daughter of Zeus and Leda. One of the pair of cygnets that Zeus sired when he was treading water. She was supreme among women for her beauty and sought in marriage by many eminent Greeks. A sort of Jackie Kennedy of her day. She chose Menelaus but Paris abducted her which action led to the Trojan war. In this way she was credited with having a face that launched a thousand ships. I thought my dandruff was clean until I saw yours sparkling in the morning light. Get those chips off your shoulder, make him long to run barefoot through your hair. Look angelic, try Deadruff sparkling halo shampoo. In asking for it, she claimed to have done it a thousand times before, but as she toyed with the first of her second millenium, the cork rose gently like a stiffened jack-in-the-box and the froth slopped over the lip like a television ad for patented shampoo. Is that all, I said, if it is, it's hardly worth it, is it? I reckon I can do without it. He said it was all the interruptions. I said it'd need to be in bed next time. I've had this horsing about.

For Eight: Paris was the son of Priam and Hecuba; warned in a dream that her coming child would bring disaster, his mother exposed him on a Mountain at birth but he was found by a shepherd and grew up a handsome youth. When he was called upon to judge the contest for the golden apple to be awarded to the most beautiful of Aphrodite, Athena and Hera, he gave Aphrodite the apple. Do you find time a drag? Does your watch splutter and gush for hours after you've taken a shower? You need Tick-a-tap which not only runs best under water but prefers it that way. Put your Tick-a-tap in a glass of water when you go to bed, take the tock out of time, make time something you can sink your teeth into—try Tick-a-tap. Impressed by the bric-a-brac window under my nose against the clock in the belly of the gilt-edged Venus, I longed for possession. But dear things can be pricey and it took some time to cover the cost. When I unwrapped her on my bed, the plateglass frontier remained. I shattered the window, Venus, the chamber pot and my illusions with one blow.

For Sixteen: Ulysses was a wise and crafty fellow who took part in the Trojan war and finished the thing off by stuffing a wooden horse. Mary, Mary, feeling Mary, how now does your garden grow? Better, better, feeling better since I used pulped-horse sow-and-grow. Before I lost the urge, I used to take a three-place card each Saturday. But the horses I chose were empty paper nags. One National day, I went to see them run; my fancy fell and had to be destroyed. I watched awfully as the gelding, dead as wood, was dragged away by the knackers.

O, God, she wailed, I was counting on the money to lift my savings.

O, God, the Chairman said, you are a silly bitch.

O, God, she said, something's burning.

She starts up. The child makes her sleepy. O, God, she mutters, the peas are spilling over, there's a smell of potatoes boiling dry or is it the iron, did I leave it on? O, God, the children's session must have started. She turns all the gas jets off, twists the dial, flops into a kitchen chair, kicks off the slippers from her burning feet.

LEON SLADE

IMPOTENCE OF THE INTELLECTUAL

“The surfboard is the plank
Which Australian culture has walked.”
—So I talked
While she admired her blonde lank
Hair, and roasted limbs.

STEWART CANDLISH

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

Abraham Lincoln,
25 March 1864.

KEMPTON, MORRILL & CO.

R.E.I.W.A.

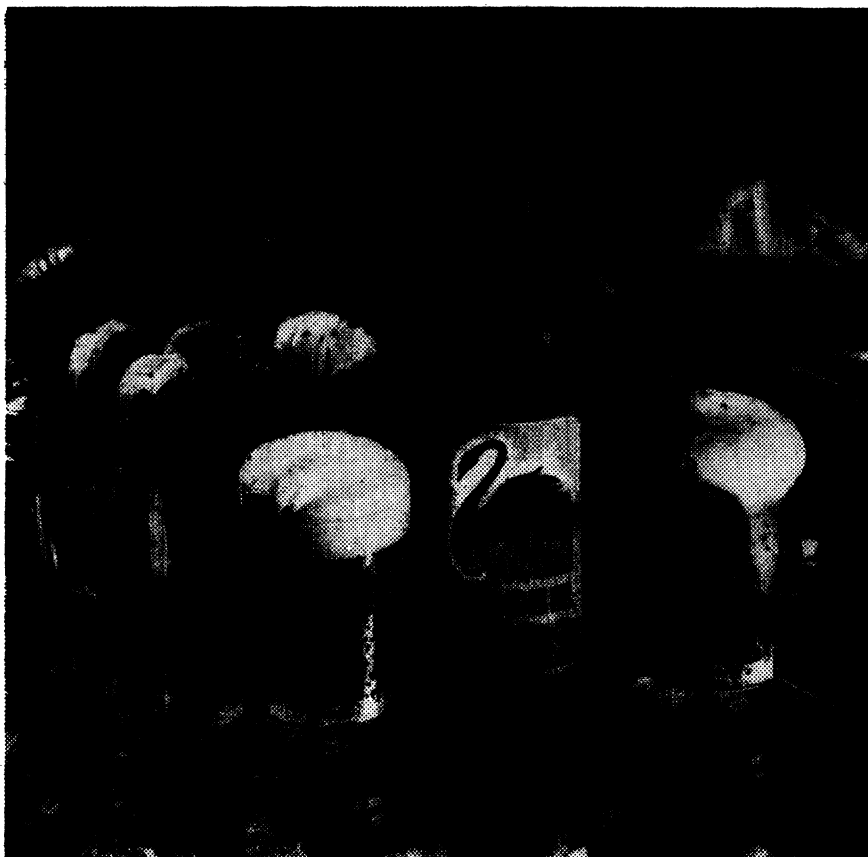
REAL ESTATE AGENTS

176B HAMPDEN ROAD, HOLLYWOOD

86 4819

86 7483

who are happy to extend their best
wishes for the continuing success of
"Westerly".



Swan Lager

Australia's
International beer
