



WESTERLY

TWO SHILLINGS.

3
1958

Campus Casuals

for

“UNI”

or

“VAC”

wear

SPORTSTYLES give you that elegant casual look on a “Uni” budget — Cash, Layby, Cash Order or special considerations to students.

It's made really easy to shop at . . .

SPORTSTYLES, where you choose from the latest in comfort wear.

See the latest in sports shirts, coats, trousers and reefers, at

Swoods

SPORTSTYLES

73 BARRACK ST., PERTH

Where you choose from the greatest range of leisure wear in AIR CONDITIONED comfort.

w e s t e r l y

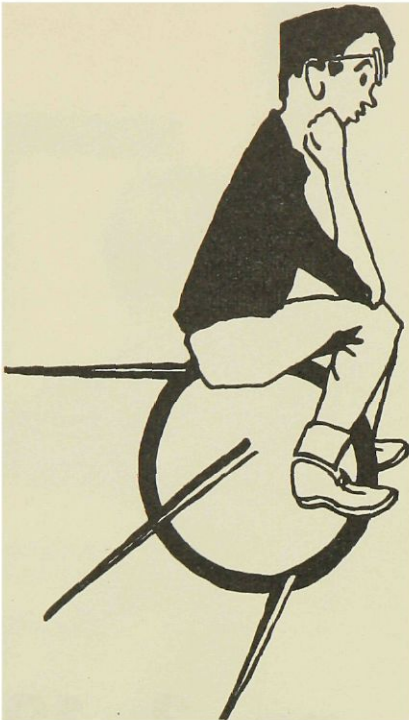
A LITERARY AND CRITICAL MAGAZINE PUBLISHED THREE TIMES A YEAR BY THE ARTS UNION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

editor WARWICK WILSON

contents

no. 3, 1958

VIEWPOINT—TALKING SHOP	- - - - -	2
LET'S WRITE FOR TELEVISION	- - - - - George Kerr	4
PROSPECT FOR DEVELOPMENT	- - - - - Sir Douglas Copland	7
LONDON CEMETERY (poem)	- - - - - Peter Jeffery	10
WRITER AND CRITIC	- - - - - John Barnes	11
LEAVES IN THE WIND	- - - - -	16
GIRLS IN A CAFE (story)	- - - - - Ellen Harrison	18
WHAT FUTURE FOR CYPRUS?	- - - - - Norman Horrocks	22
POETRY—REASSURANCE	- - - - - Joseph Jones	26
WINTER LANDSCAPE	- - - - - Ian Mudie	26
ANGRY YOUNG DRAMA (Part II)	- - - - - David Bradley	27
ON YOUNG WRITING	- - - - - Peter Jeffery	30
WHITE AUSTRALIA—NECESSITY OR FOLLY?	- - - - - Christopher M. Jay	33
REVIEWS:		
THE ANGRY DECADE (Allsop)	- - - - - John Meddemmen	36
THE SUNLIT PLAIN (Williamson)	- - - - - David Nicholas	37
POEMS OF DAVID MARTIN	- - - - - J. Medcalf	38
SNOWBALL (Casey)	- - - - - Michael Lightowler	39
DRAWINGS	- - - - - Ronald Bodycoat (cover), Non Cadwgan	
EDITORIAL BOARD	- - - - - John D. Legge, N. Donaldson, R. Macdonald-Taylor	
ADVERTISING	- - - - - R. Langford	
SUBSCRIPTIONS	- - - - - C. Greenhill	



talking shop

A STUDENT from a crisis country cornered me in the refectory and stabbed me with an accusing finger. "Why does nobody in this University of yours take any interest in our recent crisis?" he demanded. "Why did I have to hunt through the paper to page eight today to find any news about it? Does nobody in Australia take an interest in these things?"

"Not now," I replied, a little blasé. "With a different crisis nearly every week for the last twenty years, we're rather bored with them. They're so ordinary."

"You smug Australians!" he retorted. "You're so isolated, you think it's all a fairy tale. All you can talk about in that parliament of yours is money, public works, social services, help to wool-growers. Nothing about cultural matters."

"Historians still call us a frontier society," I replied. "We've only been in West Australia for 130 years. We've still a lot of developmental work to do. In fact, we're so tied up in that, we're often too tired to think about what's happening in the rest of the world."

"That's apparently what your newspapers think too. They don't discuss things enough. There's not enough analysis, or detail. And you often have only one point of view presented. Why haven't you got a left-wing paper over here?"

"No money, small circulation, daily paper monopoly."

"Then why don't your workers contribute to a fund for one? It would provide another point of view. After all," he added, teaching me democracy, "you have to hear all points of view before you can decide."

"People seem to think a trade union paper might be just as one-eyed. I don't know."

My attacker was silent for a moment. Then "Oh well, I don't suppose it matters. Your labour movement seems to be pretty dead over here. Even its foreign policy is out of date. They've burnt themselves out, I'd say."

"Well, we have the forty hour week, our basic wage, our long service leave, our social services, and our State industries. I don't suppose there's much left to fight for. Socialism is a dead issue over here these days."

"It is much different where I come from," he said. "There the people are always talking, talking, talking. They may not have much food, they may not have had a bath, but they always follow their politics. And there's all kinds of newspapers, at

point

least a dozen in each town. The people there are alive.”

“But it doesn’t get them anywhere. That type of life is not for us. We are taught to examine things objectively, to sift, and find the truth.”

“Yes, yes, but our living at white heat is really living, even if we do not find ‘the truth’. We savour every moment of life to the full. It’s better than having no savour—and probably not much ‘truth’.”

* * *

“Ah,” said my friend, fresh back from the Sorbonne, “what I miss over here is the conversation. It is so quiet, so compartmentalised. You do not see things in a total picture, you do not make your studies interlock. You do not just ramble on about anything that comes into your head. It is so dull, so narrow.”

“What do you think’s the reason?”

“Oh, I think there’s many reasons. You’re so young when you come here to study. You’re really not mature enough for university work. Maybe you should stay at school another year, or go out and work. Then you’ll be more likely to see the wood and not the trees. And there’s another reason—you treat your study just like a forty-hour week job. Your degree is just a bread ticket.”

“But we have to get a job. There’s very few academic posts, and many of those are filled by overseas people. And there’s been very few research grants until this year. People can’t afford just to stay here and talk.”

“Ah yes, but in France the students are often very poor, yet they stay at the university as long as they can. They love their work. For them it is like an exciting hobby—it absorbs them completely. They learn about life, about people, ideas, religions, philosophy. They can see their own courses in relation to the whole body of knowledge, to its place in the world system.”

“Yes, but in Australia the community demands that the university serves its needs, by supplying its technicians, its professional men.”

“But the community is not being well served if it receives narrow specialists who have skills, but no understanding of human problems.”

“Well, how would you achieve this—more research grants and scholarships?”

“Not really. You do need those, for there is much research to be done in the Australian fields. Much collection of data, much analysis. But that only increases specialisation, reinforces the narrow

outlook. I was thinking rather of the traditions of the old universities, how they taught philosophy and theology, with the aid of the old classical writers. You developed from this a conception of the pattern of the universe, how it is designed, what is our role, how best to fulfil it. After a few years of this, you specialised in one facet of the field of knowledge. It might be literature, or mathematics, or the natural sciences. But you never lost the sense of its relationship to the other fields. And from the theological angle you saw specialisation as an examination of one particular part of God’s creation.”

“You’re suggesting something like a first year course in philosophy then—only more generalised than it is now?”

“Something like that. It would give your students here a breadth of outlook, set them thinking in terms of universal values and concepts.”

“But do you think that just one year of this would be enough? Surely you would have to follow it up?”

“Exactly, that’s it. You would need more tutors who can spend more time with the students, and discuss the wider problems connected with their field.”

“That is very difficult yet. We still haven’t enough tutors to deal with all the students adequately. And they’re rushed off their feet most of the time.”

“Too true. You will need more money, more opportunity for research, more time to read more widely. For your tutors will need more breadth in outlook.”

“Even so, it’s very difficult to pack much more into the courses now. The basic knowledge must be there.”

“Yes, that is a problem. But if you had more colleges, where students could meet together and talk, where tutors could always be ‘on tap’ . . .”

“A community of like minds, you mean?”

“Yes, where they can sharpen up their ideas on each other. Where they can exchange ideas, pool their knowledge from various fields, sit around in their spare time and really talk a problem out.”

“Instead of these interminable coffee conversations, you mean?”

“Exactly. It would do the world of good.”

“But it takes money for all this you know. There’s so many other things we need to do . . .” I stood up meaningfully.

“It just depends what you think is important.”

George Kerr

let's write for television

DON'T LET THEM fool you. There is no mystery about it, at all. About television, that is. Even less about writing for television. Whenever you hear anyone talking about 'visual writing', watch him like a hawk. He's a literary con-man. And if he speaks of the 'vital new medium', you can be sure he's trying to sell you something—probably a spare channel. If you are a writer, there is no new magic you have to learn in order to write for television. If you are not a writer, not even magic could make you one.

By 'writing for television', I imagine most people mean 'playwriting for television'. Not copy-writing, gag-writing, news-item writing. TV plays may not figure large on the Australian screens—'live' Australian plays, that is, written and performed by and for Australians—when compared with the American imports of *I Almost Married Joan*, *The Dracula Playhouse of the Air*, *Son of Son of Rin Tin Tin* and the big give-away show "What's the Flaming Idea?", but it's unlikely that Australian writers will be asked to contribute to these successful series. Far better, surely, to concentrate on what the Australian Broadcasting Control Board annually refers to as 'indigenous cultural programmes'—a play by you, produced in Australia, for Australian domestic audiences. Have a go. Why not?

George Kerr, former Script Editor, B.B.C., A.T.V., and A.B.C.T.V. (London), is now Script Editor Television Drama, A.B.C., Sydney.

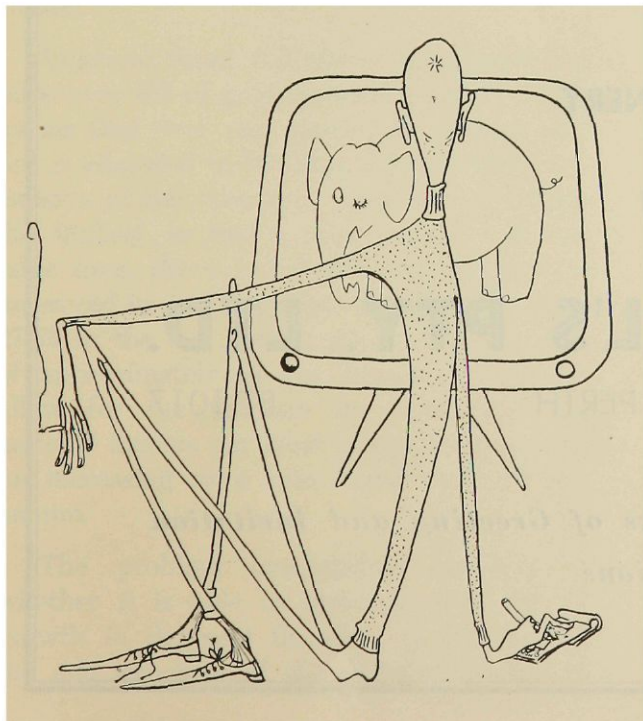
As I say, there is no magic; but there *are* rules—the ancient dramatic rules. Need one repeat them? People expressing by means of dialogue some conflict bearing on the theme of the play. . . . There are a hundred-and-one play text-books on the subject. The best text-books of all are the playwrights themselves: Ibsen, Chehov, Rattigan, Coward, Shaw, Shakespeare, Miller, Anouilh. . . . And the best required reading: *Journey's End*, the closet scene in *Hamlet*, *Death of a Salesman*, *The Seven Year Itch*, *Dial M for Murder* (it depends what kind of play you are thinking of writing, but they are all pretty good models, of their year).

Let us assume, then, that the rules have been learned—the dramatic rules for theatre writing. How does television amend these rules? Not in any major way, certainly. Any more than radio, when it came, affected the dramatic rules governing broadcast plays. Except, *except* that a radio play is basically a play heard over the telephone. If that constitutes 'a new, dramatic medium', then by all means write for it. But, surely, what it really means is that although a radio play can get a perfect production, the produced, transmitted result is still an imperfect, a half-cock play.

So with television. It has its deficiencies. First, a deficiency of audience—and of audience reaction. Secondly, the producer can force, *must* force, your attention the way he

wants it to go. I mean that it is much easier to fall asleep in a theatre; it is difficult to nod off in a viewing room, especially your neighbour's. In the third place, your characters on the TV screen are either midgets or hydrocephalics. To correct this, the prudent TV playwright finds he is writing plays about the head and shoulders of his characters. But what happens to their immortal souls?

I am not entirely flippant about this. There are dissatisfactions about the—what was that word?—‘medium’. But rules have emerged from the experiences of U.K. and U.S. writers for television. It might be well to set them out. Dogmatically. (There is no space for qualification.) A good TV play should concern itself with a contemporary problem understandable by, indeed familiar to, the man-in-the-street. Let it be shop-lifting, or a hit-and-run street accident, or a boy cheating at school, or a teenage girl of ‘good’ family playing Widgie. . . . The subject, perhaps common-place rather than tragic, would certainly appear in the columns of a French newspaper under the heading “Faits Divers”.



WESTERLY

Now there should be, additionally, a sub-subject. And there is no question about what this should be—sex. Boy loves girl who loves other girl, or wife gets fed up with husband who is carrying on with the tenant's daughter or (examine *Deep Blue Sea*)—middleaged lady, married to tedious old fool of a judge, is in love with golfing playboy who is in love with his Number 4 iron. . . . Take any combination of the above—within reason—and you have a perfectly saleable sixty-minute TV play.

And isn't a sale what you are looking for? Well, if it is, take a look at these prices: U.K. (ITV or BBC) from £200 to £300 for one performance; U.S.A.—quadruple it. Australia? Say £50. . . . No, *you* say it. Seriously, you cannot live by writing in Australia. But if you do sell here, you have a very good chance of selling in England too, and a remote but backable chance of selling in the States.

Well, we've got the subject and the sexual sub-plot, and we've nearly got the money. What about practical points? First point, don't have a cast of more than ten. Don't ask for more than four sets. Don't expect film inserts, certainly not if they require sound-on-film. Don't write farce; you have no audience, remember? Or costume plays; the TV viewer doesn't believe it is really happening, and he must. Or fantasy; too delicate for so literal, so crude, so brash a 'medium' (there, I've said it again!). Horror is out too; the competition's too fierce. As for comedy—well—you write a good comedy and we'll see. But it isn't easy, either to write or to play or to produce. And even if you get everything you expect, your viewing public of thousands of isolated groups of 2½ people may not see the jokes. Almost certainly won't. Don't risk it. Play safe. Stick to drama; grocer's wife, in love with commercial traveller, robs till. Sounds silly? You write it and see how silly it looks in the bann.

No, I'm dead serious. Go on, write it. It's TV. Technical tips? Forget them. Don't put in chi-chi camera shots. Don't try putting Eisenstein and Rotha and Huston bits in the script. You don't know it, but we've only got three cameras and one of them's gone crook and—well, *don't* that's all.

Oh, and by the way, don't write a play about winning the lottery, or not-climbing-Everest, or women running the world, or a submarine sinking, or two swaggies spitting at gum trees, or even a play set against a thunderstorm in the lonely home of a confirmed bachelor who opens the door one night to a soaked but pretty girl and says (God

help us) "Come in, take off those wet things. . . ."

I could expand on unsuitable—and, by implication, suitable—subjects. I will, willingly, by letter or personal talk—if anyone is still interested. Let me say though that, despite the seeming frivolity of these notes, the A.B.C. *is* interested. Plays *are* needed. They are also paid for, not well. But then, remember those magical U.S. figures. And the U.K. rates are not to be scorned. Above all, remember, there is one certain way of expressing your artistic sense *and*, at the same time, making a living. Write a play that tells a good story, and tell it well dramatically. . . .

STUDENTS

for all your **STATIONERY**

Requirements consult . . .

CARROLL'S PTY. LTD.

566 HAY STREET — PERTH

BF 1017

☆ *We also carry stocks of Greeting and Invitation
Cards for all occasions*

PROSPECT FOR DEVELOPMENT

Douglas Copland

THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY has had a remarkable period of development in the last decade, and particularly in the last eight years. Population has been growing at a rate of nearly 2.5% per annum, and all phases of industry have been expanding at a rate never excelled in Australian history. There are many measures of rates of growth, but perhaps the most significant is the relationship of investment to gross national product. The latter is the measure of the total output of goods and services, and investment is the amount of these goods and services annually produced that are devoted to planning for the future, and not immediately consumed.

In recent years, the rate of investment has been over 25% of gross national product. This means that over one quarter of current output is allocated to building for the future expansion of the economy. This rate is among the highest in the western world. At the same time, the value of the national income measured in real terms has increased by some 27.5% in the last eight years. This is a rate of approximately 3% per annum, but if we allow for the increase in population, the national income per head in real terms would be increasing at a rate lower than 1% per annum.

The problem confronting Australia is whether it is able to maintain this rate of growth in the next decade. If we look at the age structure of the population, it will

be clear that growth at a high rate is both necessary and possible as regards the available work force. Owing to the high post-war birth rate and the impact of immigration, the work force will grow from 35-40% by 1970. This is both a tangible asset on which to base expansion, and a responsibility for providing adequate opportunity for employment for the increasing numbers that will be requiring work. The age group 20-24 will increase by 55% by 1970. This means a steep rise in the marriage rate and therefore in the demand for houses and all the accessories attendant upon establishing a home.

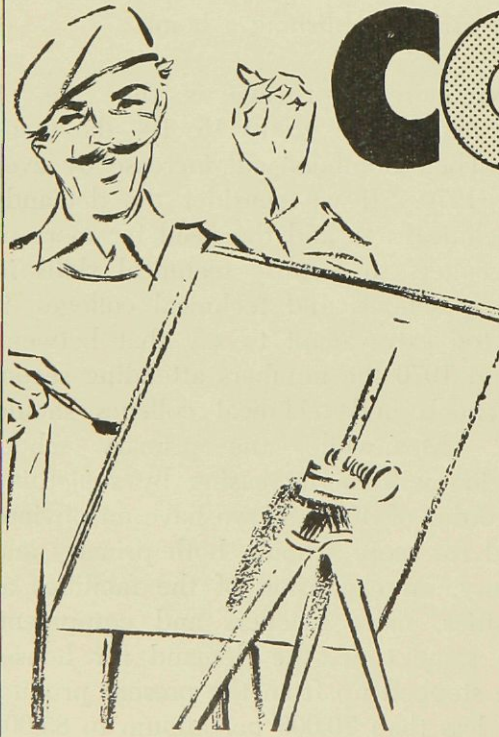
Even more impressive is the rate of growth of the age group 15-19—the teenagers. Their numbers will increase by over 80% by 1970. If we consider the demands of a technical age and the need for more of the teenagers to acquire technical skills in secondary schools and technical colleges, it is not too extravagant to say that between 1955 and 1970 the numbers attending secondary schools and technical colleges should double. Meanwhile, the primary school population will be increasing by something of the order of 40%. So we have an obvious demand for more schools, both primary and secondary, an expansion of the facilities at universities, more teachers and equipment. At the same time, the demand for houses will be stepped up from the present production of less than 70,000 per annum to 85,000 per annum and more by 1970.

It requires little imagination to see what an impact this demand will make upon the economy, particularly when one considers the wide range of services and goods that will be demanded to meet all these basic needs. Moreover, the future of Australia will be greatly influenced by the extent to which the whole nation meets the responsibility of providing education and training for the teenager, homes and facilities for the rapidly increasing numbers in the marriageable age group, and the opportunities for suitable employment for the increasing work force.

But there is another aspect that needs emphasis. In the first instance, world population is growing at a rate never experienced in history before. This is due to the modern phenomenon of death control, to the conquest of malignant disease. By 2000 A.D., the present numbers of 2,700 million will be more

than doubled. Thus we live in an expanding world, and the long-term opportunity for trade expansion will be available to those who are in a position to meet it.

Internally, there is every prospect that Australia will have increasing resources to develop. This is due in part to the improved techniques of developing the land offered by the progress that has been made in scientific research, particularly in pasture improvement, soil analysis, water and fodder conservation. Secondly, new and important mineral discoveries have been made in Australia, notably, copper, bauxite and the possibility of developing liquid fuel from black coal. In particular, the bauxite deposits in Northern Queensland are very extensive and their development offers scope for expansion in areas that hitherto have been remote parts of the outback. Whole communities will have to be



COLOURS

You'll see the latest colours and latest styles in smart new season sports shirts at Walsh's—The Leading Style Store for Men. All the best brands are stocked and at Walsh's shopping is so much easier, as you can choose from Perth's biggest range of style and sports wear.

WALSH'S

The Leading Style Store for Men

PERTH - FREMANTLE - COTTESLOE
VICTORIA PARK - MIDLAND JUNCTION

established if this task is to be accomplished. Thirdly, we have an expansion of manufacturing production of the order of 75% in real output since the war. This has greatly strengthened the economy, giving diversity to the basis of national production, and offering the opportunity in some cases of a developing export trade.

So, on all these counts, there are opportunities in private enterprise for a continued growth of the economy. But private enterprise cannot function without the provision of the services such as water supply, power and fuel, transport, schools and hospitals provided by the public sector of the economy.

If this is the picture facing Australia in the next decade, there should be no doubts about the responsibilities of both public and private enterprise to proceed with their plans for continued growth. But this growth will require the diversion of a high proportion of current resources to investment, to building for the future. We have already seen that the rate of investment to gross product in recent years has been over 25%. One of our basic problems will be to ensure that this rate is maintained; it may even be necessary to increase it. This means in turn that we must find a way of saving the amount required for the urgent investment needs. Voluntary savings will not be sufficient. No western economy voluntarily saves 25% of its gross product. Half this figure would be much closer to the mark. How then can Australia breach this gap in savings that will be urgently needed?

There are three avenues to be followed and they have already been explored in recent years. The first of these is to develop a fiscal policy to support public investment; that is, to have a surplus of revenue in the public sector over and above current expenditure. It is not generally known that, in the past

eight years, of a total public investment of £3,259 million, only £710 million was financed by increasing the net indebtedness of public authorities. The balance of nearly 80% was financed from current resources, that is, from an excess of revenue over current expenditure. This is a positive fiscal policy which has been continued in the Budget of 1958-59. In order to maintain the high level of investment, the Budget provides for financing about £150m. of public works from excess taxation and another £110m. from Treasury Bills. This latter expedient is a device to maintain public investment in a period when export prices have fallen and the normal return from taxation will be lower in the short period.

The second device is the familiar one employed by the private sector of the economy, in which a large proportion of investment is financed by ploughing back undistributed profits and making substantial provision for depreciation. About a half of all private investment is financed in this way. It will be seen that both of these devices in the public and private sector are a form of compulsory saving for the maintenance of a high rate of growth.

The third device available is overseas investment. This is being encouraged and now amounts to between 5 and 7% of total investment. If Australia has confidence in itself, there is little doubt that this rate of foreign investment will be sustained.

So the picture is that there are, at one and the same time, the resources of manpower, the pressure of a changing age distribution of the population, the opportunities for exploiting new resources and the techniques for sustaining a high rate of investment. All of these are designed to promote rapid growth and this is the prospect for the next decade, if we have the unity of purpose and the administrative leadership requisite for the task.

London Cemetery

I see tears in the dew.

Amongst the graves the golden summers of daffodils
and in the mausoleum pigeons as fat as hens
mourning their voices.

The sparse elegance of the scientific grave,
the information notated in crisp dates,
the experiment of life concluded,
the electric bolt of Faraday absorbed in the moist cell.

Along the wall, above the bickering weeds,
the plaque of Marvell once dwelling here,
a Latin secretary of state, wit, satirist,
but he had not world enough and time.

Landseer, a stag's head small as medals,
the printing in metal on polished stone,
the rain melting the strength into the obscurity of pavements.
and the melodrama of tangled weed and haunting vault.

But the great matter not.
There are sagas enough in this chaos of stone,
without the ornament of proud names.
Each draped urn, each wooden cross, each vain heart
mark out the fear and glory of two hundred years.

I am alone with the sparrows,
the long amphitheatre of vaults,
and my thoughts.

I see tears in the dew.

Peter Jeffery

WRITER and CRITIC

by

John Barnes

IN A RECENT ARTICLE in *Australian Letters*, John Thompson characterized the Australian reviewers of Patrick White's novels as "a cloud of wasps furiously buzzing in raucous colonial accents". Exposing the inadequacies and absurdities of the book reviewers is a pleasant sport, and unfortunately there is plenty of scope for it in Australia. The book reviewer is really a "book taster", and sometimes ignorance or prejudice results in judgments which would not outlast second thoughts, if the reviewer—working to a deadline and limited number of words—could afford to have second thoughts. While the erratic fancies and pronouncements of book reviewers may make entertaining reading in retrospect, the absence of critical principles (as Mr. Thompson points out) is a serious matter. The shortcomings of the book reviewers are a significant reminder of the paucity of critical thought in Australia.

Apart from the writings of A. G. Stephens (some of which still lie buried in newspaper files or are out of print), there is no body of authoritative criticism in Australia. Stephens' judgments were sometimes marked by harshness or prejudice, but generally they

were discriminating and showed a clear sense of proportion; and his diagnosis of the literary situation in the 1890's and 1900's continues to be illuminating. There have been other perceptive critics, but their work as a whole has been of little consequence.

There are, however, some encouraging signs, and in recent years several important books of literary criticism have been published in Australia. G. A. Wilkes' *New Perspectives on Brennan's Poetry*, Leonie J. Gibson's *Henry Handel Richardson and Some of Her Sources*, and Brian Elliott's *Marcus Clarke* are works of careful scholarship, studies of a type seldom attempted in Australia. In the past, pleasant reminiscence or adulation, as in *Henry Lawson By His Mates*, has outweighed biographical reconstruction and critical analysis. The definitive studies are unlikely to be written for many years yet: in some cases all the facts are not available, and generally it is difficult to obtain all the relevant material for a full critical study. These recent studies indicate the kind of work which needs to be done.

The appearance of interpretative studies like Vance Palmer's *The Legend of the Nineties*, Vincent Buckley's *Essays in Poetry, Mainly Australian*, and Arthur Phillips' *The Australian Tradition*, makes one conscious of how little *creative* thinking there has been about the characteristics of Australian writing and the way in which it is evolving. The literary historians have not been notable as researchers or critics: it is easier to record than to reconsider the commonplace view.

The quality of these recent books (four of which are by members of university staffs) owes something to the greater interest in Australian writing in the universities. There are now signs that the universities will have an increasing influence upon Australian writing in the future. University graduates figure more prominently among the writers, and several staff members are widely known as creative writers and critics.

John Barnes is at present Lecturer in English at the University of W.A.

However, there is little teaching of Australian literature in the universities, and the opportunities for the discussion of critical issues are limited. The main organs of critical opinion are *Meanjin*, *Southerly*, and the *Sydney Bulletin*. *Meanjin* has probably made the greatest contribution to the progress of literary criticism, although the *Bulletin*, in which much of Stephens' best criticism appeared, unquestionably has had the most far-reaching effect upon the growth of creative writing.

The other literary magazines are *Overland*, now firmly established as the mouth-piece of a leftwing nationalism; *Westerly*, the most adult of the student magazines; and *Australian Letters*, which is still in the formative stage. So far, these three magazines have not carried much literary criticism worth preserving.

Apart from Douglas Stewart, I do not

know of any full-time literary critic (as distinct from a book reviewer). The critical articles and book reviews in the literary magazines are usually written by fellow-writers or university teachers. The critical judgments of a writer are always interesting for the light they throw upon his own creative practices, but the majority of Australian writers are deficient in critical power (which may explain some of the characteristic weaknesses of Australian writing).

Criticism is itself a creative activity and embraces the varied activities of the scholar and the book-reviewer. There is the constant revaluation of the literature of the past, the understanding and explication of modern literature in relation to the past, and the interim judgments on current writing. Matthew Arnold's view of criticism as "the disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world"

the spring issue of

meanjin

is now available

A selection from the Spring issue:

THE QUEST OF JUDITH WRIGHT, by T. Inglis Moore; THE ACADEMY AND ITS FREEDOM, by Prof. R. Douglas Wright; GILBERT MURRAY, by Sir Arthur Gurgenvin; BRECHT AND CONTEMPORARY GERMAN THEATRE, by Graeme Hughes; THEATRE FOR LEARNING, by Bertholt Brecht; PROSPECT FOR AUSTRALIA, by Sir Douglas Copland; THE AUSTRALIAN BOOK, by Dr. Andrew Fabinyi; PAX VOBISCUM, by Hon. J. V. Barry, J.; THE POSITION OF ENGLISH POETS, by Jack Lindsay; MALLARME'S *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune*, by Dr. James Lawler; SNIPERS WITHOUT HARPS, by James Corbett; LETTERS FROM PARIS, by M. Pierre Bramaud; together with short stories, poetry, poetry chronicle and book reviews. COVER DESIGN by Picasso.

meanjin

a quarterly magazine of Literature, Art and Discussion, now in its eighteenth year of publication.
University of Melbourne, Carlton N.3, Victoria.

SUBSCRIPTION RATE: £2 (post free).

implies a very high ideal, and rightly puts the emphasis upon the *positive* function of criticism. Even in the day-to-day reviewing of books the critic has a duty to *assert* his standards, and to make judgments. He is an upholder of cultural values, the guardian and corrector of taste. Such a notion probably seems inflated to the journalist detailed to "do" a book review, but if criticism is to be worthwhile it needs must be informed by an ideal of art.

The critic, I suggest, has a responsibility not only to the reader but to the writer. In Australia, probably more than in most societies, the writer needs the stimulus and corrective of good criticism. Literature is a lonely profession, but the writer in England has the feeling of being part of the tradition of English literature, a member, however insignificant, of a community of letters. The writer in Australia is mentally isolated in a society which has no place for him. There is no substitute for the community of cultured minds, and in Australia the writer has generally been outside such manifestations of a cultured community as may have appeared.

In fact, there has long been a long-standing mutual disdain of intellectuals and writers, stemming largely, I think, from the attitude of the strongly nationalist writers who were identified with the *Bulletin*. With the notable exceptions of Brennan and O'Dowd, these early writers were hostile or indifferent towards the cultured members of Australian society at the time: they were proud of their proletarian origins and sympathies, their lack of sophistication, and their "dinkum Australian" outlook. The universities were regarded as "outposts of colonialism", representative of the "Old World outlook", against which the writers felt it necessary to revolt in their attempt to write of the new country in an appropriate idiom. And the intellectuals have remained suspect because intellectual life in Australia has been oriented towards England. In their turn, many in-

tellectuals have been hostile towards the kind of literature which has emerged.

Even more serious than this gap between the creative writer and the academic has been the conscious, sometimes deliberately self-imposed isolation of the writer from the main stream of English literature; indeed, a turning-away from the whole tradition of European literature. In order to assert themselves and to see their land and its way of life with unclouded eyes, in order to take off what A. G. Stephens called "bias-bleared spectacles", the nationalist writers of the 1880's and after consciously rejected the English view of Australia. Under the influence of the determined nationalism of the *Bulletin* they were "anti-colonial" and therefore anti-English. The literature which the *Bulletin* fostered drew its strength from the oral "tradition" and the simple observation of the people. It was consciously "anti-literary": a plain, simple "yarn" or ballad was characteristic. Only in *Such is Life* did the influence of the English tradition appear—somewhat self-consciously.

What was originally an historical attitude has become something of a fetish. Parochialism has become a substitute for genuine independence.

In some respects the isolation and parochialism of Australian writing are more apparent in Perth than in the rest of Australia. Perth suffers from a double isolation: from England, and from the eastern states where Australian life is centred. The minority feeling which this produces finds expression in the notion of "West Australian writing" and a vigorous promotion of the "local product".

A good example of this was the newspaper treatment of *The Yellow Swedish Label*, a crude farce written by a Perth resident. This play, which was presented at one of the main city theatres for a short season in August, was described in *The West Australian* as being "in every respect West Australian"—a remark which I find incompre-

hensible. It was reviewed under the heading of "West Australian Comedy", and drew an editorial headed "Theatrical Milestone", in which a distinction was drawn between "Australian playwrights" and "West Australian playwrights". In the programme threatre-goers were thanked for "patronizing this all West Australian venture". I am not trying to damn the play or the enthusiasm of its supporters: the experience must have been a valuable one for the author, and is encouraging to would-be playwrights.

However, I think it is just to take exception to the parochial attitude of mind which these quotations represent. The feeling of belonging to a local community can be most fruitful in fostering talent—as it has been in Perth—but it is quite misleading to label every piece of writing produced in Perth—whether literature or not—as "West Australian", and ask that it be given special treatment.

It may seem that I am making a fuss over nothing. In this instance, the particular work is of less consequence than the attitude which it has brought forth. Australian writers need exact and judicious criticism, and the danger is that the obsessive concern with the "local product" will lead to a confusion of standards. Local writing ought to be encouraged without being sheltered from genuine criticism. Literature does not grow through the protection and admiration of the mediocre.

The critic must be able to see beyond the local scene. The standards of critical excellence, the masterpieces which provide what Matthew Arnold called "touchstones" are English, not Australian; and any criticism which merely fixes the *relative* merits of Australian writers is therefore incomplete criticism. Australian reviewers are often content to welcome or turn away a newcomer by reciting a list of "honoured names", quite ignoring the question of whether any of the writers mentioned has achieved any-

thing by world standards. The following statement, in which the critic sidesteps the critical issue, will illustrate the point:

We have had some admirable love sonnetry in Australia, from Charles Harpur, Zora Cross, Baylebridge, McCrae, Louis Lavater and others, but Collinson speaks with a new voice, at once passionate and yet strangely objective, earthy yet sophisticated.

That extract is taken from a review in *Overland* by Muir Holburn of *The Moods of Love*, a collection of poems by Laurence Collinson, published in 1957.

I think the way in which this volume was handled by reviewers demonstrates the inadequacy of the criticism which most Australian books receive. The volume includes a sonnet sequence (which provides the title) and poems grouped under the headings of "People" and "Feelings". The quality of the poetry varies, some of the poems bearing the marks of the apprentice, but taken as a whole, *The Moods of Love* is an interesting and distinctly promising work by a young poet of compassion and honesty who regards his craft seriously. Disagreement is to be expected over such a book which includes unsatisfactory poems, but one would also expect to find critical analysis and positive standards.

The reviews don't take long to read (fourteen have now appeared), but they leave one somewhat bewildered. The sonnet sequence was ignored entirely by one critic, and received with a conflict of opinion by others: one critic thought it "a courageous attempt to say something new in the Shakespearean sonnet form"; another thought that it "seems to reflect the pattern set by Shakespeare and Michelangelo but attempts nothing ambitious"; a third summed it up as "a depressing failure"; yet another described it as "a really splendid sonnet sequence—assured, contemporary, tender, humorous and often beautiful".

In some ways, Holburn's review—from which I have already quoted—is the most useful to a reader of Collinson's poems, as it includes a suggestion of possible influences

on the poet, but it is enfeebled by a political bias and a lack of critical standards. The notice is admiring and uncritical throughout, while appearing to be critical. "The Room" and "Housework" are praised as "two of the funniest and most touching poems we have in the language", and "The Victim" is described as a "truly delightful and nostalgic poem". Writing in *Meanjin*, R. F. Brissenden selected these three poems for special mention as "embarrassingly bad". Collinson's failure in these poems should be apparent to anyone who has considered the volume and attempted to sift the contents. It is even more surprising to find that Brissenden considers "The Seagull" as "perhaps his best poem"—this being a poem which Collinson himself regards as "sentimental and technically poor".

Of the reviews the most valid as criticism seem to be those which appeared in the *Age*, *Meanjin* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*. These are short notices—too short to allow proper elaboration of points—but have the virtue of being clearly based on critical ideas. At the other extreme is the review in *Southerly*, which is so uncritical and gushing as to be useless to either the poet or his would-be readers, however pleasing and heart-warming such a welcoming notice may be to him as a person.

There is one other medium of reviewing books—the radio. The A.B.C. has a regular book review session, but usually requires a reviewer to note so many books in such a short time that he is prevented from making any detailed comments. The review of *The Moods of Love* was quite extraordinary—and inexcusable. The reviewer "placed" the poet among the "angry young men", saying: "Mr. Collinson is not a very angry young man, but he has his moments of petulance. He belongs unmistakably to this stream of writing"—a comment which is as useless as it is absurd. The quality of the reviewer's comments on the poetry is fairly represented by the follow-

ing sentence, which is the *only* reference to the poetic form of the collection: "His poetry covers a wide range, from ordinary and not very distinguished prose, cut into sections and arranged to look like verse, to some neat sonnets which show promise if not achievement." This review would make a very suitable appendix to Stephen Potter's advice on reviewmanship. The critic was not interested in the work he was reviewing, and used it simply as a text upon which to display his own personality.

From the reader's point of view, these reviews do, I suppose, provide some indication of the merits of the book, but only in a few instances do they illuminate or elucidate Collinson's work. They are—perhaps inevitably—cramped and perfunctory notices. From the writer's point of view, the reviews contain disappointingly little scrutiny of his work, even when they recognize his achievements as a poet. I hope I have made it clear that Collinson is a writer whose work particularly needs critical analysis. In "My Poetry"—a statement of his literary opinions which was published in *Overland*—Collinson admits the justice of a criticism of his work made some years earlier by Vincent Buckley, and displays his own awareness of the progress of his craftsmanship.

I am not suggesting that critics should set themselves up as father confessors, or literary uncles, or even as Lecturers in Poetic Method. It is not the critic's job to tell the creative writer *how* to write poetry, but rather what *kind* of poetry he has written. This means that the critic is, primarily, willing to understand the writer's aims and to treat his work with sympathy, not with scorn or lofty disdain. Commenting on the reviews of his book, Collinson has written: "There is a dogmatic, even a 'superior' tone about most of the reviews, even when the critic is offering praise, that makes one poet at least feel that he can't take such pomposity seriously."

In an article on modern poetry (*Westerly*, No. 2 1958), Alec King suggested that the poet ought to disregard the "innumerable voices" of critics; they tell him nothing that he had better listen to. The "voices-in-the-ear-of-poets" produce self-consciousness; they don't teach the poet how to *make* a poem. But the critic does (or ought to) represent a standard of taste, and he is in a position to define and elucidate.

Unfortunately, it seems that few of the book reviewers are aware of the responsi-

bilities of a critic. Those who are concerned with the future of literature in Australia—or indeed in any country—would do well to ponder on this definition of the critic's role by T. S. Eliot:

The critic, one would suppose, if he is to justify his existence, should endeavour to discipline his personal prejudices and cranks—tares to which we are all subject—and compose his differences with as many of his fellows as possible, in the common pursuit of true judgment.

The "pursuit of true judgment" is an exacting aim, but it is the only responsible one.

leaves in the wind . . .

West Coast Stories

Further details are available regarding the forthcoming anthology *West Coast Stories*, which is a selection from the prose works of the following members of the W.A. Section of the Fellowship of Australian Writers:—Walter Murdoch, K. S. Pritchard, Jack Harvey, F. B. Vickers, Malcolm Uren, Alexandra Hasluck, Dorothy Lucie Sanders, Randolph Stow, G. M. Glaskin, J. K. Ewers, Mary Durack, H. Drake-Brockman, Lyndall Hadow, James Pollard, Ted Mayman, D. J. Hislop, Ida Mann, M. L. Skinner, Max Brown, Jamieson Brown, H. H. Wilson, Don Stuart, Gavin Casey.

The anthology is being published by Angus & Robertson Ltd. as part of their contribution towards the Tom Collins House Maintenance Trust Fund. All members have given both works and services without fee, for the same reason, and all royalties from sales will go to the fund. There is no suggestion that this type of anthology may become an annual one, although the Fellowship does hope, that with the establishment of the T.C.H. Fund it will become possible in the future for the Fellowship, thus financially relieved of a heavy obligation, to arrange publication of other W. A. anthologies, in which case poetry will receive special attention, as it has not been possible to include verse in *West Coast Stories*.

Macquarie Network Prize

A £500 prize competition for the best novel written by an author living in Australia is being sponsored by the Macquarie Network in connection with 6IX's "Book of the Month" series. It is understood that the winning novel will be dramatized for radio, and serial rights will be sold to leading magazines.

Radio Quarterly of Australian Verse

West Australian poets may be unaware of an important service to Australian writers provided by the A.B.C. in the "Radio Quarterly of Australian Verse," a programme in the 'Quality Street' series, in which the best Australian verse written in the preceding three months is read and discussed. The poetry is selected from current Australian literary magazines and also from unpublished manuscripts forwarded to the A.B.C. for consideration. With regard to the latter, the A.B.C. is always anxious to receive new poetry for broadcast, and West Australian writers might well bear this important service in mind. Poetry should be forwarded to The Editor, Radio Quarterly of Australian Verse, c/o Director of Drama and Features, Box 487, G.P.O., Sydney.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Wild Turkey, by Max Brown (Georgian House, Melbourne, 1958); *Though Poppies Grow*, by F. B. Vickers (Australasian Book Society, 1958); *Antipodes in Shoes*, by Geoffrey Dutton (Edwards & Shaw, Sydney, 1958); *The Penguin Book of Australian Verse*, edited by Kenneth Slessor and R. G. Howarth (Penguin Books, 1958); *Hermes* (University of Sydney, 1958); *Prospect*, edited by Paul Simpson (University of Melbourne, 1958).

GIRLS IN A CAFÉ

by

Ellen Harrison

TWO GIRLS walked into the coffee shop. Immediately every eye was caught by the taller of the two, her shoulder-length blonde hair, and her showy figure encased in a green linen sheath frock. The other girl attracted little attention. She was shorter, and too fat. She walked a little behind her friend, overshadowed but admiring.

"This'll do," said the blonde. Her voice was deep and throaty. They sat down.

"Well," said the blonde, "how's everything?" Her tone was affectionate but slightly condescending.

"Oh, all right," said the other girl. She sounded a little forced.

"You know," said the blonde, stripping off her gloves, "whenever I come home, I always look forward to seeing you and having a really good gossip. I'll be here for over a week so we must see a lot of one another. There are thousands of things I'm dying to tell you.

The other girl seemed speechless, embarrassed. "That will be nice," she said at last in a flat, uncomfortable voice.

There was a short silence. Then—

"How's everything at the hostel?" the short, fat girl asked.

"Oh, all right. Oh yes, Angela, I must tell you about this girl Pam. It was quite odd."

"Is that the one who took your coat-hanger?" Angela's voice was eager.

"Did I tell you about that?" She seemed pleased. "That was a scream. But this is a different Pam. Pam Hind. She was a funny sort of girl. She had an awfully good opinion

of herself. I think she thought she was a little bit better than everyone else. She kept to herself a lot. Reading and everything. She'd never sit around and just gossip like the rest of us. You know what a ghastly gossip I am."

"You're just a gossip adict, Hilda. You never do anything else."

Hilda gave a pleased laugh.

"Yes, I suppose I am. Well Pam wasn't a bit like that. She'd come into the common room and if you were there she'd hardly even say 'hullo'. She'd stand and just look at you. Then she'd stick her nose in the air and go out again. It used to make me wild. I'd say to Betty, 'Well who does she think she is anyway?'"

"Perhaps she didn't mean it like that, Hilda. Perhaps she was just shy."

"That's what Betty used to say. Betty was supposed to be her friend. She was quite nice really."

The waitress came to take their order. "What'll you have?"

She gave the order and continued.

"Betty said she was shy, but she couldn't have been. She often said quite witty things. Like one time we were all going on stupidly and one of the girls said 'Are you a virgin, Pam?' and she said 'Virgin. That's an understatement.' She never went out. But she couldn't be shy and say things like that about herself."

"Didn't she ever go out?"

"Not at first. She wasn't anything to look at, but she wasn't horrible either, and the funniest people do go out."

Angela laughed, over-heartily.

"But she was there for months and months without ever *speaking* to a man, as far as I could gather. Betty said she'd hardly ever gone out in her whole life. It was probably true. But after a while she met this bloke and it was all on. And after a few months they got engaged. She never talked about it, but she bought lots of new clothes. She

used to tell Betty all about it. Betty reckoned they met one another and everything just went click. He was interested in the same things, music and books, you know. And there aren't many people in a little place like that that are. But from the way Betty talked you got the impression that Pam thought there'd never been anyone in love before. She used to say 'I never thought it was possible to love anyone as much as that. It's incredible that he should like me. He's so wonderful in every way.' Or that's what Betty told us. She thought it was wonderful. It made me want to throw up. Nauseating."

"Nauseating," Angela agreed.

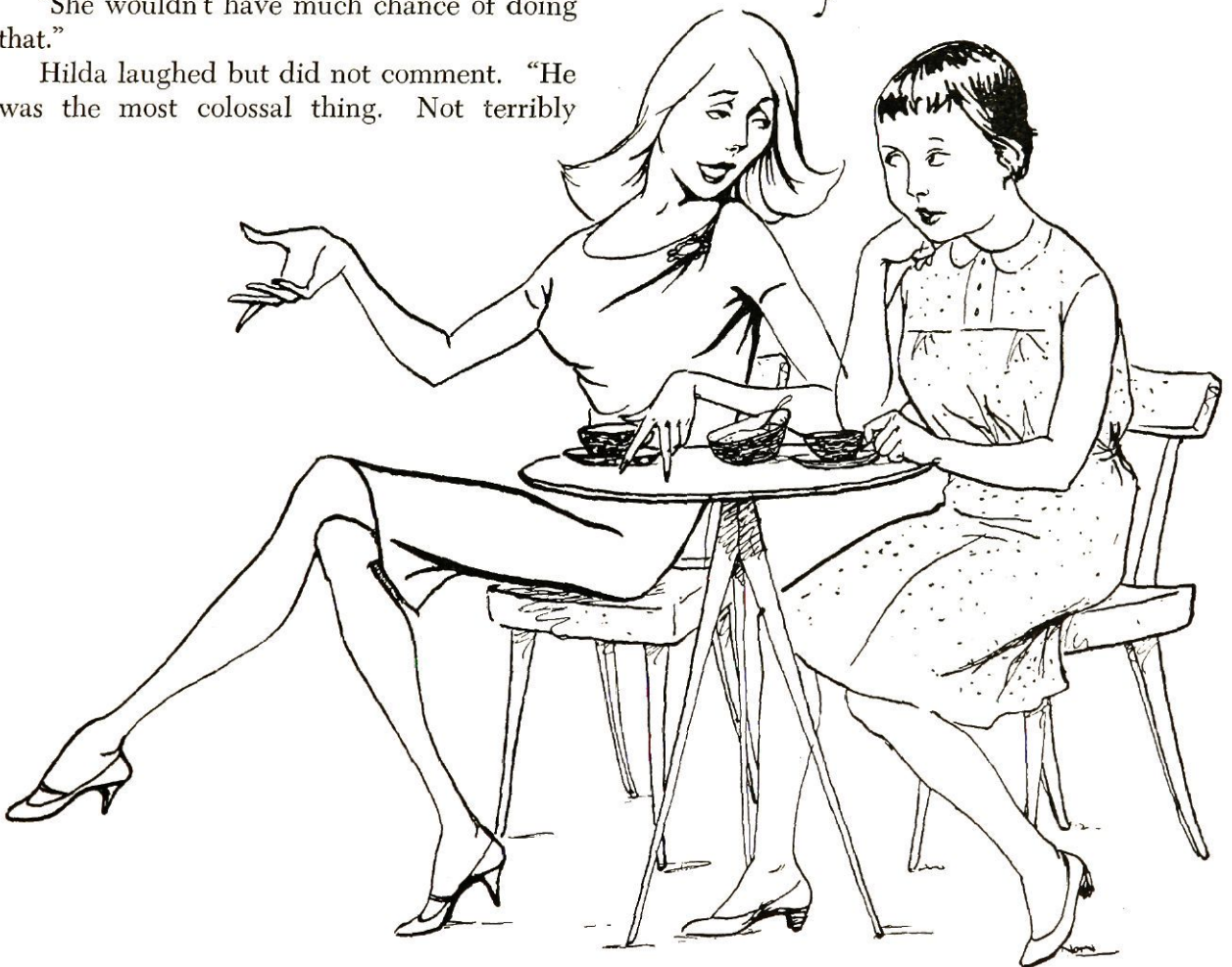
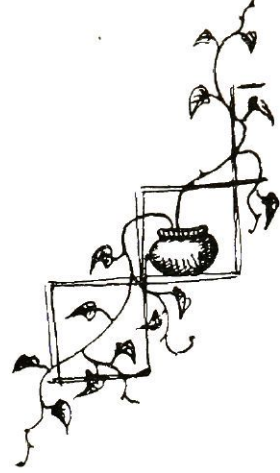
"Anyway I didn't take much notice until one day she tried to pinch my boy."

"She wouldn't have much chance of doing that."

Hilda laughed but did not comment. "He was the most colossal thing. Not terribly

good looking, but wonderful to be with. Terribly suave, and you know, cosmopolitan." Angela nodded vaguely. "We went out for quite a long time. He was a colossal thing."

"Why did you stop?"



"We called it off." She snapped out the answer and went on quickly. "Anyway this particular night he was coming to take me out. I wasn't ready when he came and Pam got on to him. When I came out they were talking like mad about the Aztecs." She rolled her eyes in an expression of exaggerated horror. "The Aztecs. Truly"

"Anyway, I said 'I'm ready now Bill,' and he said 'Just a sec, Hilda, I want to finish telling Pam about the burial rites' or something equally odd. And I waited three-quarters of an hour." She nodded solemnly. "Three-quarters of an hour. Listening to them talking about these people and all the ghastly things they did. It was interesting, but still"

She paused and shrugged her shoulders. "Apparently Bill read a thing about them in the *Reader's Digest* and got terribly keen about them and read books and books on them. He hardly ever finds anyone who knows anything about them, so when he found that Pam did he just let fly. Well we got away at last. I was wild as anything and I said 'I suppose Pam Hind will be breaking off her engagement soon,' being as sarcastic as anything. And he said 'That Pam Hind's a nice girl. But no sex appeal, unfortunately no sex appeal.'"

Angela laughed, a little nervously.

"Oh, Bill was quite bright. Then he said all sorts of stupid things about me. You know. And I *couldn't* be angry with him any more. He was a colossal thing."

She smiled reminiscently and Angela smiled wistfully in sympathy.

"But I was still wild with Pam. I said to Rhonda, that's one of the girls at the hostel, 'Does she think because she's finally got herself a bloke, it means she can collect a harem of them? All I can say is that she'd better keep her hands off Bill, or I'll pinch this Bob of hers and every other male she comes within coo-ee of.'"

"You probably could, too, Hilda."

"Oh, I don't know." Hilda's smile was deprecating, but satisfied. "Anyway Rhonda said to me, 'Oh, go on. You couldn't get him from her. They're crazy about each other.' And I said, 'I've a good mind to try. Just for one night to pay her back.' Rhonda just sat there with her eyes half shut and said 'Bet you couldn't'. Well, that annoyed me. So I said 'Bet you I could, just for one night.' And she said 'All right then, it's a bet. Let's see you do it at the dance on Wednesday.' And I said 'All right. You'll see.'"

"What happened at the dance? Did you win the bet?" Angela had been drinking the whole story in, her eyes fixed on Hilda's face.

"That's what I was going to tell you about that was so odd. Pam practically threw him at me. We all turned up at the dance. I wasn't with Bill which made it easier. Rhonda said to me in the wash-room after the second dance, 'You'd better hurry up if you're going to do it.' And I said, 'There's plenty of time', and walked straight out of the room and started talking to Pam's Bob."

"And fluttered your eyelashes at him," put in Angela. Hilda looked at her curiously and then dropped her eyes.

"And various other things," she said. "Well I got this Bob laughing. He was an awfully nice bloke. And then we danced together. When we came back I walked to a seat right away from Pam and kept on talking. He looked over at Pam a couple of times, but she was talking away like mad to this other bird, and I kept on talking to him, so he had to dance with me again."

"Well when the dance was over he took me back to Pam and tried to get her to talk to us, but she just froze up and hardly said a word. She must have been crazy. When he walked over to her I thought I was going to lose the bet after all, but she made it easy. I had a good look at them. At first he was trying to talk, you could see that, and she was freezing him up all the time, and then they were just dancing around with their

faces shut up tight, as angry as anything. It was hilarious to watch. Then he danced with me the rest of the night. He was an awfully nice bloke really. And she was talking away like mad all night, letting on she didn't care. And neither of them looked at the other *at all*. It was a scream. But I had a good time with him. He was an awfully nice bloke."

"What happened in the end?" Angela's voice was anxious and rather doubtful.

"Well, the next day, Bob rang me up at work and said could he see me in my lunch-hour. When he met me he said, 'I'd like to talk to you about Pam. You're the only girl I know who really knows her. I just don't know what to make of last night.' He was a terribly nice chap, Angela. He said, 'At first I thought she was just jealous and I got angry and behaved stupidly and so did she. It must have been rather amusing to watch.' I felt like saying it was, but I didn't.

"Apparently it was just the same going home; both of them sitting like blocks of marble, not saying a word. Then it began to seem funny to him, and he got out of his temper and said he was sorry and for her to stop being angry, and she just froze him up and said, 'It's quite all right. I'm not angry. You can talk to Hilda whenever you like, if that's what appeals to your taste.' And she just got out of the car and walked inside.

"He said to me, 'At first I thought she'd get over it by the morning, but then I began thinking perhaps she wasn't jealous. There wasn't anything to be really jealous *of*, was there? Perhaps it was something else. Because she seemed to just throw everything in so quickly. If she really did care about me do you think she'd act like that?' I said, 'I don't really know her very well.' Then he said, 'Well at least you're a girl. What would you do in a case like that? Would you just chuck everything?' And I said 'No, I wouldn't. I'd fight like mad.'"

She saw the reproach in Angela's face and her tone became somewhat querulous.

"Well, it was true, Angela. I would. He asked me what *I'd* do. He wouldn't *let* me say any more."

She paused slightly and slipped back into her normal, off-hand way. "Well when I went back that night I saw Pam and I thought I'd tell her what Bob said, so I said 'Oh, Pam, I had lunch with Bob today,' and she just looked at me, and turned dead white, and rushed out of the room, and didn't come down to tea. And then," the tone became even more casual, "at the end of the week we heard she'd written to Bob and broken off the engagement."

"Ooh, *Hilda*."

"It wasn't my fault, Angela." The note of querulous self-defence was back. "I thought *you'd* see that. Betty said it was, and she and Pam won't speak to me any more. But it wasn't my fault. If they'd really both cared they still could have made it up."

"But you could have done something *Hilda*."

"No I couldn't. Whenever I tried to say something about it they wouldn't listen. It was their own fault. They shouldn't have been so silly and touchy about it. It was their own fault. I thought *you'd* see it wasn't my fault, Angela."

She looked at her watch. "I'll have to fly." Her tone was hard and brittle and the condescending affection was gone. "I'm having dinner with a bloke tonight and I'll have to rush home and get dressed. Will you fix the bill, there's a darling. I don't know when I'll see you again. I'm going home on Wednesday, but I'll probably run into you next time I'm down, and if I don't you'll survive. But I have to rush. Good-bye."

Angela remained sitting at the table for quite a long time, picking up spoonfuls of sugar and letting them run back into the basin. Her eyes were hard and bright.

"Now I've lost her," she murmured, "and it was my own fault."

WHAT FUTURE FOR CYPRUS?

Norman Horrocks

TO MANY PEOPLE the present-day situation in Cyprus brings back memories of Palestine. Greeks and Turks take the places of Jews and Arabs, with Britain in the middle acting as a policeman. But this parallel is not exact. In Cyprus there can be no simple laying down of the mandate followed by evacuation. Cyprus is a Crown Colony and its future remains Britain's responsibility.

Soon after the Suez Canal was opened Britain took over the administration of Cyprus from the Turks who had been in occupation for over three hundred years. It was intended to be part of a joint Turco-British defence scheme against Russia. The island was then formally annexed by Britain on the outbreak of war in 1914, when the enemy, ironically, was Turkey. The next year Cyprus was offered to Greece as an inducement to enter the war. This offer was refused and has never been repeated. So Cyprus remains the great query against Britain's post-war policy of granting independence and self-government to many of her colonies. Impressive as the list of these newly freed colonies is, it cannot be claimed that politically they are more advanced than the Cypriots. In many cases the reverse is true.

Britain's primary reason for remaining in Cyprus has been its desire to maintain a base in the Middle East. Cyprus, however, is poorly equipped to be a satisfactory naval

base, for such harbours as it has cannot handle much shipping. (This weakness was clearly demonstrated at the time of the Suez invasion.) But as an air base Cyprus has more to offer—its airfields, which are being extended, serve as a useful jumping-off ground for troops in support of Britain's obligations under the Baghdad Pact. It was from Cyprus that British troops moved recently into Jordan. And there are obvious advantages in having a base on what is legally one's own territory. Foreign governments change and their permanent friendliness cannot be relied upon. But the value of any base is reduced if the local population is hostile.

That the Cypriots are at present hostile cannot be denied. But it is important to examine not only the nature of the hostility but also its causes. It is not simply a racial battle between the Greek Cypriots on the one hand and the Turkish Cypriots on the other. In the violence of the past three years the Greek Cypriots have killed more of their compatriots than they have killed Britons and Turks. And while so far the Turks are not known to have killed any Britons they have killed both Greeks and fellow Turks, although on a much smaller scale than the Greek Cypriots.

The Turkish position is comparatively simple. The Turks in Cyprus are in a minority; they are less than 20 per cent of the population. As a minority they feel that they fare better under British administration than they would under Greek rule, whether from Nicosia or from Athens. Turkey renounced

Norman Horrocks is a part-time student in the Arts Faculty of the University of W.A. He was in Cyprus in 1947-48 and again in 1954-55.

all claim to Cyprus when she signed the Treaty of Lausanne after the First World War, but naturally she still takes an interest in the welfare of the 100,000 Turks in Cyprus. Moreover, Turkey is a staunch ally of the Western Powers standing firm on the Russian borders. So although Turkey's legal right to be consulted in a settlement of the Cyprus question seems doubtful she has strong moral and political support on her side.

The Greek position is much more complex. Whereas the Turks in Cyprus and the Turkish Government in Ankara are largely in agreement, there are periodical differences between the Greek Cypriots and the Athens Government. The Karamanlis Government in Athens is anxious for a settlement of the Cyprus problem, particularly if in the process it can obtain for itself some of the credit. In the meantime though, whatever its private opinions, it is forced to demonstrate its active efforts to find a solution so as to avoid Opposition criticism, hence its applications to the United Nations and its recent mooted support of a United Nations Mandate over the island.

In Cyprus itself the Greek Cypriots are united superficially in their struggle for freedom, but below the surface there are stresses which may prove to be of increasing importance. The Greek Cypriots are in two main camps: the right-wing (supporters of the Greek Orthodox Church), and the left-wing (trade-unionists or Communists). Many of the left-wing adherents are not true Communists but there is no middle party in Cyprus. The Greek Orthodox Church has always been active politically and the only organized means of opposing it in the political sphere has been provided by the left-wing trade-unions, the leading figures in which have been trained in Moscow. A few years ago the Communists were actively supporting the agitation for Enosis—Union with Greece—although had Britain granted it then, they would have been faced with ruthless treatment from the Athens Government.

Political expediency tends to run counter to logic on occasion. At present the British administration is faced with an unholy alliance between the Church and the Communists. The unifying factor is the Ethnarch, Archbishop Makarios. It would be a mistake to regard the Archbishop as purely a spiritual leader. Makarios is the accepted head of a powerful political and religious machine. That before his exile from Cyprus he was in contact with Grivas, the EOKA leader, is not disputed. The degree to which Grivas acted under his direction and, even more important, the present relationship between these two men are, however, open to question.

It seems apparent that the majority of the active EOKA men are right-wing, Church supporters, and are taking the risks of being caught or killed by the British security forces. The left-wing seems more intent on keeping its organisation intact. EOKA has always taken vengeance on those it considers "traitors" or "informers", so it is not surprising that a number of its victims have been prominent left-wing supporters. A few months ago the left-wing leaders flew to Athens to ask Makarios to prevent any further attacks on their supporters. But the killings have continued and there have been strong left-wing demonstrations against the "masked men" of EOKA.

The EOKA leader is General Grivas, now a Greek subject, although he was born in Cyprus. Grivas took some part in the guerrilla operations which were so much a part of life in Greece at the end of the last war and in the immediate post-war years. Since his return to Cyprus in 1954 to found EOKA he has consistently avoided all the traps set for him by the British forces there. No mean feat for a man of over 60 operating in an island some 145 miles long and with an average width of 45 miles. His support from the local population is obviously very strong whether obtained by beliefs or by intimidation. The source of the financial support to

pay for his costly operations is not so obvious. Some of it is raised by more or less open levies made on all Cypriot Greeks by EOKA members. But there are also stories of large financial contributions made by certain Greek Cypriot businessmen and industrialists, who are strongly opposed to the idea of Communism gaining any sort of control in Cyprus and believe that Grivas can help to prevent this from happening. They are certainly avowed anti-Communists but some of their tendencies remind one disturbingly of Fascism.

Archbishop Makarios was born of humble parents in a village near Paphos in the western part of the island. He was both young and ambitious when he was recalled from his studies at Boston University to become Bishop of Kition (Limassol and Larnaca districts) in 1948. Three years later at the age of 37 he was elected Archbishop, the supreme head of the Greek Orthodox Church in Cyprus. By ancient decree the Church in Cyprus is autocephalous, that is completely independent, within the loose framework of the Orthodox Church. At present Greek Cypriots of all political opinion recognize Makarios as their spokesman and no other person or group is prepared to enter into negotiations with the British administration.

The form that violence in Cyprus has taken is easy to see, with shootings in the back predominating. What is not so obvious is the reason for the hostility which has led to these happenings. Again the Turkish attitude can be given more easily. The Greeks are traditional enemies of the Turks. The last war fought by Turkey was in the 1920's when the Greeks were driven out of Asia Minor. In 1956 and 1957 the British Government's policy tended to use Turkish opposition to Enosis as one of its main reasons for opposing it. This has rebounded and given the Turks a bargaining power out of proportion to their importance. Minorities often tend to be placed at a disadvantage but there are size-

able Greek minorities in Turkey today just as there are Turkish minorities in Greece. The Turkish Government dropped a broad hint that it could counter any mis-treatment of minorities by its handling of the anti-Greek riots which swept Istanbul and other Turkish towns in 1955.

The Greek Cypriot attitudes are more complex but basically like other former colonial territories they want "the freedom to make their own mistakes" rather than continue to accept an outside government, no matter how benevolent or well-intentioned. And then, Enosis is not a new idea. The Church leaders who greeted the arrival of the British in 1878 welcomed the return of Christian rule to the island and expressed the hope that Cyprus would soon be united with Greece. The campaign for Enosis has been conducted fitfully since that date. The present Greek Cypriot claim is for self-determination; if forced to they will accept a period of self-government before voting on self-determination. Cyprus was probably unique in that in claiming Enosis it was a country not claiming independence but wanting to exchange one set of rulers for another. The Greek Cypriots make it plain that their self-determination will mean Enosis. Whether a period of self-government will prove sufficiently attractive to them to make them want to retain their independence remains to be seen.

Successive British administrations have never understood the Cypriot Greek's passionate desire to be regarded as a Greek. Throughout the seventy-odd years of British rule little attempt was made to encourage the people to think of themselves as Cypriots first and Greeks second. Education was handed over to the Greek authorities. The school curriculum was based on that of schools in Greece. School inspectors from Greece visited the island regularly to check the instruction being given. There were no facilities available for higher education. Pro-

mising students went to Athens University. They came back no longer Cypriots but confirmed Greeks. Similarly the Turks went to either Ankara or Istanbul University.

Puzzled British Colonial Office officials would point to the high standard of living enjoyed by the Cypriots, the advantages to trade through membership of the British Commonwealth, the possession of a British passport giving unrestricted entry into Britain and so on. But these material advantages did not outweigh the desire to become Greeks. They spoke Greek, their religion was Greek, their educational system was Greek, they wanted to be Greeks. They saw freedom being granted to other colonies, particularly those in Africa, and they became embittered with repeated British delaying tactics. Eden's snub to Papagos and the British Colonial Secretary's incautious use of the word "never", seemed to convince the Greek Cypriots that they would get nothing by waiting. In exasperation they turned to violence and saw "never" change to "some-time" and then to "soon".

The latest British proposals for Cyprus envisage self-government through popularly-elected representatives with safeguards for the Turkish minority built into the Constitution. After an interim period of seven years the Cypriots would be free to vote on the island's future. The Turks now say that if there cannot be continued British rule then the island must be partitioned. This partition would be political rather than physical. The Greek and Turkish villages are spread haphazardly over the island but in roughly a sixth of them Greeks and Turks live side by side. Wholesale transportations would be needed to separate Greek from Turk. If this were considered then previous precedent in Asia Minor might have to be followed with the transfer of all the minority from the island to the mainland. To counter this suggestion the Turks repeatedly stress that Cyprus is less than 50 miles from the

Turkish coast and should be regarded as part of Asia Minor.

On the Greek side the position looks a little more hopeful. There are signs that Makarios is prepared to accept the British proposals with slight modifications. He is well aware that the longer he stays away from Cyprus the greater becomes the danger of his followers falling permanently under the domination of either Grivas or the Communists. The British Government has implied that if Makarios will call off terrorism it will allow him to return to Cyprus. Rather more logically Makarios insists that his return must come first.

Given the return of Makarios and the cessation of violence there is a reasonable prospect of a settlement to the island's immediate problems. It will not be achieved overnight. The ill-feelings aroused will take time to die down. The Greeks have lived peaceably with the Turks as neighbours for many years and can do so again. The immediate British policy must be threefold. One, to agree to the return of Makarios. Two, to convince the Turks both in Cyprus and in Turkey that their rights will be safeguarded. Three, to accept a caretaker role for the next seven years with sufficient imagination to redress the policies of recent years. During this time it should be possible for Britain to come to an agreement over the use of an airbase on the island, probably under the auspices of NATO to which Britain, Greece and Turkey all belong.

The new Constitution proposed by Britain, with its system of representative government and communal autonomy, includes participation by the Greek and Turkish governments. The Menderes Government seems to have persuaded the Turks in Cyprus that as a minority they will not suffer under the British proposals. This was done none too soon. In some villages in Cyprus the Turks, who are Moslems, had recently given warning that

they wanted no Christians living near them, whether British or Greek. The Greek Government's desire for a speedy settlement was recently underlined by King Paul's speech, but whatever the reasons behind the King's direct intervention the final struggle in Cyprus will remain to be decided. For although the left and right wings will probably remain united until self-determination is reached, if the vote

then goes in favour of Enosis, then obviously, as in Greece itself, the right-wing will seek to destroy the Communists. The return of permanent peace and prosperity to Cyprus seems therefore distant.

(Since this article was written the Turkish Government's Commissioner has arrived in Cyprus to co-operate with the British administration. No representative of the Turkish Government has yet been appointed. N.H., 16/10/1958.)

POETRY

REASSURANCE

A man's not strange who
knows the placement of the
stars and tells the passing
hour by the shadow's strike.

Who absent scents the heavy grapefruit
and the silhouette of dusk
and daybreak in the
mind's eye draws.

Who the rough texture knows
and feels the warmth of the
crude red bricks that his
own hands lay.

Who sees from the old seed fallen
the saplings young and striving
a new earth rending.

Joseph Jones

WINTER LANDSCAPE

The clouds come down upon the hills
lift on the mountains now my heart
in dazzle-dew the summits stand
and round and round and round and round
the black skull rattles in the grave.

The heel-marks fill behind my heels
before the wet grass lies so smooth
and soaked trees drip from every leaf
and round and round and round
the black skull rattles in the grave.

On sheep-tracked hillsides lies the bread
the black rain falls with broken teeth
the clay lies fresh upon the soil
and round and round
the black skull rattles in the grave.

From hill to hill-top leaps the axe
the crashing timber washes down
the secret hollows drown with pools
and round
the black skull rattles in the grave.

The flowers lie sodden on the bough
the sunlight pierces here below
the day lies withered on my hand
and
the black skull rattles in the grave.

Ian Mudie

ANGRY YOUNG DRAMA (Part 2)

POSSIBLY THE BEST EXPLANATION of Angry Young Drama is to be found in its unanimous adoption of the persona of the Outsider (as represented in Colin Wilson's *The Outsider*) for modern man, at any rate in his dramatic aspect. One cannot exactly define an Outsider in so many words. One has to look at the way Mr. Wilson describes a number of his heroes, from H. G. Wells, Henri Barbusse and Van Gogh to T. E. Lawrence and Fox the Quaker. And even then one will not have quite got it, for the moods or visions of the Outsider are like (and yet not like) ordinary moods of intense depression such as you or I might suffer. Outsiderism is, in fact, very like that 17th Century disease known as Melancholy, and one could make interesting parallels between the melancholic Malcontents of the Jacobean drama and the Angry Young Man.

But that would lead us too far afield. Enough to say that Mr. John Neville's *Hamlet* at the Old Vic is one of those electrifying performances which makes Shakespeare once again the most topical dramatist of our century. His Prince might be any first-rate product of the older Universities who has (of course) done his military service and even won a blue or two, and who now finds himself, sick at heart as he is, in forced opposition to what twentieth-century malcontents have taught us to call the Establishment—that immovable hierarchy of Jackasses-in-

office which governs us by right-thinking inertia and the clubmanship of safe official opinion. That is only a sidelight on Mr. Neville's brilliant interpretation, but it helps to bring us closer to what Mr. Wilson says of the Outsider:

“ . . . a man who cannot live in the comfortable, insulated world of the bourgeois, accepting what he sees and touches as reality. “He sees too deep and too much” and what he sees is essentially chaos. For the bourgeois the world is fundamentally an orderly place, with a disturbing element of the irrational, the terrifying, which his preoccupation with the present usually permits him to ignore. For the Outsider the world is not rational, not orderly. When he asserts his sense of anarchy in the face of the bourgeois complacent acceptance it is not simply the need to cock a snook at respectability that provokes him; it is a distressing sense that the truth must be told at all costs.”

What the Outsider sees, then, is Man in his aspect of *quintessence of dust*, a terrifying, disgusting and futile animal, who inhabits a universe devoid of any purpose he can comprehend. In a universe without purpose, asks Mr. Simpson, what is there to do but join the Party (one or another, it doesn't matter) translate poems, torture people, or not, heat glue, not choose not to be . . . and to a wartime generation which expects to burst into immortality, if at all, in the form of radio-active dust, these are not questions easily laughed off.

Life lived in the clear consciousness of futility would be intolerable, but at least the *suspicion* of ultimate futility, which at present is very easily aroused in audiences, is

(Continued from *Westerly* No. 2, 1958, pp. 4-8.)

being exploited in interesting ways by the new dramatists. First of all it sharpens up old conflicts of thought; conflicts between impulse and reason, reason and religious faith, traditional lore and science, the visions of genius and the incomprehension of the multitude, duty to oneself and duty to others. All these are questions of conduct, and therefore questions of theatre, and all acquire a greater interest against an easily evoked background of ultimate nothingness.

Is this a paradox? Suppose that the next moment is going to be your last—and if life is futile any moment *may as well be*—it becomes important to know what you are going to do in it. Will you twiddle your thumbs? make love? satisfy as many appetites as you can all at once? pray? love your neighbour? or kill him? or what? And then *why* do you choose to do this rather than that? Whose side do you ultimately turn out to be on?

The interest in sheer *talk* in the modern theatre is probably due as much to the menace of the H-bomb as to the example of Giraudoux or Shaw. There is, for example, *The Brass Butterfly*, in which an Epicurean Emperor, his tame scientist, the scientist's daughter (who is a Christian), and the Emperor's favourite and heir (who is in love with the Christian girl) are waiting to be blown to bits by a bomb which the scientist has invented years before its proper time. That is a fairly conventional crisis with a topical twist, but one is conscious after ten minutes that one has heard too much sheer talk. And one begins to think only of its immense distance from the wit of *Androcles and the Lion*. It is just not clever or compelling enough.

However, the Angry Young Men are rapidly learning how to exploit the value of ultimate nothing in more theatrical terms. For example, in Wally Simpson's *The Hole* the set is made almost from nothing; it is a hole in the ground, or, more particularly, a road-mender's hole. Beside it there sits a

tramp, fulfilling the life-long ambition of "forming the nucleus of a queue". Nobody ever comes to join him. He gazes into the hole and seems to see a vision. Perhaps he is looking down into a cathedral filling up to witness the Resurrection. At any rate he comments on the arrivals and the seating arrangements. Three other loungers later arrive and gaze into the hole from the other side. As a stage trick this is, of course, superb. By the end of ten minutes the audience is bursting to see into the whole for itself and the tension is built by a series of half-reports, arguments, and infuriating silences from the observers. That is all there is to it, for more than an hour. There is no tension in anything that is said: indeed, I doubt if more than three people in London can interpret the dialogue into sense; and I doubt, moreover, if Mr. Simpson is one of the three, or would want to be.

One critic saw in it a complete history of philosophy, others heard the undoubted crackle of Oxford philosophical wit, others thought it was a super-intellectual farce, others related it to the Outsider 'complex': what we saw on stage was, if you like, the human imagination erecting its own certainties out of nothing.

But whatever it was, Mr. Simpson has rediscovered something important, and that is the dramatic value of silence. That is to say, he has hit on a theatrical means for expressing the Outsider's vision. In a world seen as essentially *chaos*, it is evident that no one thing is any more or less worth saying than any other thing, and no sequence of thought is any more probable or improbable, rational or irrational than any other sequence.

What happens is that anything that is said at all seems dangerous, astonishing, a real *tour de force* (considering that there is really nothing to say) and thus it must either be portentous or hilarious. Silence itself is only a slight degree less interesting than

speech. In the revue, *Share My Lettuce*, the compere gets the biggest laughs of the evening by standing quite still and staring in silence at the audience for anything up to two minutes—which in theatrical time is a millenium. Silence produces tension, as Mozart showed, when, asked what is the most effective device in music, he replied, "No music". By investing speech with an air of danger Mr. Simpson also makes silence interesting. Since the given condition of man is that to *be* he must *think*, we always know a secret about the most dead-pan actor on any stage. Willy-nilly, he is thinking, and at some time he may be moved, by some inadvised inner compulsion, to make a remark. That in itself is interesting enough. But we can go further and say that since every actor must be thinking, he must be thinking about something. Well, about *what?* Mr. Simpson actually forces us to concentrate on the silences of his characters as if they amounted to a conflict of expressed ideas. In the case of *The Hole*, the audience feels drawn into the play, because it is made to anticipate and thus to think for itself (much good that does it) and, indeed, almost made to invent its own play. *The Hole* is not the only play to exploit this technique of silence, and Court drama can often be like a nightmare or a headache or a game of chess between actors and audience, with the dramatist continually shifting the bishops and the pawns so that the harder you concentrate the more frustrated you get. You are really concentrating very hard on a game without rules, that is, to repeat, on *ultimate nothing*.

What this technique is really doing is exploiting our unquenchable hope that the world must be a rational and predictable place, while playing on our fears that it may be the reverse, and thus if the play appears to be serious it can evoke a mood close to hysteria, while if it appears to be comic the laughs are easy to get without the aid of wit. Take first an example of a Joke from *The*

Resounding Tinkle, in which a middle-class couple find themselves in the embarrassing position of having an elephant in the back yard. True, they ordered it, but it has been delivered the wrong size. They are arguing about what name to give it when there is a knock on the door:

Husband (*coming back into the room slowly*): There was a man at the door.

Wife (*furiously knits wool rug*): Well? (*long pause*) It couldn't have been just a man.

Husband (*after a pause*): He asked me to form a government.

Wife (*knits wool rug*).

Husband: I told him I couldn't. (*Very long pause for intense concentration*) How can I form a government? (*pause*) We don't *know* anyone.

As long as you have the trick of timing the silences these lines will get at least three big laughs. All the dramatist has to do is to produce improbabilities that no audience, even when concentrating its hardest, could think of. In short it is exactly like Alice talking to Humpty-Dumpty.

John Osborn is able to use silences, noise, unpredictability of plot and dialogue, hysteria, song and dance, in a much more sophisticated way than any of his successors at the Court—in a way which evokes genuine complexity of feelings about situations that are not merely topical and contemporary, but real. The crisis of *The Entertainer*, for example, is a stunning moment of theatre; but, giant though he may be, he is in the same intellectual boat with Miss Jellicoe, Mr. Simpson, Mr. Angus Wilson and other Court writers. Mr. Colin Wilson seems to be the *eminence grise*, though he is younger than most of the others and has written no plays.

Perhaps we should not even begin to talk about "Court writers". It is far too early to suggest that a school of dramatists is grow-

ing up, or that the family likeness of these experimental plays is anything more than accidental. But there is something about this new drama that week after week sends one of the more dignified critics into a rash ecstasy of interpretation. It is usually Kenneth Tynan, but recently sedate Harold Hobson plunged head over ears for *The Birthday Party*, which lasted three nights at Hammer-smith, and which all the other critics, including Mr. Tynan, found incomprehensible. Next week it will be Mr. Tynan on the springboard. What the exciting something is, can only be guessed at. Perhaps each play has to be looked at on its own merits, but there is one guess that I am going to venture, which applies to most of them, and I would support it, if I could, by asking you to listen first of all to the appallingly dead dialogue of the popular *Flowering Cherry* (which even the Moscow Arts Theatre director mistakes for brilliant naturalism), then to the verbally-dull translations which make up the bulk of West End entertainment, and then to the new drama.

At the Court you would *hear* for the first time as theatre is meant to be heard, not in

all the new plays, but in the best. There is a vitality in the dialogue (even when it doesn't make sense) which insists on our attention. This vitality is not poetry: far from it. Nor is it the abundance and shapeliness of Shaw, or the elegance of Wilde or Sheridan. It is something that the super-eloquent Elizabethans also managed supremely well—it is the half-said but intensely *thought* utterance, which one hears in that admirable line of Webster:

*Cover her face. Mine eyes dazzle;
she died young.*

or in Hamlet's exchanges with Ophelia which carry such a burden of anguish in the flat lines:

—I did love you once.

—Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so

—I loved you not.

—I was the more deceived.

or in John Ford's desperate stoicism:

They are the silent griefs that cut the heart-strings. Let me die smiling.

In Angry Young Drama, as in the drama of Jacobean England, thought is born of pain, and, when spoken, hurts.

Peter Jeffery

ON YOUNG WRITING

IN RECENT YEARS the young writer in England has been led to imagine that creative writing depends for its success merely on the development of a brilliant technique. But this, it is suggested, is not his main problem. Technique is achieved fairly rapidly when there is an honest wrestling with syntax, and after the continual practice of a thousand sheets of writing, the pen begins to write automatically, selecting the phrase, the word, the pause that must by its expression give a logical pattern. To write originally

is much harder. The search for the writer's own elements must mean endless pages of sacrificing; good work, if derived, must be butcher blocked, and then finally the naked chicken of individuality is seen, standing weakly on its legs. But the sunlight of continued development feathers the moulting, the writer becomes more confident, his phrasing even stronger.

This, then, is not the conflict of the young writer—it is the hard work of preparation and practice that all champions face, and hence the most joyous of disciplines. The problem lies in theme. Faulkner rightly pointed out the fact that good literature im-

Peter Jeffery is an undergraduate of the University of W.A. He is at present teaching in England.

pend on the great virtues, the constants of humanity, and that the morbid preoccupation with the perverse leads to obscurity, confusion, decadence. True, but such small comfort. In this day of chaos our leaders are doubters—or liars. To see the enthusiasts of abstraction in art exult over blank sheets of white, to hear the coffee stained conversations of Penguin and pocketbook reading intellectuals, to hear children scream in darkened auditoriums at a scream quite indistinguishable from theirs, is to see and hear hypocrisy. We are all its servants. One finds oneself praising a Picasso goat, then a fried egg ceramic, in case one is to lose the praise that they gained in their selection as the first example of good.

We are not alone in this chaos. There have always been popes orgiastic in the cellars. But then, there was always the hermitage in the hills. A writer savagely slashed at most modern young American poets hiding in the security of teaching—"a silk lined cocoon." We poets are called the Silent Generation, our poems no longer flame, no longer parapet the world, are the quiet little eloquences of small voices mouthing great doubts. It is hard to find Crusaders. All the battles have been fought—the tactics change in every game, the umpires are forever blind.

Yet the need survives for the belief in literary immortality or social efficacy. Each copy of a syndicated magazine with its two million straphanging readers perpetuates the immortality of the written word; each publicity blurb that is given in the free handout amongst the asparagus sandwich, the French wine, and the free cigarettes of this modern aeroplane ride, *Life*, is social efficacy at its height. The young writer is on a slippery hill of temptation—it's so easy to relax and slip.

But it is the power of the circuit rider on horseback, of a Patrick converting the Irish with their own simple symbols, of a Francis talking brotherly to a wolf, that the writer wants. Not the high-pressured gimmick packed, baby quiet room of the modern neon lit church; the clean dental voice over the crystal microphone.

It might be argued that he needs a cause. The First World War produced *All Quiet on the Western Front*, the Second, *From Here to Eternity* and the slick competence of *The Young Lions*. The Spanish Civil War was a going down of artists, but the recent Budapest revolt occasioned the Reader's Digest type *The Bridge at Andau*, by James Michener. We no longer believe in the Internationale—it's no longer fashionable. We are the disengaged. We have suffered too many betrayals.

Esoteric circles where the fans utter the poet's name as if it were an epiphany are springing up, and there are mergers with jazz bands, art movements, progressive magazines that make the Dadaist movement look like an institution of conservative backbenchers. What of the "avante garde" in literature? Where once there were ironclad conventions to break, there is now only shifting sands, for we take no notice of our rebel fathers. Each writer is a law unto himself. He retreats into the defence that the critics don't understand, that the mob will never know, and as long as he has his sycophants he is secure. Much argument has focussed on the plight of the modern novel—where is it? Orwell said that a good novel is impossible in a dictatorship. Perhaps our times, our need to participate normally in our modern society is the most insidious form of despotism known. Nearly two-thirds of the young American writers are connected with schoolteaching, universities, or creative workshops—they rely on monthly increments! Does one write to sell or for the snobbery of a select group? No wonder the young artist likes jazz and Espresso houses—they deaden the sounds of that question.

And yet, will the young writer continue to mark time, to take the same cynical, slick dispirited steps over and over again? Our time is fraught with revolution. It is the two global camps; the rise of racialism; the fantastic increases of material power and forms. It is the chaos of embryo, and from it will spring a new classicism; a tidying-up of all the loose ends, the great experiments. It will be a reorientation of the bases of literary attack.

The names that have stood the swirling of our times have been those of the quiet men who have believed that the work is more important than the words, that the stubbornness of principle is finer than the intellectuality of pragmatic compromise. They have worked quietly in the weeds of literature, hacking away the dross of hypocrisy, building up the constants—restrengthening them—and sending notes of quiet esteem to those who have accomplished.

The young writer must return to the classics, must review the present, absorbing the good in the new directions and rejecting the bad, be prepared to defend his position in a common language. When these things are done, when the writer becomes global and not provincial, literature will flower again. In 1908, a young French writer wept an age of just departed heroes. Yet his generation was that of Rilke, Picasso, Schönberg. Possibly our time is another such weeping!

The life-line of the North-West

Few people realise the important part played by Mac.Robertson Miller Airlines in the development and supplying of our vast "North-West".

It was here in the North-West that Australia's first airline route was commenced.



Since that time M.M.A. has expanded with the State, providing essential foodstuffs and stores to outlying stations and homesteads.



Today, M.M.A. flies 3,000,000 miles, carries 50,000 passengers, 6,000,000 lbs. of freight and 200,000 lbs. of mail.

Truly then, it can be said . . .

**M.M.A. serves you
and Western Australia**

Christopher M. Jay

WHITE AUSTRALIA— NECESSITY OR FOLLY?

A PRIZE WINNING ESSAY IN THE COMPETITION HELD BY THE
INTERNATIONAL CLUB OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

The White Australia policy has been an integral part of Australian thinking since before Federation, and despite a growing pressure in recent years from religious and intellectual groups, only one political movement (the Communist Party) has declared itself against the policy. White Australia is still strongly supported in the community at large by such otherwise diverse groups as the Australian Natives' Association and the A.W.U., the Associated Chambers of Commerce and the Australian Labor Party. Advocates of any major change in the policy must therefore recognise that it will be at least a decade or two before their proposals can be given any practical effect, and that they require a very much wider acceptance than at present. The task of conversion still lies almost wholly before them.

Nevertheless, the recent immigration from Europe paradoxically both destroys some of the old arguments against the policy, and supplies new ones. To quote from the *Times of Indonesia* (16-5-58):

The educated and cultured Indonesian, who in the process of learning three European languages has unconsciously absorbed something of the culture of the continent during his stay in Europe, is surely an adaptable person more fitted to be a prospective Australian immigrant than the planeloads of white coolies one sees at the Airport restaurant in Kemajoran en route to becoming new Australians.

Australia is encouraging large-scale immigration, and is in the process acquiring pockets of foreign concentration. The Redfern district of Sydney is but one example which could be paralleled in any of the capital cities. It is hard to see in what way an immigrant speaking Italian or Greek is better fitted to learn English, than one whose native tongue is Tamil or Malay; and it is questionable whether the living standards of the better favoured portions of Asia are so very much lower than those of Italy or Greece. Australia has been prepared to endure a certain amount of economic dislocation for the sake of large-scale immigration; immigration of Asians would not have any more effect than the immigration

of Europeans. The traditional argument that Asians lower living standards by working for low wages and accepting worse conditions is quite outmoded; Asians who came here would be paid award rates, and experience of Southern Europeans shows that immigrants from poorer areas quickly adapt themselves to these conditions.

However, newer arguments on the other side can also be introduced. Too much immigration would cause a catastrophic fall in the Australian standard of living—and Australia is already absorbing as many migrants as can be comfortably taken. The religious argument that we have a moral duty to share our wealth with less fortunate peoples surely applies as much to the under-developed countries of Europe as to those of Asia; and in any case, it is quite unsound to assert that emigration from Asia into Australia would benefit the Asian peoples, as distinct from the actual emigrants. W. D. Forsyth in "The Myth of Open Spaces" exploded the fallacy that there are huge undeveloped areas in Australia only awaiting suitable settlers—by increased industrialisation and more intensive land settlement, the Australian population may eventually be raised to twenty or thirty million. The greatest inflow from Asia that Australia could take would make a very small contribution to solving the gigantic problem of over-population.

One must decide whether Australian governments exclude Asians because they are Asians, or because of the problems which would result if they were admitted in any numbers. Australia is at present refreshingly free from the sort of racial prejudice which flourishes in South Africa or the Southern States of the U.S.A., according to statements made by some of the 5000 Asian students now at our universities. The question is, would the admixture of a large number of Asians cause the trouble and problems found in other countries with Asian minorities?

Unless one is to assume that the temper, character and composition of the Australian people has radically altered since the days of the Lambing Flat Riots; unless one postulates that an Australian is somehow of a superior character to a South African, an American, or an inhabitant of any other white

Christopher Jay is a student at
Canberra University College.

country where there is a large coloured minority, the answer must be in the affirmative. This in itself is not a final argument against Asian immigration, but it does mean that opponents of White Australia have to produce pressing counter arguments.

Many people contend that Asians do not want to come here anyway. One of these is Professor A. P. Elkin, whose opinion is that not even a few hundred Asians want to come to Australia, let alone thousands. People who say that teeming millions of Asians are ready to rush into the empty north of Australia do not know what they are talking about. This second point is I feel true. Despite the fertility of the soil in some regions, the unreliable rainfall means that at the present time the Northern parts of Australia are not suitable for large-scale settlements. Until—and unless—some mammoth irrigation project or revolutionary improvement in rainmaking eventuates, the empty north is likely to remain the empty north, and by its very aridity a defence against invasion, rather than a military liability. Certainly, it is not a suitable area for any substantial Asian settlement—if Asians come into Australia in large numbers, it is to the fertile crescents of Eastern and South-Western Australia that they will go. Talk of large, empty areas awaiting the magic touch of Asian industry to blossom into production is simply building castles in the air. Let us have an end to airy rhetoric about undeveloped resources and virgin lands. There is more unsettled fertile land in Indonesia alone (apart from Java) than in Australia today. Massive over-population is by no means the case everywhere in South-East Asia; there are many areas, such as Sumatra, where a greater population can be supported.

Industrialisation is the alternative to immigration, and the solution to Asia's problems may well lie in this direction. Extension of Colombo plan aid would be a more effective way of helping Asians increase living standards than allowing a flow of Asians into Australia. In their present political condition of strong nationalism, the great majority of Asian peoples may well prefer to stay in their own countries. It is doubtful whether most Asians have ever heard of Australia—after all, how many Australians know the difference between Thailand and Vietnam? Our alleged closeness to Asia also deserves critical examination. Perth is no closer to Peking than is London; the only Asian peoples who are at all close to us geographically are the Indonesians.

It is in this context that we must look at the practical claim that maintenance of White Australia will lead to an Asian invasion at a later date, a view vigorously expressed by Mr. Malcolm Muggeridge during his recent visit. If this claim is correct, it is a most powerful reason for ending White Aus-

tralia, and over-rides any considerations of racial antagonism and adjustment problems. Proponents of this argument claim that unless we allow controlled immigration now, we will be subject to uncontrolled invasion at some future date, thus building up a mental image of Asian population pressures gradually mounting against the inadequate barrier of White Australia. This is a picture I cannot accept. It may be desirable to ease the restrictions on Asian immigration for economic, ethical, humanitarian or other reasons, but unless accompanied by vigorously anti-Asian measures—and militaristic governments in Asia—these restrictions of themselves would hardly cause war on a scale leading to invasion of Australia. The whole conception of a disastrously overcrowded Asia with Australia its only outlet is quite illusory.

To return briefly to Professor Elkin's first point, that not even a few hundred Asians desire to come to Australia; this is doubtful. That teeming millions would pour into the north is, as Elkin says, a doubtful proposition. But that none would come is another matter. Fiji and South Africa and the Chinese immigration during the gold rushes are evidence to the contrary. The vast majority of Asians may never have heard of Australia, the vast majority may not want to come here, but with the Asian population at over a thousand millions, it would not take a very large minority to constitute a very disturbing influx into Australia. We can assume that if White Australia ends, there will be a flow sufficient to test the adaptive abilities of the Australian people.

An argument of supporters of White Australia is that Asian countries have rigid immigration policies which are as rigorous as our own. This *tu quoque* argument may be effective in debate, but has its defects. By general consent, Asia is over-populated, under-developed and has a low standard of living. Australia is under-developed, but is not over-populated or afflicted with a low standard of living. Asians can argue that further immigration *into* Asia is most undesirable, whereas immigration *out* of Asia is not. Furthermore, in the past Europeans have come as exploiters, to enjoy a superior standard of living at the expense of the native populations, and there is still no guarantee that conditions have changed. Perhaps the Asian restrictions are as strict as ours, but if they are wrong or ill-considered, that is no excuse for our maintenance of a similar policy. The question must be settled on its merits, without appeals to Asian practise.

On the balance, large-scale immigration from Asia is still undesirable. No sufficient case has been made out for unrestricted entry on the grounds of expediency; indeed there are good reasons why some restriction should be maintained. Few Australians deny

this; on the other hand, there is increasing support for the adoption of a quota system of admission of Asians. The case for this is very much stronger. It is opposed mainly on the grounds that it is the thin end of the wedge; indeed, this is almost the only reason adduced by its opponents. The implication behind the "thin end of the wedge" is that Australian governments are incapable of staying somewhere between two extremes. It is a far cry from a quota to unrestricted immigration; and the implication that the institution of a quota is the opening of a floodgate to Asiatic hordes is untenable. A quota could, of course, be the thin end of the wedge; but cannot reasonably be opposed for that reason. It is when the wedge starts to become thicker that the time has come to protest. A trickle of 100 Indians, 100 Pakistanis and 100 Indonesians, a sprinkling of Ceylonese, a handful of Malays, a proportion of Thais will not affect the racial composition of the Australian nation, and any results would be negligible.

It is argued that there would be disputes about the size of the quota, and that it would therefore be unwise to introduce it. On the same argument, since there has been dispute about the size of the immigration intake, it should be cut out altogether. In any case, what is the present situation but a dispute over whether the quota shall be nil or something? Similarly, it is argued that a quota would be a gratuitous insult to Asians. Perhaps it is; it is not so much of an insult as total exclusion. The fact that America will only allow a quota of about a hundred Australians to settle in America each year has not noticeably affected our relations with that country.

There is a very strong case for the institution of a quota system. Let us not confuse the issue by regarding a quota system as the end of White Australia; it is only a modification, albeit a needed one. A European-educated Asian is as assimilable (as pointed out in the *Times of Indonesia*) as a Greek or Sicilian; the evils attendant on a large inflow are non-existent with a limited intake. There are today about 11,000 Asians in Australia, and their impact is not particularly noticeable.

It is interesting to note that the Immigration Department, under the administration of Messrs. Holt and Downer, has adopted what is, in effect, a quota system. 800 Asian war refugees have been allowed to stay here, and individual cases have been treated leniently—much to the disgust of more extreme members of the Australian community.

Modification of the White Australia policy with the institution of a quota system, but maintenance of its essential object—that is the standard conclusion of the more enlightened part of the Australian community.

A quota system *is* the thin end of the wedge. This is, however, to be welcomed rather than feared. It marks the beginning of the end of racial intolerance, differing standards of living, racial exclusiveness. It is a step on the road towards a full adoption of Christian principles in the relations between races. If it is but a small one, it is still a step; the wedge is still thin, but it is there. Like the dinosaur, the White Australia policy is moving towards extinction.

USE THIS FORM TO SUBSCRIBE

Please send me ^{a single copy of*} a subscription to* Westerly, starting with.....issue, 19.....
(1st, 2nd, 3rd) (year)

My Name..... Address.....

and ^{single copy*} subscription* to the following:—

Single copy costs 2/-; subscription 6/-, overseas 7/6, post free.

Name..... Address.....

Name..... Address.....

Enclosed is remittance for £ : : .

please add exchange to country and interstate cheques.

* Strike out whichever does not apply.

ADDRESS: "WESTERLY", c/- ARTS UNION, UNIVERSITY, NEDLANDS, W. A.

Screaming at the top of their voices?

THE ANGRY DECADE—a survey of the cultural revolt of the nineteen-fifties, by Kenneth Allsop (Peter Owen Limited, London 1958).

WHAT IS THE TREND of young writing in Britain today? Who are the 'Angry Young Men,' what influences are working on them, what are they saying and what is the value of it? These are the questions which Kenneth Allsop sets out to answer in this book. It will be, he hopes, "an objective examination of their work". That work in most cases covers somewhat less than five years and most of the writers mentioned have, as we are so often reminded, only just begun. This fact, combined with the author's personal acquaintance with those whom he criticises, may well give him qualms. And the nineteen-fifties which the book so gallantly sets out to cover are, after all, not yet over and we are still, in a great many senses, in the middle of them.

Nevertheless, *The Angry Decade* is a stimulating and interesting book to those who know the Angry Young Men only at second-hand, or even to those who have read only the most spectacularly angry of them. For although attention naturally focuses on Kingsley Amis, John Osborne and Colin Wilson, almost every other writer with the least claim to 'angriness' is dealt with.

At the outset, Mr. Allsop prefers 'dissentient writer' to 'angry young man,' not only because of the almost rude associations of the term, but because as applied to writers as widely divergent as Amis and Wilson, 'Angry Young Man' is misleading. "They have," he declared, "widely disparate

outlooks on modern problems and modern solutions . . . yet they are all, in differing degrees and for different reasons, dissentients," disagreeing "with majority sentiments and opinions".

It is remarkable, however, that most of these writers, who come from lower middle or working class backgrounds, and who received their education through the Welfare State, have no interest in economic or political ideology. Their concern is almost exclusively introspective, how things affect them personally regardless of a wider framework. They share in common a lack of spiritual direction: they have all lost faith in

'Law Givers,' who, with Colin Wilson in the lead, are setting out to create the new world out of the ruins of the old by a formula mainly existentialist though not without a suspicion of fascism. But, while Mr. Allsop points out the essential validity of the position in which these writers find themselves, and while he is prepared to recognise the justice of the praise lavished on John Osborne and even on Colin Wilson, yet he is quite definite in his criticisms. Apart from condemning their slovenliness of execution, his most serious criticism of them is that, in their introspection, they fail to face up to what is really

review

SECTION

the 'shiny barbarism' for which our fathers so selflessly and pointlessly strove. They see that behind its innumerable facades our civilization is rotten to the core.

Mr. Allsop deals with his dissentients according to their attitudes towards this underlying common conviction, and to do this he classes them into three groups, the three main chapters of his book. There are the 'Neutralists,' of whom Kingsley Amis is perhaps the best known, who "stand well back from the edge to scoff and jeer" and who refuse to take a look at "the perception of complete terror" (Wilson's definition of the reality of the world). There are the 'Emotionals,' like John Osborne, who work themselves into a fit over the whole situation, although one is never quite sure just what all the fuss is about. Lastly there are the

the problem; and they fail because they are, most of them, by no means clear in their own minds of what that problem is.

The Angry Young Man has suffered from having success too early and the fact of his youth has been used to focus attention on him to the extent of raising him to the position of genius, when all he had done was to state the current confusion of his period—an achievement, but a limited one.

Against this, Mr. Allsop sets—and this says more than pages of elaborate analysis—not only the writers of the Twenties, Thirties and Forties, but some leading contemporary foreign writers, men like Camus, Satre, and, with even more point, Samuel Beckett, Bertolt Brecht and Jean Genet. This is perhaps not altogether a fair procedure, but it does serve the

purpose at once of "cutting our younger creative artists down to size" and "getting the proportions right," as well as indicating that, for work even to pretend to lay claim to enduring quality, it is necessary for it to do more than merely chronicle, however accurately, the momentary form of eternal discontent, however widespread discontent may at that time be. And while these young writers have said what people are now thinking, they have done so with more enthusiasm than understanding.

John Osborne is perhaps a case in point. Mr. Allsop, quoting John Raymond in the *New Statesman*, points out how *The Entertainer* came just at the right time to play on popular feeling over the Suez crisis; that "he (Osborne) struck exactly the right surly, sour defeatism with which the mid-Fifties Britain seethed, but this could not conceal the intrinsic bitterness and shapelessness of the play . . ." What is true of this one play may well be true of the Angry Young Writers as a whole. Will they be saying anything significant to people who live when the particular emotional events and system they decry have passed away? Will they just be left screaming at the top of their voices?

Yet it would be a pity if writers like Wilson (who despite his many all too obvious defects is really trying to say something) were to be totally disregarded. They have broadened the scope of our writing, potentially at least, for they have shown themselves aware of the problems facing European writers too, even if they have not solved them. And their surprising success (despite their inadequacies) has shown at once how necessary it was to state these problems in Britain, and how urgent it was to try to solve them.

Mr. Allsop's *The Angry Decade* deals with their writings fairly and clearly and attempts to assess their significance — a notable achievement considering how difficult it is to assess and evaluate the literature of one's own time.

JOHN MEDDEMMENT.

Quiet Authenticity

THE SUNLIT PLAIN, by H. D. Williamson (Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1958).

AS THE WINNER of the *Sydney Morning Herald* Competition, it was to be expected that *The Sunlit Plain* would be a readable novel of some literary value. These hopes are to a certain extent fulfilled. In the tradition of the Australian novel it is unmistakably Australian, but—pleasant surprise—not of that aggressive variety which characterised our literary adolescence. The major impression gained from the novel is the quiet authenticity of its life and its faithful depiction of a sleepy country town.

The story is set in a small town somewhere in western New South Wales in the middle of the plains. It follows the fortunes of Eddie West, an orphan brought up in a poor home and gradually becoming prosperous through a combination of shrewd business sense and a slightly questionable use of his employer's and prospective father-in-law's weaknesses and desires. But Eddie is an interesting person and one is prepared to forgive him the occasional lapse, whether it be short-weighting the skin trappers or pulling a knife on an objectionable bully. The action is very firmly set in its environment and the novel's great virtue is the strength and vividness of its background both in its physical state and the varied crowd of characters.

Life in a small country town such as Coonamble is essentially dull and tame, with little out of the ordinary and prosaic unless it be the occasional visit of a rodeo or the cricket match on Sunday afternoon. H. D. Williamson manages to catch this flatness of life without letting it make the novel similarly flat and dull. The temptation to inject some excitement into the plot is resisted successfully for most of the novel, but unfortunately not all, for towards the end there is a murder, and the attempt to build up tension and suspense is jarringly out of harmony with the rest of the book.

Such a sensational event as a murder in a sleepy town like Coonamble would have served to highlight just its very sleepiness, and allowed the author to round out his characters under the stresses of fear and excitement. But this opportunity was not taken. The murder hardly seemed to cause a ripple. Furthermore, it appeared poorly motivated and improbable—nothing less likely could be imagined than the timid, colourless Polkington murdering his hulking, bullying partner. In actual fact the murder is an in-expert attempt to provide some colour and excitement which is more suited to the 'whooped-up' life of novels such as *Call Me When the Cross Turns Over*, and is also a *deus ex machina* to help get rid of an awkward character. In *The Sunlit Plain* the major interest is centred on the life portrayed and on the illusion of reality created. The murder succeeds only in breaking that illusion.

Although there is a wide variety of assorted characters, the novel would have been enriched if they had been drawn in greater detail. This point indicates a distinct weakness in the novel—it is too short. This is probably the fault

of the reading public, who no longer have the time or the inclination to read long novels, but when a novelist sets out to depict the essential life of a town, 260 short pages are nowhere near enough. Fascinating characters are picked up and examined till the reader's interest is caught and then dropped, with no further development.

There is a very fine chapter dealing with the relations between Eddie's foster-sister Tanette and the policeman Regan, where the former is shown to be living in the world of the films she so avidly attends three times a week. But after this excellent introduction it is never mentioned again. The writer is obviously inexperienced in handling the novel form and the very real gifts in characterisation are spoilt by this lack of development and amplification.

Nevertheless, many of the descriptive passages are very fine, and Williamson has both an acute eye and a vivid phrase. Such lines as "for a young man he possessed the smoothest paunch imaginable. Wrapped in a dirty, white shirt it bulged over his belt like a water-filled balloon." and "The self-possession that had taken flight at the momentary closeness of Glory Jones had returned to him, having merely fluttered into the air like a startled pigeon and descended again almost immediately to its perch" are excellent, while the passages of descriptive prose convey very strongly the feeling of the wide, dusty plains with the little towns huddling together lest they be lost in the midst of immense open spaces.

But despite its authenticity, the novel is not, in the last analysis, really satisfying. The thread of unity is the story of Eddie West which, though mildly interesting, supplies little dramatic possibility nor illustrates any theme. This is

the basic weakness of the novel. Williamson in effect refuses to take a stand, or be committed in any way—which probably explains his reluctance to investigate his characters very deeply. But it is this reluctance which spoils the book. As a picture of a slice of the life of a small country town the novel is engagingly authentic, but its value is little more than this.

The Sunlit Plain, then, is not a great novel, but it has many virtues, displays considerable promise and is an accurate, unemotional, restrained portrayal of Australian life. Nevertheless, while the author has considerable talent in descriptive writing and suggests ability (not yet fully developed) in the drawing of character, he has not succeeded in doing more than writing an interesting account of country life.

DAVID NICHOLAS.

A "Poetry For The People"

POEMS OF DAVID MARTIN (Sydney: Edwards & Shaw, 1958).

POETRY, it has been said, should create something for the reader: it is created life, self-contained, sufficient in itself. To exist in this way it must be organically alive from within.

Unfortunately, Mr. Martin's poetry rarely measures up to this aim. Too often it is just a spread of poetic language: it dissolves into sentimentality: it is soft-centred. These weaknesses occur because Mr. Martin appears incapable of handling a form of poetry which, he states in his preface, greatly interested him—that is, folk song. He says he wants to write "... a domestic poetry. A poetry which can come into the house on work days and

on feast days, when there is laughter and grief."

This, however, should not be a vehicle for personal sentiment, unshaped and unimagined, such as we find in "How glad I was." Here is the first stanza:—

*When thought and word are
joined in rhyme,
More beautiful than olden
song,
A melody that goes through
time,
Like Bach's sonatas—sweet
and strong—
One verse will tell posterity
How glad I was to marry
thee.*

Here the personal feeling and ideas expressed require a more personal, vital rhythm than that of a song. A folk song is the musical celebration of some universal idea of feeling and for this the 'sing-song' measure is extremely suitable.

On the other hand, if a song is to be personal, so must the rhythm. An example of such songs is found in those of John Donne, where the rhythm, to suit the language, is powerfully and vitally personal. Mr. Martin's attempts at folk song are neither one thing nor the other; they are weak because he fails to integrate meaning and rhythm.

Poetry is never *entirely* dependent on arousing associations with the reader's personal experiences or memories, but in many of Mr. Martin's poems we cannot feel anything because we have not shared his particular, localised experience, and he does not succeed in 'universalising' his emotions in any way. In "Oranje," for example, the language is at best only creative of a vague response in one who has not fought or lived in the towns mentioned. If Mr. Martin is, among other things, aiming at simplicity

he fails, for what we find is flat, uninteresting verse.

In his preface Mr. Martin also mentions that he does not believe that "the didactic must always be the enemy of poetry." This is true in the sense known by the Elizabethans—poetry was to "teach by delighting." However, Mr. Martin often spoils his poetry by making his particular lesson too obvious; for example, in "The Twenty Second of June." In the body of the poem his thoughts, his feeling for mankind are well expressed and creatively imagined; we actually become a part of the poem—until the final line:—

Workers of the world unite.

This line is so blatant—and so unnecessary—that, whether we agree with the poet's politics or not, we cannot but feel that it spoils the poetry. We suddenly find ourselves no longer *within* the poem but on the outside, listening to a lesson.

Fortunately, there are to be found a few of Mr. Martin's poems which are better than these. Among them are "Cholera," "The Jew," and "Soldiers," a poem written in the folk song tradition, which does possess some of its strength. "Cholera" in particular affords an example of what the poet *can* do. Here he at last universalises without becoming merely an observer, and really re-creates his experience. Here is part of the first stanza:—

*Silver shod is the stallion
Who lifts his hooves like a
dancer,
Dark is the face of the
horseman,
Proud like the world's wide
banners.
He gallops between the
stars,
He crosses the five great
rivers,
He sits to horse so lightly,
Like death on the eyes of a
child.*

One cannot help feeling that if Mr. Martin could forget that he is trying to write a 'poetry for the people' as a special type, he could possibly give more of these rare tastes of real poetry scattered throughout the book.

J. MEDCALF.

Personifying Attitudes

SNOWBALL, by Gavin Casey
(Sydney: Angus & Robertson,
1958).

PEOPLE giving any serious consideration to the assimilation of the aborigine must ask themselves, "Is the granting of full citizenship rights to the native in Western Australia the complete answer to this problem, or is there more involved?" It is suggested that relationships between the aborigines and the whites cannot be solved by government legislation. The real answer to the problem lies in the acceptance by the parties of each other's point of view, and the growth of mutual tolerance and respect, particularly by the white section of the community. Gavin Casey, in his most recent publication, *Snowball*, highlights this problem of the relationship between the black and the white. He explores the whole range of white feelings towards the aborigines, whilst providing a keen insight into the outlook of the black towards the white.

Although Casey's characters portray the varying degrees of feeling towards the aborigines found in nearly every community, they are not stock types, labelled "intolerant," "unconcerned," "friendly," but real people. They are individuals, each with his own personality, his problems, likes and prejudices.

At one extreme is Bridges, the Road Board Secretary, a small-minded man who has developed a hate complex towards the blacks, particularly the 'privileged' Charles family. A convincing character, he is the proverbial man behind the scenes, who devotes his life to stirring up ill-feeling against the aborigines. In direct contrast to Bridges is Greg Stapleton, who owns a welding business and works in a partnership with Jack Charles, and who overcomes the supreme hurdle of tolerance by marrying Jack's sister, Josie.

Between these two extremes lie the remainder of the whites—Lorrie Welch, the attractive young school teacher, idealist in matters concerning the social status of the aborigines; Police Sergeant Rolls, who judges incidents and people on facts and not on colour; Hickory, the headmaster, a foil to Lorrie Welch's impetuosity; the old station owner, Connaughty, who treats the natives firmly but fairly. Approaching Bridges in sentiment is Elkery, the man who thought he could do his country more good by staying home and superintending the native settlement than by going to war. Elkery is brutal in his dealings with the natives, and although one may tend to think he has the welfare of his charges at heart, when presented with an account of his determined defence of the inmates of his settlement against the whites following the Benney Charles incident, a closer examination of his motives does not reveal commendable sentiment, but rather a concern for protecting his authority over his own puppet kingdom and not those within his kingdom.

Casey does not, however, concern himself purely with the whites. He provides us with a sympathetic and interesting insight into the minds of the abori-

gines. Their outlook on life appears to be conditioned by one thought, 'that a native will never win an argument with a white man.' This feeling underlies the passive acceptance by the Charles family of the indignities heaped upon them, the passive acceptance that irritates the idealistic mind of Lorrie Welch.

At the head of the family is Snowball, an ex-police tracker of renown, and a pacifist in his dealings with the whites—a state of mind conditioned by years of experience. Snowball has a keen insight into the social position of his people, an insight instanced by his realization that white men do not appreciate being hit over the head by aborigines, a realization which causes him to hit one on the backside instead.

Snowball's daughter, Myrtle, is a colourful personality, who unsuccessfully attempts to attain white respectability for her home. Her eldest son, Jack, is an ex-serviceman whose sense of responsibility towards his family, his admirable qualities of leadership and his common sense place him on a plane above a good many of the white population. Benney, his younger brother, is a boxer of considerable ability. His downfall comes when he attempts to kiss a white woman and is rejected. Myrtle's daughters Josie and Doll also come to realize their position in society. Whilst young and attractive they are useful to elements of the white population as prostitutes, but when they lose their physical appeal they will become nothing.

The plot in this novel serves principally to provide the situations through which the interactions of these characters can be observed. It centres the interest on the characters and their reactions to the continuous and varied set of circumstances which

confront them. The dialogue and the description in the book are authentic and natural, and Casey's handling of Australian vernacular adds to this feeling of realism; it is neither exaggerated nor forced and is heightened to achieve significance and vitality.

Casey is an experienced writer who has three other publications to his credit—*Downhill is Easier*, *The Wits are Out*, and *City of Rome*. And though his writing appears to lack the poetry and the sensitive appreciation of the native which distinguishes Katherine Susannah Pritchard's *Coonardoo*, *Snowball* does exhibit a sympathetic understanding of the native mind. Possibly the above comparison is unfair, for Casey should not be judged against a particular style of writing which he did not choose to adopt. In *Snowball* he is not dealing with those deeper and more subtle moods and emotions of the native and his background; his concern lies with the motives, the actions

and the thoughts of everyday people in everyday situations. *Snowball* exhibits its author's skill in the depiction of characters, the ability to personify various states of mind and attitude, and to make his characters live, not merely exist.

Alongside the works of Somerset Maugham and John Steinbeck, two of the masters of character portrayal, *Snowball* may not rank as a masterpiece. It is, however, a book from which every reader will emerge thinking—and wondering—about the problem of the aborigine, measuring himself against the whites whom Casey presents, questioning in his own mind his own mental attitudes towards the colour problem; and if Casey is capable of producing a thoughtful and critical understanding in his reader, then he has made a substantial contribution not only to social thinking and to Australian literature, but to Australia.

MICHAEL LIGHTOWLER.

RATIONALISTS SECULARISTS STUDENTS

**and others interested in
FREE THOUGHT
on secular subjects**

are invited to write to

**Mr. F. A. Law, Merredin
or Collin Coates, 100
Acton Ave., Bayswater**

The University Bookshop

at the University, Nedlands, Western Australia



SPECIALISTS IN THE SERVICE OF SUPPLY OF UNIVERSITY
TEXT BOOKS AND ORGANISED FOR OBTAINING ANY
WORK OF LITERATURE PUBLISHED OVERSEAS.



For prompt attention - - - - - Ring 86 2481

**For ACADEMIC GOWNS, UNIFORMS,
and, in fact ALL CLOTHING made
satisfactorily to your own requirements**

call at . . .

BOANS
of PERTH

gines. Their outlo
pears to be conc
thought, 'that
win an

SATURDAY ROUNDAABOUT

6 WF

7.15 to 10.0

**a lively miscellany of music,
prize-winning quizzes,
big-name interviews, and a
touch of sport**