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Philippa Henderson's poster work has usually been connected with theatre and almost always has been commissioned by groups within the University of Western Australia. Robert Juniper discusses Philippa Henderson's poster work in this issue.

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STORIES

POEMS

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Armstrong King

THE RABBI'S BREAKFAST

WHEN THE RABBI SAMUEL WEISS arrived in Australia he lifted his eyes to the sunshine—

"Now this," he said, "is a land without sorrow."

And so it was; it was not Russia where the black wind froze the tears on your face; it was different. So he stroked his beard—it was thin and patchy then—and reflected and, as he reflected, a twinkle came into his eyes as though God had found voice in laughter at last.

"If the Prophet Moses had only led us *here!*" He joked, and fell serious lest his wit be heard. Then he uttered a secret prayer to himself.

Years passed. The Rabbi found a congregation in Sylvan Street in a district with trams rattling and little shops standing together as tight as matches in a box, and people talking and people walking; and where he was honoured and blessed. His only child Phillipina, grew tall and beautiful and went through school on wings. And the Rabbi chuckled with inner delight.

"Phil," they called his daughter at the University, and treated her with holy indifference—an Australian bred, equal and as good as the next.

And the land prospered and summer followed summer, the trees grew and everybody throve with sunshine and tolerance. The Rabbi began to forget the language of his youth, keeping only Yiddish for memory's sake and noble Hebrew for the Scriptures, speaking, for the most part, English with majestic care.

"This is a *land!*" He used to cry in deep content. And each time he whispered anew his secret prayer.

With the passage of time, apart from being a man of God, he became a great joker—

"Rabbi," they tested him once, "old Seth Bartok who is eighty has married a wife of twenty five and they have a baby. Tell us, is it his or is it a wonder?" And they sought to trick him, believing the worst of old Seth's wife.

So the Rabbi held his hand palm down—

"If Seth is the father, then it is a wonder. And if he isn't," and he turned his palm sharply uppermost—"is it a wonder?" And that answered all things.

They hunted him with riddles, plaguing him in the morning sun where he used to watch his beloved jacaranda flowering and listen to the nearby trams.

"Riddles!" He used to exclaim. And inevitably, invariably, he solved them all.

And Sarah, his wife, shared the Rabbi's happiness, there being only one thing to cloud her life—the Rabbi's breakfast.

"Well", she challenged daily, "what do you want *this* morning?"

The Rabbi could never say.

"Eggs?" Sarah suggested, patient and forebearing, knowing the Rabbi would shake his head negatively.

"Sausages, then?" expecting refusal.

"Fish?" anticipating rejection.

"What, then?"

And so evasive was the Rabbi's answer, so artificially non-commital, so invariably vague that Sarah used to fall into a bad mood and bid him go unfed until lunch time.

"Was mortal woman ever so plagued?" She asked her friends.

But the Rabbi shrugged his shoulders—

"A breakfast—so little to go without."

Every day Sarah considered the Rabbi's breakfast, sighing, wondering—"One day," she threatened, "I *will* please him."

At first they laughed in Sylvan Street—the Rabbi's breakfast! It became a joke, a never-ending source of wit and amusement, so traditional was the loving humour in which the Rabbi was held.

Then, so great became the Rabbi's contentment that, in the words of his wife, he began to dance on thin ice.

"Bah!" He retorted. "Ice? In this land?"

"Mark my words," she warned. But still the Rabbi lived and prospered.

The Rabbi's breakfast became a *cause celebre*. Everybody knew he preached on an empty stomach. They discussed it, speculated and suggested.

"No," Sarah sighed, "he doesn't know *what* he wants."

Then they used to address him in the street—

"What, Rabbi, nothing for breakfast again?"

But he evaded them gently, enquiring after their children, their health, anything.

"Breakfast, he must eat breakfast," they worried as though he were their special charge and responsibility. "It's not natural. He'll die away."

"Father," Phillipina begged, intent upon educated rationality, "why all the fuss about breakfast, why?"

"Well," the Rabbi spread his hands in love, "well, my daughter, I would if . . ." and always there followed long and evasory talk until even Phillipina became angry.

"Aren't you hungry? Answer me that."

"Hungry!" Sarah intervened. "He's a skeleton—skin and bones. Soon he'll be on his back and then . . ."

On this subject her love paled, her patience died.

"What do I offer?" She complained, at her wits end. "I offer eggs, I offer fish, chicken, steak but he doesn't want." And Sarah could trust her tongue no further, so exasperated was she.

They tried to trick him—

"Rabbi," they asked, "did they breakfast in Israel?"

"Always," intoned the Rabbi.

"In the Diaspora?"

"Invariably."

"In the Captivity?"

"When they could."

"When God made the world in six . . ."

But he smiled into their eyes with understanding—

"Almighty God is Spirit," he checked.

"But he created *all* things?"

And he saw through their guile and cut them short with patient words.

They called in Mark Hellman, doctor by the grace of his father's eyes blinded at the tailors bench.

"Must a man eat breakfast, doctor?"

"Yes, it's a question of metabolism. The sugar contents of the blood fall in the night and . . ."

"I have no objections to breakfast," the Rabbi protested, mild and forgiving, snatching the wind from their sails. "So you're a doctor, Mark?" And he nodded as though all things were self-explanatory.

The Rabbi's breakfast brought out the best in people. It kept Sylvan Street in a state of mild animation. It was a God send.

It gathered one group into a back room where they sat over undealt cards exchanging parallel and analogy. Every trade was a parable; every business a sermon; every risk a prophesy.

"Could *I* press trousers on an empty belly?" Mott Wiener asked. And they regarded the curvature of his stomach with rude amusement.

"Or could I upholster with no stuffing?"

"Or cut a schnitzel with no sharpening?"

"Or bake a strudel with no sugar?"

Then how could the Rabbi commune with God unfortified? "As sure as I live he'll fall sick."

"Hunger and starve."

"Leaving a wife and daughter, God forbid."

It was shocking, they all agreed.

"Your deal," they resumed, remembering the cards.

"Jokers in?"

"Jokers out," they ruled, to dismiss the Rabbi from thoughts.

What talent in Sylvan Street! And the Rabbi marvelled seeing in all things the hand of God.

"God," he preached on the Sabbath, "is the source and genesis of all being."

And nobody could deny it, happy as they were in the knowledge. A renaissance gathered Sylvan Street into new life in spring where there had been no inspiration before.

Unheard of knowledge sprang to the surface a propos the Rabbi's breakfast. Everybody became an expert; each knew better than the other. Each knew more and nobody knew less. Everybody stretched out the arm of memory for proof and example. No-one was at a loss for words and nobody could say too much—

"Sylvan Street," the Rabbi said with a twinkle in his eye, "miracle of a street."

But Sarah lost patience more than ever—

"Such cleverness!" she snapped. "Does that lay the Rabbi's table?"

"Did not the ravens feed the prophets?" he asked enigmatically.

Nevertheless they published their doubts in Sylvan Street—"If the Rabbi does not eat breakfast . . ." they cautioned.

"It's wrong."

"Tempting Providence."

"Irresponsible."

"Reprehensible."

For a time it looked as though the Rabbi was to be approached in petition and favour.

"Nonsense!" he retorted. And they say his eyes flashed that day. Then he soothed them with harmless jokes and went his way.

Neighbours came to Sarah's door—

"Paprika salad," they prescribed, "with oil and vinegar. If that doesn't tickle his palate . . ." and they raised their shoulders to express the futility of even *trying* after that.

"Herring toasted in honey, white cheese with tomatoes, chopped liver, stuffed chicken neck with pickled cucumber . . ." others advised.

And each left a token of sincerity until Sarah's larder reeked with untoward smells and the Rabbi grumbled and daughter Phillipina lectured. But none, not one, of the neighbours' offerings moved the Rabbi to appetite for breakfast. Sarah herself grew tired of neighbours' gifts until her stomach turned.

"I'll live until lunch time," the Rabbi assured her.

"Any *other* man," she complained, and then stopped, considering that her husband was not any other man, but the wise and jovial Rabbi Weiss.

At one stage views bent in the Rabbi's direction and a swaying motion came over Sylvan Street as though opinion was toppling sideways and establishing forever the validity of the Rabbi's indecision. Jos Abba, who knew everything and carried his fame wherever he went remembered how the Prophets had dwelt upon the wisdom of fasting.

"Answer me *this*," he demanded with declamatory finger, "how often is breakfast mentioned in the Scriptures?"

"Manna," they flung at him promptly. "Every morning—basketsful, remember?"

Jos fell defeated and shifted camp to re-ally himself against the Rabbi.

"Tempt him," Jos Abba urged.

"And have I not tempted him, then?" And Sarah blushed at the thought of so much temptation.

"In Russia . . ."

"Russia!—we're not *in* Russia. A bit of herring? Pfui! Who licks his chops at a bit of herring now?"

"Chicken fat on toast . . ."

"And where's the frost you need chicken fat to keep warm?"

"It's the land," Abba concluded. "Too much sun, too much food and too much . . ."

"And too much schmooz—away with you."

But division had been struck where none had struck before. It split families, re-united enemies; it was a topic on every lip.

Phillipina, who had done Arts at the University, balanced the Rabbi's indecision with fine and careful pedantry, condemning his age and time, speaking of modern ways, balancing proteins against fats and assessing the worth of carbohydrates.

"It's common sense," she laid on. "Starch turns to sugar and sugar turns to . . ."

But the old man smiled from his eyes—

"And for this I must suffer?" He demanded in gently raillerie. "I buy sorrows with gold?" Then he brushed his daughter's cheeks with his beard and blessed her, a treasure, a joy.

"So much fuss," and he retired to his books to think of the deliverance from Egypt.

When Phillipina reached her twenty-first year and was to be married the next day, and everybody wept to see so much joy in the old Rabbi's face, on that day, they were sure the Rabbi would change.

So Sarah came down secretly on the wedding morning smiling radiance—

"This time surely," she swore, "on his daughter's wedding day he'll eat his breakfast—surely."

But even though Phillipina stood as beautiful as a gully fern that morning and the Rabbi was to marry her before God with his own hands, even then, poor Sarah was to see her breakfast go uneaten.

"Not on this day of *all* days!" She called as much to the Lord as to the Rabbi.

"More so on this day," he answered, leaving her to puzzle alone.

All Sylvan Street paused—

"It's unbelievable!"

Then the Rabbi himself lost patience and although he had foresworn all anger and had never dealt with Sarah in any words but those of kindness, he rose now in the morning chiding her for gossip. But lunch time always brought him home hungry and forgiving.

When many years had piled up behind them, the Rabbi and his wife celebrated their Golden Wedding.

"And now," Sarah begged, "for once—just once—make up your mind what you want for breakfast."

But even then, on that day, his own Golden Wedding Day, the Rabbi hesitated.

"In all other things, Almighty Father," Sarah prayed that night, "you have sent me a fine and wonderful man. Now tell me, and if *you* have no influence . . ." and she clicked her tongue in the darkness.

So God smiled a golden smile. And the next day Sarah knew what to do.

So, if it ever befalls that you are down-and-out, go quietly to Sylvan Street and open the door silently (it's unlatched) and there, served and waiting, you'll find the Rabbi's breakfast. Eat it quietly and depart—it is meant for you. But please do not disturb the Rabbi. He is thinking how he got so much for so little.

And often now, in the quietness of his days, the Rabbi is heard to muse—

"When thou vowest a vow to God, defer not to pay if; for He hath no pleasure in fools; pay that which thou hast vowed. *Ecclesiastes* 3."

SWIMMER

When it comes down, the winged
Spirit like a sword of fire
And pierces you

And round your ringed
Head makes a cage of wire
Then you pass through

A golden ceremony:
Now there is nothing there
In the shell you

Are save the bright sky
And the burning air
From that far blue,

Every thrashing sea,
Birds crying their pain,
And white yachts tossed

In the noonday.
So the blue wain
Of stars there crossed

In the southern heaven
Invades you also;
You faint and die,

Possessed and riven
By the stabbing glow
And naked lie

On the wrack-strewn beach
Your body open
To the spume and wind

Nothing can teach
Whom the brave sun
Taught more than mind

Can learn, the message
Of leaves that curl
And burn and blow

From age to age
Of days that whirl
Of all bright things that go.

CHARLES HIGHAM

THE ISLAND

I

The sea is not small in love, I thought,
nor ever was; my need to forget
ferrying me out, the grey harbour
stretching back tight over my wake.

Soon, the island, growing with the sun,
far out at sea, tempting me and
my wandering bluer than any eyes I've known,
sea becoming sky and sky sea
in the endless anonymity of my sailing.

A wind from the southwest with
the pitch of the dark water soothing me.
No more my mind an extended conversation,
but cleared away of words and though
ghosts struggle in the centre of each wave,
none am I able to recognise.

So I come into this bay
salt on my tongue, the beach shining
and the island's humps, sweet as bread.
Around and all around are the vast butts
of blue, making their climate of love. And
I anchor here, watching and listening to
the first age of the world grow tall.

The sea is not small in love, I thought,
nor ever was.

II

You no man can ever own.
Though the lease can run for
ninety nine years, possession
is only a word quickly lost among
your tall dunes and sticky acacia.

At first, brash in my occupation,
more arrogant than any groom,
I believed that by stamping my footprints
over your dunes and clean, crosshatched beaches
I would bow you to my imaginings.
Even as I lay through each sweltering midday
on a stretcher in the shadow of my shack,
watching the green glass of the fringing reefs
crumple with the seabreeze, I thought how
your virginal passivity was being changed,
however slowly, by my habitation; that
your present weight and number of rock,
pool, upsurge of sand and plant was moving
more and more towards my own identity.
But the opposite was true.

III

Almost without knowing it, I began
to assume a little of your solemn temperance,
the shape of your repose about me like a skin,
a wholeness being moulded out of my portions.
And with this came fresh insights
into my lusts, insecurities and balks.
Had I not renounced carnal love
and comfort for one summer at least?

IV

And your salt water, fiercer than blood,
washing away my heresies in that
indistinguishable fusion of all
greens, blues, turquoises, welling away
under my tedious shape, buoying me up.
A frantic comfort, your waves, dissolving
my inelegance and nudging my very nature towards
what ineluctable humility? I could feel
the mass and texture of all that water
sponging dark memories down my sides
and about my limbs—tremors of what
aqueous incarnation?

And so baptised myself half a dozen times
a day in your Jordan, but giving myself
no name.

V

So, very gradually, longlegged intruder
that I was, I began to sublimate my uncouthness
towards the more gentle expedients of your
cosmos, considering the soft interaction
of those elements keeping your daemons
intact. But the meddler in me prevailed.
One dawn I attempted to capture one of your
genies—a fish, huge, famous, with a mask
across its eyes. From the recesses of the reef
I dragged it up, from its ducal pastures.
It flashed and burst on the line, its hurt
minting the sea, fire dripping from its scales.
It became mine, gulping and twitching
in my grasp. Tremors of regicide fled through me
and half-astounded by its majesty and already
having a catch of smaller fish, I released it,
watching it swerve down into its green corridors.
And out over the reefs the waves boomed a warning.

VI

About the midday the sun becomes
a parable of wrath, gobbling up the few clouds
and bleaching the sky. The sea is shrapnelled
into fine splinters. Crows are panting in the
smouldering trees up from the beach.
I lie in the thin inadequacy of this shade
waiting for your familiar tokens to disintegrate.
Everywhere is the smell of blistering earth
and plant. Your dunes swell as if full
of broiling fungi. Wild confessions press up
on to my lips as the filching heat mars my sanity.
I drift and dream.

VII

You, the island, envelop me,
sucking my essence down into your tight
perfections. Still I dream with wild condensations
of my pasts becoming myths as birds fly
in steady lines beneath an opal ocean
and huge fish leap into the sky.
Still you dominate, even my delirium,
huge, indefatigable and with no woman to come
between us. When I awake, even though there is no one
within twenty miles of where I lie,
I will hear myself ask—
"What did you say?"

GRIFFITH WATKINS

EURYDICE

LOUISE HAD DEVELOPED A WAY of concentrating upon the smallest things in her surroundings. Like a mescalin addict she could peer at a leaf or a brick until it filled the world. When scents from garden flowers assailed her, she shut her eyes, concentrating. This sort of preoccupation helped her bear joy as well as anxiety. When Harry drove her out of the wrought iron gates she saw verdigris on the hinges, moss on the lowest stones of the wall.

They did not speak for some time. Louise, hands clenched in her lap like a child on a long-awaited treat, began to take in the landscape in great sweeps. A pulse beat in her throat as she moved forward to look up, right up, at the sky. An uneasy movement from Harry made her sit back and look at him instead. Every time she did this she felt the same shock of recognition and love as she might if he entered a room unexpectedly. She saw the red threads in the tweed of his jacket, the creases of his forehead, the impartial glance he cast upon the road.

"Does my hair look nice?" she asked.

He looked, briefly, and smiled.

"Looks lovely."

"I had it set," she said. "They do it often in there to keep up your morale."

He grinned and tried to laugh but it came out a hollow 'huh-huh'. Louise almost burst into a torrent of explanation about the place . . . that it wasn't so bad, that the people weren't lunatics . . . to try and explain his shame away. Instead she concentrated on his cuff links which she had never seen before: they were big squares of black and silver. He was wearing a new shirt.

"Did Mrs. Beale do the washing?" she asked.

"Oh I took the things over to Mum, most of the time." Louise took a quick glance at the sky to steady herself and said:

"How is your mother?"

"Oh fine!" he said. "Got over her flu."

"Does she know I'm coming home?"

"Of course." Harry drove a little faster. "She might come over tonight."

"Tonight!" squeaked Louise. It was too distressed.

"Go easy." said Harry gently. "She's been over this week helping Mrs. Beale to clean up the place."

"That was kind." whispered Louise.

She fixed her gaze on an orange in the glove box; she concentrated on the pits in the thick skin. She shut her eyes for a moment and saw a glowing blue

shape where she had been staring so fiercely at the orange. They drove on and on. When they were close to home she said:

"Harry!"

He said: "Lulu?" and she laughed for the first time, letting her joy spill over a little.

"It's marvellous to be driving about after all those months shut up," she said. "The car's going well."

Harry still smiled. He could steer with one hand but he did not reach out and touch her. He kept both hands on the wheel and presently swung the car into their drive with the familiar crunch and thump that Louise was waiting to hear.

The garden had changed and grown in such a multiplicity of small ways that she knew she could spend days walking about the lawn, concentrating on the new growth. Harry got out and Louise waited just a moment too long; he looked back and realised that he had not opened her door. She sprang out then and as he fiddled with the key in the front door she tripped on the steps, supporting herself on the big stone urn. He turned and she said quickly: "It's all right", but he had not been moving to help her.

Before she walked inside to give him a kiss in the hall . . . their first, because they did not kiss before strangers . . . she concentrated on the stone urn where her cactus had died. She explained to herself that they were too tense to kiss in the car driving home. It had been much the best for Harry to wait until now. She walked into the hall and stood looking at herself in the mirror, inhaling the polish and new wood smells of her home. She had imagined this moment. 'This has sustained me,' she thought. 'I have endured it all.'

Harry appeared in the doorway of the lounge room and stood watching her.

"I'm so glad to be home," she said. Her eyes filled with tears. "You can't imagine how glad I am." Her voice gave a shake and Harry said:

"Steady on."

When Louise held out her arms to him he came forward and took her by one hand. Her hand lay on his palm and involuntarily it contracted, like a child's hand, gripping his fingers and attempting to draw him to her side. For a second he resisted and Louise was left with no idea what to do. She cried out in that shaky, stupid voice:

"Darling . . ."

"Don't stand in the hall," said Harry. He pulled and she let go of his hand. It was an accident, she said to her own fingers, flexing them as she strode into the lounge room. Harry had merely been leading her into the room they used most. But the anxiety was rising in her, making her body strain and tingle as it had not done for so long. She talked to cover her uneasiness: "It's so clean . . . so lovely . . ." She saw the flowers, a big vase of white chrysanthemums on the mantelpiece, and thought, irrepressibly: "Oh it's all right. It really is all right. He wanted me to see the flowers."

"They're beautiful!" she cried. "Oh Harry, they're lovely. It's funny . . . I like their smell. They smell like spice." She spun round and whisked up to Harry, kissing his cheek, on the way to the beautiful bunch of chrysanthemums. She could see herself . . . which was a bad sign . . . executing this gay natural movement. The returning wife gave her husband a quick kiss then hurried over to bury her face in his bouquet of flowers. And at the mantelpiece she found the chrysanthemums were old, old, with withered petals heaped round

the vase and a smell of stale flower water. Behind her Harry reacted to the kiss with his same embarrassed laugh. She lifted the bunch of flowers up out of the water a little and saw the slimy stalks, like weeds growing in a stream.

"They have been nice," she said softly.

"They're ready to throw out, those flowers," said Harry. "Sit down and I'll make some coffee."

"Why on earth did you get a bunch of chysanthemums?" asked Louise. Nothing had served; she was getting angry. She lit a cigarette, flopped into one of the chairs and kicked off her shoes. On his way to the kitchen Harry picked up the smoker's stand and placed it by the side of her chair.

"What have you been doing while I've been away?" she called out.

"Don't yell," said Harry, in the kitchen doorway. "I've been busy. I told you in the letters."

"Can we go to the beach tomorrow? I mean, you're not working this week-end, are you?" Louise tapped at her cigarette until every flake of ash had left the glowing tip.

"We'll see."

Harry went back into the kitchen and Louise found that she could not concentrate. She could not look deeply at anything any more. When he came back with two beakers of coffee she said boldly:

"Harry darling, come and talk to me."

He perched awkwardly on the arm of her chair and she put her hand on his wrist, deliberately lowering her eyes. Perhaps he would give her a kiss. She pushed to the back of her mind an awareness of his own tension and uneasiness.

If only he would *try* . . . she had tried so hard. Or had she always found it easy to kiss and be friends, to soothe unrest physically?

Harry said: "Just take things easily for a while."

This made Louise even more afraid and she exclaimed:

"Harry, try and be happy that I've come home!"

He cut in automatically: "Happy? Of course I am. Don't start!"

"You aren't happy!" she clutched at his arm. "Harry please look at me!"

He kept his face turned away.

"You're getting worked up," he said, with an effort.

"Louise, you're starting the moment we get into the house."

"I'm not."

To herself she shrieked aloud of a thousand small rejections. Her precious concentration, so painfully nurtured, was all gone and now she was gone . . . Making Things Worse, Making a Scene, Spoiling Everything . . .

"Harry, say that you're pleased to see me! Look at me and say that you're pleased to have me back."

"Stop that!" Harry rose to his feet and dragged her with him, clinging tightly to his arm. "Get hold of yourself before Mum gets here."

"I can't . . . I can't . . . why don't you just look at me. *I'm not mad any more.* It's no disgrace!"

"It's difficult for us both," he said. "You know that Lulu."

She cut him short as she had always done, hoping still to trample every barrier of polite speech and common sense and convince him with an emotional torrent of words, with her feelings, her true, true disordered feelings, which must make him understand. All she did was to impress him again with the impropriety of emotion. She leant on him and cried: "Unless you say that you love me I won't understand. Say, say, say, even if you don't mean it . . . take hold of me . . ."

Her manner was so shocking that Harry drew back and held her, drooping, before him.

"You're not better," he said. "You don't seem much better at all."

For the first time an intimation of loss and a hardening of resolve crept into Louise. She stood upright, stiffening so that she no longer needed his support.

"I hadn't realised it," she said. "Perhaps I'm not better."

The moment that she admitted this her concentration flooded back. She gazed into an ashtray of thick mauve glass on the table; it held an oval reflection of the room. The figures of Harry and Louise were drawn apart in silence, gradually.

"I could have been better," Louise said petulantly. She looked deeply, deeply into the thick glass.

Seconds before she said it Harry chimed in: "You might have to go back."

Here words were an echo: "I'll have to go back."

Louise looked at her husband in triumph: had she caught him in outright rejection at last? Instead she saw real anxiety, compassion, even self-pity which humanised Harry most of all. He began a halting explanation; the doctors had been so uncertain about her progress; they had warned him that she might not settle down.

HOSTESS

Her elegant demise oppressed the evening.
It came slowly: The door let out her heart in gusts
as each infrequent guest rent like a blade.

Sparkling! in a darling dress of non-sequiturs
and sweet clangers. But too disarmingly adroit and gay
she played to those of us who stayed away,

the brilliant ones. Left were the hungry and lonely.
At nine the trick of soporific food,
and to the best one amongst us she came

(the white distraught fleshes above her dress
like the doleful lowered cheeks of supplicants)
saying: "Salami?"

MALCOLM LEVENE

Jill Hellyer

THE INVENTORS OF COOLIBAH CREEK

THE RED-BROWN ACRES of the Garrett property lay flatly against a skyline that was broken here and there only by the round-topped kurrajongs and the scattered heaps of gibbers. From across the paddocks and slowly toward the old homestead two men were walking with leisurely strides, inconspicuous in the dust that rose in clouds about them. They walked in silence, for Andy and Tom Garrett seldom found need to speak to one another. Both of them bachelors, they had carried on the farm after their father's death many years before, and the familiar routine of their work and the uncluttered pattern of their lives left little to be said or speculated upon.

Andy Garrett, two years older than his brother, pushed his hat back further on his greying, gingery hair and narrowed his pale eyes thoughtfully. One goal alone lay on the quiet horizon of their days and it was upon this that their minds were centred now. Together, in the corrugated iron shed behind the peppercorn trees, they were attempting to solve the riddle of perpetual motion. On this soul-consuming project they spent their every leisure hour.

"Now fallerin's finished," Andy murmured, "we might have a bit more time."

Tom nodded. His casual glance took in the shed that housed their invention. "Might go over this evenin'."

"Yeah."

The low purr of an approaching car came to them across the paddocks. Tom turned his glance roadwards.

"What's Herb Warren doin' goin' to town on a Thursday?"

"Pickin' up his nephew off the one-thirty, I expect. Young feller up from the city for a bit of a spell. Student or somethin'."

"Yeah?"

They washed their hands and arms in a tin dish beside the tank stand and went into Freda's cool kitchen. At first glance their sister Freda might have been mistaken for another brother in her drab, indefinite clothing and thick, heavy boots. Her many chores took her as much outdoors as in, and she had long ceased to regard herself as anything else but part of an unending pattern. If she had been a girl once, vulnerable and aware, her steady eyes did not betray it. Her mouth was hard as a man's.

Andy and Tom slouched wordlessly into their chairs and demolished the well-baked roast.

Herb Warren nodded towards the side of the road. "That's Garrett's place over there . . . nearest neighbours." His fleshy, pleasant face creased amiably. He would enjoy having his brother's son up for a stay, and young Brian seemed

in need of a bit of fresh air. A tall lad, lankily built, he wore the freckles of boyhood on a face growing rugged with impending maturity.

Brian looked about him keenly, his interest tempered with a raw patronising manner. A student in engineering, he was looking forward to showing his uncle a thing or two when it came to farm equipment and machinery.

"You might be interested in going over there one day," his uncle was saying. "Got a bee in their bonnet about perpetual motion. A great contraption they've rigged up in their shed there. Don't know much about it meself but it's certainly something worth seeing."

The boy stared, first at his uncle and then at the retreating weatherboard house. Perpetual motion . . . and at Coolibah Creek, of all places! What a laugh.

"Must be nuts," he snorted, giving his uncle a conspiratorial wink.

Herb Warren frowned. Although previously he had been inclined to think that the Garretts had, as he may have put it himself, a queer streak, his nephew's brash statement irked him. Andy and Tom were, after all, decent fellows . . . dashed hard-working men. And this fact he quietly proceeded to tell Brian.

Brian accepted the mild rebuke in silence. Then he grinned again. "And did you see the name of their property? 'Danged-if-I-know', or some such weird name. Where on earth did they pick that up from?"

Warren's face resumed its smiling contours. "Oh, that. The Garretts came over from Victoria when my grandfather—that's your great-grandfather—came here in the seventies. Old Garrett took up his selection all right, but when it came to registering the place he couldn't think of a name. 'Well, what are you going to call it?' the young clerk feller says. 'Danged if I know,' says old Garrett. And that's just what the clerk wrote down."

Brian found plenty of work to keep him occupied on his uncle's property. He lent a hand with the fencing and his exuberance sobered a little with the long, hot days during which he seemed to have drunk gallons of sweet, black tea. He also had the satisfaction of getting into running order an old generating set that he found neglected in the harvesting shed. On the following Friday he decided against going into town with the family who were having their weekly shopping day at Coolibah Creek.

He ate a solitary lunch and then went outside. From his seat on the tank-stand he could just make out the faded roof of the Garrett homestead through the distant peppercorns. The perpetual motion machine . . . he really should go over and have a look at the thing. He had almost forgotten about it, but

how the idea intrigued him. After all, he knew the futility of such a project and he would in all probability be able to save those brothers years of frustrating work. It shouldn't be more than a mile or two's walk.

Freda was in the kitchen, cooking. Her strong, square hands turned out a surprisingly light scone. Tiny rivers of perspiration ran from her thick hair. The knock on the door startled her. Few strangers ever made their way through the litter of broken and discarded machinery to her back door. When she saw Brian standing there, his freckled face held in a tentative smile, she could not at first place him. She stood at the door enquiringly while he stumbled to introduce himself.

"I wondered if your brothers might let me have a look at their machine—their invention, you know. My uncle told me about it. I'm interested in that sort of thing," he went on, hesitating, as the woman's hard, immobile face continued to stare at him.

"My brothers are in town," Freda said at last. "Almost everyone is of a Friday."

"Except you?" Brian asked, determined to get through somehow to this woman after his long trek over.

Freda shrugged as though to say: "What would I find to do in town?" but instead she said, "I expect you'd like a cup of tea. There are some fresh scones on the table. I can't tell you when my brothers will be back," she added as she followed the boy into the kitchen and set out the refreshments on a spotless cloth.

Hungry after his walk, Brian ate with enjoyment. The scones were light and plentiful, the layered chocolate cake delicious. Across the room, a cumbersome, old-fashioned clock ticked with a noisy insistence. It was not until he had finished his first cup of tea that Brian suddenly realised that they had not exchanged words since they had entered the room.

"Another cup, Mr. Warren?" Freda's flat voice broke the silence.

Brian handed over his empty cup. "Why, thanks . . . and please call me Brian. You know, I'm getting real countrified. I enjoyed that cup of tea, and your cake and scones are simply super. I guess you must be just about the best cook in this district, Miss Garrett." He spoke with sincerity, sensing the monotony of this woman's life.

For a moment Freda's face was transformed. As though breaking from the stiffness of countless drab years, it moved in an awkward smile. Her grey-blue eyes were warm and living.

"I have reached her," Brian thought, a flush of maturity coming with the knowledge. But the moment passed. Ill at ease again, he did not know how to continue. A long silence fell between them.

"I don't know when my brothers will be home," Freda repeated. "Perhaps you could come again tomorrow."

"I would like to see it with them, of course," Brian said. "Do you think they'd mind, though, if I just had a quick look at it now? If you could just show me where it was . . ."

Freda did not reply immediately. When she did, it seemed to be with an odd reluctance that she agreed to take him to the shed.

Brian could not have said what it was that he expected, but it was certainly not this immaculate order and neatness within the crude building. As his eyes grew accustomed to the dimness he could make out the shape of the lathe and

then, behind it, the complex structure that occupied most of the bench on the far wall. Freda opened the large square of iron that served as a window so that the light fell slantwise on her brothers' work. The boy's eyes moved slowly over the machine, on which a series of rollers fell in a long, zig-zag shaped frame w hen they were started in motion. Straight guides ran from the bottom upwards again to the top. The workmanship was faultless.

A smile crossed Brian's face, though he checked it as he caught the woman's eyes upon him. A look of strained apprehension tightened her features. He wondered vaguely why it was that she seemed worried.

"I think I get the gist of it," said the boy. "These rollers falling down here are intended to generate sufficient power to push themselves up to the top again, and so on, over and over. Is that the idea?"

Freda spoke carefully. "I think so. There are problems with the second stage. My brothers were working on it only last night."

All of Brian's brash young superiority rose once more, flushing the smooth tan of his face as his words tumbled out. Any tentative sympathy he had felt for this stolid woman faded as he watched her face staring back, coarse and heavy, in the harsh shaft of sunlight. All these tools, meticulously kept, this masterpiece of craftsmanship, perfect in its precision, belonged not to genius but to the determination of painstaking years of experience.

"I'm sorry to have to tell you that your brother's invention is not worth that much . . ." he clicked his fingers in the dusty air . . . "Of course there are problems. It can't be done, that's why. They can try to lengthen the drop with all those zig-zags till kingdom come but they'll never generate enough power to lift those rollers again. I wouldn't expect you to understand, of course, but it's simply a matter of not being able to replace the friction lost. It's perfectly obvious to anyone who knows . . ." his voice trailed off. Useless to explain.

They stood facing teach other in the gloomy shed. Her animosity hung between them like the motes of dust that swirled angrily in the clear path of light.

At last she spoke. There was a frightening weariness in her voice. "You mean to tell my brothers . . . that?"

"Of course. Why not?"

"Don't tell them. Whatever this is you are saying, you must not tell them." She did not argue as to whether he was right or wrong. She sensed the truth, perhaps, in the sureness of his hateful young voice. The power of his knowledge seemed to engulf her.

The boy stared at her incredulously. "Not tell them? Why? You want them to go on and on with this whole impossible project? Can't you see what a frightful waste of time it is?"

"What's time to us?" The flatness of her tone chilled him.

"But surely they'd be grateful if I could tell them that they're on a wild goose chase?"

"You think they'd be grateful, do you? Grateful for taking away their dream of years, their striving of a lifetime? You would kill the souls of two good men."

"I don't follow you. Honestly I don't. You'd prefer them to go on living in a fool's paradise, I suppose?"

"At least it's some kind of paradise. I know what you're thinking . . . that we're all fools—the lot of us. No doubt you're a very clever young man. Oh yes, very clever. And soon you'll be off, back to the city. Your life will go on and all this will be forgotten. But before you go you want to take our lives and make them little."

He was surprised at her momentary eloquence. The deep emotion in her eyes jolted him. Did she know then? Had she known? He could not be sure.

"I know my brothers are not clever men, but they are good men. Do you understand that, Mr. Warren? Do you know how long they have worked on this machine?" Her gesturing arm embraced all before them. "For seven years they have planned and worked on this while they drove all day on the tractor, while they sat by the fire in winter or lay awake on hot, summer nights. It is part of them. It *is* them. Their wife and child. Yet you mean to take it all away. You mean to leave them empty and alone."

"How you must love your brothers." His voice was bitter, grudging his admiration.

"Who else?" she said simply.

They stood in silence once more. Brian was torn between understanding and exasperation for this indomitable woman. At last they became aware of an intrusion, the sound of a car drawing nearer. Seeing the shed door open, Andy and Tom walked straight from the car to join their sister and the young visitor. As the two men approached, men who appeared so obviously a part of the red earth about them, Brian was more than ever determined to acquaint them with the futility of their efforts. The sister he dismissed as having the stupid emotionalism of all women. He felt a surge of contempt.

The brothers lurched up. "Lookin' over our invention?" Tom queried genially. "Lad like you should be interested in a set-up like this."

"Perhaps I'd better explain it all to you," Andy began in a slow drawl. "Now, you see this here?" He went on and on, explaining, demonstrating. There was a quiet pride in his voice. Brian stood by impatiently. At last, at long last, Andy was finished. Now was the time to tell him. This was the moment. The boy leaned forward to speak and at the same time he found himself looking straight into the tragic tautness of the face of the woman who stood immovably behind them. Her body was lost in the shadows. Andy and Tom waited expectantly by, their eyes sombre and kindly.

Brian moved restlessly. "I can see what you're driving at," he mumbled. "You've put a tremendous amount of work into all this. I can see that. But . . ." Curse that woman with the hopeless eyes. The hating eyes. "But . . . I have to be getting along. Thanks anyway for letting me have a look. The workmanship is beautiful, really beautiful."

He left them smiling. Two brothers glowing with an inner pride. He made his way quickly across the paddocks, his feet kicking up the powdery dust as he walked, and with the unaccountable feeling that some strange bond existed between himself and a woman named Freda Garrett.

Dorothy Hewett

WOULD YOU MIND IF I SAW A MATE OF MINE

THEY LEFT PERTH that morning at six o'clock, piling the kids in the back on top of the blankets. It was early summer, but there was rain in the air and the clouds hung low over the Darling Ranges.

"We'll head for the timber country," he'd said. "I always wanted to see them big kauri trees. They reckon you can garage a car in the holler trunk. I read about it in "Post" one time . . ."

The kids were happy, crouched under the tarp, playing cubbies, relieved to get away on their own for a bit. It gave them a light-hearted sense of adulthood and freedom, mixed with the joy of being very young and without any real responsibility for anything. And Cliff and Moira were happy, driving through the summer rain in the rented Holden ute, shut in the front cabin alone against the weather, conscious of shoulder and thigh, the light swish of the windscreen wiper, everything conspiring to create this warm intimacy between them. The road unravelled like a wet, dark, asphalt ribbon over the hills between the jarrahs and the orange-thick blossoms of the Christmas trees.

When the sun came out the three kids came from under the tarp, blinking their eyes like kittens, a straw hat blew off and bowled along the road, the kids sang, the gum leaves glittered in dry drifts in the gutters, Cliff recited Lawson and Will Ogilvie and "Life and love and Lasca". He drove with his arm around Moira's waist.

They stopped at a chook farm and bought two dozen eggs off a spindly legged Pommy chook farmer in Bombay bloomers and long, burr-thick socks.

"We'll boil 'em up in the billy, dinner time," Cliff said. "They're good tucker."

By the time they got to the Mount Lyell Super Works and the Bunbury turn-off they were all relaxed and happy.

He put his hand on her knee. "Would you mind if we stopped off and saw a mate of mine?" he said.

Moira smiled at him. She had a gold filling and a steel support for three false teeth, but the smile was sweet and intimate, and it didn't seem to make any difference. She shook her head.

"No, I don't mind what we do?" she said.

WELCOME TO BUNBURY said the sign. Cliff drove through the streets. It was Saturday lunchtime and there were a good few cars on the road and rafferty rules with cars angle-parked anywhere. Woolworths was crowded. Cliff had a bit of trouble changing the gears on the steering wheel. He was used to gears on the floor.

"He's a wharfie," Cliff said. "Morrie Harris. They told me in Darwin he was down here workin' on the wharf." He remembered something else they'd told him in Darwin: "If Morrie Harris come back here we wouldn't be killin' any fatted calf," but he only said, "He'd be in some caravan park. He had a good outfit, brand new Holden station wagon and a caravan he built himself."

"Is he married?" Moira said.

"Yeah, he's married. Wife's name's Annie. She was seven years in the Territory with him."

Moira's smile was relieved. Without analysing it she was happy that this Morrie Harris had a wife. She was wary of any unmarried bachelor mates turning up to break the intimacy they were beginning to build up together.

"Were they happy?" she said, wanting to believe that they were, wanting to believe that some people salvaged happiness out of marriage, because she wanted to marry him.

"Yeah, I think they were, much as any outsider can tell," Cliff said thoughtfully. "Annie was barren."

Moira felt a quick surge of triumph at the three kids brawling in the back of the ute, proof of her fruitfulness, and then she pushed the thought away, ashamed for her lack of charity towards this unknown woman, Morrie Harris's barren wife.

Cliff started thinking about Annie Harris, very tall and thin, with black, straight, greying hair. She came off a farm near Blackall. Annie was used to a hard life. That's why she could stick it with Morrie in the Territory. He was stockriding on Wade Hill, the biggest station in the world, shooting scrub bulls. There were so many bulls they'd exhausted the cows and killed them all off. Annie went all over the Territory with Morrie when he was elected Secretary of the North Australian Workers' Union in Darwin. He built whatever union organization there was in Darwin and then that Darwin wharfie says . . . "we wouldn't kill any fatted calf if Morrie Harris come back . . ."

"Annie was very wrapped in Morrie," Cliff said. "I remember goin' to a dance in Rocky. There was only about half a dozen women there. I went over and asked her for a dance, but she says, 'No, I want to sit next to Morrie'."

"Where did you first come across him?" Moira said.

"Lucinda Point . . . year after the wharfies' strike, in the last days of the sugar stackers. The bulk loadin' was bein' built. Morrie'd got the arse out of Darwin, got the arse out of Sydney, and worked his way up north. We built a kind of unofficial Trades and Labour Council in Lucinda Point, led by the wharfies and seamen. I was fireman on the Bundaleer. We even had a port minute book. We used to leave it with the wharfies when we shipped out. A little Maltese called Joe . . . he couldn't read or write . . . used to bring it down to the ships for us. He was the greatest organizer in the Port . . ."

Yeah, that was where he'd known Morrie Harris, Lucinda Point and Rockhampton. Everyone saw Morrie about everything in Rockhampton but he never done much himself. He always said he didn't want to speak off a platform if anyone else'd do it. His nerves was bad.

"He couldn't rest in one place," Cliff said. "He'd had a fair sort of maulin' over the years. He built a home and planted a mango orchard in Bowen and almost give it away to an old age pensioner. If we could find a caravan park we'd find Morrie. He's been a bit of a drifter all his life."

Cliff was a bit of a drifter himself, but he didn't know much about this

country. He'd paid off the "Dorrigo" at Fremantle on the Friday, and he wasn't fussy about shipping out again in a hurry. It was only the second time he'd called in to Fremantle and this time it was over a woman, which was nearly always a bad blue. And the woman was Moira, pressed against his ribs, small waisted, big hipped, shot through on her old man with three kids to keep, and a naive youthfulness in her face that belied her busted marriage.

Cliff was forty, but he'd never married, never even lived with a woman for any length of time, although he'd had plenty; girls in Sydney and Melbourne and Brisbane and up North Queensland in the sugar ports and island girls, very matterof-fact on the run to Noumea, hanging on your arm with a "How long you stayin' sailor? Week, fortnight. We make a beebee?"

And now he wondered was it all going to end with this small, blonde, thick-legged woman and her three kids, wrestling in the back of the ute. He valued his freedom. He couldn't see himself tied down to a land job with a wife and three kids to answer to. He'd seen enough of seamens' marriages to know what a strain it was on a woman, carrying the burdens of a family and loneliness while a man was at sea six weeks at a stretch, never knowing if he might come into port, early and unexpected one morning, and find a stranger sharing his double bed. Not all women were the same, but Moira was lively, and still attractive.

He pulled in opposite a Caltex service station.

"Morrie Harris. Never heard of 'im", said the garage attendant. "But there's a carvan park on the foreshore. Might find 'im there."

"He's got a good outfit," Cliff said. "A caravan and a Holden station wagon."

They parked on a sandy turn-off, near a cluster of caravans and an old bus lying against the shelter of a Moreton Bay fig. There was a typical, little weatherboard beach shop, plastered with faded blue Robur Tea signs, set sideways for shelter against the sandhills. It smelt of biscuits and soft drinks and wet sand, with a slot machine that told fortunes for a penny at the fly-wire door.

"The shop's as good a place to ask as any," Cliff said. "They always know."

Moira watched him walk away from the ute, moving with the easy, long-legged, deceptive stride of the big man, the flies settling on his broad blue shirt.

While he was gone a rain squall came across the bay, and she stood out in the wind, her dress blown up, struggling to button the kids under the tarp. He came back through the drizzle, and took it off her, buttoning it easily, leaving a space for the kids to breathe, his face heavy and quiet with some sort of sadness.

"Did you find out anythin'?" she said.

"I met his mate in the shop," he said. "He give me the drum. Morrie's wife's left him and he's on the piss . . . Jesus! he's come down in the world. He's livin' in that derelict bus over there."

She looked across at the bus, lying rusty and melancholy, listed into the sand. A little, hard, red-faced toiler, his dark clothes blown about in the wind, came out of the shop. "That's his mate," Cliff said. "Looks like a plonkie, but a workin' plonkie, not a degenerate plonkie."

"What made his wife leave him?" Moira said sharply, sensing some sort of danger in the situation.

"I dunno", he said slowly. "They was together a long time."

"P'raps it was the booze," Moira said.

"Could a been. Or p'raps he went on the booze *after* she left him." It was the masculine side of the argument and she didn't answer.

"I would a thought he was the last bloke to turn plonko," Cliff said. "He never touched it at Lucinda Point. His mate says he's down town somewhere, probably in the plonk shop." He looked towards the bus, wrinkling his forehead.

"Ah, well," he said. "I won't embarrass him."

"Aren't you goin' to look for him?" she said.

"No. I don't think so. He was with Annie last time I seen him. I wouldn't want to embarrass him."

He stood, staring at the bus in the light rain. "Morrie always had a phobia about depression," he said. "He was always gettin' set for the depression." He shrugged his shoulders. "We better get a few stores in . . . some bread and some tinned dog." There was a typical country woman behind the counter. She had round, thick, white arms like cream, and inquisitive eyes. "Did you find your friend?" she said.

Cliff's face was impassive. "No, couldn't locate him. They reckon he's uptown.

"Yes," she said, nodding her head. "Yes, that's where he'd be. Are you a relation of his?"

"No, no relation."

"Just a friend? Well I wasn't goin' to say anythin' if you'd been a relation." She leaned across the counter, her eyes sparkling with information. "But he's in a bad way. Yes, a very bad way." She shook her head. "He's on the booze."

"He didn't drink at all when I knew him," Cliff said.

"He's on it now, full as a goog, mornin' till night. He often comes in the shop here, but most of the time he don't know what he's doin'. He come into a lot of money you know, or so they reckon. Won the lottery p'raps. But he oughta take a pull on hisself. No good for him. Did you know about the money?"

"No," Cliff said. "Don't know about that. I haven't seen him for years. Lost track of him."

"You wouldn't know 'im," she said. "He looks bad." She glanced up sharply. "Shall I tell 'im who called?"

Cliff hesitated. "Just tell him Cliff was askin' after him. That's all."

"Cliff," she said. "Alright I'll tell 'im. He should take a pull on hisself. It's a shame. But he's too far gone I reckon."

They went silently out of the shop. Moira felt sudden compassion for Morrie Harris, drunken and derelict, washed up on the Bunbury foreshore in the seaweed and sand drift.

It's sad she thought, the waste of people. It was like sand drift and the derelict bus and the little, red-faced wharfie pottering about amongst the old bully beef and tomato soup tins at the roots of the Moreton Bay, and the dark sky and the sea running at the end of the Long Jetty. The tragedy and the waste of it all was suddenly more than she could bear.

"Don't you think you ought to see him," she said. "You might be able to help."

"I dunno," Cliff said. "It might be better just to leave him alone."

He drove the ute off the sandy track, back onto the main asphalt road into town. They passed the Workers' Club, grey and paintless, and two pubs. The wind from the sea blew up the street. "Keep a look out for a plonk shop," Cliff said. "And I'll take a gander inside the pub."

"What's he look like?" she asked him.

He thought about that for a while, searching his memory for Morrie Harris, with his caravan and his brand new Holden station wagon, and his tall, dark wife, living across the river at Lucinda Point.

"He had a very calculatin' look," Cliff said. "And a big head of wavy, black hair. He was stocky with no gut."

Moira had a sudden sharp picture of Morrie Harris, staggering down the main Bunbury street with his calculating look and his big grey head and his tight, flat gut.

"Morrie was one of them old time organizers," Cliff said slowly. "Thought he could run the whole box and dice. I remember his sayin' to me once 'I know everythin',' he said. He never said it to boast y' understand. He really meant it."

And he had said: "But how d'you know Morrie?" and Morrie had only answered, "Because I know everything."

"There's a winery," Cliff said, pulling up sharply. He double parked in a side street. The kids were hungry and niggly, yelling out for fish and chips.

Two men went by with thick muscled necks and blue denim work shirts.

"We'll have to take it up with the union."

"Yeah, it'll mean a stopwork meetin'."

Moira saw Cliff come out of the wine saloon and head for the first pub.

"We're hungry Mum," the kids whined from the back of the ute. Cliff came out of the pub. He was talking to someone on the curb, a little runt of a man who hardly came up to his shoulder.

Moira strained her eyes to see who it was but she was too short-sighted.

"Cliff's double parked. Cliff's double parked," the kids chanted.

Cliff scowled from the other side of the street. He came back with a big steamy packet of fish and chips in his arms.

"You'd think the bloody kids 'd have more sense," he said. "Whadda they want to do, draw the crabs and put a man inter the coppers?"

The wind blew them out of Bunbury. The fish and chips burnt against Moira's thigh.

"We better stop the other side of town," she said. "The kids are starving." She had tears in her eyes. I've lost him she thought savagely. It had been a precarious balance all along. It had only needed Morrie Harris and his faithless wife to tip the scales. She wished hopelessly they could start all over again, that Morrie and Annie might have met them in the flash caravan shining with laminex and stainless steel, and made them a cup of tea and talked about the old days at Rocky and Lucinda Point.

"Morrie carried his swag in the depression," Cliff said. "He always reckoned you could live ten days without tucker, as long as you had tea and sugar."

"Who was that you was talkin' to?" Moira asked. "That little feller, outside the pub?"

"It was his mate, the little wharfie. He wanted me to go back with him. He said Morrie was at the caravan park."

She looked at him curiously. "Why didn't you go?"

He was quiet for a while. "No", he said. "No. Leave him to his memories."

"We wouldn't kill any fatted calf if Morrie Harris come back," cried the wind in Cliff's ear. He was remembering things about Morrie now, things he'd forgotten long ago. The time his brother broke both his legs timber cutting. He'd brought him in from the scrub and they'd landed at the railway station in Rocky without a cracker between them. That was the only time he'd ever asked Morrie a favour, the first and last time. He'd asked Morrie to drive them home to Yepoon to their peoples' place. It would have been a quick trip in that brand new Holden.

"I'll be usin' the car myself this weekend Cliff," Morrie had said, and he'd gone back inside the caravan, good humoured as ever. A lanky, red headed wharfie with five or six kids and an old, beat up Chev had taken them home. Cliff had seen Morrie that weekend down at Yepoon with a couple of young sheilas in tow, showing off like an old bull.

And he realized now that this was what that Darwin wharfie had been trying to tell him about Morrie. This was why history had passed him by, leaving him derelict on the beach with his memories bottled up in a dead marine. No-one can live for himself alone and that was how Morrie had lived.

They stopped the car in a clearing and sat on the dry grass amongst the ants, eating the fish and chips. Cliff lay on his back, staring up at a patch of pale blue sky between the boughs of an ancient red gum. He looked at Moira. She was sitting quite still among the fallen gum leaves, bent forward slightly with the stillness of a child who waits to be hurt. He thought, she's been sitting like this for a long time, waiting, and with the touch of my fingers I can transform her into a woman again. It made him feel humble, not like a God among the gum trees, as Morrie Harris would have felt, but like a man, who knows enough not to abuse his power.

Funny, he thought, Morrie Harris was never a real mate of mine. Funny, how a man must live more than half his life with other men, before he can see that a woman too can be a mate.

There was sunlight in Moira's hair. He stroked her little, hard, worn hand with the white ring circle on her finger where she'd taken her old wedding ring off.

"Annie had an old white cockatoo," he said dreamily. "She had it longer than she'd had Morrie. Usta chase everyone away from the camp, boss the whole show, just like Morrie, but Annie loved it."

He chewed reflectively on a piece of twig, turning her fingers over and over in his palm.

"Wonder if Annie's still got that bloody old cockatoo," he said, "or if she's woken up to him too." He smiled at her, and held out his hand.

"C'mon," he said. "It's late, but we're headin' for real country love, kauri country."

And it was all right now. Everything was all right now. It would always be all right, but she would never know why.

PEAR TREE

The pear across the valley
That shivers in the rain,
And glitters in the sunset,
Has beckoned me again
As I lie here in pain.

The cottage on the mountain
That looks across the sea
To where the lighthouse nightly
Swings the shipping free,
Has long been ill with me.

The bushfire burnt the summer
Across the valley west,
The apples rotted autumn,
And winter iced the breast;
But none took me to rest.

And now the pear has blossomed
A fruit of freckled gold
Across the blackberry valley
Whose depths are black and cold
Below the bushes' hold.

But she that I used so cruelly
Has hacked, and cut, and torn
A tunnel through the blackberry,
Urged by the cursing scorn
I whispered with each dawn.

And now, her forehead, bleeding
Where ugly thorns have pressed,
And the tasteless pear beside me,
Are the last cruel jest
Bleeding in my breast.

RAY SINCLAIR-WOOD

THE IMPRESSIONISTS

Van Gogh,
in his agony,
peeled the sun like a lemon

Renoir
caressed his big white bathers
right onto canvas

Monet
swam through the waters around Paris
the cloudshine way.

Toulouse-Lautrec
caught the grotesqueries of whore and dancer
in a syphilitic fancy.

For Cezanne,
the red earth of Provence
came in tubes.

I drink
the whole museum,
a lovely circus in my head.

CONSTANCE SCHEERER

Robert Juniper

THE POSTER ART OF PHILIPPA HENDERSON

FOR TWO YEARS the posters of Philippa Henderson have announced various forthcoming attractions of the Dolphin Theatre, the Playhouse, Winthrop Hall, and the New Fortune Theatre. These posters are always different and surprising—ranging in feeling from the colourful and witty "U.S.A.", to the dark and dramatic "Hamlet" or the tender study for the recital of Bach's "St. Matthew Passion". The artist moves from one subject to another and switches techniques to suit her theme with the confidence and the facility of one much older than her 24 years.

Philippa Henderson first attracted attention four years ago with her sympathetic lyricism and sure draughtsmanship in a series of illustrations she made for a publication of the poetry of J. M. S. O'Brien. Shortly afterwards she was awarded the prize for drawing in a University of W.A. Undergraduate Art Exhibition, where she showed a group of coloured drawings with delicately patterned compositions and a rare tenderness and compassion for the subjects.

There was in her work at this time something reminiscent of the English painter David Jones. Like him she created, subtly and unsentimentally, with linear designs, a fairy-like world seen through the eyes of poetic innocence. Her position as an art teacher at one of the major high schools has given her a background of discipline for her painterly development, but undoubtedly, the major factor which has led to her present versatility and artistic maturity has been her poster work. Here she has had to experiment with different media and has been required to tighten up her compositions.

Philippa Henderson has been fortunate in her contact with the world of university and music society which has given rise to the demand for her posters, and in the way in which she has responded to this demand, she follows a path trodden by such men as Bonnard, Toulouse Lautrec and Lionel Fieninger, who gave posters the status of fine art.

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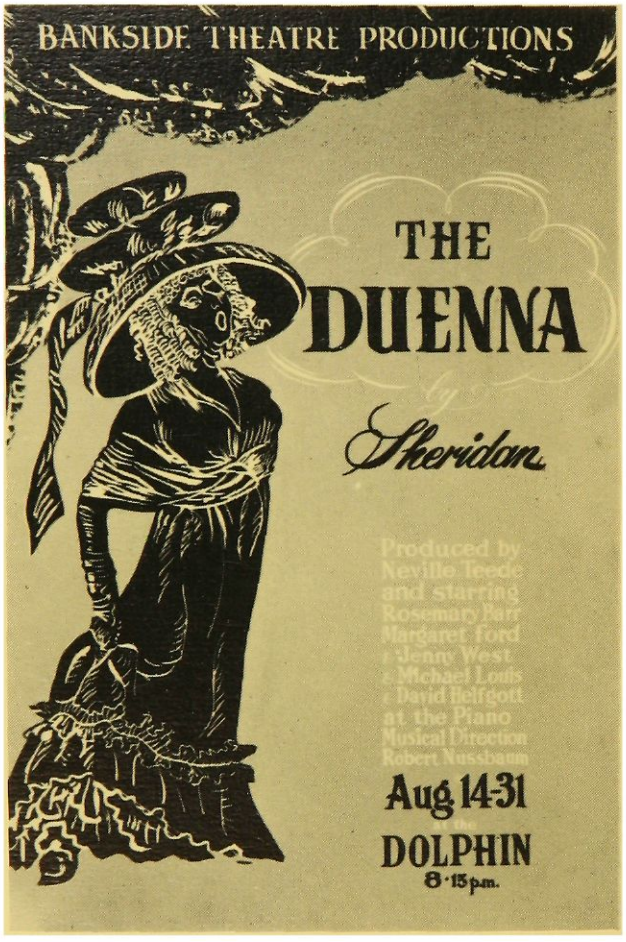
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Robert Nussbaum
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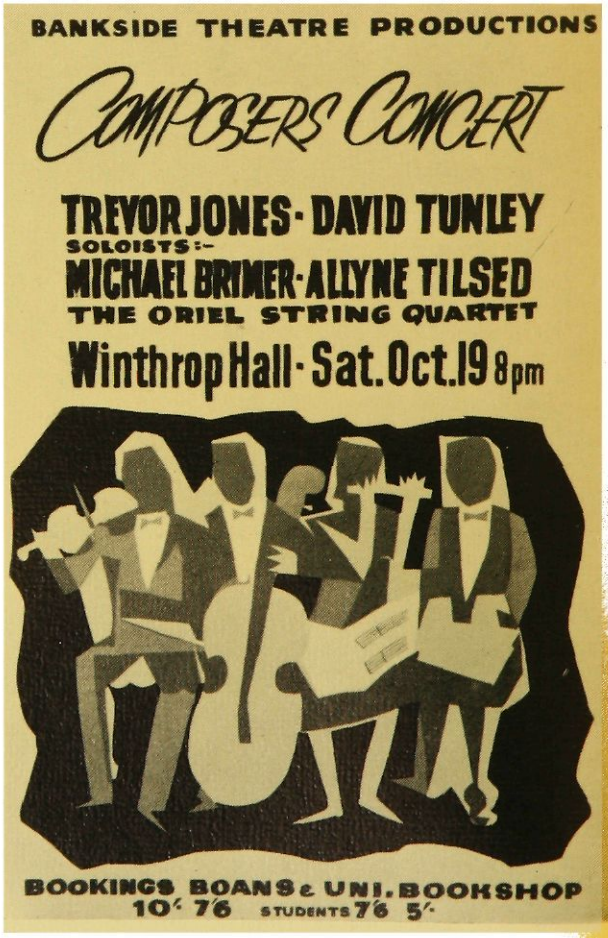
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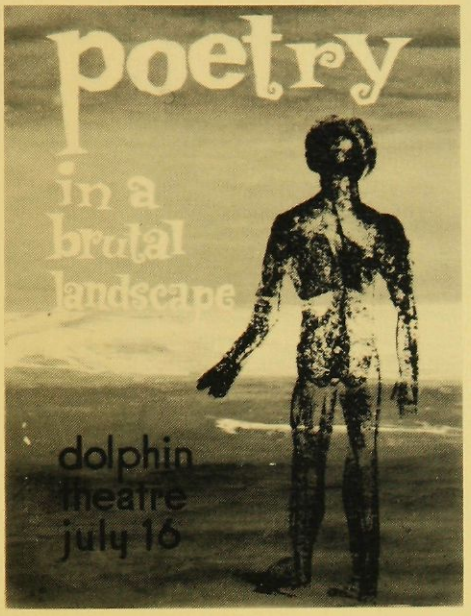
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JOAN BRUCE NEVILLE TEEDE
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the DOLPHIN

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McPAWSON

Scene: *A Conference of Australian Writers*

High on a dais, in unaccustomed state,
McPawson stood, impassioned and irate,
To vent a broadside on all those who use
To flout with envious spleen the Native Muse,
Pale dwellers in the Groves of Academe,
Sickly, sequestered souls who vilely scheme
To wrest from stronger wits their laurels due,
And on the Many thrust the whims of Few.

His Cobbers all with eager relish sate
To hear the words of their exalted Mate,
Who strained awhile his Passion to command,
Touching the hearts of that expectant band,
Who all, with sense of injured merit sore,
Craved for the balm McPawson had in store.
At length, his Passion brought beneath the yoke,
The Orator in pregnant accents spoke:
'Friends, writers of Antipodean birth,
Of Genius rooted deep in native earth,
Whose Fancy, bred on homely diet, roves
Surf-beaten strands and eucalyptic groves;
Or dwells with Toilers in lush fields of cane,
or opal-gatherers on the barren plain,
Or pores on Yarra's stream, or probes the ills
Of Paramatta or of Surrey Hills;
Who all in glorious Writerhood rejoice,
And give our Land, that else were dumb, a Voice:
Be not dismayed, although your just reward
Some costive Critics scruple to accord.
You know your worth: each one has played his part
To 'stablish in our Land the Writer's Art;

A's good if Writer B pronounces so.
And who attests to B? Why, Writer A!
The issue's settled—what is left to say?
'Tis thus each genial wit sustains the other;
In mutual tribute, Brother succours Brother.

And each has won, though Critics carp and bitch
Within our Southern Pantheon his niche.
"Creative Writer"—earn that blessed name
And you're beyond the touch of petty blame
From those that carp because they cannot Write,
And, reft of vigour, burn with eunuch's spite.
True writers answer only to their peers:
This granted, we may laugh at Critics' sneers.
It is not hard a Writer's worth to know:
A's good if Writer B pronounces so.
And who attests to B? Why, Writer A!
The issue's settled—what is left to say?
'Tis thus each genial wit sustains the other;
In mutual tribute, Brother succours Brother.
The happy Circle, being thus complete,
'Tis sacred ground, unsoiled by Critics' feet.
And yet, while in each other's warmth we bask,
Stern Duty calls us to our public task:
We might at Critics' folly be amused,
Did we not see the People so abused,
And how in Academe the wells of Truth
Are muddied, to the grievous hurt of Youth:
Their fledgling wings by Sophists' shears are trimmed,
Their palates dulled, their tender optics dimmed.'
McPawson stopped, by honest Grief oppressed,
And stood with glist'ning eye and heaving breast;
A gentle murmur rose on every hand
At sight of Strength by Tenderness unmanned.
But soon McPawson this attack subdued,
And with reviving rage his theme pursued;
'O Criticism! In that specious name,
Sour Pedantry snuffs out the sacred flame;
Cold Scrutiny it brings, like butcher's knife,
To all that throbs with warm and tender life.
Brooding on sections, it forgets the Whole,

And, probing vital parts, lets out the soul;
Exults in each deformity it finds,
And breeds a callow scorn in budding minds.
  For monkish Intellect abhors to see
Emotion run in joyous liberty,
And ever seeks to curb its genial flow
With Questions: "What is this?" "And wherefore so?"
The Critic e'er will play the Wowser's part:
His leering deathshead spoils the Feast of Art.
So let him gnash his teeth beyond the gate
And on the vacant dark expend his Hate.
Rise, lovers of Good Writing, and reject
The bumptious claims of nagging Intellect!
For not by taking thought is Greatness known,
But through the blood and deep within the bone;
No judgement's needed merit to divine,
But prickling hair-roots, and a freezing spine.
'Tis thus the Common Reader gets his Kicks,
In spite of faults that envious Malice picks.
  The Critics ever walk in ways apart,
Secure from contact with the simple heart;
Abjuring Mateship with the common throng,
Convinced whate'er the People like is wrong;
How may such Pedants judge the true appeal
Of wits who know the Folk and how they feel?
Touch but the Heart—the only valid test;
And what they like the Folk themselves know best.
But Critics would, in Intellectual Pride,
Let Education man from man divide;
And make the Grove of Wit, where all may meet,
The thorn-hedged pleasaunce of a wan elite.
And who can wonder? For they seldom read
Aught save what alien Pundits have decreed,
In countries where the Common Man's debased
And Privilege assumes the mask of Taste.
Their talk of Standards—'tis a lame excuse

To do their dirt upon the Austral Muse:
On foreign wits they love to lavish praise
And to our native Bards deny the bays.
Too long—'

But here McPawson's anger surged,
And choking sounds, but no clear speech emerged.
With trembling hands he poured himself a draught
Which painfully through chatt'ring teeth he quaffed.
His Cobbers watched, with comradely concern,
His Spasms cease and power of speech return:

'Too long we've suffered: let us now indict
The sins of Academe 'gainst those who Write.
We've nought to lose: there's precious few of us
Will see our Works enshrined in syllabus!
(For by what mystic cunning may one hit
The mark that earns inclusion in Aust. Litt.?)
And, truth to say, these Pedants lower our state
More by Neglect than by their active hate.
'Tis shame to say it, when they could with ease
Augment our fame—and yes: our Royalties!
Blush not, my friends: we labour not for pelf,
Yet still must live, and think at whiles of Self.'

The speaker paused, and ripples of assent,
From round the hall, in swelling torrent blent.
McPawson raised a hand. 'Take Heart,' said he.
'We'll win the plaudits of Posterity.
What'er befall, ne'er doubt the Inner Light
Which brings assurance that you're born to Write;
Nor, come what may, this cheerful Faith surrender:
All talent's Sacred, be it ne'er so slender!'

At this the Cobbers could no more contain,
But cheered their Oracle with might and main,
Who once more raised his hand, as if he would
Disown acclaim, but could not break the flood;
And, giving up, allowed himself to drink
His fill of praise—from which few Writers shrink.

For manly hearts that scorn effete Pretence
Of their own dues will show their proper sense;
And so McPawson stood with flashing eye,
Blithe as a surfer when the waves run high.
But as the Cobbers cheered, with tireless zeal,
A change was seen: McPawson seemed to reel!
He staggered with a strangulated gasp,
Seizing the lectern in a frantic clasp;
His features worked, suffused with deep'ning red;
His eyes stood, like a crab's, from out his head.
The tumult ebbed; the hall was Deathly still;
The awesome truth came home: McPawson's ill!
The audience were so stricken with amaze,
Not one of them at first a hand could raise.
They saw his nerveless fingers lose their grip,
And, fascinated, watched him floorward slip,
Till, underneath the lectern dropping quite,
McPawson was completely lost to sight!
The Spell was snapped: as by a single urge,
The company rose up in massive surge,
And on their fallen Champion would have pressed,
Had not some cooler wits restrained the rest.
'Good Friends, be calm!' 'Please do not stand so near!'
'Give room!' 'Give air!' Is there a Doctor here?'
The ranks divide: one wit (of various Parts)
Steps forth, as having skill in Healing Arts;
Ponders a while, then gives a cheerful view:
McPawson, though sore stricken, will pull through!
Some gently wept, transported with relief,
(For deepfelt Joy may wear the guise of Grief);
Others more stern, in silent thankfulness,
Restrained a joy none fitly could express.
The brush of Death's dark Pinion subdues
Even the stalwarts of the Austral Muse.
They waited till a chosen few had left,
Bearing McPawson, still of sense bereft;

And would have followed, but a voice was heard:
'Friends, fellow-Writers, may I say a word?
You may recall—'twas I that took the Chair,
And though, alas, our Speaker's gone elsewhere,
It still behoves me—so at least I deem—
To voice our thanks, and our profound esteem.
McPawson's stricken: for the mortal frame
Can scarce endure the spiritual flame . . .
But that's enough! 'Twere folly to extol
In florid terms this strong but simple soul.
He's of the Folk—and 'tis the common word
By which the Heart, at times like this, is stirred.
And so, McPawson, in your stricken state,
I've only this to say: Good on yer, Mate!'
  The Cobbers, by these words electrified,
Took up the cry which rose on every side.
The tension slackened; their unwonted Quiet
Gave sudden place to wild, euphoric Riot.
'Good on yer, Mate!' resounding through the hall,
A fiery exultation sped through all.
But note—a new development and strange:
The Cobbers underwent a subtle change.
For they—so late released from anxious care—
Forgot McPawson ever had been there!
The Spirit of self-approbation came,
And settled like a Pentecostal flame:
Each one unto Himself did arrogate
The simple homage of 'Good on yer, Mate!'
And such a plenitude of Bliss it brought
That no one to McPawson gave a thought.
In ecstasy of mutual Tribute, all
'Good on yer, Mate!' from each to each did call.

R. V. JOHNSON

THE POET WHO CAME TO NOTHING

My friend I meet you in an evil time,
Summer is dead on your lips and the dog-days vanished,
Now is the hour of the cheat and the philistine,
And the gangling youth with the fire in his mouth is finished.
It would have been kinder if I had left you buried,
Your hand is hesitant, your voice grown cold,
You have gone past death and grown no faith,
No wisdom - - - - - - - - - only grown old.

At the first turning of the stair you sit in comfort
And commonplaces cannot bridge the years.
The pause is awkward, a cigarette covers the silence,
But platitudes are no substitute for tears.

O where is the man who challenged the world with words,
O where is the poet who wept for man and his pain,
The burning eyes and the shoulder that brushed my own . . .
Buried under words that patter and drizzle like rain.
O where is the youth with the soft, compassionate mouth,
The legs that straddled the earth and the voice of fire.
You must have bled him to death but the words he wrote
Live on and prove you damned as a liar.

O God the loneliness that stares between our eyes,
The eyes that beg . . . "Go now and leave me alone,
For God's sake leave me alone with my tears and my pain
Before you flay the living flesh from my bone."
Uneasy eyes that shift and turn and moan
And trap the thought their owner dare not own,
That cry with a last foretaste of agony,
For God's sake leave me here to weep alone . . .
While the smooth voice asks me, "Would I care for tea?"

So I'll take my leave, take pity on your grey hair
And leave you here to rot in your comfortable, dull despair.

At the first turning of the stair there are cups of tea,
Eyes without hope, eyes without dreams or pity.
Each man comes hard to his appointed end.
Rain in my boots I walk the streets of the city,
But I am rich when I look at you my friend.

I do not envy you, to each the choice is given,
Your choice to know the truth and choose the lies.
The scales are tipped . . . nothing wil lbe forgiven.
History is written here between our eyes.

It's a hungry time and the pimp is at my shoulder,
Eyes without hope, eyes without tears or pity.
The thirty greasy pieces in your hand,
You sit alone above the rainwet city.

My friend I meet you in an evil time.
But evil times are buried with evil men,
The turncoat digs his grave with the philistine.
If I live that long I'll weep for you . . . even then.

DOROTHY HEWETT

Dal Stivens

LANDSCAPE IN AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE

ONE OF THE MAJOR RECEIVED TRUTHS of Australian literary criticism is that the early settlers did not love this land, that they found it alien and unbeautiful, and sighed for the green fields of England. Eventually, native-born Australians came to accept the land and were able to write about it unself-consciously and often with affection. For years I accepted this writ—after all, everyone said it was so. Here is a typical statement by the well-known critic, the late H. M. Green:

> It is not so easy to appreciate a new country, new climate, new soils, new vegetation, all at once. To the first comers this was a strange and hideous place, to which people came only because they had to, or until they had made enough money to go back and live in comfort in England again. Of the first visitors to Australia, one, in 1827, spoke of the 'miserable looking trees that cast their annual coat of bark; and present to the eye of the raw European the appearance of being actually dead'. This visitor must have forgotten that European trees look even more dead when in winter they have cast their leaves. And a second visitor, as late as 1855, remarked that there was 'to the stranger's eye something singularly repulsive in the leaden tint of the gum-tree foliage, and in the dry and sterile sandstone from which it springs'. These people disliked what they saw about them, simply because it differed from what they had been accustomed to. It was not until the second and third generation, those of the locally born and brought up, that even Australians could see Australia as she really was.

There was literary evidence for this received truth. In 1870 (the year he suicided at the age of 37) Adam Lindsay Gordon, who had been born in the Azores and had come to Australia in 1853, published these new famous verses in the preface to *Bush Ballads and Galloping Rhymes:*

> They are rhymes rudely strung with intent less
> Of sound than of words,
> In lands where bright blossoms are scentless,
> And songless bright birds;

(It is, of course, nonsense and the more foolish because Alfred Russel Wallace had written earlier about Australian songbirds and said the magpie (shrike) was the equal of the famed nightingale). And Mr. Justice Barron Field, (1776-1846), one of the first Australian poets, had written in his published diary:

> New South Wales is a perpetual flower-garden, but there is not a single scene in it of which a painter could make a landscape, without greatly disguising the true character of the trees. They have no lateral boughs, and cast no masses of shade . . .

He despairs of the other arts:

> All the dearest allegories of human life are bound up in the infant and slender green of spring, the dark redundance of summer, and the sere and yellow leaf of autumn. These are as essential to the poet as emblems, as they are to the painter as picturesque objects; and the common consent and immemorial custom of European poetry have made the change of season, and its effect upon vegetation, a part, as it were, of our very nature. I can therefore hold no fellowship with Australian foliage, but will cleave to the British oak through all the bareness of winter.

And quotes with approval Sir James Smith:

> . . . New Holland seems no very beautiful or picturesque country, such as is likely to form, or to inspire, a poet . . . There seems . . . to be no transition of seasons in the climate itself, to excite hope, or to expand the heart and fancy.

Along with this supposed hatred of the new country there was said to be an almost universal ambition to make one's fortune and return to England as quickly as possible. This has been a persistent theme in a score of novels about the pioneers. I suspect that isn't more accurate than the received truth that the early settlers hated their new land. Some did want to get rich quick and return to squire it in England but I think they were a minority. This is, of course, merely an opinion. I have not had the opportunity to examine all the evidence.

Only in recent years have I come to suspect that this received truth is, at best, a half truth or even a quarter truth! My suspicions were first aroused when, during my residence in London, I was asked to review *Settlers* (Faber and Faber, London 1950), a collection of extracts

from the journals and letters of early colonists in Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand, edited by John Hale.

Few, if any, of the settlers, found their new homelands ugly but, on the contrary, most of them were full of praise for their natural beauties. Five of the six early Australian migrants in *Settlers* were enthusiastic. There was, for instance, Elizabeth Macarthur, writing home in 1795, only seven years after the landing of the First Fleet:

> The greater part of the country is like an English park, and the trees give it the appearance of a wilderness or shrubbery, commonly attached to the habitations of people of fortune, filled with a variety of native plants, placed in a wild irregular manner. I was at the Hawkesbury three days. It is a noble fresh water river, taking its rise in a precipitous range of mountains, that it has hitherto been impossible to pass; many attempts have been made, although in vain, I spent an entire day on this river, going in a boat to a beautiful spot, named by the late Governor, 'Richmond Hill,' . . .

There are many other similar entries in her letters.

There's also the excited and ingenuous William Barnes writing in 1824 of his new cottage:

> It is most delightfully situated on rising ground, and a most beautiful River (the Tamar) seen front meandering for many miles, with a fine Rich country on both sides, terminated by mountains.

And there is Irish-born George Fletcher Moore, who studied law, forsook it for flute playing, and abandoned both to go farming in Western Australia. He wrote in 1830:

> I have since been up the Canning River, about a mile above the navigable part, to look at some grants which are undisposed of. The country there is beautiful, covered or rather studded with magnificent trees . . .

And later he thought the country "most singular" though he thought it tended to sameness.

Among Mr. Hale's settlers there was a mildly dissident note from a literary clergyman, John Davies Mereweather, who admired the climate and wrote (in 1850): "All is beautiful but the parched-looking green colour of the trees is a great drawback."

Although I did not realise it at the time, the reservation of the literary (and not very talented) Reverend Mereweather was significant. But more of this later.

After reading *Settlers* my suspicions were aroused and I began to dip more deeply into the journals and letters of early settlers and explorers. With few exceptions they loved their new land and praised it highly. I cannot list or quote them here. But Sturt was full of praise for Sydney and its climate. And did not Thomas Mitchell describe the country he saw in 1836 on the way to Portland Bay as "Australia Felix?" And this excerpt from *The Gold Finder* (1853) is very relevant:

> The attractions of the woods are inconceivable to one whose misfortune it has been to have been, all his life, trained within the limits of a dirty street, bounded on the north by—*brick;* on the south by—*brick;* on the east by—*brick;* and on the west by—*brick!* Let him, however, in his imagination, picture thousands of cattle ranging abroad in an illimitable park-like wilderness of verdure and shadowy foliage; let him imagine himself living in the open air for several months together, and often throwing himself upon the beautiful grass and sleeping without injury; let him diversify this life with fishing, and hunting, and reading, and the thousand charms with which these are associated in every mind; let him now feast upon the products of his own healthy sport—to-day gormandising on a turkey, and tomorrow on a teal; now on a perch, and now on a piece of the Murray cod, and all obtained without fear of being subjected to the penalties of the game laws.

I began asking myself, how could the received truth and the historical truth be reconciled? A flash of illumination came when I found in Keats some verses about America concerning scentless blossoms and birds which didn't sing—years before Gordon was to say the same things about Australia. Keats was echoing a popular belief of his times about tropical countries and applying it generally to America. What was good enough for Keats—and other writers—was good enough for Gordon decades later!

There is a small portion of truth about songless bright birds and scentless blossoms in some tropical lands.* Some tropical blooms which do not depend on insects for pollination are relatively scentless. Some tropical birds such as parrots and birds of paradise are poor "singers", for reasons which are too involved to be discussed here. But Keats overlooked that much of America is not in the tropics but in the temperate zone. And Gordon overlooked that only a third of Australia, the sparsely settled part, was north of the Tropic of Capricorn, or, more likely, Gordon adopted the literary convention from Keats, and, probably, other writers.

In this literary cliché of Gordon's we have a

* I have searched unsuccessfully for the source of Keats' and Gordon's belief. Did some early traveller write this about some new land?

clue to reconciling the received truth and historical truth. Many who wrote disparingly of Australia in the early days were authors, mostly of smallish talents. Literature is always artificial —to the extent that it has certain conventions. No poet, for instance, who writes about a rose does it alone. His predecessors are at his elbow, influencing the form of the poem and the words he chooses. Nor does his reader experience a poem about a rose alone. Echoes of Shakespeare, Waller, Herrick, Edward Fitzgerald and others are vibrating on the edges of consciousness. There is a literary way of seeing things and saying things. The early writers were transplanted Englishmen and when they attempted to describe the Australian scene it was with the traditional tools—in terms of English literature.

A major talent might have broken through to something fresh, but not necessarily, because the source of most good poetry—or other writing—is, almost certainly, in our childhood. The subject matter of much poetry (perhaps all) are natural objects that had a magical significance for the poet (and ourselves) during his childhood—natural objects such as flowers, springs and streams, clouds, birds' nests, trees and so forth. This was the theme of Sir Kenneth Clark's Romanes lecture at Oxford in 1954. There was no rational reason said Sir Kenneth, why we still attached so much value to these natural objects when they were seen afresh for us by poets and artists. But we did.

If we accept Sir Kenneth's theory—and I, personally, find it illuminating—the early Australian writers who had lived their childhoods in England could, like Barron Field and others, see nothing that was *magical* here.

If the theory is correct, Australian literature—or literature about Australia—could only be created by writers whose childhood had been passed here. The facts, of course, bear it out. Our first Australian poet of any importance, Charles Harpur (1813-1868) was born on the Hawkesbury River in New South Wales. In some verses from his best poem, which not quite free from old-fashioned conventions, he does capture something genuine about the landscape:

> Not a sound disturbs the air,
> There is quiet everywhere;
> Over plains and over woods
> What a mighty stillness broods!
> All the birds and insects keep
> Where the coolest shadows sleep;
> Even the busy ants are found
> Resting in their pebbled mound;
> Even the locust clingeth now
> Silent to the barky bough:
> Over hills and over plains
> Quiet, vast and slumbrous, reigns.

From Harpur it has been a slow, steady progression—writers are rather like polyps, slowly adding to the common tradition—to the striking *Australian* image in the poem "For New England" by Miss Judith Wright:

> But look, oh look, the Gothic's tree's on fire
> With blown galahs, and fuming with wild wings.

The Galahs are accepted and have magical qualities. Probably only an Australian, born and brought up here, could have written these two lines.

I'm not claiming that the best Australian poetry or prose has to be about Australian natural objects. It can be about anything. But I'm citing Miss Wright's vivid image as one that would not have been evoked in Barron Field or other earlier writers—even if they had her talent, which they didn't!

Here is an excerpt from *Working Bullocks* by Katharine Susannah Prichard where the eucalypts are seen very differently from the way the Reverend Mereweather saw them:

> Then the team swung out from the bush, turning into the track, sunlight striking down through young green of the red gum and jarrah saplings, splashing the big red and white bullocks in the lead. Red, tawny, black, and white backs of the beasts moved slowly, with rippling sway, against the lighted and shadowy depths of the forest.

And here is another landscape passage from *The Young Desire It* by the late Seaforth Mackenzie:

> And there were earlier dawns. There was the springing energy of a horse under him, and the frosty, brilliant sunrise over vast plains, stony and without dew; sunrise like a mirage of noon in treeless tracts of broken stone and blood-red earth and grey growth, where the clatter and thud of hooves had no echo. There was his father, swaying easily to the restless movements of a bay mare, unconsciously stroking a stone-coloured beard, screwing up faded blue eyes long used to looking into remote distances of blinding day, long outgrown even pessimism and foreboding . . .

The Australian landscape—with its feathery-topped, slim-trunked eucalypts, cascading fragrant wattle (mimosa), and melodious songbirds—is now accepted naturally by Australian writers. It is written about with affection—or, at least, ambivalently. It took the writers longer to accept the landscape than the non-literary first settlers. But this was inevitable. Writing is always a little artificial, as well, as persuasive. It has proved so persuasive, I believe that historical truth has been distorted.

Clarence Gohdes

WHAT "SOUTH" ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT IN THE U.S.A.?

THE FOREIGN STUDENT of North American geography finds little difficulty in grasping the fact that the United States consists of fifty units called States whose size, population, and economic consequence vary from the mighty to the minute. Their boundaries are carefully demarked by surveyors' lines and are readily ascertained. But when he looks for definite bounds for the regions called Far West, Middle West, East, Northwest, etc. vagueness and confusion settle like the shades of night. The reason is simple enough, for these regional terms are not official—and many a citizen of the United States would be hard pressed to clarify them in a lucid manner. The use of directions—North, South, East, West—is naturally a handicap to precise definition. When expressions like Southern, Western, etc. are officially used, as in Tanganyika, for instance, the limits of the regions are easily traced, but the borders of "Southwestern France" or "Northern Italy", or "Northern Japan" are impossible to delineate. Yet we accept them as a matter of common usage. So it is in the United States. The confusion implicit in such terminology in North America is perhaps exaggerated by the immensity of the areas under scrutiny and also by the fact that East and West have been changing conceptions based on no fixed center but upon a constantly shifting "East." To North Americans the West has, thus, been an area that has moved with the progression of population and the establishment of new States further and further to the west of the Atlantic seaboard. The recent admission to Statehood of Hawaii, for example, makes almost ridiculous the employment of the term Far West in describing the West Coast and Rocky Mountain States. But that term, nevertheless, still continues in use.

In a number of cases a knowledge of history as well as acquaintance with American usage is necessary for a proper understanding. Northwest is an example. This word should logically, of course, be confined to Alaska, but it is still generally assumed to designate the area including Washington, Oregon, Idaho and usually Montana, too. But Northwest originally meant the region to the north and west of the original colonies, an immense tract acquired from Great Britain at the end of the Revolutionary War. In 1787 it was made the first official "territory" and eventually was split up into the States of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, and Wisconsin. These five States are today regarded as part of the Middle West. The counterpart of this original Northwest exists only as an historian's term—namely, "Old Southwest," which designates a Southwest of more than a century past which embraced the area presently occupied by Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama. It is this "Old Southwest" that is supposed to have developed a kind of humor in the 1840's which later influenced Mark Twain.

The word Southwest as used today is one of the most difficult to cope with. The Chamber of Commerce of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, proudly prints the words "Heart of the Greater Southwest" on its official stationery. But a California historian, W. W. Robinson, asserts that Los Angeles is the "magnetic heart" of the Southwest—because it draws everyone and everything to itself. The regional author Walter S. Campbell, better known to many readers as Stanley Vestal, excluded Arizona from his compilation entitled *The Booklover's Southwest*. Ed Arnsworth, a Los Angeles newspaper columnist born in Texas, maintains that his Southwest is anywhere that mesquite (a kind of shrub or tree) grows. To this, Lawrence Clark Powell, librarian and author, replies that Kew Gardens in London would qualify. Mr. Powell himself considers the *cor cordium* of the region to be Albuquerque, New Mexico, but willingly admits, "Your definition of the Southwest will depend upon who you are and where you are from."[1]

J. Frank Dobie, a very eminent authority on the section, who once served as Harmsworth Professor of American History in Oxford University, indicates a similar attitude in the following explanation:

The term Southwest is variable because the boundaries of the Southwest are themselves fluid, expanding and contracting according to the point of view from which the Southwest is viewed and according to whatever common denominator is taken for defining it. The Spanish Southwest includes California, but California regards itself as more closely akin to the Pacific Northwest than to Texas; California is Southwest more in an antiquarian way than otherwise. From the point of view of the most picturesque and imagination-influencing occupation of the Southwest, the occupation of ranching, the Southwest might be said to run up into Montana. Certainly one will have to go up the trail to Montana to finish out the story of the Texas cowboy. Early in the nineteenth century the Southwest meant Tennessee, Georgia, and other frontier territory now regarded as strictly South. The men and women who "redeemed Texas from the wilderness" came principally from that region. The code of conduct they gave Texas was largely the code of the booming West. Considering the character of the Anglo-American people who took over the Southwest, the region is closer to Missouri than to Kansas, which is not Southwest in any sense but which has had a strong influence on Oklahoma. Chihuahua is more southwestern than large parts of Oklahoma. In *Our Southwest,* Erna Fergusson has a whole chapter on "What is the Southwest?" She finds Fort Worth to be in the Southwest but Dallas, thirty miles east, to be facing north and east. The principal areas of the Southwest are, to have done with air-minded reservations, Arizona, New Mexico, most of Texas, some of Oklahoma, and anything else north, south, east, or west that anybody wants to bring in. The boundaries of cultures and rainfall never follow survey lines. In talking about the Southwest I naturally incline to emphasize the Texas part of it.[2]

Something of the same difficulty in definition plagues the South—a region which most Americans think is one of the easiest to isolate. A common synonym is "the area below the Mason-Dixon Line." This famous surveyor's line was run between Pennsylvania and Maryland in 1763-1767 to settle the rival claims of the Penns and the Calverts over the mutual boundary of their respective colonies. By popular usage it was later extended westward to the Ohio River and down that stream to the Mississippi. Thence it was further extended, again by popular usage, along the borders of Missouri. It came to represent the line separating the slave-holding South and the free North at the time of the debates leading to the Missouri Compromise in 1820.

"The area below the Mason-Dixon Line" does not, however, conform exactly to another conception of the South which also makes an appeal to history, namely, that of the group of States, eleven in all, which seceded from the Union, in February, 1861, formed the Confederate States of America, and in an unsuccessful effort to maintain independence fought the bloodiest war in New World history. Yet many Virginians or Carolinians, for example, both before the Civil War and a hundred years after, have regarded Texans as more western than Southern even though the Lone-Star State, as Texas is called, joined the Confederacy. And most of the residents of Kentucky—a so-called Border State at the time of the War Between the States, though it never seceded from the Union—would today feel hurt if their claims to be Southerners were denied.

The difficulty of pinning the South down in a precise conception increases as one encounters popular notions of the peculiarities of the area based on elements other than geography or affiliation to the Confederacy. The sectional song of the South is "Dixie," and a standard version begins: "I wish I was in the land of cotton . . ." And for many Americans the South is the "land of cotton." But cotton buyers for some time have thought of Arizona and California as much more consequential in producing the snowy crop than most of the Southern States, and maize is far more abundant in them. There is no important field crop that is peculiarly associated with the entire region—and if one were to try to find a plant that is very widespread in the South exclusively one might come up with something like the muscadine grape, whose habitat, however, trickles over the line into the North. The variety of climate and terrain in the South is so great as to baffle valid generalizations about vegetation. Immense reaches of sandy beach and dense coastal swamps along the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico are matched by millions of acres of rolling Piedmont and hundreds of miles of verdant mountain chains, including some of the highest peaks east of the Mississippi River. So varied is the terrain that almost all varieties of birds found elsewhere in the United States are to be found also in the South, and the wild animals range from deer, bear, and the marsupial opossum to the coyote, javelina, wild boar, and alligator. Dixie as the Southern region is also called, is only in small measure a "land of cotton."

The South is also imaged as the land of the North American Negro. But, in much the same way as mechanical cotton-pickers have quickened

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the movement of the "land of cotton" westward, the higher wages of industrial cities have stimulated the migration of Southern Negroes away from their native haunts. So radically changed is the demographic picture of Dixie that the popular imagination has not as yet caught up with present-day realities. The need for labor which reached a critical level during the First World War drew people from rural areas to the manufacturing cities in unprecedented numbers, including a fair proportion of Southerners, white and black. Relatively insignificant Negro communities in many such cities were thus expanded, and the way was prepared for the gigantic migration which surged to new heights during the Second World War and is not likely to cease in the immediate future. The following table provides succinctly the chief data relative to the shrinkage of the proportion of the "colored" population in the South:

POPULATION AND POPULATION CHANGE, 1940-1960

State	Population in 1960 (millions)			Per cent. change						Per cent. Non-white		
				1950-1960			1940-1950					
	Total	White	Non-White	T*	W	NW	T*	W	NW	1960	1950	1940
Virginia	3.97	3.14	0.83	1.8	21.7	11.9	2.4	28.0	11.3	20.8	22.2	24.7
North Carolina	4.56	3.40	1.16	1.2	14.0	7.2	1.4	16.2	7.9	25.4	26.6	28.1
South Virginia	2.38	1.55	0.83	1.2	19.9	1.0	1.1	19.3	1.1	34.9	38.9	42.9
Georgia	3.94	2.82	1.13	1.4	18.3	5.8	1.0	16.6	–2.4	28.6	30.9	34.7
Florida	4.95	4.06	0.89	6.0	87.6	46.7	4.6	57.2	17.5	17.9	21.8	27.2
Tennessee	3.57	2.98	0.59	0.8	7.9	10.9	1.3	14.5	4.3	16.5	16.1	17.5
Alabama	3.27	2.28	0.98	0.7	9.8	0.1	0.8	12.4	‡	30.1	32.1	34.7
Mississippi	2.18	1.26	0.92	0	5.8	–7.0	†	7.1	–8.1	42.3	45.4	49.3
Arkansas	1.79	1.40	0.39	–0.6	–5.8	–8.7	–0.2	1.1	–11.4	21.9	22.4	24.8
Louisiana	3.26	2.21	1.05	2.0	23.1	17.9	1.4	18.9	4.1	32.1	33.0	36.0
Texas	9.58	8.78	1.21	2.2	24.5	22.4	2.0	29.9	6.3	12.6	12.8	14.5
Kentucky	3.04	2.82	0.22	0.3	2.8	7.6	0.4	4.2	–5.2	7.2	6.9	7.5
United States	179.32	158.83	20.49	1.8	17.5	26.7	1.47	13.3	17.0	11.4	10.5	10.2

*Annual rate. †–0.02. ‡Negligible.

Source: Joseph J. Spengler, "Demographic and Economic Changes in the South, 1940-1960," *Change in the Contemporary South*, ed. Allan P. Sindler (Durham, N. C., 1963), p. 27.

A glance at the table will show quickly how unjustified is the common belief that such States in the "Deep South"[3] as Alabama and Mississippi contain the largest Negro population. And a further glance at the following data for selected "urbanized areas" (1960 census) makes it evident that the New York City complex alone contains more Negroes than any State in Dixie, that the Chicago area surpasses the entire State of Virginia in this respect, just as Philadelphia exceeds all of Tennessee, and Los Angeles all of Arkansas:

Baltimore, Maryland	342,545
Chicago, Illinois	959,940
Cincinnati, Ohio	127,676
Cleveland, Ohio	259,162
Detroit, Michigan	552,748
Los Angeles, California	460,033
New York City	1,534,595
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	629,276

The comparable figures for three of the largest Southern "urbanized areas"—Houston, Texas (236,090), New Orleans, Louisiana (263,914), and Atlanta, Georgia (207,792)—are here presented for comparison. If the South is to be considered as the land of the American Negro a number of Northern cities will have to be annexed to Dixie to make the image fit the existing situation.

The picture of the South in the mind's eye of the average American living outside the region has for many years been a confused and confusing welter of romantically attractive and fabulously repulsive elements. Lighter hues in the romantic coloration are provided by the traditional charm of an "old regime" with beautiful young women residing in columned mansions set in grounds ornamented with scented magnolias and boxwoods, with Negro servants as loyal as Achates, as humorous as Uncle Remus, and as patient as Uncle Tom, with the courtly manners of the well-bred "old families," and a chivalric ideal personified in the peerless symbol of manhood—Robert E. Lee. There is also the fetching Southland of the contemporary tourist who dreams mid winter snows of the sunkissed beaches of Florida, the picturesque Everglades, Louisiana bayous, or the live-oak trees garlanded with Spanish moss in Georgia; of the Skyline

Drive through the Blue Ridge Mountains overlooking the Shenandoah Valley, rich with apple blossoms; of colonial Williamsburg, the first Virginia capital, now restored in its pristine neat brick patterns; the azalea gardens along Mobile Bay; the bluebonnets painting the Texas prairie in the springtime; the fabled Vieux Carré of New Orleans, ancestral home of jazz and a famed Creole cuisine; of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, more frequented than Yellowstone or the Grand Canyon of the Colorado River. There is the sportsman's paradise also: golfing at Pinehurst, Augusta, Boca Raton, and a thousand other resorts; the Kentucky Derby, most famous of North American horse races; skiing on the waters impounded by dams in the Tennessee River Valley; hunting for "birds" in sedge grass or the shredded leaves of palmettos; trolling for tarpon in the Gulf of Mexico or spinning for bass in the myriad lakes of Florida, often encircled by groves gleaming with oranges and redolent with the fragrance of their blossoms. *Kennst du das Land?* What Italy meant for Goethe, for Shelley, Browning, or Ibsen—or what the Côte d'Azur evokes in the mind of the West German tourist—that is part of the rosy image of the American South.

Quite the opposite in hue is another series of colorations, for the region in the eyes of millions of Americans is also what Terrone signifies to Northern Italians, what Auvergne represents to Parisians—or what Boeotia conjured up to the ancient Greeks—a land of backwardness, bigots, and buffoons. Slavery, racial strife, ignorance, and poverty are ingredients that contribute to a picture of a South from which Mrs. Stowe's Eliza did well to escape by perilously leaping on hunks of floating ice: the South of the Klu Klux Klan, of the illiterate "poor white"—the "Bible Belt" or "The Sahara of the Beaux Arts," as Henry L. Mencken alternately called it, "The Economic Problem Number One" of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Dealers, the bleak country of Erskine Caldwell's Tobacco Road and its morons, of the "Worst American State"—the miasmatic stamping ground of William Faulkner's Snopses—of Scottsboro, Little Rock, and Birmingham. This nightmare realm supplies a regional butt for the national prejudice, where timeless laziness and inefficiency are supposed to stalk hand in hand with a modern monster known as Lowest Per Capita Income.

A weighty factor in spreading the view of the region as problem-haunted and poverty-cursed is conventional metropolitan journalism emanating principally from the North. The South itself is possessed of relatively few large cities, and at present boasts no newspapers of sufficient consequence at the national level to modify or correct editorial attitudes or misapprehensions for the press of the nation at large. Indeed, the voices of the regions all over the United States are almost subdued amid the constant standardization and the clichés of syndicated columnists supplied wholesale by the press associations. The entrance of radio and nationally viewed television programmes into the area of news gathering and "commenting" on current events has further weakened the influence of more local rivals and further jolted the foothold of sectional opinions. Modern communications corrupt local manners. The picture of Birmingham, Alabama lately projected by the national press, radio, and television supplies a case in point. The more sensational aspects of the struggle for racial equality in that unfortunate city have been played up as "show business," to the point that a central factor motivating the Negro clamour for privileges has been lost sight of in the confusion. James Bryce long ago pointed out:

> If the Negro shares in the prosperity of the South, if he grows richer and enters the professions more largely, he will become more "uppish," will be quicker to claim social equality and more resentful of its denial. What the whites deem his insolence will provoke reprisals from them. This will increase the tension between the two colours. And as the upper section of the negroes find that all their advance in knowledge and material well-being brings them socially no nearer to the whites, their feelings will grow more bitter and the relations of the races more strained.[4]

Amid all the publicity about racial hostilities in Birmingham, contrived or not contrived, the serious student would find it hard to believe that such economic progress has been made in that city that from 1950 to 1959 the percentage of its Negro families earning $4,000 or more annually arose from 4.4 to 28.8%. It would seem impossible that over half of these families now own their own homes or that, again as of 1959, 44.2% possessed automobiles, 98.2% mechanical refrigerators, and 84.7% television sets. These indexes might be regarded as favorable, indeed, if they were applicable, let us say, to Pisa or Graz, Pilsen or Grasse.

The publicity attendant upon the efforts to combat segregation in the schools has resulted in the perpetuation of a standard pejorative attitude toward education in the South which is again not exactly in agreement with reality. The press has not made clear that these same relatively poor States contribute a higher percentage of their total income to the cause of public education than does, for example, affluent New York or Illinois. The fact is obscure that, despite racial

discrepancies, the *average* salary paid its Negro teachers by a state like North Carolina[5] is actually higher than the average salary paid to their Caucasian colleagues. And only in the Southern States is the number of Negro teachers comparable to the Negro population. Even the college-bred public of the nation is unaware that, both in physical equipment and in the quality of their faculties, the universities supported by Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana, Florida, and Tennessee are at present superior to those provided by any State in New England—the erstwhile stronghold of public education in the United States. A glance at the following data will illustrate the point so far as library resources are concerned:

Number of Books Held in University Libraries

South	
Alabama (Tuscaloosa)	679,856
Arkansas (Fayetteville)	407,574
Florida (Gainesville)	917,739
Georgia (Athens)	438,288
Kentucky (Lexington)	904,757
Louisiana (Baton Rouge)	701,410
Mississippi (Oxford)	336,761
North Carolina (Chapel Hill)	1,077,343
South Carolina (Columbia)	380,162
Tennessee (Knoxville)	670,257
Texas (Austin)	1,427,942
Virginia (Charlottesville)	1,104,610
New England	
Connecticut (Storrs)	321,357
Maine (Orono)	316,299
Massachusetts (Amherst)	238,383
New Hampshire (Durham)	296,140
Rhode Island (Kingston)	195,000
Vermont (Burlington)	220,000

Source: *American Library Directory*, 23rd ed. (New York, 1962).

The nation's first state-wide religious observance of "National Library Week," it may be noted parenthetically, was not held in Boston or Berkeley or Ann Arbor but in Jackson, Mississippi. In St. Peter's Cathedral in that city a solemn Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated on April 1, 1963, "for libraries, librarians and friends of both," and special thanks to the Almighty were offered for what had indeed been "phenomenal progress"—a new library facility had been opened in "The Worst American State" on the average of one every fifteen days since 1957.[6]

Books about the West—or something called the West—whether fiction or non-fiction, have for a long while led in the race for regional prominence. But Mencken's label "Sahara of the Beaux Arts" and the popular attitude toward the South as the North American Boeotia are not consonant with the circumstance that for more than a generation Southern literature has been commented on as a regional entity more frequently than the belles-lettres associated with any other section.[7] The grounds for this apparent anomaly are not readily ascertained, though explanations spring readily to mind.

First among them is, of course, the secular history of the area. This involved a unique temporary separation from the Union, a subsequent prolonged sectional solidarity at the level of national politics, and a conscious minority status based on a variety of components, economic as well as political and racial. As a result, Southern history has perhaps been as much of a separate staple in college history departments as the annals of any other section of the United States. To a less extent, Southern literature has likewise provided a more or less separate commodity in the curricula of English departments, though but rarely in Northern colleges and universities. Academic interest, then, would be one factor.

A much more consequential reason, however, is that, for the past two generations and longer, a large number of top-ranked authors have been Southerners by birth. No one can range through the roster of literary celebrities of twentieth-century America without encountering such names as Madison Cawein, James Branch Cabell, Ellen Glasgow, John Gould Fletcher, Conrad Aitken, Tennessee Williams, and William Faulkner. A recent study of the miscalled "Renaissance in the South" reminds critics that within the last few years Southern authors have been the recipients of a Nobel award for literature, eleven Pulitzer Prizes for fiction—a full third granted since 1929—four Pulitzer Prizes for drama and five for poetry, and that seven of the seventeen awards made by the New York Drama Critics Circle have been bestowed on playwrights from the region.[8]

Moreover, the South as a subject for treatment by poets, novelists, and dramatists is an established land of romance which reflects the contradictions implicit in the national attitude. Indeed, belles-lettres, since the days of William Gilmore Simms and Harriet Beecher Stowe, may have helped to create the contradictions. On the one hand, the New Orleans of George Washington Cable, the Nashville, Tennessee, or the Texas ranches of O. Henry, and the Atlanta of Margaret Mitchell in appealing to the popular imagination are akin to the Virginia of Thomas Nelson Page, the Kentucky of John Fox, or the Georgia of Joel Chandler Harris. On the other hand, but not far removed from the same land of make-believe, is the literary image of the South as the grotesque region of Erskine Caldwell, of Faulkner, and a multitude of their surrealistic imitators. Southward we fly to the faerie realm of the imagina-

tion—on the pinions of buzzards as well as on the wings of mocking birds!

Whether as tourist, sociologist, historian, politician, or literary critic, one who attempts to bring the South into a clearer focus is confounded by the circumstance that the region is not only a huge[9] and undefined geographical entity—a perplexing, changing, contradictory economic and political figment—but a vaguely outlined province in the boundless domain of fable. No wonder that the New York Public Library has long since given up in its subject catalogue the heading "South" to designate a section of the United States. Whoever wishes to talk truthfully about the region had better be asked, "Which South—or whose South do you mean?" Americans—whether Northerners, Southerners, Easterners, or Westerners—are more alike than different, and for the life of them they cannot but sympathize with the foreign critic who in blessed ignorance says that Ezra Pound speaks with a Middle-Western accent because he was born in Idaho—or that a study of the works of William Faulkner clearly shows the South to be a tree that bears only bitter fruit.

1 **Southwestern Book Trails: A Reader's Guide to the Heartlands of New Mexico and Arizona** (Albuquerque, New Mexico [1963]), p. 1.

2 J. Frank Dobie, **Guide to Life and Literature of the Southwest** (Dallas, Texas, 1952), pp. 13-14. Reference is made to Erna Fergusson, **Our Southwest** (New York and London, 1940), Chapter I.

3 "Deep South" is an expression which came into vogue in the 1930's and originally is applied to Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, though other States, like Georgia are sometimes included.

4 **The American Commonwealth** (New York, 1911), II, 562.

5 Median salary of teachers with Class A certificates: $4,301 (with graduate degree: $4,758). Teachers with A certificates or higher: 98.92% of all Negro teachers; 95.27% of all White teachers (**Salaries and Supplemental School Taxes 1961-62,** N. C. Education Association, Department of Research, p. 3.). Teacher supply 1962-63: White 31,275; Negro 12,147. Average salaries for all teachers 1962-63: White Elementary $4,820, White High School $4,962; Negro Elementary $4,998, Negro High School $5,102.

6 **1963 National Library Week: Sixth Annual Report** (New York, 1963), p. 6.

7 I am practically finished compiling a bibliography of published books and articles devoted to the history of the belles-lettres and the theater in the 50 States and the various regions. The items accumulated for my regional lists amply warrant the statement, which, however, does not hold true for discussions of the theater.

8 John M. Bradbury, **Renaissance in the South: A Critical History of the Literature, 1920-1960** (Chapel Hill, N. C. [1963]), pp. 4-5.

9 The distance from the northern extreme of Virginia to the southernmost mainland of Florida is roughly the same as that between Vienna and Crete, London and Rome, Canberra and Mackay, or Tokyo and Okinawa.

Rodney Hall

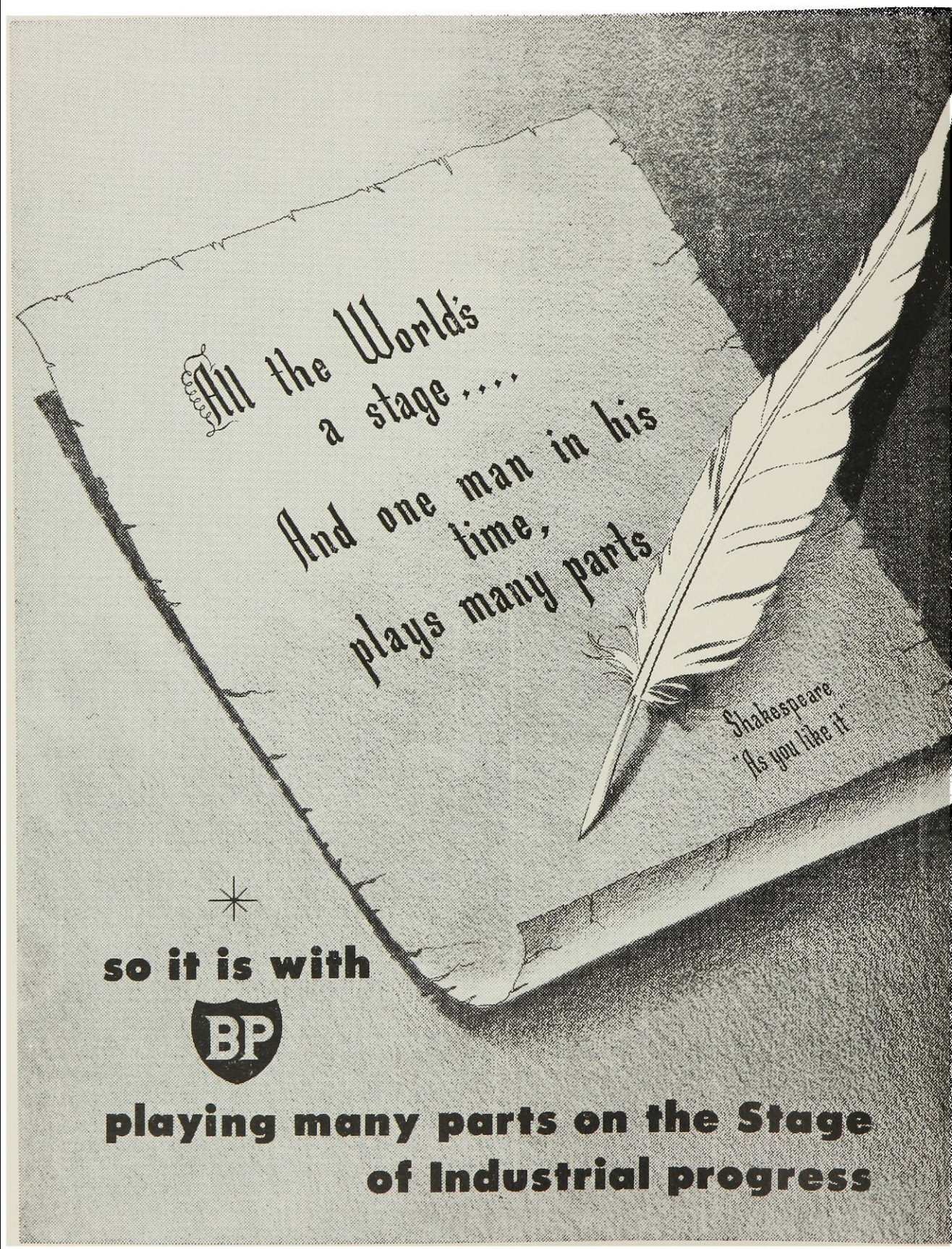
THEATRE IN LONDON

LONDON THEATRES are offering plenty of variety and interest at the moment. But this is nothing unusual, nor are the fluctuations in quality. The National Youth Theatre is presenting *Coriolanus*, Marcel Marceau is here with a fresh repertoire. The critics like them both. *Entertaining Mr. Sloane* is playing just up the road from *A Difference of Opinion.* And the critics like them too. Chekhov's *The Seagull* is on in one part of town, *Camelot* in another. And the critics are delighted. Alas! has it become a myth that critics are hard to please? And how much do their opinions count? *Camelot* is pretty detestable like all musicals, *Entertaining Mr. Sloane* is an unfunny comedy, and *A Difference of Opinion* is about as interesting as boardroom meetings in any firm of the type so sedulously portrayed. On the other hand, Chekhov, Marceau, and WS are beyond reproach. But it is illuminating to note that the only local boy among them has been dead these past few hundred years. And it is local talent, we're told, that is booming at the moment. One regularly hears of this "new wave of brilliant young playwrights". Laurence Harvey recently told B.B.C. audiences that Britain has at last turned the tables on the U.S.A. in fertility, variety and quality of new plays. If this is so, one might profitably pause here to offer up a brief (silent) prayer for the U.S.A.

The strengths and weaknesses of serious theatre in London can be illustrated by reference to three plays: *The Birthday Party* by Harold Pinter at the Aldwych, *Entertaining Mr. Sloane* by Joe Orton at Wyndham's, and *The Shoemaker's Holiday* by Thomas Dekker at the Mermaid. Let's start with the qualities these productions share. It must be said immediately that the standards of acting and direction are very high indeed: technically superb, inventive and vital. Stage design is similarly accomplished. And some mention must be made of the lovely theatres themselves with—blessed provision—their bars.

The set for *The Birthday Party* is a masterpiece of ingenuity; a house interior being placed cornerwise on the apron stage. Action moves through four enclosed areas: the front-door/hallway/staircase; the kitchen with hatch through to the livingroom; the livingroom itself occupying the front stage; and a yard reached through the back-door and adorned with the inevitable dustbins. Incidentally, the dramatic potential of the dustbin seems unending—from Patrick White's dead foetus, to Beckett's half-dead old couple *(endgame).* Though it must be confessed that poor Pinter's dustbins just stand there, utterly ignored throughout the action.

The Birthday Party grew out of a passage in Kafka. Roughly speaking, this text from *The Trial* tells how the narrator was brutally interrogated by unknown officials of an unknown power for an unknown offence (rather typical). From Kafka and John Russell Taylor, Pinter draws the notion that the less exact a menace, and the more vague its motive, the less chance anyone in the audience has of escaping the feeling that this could happen to him. A morsel of a plot! yet in Pinter's hands it gives rise to a drama of personalities, humorous, horrifying. The household routines of the poor in England are shown as ludicrous and sad. The hero's decline from depression through violence to automatism is expertly managed. And yet the menace of the interrogators never quite touches the audience as it's supposed to. For me, the failure stems from Kafka. The theory of unexplained victimization is sound enough; but when the evil powers, in order to preserve their anonymity and their anti-reason, cease to be human or even part of any human agency, terror dwindles to curiosity. As a result, these aren't people like ourselves torturing people like ourselves, they are biological oddities—but are they alive? the chief interrogator has to get his offsider to breathe for him. The trouble is that writers who take Kafka as a model fall into the trap of refusing to identify the "enemy of humanity" their work is built round. They want to make use of an emotional apparatus without having to commit


All the World's
a stage....
And one man in his
time,
plays many parts
Shakespeare
"As you like it"
so it is with
BP
playing many parts on the Stage
of Industrial progress

themselves to any standpoint that can legitimately give rise to it. This is particularly sad in such a man as Pinter, who is a skilful dramatist.

Mr. Orton, with his first big success, takes the process of one stage further, one stage too far. He discounts the element of human suffering. He even assumes that brutality is fundamentally amusing. Thus in his "black comedy" *Entertaining Mr. Sloane* an old man is kicked to death by an amoral young thug. Not out of high spirits—mark you—not in formalized action like Punch and Judy, not even from any sense of the effectiveness of outrage; simply as sadistic bullying, simply as a means of stopping the old fellow telling what he knows, simply to create a situation in the plot where the old man's son and daughter have the thug in their power. The story goes like this: Kath, in her early middle-age, shares a house with Kemp, her father. Her brother Ed is about her own age and lives by himself in a costly apartment, he is a homosexual. Kemp has refused to speak to him ever since, many years before, he found him in bed with a boyfriend. Sloane has turned up, as the curtain rises, and Kath invites him to stay, as a sort of unpaying paying guest. Ed, hearing of this, demands that Sloane should be turned out; then meets him and is attracted by him. Brother and sister each decide to get Mr. Sloane in bed. And he shows he's perfectly willing to oblige either or both. Kemp, however, recognizes him as a murderer at large. Later Sloane kicks Kemp to death to stop him talking. Ed and Kath, who are still in the house, blackmail their guest. They know how he killed their father—he cannot escape from them. They arrange to share his favours alternately, six months each. This closing scene is one of the few really funny parts of the play, for those in a mood to laugh. In the main, the comedy lines are rung-in, they're set-piece jokes of an unpleasant nature: self-conscious vulgarities, obscene innuendoes; genuine smut because forever suggestive rather than openly bawdy.

Such plays pose problems for the actor. How does one interpret an ersatz human being? In Beckett's work there are such extremes of this difficulty that even he himself claims not to know how his lines are to be spoken. Orton isn't insane enough to bring it off as wholeheartedly as Beckett. And in *Entertaining Mr. Sloane* there are plentiful human touches. Yet the realisms distract from, rather than cohere to, the state where they amount to an interplay of characters causing situations and action. His people, while seeming to respond with passion, yet respond superficially. In this production, neither actors nor director appear to know what to make of them. Kath is played as farce, and so emphasizes the element of Vaudeville. Sloane is played straight, as a voluptuary, with ambivalent behaviour made credible by his amorality. Ed is played straight also, except in the last scene when he out-hams Kath. Kemp is superb, the only sympathetic part in the whole play: a stupid, narrow, defenceless, stubborn old man. In being kicked to death, he represents the mainspring of failure in the show. He, as the audience's principal interest—the one person giving rise to real concern—is murdered by an offensive lout, and the outcome is expected to be hailed as funny. Every sensibility of the audience has been flouted and in consequence the final scene falls flat, despite its undeniable qualities as farce.

The Shoemaker's Holiday by Thomas Dekker (born Circa 1570) makes both these other plays look very thin indeed. It has Rabelaisian gusto, in bawdiness, as in verbal extravagance—the very qualities lacking in Pinter's precise dialogue with its tendency to over-simplicity and repetition; and in Orton's sniggering smuttiness. Simon Eyre, Dodger, Cicely Bumtrinket, Firk, Hodge and company romp through fast-moving scenes till the Bottom-like Simon is clothed in Lord Mayoral silk and entertains the King to a Shoemakers' Banquet. Whatever Dekker attempts instantly touches the audience. There are moments of poignant tragedy when the apprentice Ralph returns from the war with only one leg. There are lovers; an enthusiastic morris dance; plenty of singing and drinking; the spy to end all spies; conflict between aristocracy and the merchant class, between both and the glorious shoemakers. The music is played live—a fine effect. For the rest, the high spirits, the loyalty, the personal dignity of these shoemakers give the play a humanism, a modernity even, lacking in *Entertaining Mr. Sloane* and in *The Birthday Party*. Here is the idealized mentality of the unionist. Yet the trade union movement, as one of the great forces in the 20th century makes little impact on current English drama, Wesker and the noteworthy Mortimer aside. Orton's society is as utterly sick and depraved as Dekker's is virile and generous. Some people might claim that this fairly represents the contrast between 16th/17th century England, and England in the 20th century. I don't believe it myself. More likely, a combination of tradition and a compulsive striving for novelty now act as deadweights on the creative imagination.

The public response to these new plays has been varied, Pinter being well attended, Orton not so well. The newspapers have divided: those aligning themselves with Messrs. Littler and Cadbury to demand censorship of the sex and sadism in recent productions, fill the rest of their pages with rape announcements, etc.; and those defend-

ing the new playwrights argue that serious writers have always grappled with the problems that obsess society and trouble the soul. But the Mr. Sloanes of this world neither obsess society nor do they trouble the souls of many. It might well be that Mr. Sloane obsesses Orton, but the play shows no sign of any heart-searching at all, no conflict. As to Sloane's crimes, nobody cares —he's just there to facilitate a plot as shallow as the drawingroom comedies of the 1910's. Orton's play is not a serious work of art in the way Pinter's is.

Plenty of clever apologists here are busy defending English art in all its forms, though what they seem to overlook is that audience response varies in kind from one art form to another; that all sorts of fallacies arise if music, poetry, painting, etc., are lumped under one heading for mere convenience; that a theory which stands good for music might not stand good for poetry, that some airy notion about abstract painting simply will not do when applied to drama. Thus an art is not only valued (a) because it reveals truths about life, (b) because it develops culture, or (c) as an end in itself; but for all these reasons at once. And each art, each work of art, will draw upon such responses in different proportions. Drama, it seems to me, tends most strongly toward the therapeutic. And here lies the clue to a good many of the weaknesses in the new plays showing at the present time. The theatre has a social function. It provides audiences with a sense of participation whilst widening their understanding of the human condition. In this it differs dramatically from formal education, book-learning. Through momentum of action and release, its effects are unlike those of the printed word. A play can increase public tolerance: turn mistrusted, foreign, even execrated, people into human beings with identifiable feelings and motives. It can excite and stimulate, and it can calm: all these things in large company where they have a refreshing effect, rather than in the private of a small dark room where the eventual outward results of such inner enlightenment are likely to be muted by being faced with a different environment. TV operates through four distinct phases—playwright, to audience, to private reaction, to public reception of this private reaction. With the stage play the two last are fused into a single participation in direct public reaction. Of course, this is not a case against TV, just against using what might be good TV material in the theatre. Into this category falls *Entertaining Mr. Sloane.* (To have been able to switch over to another channel would have been the profoundest relief.) The specific importance of the theatre, then, is that it's a public aesthetic experience. So it is disturbing to find that theatres in England, particularly in the provinces, are dwindling. Playwrights are at least partly to blame; people *will* go out to see something that is sufficiently important to them.

What England lacks is a general movement in the theatre embodying a set of values that has some relevance to the overall development of society. People are tired of morbid preoccupation with sickness, of whatever kind. It amounts to this, the theatre must again become socially alive, socially responsible; unless it embodies the dynamic forces in people it cannot expect their support. Unless it becomes part of such forces it is going to shrink further into the obscurity of a possessiveness that becomes isolation, and of sick tastes that are confined to a sexually deprived minority. Let these things follow their own course, by all means, but they ought not to be allowed to direct a nation's public expression.

In Australia there is a tendency to import these enervated values, to regard all else as chip-on-the-shoulder philistinism. Too often mere recitation of snob Art values is sufficient to quash any protest. The fashionable critic, hearing doubts cast on the worth of a piece of nonsense that has been delivered as if some profundity informed its horrific symbolism, will say: "Ah, but what splendid *theatre* it is." or "Yes, but those classically balanced lines!" or more lamely "Of course, the whole is so delicate that it's difficult to define in what way it is good, except that we know intuitively it is . . ." If we weren't so easily embarrassed at having our opinions challenged, Australian drama might be healthier than it is. Nevertheless—though we could do with more of the courage and polish shown by English directors and actors (and with comparable theatres)—we're a good deal better off without their decaying traditions.

John Barnes

AUSTRALIAN LITTLE MAGAZINES

John Tregenza's brief study, *Australian Little Magazines 1923-1954**, is a most valuable piece of research. Based upon an M.A. thesis for the University of Adelaide, it demonstrates the kind of interesting research that is open to students of Australian literature, and has most of the virtues that one would hope to find in such a work. Clear, unpretentious and solid, it is a book for the specialist that can be recommended to the layman as well. Not the least of its value is the bibliography which lists all the periodicals covered in the text and indicates in which libraries they are to be found.

Mr. Tregenza has wisely limited his field of study, beginning with the founding of *Vision* in 1923 and ending (rather arbitrarily, perhaps) with the emergence of *Overland* (carrying on from *The Realist Writer* established two years earlier) in 1954. Within this range he keeps strictly to the "little magazines", ignoring what was happening to the *Bulletin*, and leaving out of account such publications as *The Publicist*, *All About Books* and the various annuals that appeared from time to time. This concentration is necessary, but rather more awareness of the existence and effect of these other publications would have deepened his study. He shows little knowledge of the background of the conventional and popular against which the little magazines tried to gain a hearing. The condition of the *Bulletin*, which had been such a stimulus to writers in the nineties, is of particular relevance to Mr. Tregenza's study; but he makes little attempt to suggest the kind of influence it exercised. He remarks that by the 1920's "the *Bulletin* had very little new to say", and later mentions its "allegedly pro-fascist bias" in the 1930's. But *what* did the *Bulletin* have to say? What kind of writing did it encourage? What was the *Bulletin* "*formula*"? Mr. Tregenza has made use of Vance Palmer's *Louis Esson and the Australian Theatre*, a fascinating source book on the 1920's, without noting the effect of the *Bulletin* on such writers as Esson, Palmer, and Katharine Prichard. Mr. Tregenza's account of the twenties —with which he begins the book—is one of its few weaknesses. He does not seem to know the writing of that time very well, and leaves some unfortunate gaps. That his account gives a feeling of incompleteness and disproportion at some points, however, is more an indication of the absence of previous studies, to which a researcher might turn for a reliable guide, than of the limitations of the researcher himself.

As everyone interested in the subject knows, a student finds little help in the surprising number of books and pamphlets and articles which purport to sketch the course of Australian writing, but which are usually lists of writers to whom, it is asserted, attention must be paid. In time of need one can, of course, refer to H. M. Green's massive compilation in which something is said about everybody; but that work offers little in the way of historical interpretation, which requires a more rigorous notion of value than Green displays. Green's "history" is, in essence, a collection of judgments, conventional in character, on published works. The very inclusiveness which Green set himself as a goal disqualifies him as a literary historian. In his concern to be fair to everyone, he fails to sift the chaff from the grain, and the reader looks in vain for a view of Australian literature as a living whole. There have been some attempts to suggest the lines of significant growth—P. R. Stephenson's erratic "Foundations of Australian Culture" is still a pioneer work—but there is so far no substantial work of this kind.

In a comparatively new literature such as ours, it is hard to establish perspectives. Ultimately, the writing of literary history is a critical activity, for which the literature itself is the field of main study. But the critic, in order to distinguish the pattern of development, needs to be able to see individual works in a meaningful relationship. Here the work of such researchers as Mr. Tregenza can help the critic by documenting aspects of the culture out of which the literature comes and to which it contributes. As he observes: "The little magazines help one to experience the writing of the period as an organic thing and not merely as a collection of volumes by particular writers." This study is a real contribution to an

* John Tregenza, **Australian Little Magazines 1923-1954, Their Role in Forming and Reflecting Literary Trends** (Libraries Board of South Australia); 1964; 30/-.

understanding of our literature as a part of our local civilization.

In Mr. Tregenza's view, the little magazines "illuminate the circumstances under which people have been writing in Australia in the period, particularly the way they have tried to cope with the special problem of cultural isolation." This is a just observation, but the problem of cultural isolation is a rather more complex one than his study assumes. Briefly, it could be said that in its heyday the *Bulletin,* encouraging writers to rely upon their own resources encouraged a notion of self-sufficiency that led to parochialism. The pursuit of Australian-ness inevitably became stultifying, but for some writers like Palmer, who was never closed to outside influences, it still retained its worth. By the end of the period with which Mr. Tregenza deals, it no longer seemed to imply the resistence to outside literature as it had originally. Such ventures as *Vision* in the 1920's were bound to fail because they were a reaction to the nationalist concept of literature rather than a re-vitalizing of it. Mr. Tregenza considers that *Vision* was "a decided step forward in the evolution of Australian poetry", but there isn't much evidence to support him. *Vision* offered an escape from the hackneyed themes of the Great Outback into the precious and unreal. Far from tackling the problem of cultural isolation, *Vision* merely reflected it.

A more mature response can be seen in the thirties, particularly in the magazine, *Manuscripts,* which lasted four years, and carried some interesting commentaries on contemporary European literature. Mr. Tregenza mentions several figures who deserve to be better known, especially Hirsch Münz and Bertram Higgins (who was associated with the English magazine, *The Calendar of Modern Letters,* for some years.) In terms of influence, however, the most important development in these years was the Jindyworabak movement, on which Mr. Tregenza writes very well. Partly inspired by the ideas of P. R. Stephenson, but essentially the creation of Rex Ingamells, this was yet another attempt to find Australia—and another form of escape.

With the war came an abundance of little magazines, falling roughly into three groups: the "realist" or left-wing magazines, of which the longest-lived and most effective was *Australian New Writing;* the *avant-garde,* led by *Angry Penguins;* and *Southerly* and *Meanjin,* both of which aimed at catholicity from the start. Mr. Tregenza treats *Angry Penguins* the most fully, giving perhaps too much emphasis to the Ern Malley affair. Nevertheless, the story was worth telling in detail, and Mr. Tregenza gives an illuminating account of Max Harris, the principal victim at the time. His narrative leaves one in no doubt of the permanent value of *Angry Penguins,* in the fostering of Australian art as well as literature.

He has less to say about *Southerly* and *Meanjin,* and here it seems to me that he fails to recognize the significance of their success in not only staying alive but developing with the years. By the 1950's they were established as part of the literary scene, backed by the Commonwealth Literary Fund, and commanding a diversity of contributors. While *Southerly* has been more purely "literary", and is now—after a period in the doldrums—emerging as a vehicle for the academic study of Australian writers, *Meanjin* has embraced a wider range of interests, and has set out, more consistently than any other magazine, to encourage Australians to look beyond the culture of the local scene. Among the more interesting and significant developments—which Mr. Tregenza does not consider—has been its use of translated material, including work from Asia. It seems that at last the problem of cultural isolation is no longer a problem.

In an Epilogue Mr. Tregenza notes the remarkable growth of literary magazines in recent years, remarking on "the current tendency (whether for good or ill) of most literary journals to have from the beginning, or eventually to obtain financial and/or organizational backing". The issues which this new situation raises are quite different from those discussed in his study. As he points out, the literary magazines are becoming more like the nineteenth century reviews, and with the expansion of universities the trend is bound to continue.

The prospect is an exciting one, although the financial backing that most of the journals receive is not enough to free them from financial crises. One aspect that Mr. Tregenza does not mention, although readers of *Westerly* will not need reminding of it, is the cultural isolation *within* Australia. In the past, with two notable exceptions, literary magazines thrived, if at all, in Melbourne and Sydney. Now all the state capitals, except Brisbane—where *Meanjin* began—have well established literary magazines, all of which aim to reach a national audience.

The opportunities are obvious. What is less obvious is the danger of complacency. The mere publication of a magazine is no guarantee of its quality. Mr. Tregenza's study reveals the vitality and enthusiasm that led editors to embark upon the seemingly hopeless task of publishing magazines with a minority appeal. One hopes that the historian of the future will find at least these qualities in the magazines of the present.

Dorothy Hewett

THE INIMITABLE

Colonial Minstrel, a beautiful little facsimile printed by the Adelaide Libraries Board, with a buff leather cover and gilt title, is a collector's piece at a possible price.

It is mainly a collection of Charles Thatcher's colonial parodies, "forming a complete comic history of the diggings", sold wholesale and retail at Cole's Book Arcade in Bourke Street, Melbourne.

The collection is divided into several sections, as they came off the press in Thatcher's lifetime: Thatcher's Colonial Minstrel by the Inimitable Thatcher, printed 1864, Thatcher's Colonial Songster in two parts and The Victoria Songster, second edition, priced 1/-, containing "new and original colonial songs, together with a choice selection of the most popular songs of the day". printed 1860.

One of the delights of the collection is the interpolated comment before each song . . . "a new original song, as written and sung by Thatcher, with deafening applause, at the "Shamrock"; "an original song, written by Thatcher and sung by him with unbounded applause"; "immense applause" or "tremendous applause"; written by Thatcher and sung by him in the foot-police costume"; "Thatcher's celebrated song, "Petticoat Lane" as sung by him for 275 nights at the Charlie Napier, Ballarat."

Who was the inimitable Thatcher, the colonial minstrel of the "Shamrock" and the "Charlie Napier", the hack poet and music hall singer, the professional ballad hawker of his own broadsides?

Hugh Anderson in his "Goldrush Songster" and "The Colonial Minstrel" has done much to bring Thatcher back from the shadowy figure of the newspaper files.

The lure of the goldrush brought Thatcher, a professional London flautist, to Bendigo in 1853. Gold was hard to find so he went back to his old profession, and began singing in the Bendigo pubs the songs he'd learnt in the annexes to the tap rooms in the London pubs in the late '40's.

He composed his own parodies to well known tunes, and soon gained a reputation as a witty commentator on the life of the diggings. Thatcher's themes were the common ones of the "new chums" troubles, the contrasts between England and Australia the excitement of the new "rushes", the unpopularity of the squatters, the Chinese, the digger at work and play, and his trials and grievances, like the increase in the gold tax, and the iniquitious licencing system. His gibes at the police and the military were always popular.

He was an independent performer at The Shamrock and The Charlie Napier in their heyday. The concert room built at The Shamrock was fabulous; fifty six feet by thirty feet, stuccoed in gilt with moulded panels, piers and fluted pilasters, gilded wreaths and three burnished gold chandeliers. There was no entry fee. The profits came from the sale of drinks, and up in front was Charlie Thatcher singing his songs of the fire brigade, dressed in uniform, to rapturous applause, catcalls and cries for favourite songs. His admirers always wanted him to "sing the programme" which did not endear him to the other artists.

Thatcher's songs reflect the changes in the diggings and are an excellent social barometer. The change to deep level mining in Bendigo brought the sharebroking mania and Thatcher wrote, "The Loss of the Shareholders" to the tune of "Toll for the Brave", beginning "Toll for the bank, the bank that is no more."

He often used a devastating patter in between his verses, for instance in "My Broker".

Old Mother Stiggins that kept a small shanty,
And was fined for grog selling some three years ago,
Has built a nice villa and lives now in plenty,
And votes blue shirt diggers quite vulgar and low.

I remember when her maiden name was Muggins, and how she'd turn out of a morning at about nine . . . open the grog tent with large holes in her stockings and get gloriously lushy . . ."

At the Shamrock they advertised, "Thatcher will sing tonight his crack song for the last time . . . The View Point Chemist . . . also his laughable song (first time) The National System of Education, his new screaming song Why don't you shave?"

But his local travesties were not so popular in some quarters. The police were embarrassed at his caustic, anti-police humour, and comic cuts at authority in general. The memory of Eureka was still a nagging scar. In fact Thatcher was singing his anti-trap, anti military songs in Bendigo while the stockade was raised in Ballarat.

When Bendigo became respectable this new kind of world had no place for a Thatcher. His allusions and comments on the private lives of its citizens brought libel suits, fights, threats, a horsewhipping and even a jail sentence.

There was scandal when he ran off with Madame Vitelli, the wife of an Italian musician, but they eventually returned to sing duets together in Bendigo, under new management.

But the goldrushes were no more, and Thatcher was a goldrush singer. He followed the rushes to New Zealand, and became as popular there as he had been in Bendigo and Ballarat. In 1866 he came back to Victoria, on the old circuit, with his one-man show, "Life on the Goldfields" packing them in but already he was something of an anachronism. The show revived all the past glories of the diggings in a kind of popular history in song.

In 1870 he was still barnstorming in New Zealand, sometimes called "a travelling mountebank", eventually ending his life as an entertainer with a shower of rotten eggs and bad apples on his final night in Oamaru. He died in Shanghai in 1878 of cholera, his profession listed as "an importer of curios".

Thatcher at his best was very close to folksong. His links with the street ballad and the early Australian ballad can be seen quite clearly in the most successful of his parodies. Somehow their topicality doesn't make them smell of lavender and old musk. They are far too lively and impudent for that. Sometimes listening to the local ballad singers one might wish that the Inimitable might stroll among us one of these nights, without benefit of guitar, and "sing the programme . . . "The Lady of the Lost Swan" with chorus "Fill 'er in, Fill 'er in" would be a real "screaming song" in Perth these days.

D. R. Scott

TRAFFIC IN TOWNS

In 1960 the British Minister of Transport appointed Mr. (now Professor) Colin D. Buchanan, who was to collect his own team of colleagues, to examine the long-term development of motor traffic in urban areas and its likely effects on the cities of Britain. Buchanan's team came to be known as the Working Group within the Ministry. Some time later the Minister appointed a Steering Group, drawn from outside the Ministry and chaired by Sir Geoffrey Crowther. The functions of this Group were to assist the Working Group in all possible ways, to give the Minister an opinion of its work, and to go rather further in drawing conclusions for public policy than was thought appropriate for a Working Group functioning within a Government Department. Two reports were subsequently produced, the main 'Buchanan Report' giving the findings of the Working Group and a brief report containing the comments and policy conclusions of the Steering Group. Both reports were published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office in 1963, in a handsomely produced and lavishly illustrated single volume entitled *Traffic in Towns** and priced at fifty shillings sterling.

Clearly, a volume at this price was unlikely to be widely purchased by the man in the street; yet, if one lesson emerges more clearly than any other from the Report it is that the man in the street, be he motorist or pedestrian, must not only understand the nature of the urban transport problem but, having understood it, must contribute to its solution. The shortened edition of the Buchanan Report, published as a Penguin Special, will perform a valuable function in bringing the principal findings within the reach of a much wider public. It is to be hoped that the title will not deter non-motorists from reading the Report, for it is the imminence of their motorization in large numbers that is the root of a difficult, extremely urgent and by no means exclusively British problem.

* **Traffic in Towns:** The Specially Shortened Edition of the Buchanan Report, Penguin Books Let., Hormondsworth, 1964. 17/6d.

The Penguin edition under review is a condensation of the Working Group's Report 'which has been approved by Professor Buchanan and which omits none of the main arguments or conclusions of the report', together with a preface by Sir Geoffrey Crowther giving the gist of the Report of the Steering Group. Condensation has been effected skilfully by shortening sentences and omitting some of the less essential material; the result is a text which still flows freely and yet makes an impact at least as strong as that of the original. Some of the copious maps, diagrams and halftone plates of the original have necessarily been omitted, but all those essential to the understanding and illustration of the Report are included; this presentation of only the most essential illustrative material tends to strengthen the Report's impact by showing the problem in stark simplicity. The good quality paper of the Penguin edition has allowed clear reproduction of halftone plates but the bright colours of the original maps and diagrams have been replaced by too closely graded shades of buff, khaki and grey. These pale shades are in some cases overprinted on detailed base maps, resulting in overcrowding; the legend on some maps has to be sought for diligently amongst a mass of background detail. Despite these irritations, the book remains a high standard and inexpensive production within the Penguin format.

The Working Group's terms of reference were 'to study the long-term development of roads and traffic in urban areas and their influence on the urban environment'. It was not asked to produce proposals for any specific place; neither was it required to produce any kind of national road plan. What it in fact examined was the volume of the likely future increase in traffic and the nature and magnitude of the measures that would be needed to cope with it. What it found was that the number of motor vehicles in Britain is likely to increase with great rapidity and that, unless something is done, '. . . either the utility of vehicles in towns will decline rapidly, or the

pleasantness and safety of surroundings will deteriorate catastrophically—in all probability both will happen together'. In regarding the motor car as one of their most treasured possessions or dearest ambitions, the British are apparently 'nourishing a monster of great potential destructiveness' that is giving rise to an extraordinary problem involving nothing less than 'a threat to the whole familiar physical form of towns'.

This extraordinary problem facing Britain stems from a growing population that is increasing in affluence. Most people wish to own a car, and the means to do so is about to become available to a large part of the British population. It is estimated that, as a result, there will be in forty-six years' time four times as many vehicles in Britain as there are today. This is formidable enough, but the urgency of the problem is brought home by the estimate that almost half this increase will occur within the next ten years. Already the number of vehicles is causing problems: urban congestion cost the nation some £250 million in 1961; there were 347,551 road casualties in 1960, 73 per cent of them in urban areas; deterioration of the urban environment has resulted from danger, anxiety, noise, fumes, the space required by moving and stationary vehicles, the disintegrating effects of busy routeways, and the visual intrusion into otherwise aesthetically satisfying townscapes of large-scale highway engineering works, of all the paraphernalia deemed necessary to help traffic flow and, of course, of the vehicles themselves, cluttering up every square yard of available space.

The motor vehicle has also had an effect on the general form of towns; its use has both encouraged and enabled urban dispersal—in some cases with disastrous results. As the Report points out, there are considerable economic and social advantages in both urban and national compactness and, in any case, Britain is so small that dispersal would mean virtual obliteration of the countryside. The Working Group considers that there is no prospective substitute for the motor vehicle, that people expect to be able to use it (Crowther adding that when the majority of the population are motorists the majority of the voters are also motorists), and that it is in conflict with the present form of towns. The bulk of the Report explores the consequences of this situation, for existing British town forms rather than for prospective new towns.

In a brief discussion of the Working Group's theoretical approach the importance is stressed of understanding and assessing the (pedestrian and vehicular) traffic-generating potential of various parts of the urban landscape and of integrating the transport net work with them. Traffic is a consequence of the interdependence of various activities, most of which in an urban area are carried on in buildings. To be efficient the transport network must permit free flow between functionally related areas (which may be individual buildings, small groups of buildings, or large districts). It must also permit adequate access to the buildings constituting such areas without, however, causing deterioration of 'environment', the latter term being employed in a narrower sense than usual to denote only the effects of motor traffic upon the surroundings. Acceptance of these requirements leads logically to a design principle identical with that used for buildings: roads (urban 'corridors') must serve, but not inject unnecessary traffic into or through, environmental areas (urban 'rooms'). Two points not made explicit in the Report follow from this principle. The traffic-generating potential of an urban 'room' depends largely upon the number of people using it, but the size of the 'room' depends also upon the intensity of its use, that is, upon the number of persons per acre. Despite the Report's criticism of disproportionately large highway works, if these people travel by car it will be necessary to accept that an area of modest, intensively used buildings will require to be served by roadworks that are ridiculously large by present standards of balance and proportion. The second point rather glossed over is that construction of a network of urban 'corridors' serving environmental areas is bound to crystallize those areas (and the functions associated with them) within their present limits for a considerable period of time. If horizontal expansion of an environmental area is possible, other means will be found to accommodate greater activity; if this causes additional traffic concentration, the wheel has turned full circle. The full implication, that once the roads to serve an environmental area are constructed the form of the town and the nature of its environmental areas are determined for a very long time is not explicitly stated and is presumably regarded as unavoidable. The decision to relace an intangible zone boundary with an expensive roadway cannot be taken lightly. Although the Report warns that motorists will have to accept increasing discipline, it does not warn that entire towns will have to do likewise.

Practical studies were made of four towns in order to ascertain the effects of a build-up of vehicles and the kind and scale of measures needed to deal with the resulting situation. Distinctive environmental areas were delineated and a network of primary, district and local distributors devised to serve them. Partly because of the

paucity of basic data, these studies were academic methodological exercises only and were not intended to yield specific planning proposals. Their findings are nevertheless of great interest. In the case of a small town (Newbury, Berks., population 37,000) it is concluded that it is physically possible to provide for the likely maximum vehicle usage but 'it will require drastic and expensive measures on a scale hitherto unexpected for a town of this size'. The alternative is to curtail the usage of vehicles but, even without such curtailment, some form of (probably uneconomic) public transport will be necessary if part of the population is not to be immobilized. From the study of a large town (Leeds, population 511,000) the following conclusions emerge: that even in a complex city the problems of vehicular movement are susceptible to analysis and the necessary characteristics of a network can be evaluated; that accommodation of the full potential vehicle usage is practically impossible and, even if journeys to work are made by public transport, the increase in other types of journey will necessitate difficult and costly measures; and that substantial redevelopment of the central area will be necessary in order to obtain satisfactory accessibility and good environment.

Historic towns create particular problems. In the case of Norwich (population 160,000) it is concluded that areas of historic and architectural interest can be successfully maintained only if a reduced standard of accessibility is accepted, including a strict discipline of vehicular movement. The fourth study examines a city block in west central London in order to secure an insight into the problems of a very large city. Three possibilities are explored: complete redevelopment of the block, staged partial redevelopment, and minimum redevelopment. Even with complete redevelopment there would be a strict limit, well below the potential maximum, to the amount of traffic that could be accommodated principally because of the difficulty of providing a primary network adequate to serve the study block and all adjoining blocks. Furthermore, complete redevelopment would require an intricate multi-level design that would revolutionise questions of land ownership and development procedure and result in a radically new urban form. Staged partial redevelopment would still require the creation of a 'new ground' level in order to separate pedestrians and vehicles and would reduce still further the proportion of private cars that could be accommodated. Minimum redevelopment (in fact involving considerable redevelopment) would permit scarcely any use of private cars for work and shopping journeys and would soon prove inadequate for the 'essential' traffic generated.

The Buchanan Report presents Britain with the apparently obvious course of cutting its coat to suit its cloth; if society elects to own and use motor vehicles it must be prepared to meet the cost of works on a matching scale. Even so, the larger the city the less freedom will the public have to use its vehicles as it wishes—an awkward fiscal problem if, as Crowther suggests, its vehicles will be a useful source of revenue to pay the requisite works.

Perhaps the most important conclusion of the Report is that the measures discussed will operate—were indeed designed to operate—without destruction of the most prized attributes of urban life. The measures have been devised to serve primarily, not the motor vehicle, but the town; the 'monster' has been allowed some play but it has not been given full rein. Where its conflict with the town is greatest, in the high density centres of large cities, the vehicle has, in one sense, made the greatest impact by forcing a recognition of the need to integrate the design of buildings and roads, to reconcile the needs of town and vehicle; yet it is here also that the smallest proportion of private vehicles will gain admittance.

Traffic in Towns is a bold, yet disciplined, evaluation of a major social problem. It should be compulsory reading for all who care for the future of the urban way of life and for all who care for the future of the motor vehicle; it should be high on the 'recommended' list for all who enjoy the calm development of a well-reasoned argument.

LETTER

Now that you are living
In another town,
Who lies down beside you
After dark comes down?

Does someone stroke your hair?
Is there a voice that sings?
And many times I wonder,
Who comes and tells you things?

It rains now every night:
There is not much to say.
I try to keep your house
Till I can move away.

CONSTANCE SCHEERER

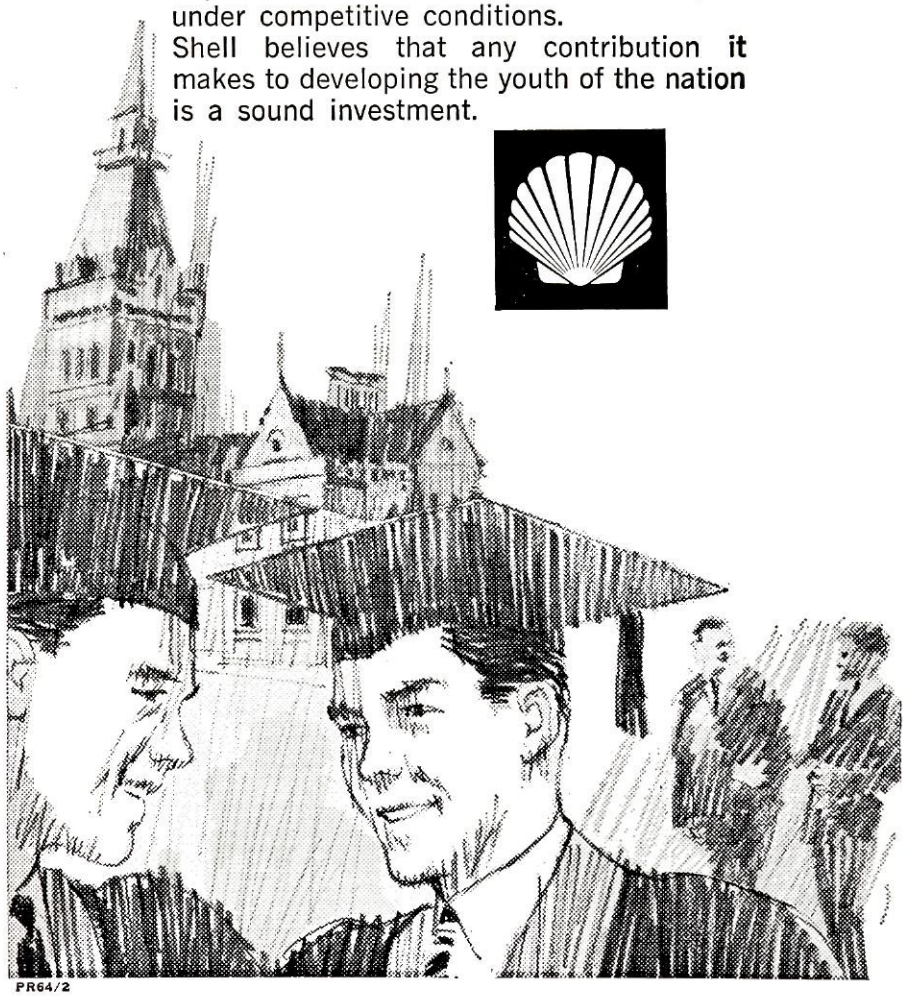
ACCENT ON YOUTH!

Australia's young people, on whom the nation's future depends, are distinguishing themselves in many important spheres — and Shell is helping many of them to give their best performances.

At academic levels, Shell scholarships and bursaries give tangible encouragement to students and graduates. Cultural pursuits are encouraged by awards such as the £1,000 Shell Aria at the Canberra National Eisteddfod.

In some sports, special coaching clinics sponsored by Shell, teach young players the rudiments and finer points of the game — in others, promising youngsters receive opportunities, also provided by Shell, to improve their standards and techniques under competitive conditions.

Shell believes that any contribution it makes to developing the youth of the nation is a sound investment.



PR64/2

JOHN KEATS
Bronze cast from a life mask

. . . . . *a heap*
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

from THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

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