WESTERLY
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Photo on p. 32 courtesy Ted Mayman and West Australian Newspapers,
The Golden Mile in its days of full production.
DONNA DEVINE

Twenty Dollars a Week
and All You Can Eat

Let me tell you this, if you can hear me now.
It is no small thing, nothing to shame your proud heart to know that when I press
the button, wait for the rumblings and clank of the automatic garbage disposal, I
remember you.

Eyes tightly shut, I hear again the old rusty truck bearing down on us, bumping
and bouncing over the pitted gravel road that was the main street, and you, proud
on the running board, hanging on one-handed, beaming, holding out your good
arm brown and benevolent, jolting past us, drawing hallooes and shouts and we
followed you, running until the truck lurched around the corner and out of our
sight.

(Oh what a long way we have come to be still so empty.
The old men are dead and the children gone. Cobwebs grow on tired beams in
crumbling forgotten cabins and somewhere along the way we found our souls too
heavy and left them by the road.)

Old Mike Jocko, spastic half-breed, lived alone there all the years of his life
that we knew him, wintering on Michipicoten where the churning falls pounded
into an icy harbour. He chopped wood with a semi-useless left arm tucked into the
front of his greasy woollen jacket, but he prowled the late night streets in fringed
brown buckskin and heavy lined moccasins, brightly beaded and stitched; the old
leathery hands had lost no skill through age or disease, and he wore a knife at
his hip.

Huddled beside lamp-posts, hopping from foot to tingling foot in the autumn
dampness, we waited for him to lope down the narrow grey moonlit pavement, his
nutbrown ancient face creased in a grin. Self-appointed watchman, scouting the
brief town from end to end, who could begrudge him an occasional mouthful of
whiskey to ward off the cold? We smelled the evidence often enough but never in
manner or speech did he betray his intimate relationship with the bottle.

(We are most of us gone now from the place where you knew us. Our own
private cigar-store Indian, we walked around you, lived beside you, drew our
mirth from your own good nature and never reached out to touch, find if you
were wooden or flesh. You were, in yourself, insignificant. But why is it that in
remembering you, like the re-running of old film, the mechanism whirrs and clicks,
stuck at your frame?)
Not content to live on a weekly welfare cheque, he was a man of dignity and always had worthy employment. In autumn, guiding wealthy tourists through his beloved forest country, he pointedly ignored their high-powered telescopic rifles, mobile freezing units and carefully worked out strategy. He would squat down haughtily in the place he had selected and state simply: “We wait here. Goddam moose no come tomorrow next day, we go someplace else.” And once, in a particularly dense section of woods far from the camp, a florid-faced American businessman with too much money and too little respect asked Mike querulously: “Hey you—whaddya do when you get lost?” To which old Mike replied, with lofty disdain: “Me go home.”

But his summer job was our favourite. He had permanent seasonal employment with the town council, and whenever we saw him jerking and hustling across the street into the council yard we rushed to surround him, crying in unison: “Whatcha doing this summer, Mike?” Twinkling, warming to the game, he would answer, his left arm bumping and twitching, anticipating: “Ride’em garbage truck this summer!” “Oh yeah,” we shrieked, nudging one another, crowding into him, “What’s the pay like, Mike?” He would throw back his head, winking at us: “Twen’ny dollars a week and all you can eat!”

Hardly able to finish before he began to chortle and heave, toothless, rheumy-eyed, convulsed in wheezy laughter, he would stretch out his good hand to touch us, to share the joke, an arm here, a shoulder there, happy tears streaming down the ridged glorious gullies of his face.

(Where are they now, those children who peopled your old age? Did you take our mocking and translate it into love to warm you through the silent long winters when we forgot about you? We never saw you sit in your small wooden cabin surrounded by books we never knew you had, never knew you could read, until the day in mid-winter two schoolboys clambered up on the rotted old wood-box outside your window. Peering in, hoping to startle you, they were themselves stunned to see you lying on the worn linoleum where you had fallen, a bullet through your head, the rifle beside you.

And books. Books on the table beside a stale loaf of bread. Books in cardboard boxes and piled in corners. Ancient school texts and religious pamphlets, musty encyclopaedias and dated novels. When we struggled with Latin passages and French verbs snug in our comfortable centrally heated houses, where was your mind, Mike Jocko? When we rushed to finish homework and met outside the restaurant, giggleing, stomping galoshed feet on the loose board steps, peeling off chunks of scratchy black tarpaper from the outside walls with icy-numb fingers, gloves stashed carelessly into pockets. Inside, the jukebox flashed and beckoned while the older girls flirted, self-conscious in pointed falsies and bright lipstick, colourful nylon scarves tied around their curlers.

Did you ever want us then?)

Later, we would file nervously through the small sad rooms, avoiding one another’s eyes, seeing where you ate and slept. Furniture chipped and unsteady, dust on walls and floor, one brown-stained enamel cup in the kitchen and all your books staring back at us, kindling the beginnings of guilt.

“Jeez, I never even knew he could read . . . . where did he get all the books for Godssake.”
"I dunno. How the hell would I know," someone would answer irritably, but with a tremor in his voice that made us turn away from him.

I also can read. Latin and French and history, religion and science. And I am now what you were.

Five children tumble and spill from all the curtained, carpeted rooms of this house. They tell jokes and talk at me, wait for the conditioned response. I am a boat. I ferry restless young over waters still and treacherous, drift according to their whims and childish directings. They follow changes of the moon, but from where will I take my bearings?

Drinking interminable cups of tea with plastic women, waved and mascaraed, juggling flippancies with suave men, smooth-skinned and confidently Caucasian, I dare sometimes to look through those tight faces. Crouched inside my head, not hearing or believing the things I say, I watch for a brown old man, silver-haired in buckskin and beaded moccasins. I wait for him. I watch.

I must be a masochist. What I want to know is this. Did you ever try to speak and we didn't hear you? Mike Jocko, what did you do with the things you learned?

I take the film, study every square as it passes through my mind, straining to see your face. I study the smile, the black ageless eyes that witnessed countless dawns and sunsets as your people snuffed out like candles in the wind of change. I look for a clue, the briefest change of expression betraying your loneliness. "A good man for an Indian," our parents said benevolently about you. But they didn't go to the funeral.

To think of you with those books, alone in your kitchen while the snow piled steadily higher against the window, covering the glass. You at the rough-hewn table, in old cardigans, handmended, keeping your left arm still, tightly pressed against your thin chest, looking at those books all the months of winter and with no one to talk to.

We grew up and departed the town. Brashly confident we left childhood and old Mike behind and buried with equal ease. Now we would recall both. Not to relive, but to sift through the ashes for a clue to the mystery we may have overlooked. I cut and edit and splice. Suspecting that in the old Indian there was a key but it was necessary that we ask, it could not be so casually given.

If ... if . . . if . . . . I had said this or done that, Lord how we are haunted by things undone, unspoken; filling silences with trivia, we take golden moments and colour them brass.

Now, so much later, I should be happy to remember you smiling. My kitchen is shiny and new. In this large mechanical house I search through my mental photographs of you, all of them laughing, and I think I should be content here, with five others who depend on my integrity and I see you on that cold cracked linoleum surrounded by books.

I would sit me down slowly on this floor, and know that knowing brings little peace. Our freedom is surely measured by the things that we don't understand.

Forgive us, old hunter, old friend.
I lean heavily on the door-frame, pressing a wet cheek against the wall.
ERI C B E A C H

A Jingle to Indooroopilly

not to get bogged in th wet
     north of alice
choose to fly to honolulu
that's you
     as for me
I'm soaked through
     (thin-skinned)
I live under th rain
     th bourgeois in trains
     close their umbrella
an elephant's foot
     appears in th hallway
more reason to be there
than me
     (I've no money)
who support
     one th other
I fidget
     a poet's some sort of mechanic
hide my bitten fingernails
     in my coat pocket
while this public school
accent
     (th good doctor)
     "once, old boy, a communist"
     drones on
& his wife sits like someone
     who always had somethin'
     to inherit
& th aged daughter
     (calls her mother "lizard")
     (her father "loathe")
tries to sweep up
     th remains of our romance
     with a smile
as fixed as th mantel-piece
     a stage
     for porcelain dancers
& as for th daughter
     she makes no amends
     we have to leave
& that night she cries
     "we're not lovers"
     "we're not friends"
stunned?
    I'm smashed to smithereens
    how can I fail
to see what she means?
    then she says she's sorry
& keeps me awake all night
    when my play's due to open
but I'm ruined for opening night
    then she cops this phantom pregnancy
all my money gone
    on th flight down to sydney
& no abortion
it's me that's scraped clean
    I begin to cry for no reason
in which I dream horrors
    she says yes
"can't we pick up th pieces?"
    she does test me
my eyes drip
    my shoulders grow up round my ears
not tears
    my last night in that house
she screws my brother
    in th next room
    noisily
DONALD MOORE

Trial Balance

He stands proud over polish salami
schinken and blutwurst sausages and ham
dolcelatte and olives in the delicatessen
behind the scales bought by instalments
in the shop that belongs to the bank not him;

because he thought what do taxes matter
if he works for mum and the boys and him
instead of the comrades and proletarian congress.
On Sunday when his sons go down to the surf
he mows the mortgaged yard and mends the financed car.

Now they say he must join the shopkeepers union
buy through a consortium to contain rising costs
ally with the ratepayers resisting the planners
who want his yard to widen the road
spare from his savings to service the suffering.

Against this life balance in his ledgers
the barbed wire the bullets.
FAY ZWICKY

Acceptance

4 June 1974

The Editor
*Lumb Swamp Zeitgeist*
P.O. Box 2,
Lumb Swamp, Sheepworthy,
Noncs.

Dear Sir,

I'm sorry you xxx xx xxx were unable to find a use for my story, *Nadir or Self-Portrait in a Balloon Basket* even though it has been much admired by several literary friends (including a regular contributor to your journal). I cannot agree that the hero's repeated anecdotes during descent about Mao-Tse-Tung and the Queen of Denmark amount to no more than historical gossip, to quote you, "allowing what tension there is to ebb away". On the contrary, all who have read the story seem to agree that the tension teaches the very height of erotic republican fantasy. At your suggestion I will, however, remove the barnacle-scraping episode which could, I suppose, be interpreted as in dubious taste although many found it hilarious, especially Ottoline Trench. I would ask you to reconsider it now that the offending section has been removed.

I am enclosing for your consideration a recent poem of mine. I am told on good authority that it has something to say.

Weather Report

A drop of
Worse
Need of
Mack.
Mongolian yak-shaped
Cumulus breeding
Storms gales.
Crystal-gazing it will
Be white from
These days onwards
White
White
White
White
White
White
Grey
Black
Black

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Chilling sprinkle dwindle
Vex vacillate vaporize
Vacate muggy clouds pointing
Accumulation of outgrowths.
Natural whispers of
Immortality whiten
Doorsteps sibilant.

It is on
the cards there will be
no real
warmth
Here hope
shall come
From influence
of scattered hybrid
wind
Ostensibly. Take
wet mack and
smack new
blue
sky.
Blue-blooded
bird
breaks wind to windward
s-m-a-a-a-a-a-a-k ! ! !

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely

Warren Lamb

P.S. I would remind you that I am a friend of Ottoline Trench.
17 July 1974

The Editor
Lumb Swamp Zietgiest
Lumb Swamp, Sheepworthy, Nones.

Dear Frederick,

I think we’ve been corresponding long enough for me to call you by your first name. I don’t want to put undue pressure on you. I know how busy editors are these days. Every Tom Dick and Harry seems to be writing poetry and, what’s more, getting published. However, as my poem, Weather Report, was sent more than six months ago, I just wanted to be sure that it arrived safely. The post is so unreliable and I don’t like to think of one of my favourite children floating in some limbo alone and unwelcomed. I hope you will understand my concern as I’ve just had a nibble from a journal of international repute and would not like to disappoint the editor.

While I think of it, that story ought to be publishable with the removal of the barnacles—the elusive plot line has been commented on favourably by several people since I sent it back to you. Basil Hyde especially asks me to pass on his best wishes. He met you at the Write-In in March of last year. That must have been quite a party!

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours as ever
Warren Lamb

P.S. Our mutual friend Mrs Trench has been down with the ’flu but continues to speak of you with great warmth.

5 July 1975

The Editor
Lumb Swamp Zxxietgiest
Lumb Swamp, Sheepworthy
Nones.

Dear Mr Wiper,

I really thought we knew each other well enough though surface mail does, I grant, take a long time. However, since you insist on the formalities . . .

We don’t stand on ceremony in this country. Every man is as good as his neighbour be he an editor or a garbage collector. It’s one of those more tiresome middle-class shibboleths I don’t personally hold with but I can’t vouch for the reaction of others. I regret misspelling the name of your journal but German is, after all, not the mother tongue (Zietgeist is, I presume, a German word?) and we all know what they did to our boys don’t we! But I didn’t intend to pursue the subject at any length. You may call me Warren, by the way. I never much cared for the name Lamb (to the slaughter and all that, ha, ha) but one takes what one gets in this sad old world of ours, n’est-ce pas? By the way, Basil swears he met you at that conference and says you’ll know immediately who he is if I mention Metricup, one of our quainter indigenous place-names.
I am relieved to know that Weather Report arrived safely. You've obviously had ample time to consider its merits and would seem to be giving it your usual scrupulous editorial attention. I'm sorry you don't like the title. I thought it singularly apt myself but you have my permission to change it to "McLeod" which, come to think of it, makes for a challenging pun. Or perhaps "Poem for a Wet Day" would do—one does want to bring all the reader's sensibilities into play and the former may be more appropriate for this purpose. I would like to know as soon as possible if you intend using it as the editor of that American journal is putting in the boots. Or is it putting on the screws? Both equally valid metaphors, don't you think? Especially if one happens to like boots with one's screws, eh?

I'm not sure what you mean by making it "tighter". It simply wouldn't work in the "projective verse" mould if I were to cut anything out. I could, at a pinch, remove one of the "whites". Or would it, do you suppose, improve the concreteness by excising instead one of the "blacks"? Don't want to be accused of racial discrimination. Not these days, anyway. As a long-standing enemy of triviality I feel my integrity is at stake over the suggested comma between "storms" and "gales". Since each is related to the other in kind, if not in intensity, I feel obliged to keep the flow of the line which would, you must admit, be severely disrupted by the admission of pedestrian punctuation. Strange that you should pick on that line actually. It's the very line my poet friends most liked when I took part in a reading at the local Poetry Society meeting last Tuesday. Even young Philip McSavage who has published in quite a few avant garde journals was moved to comment on its "meaningful laconicism". I still treasure the phrase. I might add that he has just been commended in a competition adjudicated by Ted Hughes who spoke favourably of his capacity for "going over the edge". Not the easiest of effects to achieve at a time when everyone is clinging so desperately to cautious rationality. My wife, by the way, has just been put under psychiatric observation again. She had a bad turn at that reading and took everyone by surprise. I had no idea poetry could have such potent effects although I have always believed in taking it very seriously. Medicine and law demand a professional approach and I see no difference between their practice and that of poetry. One has a calling and one must follow. I am not being neglected during my wife's absence, however, for my admirable mother-in-law has picked up the reins and is keeping house for me. She makes an excellent turnover. But I digress—if I may return to the poem for a moment—I don't feel the adjective "wet" attached to "mack" overstates the case. Certainly moisture is in the air but one can't be too explicit for today's illiterates. But change the title by all means.

I was somewhat disappointed with the story you featured in your last issue. A dodgy proposition as bedside reading—I was awake all night. I mean, that the husband and mother-in-law drive the young wife insane is reasonable enough but that she should spend at least half the story in a catatonic stupor stretches credibility too far. This kind of conjugal insensitivity is a thing of the past and I do feel your journal owes it to its readers to keep abreast of the times (despite the degree of subjectivity which must infect colour editorial preference). And isn't there something a shade presumptuous in linking the bulk of mankind with all this human driftwood? Was all that matted hair really necessary? I know the writer is young, but I don't think the deviant sex helps the theme much. Although, given the wife's great fear of pregnancy, surely le vice américain would have been more appropriate than bondage? With such sophisticated characters, it seems that lines 205-206: 'His wife blinked in confusion asking "Can he really do that?"' are singularly beside the point. While I'm about it, I have decided to have another look at Nadir—perhaps the removal of the barnacles does make it less of a grim social exposé and more of a manual for voyeurs as you suggest but I'll need to think about it. Despite your reservation, I feel that, au fond, you're basically sympa-
thetic. The criminal is, by the way, an unknown person of about 52. I thought I had made this fairly clear even though he never actually appears. The hero hints at his presence shortly before touch-down (see 11.652-712).

Thanking you in anticipation and kindest regards.

Your
Warren

P.S. Basil asks to be remembered to you and tells me to recommend the Jungfrau Riesling, preferably '63 vintage. He keeps in touch with that young poetess from Metricup, W.A. and says you made quite a hit there! Thought you might like to know.

W.

The Editor 18 July 1975
Lumb Swamp Z.G.
Lumb Swamp, Sheepworthy,
Noncs.

Dear Mr Wiper,

How considerate of you to use air-mail postage but don't get snarky with me. I'm afraid the reference to wolf's clothing escapes me. Far from meddling in your affairs, I'm merely showing a friendly interest in the doings of a much-admired colleague. My wife is steadily improving in the capable hands of Dr Schock—I would not hesitate to recommend him to anyone and thank you for your considerate enquiry. I hope yours is equally well. Basil tells me she takes a keen interest in the journal which must be of inestimable value to you, especially since I read last week in Time of her father's sudden death in Rio. There must be quite a packet in tin-mining these days. I'm so glad you've come to realize the poem has possibilities. After thinking over your suggestions, I've enclosed Nadir and have decided to retain the barnacles after all. The issue of taste has become less crucial at this stage.

With warmest wishes.

Your friend
Warren

1 August 1975

Dear Fred,

I can't tell you how grateful I am for all your help, encouragement and for that exceedingly generous cheque. What a lift I got from seeing both the story and the poem in print at long last! I knew you were fundamentally sympathetic—it just takes a bit of time to adjust to another point of view, doesn't it? I suppose we've all been in that boat at one time or another. For now, I send my best wishes for the success of the new issue. I've already managed to flog at least 20 copies to my closest friends who continue to take a keen interest in my poetic career. Ottie feels there is also a great future in my stories and suggests that I send you another immediately while the iron is, as they say, hot. I enclose, together with a self-addressed envelope (just in case you should be unable to use it,) . . .

WESTERLY, No. 2, JUNE, 1977
The River of Love

Debo de hablar del suelo que oscurecen las piedras,  
del río que durando se destruye...  
I must speak of the silt that darkens the stones,  
of the river that enduring destroys itself...  

Pablo Neruda

Summer in the mountains, and this spring  
Bubbling at our ankles. No one had warned us.  
One step downwards, and we were running  
For a thousand miles. All we had to do was follow,  
Wind through endless discovery,  
Modest amongst moss by soft banks above the snowline,  
Foaming over rattling stones to drift in pools  
Deeper than sunrays, the first hint of danger  
In the cold depths and the slimy knee of a snag.

Then the full flow, drought-defying confidence  
Of channels beyond the shallows, and the constant presence  
Of noble trees, the jests of cockatoos,  
The gravity of ibis.

Your skin was the colour of the naked river,  
The reeds stirred secrets in your hair.  
Swimming from the shallows we never knew  
The depths we drifted over, happy and fearful  
To feel that they were there.

But after months, years, a thousand miles,  
I woke one morning to find that I had lost you,  
Lost the river, lost the guiding flow  
In a wilderness of reedy swamps, promiscuous shallows,  
No trees, the only noise the sucking feet of cattle,  
Mosquitoes and mud, aimless trivia of slime,  
And further out into the lake, amongst the bullrushes,  
The lolling head of a drowned duck-shooter  
Dragged down by his huge waders  
Filled with water, yabbies munching his thighs.

I lost you, lost the river

I have gone ahead, to wait by the sea,  
By the murderous mouth where the squeezed-up river  
Hoses itself out of the lake like a sow pissing,  
Running a brown stain into the pure blue sea  
That thrashes it into whirlpools and surfslides
Before devouring it utterly
And turning all that once-sweet water into salt.

Beloved, could we not have turned upstream in time?

No, I will wait, I will find you again.
The river was our thousand drifting miles of discovery.
Never turn back, the movement is all the other way.

Now we must suffer rebirth from the terrible sea.
We were of the river, but our lungs drew air.
We endured, we were never destroyed.
The Bargainer

Your body hardly bends when you walk, hands delicate and decorous as your neat St Catherines voice, properly watered, trimmed at the edges.

Seeing you in that little green dress with your plaited hair, I imagine you twenty years ago —hair bunched and bands on your teeth making you scared to smile.

Was that when you learnt to use your eyes as money? —small black agents, bulging with promises, fluent and dishonest in battle with the large, hard-bargaining world.
GARRY DISHER

Disguises

It's a pity, but I'm too much of a shock for most people to take. Although people now seem to be more inured to anything that is distasteful, I just can't go out very often. If it were only my leg it wouldn't be too bad; the world is full of funny legs. But funny faces can't be disguised in gabardine or denim or nylon. I love children but they are the worst offenders. Their mouths open, their eyes widen, they point and gasp and ask questions and comment in loud innocent voices. Their scurrying, bland, collars-up parents don't dare look. They are so afraid, so without compassion, so middle class. Only their children are capable of unaffected and genuine sorrow. The occasional young man or woman will look directly at me, their eyes will flicker with pity or curiosity, but they keep on looking sometimes, just to show how liberated they are; how unintimidated. I hate that.

I was born with my set of horrors, unlike the poor bloody fools who had it happen to them. I've seen the photographs, I've read the descriptions, I've seen them at the hospital. The stumps of limbs, the missing noses, the runny moulds of faces, the dripping cheeks, mis-placed eyes, little holes for a nose: I can beat any of that! The stripped skin, the multi-coloured blotches of skin, the sparse hair, the sunken chests, no fingers: they've got nothing on me!

I slobber, I grunt my words, I stare wildly. Poor old dad, what a grey thin man he is, with his dry soul. And my compulsive mother, who sits and drums her fingers and bites her nails. Forever agitated. They are not at my beck and call, but they are certainly at the beck and call of their own poor, twisted, confused minds. My mind is as cool and clear and straight as a die. I can see through anything. I add to my collection of hypocrisies every day.

Advertising! God, how I laugh at what they try to get away with. Perfectly beautiful women sit and stare at their reflections and ask "Why?". They press at stomachs that don't protrude, they worry about their perfect breasts, their shiny hair, their clear eyes, their flower garden bodies. They glide and simper, they are haughty and humble. They swing their hair about, they touch themselves; everybody touches them, all the time. They all look the same. They are all dead behind the eyes. Do you think if I spray anything down there, a man is going to be less offended tonight? Do you think that if I spray this, cut like that, apply this, wear that, I can make myself look more beautiful? I can't make myself look better AT ALL! But people certainly look at me, ha ha.

Those simple souls who can brave my bedroom, the minister, uncles and aunts and cousins, they suffer the most. My bedroom, with its bed containing a sheet covered oddity, and its occupant's face in shadow... Within five minutes they have adopted a deformity of their own. Some start to limp, some have migraines,
some shake, some get asthma, most stutter. Who can really believe that he can compensate for me?

A fellow at work today told me that he keeps a diary. Keeps a diary! That is so foreign to me. What can you write in a diary? My old uncle used to write down the weather for each day, or what he got for selling twenty hoggets or his wool, or how many acres he put in a certain paddock, or how much rain fell, or what things cost. It was a reference book, a source of facts that he could look up. That's what a diary is; a black bound little book, with a few lines for each day, room enough to jot down little interesting notes.

I asked this fellow what he wrote in his diary, and he said thoughts that came into his head, descriptions of his mood, descriptions of people and places. His philosophy of life he told me. His philosophy of life! Then some of the other fellows started talking. Lots of them listen to classical music, of all things. I know that there are certain sorts of people who like to listen to it, but it is hardly a productive pastime, and besides, I think that not many of the fellows at work could properly understand or appreciate that sort of music. Diana listens to it but I suppose she can't very well do much else, although it could hardly be very soothing for her, that sort of music. Once she was playing some waltzes or other and I was reading the paper and there was a particularly interesting article in it about multi-national corporations which I talked to her about. I couldn't even finish. She quickly indicated that she wanted to listen to the music. I don't mind it as a background, but how can you listen to it? And I really think that Diana should be kept up to date with important events in the world. One's mind must keep up to date with things even if one does have to suffer physical shortcomings.

I mistrust an indulgence in the world of ideas and art and music and writing. I think these things can be a sign of weakness in a person, and so I don't let myself become too involved. The dissipation of energies on unproductive pastimes is perhaps one of the greatest stumbling blocks to our overcoming some of the problems facing us today. Of what use were cultural matters to our pioneers? They didn't have time for the affairs of the mind.

Another friend once confessed to me that he wrote poetry. To me poetry is not in itself a bad thing. I remember some of the beautiful lines of poetry that I studied at school, and the simple, profound themes of some of them. The Australian ones, "Where the Dead Men Lie" and "The Sick Stockrider", and the beautiful lines of the English ones... "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield" and "What immortal hand or eye could frame thy fearful symmetry". To me, that was real poetry. But what could I write poetry about, if I wanted to? What do these everyday people one meets or hears of, write about? There are geniuses, there are clever creative people, and their talents are soon recognized, but why anyone else should want to do artistic things I can't imagine. I keep my inner self at arm's length.

There has been only one period in my life where I let my feelings run free, and that was when I made up stories to tell to Diana when she was small. They say I had a flair for it.

Pull the arm, wait for the clicks to fall into place. Nothing. Put in my money, pull again. Nothing. It is all automatic. I keep on going. You've got to win sometime. The odds point to it. Six six king. I hear the money inside but nothing comes out.

You have to have your own machine. You can't just go from one machine to another without any system, or you will miss out on the chances of a jackpot. If you stay on one machine you will win sooner or later. All last year I was behind, but already this year I'm ahead. The wins are usually small but worth it.
One day last week I put through $200 worth. Some machines here pay thousand dollar jackpots. The machine next to me came up with it one day, just as I was going home. I didn't have a cent left to my name, else I'd have pulled mine. I believe in signs and omens. They indicate when to try. I would have got something if I'd gone then, though some of the others say it only comes seven pulls after. A fair cow it was too, missing out in a big win, because sometimes when there's no one at the next machine I pull that one as well.

Found someone on my machine this morning. A traveller, I could tell. Just trying his luck. I couldn't believe it. A hundred machines in the place and he has to go and pick mine. I tried to stare him out. I tried to put a jinx on the bastard. Then I stood beside him and just looked at him. He told me to clear out and I told him to clear out. I pushed him and trod on his toes. He yelled and went off to the manager. The manager and I have an understanding. I'm allowed to play my machine when I'm in the Club, and no other club gets my business. Not that I'd go to another club of course, and the manager must know that. He's not stupid. Those blokes know more about psychology than any of these smart-arses on the tele. The manager comes up with his hand on the bloke's shoulder and gives me a wink and the bloke a smile, talks to me, whispers in the bloke's ear and winks at me again. The bloke goes off in a huff and the manager comes up to me and says, "How's it going, Mrs Duffield?" Always "Mrs Duffield", never Eileen, for me. He gets a girl to bring me a drink though I never have time to really enjoy a drink. As he left he flicked the machine with his fingers and straight away it came up pears. I believe in good omens.

And you do have to have a method. Mine is to do a little step up to the machine and put in my money, pull half-way slowly and then jerk the next half of the movement. All in one smooth double movement. I put my feet on the same red flowers on the carpet every time, and don't breathe, and I always look deep into the eyes of the machine to will it to come up with something. I put a special look on my face too. Then I step back and then forward again. You've got to have a routine, a special way of doing it. It's not just a game. Diana and her father laugh at me and make fun. They think I'm always anxious when I'm not at the Club. They reckon I'm itching to get at my machine. But that's not true. I might look all glassy-eyed, but I'm always calculating.

"Eileen, are you going to the Club today?"
"Yes." Drum drum drum.
"Ever know her not to?" Dribble.
"No Diana, I haven't. Oh Diana, wipe your face!"
"Buy me a Benjamin Britten today." Dribble.
"Diana, you can enunciate better than that. Buy you a what?" Dab, fold, straighten.
"She said Benjamin Britten or something." Rub, sigh, tap tap.
"Keep still mother. Just itching to pull that bloody machine aren't you." Crash bang.
"Diana! Mind the plates!"
"Won twenty dollars yesterday. Wait till I get the jackpot." Stand, sniff.
"Eileen, have you made my lunch yet?"
"Oh make it yourself Charlie. I have to wash Diana's sheets and her nightie and then her. What do you do all day? Just try to build up a business of your own in the bloody sky!"
"Disappointing, the pair of you. I mean nothing personal by that Diana. Just that you don't seem to show any interest in your father. And you, Eileen, should I ever get a promotion, how could I ever entertain? A nervy wife who ignores everyone? Just think about that for awhile."
“Bloody old fascist!”
“As far as I’m concerned Charlie you can stuff your job. Not the way for a lady to speak, I know. You’re a fool Charlie. Your whole life is bloody order order order!”
“Eileen.”
“Oh go and make your bloody sandwiches Charlie.”
“And how much longer do you think I’m going to provide you with house-keeping money just so you can fizzle the lot each week, hmm?”
“Charlie, give me a hand to carry Diana to the bathroom. God she stinks.”
“Eileen! I was talking to you. Do you realize what this place looks like every night, hmm? Do you know what it smells like? Do you know what it’s like to eat cold food, burnt food, or no food at all, hmm?”
“Charlie! Keep your voice down. Diana does have some feelings you know. You’re scaring her.”
“Shut up the pair of you, you old fools. Go on about your business, leave me to wallow alone all day, go on.” Cry, cry. Dribble.
“What did she say? Oh darling, don’t cry. I’m sorry I yelled. What did you say?” Stroke, ease, console.
“I said I’m sorry. Come, I’ll help you bath her.” Contrite.
“You’ll be late. Get off to work, I’ll do it.”
“Well, if you’re sure now. I’ll buy my lunch. Bye bye.”
“Remember my record.”
On the End of a Visual Conversation

OK,
it's a game.
we're strangers
till now.
no summernight
dreams
no starry-eyed
skies.

OK.
what of this, then?
a loneliness shared.
   places not visited.
   years never spent.
all fear
or weakness?

OK.
well,
no comment.
Cricket in the Bedroom

Tacked to the hill
the surf roar is the secret
of our stability,
    so you tell me,
    chirpily;
silence, and we'd be over
like a pack of cards.

I must believe it
after last night's storm;
you in my shoe,
and all of us pegged to the wind
    flapping
like the wild eagle.

This morning,
spurning my broom,
my urban footsteps on the pine,
    my fears,
you have gone.

Surf roars
along the ebb and flow of coast:
I am secure,
so you tell me.
At forty-one Mrs Malini Ganguly should have slowed down to an even pace of life. But her wardrobe mirror (which had swallowed her six months' hard savings) counselled her otherwise. With not a single grey hair, and a face as smooth as an angel's, rising above Yardley mist (so she complimented herself each morning), she couldn't give it all up so soon. If a woman is as old as she looks she wasn't a day older than twenty-seven, she thought.

If destiny had yoked her to an unexciting little clerk in the Supplies Department (how she wished her father had looked around a little more enterprisingly for better possibilities), it was no reflection on her figure and deportment. As the oldest of three sisters and two brothers, in a family barely subsisting on an engine driver's salary, it was her misfortune to be shovelled off first. And Bhabhani had asked for only a sprinkling of dowry, in spite of his equally straitened circumstances. If he had renounced his legitimate rights, Malini took it only as a tribute to her beauty.

They lived in a single-room flat, with a niggardly verandah and a kitchenette-cum-pantry. Although they had no children, spiralling inflation had made them feel the severe pinch. How could she manage to run the house within a couple of hundreds only?

Promptly she turned to her own education—marriage had chopped it off after matriculation. But couldn't she pick up the link again ... do her Intermediate, then B.A., and then ... ? This would also help her overcome a gnawing sense of loneliness and frustration. A woman can't live out her entire existence in a kitchen—and how could one encounter the grey dalliness of routine with a husband who returned home each evening, loaded with office files? Often she wished he would stay away longer—then she could at least listen in to the radio, look through mags borrowed from the neighbours, or mutter incomprehensibles to Aristo, her little parrot, who merrily swung in a steel-cage over the doorstep.

Bhabhani literally exuded clumsiness and boredom, never said or did an exciting thing, except make a pass at her on each pay-day.

"It makes me feel a professional, you know. Why can't you make it less functional?" He would just gape for a few seconds and then look away shyly, like a blinking idiot.

But, of course, he was otherwise very considerate and helpful. He would do all her chores; he knew how to pick the shiny fresh brinjals, knock off the little ends of lady's fingers to assess their crispness, and always bought provisions enough to last an extra month.
“One can never be too sure in these days of rationing and scarcity—so let us lay by something for a rainy day.”

But, strangely enough, the metaphor always evoked an entirely different response from her. She always waited for the monsoons—dark fleecy clouds, awesome gurgling thunder, musical splutter of raindrops on her tin-roof, and puddles of water all around. This was the season when she loved to walk about outdoors, let her mississippi-long hair get soaked till she returned home dripping with a kind of liquid fire. But where was her true mate? Bhabhani only dreamt about flues, chills and nasal-inhalers.

Then one evening he brought a friend along. Aristo fluttered, and made excited guttural sounds.

“Raj, my colleague—he is in the accounts section,” Bhabhani introduced him to his wife.

The visitor, a handsome man in his early thirties, smiled, offered his salutations, and looked curiously around.

“He is, perhaps, the most highly educated person in our Department—M.A. History, and diploma in law too. If you need any help . . . .”

Surely, she needed help rather desperately, not so much with her studies (she was now already on her way to Intermediate) as with herself. And Raj looked rather attractive, with suave manners.

“That would be very gracious of him. I could then move up to B.A.—and even take up a job.”

There was now hardly an evening when Raj was not around, helping Malini with her studies. He would often have his afternoon tea with the Gangulys, and not infrequently stayed on till supper. This was a pleasant diversion for him—a sort of intellectual exercise and the excitement of a woman’s company.

Raj had nothing to hold him back at home—an ailing father, four sisters all queued up for marriage, and two brothers, also unmarried, waiting to be picked up. How else would he have allowed himself to be pushed around as a mere Upper Division Clerk? Circumstances had forced him into taking up the first job that came his way. But he was now rescued from the drab routine in his office, and the tensions of an overcrowded family, by refreshing evenings at the Gangulys’.

Malini now flitted about like a butterfly between two men; but she was no fool. Every man must pay for the little compensations of life. If she allowed Raj to come into the kitchen (when she was frying some peanuts, stuffing brinjals with mashed potatoes, or doing some Bengali rasagolas) and even touch her hand (the studies were now running at a low ebb), he had to pay for all this in some form. Since Raj would never marry (isn’t it sacrilegious for a mere clerk, however handsome, to even dream of bringing into this sordid world more children, more problems?), he might as well share his monthly savings with his friends. So he was permitted to bring in a substantial quantity of grocery each month, and take them out to the movies, whenever Bhabhani couldn’t net in a complimentary pass from somewhere. Raj had even offered to share the cost of a piece of land, if they had any plans for house-building.

“Dada, how about a trip to Nainital? I’ll make all the necessary arrangements for travel, and we could stay there at the Government Dharamsala.”

This excited Malini very much, and Bhabhani had to fall in with the other two.

A week at Nainital turned out to be truly exhilarating for Raj, as Malini now let him take some more liberties with her. Hadn’t he amply paid for everything? So she let herself be snapped with him at the foot of the Linga temple, while Bhabhani kept jumping around with his baby Kodak, “shooting from a perfect angle”.

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One evening, Bhabhani had gone to bring some snacks from the market, but he returned a little prematurely. He was taken aback to see Raj combing his wife's hair, her head dangling over his left shoulder. At the sound of his footsteps, both straightened up immediately. Raj picked up a book, pretending to read.

It was later at night, after Raj had retired into his room, that Bhabhani mustered up enough courage to say, "I didn't like the way you were both sitting together this evening". He put it rather mildly and couldn't say anything more—his nerve suddenly failed him.

"Are you mad? What was wrong anyway? We were merely studying together .... Besides, he always calls you 'Dada', which makes me his sister-in-law. So how dare you ...." She thought it discreet not to round it off quite.

Bhabhani was completely cowed down. A timid little creature that he was, he simply beat a hasty retreat.

"I didn't mean to ...."

"Then what were you trying to tell me? Am I a fool? Am I not old enough to look after myself?"

But even this sharp reference to her age made her a little self-conscious. At once she stroked her hair, her flaming glory, and began to pace up and down peacockishly to reassert her perennial youth.

"I'm terribly sorry," mumbled Bhabhani.

* * * * *

Back home from Nainital, she began to impose herself even more brazenly.

"Why don't we rationalise our budget a little more prudently? Raj has just bought himself a scooter, and surely he could take me to the Super Market each evening for bread and eggs. Things are much cheaper out there, you know."

For a moment Bhabhani felt rather nettled. To let his wife fly around with a bachelor—what would others say? However, he didn't have the courage to needle her again. On the contrary, he cursed himself for entertaining any mean thoughts about Raj who always called him 'Dada'. What was wrong in Raj's doing his sister-in-law's hair? Perhaps it was just an innocent little thing.

It was only when a neighbour stopped him round the corner one evening, that he was brought face to face with the stark reality.

"Babu Ganguly, we don't care why you allow your wife such freedom—but we cannot let our neighbourhood be polluted with scandals. After all, we have our own wives and daughters."

Bhabhani felt unnerved for a moment, but soon after there welled up an uncontrollable urge to defend his honour.

"What the hell do I care for you and all the neighbourhood!" His eyes were flashing with righteous wrath. "If you are insinuating about Raj, he is like a brother to me—he calls me 'Dada'. And so it's all your own filthy mind, your terrible inhibitions!"

"Then we leave you to your damnation," the neighbour snapped back and walked away.

Bhabhani came home in a state of daze. Raj and Malini were in the kitchen. As the parrot greeted Bhabhani, Malini's voice rang out:

"Darling, we have been waiting for you—Raj wouldn't touch coffee without his Dada!"
Bonfire

We could always tell it was coming by the shops.  
Bonfire Night—get your crackers now.
We did,  
and eager, put them by  
like holy things until the time;  
the sparklers, jumping jacks & penny bombs,  
(a seconds whizz and sputter),  
and catherine wheels that spoked  
a minute through their wild gearing.

We how-much-longer-waited on the time,  
excitement flaming up,  
all patience burning.

And it came.

In the middle of it all the bonfire grew,  
and was true the biggest blaze  
your eyes could hold.  
It swung the night around it like a sun,  
and we,  
spun satellites, still bright believers.

But best of all  
were the rockets that we skied,  
sent skittering away  
like the child-bright years; and  
how they many-sparked & flamed & flared,  
and broke the black incredible with light.
Port Arthur

On one side
Of an English-looking park
Stone lions open-mouthed
In pure fury crouch
And guard a walkway
Lined with imported oak.

Centred in the park,
Where horse-riding rulers from
The mother country walked
Turd-dropping hounds,
A weeping willow tinted red.
Coming into leaf it glows
Like a plastic sack of blood.

On the prison side
A sombre walkway
Lined with native pine
Has grown out of hand.
Roots above the ground
Spread to the other side
And marry into oak.

On branches growing out
From trunks as thick
As horses’ chests
Tight-knit clusters of
Shell-terraced cones
Refuse to drop.

The issue has been joined.
Stallion-black, a grease-slicked
Motor bike roars off
Through reddish hybrid scrub.
A strip of bark
Blown along the road
Shapes into a fox.
From branches humped and barbed
With sleek-feathered crows
Acorns part and drop.

Iocasta, wearing daisy chains,
Soft stems split
By dirty fingernails,
Cries out in distress.
Oedipus grins as he flicks
Pine quills from her dress.
the final eviction

there is no need to
return to the house—
the final eviction.
I know it off by heart
the chair on the
front verandah
you sitting
waiting for us to come
home.

Getting into bed
with you on the cold blue
mornings in the warm green
afternoons and said how
when you died I would
die with you be buried
in the worn green blankets.
I know it
backwards.
Strangers will
come walk on us pull
us down and we will still
be there.
A Sketch Plan

An empty house—
discarded
smells cling to the
air. Clasped frangipanis
unfold slowly
in darkness
the long earth
sings in this rain.

Spiders weave
up and down slowly
around.

People return.
Insects burrow
deep in the peace
of the moist black earth.
A spider
cleans his teeth
and
waits
The glorification of beer time was over. In 1919 'Joe Rail' was writing verse which
is reminiscent of Sun verse at its best; but 'Joe Rail' was well aware that the gold-
fields muse was out of sorts:

... her wild unpolished stanzas to my soul no solace brings
For I notice that her lyre shows a bunch of broken strings,
From her great parade of virtue my better nature shrinks
And I have a firm conviction that the soulful lady drinks.¹

Her efforts provide strange company for the musical abstractions of Lillian
Wooster Greaves and May Kidson whose work was prominent in the newspapers
of the 1920s.

The strength of the goldfields press had been to speak up boldly on contro-
versial issues of the day. Journalist Victor Courtney recalls that during the 1980s
editors prided themselves on their independence. In his opinion, newspaper criticism
was freer during the first decade of this century than ever since. In 1911 the
situation was changing rapidly.²

A newspaper clipping of 1914 reflects this change. A reader of the Sun requested
that Crosscut's poem 'A Man was Killed in the Mine Today' be reprinted as relevant
to a recent mine accident. The poem, which condemns the company's pursuit of
profit at the cost of human life, was singled out for praise by the editor when first
published in 1907. This, it was said, was the kind of verse the Sun wanted. In 1914
the newspaper complied with the reader's request, but with the comment from
Crosscut that he was not carping at things which for the time being could not
be changed; he expressed his admiration for the company which, through its enter-
prise, provided employment for thousands of workers.³

Where were the literary identities of the roaring days? Bluebush and Prospect
Good were dead. Crosscut was severely wounded in the 1914-18 war and died not
long after his return to Australia.⁴ Andrée Hayward, J. E. Webb and Jack Drayton
continued to work for newspapers: Webb went to the Sydney Bulletin in 1920,
Hayward in 1922; Drayton joined the Staff of Smith's Weekly in Sydney.

Until his death in 1939 the name of Dryblower was a household word in Western
Australia. Oldtimers called on him at the office of the Sunday Times, and the
younger generation followed his column each week. Dryblower seemed as young
as ever. In fact however his talent had diminished. The topical, of permanent
historical interest, became the trivial and ephemeral. The old spirit of non-
conformity which had nurtured original ideas was stifled. The old philosophy proved

* This is the third and final article by Beverley Smith on writers of the West Australian goldfields.
more than ever inadequate during the depression when Dryblower was chiding the rich and urging the unemployed to endure hardship without complaint. Nevertheless, to Western Australian readers he remained a symbol of the bush tradition, an evocation of the past.\(^5\)

Of all the goldfields writers Laurence Spruhan was the only one who found new sources of literary inspiration on leaving the fields to work in other parts of rural Australia. He was a confirmed wanderer whose restless career was as he had predicted with a note of disillusion and regret in 1906:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{I've lost and given over} \\
&\text{The life that might have been.} \\
&\text{The track that stretches forward} \\
&\text{I have no heart to face} \\
&\text{The straightened path of Duty} \\
&\text{I cannot now retrace.} \\
\end{align*}
\]

So through the years uplooming
I'll never find content
But linked into my sorrow
Must roam the continent.\(^6\)

The roaring days had left a legacy of lost citizenship. Career, home, the permanence of residence without which full social responsibility became almost impossible, were not to be his. During the thirties he had a number of stories and poems published in Smith's Weekly. When he died in Broken Hill in 1948, an obituary notice by F. E. B. Rost in the Barrier Miner, stated that Spruhan was a poet mourned by 'his cobbers on the Barrier'.\(^7\)

Similarly, Laurence Spruhan's brother Frank, who did not write poetry during the goldrushes, took to writing later on. Most of his work was submitted to trade union journals. On his retirement in 1948 workmates took up a collection to have his verse published in booklet form. The tribute paid to him in the preface by Max Lovelock reflects a persisting tradition:

The divinity that shaped Spru's Irish-Anglo ends was Australia. Sixty-eight vital nomadic years in our Timeless Land with its esprit de terre, its literature and its people have produced a personality uniquely Australian and essentially lovable. A consummate raconteur with a glittering fund of anecdote; an elo­cutionist of the bush school with a versatile repertoire, and as we know him best of all a good mate who has lived well, satisfyingly and more for others than himself.\(^8\)

Well into his eighties, Spruhan could recite from memory the verses he had first read on the Kalgoorlie diggings.

The continuity of tradition is again evident in the history of Julian Stuart. Stuart died in 1929. His son Donald Stuart is a novelist. His daughter Lyndall Hadow has written many fine stories, contributed to weeklies but never collated. She is also the editor of Part of the Glory, being reminiscences of the shearsers' strike, Queensland 1891, by Julian Stuart, with a foreword on his life and times.

In literary circles, the goldfields writers were soon forgotten. By its very nature this was a phase in literary history which resulted in very few permanent publications. The Sunday Times published two collections of verse by Dryblower: Jarrahland Jingles in 1908, and Dryblower's Verses in 1926. Along the Road to Cue, a collection of Hayward's early verse, was published by the Geraldton Express in 1897. The only well-presented volume was Off the Bluebush, a collection of poems by J. P. Bourke published in Sydney in 1915 on the initiative of A. G. Stephens. It included a thoughtful preface by Stephens based on what he had written about Bluebush for Leeuwin, illustrations by Ned Wethered, and a portrait.
of the author. Stephens intended to publish a similar edition of verse by Francis Ophel. Among his papers at the Mitchell Library is a collection of newspaper cuttings and the comment, in his own hand, 'never collected, not heard of for years'. In 1930 he advertised for information about the poet and was sent a bundle of papers by members of the Ophel family. Unfortunately the project lapsed for want of finance. These few publications do not adequately represent the output of writers whose work otherwise appeared only in newspapers and periodicals.

Though negligible as a literary influence, the goldfields tradition continued as a social influence long after the decline of the goldfields press. It was a style of literature directed not at the literary connoisseur but at the casual reader who left school at an early age. This was the reader whose intellect in other circles was so often called in doubt. To the *West Australian* he had sufficient education to read but not enough to think. For Alfred Chandler, he was too preoccupied with athletics and the race course. Modern students of the labour movement tend to reiterated this kind of criticism: 'the broad outline of Labor thinking in Western Australia is readily discernible. There was a small minority which read and thought; and a large minority which apparently did not read or think.'

Poet Judith Wright states that 'The Australian ideal was a man of action ... a horseman more daring than any known before, a spare laconic personality with *little time for ideas* and a restricted grasp of reality' [my italics]. Is this true?

Such statements have to contend with the image of a lean man struggling across an empty desert on foot, with the parts of a printing press as the primary item of luggage. What an extraordinary assertion of faith in the powers of thought and communication! It is a journey which began years before in the struggle for literacy; the search for meaningful, relevant books in a world full of books written for other kinds of readers. With the triumphs of nineteenth century Australian journalism behind him, it must have seemed that this new heroic march into the desert was yet another stride of progress. Yet within a few years, the destination could be seen with clarity: a small ghost town. It was almost the last phase in the history of the independent press. Even the very reputation of journalist, critic, poet, and reader would go down before this false assertion that the people did not read or think.

Bluebush would have challenged this statement in another way. He liked to tell the story of the pub keeper at Broad Arrow who decided to take advantage of 'the general spirit of argumentativeness' of the time. He bought an encyclopaedia for £32 and some months later could enter in the ledger: 'To wagers won on the strength of readied up arguments, £184/6/8d:

'Wild and woolly arguments would rage for hours around the subject of whether the Long Parliament tossed “Oliver Crumwell” out on his ear or if he, Crumwell, tossed the whole collective beak of the aforesaid assembly.'

History and geography were the usual bones of contention. By the time the locals 'took a tumble' they 'had no betting silver to speak of but numerous odds and ends of authentic information in its place that they had since converted into beer in many an outback tap room.' The bar room debaters were presumably among those who inundated the *Sun* with enquiries on all manner of erudite topics. For an insight into the political and literary interests of the day there is no better source than the column ‘Replies to Correspondents’ in the *Sun*. There were rarely less than twenty or thirty replies each week, most relating to history, politics and literature.

It is true, as Judith Wright says, that 'libraries however small cannot be carried in swags'. What is more striking, however, is that people of so few possessions should have bothered with books and reading at all, especially if one thinks of this as a generation new to literacy and new to leisure. No doubt there was a shortage
of books. The newspapers reported that miners and mechanics institutes showed signs of neglect and mismanagement; these reports usually resulted in an outcry of protest from editors and their correspondents and attempts at reform. In Perth, the Public Library was well patronized in the period before World War I. Joseph Furphy noted that on a Sunday ‘some hundreds of quiet, respectable people spent the afternoon there’. The extent of borrowing at libraries is, however, an inadequate guide to the intellectual habits of the day. Journals were of great importance, and reading generally was approached with 'a spirit of argumentativeness'. A man might own a few treasured books extensively annotated, the bindings reinforced with pieces of wire and cardboard. Selected from many which had passed through his hands, they were the subject of intensive study. It was the custom, too, to circulate newspaper cuttings concerning politics and literature, or to paste up some perspicacious item on a hut wall where it came to the notice of a succession of inmates. It is not surprising to find a remarkable homogeneity of ideas and even the recurrence of particular phrases in contemporary writing. This was an indication not necessarily of an uncritical conformity but of a widespread sharing of ideas.

What was happening in the west suggests that Kylie Tennant does not wildly exaggerate when she writes:

In the nineties people read books. Every little country School of Arts was solid with classics. One country newspaper boosted its circulation by printing Ruskin's *Unto this last* in its leader columns; navvies, drovers and miners attended lectures on French poetry, Darwinism, Henry George and the land laws of Leviticus. There was a stirring quality, a pride of men who found themselves enlisted in great causes.

It is true that political thought was in many ways confused and undirected —eclectically derived from sentimental socialism, Irish rebellion, social credit theories, Christian ethics and much else. There was always a prevailing unresolved sense of tension between the ideals of the bush, conceived romantically, heroically, morally, and a sense of the realities, of hardship, futile sacrifice. The poems of Francis Ophel seem to come close to achieving a resolution between the realism of Henry Lawson and the romanticism of Banjo Paterson, but it is a poetic or emotional resolution that stops far short of practical politics. This confusion, combined with a mood of disillusionment, imposed great limitations on contemporary thought; but the discerning literary critic and the more advanced political thinkers were at first eager to clarify confused issues. During World War I, however, elitism affected both literature and politics. Those who became most critical of popular intelligence had themselves contributed to the decline by withdrawing into minority cliques, either literary or political.

Joseph Furphy had warned of the coming Armageddon should 'social-economic conditions fail to keep abreast with the impetuous uncontrollable advance of popular intelligence'. Looking back, our generation tends to scepticism. We see mainly prejudice and irrationality: jingoism, racism, chauvinism, sentimentality. We expect a great deal, and judge almost as if these forebears shared our world of liberated colonies and improved communication. Yet, it was a time of popular intelligence, then referred to as 'manly wit'. We do not hear the phrase today; the word 'manly' has lost its nineteenth century connotation of 'working class'. Nobody writing about manly wit in the nineteenth century suffered the sense of diffidence and embarrassment which the modern writer experiences in referring to working-class culture or popular intelligence. The subject of manly wit was raised in a spirit of self-confidence and ebullience.

At the same time, there was a great deal of disparagement of scholarship and scholars, characteristically summed up in Lawson's famous lines:
My cultured friends you have come too late
With your bypath nicely graded,
I've fought thus far on my track of Fate
And I'll follow the rest unaided.
Must I be stopped by a college gate
On the track of life approaching?
Be dumb to love and be dumb to hate
For want of a pedant's coaching?

You grope for Truth in a language dead
In the dust 'neath tower and steeple,
What do you know of the tracks we tread
And what of the living people?

Often construed as an expression of 'characteristic Australian anti-intellectualism', these lines are in fact the opposite: a positive affirmation of a new approach to thought. The old learning was sterile. It did not solve the problems of hunger and public ignorance. It did not draw men together as brothers, but set them apart. Tentatively, out of the bush tradition there was emerging a new approach to education which challenged the old precisely where it was most deficient.

The men who came to Western Australia at the time of the goldrushes believed like Lawson in the university of life. Experience was the best lesson, and no better would be found until the schools themselves passed on the kind of learning that was relevant to the place and the people. It is understandable that such a viewpoint should emerge in a society once colonial, and that the view on education should be paralleled so closely by a concept of national identity.

The manly literature of the goldrushes carried forward well into the twentieth century the image of 'the bushman'—a man with vices and virtues but at bottom 'a real mate' and a product of the Australian bush. That this idea was a persistent one cannot be doubted when one reads the goldrush newspapers. The most concise summary comes from the pen of Edward Sorenson, a contributor to the Bulletin in the 1890s whose books were not published until 1908, 1911, 1914 and later. His sketches appeared in the Kalgoorlie Sun and Sunday Times; and in the Western Mail as late as 1918.

'The Bushwhacker', featured in the 1910 Christmas edition of the Sun and Sunday Times, is a summary of the qualities attributed to the bushman:

In whatever part of the bush you find him you are sure of a welcome at his camp or hut... There is no friendship or mateship as complete and splendid as exists among those whom accident has thrown together in numerous isolated camps of the backblocks... They show conventional interest in the offspring of celebrity but there is no prejudice in the weighing of him as a man and a mate against the charcoal burner or the dog-poisoner. By the natural order of things the latter will probably be the better man in Bushland and be treated accordingly.

Without apology, Sorenson notes that the bushman drinks, bets and swears, smokes heavily, eats heartily and is not religious. He cannot tolerate the term 'master' and has 'a hatred of authority that is liable at any moment to blaze into fierce rebellion'. In war he is a superb fighter but must be led by a fighter, "a shrewd, solid-thinking man—not by a gilded Johnny'. He is often heard to say, in a burst of poetic feeling, 'Oh, if I could write a book'. 'His mind is full of books... stored up through years of wandering, studied out in lonely corners; books he would like to see written as they appear to him, true to his life and environment... there is no keener critic when it comes to familiar details than the bushman.'

Local writers with an attitude similar to Sorenson's described a man of this type on the Western Australian goldfields. As depicted in "The Outback in 1905",

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which appeared in the *Sun*, he was a hard-swearing 'Hustler' to be found beyond Morgans and Laverton on the outskirts of settlement. Though half-starved and living in squalor he retains his dignity as long as he does not lose caste by working for wages. Hard-drinking, restless, and cynical he is always ready to do the rough work which paves the way for 'the boddler and his parasites' who 'pull in the cash' and sit in judgment on him. In his opinion a town soon 'goes to the dawgs' on the arrival of 'sky pilots' (parsons) and lawyers.\textsuperscript{21} 'The Battler' in 'Portrait of the Overlander' (1910) refers in passing to the moral superiority of the bushman over the city dweller.\textsuperscript{22} In another sketch the same writer denies the romance of the track, and argues that the duties of citizenship involved in a settled life are more worthy; but he reasserts his respect for 'the good poor devils' who hump the swag, with their 'rigid materialism' and moral strength. This is an eloquent sketch with the incidental quotations much beloved by the contemporary reader—one from *Othello*, the other from an old bush ballad:

\begin{quote}
With my swag upon my shoulder
An' my billy can in my hand
I'll travel the bush of Australia
Like a true-born Irishman.\textsuperscript{23}
\end{quote}

These various outback characteristics were being drawn together and stamped 'Australian'. When A. G. Stephens reviewed Dryblower's *Jarrahland Jingles* for the *Sunday Times* in 1909 he described the book as 'manly', 'Irish' and 'the most Australian book seen for years'. It shows, he writes, that 'not on the coast or in the cities but in the torrid interior of the country are the true Australians bred'. He defines national character in terms of its manliness, Irish traits, and inland origin, and found all three in the Western Australian publication.\textsuperscript{24}

Many of the attitudes and customs enumerated are to be found in Western Australian life before the goldrushes. One calls to mind the carousing and revelry in Moore's kitchen among servants who no longer acknowledged him master; the Dardanup Irish, renowned for their good fellowship, strength, hard fighting qualities and horsemanship; the Vasse sandalwood cutters on a spree in Fremantle and Bunbury; the lamb-down of shepherds in Northampton and Geraldton; the hard-sweating teamsters; the contempt for police and pimps in town and countryside; and O'Reilly's old bushman, with his anecdotes and simple bush hospitality. Henry Trigg and William Nairne Clark were quick to realize that the wellbeing of colonial society depended on the industry of the practical-minded, and Joseph Chester, sharing this view, thought of gents and scholars as a drug on the market. Already in the sixties, a blunt outspoken manner of speech was regarded by a leader writer of the *Fremantle Herald* as an attribute distinctively Australian. And Beresford's sandalwood cutter, who stands with O'Reilly's bushman as the most vivid depiction of the evolving type in pre-goldrush literature, expressed opinions which anticipate the bushwhacker of Sorenson and his contemporaries in numerous respects; scepticism towards the philanthropy of the pious; respect for the plain, useful man; contempt for affectation, society manners and keeping up appearances; distrust of social climbers; and the conviction that more was to be learned by keeping your eyes and ears open than by the narrow study of books.

These characteristics were drawn together as the epitome of the Australian way of life. It was perhaps as strange to find a vision of national identity and destiny in the thoughts of the convict O'Reilly as later in the poems of Francis Ophel, the ragged, homeless prospector. Yet all over Australia a concept of national identity was being defined by just such people. Of course conflicting ways and aspirations were always to be found among working class Australians. The upper class had tried to cultivate a different ideal of the working man. They preached that superiority in taste and culture, and the ability to administrate and govern for
the good of all inevitably went with social position; a gentleman should command
the respect of the working man and his cooperation as a thrifty, devout, hard-
working and sober citizen. For all Chester’s contempt of the socially ambitious,
some of his acquaintances at the Swan River Mechanics Institute endeavoured to
conform to this upper class ideal of respectability; others were striving to ‘raise
themselves in the world’, and some did.

Similarly, though the legend of the bushman persisted in the twentieth century
there were many discrepancies between legend and fact, and the Australian way
of life was as complex as the contrasts of city and countryside could make it. The
bushman of the legend was still to be found on the outskirts of settlement, but he
was a lonely figure with little direct influence on social development. By the
1920s more than half the population of Western Australia lived in or about the capital
city and the radio was replacing the raconteur. The trade union militant was
achieving more than the independent working class rebel in shaping a new and
better society. In spite of this, the legend of the bushman continued to have wide
appeal. Even those whose conditions of life had little in common with the bush-
man mentally deferred to his outlook on life.

NOTES

1. Sun 16.3.19, “The Rhymer’s Muse”
2. Victor Courtney, op. cit. pp. 34, 11, 41, 71
3. Sun, 1.3.14
4. See Appendix, p.
5. Victor Courtney, Perth and all this (1962), p. 72
7. F. E. B. Rost, “From Notasians to Laurence Spruhan”, The Barrier Miner 1948, Cutting
   supplied by Frank Spruhan.
8. Frank Spruhan (“Spru”) Coming Round the Bend and other verse, Sydney, 1948.
11. The journalism speaks for itself, but note also how Francis Adams regarded the journalist
    as the “Civilised Australian”, who “sums up the outward and visible if not the inward
    and spiritual grace of the Australian civilization in its most striking and dominant aspects more
    nearly than any single person can”. The Australians (London, 1893), pp. 47-8, 53, 95-6, 104.
    Adams differentiated between the metropolitan dailies as conscious replicas of London news-
    papers and the small newspapers as having “some genuine and disinterested sentiment of
    patriotism and social belief, of personal pride and purity . . . p. 94.
12. Sun, 6.3.10, “David Hatt’s Encyclopedia, A Glimpse of Broad Arrow in the middle nineties”,
    by Bluebush.
13. Wright, op cit., p. 53.
    Furphy arrived in W.A. in 1905, died in 1912.
15. The library of a deceased ex miner now in possession of the author was found to be in this
    condition.
    Tennant, Australia, her story (1956). See also p. 84 and p. 95 of Prout’s book.
17. The contrasting views of Paterson and Lawson and their confrontation are discussed by
    and the 1890’s, Australian Literary Studies, Vol. 5, No. 1, May 1971. As Nesbitt states, there
    are “ambiguities” in the literary nationalism of the time (p. 17), and “the debate (between
    Lawson and Paterson) has been underestimated in Australian literary and social history”
    (p. 3).
19. As an example of current usage, see article on Rhodes Scholars, Sunday Times, 26.2.05.
    in form but not in substance from the original version, “The Uncultured Rhymer to his
    Cultured Critics”, Verses Popular and Humorous (Sydney, 1900).
21. Sun, 12.2.05, unsigned .
23. ibid, 15.1.11.
24. ibid, 4.4.09.
27. ibid, pp. 135. See p. 189.
28. See Humphrey McQueen, *A New Britannica* (1970). "Lawson was a mass of contradictions . . . these contradictions have allowed the propagandists of many differing species to claim him as supporter of their particular beliefs. Skimming through his newspaper verses, it is easy to select samples to suit any given ideology . . ." Dennis Prout, *Henry Lawson, The Grey Dreamer* (1963), pp. 215-6, gives some interesting examples of the way in which some of Lawson's ideas were rejected by his readers—a process which must be taken into account when one considers his work as either reflecting or influencing his contemporaries. See p. 61, p. 133, p. 262.
One sympathises with McQueen's point of view—he writes during the tragic Vietnam intervention, when there was good reason for Australians to look critically at the past for the origins of militarism and racism. It is true there are regrettably many echoes of Lawson's racist sentiments in the goldrush verse but there is no indication in the Western Australian writing that the militaristic verse made an impression on his readers there. Prior to the outbreak of world war one, the militaristic theme is rarely to be found in goldrush verse. There are editorials and other items in the *Sydney Bulletin* (4.5.05, 30.3.05, 18.5.05) noting the appearance of jingoism in the community, particularly in the schools, which, it was said, would have disastrous effects on thought and the spirit of critical enquiry. This kind of contemporary comment suggests that one would have to consider how far jingoistic sentiment was being fostered by the establishment and international influences as distinct from within the popular movement. As McQueen observes in the Introduction to *A New Britannica*, "The great flaw in this book is that it attempts to outline the ideological subordination of the workers without first examining the culture of the ruling class". In the late nineteenth century there were two senses of nationalism: one, intense and close to the people, the other weak, and as defined by office, authority, economic power. The first was independent of and not subordinate to the second; the conflict was not as intense as it might have been.
29. In reviewing Serle's book, Dr H. P. Heseltine finds no contradiction between Serle's stated aim and the result. (*Meanjin*, Vol. 32, No. 2, June 1973). He notes that the author refers to his purpose as "frankly elitist" and states that "the body of the text remains true to his prefatory statement of intention . . ." Whilst disagreeing with Dr Heseltine on this point, I agree with him that Serle's clear headed views on the relationship between nationalism and culture are valuable (notably pages 231-2).
There is no necessary reason why nationalism should be associated with parochialism or xenophobia, as sometimes in the past. Distinctive cultures are surely among the delights of world society and a source of evil only when exploited for destructive purposes. There are greater dangers today from the forces which undermine distinctive cultures.
Sleeping Dogs?

Though she wrote often he scarcely read her letters and would touch on nothing she had when replying.

He wished she’d just stop: would make it all simpler; he couldn’t forgive—why remind him?

He’d help with the children. He knew they must eat. If she’d leave him alone he’d arrange it:

earthed in his head was a duty to things dead more profound than any owed to the living—

if only she’d grasp that and let him slip through in no time he’d show her she’d see.

Long sorrow for loss is indulgence he’d say. And blame? Well blame is a trivial skill.
I try to imagine you
crying
and cannot
and cannot myself
cry now either.
I'm tired very
tired yours
sincerely. That
should do it.
Lethargy if he
remembered rightly
bored her.

ZENON PIRGA

Transitions

There are seagulls on the platform
At Perth Central
Making like rich men in a ghetto
Of local pigeons.
Like Africans in a Lapland winter
They are blots
On a background of antonyms.
And still I have seen pigeons
By the sea
Searching for lost pennies in the sand
Like hoboes in San Moritz or Monte Carlo
But what can you expect?
It is a shrinking world in an age of tourism.
These days you can fly anywhere.
Hong Kong

Two strings are on the Chinese lute,
stretched to love and reasoning

break the season
Hakka black embellished hat
and necessary high-rise flats,
horizons gauzing buildings
of the establishment.

The walled village
concealing incest
joining cabalistically the sweet
single brush-stroke of contentment.

Tourists buy the heart-lent
and the loneliness
the long nights covering
the principia of children.

Tourists buy the tuning
of hope, Buddha and pink jade
and try to pluck the two strings
stretched to love and reasoning.
Taking Hold

She decided finally to call the office.
‘What’s wrong?’ he said. She knew he was uneasy about private calls.
‘It’s your brother. He’s coming back.’
She waited.
‘When?’
‘Soon.’
‘What do you mean?’
‘Soon. Listen: So that I won’t upset the routine, here’s the warning—returning soon. That’s all it says.’
‘Bloody typical. But why now, after all this time?’
‘I thought I should let you know.’
‘Thanks.’
That evening, after five years marriage, she didn’t look forward to his return from work. During dinner he started again.
‘Remember the last time we saw him?’
The night before his brother’s last departure. A night of humidity and beer, averted heads and hurried drinking. How long had they been married then? A month? Two months perhaps. The move into the new home hardly complete. Canvas and paint tins on the floor. Even the walls seemed to blush. And the frail body of the older brother pacing the room, eyes suddenly colliding with theirs and bouncing into the night. It hadn’t been easy. What had been said that night? Waking late next morning, his brother gone, there had been a feeling of too much said, something revealed.
‘A lot has happened since then,’ she said.
‘Has it?’ What? What event, what genuinely significant move that could possibly surprise his brother?
‘Don’t worry. We can handle him.’
She doesn’t understand he thought.
She followed the faint crease marks away from his eyes. He was definitely beginning to age.

* * * * *

So word had come but typically vague. Riding the train across the suburbs he outlined the face in the window. The twitching eyes and finely-curled mouth. In his office in the gap between the ring of the phone and an official voice he listened for his brother. A quiet voice, uncertain but demanding. Hello. And a silence as he fumbled for an answer. He jabbed his cigarette at the ash-tray.
During the lunch-hour he left his own too-comfortable office and walked the streets. He watched the people, the rambling masses. Looked for himself in another form.

Twins, people had said. Just like twins. And maybe in those days they'd been right. There had been pleasure sometimes in trying to deceive people. Elderly neighbours had actually been fooled. But which of you is older and who is smarter they'd pestered. And, sensing the answers, he'd still watched their reflections in shop windows and wondered.

Returning to his desk he felt oppressed by the accumulated fat of the past ten years. How different they must look now. He flicked a switch, lit a cigarette, concentrated intently on the mannerisms of the job. There was no need for nervousness. He was behaving stupidly.

He rode home clutching a bottle of wine.

* * * * *

His mother rang that evening.
'I hear your brother is returning.'
'Yes. Your son.'
'I suppose he'll still be unsettled.'
'Perhaps.'
'You'll have to talk to him.'
'It's five bloody years! How do we know what he'll be like?'
'Please don't shout at me.'
'Sorry.'
'I don't want him coming home upsetting things again. That's all.'
'Don't worry, he's hardly likely to bother you. More likely to plague me.'

Long after the receiver was down he heard her voice scraping through the years. They look like twins she was saying to relatives. Just like twins. But oh so different. So very different. The older one was ... oh, she didn't know ... sort of restless. Discontented. Could never settle. Certainly had some strange ideas. When you spoke to him he wasn't with you at all. Could have been floating in space. Perhaps it had been the birth.

She'd been so tense. Remember Dad? Remember the tension? And Dad, stroking the dog on his knees, nodded. Perhaps in answer. It didn't seem to matter.

She didn't like to bring it up of course but there was that other business. The uncle. An uncle in the family on Dad's side. He's been ... well, to put it frankly ... a bit of a case. And there were, one had to admit, certain similarities.

On the sideboard the phone seemed to be tingling as though someone couldn't get through. The sound of his mother, perhaps, mumbling as she retired to her room. His father in the lounge, old eyes slipping from the television, hand on the dog. Let them rest. Two boys. They'd done their job.

The girl beside him was watching. Curious, expectant eyes.
'Where have you been, dreamer?'
'I bought some wine today.'

There would be time for talking but not now. Please. He had to sort it out in his own head first. He said that to himself as he dug the corkscrew deep.

He cracked his glass against hers, drank greedily, then reached across and kissed her almost viciously on the mouth.

'What, been promoted again?'

Was she laughing? The young open face of only three or four years ago had changed. Or perhaps it was his mind producing those lines of ambiguity.

'Remember?'

Already she was beginning to landmark the marriage in terms of significant events. Nevertheless he did remember. The day his seniors had finally put the
proposition he'd waited for, the chance to grip a rung, to become fully-fledged rather than assistant to. And for some reason he'd faltered, mumbled something about having to consult the wife. His boss had eyed him quizzically. Travelling home that evening he'd seen the sprawling miles of tiled roofs, fences, gardens, as never before. The whole, tattered order. Was it this that he was coming to? As if in a dream he'd rolled and swayed with the dull-eyed bodies around him, wanting suddenly to hack indiscriminately, to inflict chaos, panic, reaction. He remembered stepping over the front gate and noticing how the young shrubs had taken a grip on the earth. Entering the house, he'd hoped that somehow there in the kitchen she would stand and confront him with the obvious solution. Face him, as once his parents had, in a direction. Instead she'd pointed to the card on the sideboard. A card from his brother. On that day of all days! After almost three years the first communication, two or three sentences. You couldn't even tell where it was bloody well from he'd shouted. And she with cake-mix-smeared hands had come across and fingered the card. Angrily he'd snapped it from her reach, daring retaliation. Why he was so touchy about his brother no-one would ever know she'd screamed. Surely he wasn't all that inferior! With deliberation he'd moved to her and split her lip with the back of his hand.

They hadn't been able to eat that night. Eyes glowering she'd listened to his trembling apologies. Listened as he'd attempted cautiously to exorcise a brother. Once as teenagers he said they'd fought violently. Over what he couldn't remember but it hadn't been the same since. It must have been about the time his brother had dropped out of university and left home. He'd cried a lot after that fight. Could have done anything his brother. Could really have made his mark. Everyone had said that. But there was something, some object, in the way. He remembered also at the end of a summer holiday his brother returning from fruit-picking. For weeks on the beach he'd waited for the exam results. There was a job, a secure one with a firm. Exam success, and the job was his. He'd worked so hard. And then in the paper one day he'd passed. Only just, but he'd passed. There was a small celebration with his parents, the first time his father had allowed him a drink. His brother had appeared the next morning early. Told, he'd merely said good luck. No congratulations, no shake of hand. Good luck and a momentary catching of eyes. It was the sort of look that made him feel as though he'd done something wrong, almost violated something sacred. It was a look he'd never forget. The next day his brother had gone.

In bed that night as they'd talked themselves slowly to sleep she'd said, 'I'm a person too remember.'

Drifting into sleep he'd spoken last.

'It's not just a matter of inferiority. It's something more than that.'

Next morning at work he'd accepted the offer of promotion. It depended on the success of a short course at night. But the step into his new office had virtually been taken.

* * * * *

But they were too young to reminisce. And he poured more wine. They gulped, watching each other. Her pregnancy wasn't yet showing however much they peered, touched and listened. The house could seem so empty and still at times, a vastness that perhaps they would people.

* * * * *

Next evening his mother rang.

'I've been thinking about your brother. He'll have to stay at your place. It wouldn't be fair here, dragging things up again. Your father has almost managed to forget him.'

'He won't stay anywhere. You know that.'

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‘What happened?’
‘Nothing happened. Forget it.’
‘You were never like that. You settled.’
‘Yes, I was a good solid boy. I can almost hear you telling the bloody neighbours from here.’
‘Sometimes you can be almost like your brother.’
‘But at heart I’m a good level-headed boy.’
‘Is something worrying you?’
He refused to answer.
‘How is the other business coming along? I’ve begun knitting already.’
‘Nicely. Not kicking yet but nicely thanks, tell the neighbours.’
He slammed the receiver down, immediately reddening with anger and remorse.
The blame wasn’t hers. It was bigger. They’d have to call sometime with an offering. Perhaps a few flowers, or some vegetables from the garden. He walked into the darkness of the backyard. The garden needed water.

* * * * *

As the days passed it occurred to him often that some effort should be made to contact the brother. To somehow pinpoint his position, get something definite. But it would probably be the same as always; they’d have to wait until he was ready. One day when least expected in he’d blow, tramping through the house, lighting his eyes on everything. There were friends somewhere in the suburbs. But a weird collection. Difficult enough to locate, let alone approach.

Some years back, sitting in his suit at the breakfast table, he’d reached for the paper. And there at the head of a stampeding mob of demonstrators was his brother. The camera had caught his eyes and for sometime in the kitchen the two brothers had glared at each other.

* * * * *

At night school one evening (a follow-up course to the original) he contributed to discussion for the first time. Others looked.

After, in the pub, the instructor asked him what he’d thought of the lecture. ‘Bullshit!’ he said. And stormed into the night before the instructor could finish asking which part. He walked, quickly, shoulders hanging forward. Like his brother.

* * * * *

At squash, with a senior officer caught on his knees at the front wall, he aimed a ball fair at his head. He missed and looked quickly back to an empty gallery.

* * * * *

One Friday evening, with the prospect of a weekend to fill, the young girl spoke.
‘And is it so shameful what we are doing?’
‘No. It’s the right thing.’
They were uncertain of each other’s tone.
‘Your brother was always a bastard.’
His eyes flared upon her.
‘Come on, bash me.’
They laughed quickly and stopped.
‘I’ve been thinking of a holiday, a week off,’ he said.

And so it was arranged. On compassionate grounds a week was brought forward from his annual quota of four. A week on the coast. The squash appointment was cancelled, night school easily dismissed. Reliable neighbours would feed the cat and water the garden. In the wind and spray of an ocean beach they would walk and talk and sort themselves out.

* * * * *
On the way they called on his parents, armed with vegetables. They were ushered into the big cool home.

'We've had a message,' his mother was saying. 'We won't be seeing your brother. He's been and gone. He didn't even bother to come and see us.'

'Better forgotten,' said his father without looking up from his newspaper.

'Yes.'

Caught in the lounge they sipped tea.

'How's the study?' his mother asked.

* * * * *

They travelled to the coast in silence and lasted three days. The rented shack was too hot and poky, the shower temperamental, the stove quite inadequate. The currents were treacherous and once he was very nearly swept out to sea. And after the first day they began to think of home. Home, where there was so much more to be done. Home, where the cat might be fretting, mail might be waiting.

There was assurance in the complete agreement with which they drove back to the city.

'I doubt if we'll ever see him again,' he said. 'He never had much time for me.'

'If you bumped into him in the street you mightn't even know him,' she said.

They laughed.

* * * * *

The cat was pleased to see them, rubbing against their legs and settling into a comfortable chair.

Locked in bed she said that she could definitely feel something stirring inside. She'd felt it in the past few days. She placed his head against the flesh and he listened. Perhaps he could hear something but he knew how easy it was to imagine. As he clung to her he thought he'd wait for something more substantial.
Posy for Springtime

The lockers clatter lunchtime to the belled end.

The posy passes from giggle to smirk (dandelions, freesias, soursobs bound with grass) and Gregory takes it, fixes it low in his belt.

The dandelions wink at the girls. He flips his posy erect and says ‘My flowery aphrodisiac’. The old, raw gesture it makes is just now right, and new. The boy has a man’s voice and the day is his and the corridor, and sudden, a whole world of girls.

He is lion, thesaurus, wit, he is the rake of room 19. His virgin pain, creeping around him catlike all the week is suddenly sharper, not at all assuaged by the swagger of being John Donne in Matric.
Maribarbola: The Dwarf at Court

(Maribarbola was a German dwarf attendant in the Spanish Court, and was painted by Velazquez in the foreground of 'Las Meninas' (1656).)

I still see three widows in black
cast on a cold brick street in the sun.
I hear the choked wet slap of a shirt.
The laundress crosses herself; ignores
the Bishop's boy with me on his horse
and my father already counting the coin.
My evil eye seeks out my mother's face,
the dam of the Ansbach dwarf, herself cursed

with a man who fingers next month's beer
in coin sold. It earned me counterpoint
for forty years; plum brocade as parody;
and a dog for size. And after the ladies

have laughed at the painting, refreshed the day
with a scatter of lavender water, I compose
my lumped gnome face. The painter, who knows,
has sold my grace again, in a master's scene.
Edmonton: Summer of ’62

I have been there. My compatriots the eventide
old man, his daughter, charts, a mongrel or two.
Trying to get back I came back—the city
I told them, would pass, as does any regression.
Recoiling with
   this innocence
   The mountain peak seemed none the higher.
The quagmire of rainforest breasted me home.
The constrictions danced before me
   a circumstance:

My tongue clicked out
    mountain!
    creek!
    forest!

as the old man
shrank from view, the daughter that was
merged to shadow, and the charts
and dogbodies became one with the headstone.

I have been there. I came back. The moon rose
above my shoulder. These symbols I will
show to any non-believer on how the mind’s camera
is slow in dying, how each footfall
   serves
avidly strengthening the legend.
News Flash

Earlier
This evening
At the intersection
Of Meat Pie & Sauce Streets
In the upper reaches
Of outer suburbia
A man believed
To be in his mid-eighties
With walking-stick
And short-sight
Casually
Collided
Head-on
With a bus
Full of homegoing
Football enthusiasts
Believed to have been travelling
In the opposite direction.

Police say
Damage
Was negligible.

Snapping however
Of the old man's walking-stick in two
Could be heard for miles.

Four tow-trucks
Parked
Up a blind alley
Arrived
On the scene
In seconds.

Spectators say
The smash
Is the worst
They've seen
For sheer lack
Of serious injury.
J. ZIZYS

for the love of time
hurry up
do this or that

there is a time
to scatter stones
and a time to
gather up stones

it will get done
the boy argues
all in good time

procrastination is the
thief of time my
restless watch
whispered
to me

having
before been
trapped in the
teeth of time I
smashed the
watch

now
I wear a
crown made
from the sixteen
jewels of stolen time
james dean

1
where if you glance behind
you can see the monochromed bars of taxis
swivelling at the bend
the car still burning there its flame
crawling up the sky hesitant as a crippled fly
of glass
& beside the white emptiness of billboards
stylised coppers watch blank faced
from motorbikes
in the rear vision mirror you catch
him looking through your eyes narcissist
as ever the flowers of his mockery recurring
eternal late movies on television

2
with valentino he escaped
a destiny of soap commercials but has served
to keep the repressive myth alive
beauty & honesty are easy distorted but
as with rimbaud they could have done without
his energy. an unforgivable imperfection—
although the creases have never deepened
on the sides of his face

3
a few lengths ahead
an old customline her fins swept back ducktail
& sleek brakes at the stoplights
the slow single flicker
on off on off & the regular heartbeat
of gas & the delicate pulse of her timing
move slowly past him the manual gear change
up when the lights go green
the speedometer needle climbing & the sleeve
cought in the door & I leave him
& america

pissweak reflection & creator of a generation
now gone to parenthood & the suburbs
& the chicken still screaming on the verandah

the tragic screen widening to cinemascope
the sun coming up & the huge mandala of the wheel
easy in your palm
GRAHAM ROWLANDS

Ian Mudie

I'm afraid his steep mauve-purple mountain ranges
never reached into peaks of friendship for me.
History, when Australian, has never been more than dates,
names, places and nothing happening—absurd, I know,
killed by rote-memorizing at primary, secondary schools,
no doubt having something to do with my not being
impressed by the obvious heroism of heroic journeys by
explorers going from somewhere through nowhere to sometimes
nowhere, although sometimes starting from nowhere only
to end up somewhere—all of this pioneering, of course,
travelling to and from both nowhere and somewhere. Although
his poetic snapshots of landscape seem only dull bushgreen
with only a bird or two when not sand, gibber or spinifex,
his South Australia has explained to me, a Brisbaner,
the importance of his Murray River and his riverboats.
How many others could have got those old captains talking? Not I.
This, only partly why I think his prose better than his poetry—
with exceptions; his humour, always better than his solemnity.

I'm afraid I don't think poets are ordinary people
as he told me they are. Not extraordinary either—
but most extraordinary in their sitting and setting down.
If so, then he was most extraordinary, those notes
having to go into his notebooks everywhere he went,
the reason why he lost one at some green trafficlights.

I'm afraid I did become mixed up with the almost-snobbery
he told me I'd never, as he did not ever, both of us
not accepting what he told me his mother called snobbery
that, as he told me, he told me was her inverted-snobbery
which neither he nor I would be part of either. And was right—
although he didn't allow for lineage's independence of mind.

I'm afraid I didn't share his estimate of his own poetic friends, many
of them: I wonder if he could have possibly believed them his equal.
Still, it was his same bent and viewpoint that caught out some who
didn't share his own estimate of those friends either, although
I wasn't one of those who said they'd read the non-existent.
It was the same wanting-everyone-to-be-equal attitude of mind, our
opposition to injustice that voted us identically, wanting more.
I'm afraid I'm both pleased and afraid to say our hands shook
in and on equal humility against the rudeness, the paranoia of
the leader we both wanted to win, believed in. But not just then.
I'm afraid I'd give all of his poems but two, even his best prose, even his funniest joke for those two: the almost anytime, almost anywhere pain, the red, ageing eyes of "Chauntecleer", the almost anywhere fear of what others were saying or thought to be, it can almost never be known, the almost anytime fear of "The Pursuer".

I'm afraid he died where I'm sure he didn't want to—in London, although I'll never again look at his mountains in the same way, knowing his ashes are scattered over the Flinders Ranges.
H. E. DANIEL

Ways of Resistance in David Ireland's
“The Unknown Industrial Prisoner”

In Bring Larks and Heroes, Keneally's concern is with the conflict of the individual moral imperative with the system, the institution. The novel is structured by the awakening of Halloran's commitment to moral action, his acceptance of moral responsibility abrogated by the system. He puzzles over his dilemma, struggles to determine the implications of participation in Hearn's scheme; and, at base, his choice is freely made and firmly, if with anguish, acted upon. That the system is impregnable to such an assault as Halloran's is a concern subsidiary to Halloran's awakening to and acting upon his convictions. While David Ireland's The Unknown Industrial Prisoner shares with Bring Larks and Heroes a sense of the system at work on the individual and the specific image of the prison system, it is the institution itself, the sprawling and chaotic Puroil refinery, that is the dominant presence, its dehumanising effect on those caught within it chillingly clear from the outset.

Puroil is a wasteland, its lumbering machinery capricious, its ranks rigidly demarcated, its code inspired by greed and expedience, its workers trapped into a labour that has no dignity. That the institution is essentially unassailable is crucial to the novel and, where Keneally focuses on the moral development of Halloran, Ireland creates a multiple perspective through a diversity of characters and a fragmented narrative structure. And rather than awakening to the confining and diminishing pressures of the system, Ireland explores ways of resistance and of realising man's 'true function'.

In these differences, many of the initial difficulties of The Unknown Industrial Prisoner are reflected. The structure has, at the outset, a disorienting effect, demanding a retention of many discrete elements and many characters, initially without the sense of vantage point Keneally creates through fidelity to Halloran's experience or that Ireland generates in The Chantic Bird and The Glass Canoe through the consistent presence of the narrator-protagonist. It is not a structure that makes many concessions to the reader, its narrative line depending on the parallel movement of many characters towards resistance to Puroil. However, these difficulties I think are initial rather than enduring and it is, ultimately, because of these characteristics that the novel yields a more intricate and compelling portrayal of the institution at work on those enclosed within it than a more conventional structure might yield.

There are purposes and problems peculiar to the review as a critical form yet the reviews of the novel when first published in 1971 together raise important issues related to what I have called initial difficulties with the novel and, while most of the reviewers attributed some strength and vitality to the novel, it is in their qualifications of this that I am here interested. Brian Kiernan suggested
its conception is more appropriate to the short story form and that interest in characters is not sustained because of the degree of their alienation. Donald Crick felt it fails to "create a sense of events leading to any point of climax".² What Carl Harrison-Ford described as "a number of frozen sections".³ The characterisation Clifford Tolchard found "gimmicky" and "computerised", with "outlandish names which admirably suit their nebulousness".⁴ Barry Oakley found that, while it succeeds in building a rich "raffia-weave" pattern, its curious narrative structure becomes wearying, while John McLaren concluded that its style and structure "deny continuity and development".⁵ It is these central critical questions I want to consider while discussing its image of the system at work on individuals.

The narrative line is determined by a correspondence of action and reaction, of offence and defence—a kind of 'thrust and parry' dialectic. Despite the semblance of circularity in the earlier part of the novel engendered by the many breakdowns and resumptions of the plant, it is a firm line of interaction, quickened and intensified by the shifts in Puroil policy and the concomitantly desperate attempts at resistance. From this escalation of the conflict between Puroil and prisoners derives the novel's cohesion and its insistent pressures on the reader. From the total pattern of resistance, three main forms stand out: the establishment and development of Home Beautiful through the Great White Father; the efforts of the unions to safeguard workers' rights; and the attempts of individuals to wrest some justice from Puroil in their personal dilemmas, attempts which culminate in the massive explosions which rock Puroil finally. Against these closely interwoven forms of resistance stands the brooding figure of the Samurai, searching for a way of translating a seminal commitment to the well-being of prisoners into action. These forms of resistance are initiated within the first chapter so that, from the outset, the nature of the imprisonment is balanced against the struggle against it.

The misery of the first waking to the 5.50 reveille of Glass Canoe's clamour on the lockers, for those who wake cold and disoriented to the shift worker's disordered time, is a parody of dawn as a sense of renewal and possibility. This first day in the 'penal colony', where days are scratched off in cement walls, all but the Samurai bear a residual ankle scar and the 'trusties' must torment their men to retain the privileges of rank, introduces the jealously guarded ranks where men must set themselves against all others to survive. The ethics of survival are clear in Stillson's tightening anxiety over the Enforcer's vengeance, the absurdity of the new foreman, Samples, reduced to clandestine stalking of his workers in order to learn his new job rather than confess ignorance, the public mockery of a foreman because "... no one wanted to side with a foreman, not in a crowd. They would sneak into his office later one by one and square off."⁷ That the hierarchy shelters the tyrannical, the unstable, the sadistic, emerges in the torrid scene of Far Away Places' ordeal. While Puroil's indifference to its human resources (and insistence that men be at odds with each other) is chillingly real, this first chapter also sees the establishment of Home Beautiful and, although it is clear that the "smell of death" (p. 28) pervades even it, this seems only a minor doubt in an otherwise sanguine enterprise of self-determination and co-operative endeavour. Great White Father is at the start able to articulate the nature of their imprisonment and offers the haven in the mangroves, across the oil-dark waters, to ease their lot, his purpose already given shape and form. From the diversity of minor figures already woven into the narrative, the Samurai too is marked out as a major figure and, as he eagerly attends to the words of the Great White Father, seeking revelation but dissatisfied, the contrast of his purpose with that of Great White Father is foreshadowed. The Samurai is an isolated figure, brooding on the ruthless hostility which alienates man from his fellows, subjecting himself to firm discipline in readiness for a role as yet unrevealed. In his solitary concern for honour, he is at odds with those around him who live by the code of survival, confined to a
troubled detachment. This first chapter, where Ireland's purpose clearly extends beyond the fact of man's alienation "from his true function" (p.25) to questioning ways of resistance, concludes with the haunting image of the idiot on the highway, endlessly tying and untying the knots of grey rag and rope while passers-by step round him unseeingly and those responsible for him sometimes forget his existence.

Already six months delayed at the start of the novel, already causing harsher conditions, the start-up of the new plant is accompanied by the fulsome rhetoric of senior workers and coaxed into operation by that ignorance and avarice that comes to signify the daily functioning of Puroil. Establishing the characteristic pattern or start-up and breakdown, at the time of the first breakdown, Ireland freezes events into a series of stills that capture some of the diversity of Puroil: Glass Canoe surrendering gladly to the enveloping roar; supervisors in a futile circling around the site; the old couple in the Plymouth, hired as guards, huddling beneath their blanket; in Home Beautiful's drink hut, Great White Father languidly enquiring about the blast; contract prisoners smoking in the pig-pen; Blue Hills asleep on a floating roofftank; Beautiful Twinkling Star heartily intoning hymns. Rumours of retrenchments, rumours fostered by the company, selection of scapegoats and the threat of idleness characteristically follow, with the corollary of increasing rigour and deterioration from the "honeymoon" days at the start. The narrative line is in part determined by the whims of the plant itself, in part by the escalating pressures on workers themselves, under the shadow of the Second Industrial Revolution whereby, as the Wandering Jew bewilders himself by pointing out, man is no longer sacred, the machine prevails and man is but another resource.

The capacity of the unions to resist is suggested in the Python's likening their role to the children's game 'No Bending': "'You yell out No Bending! while you poke 'em in the gut to make 'em bend, and if they bend they're out'." (p.208). The company manipulates the unions lightly, toying with their demands that can hold no menace for each man is set against his fellows to cling to his job. When the men seek minimal safety conditions, they are greeted by the glazed and smiling assurance of the Wandering Jew that he is "very interested in the safety question" (p.255)—he becomes alarmed by their tendency to believe him. Puroil's adroit manipulation and the unions' hopeless resistance of it are coloured always by the code of survival whereby

They would forget their solidarity and work like slaves to be the last to go. Fear, like a monstrous sore planted by a rabbit exterminator, stood out hard and crusted on their faces. (p.262)

Through the detailed elaboration of union attempts at resistance, culminating in the industrial agreement that precipitates the climactic explosions, run the fortunes of numerous minor characters, some of whom exist to embody a dilemma, a predicament which commands immediate recognition from the reader. Ireland's viewpoint obviously is not directed to the inner experience of such minor figures but to the collective experience. That the failure of union resistance is inevitable is clear as much in Puroil's playing with their threat as in the fates of characters such as Blue Hills and Herman the German. The pattern of union and individual resistance reflects that structure of assault and defence, of action and reaction, characteristic of the novel. Within the dilemma of each individual, there is a firm development towards climax of personal fortune: the efforts of One Eye to get the sack are finally successful and leave him resentful; Herman the German's injury, decline, his being sacked, end in his death at Home Beautiful; Taffy the Welsh seeks compensation, broods on vengeance and is led to sabotage; Far Away Places, humiliated by Glass Canoe, develops a curious dependence on him; the
Good Shepherd, struggling to reconcile Christian and Puroil ethics, settles for an expedient loyalty to Puroil; the fortunes of Cheddar Cheese fluctuate according to fashions in "leukemia pity". Such developments in personal fortune are embedded in the pattern of collective experience of which the sabotage at the end is the culmination.

Under the harshening policies that challenge the faith of even the most fervent believers in Puroil's ultimate justice, numerous minor characters are driven to sabotage, actions which produce a kind of spontaneous combustion as Puroil explodes because of its nature. It functions by self-seeking, ruthless indifference to its human resources, incompetence and avarice, and, in a powerful welding together of the many discrete elements of the novel, Ireland shows the seeds of its own destruction within it. Characters such as Dadda, Donk, One Eye, Taffy the Welsh and Congo Kid, are driven to vengeance; others such as Loosehead, the Thieving Magpie and Ambrose are impelled by ignorance, gullibility or incompetence, to participate in the climactic explosions. There is no leader, no planning, nor can there be where each man is isolated by fear. It is to these explosions that the narrative develops and after them, the narrative pace slows, the impact on Puroil reflected in the puzzled question of an investigator, "Is there anyone who might have a grudge against the company?" (p. 369).

Together the minor characters yield an elaborate portrayal of men caught up in an institution and the impact of this derives not from fully rounded characters whose inner experience we share, but from the interweaving of numerous individual circumstances into a sense of collective experience in an intransigent system. It is by their reactions to imprisonment that such figures are realised, by the specific dilemma in which each one is enclosed. The use of sobriquets heightens the sense of confinement into a role in collective life, usually the sobriquet suggestive of particular attitudes: some, such as the Enforcer (hurt and confused by ingratitude to kindly Puroil), the Python (uncoiling to strike at the lowly prisoners), the Wandering Jew (passing through Clearwater in his journey to the international board), the Actor (Education Officer adept at propaganda), encapsulate significant characteristics and judgments on them. Together, the sobriquets embody a sense of the values and codes of behaviour among prisoners and as such are intrinsic to the novel through their very suggestiveness. Against the many minor figures in the novel are several sustained characters who, although presented through the same pattern of fragmented and multi-faceted narrative, are closer to conventional characterisation. These characters, notably Glass Canoe, the Samurai and Great White Father, do in different ways provide that sense of vantage point one misses early in the novel and at the same time allow Ireland's exploring of ways of resistance to be sharply focused against the background of resistance of both unions and the many minor figures. And with each of these characters there is a very clear sense of development throughout the novel, despite some uncertainties which I think cloud the resolution of the novel.

Glass Canoe is not, like Great White Father and the Samurai, committed to the collective welfare but is concerned only with his own survival. His is the only sustained portrayal of an individual seeking not to question, modify or resist the system but to win its rewards. Pouring all his energies and aspirations into approved Puroil channels in exchange for some identity to which he can cling, Glass Canoe finally must accept Puroil's utter indifference to him. His ingratiating manner with the Python, his savage contempt for the lower orders and his fawning subservience are hardly endearing characteristics. It is Glass Canoe who degrades Far Away Places in the first chapter, who repeatedly waives safety provisions to win praise, yet, while he at times seems an embodiment of Puroil ethics, there is also compassion in Ireland's attitude. Vulnerable to the Python's inveigling, he is pitifully trusting, with a nervous tautness which manifests itself as "A grotesque smugness
...the nearest he got to a relaxed manner. An ingratiating hangman talking to
members of the supporting cast.” (p. 59). He is presented as “the Hollow Man”,
adrift in the Puroil wasteland:

His brain teemed with the echoing, strident voices of the men he imagined
himself to be. He glanced round the mob faces confidently, not seeing them.
He didn’t know what he would do next. (p. 87).

He is willingly subsumed into the roles Puroil offers, believes in Puroil as he cannot
believe in himself, believes the doctors when they insist that privacy is unhealthy.
A tormented and self-enclosed figure, he is a prey to the fear that he is not ‘afloat’,
“Perhaps he had sunk and didn’t realise it yet.” (p. 164), feverishly consulting the
list of approved Puroil characteristics. Casually pushed into the current by the
Elder Statesman, he tries to establish a private meaning for words, losing the
last link of language. He suspects he does not exist, that he is only the memory
of roles imposed on him, and he ponders the possibility involved in the negation,
the ‘un’, of all that exists. The menace of negation grows with the questionnaire
that gives no hint of the ‘right’ answer and he is left with nothing to cling to,
aware only of his hollowness and Puroil’s utter indifference to him. Before his
death, as he exposes to a silent audience the images of himself which at last words
can convey, he feels a surge of meaning and significance. As he falls to his death,
the style is detached, coldly documenting the reactions of witnesses.

Glass Canoe acts as a vantage point on those who secretly and intractably
believe in the ultimate justice of Puroil. The shift in him from fidelity to a twisting
anxiety then despair is bleakly suggestive of the prisoners at large. His hollowness
and awful emptiness, the futility of his attempt to find some identity in an alien
world, make him a haunting figure.

From the developing contrast of the purpose of the Samurai and Great White
Father, there comes a further vantage point on the mosaic of character and event.
Ireland’s attitude to Great White Father is complex, at times one of endorse­
ment, at times one of indictment, finally almost mocking. At the start, Great White
Father urges resistance through “Smiles, a quick wit, sex, alcohol, and never say
Yes to the bastards.” (p. 10). While recognising that “awareness ... sharpens our
sense of confinement” (p. 29), he aims to awaken awareness yet combines this
with a form of underground resistance that is, essentially, acquiescent, a kind of
rebellious assent to the system—what John McLaren called “inner migration”.
The tension is clear at the outset: that between fostering awareness and proffering
only the comfort of oblivion because

It is safer for most of us to be shackled in our chains than to be free to fend
for ourselves ... What we have to do is make our little hole in the barbed
wire and creep out now and again to our hidey hole where we can forget we
are born prisoners and will die prisoners. (p. 28).

Home Beautiful, their ‘hole in the barbed wire’, is designed not to escape from
nor challenge the system but to sweeten a continuing confinement through periodic
relief from it. Adrian Mitchell argues that Great White Father “... creates a model
of the alternative society” and is “something of a one man Workers’ Education
Association”; yet he observes too that Home Beautiful and “the accessible carnal
delights scarcely establish the possibility of growth, of life itself against the degra­
dation of industrialism ...”.
Ireland is not, I think, proffering Home Beautiful as
a means of growth and indeed adopts a critical stance to it from the outset. Great
White Father himself does not see it as a means of growth, describing it as “a vast
underground movement of inertia” (p. 166) and he accepts that “He was no
frustrated missionary like the Samurai. He was teaching these poor wretches,
trained to captivity, to make life bearable.” (p. 21). Against the paternalism implicit here, is the Samurai’s unwilling, somewhat resentful, recognition of his capacity to lead others and his anxious deliberations on the form that leading should take. Through this contrast, which develops during the novel, Ireland’s attitude to Great White Father takes shape. Where the Samurai is isolated, committed to honour and the need for a worthy opponent, a prey to despair at the weakness and the consuming enmity of others, Great White Father lustily exhorts them to oblivion:

Beware the evils of temperance and sobriety and embrace the worship of the bottle... Be not led into the wretchedness of right conduct... Drink! And the deliverer from this bondage, and the refuge to which you fly are in you (p. 31).

While he accuses the Samurai of being “a company man” (p. 337), the Samurai points out that Home Beautiful in effect promotes Puroil’s interests—and Great White Father dismisses this as “a side effect” of the way of “Eternal Oblivion” (p. 337). Adrian Mitchell argues that the Samurai’s goal is to make the system work, “to make some sense of the system itself”. Yet more than by the system itself, the Samurai is disturbed by men’s involvement in an enterprise dependent on co-operation yet defeating themselves (and thus, as a secondary issue, the system) by their own fear and ignorance. He pursues the notion of a dedication in which men’s private purposes might be submitted in a larger design. It is not dedication to Puroil but rather a concept of human order and human relationships totally at odds with the disorder and hostility prevailing at Puroil, at odds too with the Great White Father’s offer of his monarch’s patronage:

‘Princes of the blood, with me their king. That’s what they miss: the colour, the natural subordination to a king whose authority is unquestioned and whose orders coincide with their desires.’ (p. 194).

Great White Father is a powerful figure in the novel, his attitudes bitingly clear in his addresses to the populace of Home Beautiful. In part he is a voice of Ireland’s own Acerbic irony, through his subversive injunctions, the casual yet trenchant analyses of Puroil and the industrial society at large. He is often a parody Christ figure—his sermons an inversion of Christian ethics, his urging of acceptance a kind of dissenting acquiescence, the healed incision in his side revealed (as is the significant ankle scar) in the parody death scene, his ministering to the needs of his flock mockingly depicted. Ireland draws forth the inconsistencies of his attitudes to men who are “prisoners of their own image of themselves” (p. 194): for instance, when he exhorts the hapless Ambrose to the futile task of painting the door, content to foster in Ambrose “the force... of the feeling that he was doing his bit for the common good” (p. 139) regardless of the futility of the task. The disjunction between generating a sense of purpose and an act of futility is at the core of Great White Father’s outlook, for he delivers them from bondage only with the promise of inertia—

And from enslavement to Puroil I will lead my groggy troops into enslavement to the delights of women and the bottle. In short, to inertia. A vast underground movement of inertia. To exist, to be, is all. Inertia will save us—our ability to live at the lowest pitch... (p. 166).

His richness and comic vigour as a character in part spring from the despair underlying his purpose—and it is despair, however purposeful he seems. To Beautiful Twinkling Star, he angrily asserts that life is “a rotten joke for your Bloke to pull” (p. 330); to Wandering Jew, he proclaims his faith in “‘The destiny of a slotted, punched card that one day suddenly finds itself alone—and important—traversing the labyrinth—’” (p. 304). While he is portrayed in scenes mellow
with irony and earthy vitality, there is a dissociative distance in Ireland's attitude to him.

The Samurai feels compassion for men like Fitter Dick and the Mad Bloke who are bowed down like the "new negroes" (p.90) and feels bitterness that men debase themselves. When some officials arrive, he shouts, "'Quick! On your knees. They might chuck us a dollar!' Several lowered themselves to this position immediately." (p.89). Finding only the cowed and defeated, he becomes crippled by his own anguish which Two Pot Screamer alone recognises, wondering how long this man could keep inside himself the fury that was stirred and boiled up fresh each day by the jumble, the tangle, the idiocies, the sneaking out from under, the endless don't-care. (p.310)

From one deliberating before committing himself to action, the Samurai becomes cursed with the habit of anxiety, "a man with dead seed" (p.312), only his dreams a release. It is the very intensity of his struggle to commit himself to action, to translate his concept of human order into reality, that makes him a compelling figure. And convinced that the way of 'inertia' only blunts resistance, he is left impotent in the face of prisoners' complicity in their fate.

The contrast of the Samurai and Great White Father is the central perspective on event and character. It is with a fine irony then that Ireland juxtaposes the scenes of the saboteurs finding their own action against Puroil with the "policy speeches" (pp.342-3) of the two main characters. This juxtaposition prompts a re-appraisal of the attitudes of both and, underlying the closing scenes of the novel, is the fact of Puroil's exploding from its own contradictions, quite independent of the activities of both Great White Father and the Samurai.

Ireland has consistently drawn out the ambiguities inherent in the Great White Father's attitudes and, when he is mocked as the Great White Feather, when Home Beautiful threatens to collapse without his subsidy, when his death is presented in a neat parody of the demise of the great, his role in the novel is not debilitated. His growing uncertainty of his purpose in fact sustains him as a character: there is more insistence than conviction in his address to the cat, when he avers:

-'In spite of what the Samurai thinks, it's better to have a drink with a man than to found new civilisations on his corpse. I can't see men as coral polyps, dying in order to build the edifice a little higher with their bones ... I wouldn't try to alter a thing: all systems woe.' (p.343)

While this slightly defiant confidence sustains his portrayal, there is less sureness in the portrayal of the Samurai after the explosions. He survives the rather gratuitous mockery of an arm injury from the too vigorous bonhomie of his fellows but the almost slapstick liaison with Mrs Blue Hills and the kidnapping sequence (the only sustained sequence outside Puroil's gate) seems an intrusion on the narrative and extraneous to the portrayal of the Samurai. While his earlier troubled detachment is convincing, in a sense he is at the end of the novel still poised for action, still seeking a way to realise his purpose. There is a shift in the final chapter when he determines on guerilla warfare as the way of resistance, but the passage from a doubting search to a subversive role (guided by "Hate, Chaos, Leadership" instead of "Help, Care, Listen") is far from smooth and depends on Ireland's assertion of a change rather than the embodiment of it and thus significantly weakens his role in the novel. That this warfare is to take place on "a new industrial frontier in the west" (p.379) seems evasive (as evasive as the similar conclusion of Burn and The Glass Canoe) and seems a retreat from the issues the novel has explored.

The end of the novel is further clouded by the appearance of the peculiarly self-effacing narrator, his role not illuminated by the enigmatic remark that "'And
I myself am missing but that lack is essential'” (p. 374). There are grounds for identifying the narrator as the Samurai or else as Two Pot Screamer or, again, as a new and anonymous figure, but for the reader to have to embark on a hunt for clues is hardly suggestive of an organic role for the narrator. Two Pot Screamer and the Samurai have both recorded events at PuroiI and there has been throughout the novel the motif of the power of words (in the DNR signs, the Utopia 1852 posters, the notices beginning “Men that were once bludgers . . .” (p. 297) and the inscription, ‘The Unknown Industrial Prisoner’ at the base of Blue Hills’ tomb); but the issue of the narrator’s identity is again interposed between reader and the Samurai’s belief in the writer as reformer, so that this element in the novel remains submerged.

At the end of the novel, the Samurai is horrified by the vacant eyes of the idiot fixed on him and is arrested by the aimless knotting that seems the summation of human endeavour; and while Ireland acknowledges the comfort of indifference, to be aware of the idiot’s endless and futile actions is the preliminary of any attempt to realise man’s ‘true function’. Among the prisoners, the prize won by the Colonel, for his sculpture of the Unknown Industrial Prisoner, prompts only a sense of the gulf between their world and the world of those whose are entranced by the symbolism of metal and scrap. The conflict of human purposes which brings disorder and confinement to man is reflected also in the final scene, where the narrator and the Volga Boatman, dodge each other, each fixed on his own goal,

...concentrated absolutely on where we wanted to go. We had no mind left over to escape each other. Back and forth we went from side to side . . . each, for the sake of a tiny inconvenience, wishing the other had never existed. (p. 379).

It is a final image of man at odds with man and a last ironic insight into the Samurai’s dream of ‘dedication’ where private purposes might be subsumed into a larger design. While the novel’s pace slows at times and while its mosaic of event and character is initially disorienting, in its interweaving of individual purposes and the pressures the system exerts, the novel becomes a powerful indictment of the industrial society as well as an exploration of resistance against a confining institution.

NOTES
8. p. 96 op. cit.
10. Ibid.
The essential subject of *The Getting of Wisdom* (1910) is the conflict within the divided self of Laura Rambotham. This conflict takes the form of Laura’s turmoil before two warring elements within her own personality. She is torn between a strong impulse to express her native and spontaneous self and an opposed desire to repress her individuality by conforming to the attitudes and expectations of her school milieu in order to gain social acceptance.

Richardson has designed the novel to emphasize that Laura’s experience follows a pattern of gradual self-suffocation and a subsequent regrowth into a tentative maturity in which she gains sufficient “wisdom” to accept her individuality. From the moment of her arrival at The Ladies College Laura learns that she must deny and submerge her own selfhood if she is to be accepted by her schoolfellows. This denial of self reaches its climax after the Shepherd affair when Laura strenuously subjugates her feelings and thoughts in her efforts to escape from “Coventry”. Subsequent to this annihilation of self, there is a counter movement towards the end of the novel which charts Laura’s hesitant and painful regrowth towards self-acceptance and the courage to express her unorthodox individuality.

The opposed elements within Laura’s personality are established within the first pages of the novel. Richardson initially emphasizes her assertive individuality by referring to her as the “personification of all that was startling and unexpected” and stressing her “natural buoyancy of spirit”. Another element of her personality is a compelling desire to be “liked”. This quality becomes apparent during her first encounter with Mrs Gurley:

> What really occupied her ... was how she could please this hard faced woman and make her like her; for the desire to please, to be liked by all the world, was the strongest her young soul knew.” (35)

These twin aspects of character come into conflict because Laura’s natural and spontaneous selfhood is not acceptable to the school community. Her warm advances towards the teachers offend the stylized decorum of the school and she does not perceive the world in the same conventional framework of the other pupils. She has a vivid and pictorial imagination whereas a prosaic curriculum has stultified this faculty within her contemporaries. The Anne Johns episode also indicates that Laura has a keen understanding of human affairs which transcends the conventional pieties of the other girls. Such qualities set Laura apart and she denies each of them in her pathetic attempts to gain acceptance.

Laura’s “natural buoyancy of spirit” is curtailed within hours of her arrival at The Ladies College. She quickly realizes that her behaviour must adhere to rigid
codes of conduct and propriety. A sensitivity to the "general unfriendliness of the people" (38) forces her to retreat into a timid submissiveness and a fear of becoming an object of public scorn by violating the stylized manners of the school. The same fear underlies her concealment of the scandalous fact that her mother earns her living as a dressmaker. This amounts to a denial of an important aspect of her social identity and she denies her religious identity as an Episcopalian when she assures a young dissenter that she is indifferent as to which type of church she attends. She also learns to deny her imaginative nature and succumb to the school's limited concept of knowledge by driving "hard nails of fact into her vagrant thoughts". (61) These denials and repressions establish the pattern of self-negation which persists throughout most of her school days.

The first months at The Ladies College therefore make a definite impression upon Laura that "the unpardonable sin is to vary from the common mould" and that she must learn "to model herself more and more on those around her". (86) However she is unable to accept such self-repression without some degree of conscious conflict:

You might regulate your outward habit to the last button; you might conceal the tiny flaws and shuffle over the big improprieties in your home life, which were likely to damage your value in the eyes of your companions; you might, in brief, march in the strictest order along the narrow road laid down for you ... yet of what use were all your pains, if you could not marshall your thoughts and feelings—the very realest part of you—in rank and file as well? (102)

She begins to suspect, but as yet is too immature to recognize the implications of her suspicion, that no matter how strenuously she attempts to regiment her behaviour, she will never be able to fully deny the most fundamental aspects of her unconventional selfhood.

Laura's vagrant self reasserts its reality during the Annie Johns episode. She does not feel the outraged righteousness of the other girls but intuitively understands the pressures which have influenced Annie's "crime":

She understood what it would mean to lack your tramfare on a rainy morning ... she could imagine, too, with a shiver, how easy it would be, the loss of the first pennies having remained undiscovered, to go on to threepenny-bits, and from these to sixpences ... How safe the other girls were. No wonder they could allow themselves to feel shocked and outraged; none of them knew what it was not to have threepence in your pocket. (103-109)

Her reaction reinforces Laura's sense of the unorthodox nature of her native self: "her feelings had been different—there was no denying that." (109) However she is still incapable of accepting this personal difference which sets her apart but views it with fearful apprehension:

Oh! the last wish in the world she had was to range herself on the side of the sinner; she longed to see eye to eye with her comrades ... For there was no saying where it might lead you, if you persisted in having odd and peculiar notions; ..." (110)

In an authorial aside Richardson stresses that these fears are an aspect of Laura's persistently anxious longing for social acceptance for they are linked with her longing "that she might be preserved from having thoughts that were different from other people's; that she might be made to feel as she ought to feel, in a proper, ladylike way." (110)

As Laura and her companions progress through their adolescence success in the sphere of sexual flirtation becomes a major criterion of social success and a means of winning peer approval. Laura's fabrication of a romantic affair between
herself and Reverend Shepherd is an attempt to gain such approval. She does not consider the enormity of her fictions but is preoccupied with “the prestige the visit had lent and yet promised to lend her”. (148) The exposure of the deceitful nature of her tales results in the realization of her darkest fears of social rejection. She is branded as an “outcast” like Annie Johns and sent to “Coventry” for her offence.

Laura initially responds to her banishment by adopting a rebellious identity. The knowledge that her classmates regard her as a “moral inferior” prompts her to become “a rebel wrapping herself round in the cloak of bitterness”. (181) However, her defiance is superficial, it is only based upon a distempered resentment, a “hate of those within the pale”. (182) It does not proceed from an understanding of how the imperatives of her own identity command her to seek an independent lifestyle. The shallow nature of her rebellious posturing is borne out by the rapid resurgence of her yearning to “re-enter the fold”. Her efforts to regain acceptance constitute her most extreme acts of self repression and a willing acceptance of public self-abasement:

Her outward behaviour for many a day was, none the less that of a footlicker ... You could also rely on her to do a dirty job for you—A horrid little toady was the verdict ... she was forever considering what she ought to do, what to leave undone. She learnt to weigh her words before uttering them ... she learnt, too, ... to keep her real opinions to herself, and to make those she expressed tally with her hearers. And she was quick to discover that this was a short cut towards regaining her lost place: to conceal what she truly felt—particularly if her feelings ran counter to those of the majority. (182)

Richardson clearly indicates that such strategies amount to Laura’s wilful denial of her native self:

Deep within her ... there lurked a feeling which sometimes made as if to raise its head ... to remind its owner that her way, too, had a right to existence. But it was not strong enough to make itself heard, or rather Laura refused to hear it, and turned a deaf ear whenever it tried to hint at its presence. (185)

The remainder of the novel charts Laura’s gradual regrowth from this extreme state of rigid self-repression towards a tentative understanding and acceptance of her unique individuality. Her acceptance as a member of the school literary society completes her social “regeneration” but is also important because it encourages the cultivation of her imagination, the sole remnant of self which she had not wilfully prostituted in her compromising efforts to regain acceptance.3 Once again she confronts and succumbs to pressures of conformity and her first literary pieces are attempts to gratify the expectations of the other members. However she gradually realizes that literature provides an avenue for the expression of her imaginative nature without transgressing the codes of social conduct. She achieves an independent vision, a piece of wisdom which she can accept without compromising her personal integrity:

In your speech, your talk with others, you must be exact to the point of pedantry, and never romance ... or you would be branded an abominable liar. Whereas, as soon as you put pen to paper, provided you kept one foot planted on probability, you might lie as hard as you liked ... (196)

Laura’s friendship with Evelyn Souttar promotes her regrowth towards a “healthy ... self-assurance”. (202) Evelyn is the first person Laura has encountered since she left home who accepts her individuality. She “was the only person who did not either hector her, or feel it a duty to clip and prune at her: she accepted Laura for what she was—for herself”. (201) Under this benign influence
Laura “shot up and flowered like a spring bulb”. (201) The intimacy she shares with the older girl is also the means whereby she is freed from the guilt and doubt that she may be inherently evil, a fear which has burdened her since the Shepherd affair. Once emancipated from this debilitating fear she grows towards a healthier state of self acceptance.

Despite her new-found self esteem Laura is still an immature adolescent and her immaturity is reflected in the way in which her friendship with Evelyn degenerates into a possessive “tyranny”. She naively assumes that Evelyn’s commitment to her excludes the possibility of her forming other intimate alliances and the knowledge that Evelyn has an attachment for a certain Jim comes as a “rude awakening” for Laura. It confronts her with the fact that her cherished intimacy with Evelyn is limited to a moment in time, that it cannot be an everlasting haven of self-assurance. Her tantrums are therefore more than the expression of an adolescent jealousy, they indicate Laura’s reluctance to emerge from this cocoon of protective friendship and confront the world as an independent being.

Laura’s turning to religion as a “well of comfort” after Evelyn’s departure is yet another attempt to evade growth into autonomous selfhood. Richardson’s language clearly indicates that Laura’s devotion to Christ is a response to her continued need for a protective friendship:

To this younger, tenderer God, she proffered long and glowing prayers ... she felt herself led by Him, felt herself a favourite lying on His breast ... (221)

This reliance upon religion is excessive and immature in the same way as her dependence upon Evelyn. The realization that not even religion can protect her from the need to act as an individual agent dawns upon her with alarming clarity after she is forced to cheat in order to pass her history exam. The compromise she makes in the interests of self-advancement shatters her “entire self respect” and she rebukes God as a faithless friend with a “cold and calculating heart” for failing to protect her from such “extremities”. (228)

If Laura’s religious devotion constitutes an evasion of the challenge to grow into independent selfhood, then her decision to become a “lukewarm” Christian by restricting her faith to “the glib and shallow mode of her friends” is a positive gesture of self-affirmation. She makes this choice without reference to any authority other than her thoughts and feelings. As such, it is her first truly independent action since she entered the world of The Ladies College and her new degree of independent selfhood is reflected in her behaviour at Church. Instead of conforming to the conventional piety of bowing her head at the mention of Christ’s name, “she held her head erect and shut the ears and eyes of her soul”. (229)

Laura’s regrowth towards an independent selfhood continues through her last months at school. Unlike her contemporaries Cupid and M.P. she does not allow her future identity to be predetermined for her by choosing a standardized career or social role. She emerges from the confines of the college with an embryonic spirit of independence. This is not to deny that she still has an “uncomfortable sense of being a square peg, which fitted into none of the round holes of her world” but she no longer tries to deny and disguise her difference. Richardson herself suggests that full self-realization will only come to Laura in a “freer and more spacious world” where she will discover her “seeming unfitness ... to be only another aspect of a peculiar and special fitness”. (234)

The Getting of Wisdom therefore records two major phases in Laura Rambottom’s development towards selfhood. The first phase involves the transformation of a buoyant and imaginative child into a timid adolescent who represses her native self to gain social acceptance. It is succeeded by a process of regrowth which involves Laura’s awakening to an understanding that the differences between herself and her contemporaries are the indelible marks of her unique individuality.
The novel concludes with a gesture which symbolizes her emergence into a confident selfhood. Released into a freer world outside the college she chooses to violate public decorum by running through a public park with most unladylike recklessness:

... it came over her with a rush: she was free ... she might do any mortal thing she chose ... she was off, had darted away into the leaden heat of the December morning ... people stood still and looked in amazement after the half-grown girl in white ... (230)

By the end of the novel Laura has acquired the wisdom and courage to be her natural self without her previously debilitating concern as to whether her behaviour conformed to the expectations and values of her milieu.

REFERENCES

   (All page references are to this edition and are indicated in the text.)

2. It is significant that the novel was originally published as *The Education of Laura*. Richardson also considered *The Enlightenment of Laura* as another possible title. See Green, Dorothy, *Ulysses Bound: Henry Handel Richardson and Her Fiction*. Canberra, A.N.U. Press, 1973, p. 222.

3. At this point I wish to register my dissent from Buckley's interpretation of the novel as "the education of an artist". To see the novel as the record of Laura's artistic apprenticeship seems an exaggeration of the degree to which Richardson is concerned with Laura's artistic potential. Dorothy Green's assessment of the novel as "the portrait of a particular kind of person, who might or might not turn out to be an artist, rather than of one who was born to that destiny", is truer to the experience of the novel. See Buckley, Vincent. *Henry Handel Richardson*, Melbourne, Lansdowne Press, 1962, p. 21. Green, Dorothy. *Op. cit.* p. 241.
ANNE LLOYD

Anniversary Reverie

I am no ghost in a midnight trellis world
walking between cold wax shutters
that shatter the tilt of the stars' fine pencil lines.
Velvet negligee clasps me in its icy night parcel:
I'm padding the length of the hall,
to water insomnia, I claim.

Dripping only metallic tattoos,
the tap divides my romantic cloak of sensibility,
shrieks at the anniversary bottle
disintegrate to fragments of jab-sharp glass.
The ghost wraps his tight body in double sheets,
snores contemptuously:
he has exorcized me with french champagne this year.

Twisted, the moon pales and melts eye-red stars.
Messages hung in paraffin
distort the ivy spades
that shelter along the sill,
and bending, creep between loose linen windings
to strangle the complacent corpse.
...wandering
inhuman-human presences
swarm to my lighted candle's flame,
in metaphors of silence beg
a human syllable, a name.

"All Souls'"

This volume of Gwen Harwood's poetry, selected by the poet herself, will be particularly valued by many people who have followed her career since her first book, Poems, appeared in 1963. It includes above half the poems from this and its successor Poems/Volume Two (1968), together with 27 recent poems. Given the rarity of those first two volumes now, it would have been beneficial to have a fuller selection from them: certainly a much wider, more diverse readership exists for her poems now. In general, though, one is grateful simply to have these poems and the opportunity for an overall view they afford.

Perhaps the first question to raise as one confronts this book is: where is Gwen Harwood to be found in her poetry, what kind of human presence declares itself through the poems? Critics and reviewers have often stressed the "mask" aspect of her poetry ("I like disguises, I like wigs and beards") taking her much too easily at her own word. Play, irony and disguise certainly do figure importantly in her work as a whole—pre-eminently in that critically over-analysed but stubbornly opaque character, Professor Eisenbart. (In so far as Eisenbart is a projection of the trickster figure in Gwen Harwood, I'm sure he's well pleased by this!) But to what purpose are these elements of irony etc. characteristically working? My own feeling is that they tend to express the more anarchic, "shadow" side of a vitalism which is central to Gwen Harwood's poetry, taking on an affirmative and really heroic dimension in her finest work. Whatever the relationship between these two aspects or "sides" of Gwen Harwood's vitalism (doubtless a quite mysterious and necessary one) there is often something shallow or ambivalent about the creative impulse in poems of satire and irony. A poem like "Claire de Lune" (praised in a recent article by Norman Talbot as "clearly . . . [belonging] with the major work") seems to me quite simply split down the middle: the first part, an attack on a "bluestocking", is as barbed and bitchy as any bluestocking could be, while the second part rhapsodically celebrates basic life forces, "the wild thrust of lovers . . . the flux of this swarming sea". The teasing, elliptical quality of

You nibble at space,
blot a starfield out with a starfish hand,
while streaking and scraping the moonlit shore
your image deformed scrawls a body
impenetrable by this light.

is poetic light years away from the ardour and serenity of these concluding lines:

Ah, nature
is wasteful, the wild thrust of lovers
is careless, the flux of this swarming sea
is endless. The artist alone

is sparing. In light from a single source
with calm and indolent judgement,
with a tip of a pen, with a paintbrush,
he will seal and transfigure the changing face
of truth, which is living, and moving with us as we walk,
and stays with the lovers who lie in creation's act;
like this cone of light on the sea.


* The text referred to is Gwen Harwood, Selected Poems (Angus and Robertson, 1975).
The passage announces what has been one of the deepest, most enriching themes in Gwen Harwood's poetry: the artist's love and loves redeeming time, change—and plain human confusion. It suggests something of the poise between the contemplative mind and the inner world of impulse and feeling out of which she has built her art. The artist's search must be—a humanising one. Of course creativity has its roots in various kinds of play—and Gwen Harwood has profound insight into this. But too many chimeras, mirror images and masks have been pursued into mazes of complexity and abstraction by critics. Gwen Harwood works (self-confessedly, intentionally) on many different levels of seriousness and lightness—hence the variety but also the unevenness of her poetry. It seems to me important to acknowledge this clearly and not be misled by it if one is trying to convey the real human centre and artistic range of this challenging body of work.

"this cone of light on the sea".... form, illumination, meaning patterning the seemingly boundless energy of nature and human passions. In being realised during the course of Gwen Harwood's poetic development, this vision has been transformed. As many later poems reveal, a superb clarity—of heart and spirit, as well as of mind—has emerged giving a sense of abundance and resource far beyond what her early work promised. The imagery of darkness so pervasive in Poems (with its rich associations of passion but also of unknowing: "gross darkness") has been supplanted by a dominant imagery of light and water in the later poems (from the third section of the second volume onwards). In these the spiritual vitality of an achieved emotional richness and understanding has become a central ordering principle. Addressing a friend and, I presume, fellow poet in "Winter Quarters" she affirms her long-standing trust: that love and art can withstand and triumph against mortality in every sense except the literal one:

I look. I store
the memory that must serve so long.
Feature by feature I record
your ageing face, through which the loved unageing spirit shines once more
to liberate the pulse of song
in that calm centre where each word
hangs like a waterdrop unmoved

in early quietness, the real
presence of morning globed in light.
Look long and truthfully. Each scar
declares our living worth. Be sure
that the clean wounds of time will heal.
Rejoice in this unwounded night.
The young are beautiful. We are
ourselves, and love, and will endure.

Here is a sacramental vision of language as embodied translucence: "... the real presence of morning globed in light". It is a vision that takes on reality in this poem and has become one of the touchstones of her achievement. Whatever sense we make of Gwen Harwood's poetry as a whole—with all its elusiveness and play—it matters that we hear and recognise the essential pulse of her poetic genius. For myself, I believe her most enduring and compelling poems are those of open and directly expressed feeling, those in which lyric utterance is the driving force. These run the gamut from celebrating a sense of holistic abundance to scorching bitterness. I have argued that the former note emerges most fully in the more recent poems where there is almost no bitterness though still an air of metaphysical ambiguity and strangeness. The presence around the candle-memory, fear, longing, unrealised desire—are as pervasive here as they ever were.

* * * * *

The actual poems appearing in Selected Poems are of interest in revealing, of course, something of Gwen Harwood's attitudes to her work. One notes that she has been generous to her two creations Eisenbart and Kröte: all 8 of the Eisenbart poems from her first book are included, and 8 out of the 9 Kröte poems appear in the second book. Gwen Harwood has gone on writing poems about Kröte and two of these appear in New Poems, the third section of this present volume. It is difficult to generalise about the kinds of poems excluded, though I would say that a number of strong poems exploring reaches of anger and pathos are regrettably missing from the Poems/Volume Two section.

The selection from Poems given here fairly reflects the wide range of emotional tones and technical virtuosity of that book as a whole. I regret only two omissions from it: "The Wound" and "Ad Orientem". These have that lucid but hard won simplicity of utterance characteristic of Gwen Harwood's writing at
its best. This is a simplicity too often struggling to get through in the complex, impacted world of the first volume. Consider the contrast between these two extracts, from “In Hospital” and “Panther and Peacock”:

Pain splinters me.
I am cracked like glass. I taste salt, my own fear, can save nothing, am ground, degraded on my own fragments, abraded featureless. And am free of pain for a brief space.
A fire-talented tongue will choose its truth. I do not bear what’s gone, do not refuse what’s yet to come. The grace of water rinsed, re-made these stones. My tongue’s betrayed by pain. They speak my prayer.

Professor Eisenbart, with grim distaste, skirted the laughter of a Sunday crowd circling an ape’s gross mimicry of man. His mistress watched a peacock. He grimaced, making rude observations on the proud creature’s true centre of that radiant fan.

Raked by the aureoled bird’s nerve-twisting cries they strolled away, affecting noble ease.

The force of something fragmenting, overwhelmingly difficult is felt graphically in these first lines quoted from “In Hospital”. The poet is struggling to master her own vulnerability—and succeeds, grasping the promise of renewal: “A fire-talented tongue will choose/its truth”. The effect is gripping and courageous. In the second passage one is aware of the poet’s mind at work creating a network of ironies aimed at shattering illusions of superiority and pride.

Raked by the aureoled bird’s nerve-twisting cries they strolled away, affecting noble ease.

The image offered here of the flesh as an “old blind dog” startles in its revelation of an honesty beyond all pride. And it is surely because of this honesty, not despite it, that the poem captures that note of liberation and exultancy that is one of the most remarkable qualities in Gwen Harwood’s poetry. Certainly, the relationship explored here between a sunflower-like “climbing” after transcendence and an earth-bound “suffering” is an abiding one and has produced poetry of durable poignancy.

“The Wine is Drunk” presents the poet’s perception of an otherness and alienation persisting despite—with the total intimacy of sexual love. An equally intense but different sense of otherness is grappled with in “Alter Ego”:

Who stands beside me still, nameless, indifferent to any lost or ill motion of mind or will, whose pulse is mine, who goes sleepless and is not spent?

Mozart said he could hear a symphony complete, its changing harmonies clear, plain in his inward ear in time without extent. And this one, whom I greet
yet cannot name, or see
save as light’s sidelong shift,
who will not answer me,
knows what I was, will be,
and all I am: beyond
time’s desolating drift.

The alter ego, the poet’s completed self and
destiny (timeless, omniscient), is eerily present
to her in her time-bound state. Yet this final
reality shadowing the poet’s life is, as the poem
develops, comprehended and contained by her
own questioning awareness ... her sense of
vulnerability is mastered because she experi­
ences a rootedness in some immutable core of
being. Here, as in many of Gwen Harwood’s
best poems, music and time are not only meta­
phors for each other, but for experience or
being itself; and the poet’s imaginative inter­
weaving of all three becomes the measure of
her ability to affirm a sense of grace and con­
tinuity against the void. So, against her per­
ception of “time’s desolating drift” stands her
belief (declared later in the poem) that “time
will reclaim/all music manifest”. The attempt
to make the music of creative joy manifest­
and therefore recoverable—has remained cen­
tral since this, the first poem of her first book.

Poems/Volume Two presents us with a more
ordered and stable imaginative world than
Poems, and ultimately a richer and more reso­
nant one. This is because it is in general more
directly and spaciously centred in the poet’s
inner life. The greater clarity involves the
poetry becoming less dense and pressured at
times; but in the finest poems—my list would
be much longer than for the first book—the
clarity in question is a blend of emotional
lucidity, imaginative insight and even spiritual
illumination. The contrast is evidenced in the
following passages from the respective books:

With ravening beak and talons tense
for mastery the spirit drops
from its inhuman height on sense
clouding with anguish. But the body
with darkness for its evidence
discerns no god, though in its gathering
nightfall from living tissue shine
godheads of light and fire assumed
from our love’s light and bodies’ fire.
Darkness clouds your eyes, or mine—
no matter whose, when each will suffer
gross darkness for the other’s sake.

“In Zurich by the Tideless Lake”, Poems

I see that lost enchantment wake
in light, on water, and the spirit
like a loved guest on earth can take
its needs and its delights, and wander
freely. The dazzling moments burn
to time again. In simple twilight
water speaks peace, the swallows turn
in lessening arcs. The dry reeds rustle
and part to set the nightwind free.
The heart holds, like remembered music,
a landscape grown too dark to see.

“Alla Siciliana”, Poems/Volume Two

The first extract touches a recurrent theme in
Gwen Harwood’s poetry: a vision of the
“darkness” (incomplete understanding) at the
heart of human knowing redeemed in sexual
love (“our love’s light and bodies’ fire”). Yet,
ironically enough, the passage lacks emotional
cogency, despite its imaginative power: the
poet seems caught in the toils of forces she
cannot (poetically) control. The impassioned
rhetorical tone fails to hold the passage to­
gether—and it is at the very points where an
attempt at conscious logic is made that the
rhythms are crucially weakened (“But the
body ... though ...”). The second passage is
in fact the more deeply embodied. In it the
spirit is not a god-like eagle cruelly opposed
to the body, but a “loved guest on earth”—a
harmonising force through which the integra­
tive power of the poet’s imagination is liber­
ated and fulfilled, bringing—as the last lines
suggest—its own triumph over darkness.

The strength and distinction of Poems/Volume Two is located mainly in its third
section, in my opinion. This is well represented
in this new selection (the last 12 poems in the
relevant section) though I would mention
three others not included: “Dreaming, Waking”, “To Another Poet” and “Person to
Person”... these create an ambience holding
complexity within simplicity in a way which
sets up echoes between them and with other
poems like “Nightfall”, “Estuary”, “In Bris­
bane” and “Alla Siciliana”. The rest of the
original volume contains other superb poems
such as “All Souls’”, “A Magyar Air”, “Burn­
ing Sappho” and “Chance Meeting” (the last
three are unfortunately not in the present selec­
tion). Here are some poetic statements very
characteristic of Gwen Harwood taken from
this volume and included in this new selection.
On friendship:
  Those who are lucky find a few:
  to the heart's innermost recesses
  their words and looks and gestures fall
  like light, and this is mutual.

  Think of light entering a room:
  nothing is asked, and nothing offered;
  but mind and eye together wake
  to see the commonest objects take
  authentic clarity of form,
  and fresh from rest the heart embraces
  for a brief moment, unafraid,
  the stuff of which the world is made.

  from “Impromtus”, III

On art:
  At the service of a human vision,
  not symbols, but strange presences
  defining a transparent void,
  these notes beckon the mind to move
  out of the smiling context of
  what's known; and what can guide it is
  neither wisdom nor power, but love.

  from “New Music”

On selfhood:
  Each day
  I choose my life, choose to be woven
  in other lives, and weave my own
  threads in a fabric of such weight
  it pulls flesh earthward, yet can lift
  a breathing animal to swift
  flight from the miseries of fate.
  How shall the heart's true shape be known,
  spirit made manifest?

  .... I must
  suffer, and change, and question all,
  wrestle with thought and word, and bind
  my speech to earth's own laws to win
  the heart's true life at last.

  from “Littoral”

On the past:
  My ghost, my self, my intimate stranger
  standing beneath these lyric trees
  with your one wineglassful of morning
  snatched from the rushing galaxies,

  bright-haired and satin-lipped you offer
  the youth I shall not taste again.
  I know, I bear to know, your future
  unlooked-for love, undreamed-of pain.

  from “In Brisbane”

As mentioned above, the Eisenbart and Kröte poems are strongly represented in the Selected Poems. To be numerical for a moment, they represent over a fifth—18 out of 84—of the total. What is one to make of these two characters? One could probably get quite a long way by talking of them simply as collections of clichés. Eisenbart becomes, in his worst moments, the mad scientist (“Panther and Peacock”, “Professor Eisenbart’s Evening”); in his less worse moments he is the dried up academic (“Prize-Giving”, “Daybreak”); at his best a figure pathetically remote from human warmth and hope (in the words of “Group from Tartarus”, “Too old to love, too young to die”). Satire and sympathy combine in Gwen Harwood’s attitude to Eisenbart throughout these poems in fact—and her attitude, like Eisenbart himself, cannot be focussed clearly by the reader because both are so bound up with fantasy and projection. Kröte is also reducible to a cluster of clichés—he is an eccentric German music teacher, a failed artist, a drunk, an outsider... and in great contrast to Eisenbart, he has a heart of gold. But it goes without saying that a number of these poems contain splendid poetic moments because, although Kröte is a stock character, the situation he is in is real enough and many of his feelings and reactions all too humanly recognisable. “Afternoon”, a poem dealing with his frustrations as a music teacher, ends

  Between the wrong notes and the howling
  he must endure, and earn his bread.

Earlier in this poem are lines which link Kröte with his idol, Beethoven—comically but sympathetically:

  As Kröte tries
  to catch the semiquavers, swearing
  and whistling through his snow-white teeth,
  Beethoven frowns in plaster, wearing
  Kröte's hat on his laurel wreath.

Most of the Kröte poems lack this detachment, however (though “snow-white” does not seem particularly dispassionate or plausible!). Too often the reader is caught up in Kröte’s inner melodrama—a kind of paralysed inwardness mixed with defiance (see “Monday”, “Hospital Evening” and “Fever”). Ultimately, only the social comedy of “At the Arts Club” (with its
bizarre echoes of Eliot) can alleviate the sorrows of Kröte:

The hostess pats her tinted curls.
Sees, yawning surreptitiously,
a bitch in black with ginger pearls
squeezing the local tenor's knee . . . .

Sober, Kröte's inclined to gloom.
Drunk, he becomes a sacred clown.
He puffs and pounds and shakes the room.
An ill-placed ornament falls down.

A pause. Chairs squeak. The hostess claps,
wrongly—there's still the fugue to play.
Tenor and Ginger Pearls, perhaps
for ever, boldly sneak away.

* * * * * *

The third section of Selected Poems is New Poems. As in the preceding two, one is aware here of a complex and vibrant sense of life realising itself in many ways and on many levels. The iconoclastic verve informing many of Gwen Harwood's poems—and her famous literary practical jokes aimed at mediocrity and pretension—is only one manifestation of a fiercer independence of spirit than is commonly found among Australian poets. Some of the later poetry shows, in fact, a quality of wilderness such as to startle and challenge the reader. This wildness has as much to do with the intense imaginative energy, the intellectual rapidity of the poems, (giving the impression of a talent racing ahead of itself) as with the uncompromising emotional honesty of the writing (self-relevatory in a cathartic, not oppressive, way). Whether they speak of the reaches of bleakness or ecstasy, her poems remain centred in the authenticity of her essential self:

Some old, lost self strikes from time's shallows,
crying
"Beyond children, household, habit, I am I,
Who knows my original estate, my name?
Give me my atmosphere, or let me die."

"Iris"

We see ourselves, in callous light,
stripped of the vanity that conjured
for everyone an emperor's suit.
Who can drink flattery uninjured,
or banquet on illusion's fruit?
Unwelcome nourishment, but real
in truth's unpalatable meal.

"In the Middle of Life"

What's love but this sustaining violence—grains of time
igniting, burning, raining
through absence as I climb
on stormy air to lie
alone on the black sky.

"Night Flight"

All these poems bear a strong imprint of isolation; yet what makes them and many of the later poems so inescapably moving is the warmth and radiance of spirit which again and again invests friendship, sexual love, loss, despair and death with a sustaining wisdom and eloquence:

Before the last great fires we two went climbing like gods or blessed spirits in summer light
with the quiet pulse of mountain water chiming
as if twenty years were one long dreaming night,
above the leafy dazzle of the streams
to fractured rock, where water had its birth,
and stood in silence, at the roots of dreams,
content to know: our children walk the earth.

"An Impromptu for Ann Jennings"

At your side among the graves
I think of death no more
than when, secure in my father's arms,
I laughed at a hollowed pumpkin
with candle flame for eyesight,
and when I am seized at last
and rolled in one grinding race
of dreams, pain, memories, love and grief,
from which no hand will save me,
the peace of this day will shine
like light on the face of the waters
that bear me away for ever.

"At Mornington"

It is difficult to represent in short quotations the existential depth and range of Gwen Harwood's poetry: one is often aware of a whole rhythmic and imaginative movement of being through conflict and dissonance to reconciliation distilled into individual poems. Many such poems can stand among the very finest which have been written in Australia: notable among recent poems are "Father and Child", "Dust to Dust", "Winter Quarters", "Iris", "Night Flight", "David's Harp", "At Mornington" and "Reed Voices". This Selected Poems offers many such examples of achieved human insight and brilliant poetic distinction while setting
them in the context of a various and exciting overall achievement. It records a poetic development that can now be viewed with hindsight as an inspired and significant journey, though one pursued by a poet too intransigently anti-establishment ever to have "arrived", too unpredictably creative ever to be at rest—in the minds of readers and critics, and perhaps even her own.

Diane Dodwell

ANNE LLOYD

the lover

that morning she went delicately to make tea:
cold china cups
drifting out orangeblossom mist
twining her hands like butterfly wings about the base
she willed the thin liquor to warm
padded quietly back—almost knocked first
BOOKS


In his introduction David Walker claims that his study makes an "original examination of what constitutes an Australian national culture". This is an all too familiar claim in Australian letters, but Walker presents this topic in a manner quite different from that of his predecessors' attempts to define our national timbre. *Dream and Disillusion* is a study of four men who figure (importantly in Walker's view) in Australian literature during the first half of this century. Novelist and short story writer Vance Palmer (1885-1959), poet Frank Wilmot (1881-1942), dramatist Louis Esson (1879-1943), and the socialist Unitarian minister Frederick Sinclaire (1881-1954), each participated in similar though largely isolated and individual searches for a national culture, formulating an ideal to offset the undesirable reality of their contemporary society.

Each of these men was prominent in the social and political life of Melbourne, though only Wilmot remained a citizen of this city. Through his study of these men, each of whom had some contact if not friendship with the others, Walker is able to evoke important aspects of the Melbourne cultural milieu in a manner which supports John Docker's attempt in his *Australian Cultural Elites: intellectual traditions in Sydney and Melbourne*.

_Dream and Disillusion* offers a critique of earlier attempts to define the national culture, and implicitly points to the need for a rethinking of the theoretical bases of such attempts. Walker argues that although there are "discoverable patterns of thinking about the character of Australian society and the functioning of the imaginative writer ...(these) ... patterns are not as 'natural', 'inevitable' or self-evident as some critics appear to believe" (p.1). His study of Vance Palmer most adequately supports this contention, for Palmer is the member of this quartet who is most extensively described and analysed.

Walker suggests that the dominant critical view of Palmer portrays him as having possessed a fairly static set of opinions and beliefs about nationalism. There is, perhaps, little in Palmer's published work to suggest a contrary view. Walker's research into the Palmer papers reveals that Palmer was a far more diffident thinker than has often been acknowledged, and that Palmer's nationalism underwent several important changes in accordance with his development as a writer, and with the exigencies of current political and social problems.

This attempt to present a more complex view of Palmer is of crucial importance to the thesis of *Dream and Disillusion*. Walker considers that critical assessment of Palmer has settled on Palmer's contribution to Australian nationalism and that this kind of assessment typifies the ossification and the generally unargued preconceptions which mark evaluations or descriptions of those concerned with the making of the nationalist ideals. Walker summarizes this received view of Palmer:

As Walker's summary shows, and as he elsewhere complains, literary historians of Australian literature are prone to express the development of this literature in terms of a model of steadily progressing cultivation and maturation, so that Australian literature 'comes of age' with the 1950's and writers such as Patrick White, Randolph Stow and A. D. Hope. Walker's treatment of Palmer in *Dream and Disillusion* confounds this tidy schema.

This precis of Walker's has further implications. In an assessment of any period of literary history there is some conflict between noting and evaluating those works of literature which may be termed 'high art' and those which are thought to be of lesser literary value yet which may be more representative of social
attitudes in that period. As Walker notes, it is Lawson and Furphy who are generally considered to be the enduring writers of the 1890's. As a result, it is their expression of nationalism which is, at least implicitly, regarded as normative or admirable. Palmer's virtue can thus be seen to lie in his moderation of the "strident nationalism" of the Bulletin, where much of the nationalist literature was the work of minor authors.

Yet, bearing in mind this distinction between 'high' and 'low' art, it can be said that the latter may often be more indicative of the thought and belief of any period. For the historian, the credible material to be gained from the literature of any period in history may be merely that commonality of purpose, attitude or idea that can be discerned in the full extent of that period's literature. The usual predominance of minor literature over major works makes the lesser literature of value, as does the more explicit and less refracted rendering of the author's material in these minor works. In a study of the nationalism of the 1890's, then, more attention should be focused on this stridency of tone which is characteristic of the period. Without such distinctions, the idea of nationalism becomes an all-encompassing and undifferentiated concept which is an historically inadequate explanation, and which underestimates the contributions of writers and thinkers of different stages of our history.

Walker argues that Palmer did not initially associate himself with the nationalism of the 1890's, and indeed that Palmer's interest in national culture was impelled by quite different tensions evidenced in his own society. Each of the four figures in this study "came to maturity in a world which did not inspire optimism" (p. 8) and like his compatriots, Palmer was disappointed with Australian culture; the nation seemed impervious to the artistic spirit. He was also concerned at the rarity of folk traditions in Australia, of songs or stories which celebrated 'man's joy in his work'. Palmer attributed the spiritual malaise of Australian life to a remoteness from human fellowship, the natural world and the day-to-day lives of ordinary men and women. (p. 34).

A further aspect of Walker's attempt to characterize the cultural aspirations of these individuals can be seen in his assertion that certain psychological factors motivated them in their discovery of national identity. He shows that Palmer's avowal of nationalism was not just ideological; his awareness in himself of a certain "moral priggishness" is noted by Walker, who states that Palmer had "a nagging self-distrust and lack of conviction about his right to be a writer" (p. 35). This lack of confidence was shared by Esson and Wilmot, and the three men each questioned their right and worthiness to be writers. Walker further proposes that, through their espousal of nationalism, each man overcame this reticence as his sense of personal identity was strengthened by his determination of the national characteristics. Their polemicism (however muted) thereby provided a rationale for writing. Walker's investigation of the personal importance that this cause had for each man is of great significance, since it indicates the quality of their patriotism whilst furthering our understanding of their development as their ideals were modified or denied.

Walker accounts for the quality of the search for a national culture partly in terms of his writers' perspectives. Each was reasonably well-educated, of middle-class background, and lived in an increasingly urban environment. To each, the question of a national culture was not merely a matter of rating the simple workaday life of the bush above that of the city (though this arcadian preference was occasionally stated). Walker shows each man to have been dissatisfied with the cultural life and opportunities offered by the Australia of his youth, and their different formulations of an ideal national culture were initially in response to this dissatisfaction. World War I provided the first challenge to these ideals as their patriotic vision became at variance with the political problems occasioned by the war. For Palmer, Wilmot and Sinclaire, the danger was that they wished to see the war as something external to Australian life and therefore a less pressing danger to their version of a socialist new order. As the scale of the war and the extent of the Australian involvement increased, their position grew more escapist. They failed to analyse the causes of the war... their view of Australian society was falsified... (p. 126).

The immediate result seems to have been an intensification of their discontent with Austra-
lian society: "Paradoxically, the search for a national consciousness that was supposed to broaden and deepen the writer's understanding of his society produced a narrowness of focus and a sweeping distaste for many of the values which influenced the wider society" (p.127).

Their disillusionment with the national ideal is seen as part of the aftermath of World War I. Hugh Esson stated in an interview with Walker that "his father had never really come to terms with World War I and had always felt ill at ease in the post-war world" (p.155). If the effect on the other three men does not have such dramatic testimony, a change in their attitudes can still be discerned and their support for a nationalist culture becomes less energetic. In Palmer's case a retreat into a somewhat simplistic atavism can be seen in his championing of the 1890's. For although his much read work, The Legend of the Nineties, was supposedly written to refute the idea of that decade as a golden age, Palmer's critique of utopianism is ineffective. Indeed, through this work Palmer became more than an exponent of an ideal of an edifying and regenerating national culture; he becomes a critic proposing and actualising an essentially typological past for Australian culture to regain. Palmer thus places himself within the nationalist tradition yet, by implication, outside of this tradition's literary heyday. This admission of failure parallels the disillusionment of Sinclaire, Wilmot and Esson. But, more importantly, Palmer's idealization of the nationalism of the 1890's points to the atrophy and inflexibility that characterises the later utterances on this subject by all four men. This ossification has perhaps led to the later simplification of the attitudes and opinions of these nationalists of which Walker complains early in his study.

Despite the personal and public failures resulting from the loss of this vision of a national culture, Walker considers that the effort was productive, and that the importance of their idealism lay in their "refusal to remain deferential to the parent culture", for this "was a vital emotion among literary nationalists precisely because it helped overcome their sense of cultural impotence" (p.94). Social ideology and personal imperatives, then, combined to form and determine these attempts to create a national culture.

Remarkably, David Walker remains largely uncommitted in his final discussion on the early efforts to define the nation's culture. His study benefits from its clear lines of demarcation established by the focus on these four men. But, as an interdisciplinary study of literary milieu and the creative imagination, the work suffers from a certain distortion of purpose. Three of the key figures in Walker's study were authors of some repute in their period, whereas Sinclaire's literary activities were of a different order. The investigation of social determinants on the artistic imagination can be suggestive for Esson, Palmer and Wilmot, yet evidence gained from Sinclaire is at least implicitly adduced as supportive. Both Esson and Wilmot are less satisfactorily treated than Palmer. The picture of Louis Esson suffers from an apparent lack of available documentation whilst Wilmot is overshadowed by Palmer, whose examination is bolstered by the wide range of sources—not only Palmer's own papers but those of his wife Nettie, and his brother-in-law Esmonde Higgins. In addition, with his treatment of Palmer, Walker moves to a further area of inquiry when Palmer's literary value is assessed. Though Walker's estimation of Palmer as a writer is well-supported and interesting, this discussion seems somewhat inappropriate against the basic theme of Dream and Disillusion which is the "search for Australian cultural identity".

As a result an uncertainty as to the nature of the work exists: whether it is an examination of the interpenetration of literature and history (particularly in the chapters evaluating Palmer's work); whether it is an historical examination of certain literary figures who present examples of particular ideological positions; or whether it is a history of an idea (that of Australian national culture) and certain patterns and ramifications in the articulation of this idea.

Despite this, David Walker in Dream and Disillusion makes several invaluable contributions to Australian letters. His study of the private papers of Wilmot, Palmer, Esson and Sinclaire, and their associates, has added greatly to the knowledge of these individuals and their society. This period in literature has been neglected in recent years partly because of the dominant evaluation of it as unproductive of worthy imaginative literature. The preponderance of literature of social protest has helped establish this attitude, since much of the literature aims to unmask contemporary
social inequities, or to document aspects of contemporary life, at the expense of achieving the 'universality' which is generally required of a major work of literature.

In literary criticism, the worthiness of any period of literary history tends to be assessed by the works which attain some standard of universality; literature which, as it were, speaks beyond its age. The aesthetic values behind this kind of judgment are difficult to establish yet have the force of common sense, being apparently supported by a consensus of evaluation throughout generations.

David Walker's perspective is that of a historian, and the fictions of history likewise arise from an inevitable selectivity in shaping both procedure and content. Literature is a difficult and often unreliable source for the historian, just as the use of history can complicate methodology in literary criticism. The two disciplines seem so closely related and yet so often fit uneasily together. This is invariably so in Australian studies which are marked by a dearth of successful ventures into literary-historical studies. Most such attempts have been written in an effort to define or chart manifestations of the national culture, or to present nationalism as an ideology. Dream and Distillation forces an important revaluation of these ideas and their associated mythologies.

SUE ASHFORD


Not As A Duty Only opens with a simple though lucid factual description of an infantry battalion in the Australian Army in 1940: its formation, its hierarchy, its psychological makeup, not only of the individuals who are in sum the Battalion, but the Battalion's character, such that Gullett can finally say "the Battalion thinks' or 'the Battalion feels'; and this is not an exaggeration" (p. 2). If this seems strange, it is because much of the decade with which Gullett deals is now history, and this book has the impact of history made news in a vivid retelling of an infantryman's war from the evacuation of Greece, the Western Desert, through New Guinea to Western Europe in 1944. The incongruousness of much of the book stems directly from the moral imperatives underlying it being totally foreign to this generation. Training in Palestine, the Colonel "made it plain that it did not matter what we were. We would conform. We conformed." (p. 70). The frequency of such blank statements indicates that Gullett is fully aware how much the mores of that time are in direct conflict with those of the present. The author is ready to rely on simple empiricism in arriving at his conclusions, as the following example demonstrates.

"We came to Cairns and our ships were loaded. The watersiders stole our stores in the loading, not only little things, but items like compasses, sights and arms, on which our capacity to fight depended. This surprised us because these men were no less Australians than we were. Yet they seemed not to be on our side. Anyhow, we put guards on them and the watersiders went out on strike. So we loaded the ships ourselves. Our rate of loading was exactly twice theirs.

All of this which confirmed two views that we held strongly already. These were that the 2/6th Infantry could do anything and that there were some very curious types among the civilian population" (p. 94).

This empiricism extends to his own view of foreigners, as a young man builds his moral landscape. Gullett accepts the limitations of his experience when talking of Italians: "Italian fighting men do not enjoy a uniformly good reputation and certainly in some of their subsequent battles they did not offer very staunch resistance. Against this, other units fought with great courage... And I can only write of them as I found them. These men stood their ground." (p. 19), and by the same criteria of direct experience, hates the Japanese "because of the things they did to our dead and wounded... We never gave them a chance if we could help it. If an Italian or German were running away, one might let him go, but never a Japanese. You would kill him as you would a snake, because the next day you or a friend might not see him first" (p. 127). What is more, these are the attitudes that persist, even in peacetime: "...we thought of them—as animals. I am bound to say that when I see a group of them today, that is how they appear to me" (p. 127).
The second chapter “First Battle”, deals with the blooding of the Battalion in an attack on an Italian hill position known as Post 11. It is a fact that the most rivetting pages of this book are those dealing with battle: nowhere else in this biography does Gullett write with such economy and force as in the scenes of battle. On at least two occasions when it is likely that he is being shunted into a staff or training post, Gullett, by hook, crook, or direct request to a surprised General Blamey in one case, gets back into the front line, transferring from unit to unit to stay with the sound of the guns. This is in part due to the turn of his mind: a directness of approach forbids manipulation at a distance. On a more personal level, it reveals a desire to cut through trivia and irrelevancies to a more simple and intense mode of existence. His experience has taught him to live for the present.

“Eventually I returned to company headquarters. I could sleep for a while now. I loosened my belt and lay down on my blankets, my head on my haversack and my rifle beside me. All this was quite normal; it had been the pattern of my life for years now. A man could get along very well with few material things. But he needed something else too. Friends to hold him up, a sense of purpose, of doing something worth doing. Well, it was worth doing. Soon I would have a friend and a new loyalty. I felt very happy. Tomorrow? That would take care of itself.” (p. 140)

The intensity of the experience of “first battle” makes the rest of the book almost an anticlassic, despite the account of fighting in Europe after the D-Day landings, but what is even more deflating is the return to civilian life, because “after the war it was not easy to take anything very seriously” (p. 169).

That the book is so vivid even when written so many years later proves that war experience clings tenaciously in the memory. It took nearly eighteen months for Owen’s nightmare of “The Sentry” to become poetry; Robert Graves suffered nightmares for twenty years afterwards, and David Jones did not write his *In Parenthesis* until the thirties. For all these men, and Gullett is no exception, their memories remained so very real to them over the intervening years that when at last it came to writing their memoirs, the details were as sharp as ever. In the description in chapter two of the fighting for Post 11 the years telescope as detail after detail registers on a mind made supremely aware by the sheer exhilaration of battle.

“An Italian began to throw grenades at us. One landed by my right hand and cut up the hand and the lower part of my face. Without the tin hat Claude had found I should have been blinded. A grenade exploding so close is very painful to the ears. The Italians threw three more, hitting me lightly in various places, but the worst thing was the shock to the ears. I was frightened again but I knew I would have to shut him up. I eased my rifle forward and the next time he showed himself to throw I fired at him. It was a poor shot because my right hand was a mess and my shoulder hurt, but it gave me a second and I took it. I rolled away, stood up, and ran back to the first trench we had crossed, slid into it and fell down.

I came to in that trench where Brian Latham and his section had died. Brian lay on his back, just as he does in Ivor Hele’s picture in the War Memorial. It was getting light now. The trench was a shambles in the full meaning of the word. I did not feel myself, but I was able to notice things and I still have the impression of the bright red blood all over the dead and the wounded” (p. 22).

“... I did not feel myself, but I was able to notice things...”: pervading the whole description is a sense of otherworldliness, of a place where the edges are so sharp that the real becomes surreal, and we are given a profound impression of what it must be like to go through what Keith Douglas called “the looking-glass which touches a man entering a battle”. The reference to Ivor Hele’s painting is the key here: memory has solidified and can at last be safely perused, like a painting or a photograph.

While convalescing from being wounded in Normandy, a nursing sister asked him “You are getting to look on fighting as normal aren’t you? I mean it’s your life, isn’t it?” (p. 163), going further to say that he lived “on the edge of all this frightfulness, yet you are so happy. Not in a feverish, neurotic sort of way either, but as if you were leading a particularly satisfying and rewarding life” (p. 163). Indeed, in the simple life of the army there were moments when Gullett was very happy.
Alan Moorehead, whom Gullett had known in Melbourne before the war, saw him once while he was being given a lift on a tank just after the Normandy landings, and wrote to him years later saying “I hope you will always be as happy as you looked when you were riding on that tank on D-Day” (p.137). But to say than usually erudite man. He had been to the Sorbonne and Oxford and worked on the Melbourne Herald before the war. While in New Guinea he embarked on an ambitious reading plan, always having at least two books with him, even if he had to carry them. Gullett learnt his literary lessons the hard way, being singled out for slipshod English in a report he handed in to a superior officer on the grounds that Gullett, as “an educated man” should pay more attention to the “niceties of the English language”. As Gullett goes on to say, “This well-merited dressing down influenced me far more than the urging of teachers, subeditors or my father, and from that time I have always consciously tried to express myself at least with clarity” (p.116).

The truth is, that in Gullett, the soldier and the observer of life (for that is what his prose is based on; observation, and it never has any pretence to poetry) are perfectly mingled. The intensely humanitarian character is at ease with the coldly pragmatic element instilled by infantry training. In Greece during the retreat in 1941 for example, he can pause to admire the landscape and feel a moment of kinship with previous soldiers of the place equally outnumbered and desperate in situation.

“At the foot of the mountains we halted and were given some tea and hot food. We were told we were approaching Thermopylae, where King Leonidas and his Spartans had held out for three days against the Persian host of King Xerxes. However it was difficult to picture the battle because the topography had altered. The mountains were the same and so was the little river and its gorge, which in ancient times had been the only southern route passable for a large army, but the sea had receded a mile or more and today it is possible to march round the mountains on a narrow coastal plain, avoiding the pass altogether” (p.52).

Yet when in the rearguard just outside Monemvasia another side is revealed:

“The day passed very slowly with us wondering all the time if we should be able to make a clean getaway at night or whether the Germans would arrive, in which case we should have to fight for it. Towards evening we saw a uniformed man watching us through his glasses from the hill-top about 500 yards from us. I told Bernie to shoot him, as I did not want a general burst of fire giving away our position. The man fell over and no-one took his place. Soon it was dark.” (p.60)

The most striking example of this is in two paragraphs towards the end of the book:

“I felt uneasy about this hedge in front, so I took a rifleman and went to have a look at it. When I reached the hedge I heard voices on the other side. Very carefully I stood up to see better. About twenty feet from me were two German soldiers. They were eating; their machine pistols beside them. One had a piece of bread half-way to his mouth when he saw me. His hand stopped and his mouth stayed open. The other man then looked at me also. I still don’t know why I did not shoot them. Of course it occurred to me that I might miss the second one if he moved quickly for his Schmeisser. But I did not want to shoot them anyway. Presently the first man smiled and said, ‘Gruss Gott’.

I said, ‘Raus!’ He reached for the Schmeisser and I said sharply, ‘Nein, die kannonen mussen herr bleiben.’

I could not remember the word for rifle but they understood. He said in German, ‘Will you not shoot us?’

‘No. But go now.’

They went, walking backwards and I lowered my rifle to re-assure them.

I then moved down the hedge to the left, across my company’s front, until I came to a road. Over the road there was still the noise of heavy fighting: that is why I did not hear the German tank until it fired its machine guns about twenty yards from me. It came slowly on down the road. The riflemen and I lay down in a shallow ditch. The tank stopped. Above the chattering of its machine-guns I could hear the crew shouting at each other, could smell the exhaust and see the great, evil-snouted 88mm gun, swaying this way and that, searching for a target. Then slowly, without turning, it reversed back along the road. When he was among the trees, the commander opened the hatch and stood head and shoulders clear of the turret, looking through his
binoculars. I lined him up in my sights and shot him. He was the only German I hit for sure in that campaign.” (p. 152-53)

From the grave humour and chivalry of one incident to the cold ruthless certainty of the other, there is no impression of inconsistency or tension between the two aspects. To use terms which Graves applied to Lewis, the soldier and the man are reconciled.

From the Army Gullett went into politics. He had contested one election while still a serving officer, unsuccessfully though, but when he stood again in 1946 won the seat of Henty, going on to be Ambassador to Greece, and Chief Government Whip under Menzies from 1950 to 1955. One might ask why publish such a book now, when war is in such disfavour with the vast majority, and when the substance of the book is so stark and unpromising as to be almost a celebration of war, for Gullett so obviously relishes it. The answer is that this book has a clarity of belief and experience which is positively refreshing after the vapidities of the pacifist reaction.

JOHN WEBB


Einstein is said to have once remarked, “I like travelling, but the trouble is you always arrive.” The relevancy of such an observation, I suppose, has more to do with the traveller, than the place being travelled to. Its validity (and it’s all relative, of course) depends on the reason for travelling: the need to get away, the expectations a person has in going, and the way reality personally and individually mars the dream. It depends, too, on the degree to which the journey is consciously recognised as the formal quest, with its perceived initiation experience, its perilous adventures, its crucial struggle, its exaltation of the hero. It depends, in other words, on the degree to which a person confuses romance and reality. As I see it, the mere act of going invariably is romantic. A person may not have to confront dragons and demons, except the symbolic monsters residing on the inner landscape of self; he may not have to suffer incredible trials experienced in the labyrinth or thickest woods, except in encountering burly customs officials or surly hotel clerks; he may never discover the Holy Grail, unless he’s doing a hardcore cathedral tour of the Continent: but he should learn something. The romantic journey does not insure a one-way ticket to Utopia or Eden; rather, it offers access to self. In search of the magic garden of her dreams, Alice rues: “’Dear, Dear! How queer everything is today! And yesterday things went on just as usual. I wonder if I’ve been changed in the night? Let me think: was I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I’m not the same, the next question is, “Who in the world am I?”’ Ah, that’s the great Puzzle.’” In journeying a person should discover who in the world he is: why he felt the need to get away, and what the struggle, running a good race or sailing a tight ship, tells him about himself. Some people can cope with travelling, but arriving is troublesome, because it reveals too much about who they are, psychologically, politically, and spiritually. Some people can deal with this revelation; some cannot. It’s not self that’s at fault, when reality and the dream don’t coincide; it’s the dream. It’s not the context from whence one came that’s at fault, but the new context one finds oneself in. For some romantic travellers, the mind is never discovered to be its own place in making a hell of heaven or a heaven of hell.

This seems to be the implicit statement of John Hammond Moore’s recently published collection of essays, Australians In America. In his “Introduction” to the text, Professor Moore implies that the United States of America has represented much to the Australian traveller of the past century. It sometimes was but a mere “provocative sideshow en route to the main event—England”; more often that not, though, it was the New World of the “noble experiment”. It was the place to look to for the practicable dream, a place from which much could be learned, both in terms of what to do and what not to do. With recurring insistence, the essays of the collection bear witness to the symbolic importance of place. After his touching description of an hospitable American Christmas during the days of the Depression, J. B. Murray, for example, writes: “A better world is no idle dream.” Sam Lipski, with new-journalistic irony, writes:
"America has become the with-it Holy Grail." For some, the dream fades as the reality intrudes. Focussing on the events of the past decade, D. J. O'Hearn professes that "the American dream was certainly tarnished but [Americans] refused to consider it had turned to nightmare." As we move through these essays, it becomes apparent that the world of Uncle Sam perceived by early Australian travellers gradually changes; his wonderful world of romance is realized to be fantasy, sentimentality, or, worse still, just plain wrong. Australian travellers are partly at fault; in romantically appreciating that the New World was created in but seven days, they thought that it was good, a pleasant dream. But Americans are more to fault, because, in their own wonderfully simple way, they choose to believe that Disneyland is fifty states big and stretching from coast to coast. Alan Ashbolt knows why the dream was so constant over the years and why Australians were wrapped by its attractive Madison Avenue packaging. In discussing American literature in general and the novels of James Baldwin in particular, Mr Ashbolt remarks: "there is perhaps more wishful thinking done in America than in most other parts of the world." The points needing to be made, therefore, are that the dream is both dangerous and desirable, and, as time goes on, the chronologically ordered essays of the collection seem to reconcile the two. The dream is dangerous, because hopes are dangerous; they postpone the pressing realities of Now: we can hope that the war will be over soon, that racism and sexism will end shortly, but the mere act of hoping precludes the vital acts of doing—of squashing, eradicating, liberating. On the other hand, the dream is desirable, if it offers the attainable ideal, a goal within reach, one which will make the quest or the experiment able to be accomplished, and the hero exalted for the well being of his own emotional state. Thus, perspective counts. Though it was difficult to see what it was all about across miles and miles of endless ocean way back when, in 1876, it's not so difficult now that television and radio and the press bring the US and Australia in clear sight of one another, examining the dream and the reality, and accommodating each to the other with mutual respect.

But, perhaps, I'm straining in an attempt to see some meaning in this diffuse collection of writings from journalists, government officials, educationalists, labourers, businessmen, agriculturalists, novelists, etc, etc, .... even war brides. Perhaps I'm wanting to see archetypical patterns and philosophical insight, where only mundane diary entries and "Pop-History" exists.

Mr Moore has not collected this material to support any particular thesis; nor has he consistently wrenched his material into any definite context, sociological or political or otherwise. His reason for selection seems straightforward enough: if the material exists, get it together; put it out, and let it speak for itself. He clearly sees his job as a researcher and compiler, not as an interpreter. He provides an organizational pattern for his material, dividing it as he does, into three main areas: Part I: "Discovering Our American Cousins, 1876–1900"; Part II: "Progress, Prohibition, and Protection, 1900–1940"; Part III: "A magnificent, but Troubled Experiment, 1940–1976". He provides an eight page "Introduction" to the volume as a whole, and three shorter introductions to each of the sections, in which he highlights some of the more eccentric details recorded by Australians in their writings on America and their experiences there; and he supplies brief biographies of each of the writers themselves, so that the reader has some means by which the individualistic tone of the piece might be readily appreciated. But Mr Moore does no more than this, and the result is sometimes most disappointing. Though the essays are wonderfully diversified, they are not always intelligent, and, at times, they are even uninteresting. It is rather tiresome, for instance, to have innumerable travellers make the same tedious observations. For me, at least, it is of little or no significance to hear Alfred Joseph exclaim that "it is astonishing to see the quantities of ice cream which Americans eat, and the amount of ice which they partake". When someone like S. Elliot Napier writes that "the prices for meals at the hotels and restaurants were very high, and neither the meals nor the service anything to write home about", then I say: "Don't bother!" Unfortunately, almost the whole of the first two parts of the book deals with trivia of this kind, and with no excuses or reasons offered by the editor. Such idle remarks aren't even offered us as "quaint, albeit, shallow words by inexperienced travellers or amateur writers"—that, in

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and of itself, might contribute to an understanding of the "Australian character". Instead, they are brought to the attention of the twentieth-century reader, already suffering the shrapnel wounds of the knowledge explosion, and they are deceptively disguised as, perhaps, of some vague importance in understanding American-Australian relations. Maybe it was important in the late nineteenth century for John Dow to inform the readers of Australian newspapers of American irrigation projects; maybe it was interesting to the nineteenth century Australian to read S. K. Vickery's account of Californian eating habits; but what was "important" and "interesting" then, really should be re-examined and sorted out with some eye as to what is crucial for the part-time reader to know today.

Come the third sections of Australians in America, two related in-built criticisms of what has come before, in the first two sections, are established—additional criticisms to the ones I've already suggested. And both of them have to do with broad generalizations which are embarrassingly simple-minded and misinformed. (I should think that one would cringe at the thought that all Americans for all time spit. I should think that one would wince at even "lesser" broad generalizations, like Alfred Falk's observation that "Western Americans [are] more active and energetic [than] their fellow countrymen in the Northern and Eastern states"). To my way of thinking, Sam Lipski is spot on when he says: "...you can accept nearly all generalizations about the United States and still not be any the wiser because all have a good chance of being at least partially true, depending on which America you are talking about." And Alan Ashbolt, too, is on the right track: "...a whole nation should not be judged on what the Catholic apologist Arnold Lunn once referred to as 'a funny internal feeling'." What we have, for the most part, in this collection, is either the insignificant non-statement, or the generalization as true-and-valid statement, and the latter, like the former, is just not worth the trouble to take seriously.

I suppose the real problem with the volume, then, has to do with the intended audience for the piece. The blurb for Australians in America states that the "collection of Australian writings on the American scene will be of interest both to the student and the general reader on both sides of the Pacific". This claim intrigues me since I'm somewhat uncertain as to what specific use the student of American-Australian relations would be able to make of the essays, or what delight the general reader, however such a person is to be defined, would find there. Admittedly, some implicit statements regarding, say, the psychology of travel, or, perhaps, some material on the subject of "cross-cultural interchanges" may possibly be squeezed from the text—the sort of material that would enliven a scholarly footnote or two, but not the sort which argument might be based on. Admittedly, some people, depending on their preconceptions of either Australians or Americans, may be entertained, even delighted, to discover their oversimplified ideas regarding great masses of people confirmed. But in either instance, the book would probably appeal only to the generous reader who allows time to be spent dealing with the relatively inconsequential. Of course, some essays are worth reading, especially those of the third part. Even here, however, the material is either too narrow in scope to be able to make significant statements about the United States in general, or too broad in scope to make statements which are valid and exact. Some essays of this section, too, are stylistically animated, but if one wants form and content, a reader is perhaps better advised to turn his attention to someone other than a journalist, who is writing for the tea-and-toast breakfast readers of the world.

I don't like those reviews which say that a work would be much improved if the writer "did it my way". But I really think that John Hammond Moore could have gone about his project in a more fruitful fashion, if he had considered more the implications of the material he had collected. To say that America, at first, was a magic garden, is not a bad start. To say that the magic garden was eventually discovered to have real toads in it, is not bad either. But it must be admitted that, over the years, the toads were appreciated to have jewels in their heads, and that that tells us a great deal about the people who are willing to admit that magic is at times illusory, at times, real, but always, enchanting. Explanation and interpretation can make for significance; and, after all, significance is an afterthought, the job of the editor.

JIM LEGASSE

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Those who believe that the study of Australian literature has value outside as well as inside its country of origin will be pleased by the interest shown recently in the subject in a number of overseas countries. The interest is apparent in articles and creative work published in overseas journals and in papers presented at conferences. Different slants on the subject are being given by Asian, European and North American commentators and critics.

One disseminator of this interest is *The Literary Half-Yearly*, a journal devoted to Comparative Literature, published at the University of Mysore. Its first number for 1977 is a 'South Seas' issue, compiled and edited by Peter Alcock, a New Zealander. Between its covers, poems by Judith Wright, Thomas Shapcott, Robert Adamson, Jennifer Maiden and Chris Wallace-Crabbe and short fiction by Peter Cowan and Frank Moorhouse rub shoulders with work by Papua New Guinean, Samoan and New Zealand writers. Articles are generally not so much critical as introductory and descriptive and the guest editor refrains from attempting an impossible overview. The attempt by R. T. Robertson, from Saskatchewan, to describe how a particular literature can be related to other 'New World' literatures (he uses New Zealand as his test case) is not illuminating.

The *ACLALS Bulletin* No. 4, 1976, also published at the University of Mysore, contains nine articles on Australian literary topics. Except for a study of *The Tree of Man* by Singaporean, Kirpal Singh, the contributions were all read at a seminar organized by the Association of Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies at Mysore in 1976. Again, the attempt to describe and elucidate predominates over in-depth criticism. Papers are devoted mainly to Australia's most internationally recognised writers: White, Hope, McAuley, Wright. However, in a brief but sympathetic and illuminating discussion of Shaw Neilson, C. N. Srinath of Bangalore University comments that 'one is faced by the paucity of material in the Indian situation . . . . attention is therefore focussed on a slender collection of poems that has by chance come one's way'. The availability of comprehensive and reliable texts is clearly still a problem, outside as well as inside Australia.

*Caliban* is a literary quarterly published by the University of Toulouse. Volume XIV, no. 1, 1977, is a special issue containing articles on Commonwealth literature, chiefly Australian. Published 'avec le concours de l'ambassade d'Australie' (including financial support) the project is at least a sign that Parisian real estate is not Australia's only concern in France. Thomas Keneally's presence at the seminar in Toulouse in April 1976, which gave rise to the papers published in *Caliban*, lent emphasis to his work. Michel Fabre has an interesting article on Keneally's later novels, *Blood Red, Sister Rose* (1974) and *Gossip from the Forest* (1975). Both works have obvious relevance for the French reader, based as they are on Joan of Arc and the signing of the 1918 armistice. Fabre argues that 'Keneally's forte consists precisely in juxtaposing grandeur and the commonplace tragedy and incongruities without ever lending to exhilarating interludes the disruptive power of the grotesque. He does not destroy, he only deflates.' Fabre's penetrating critical discussion is followed by an interview with Keneally, in which Keneally's use of history is discussed.

In a country where some of the best literary criticism is closely linked with anthropology and history, it is pleasing to observe some of this expertise being applied to Australian literature by Pierre Besses and David Camroux. Besses examines the derivation of European images of colonised peoples and their interaction in Australian society and literature between 1788 and 1914. Camroux uses 'myth' in Levi-Strauss's sense ('a myth evokes a suppressed past and applies it, like a grid, upon the present in the hope of discovering a sense in which the historic and structural aspects of man's reality coincide'). He argues, persuasive-
ly, a continuity between the Australian myth of the Bushman and the Anzac tradition.

Other perspectives on Australian literature were provided at a symposium in Venice from 24-26 March 1977, which was supported by the Australian Government. The theme was ‘Australian Literature in the 1950’s’. Although most of the papers were given by Australians, the programme notes show participants from England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Belgium and Malta. In an introduction to the symposium Professor Bernard Hickey pointed out that Commonwealth Literature with an emphasis on Australian, became a separate teaching subject at the University of Venice in 1971. The prospects were hopeful for the inauguration of other centres of Australian literature teaching in Italy.

Apart from the journals and symposia mentioned above, it should be pointed out that a number of overseas journals regularly publish Australian literature and/or criticism. These include WLWE (World Literature Written in English, published at the University of Texas in Arlington), Ariel (published at the University of Calgary), Commentary (University of Singapore) and the Journal of Commonwealth Literature (University of Leeds).

If all this activity seems to confirm the view that more serious discussion of Australian literature occurs overseas than inside the country, it should be pointed out that an inaugural seminar of the South Pacific Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (SPACLALS) was held at the University of Queensland from 15-19 May 1977. Entitled ‘Commonwealth Literature Now’, the conference reciprocated some of the attention given to Australian writing overseas by considering the work of contemporary African, Asian and South Pacific writing, along with work by Australians. Not before time.

BRUCE BENNETT

LITERATURE SEMINAR

A ‘Literature in Education’ seminar was held at the University of Western Australia on Saturday, 18 June. The event was significant, among a plethora of other conferences and seminars, as the first occasion on which teachers of literature from all Western Australian tertiary institutions had met to discuss their common concerns. Derick Marsh, recently appointed Professor of English at the University of Western Australia, chaired the seminar and the keynote paper was given by Nancy Martin, formerly Head of the English Department at the London University Institute of Education, and currently Visiting Fellow in Education at the University of Western Australia.

ADELAIDE FESTIVAL

Writers’ Week will be happening in Adelaide from 25 February to 4 March 1978.

The organizers say that they particularly want to welcome young writers who might hope to give public readings of their works. They hope to have ‘better arrangements for more readings in more places’, thus allowing a wider range of writers of both poetry and prose to get a hearing.

These are the hopes. Inquiries to Rosemary Wighton, Chairman, Writers’ Week Committee: Adelaide Festival Centre, King William Road, Adelaide, 5000.
NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

SUE ASHFORD is an M.A. student at the University of W.A. She is working on the novels of K. S. Prichard and leaves for Oxford University in September 1977 for further postgraduate studies.

COLLEEN BURKE was born and has lived mainly in Sydney, travelled overseas in Ireland and England. She is a community worker in Glebe, Sydney. Has published a collection of poems, *Go Down Singing*, and poems in anthologies and magazines.

H. E. DANIEL engaged in research on a Ph.D. thesis at Melbourne University, on post-war Australian fiction. Has been a teacher in Victorian secondary schools.

DONNA DEVINE was born in Canada, has lived in W.A. for some years. Has worked as a journalist, and is now completing a degree in English at W.A.I.T.

GARRY DISHER was born in South Australia and graduated from Adelaide University. Taught as a High School teacher for a year and then travelled and worked for two years in Europe, Israel and Africa. At present working on postgraduate thesis at Monash University.

DIANE DODWELL is a tutor in English at Burwood S.C.V. Her M.A., from Melbourne University, was on the poetry of Gwen Harwood and Vincent Buckley. She is completing her first book of poetry, to be called *Journeys*.

GEOFFREY DUTTON, poet and novelist, author of many books, including Australian exploration and travel. Editor of *The Literature of Australia* (Penguin Books).

GRAEME HETHERINGTON lives in Hobart. Is a lecturer in the Classics Dept at the University of Tasmania. Has published poems in Australian and English magazines and literary journals.

KEN HUDSON lives in Perth. Has published poems in Australian literary journals.

WENDY JENKINS has worked as a social worker for Mental Health Services in Perth, and is travelling in Europe. Has published poems in Australian literary magazines.

DIANA KAN, born and educated in Melbourne. She has worked as an artist, at present works in a school library. Wrote and illustrated *Happy Families and other poems*, 1973. Is married with two children.

SHIV K. KUMAR, a graduate of Cambridge University, he is Professor of English at Osmania University, Hyderabad. Has published several collections of verse and a book on the stream of consciousness novel.

JIM LEGASSE teaches in the English Department at the University of W.A. He is a graduate of Ohio State University.
DONALD MOORE, author of a book on the poetry of Louis MacNeice and critical articles on poetry. Has published poetry in literary journals in England and Australia. Part-time lecturer on Poetry and Literature in the Department of Community Programmes of the University of Newcastle.

ZENON PIRGA lives in Perth, has travelled in Europe for two years, and is at present studying at W.A.I.T.

ANNE PARRAT has published two collections of poetry, and poems in poetry magazines, as well as winning poetry awards in literary competitions.

BEVERLEY SMITH is a graduate of the University of W.A. She teaches at the Department of General Studies at the South Australian Institute of Technology.

JOHN WEBB is an M.A. student at the University of W.A. Has a special interest in military history and literature.

JOHN M. WRIGHT was born in Tasmania and is employed by the Council of Adult Education in Melbourne. Completing postgraduate studies at Melbourne University.

JANE ZAGERIS was born in England, now lives in Melbourne. Has published *Moonbumpers*, 1974. Is married, with one son, and works as a part-time child care worker.

FAY ZWICKY is a Senior Tutor in the English Department at the University of W.A. She is a contributor to Australian literary journals and anthologies, and has published a book of verse, *Isaac Babel's Fiddle*.

J. ZIZYS was born in Lithuania and now lives in Melbourne. Has published poems in Australian literary magazines.


STEPHANIE BENNETT lives in Townsville, Queensland. Has published a number of collections of poetry, edited poetry anthologies, and is editor of *Cochon International*.

RAE DESMOND JONES, born at Broken Hill and works in Telecommunications Commission in Wollongong. Started the *Friendly Fascist* underground magazine in Sydney, and has published two books of poetry, another to appear this year.
LITTLE MAGAZINES

NEW LITERATURE REVIEW
(Number Two, 1977)
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English Department, S.G.S., ANU,
P.O. Box 4, Canberra, 2600.

The May 1977 issue of AUSTRALIAN LITERARY STUDIES includes articles on the Jindyworobaks and Aboriginal poetry and culture, Judith Wright's linguistic philosophy, A. D. Hope on 'the Provincial Muse', The Getting of Wisdom, A. G. Stephens as Internationalist critic, along with reviews of recent critical works and the Annual Bibliography of Studies in Australian Literature.

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