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WESTERLY

a quarterly review

Westerly is published quarterly by the English Department, University of Western Australia, with assistance from the Literature Board of the Australia Council and the Western Australian Arts Council. The opinions expressed in *Westerly* are those of individual contributors and not of any member of the above Committee.

Correspondence should be addressed to the Editorial Committee, *Westerly*, Department of English, University of Western Australia, Nedlands, Western Australia 6009 (telephone 80 3838). Unsolicited manuscripts not accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope will not be returned. All manuscripts must show the name and address of the sender and should be typed (double-spaced) on one side of the paper only. Whilst every care is taken of manuscripts, the Editorial Committee can take no final responsibility for their return; contributors are consequently urged to retain copies of all work submitted. Minimum rates for contributions —poems $7.00; prose pieces $7.00; reviews, articles $15.00; short stories $30.00. It is stressed that these are minimum rates, based on the fact that very brief contributions in any field are acceptable. In practice the Committee aims to pay more, and will discuss payment where required.

Recommended sale price: $1.00 per copy.

Subscriptions: $4.00 per annum, plus postage (Australasia 80c per annum, Overseas $1.60 per annum); $7.00 for 2 years (postage Australasia $1.60, Overseas $3.20). Special student subscription rate: $3.70 per annum (including postage). Single copies mailed: $1.10. **Subscriptions should be made payable to Westerly, and sent to The Bursar, University of Western Australia, Nedlands, Western Australia 6009.**

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

WESTERLY

No. 3, September, 1976

CONTENTS

PROSE

POEMS

ARTICLES and REVIEWS

MARK MACLEOD

The Growing Season

Between Strahan and Savage River, Senta took down her pants for the first time that day, the thirteenth. Bunching the hem of her skirt under the chin, she held the slack elastic waist out a foot in front of her shamefully, proudly, like a child who has wet herself. Some honeymoon.

Harl glanced to the left, and eased his grip on the wheel. "Do you—?"

"No thanks. Just looking." Just looking she was always just looking: every five minutes it had been, yesterday.

"Well, has it come yet?" He asked her the question she was after.

"No. And I'm getting worried, Harl. Sarge has usually been bang on, up till this, and it makes me worry."

Why, it was not plain to see. After all, for the benefit of the aunts and cousins who still talked about girls *having to get* married, they were married now and it was hardly necessary to worry so soon if at all. They had *saved* themselves for the families, and only thirteen days would put it about the night of the 17th of August. And much as she seemed to like measuring her body's rhythms (he'd found a clock in her toilet once), that would have to be the king hit of all time, to conceive on the wedding night.

Presumably she wanted a baby, anyway. Her conversation for weeks now had been right out of the Barry Humphries Book of 2000 Original Names for Pets. Well did she or didn't she? It would be okay marrying a girl older than you—a much prized and resented six months—if only she didn't manipulate one minute and simper the next.

Harley had the picture, all right. Senta had read that article in last January's *Crotch*: how to compute the day of ovulation. An alkaline douche for a boy and acid for a girl; the soda syphon and malt vinegar. Well, she hadn't tried any funny stuff yet. And if her last-minute move to put the wedding date forward to the 17th had been successful, why the hell should she worry now?

As the tyres bit round a hairpin bend, he was obliquely aware of a disappearing finger.

"Must you really put that in your?" Already, they had a ridiculous private word for it, which it had been simpler just to accept: one passed on by her mother and sisters. Like 'Sarge', it was one of a number of passwords to the all-embracing, octopodean female conspiracy Senta belonged to.

The society met in bedrooms before parties, around sinkfuls of draining dishes, at pre-wedding box-showings. Members of the inner sanctum were inducted with giggles whenever a baby was born, and told ancient stories of milk leaking through blouses. Harley was simply tired of it all, and had been since only the third induction among their now almost completely married circle of friends. They were up to induction number fifteen.

Senta held her middle finger up to the light. The tall, brooding Tasmanian forests flickered past in the background. Was this the finger that made the lunch, that ruled the world?

"Nope. Nothing yet." She turned on him and grimaced.

"Well I'll keep my legs crossed for you," Groler was trying to snap him out of it. "Or something."

A year later, and Harley ran his eye down the catalogue of tests on the form letter he was to give the pathologist. No getting past the instructions: they were there. Miscellaneous, upper case. Semen: Full Exam, underlined. For fertility, in brackets.

There had been twenty-four important days in Senta's last twelve months, and at least twelve fights.

"Tonight's the night," she would announce with boring regularity. And two weeks later, "Guess what came today" She'd keep a pencil and pad of graph paper beside the bed, and more than once he'd nearly cracked the thermometer in two, as he reached across to pat her in the morning.

"Now it's up to you, darling," Senta smiled .She had been surprisingly subdued as she placed the blue form letter and the plastic container on his desk. Harley had looked up from the typewriter and stretched his fingers.

"What is?"

"*You* know. Dr Hansman was very embarrassed actually. It's the first time I've ever seen it! He dropped his pen on the floor, he said 'There are basically two ways. Out of you and into the pot.' Then his voice was echoing under the desk and he started to cough. 'Or, ar, he can—'.

"So you've got a choice."

Harley mouthed an o. "And if I pass *this* test, the ball's in your court again, right?"

Senta humoured him with a nod. "He said to ring the pathologist, so I'll make an appointment for you to take the specimen down. And he said the fresher the better."

Harley bored straight ahead, his eyes shooting bolts round the driver's quarter-light, all the way home. *He* would be the one to ring the pathologist; Senta had been too willing by half.

Five o'clock in the morning, two days later, Harley hiked the back path to the old toilet, emptyhanded, a ludicrous bulge in his pyjama shirt pocket. Harley locked the door behind him, set the plastic container on the cistern tank. Unscrewed the lid, ran a nervous finger round the sharpness of the lip—

He would try it after. The concrete floor was cold on his bare feet. And she was still in the house.

Locked in the laundry when Senta had left for work, Harley held the plastic container up to the light. He had rescued it from the toilet too late: Senta had probably seen it sitting there. There was something in it: a sprig of moss from the crack in the bricks outside the toilet door. *What kind of a joke was that?*

Harley looked up at the gardening shelf. Groler had rung to wish him luck what the hell was going wrong? He needed one of those magazines. Gro-Plus. Grope-Lust. Grope-Last. Grow-up Last.

"Thirty-two Florence Street, Hornsby," Harl grinned. He saw the cab driver's eye catch his brown paper bag, with the top rolled and the corners tweaked to look like his lunch. Only hoped the container didn't rattle as they took the bends —the driver would guess at once. At the lights, the meter's dinking counterpointed the nasal persistence of the two-way radio.

"Diana near Hunts at Eastwood to Eastwood.

"Diana near Hunts at Eastwood to Eastwood." Harley could see it now. Senta would say nothing about it that night, whistle as she chopped for a casserole, get a plate for the strudel she'd bought at the Pavé, throw her arms around him, give him a mouthful of her hair, say she loved him.

And then, "I want to know how you did it!"

He cleared his throat and beamed at the nurse. Semen. It was the first time he'd ever had to say the word, and he surprised himself loudly.

"Be with you in a minute. I'll just get this one out of the way," she assured him. "It's a bit leaky."

Harley had written the details on a sheet of bond paper in black felt pen, to avoid a wait. Capital letters: name age date of birth referring doctor time taken.

"I think I've given you all the things you wanted," putting the brown bag in her left hand, the curriculum vitae in her right.

"Results in four days," she called after him, as Harley joined the crowd of women shoppers on the footpath.

He didn't even think he wanted to know.

GRAHAM ROWLANDS

Good Old Cricket

Meshed in cords of father's lengthening memory
he stood on school's green wicket, trapped
within narrow practicenet by balls turned
meteors against him. Net played
naughts and crosses on his skin.

Red leather pelted down, bowled short,
slung out of friendship's arm cobras.
He heard them rise, whir past
his eyes—he couldn't see.

Bruise turned blue cheese on his leg.
Hands blistered on handles,
rifle butts.

JENNIFER STRAUSS

Guenevere Dying

'And when Queen Guenevere understood that King Arthur was dead and all the noble knights, Sir Mordred and all the remnant, then she stole away with five ladies with her, and so she went to Amesbury. And there she let make herself a nun, and wore white clothes and black, and (as) great penance she took upon herself as ever did sinful woman in this land. And never creature could make her merry, but ever she lived in fasting, prayers and almsdeeds, that all manner of people marvelled how virtuously she was changed.'

(Sir Thomas Malory)

In the cell for the dying you may see the sky,
'Not,' said the priest 'to pleasure the rotting flesh
But to nourish the labouring soul
With Heaven's symbol.' I watch the snow,
The first of winter, soft and insubstantial,
Goose feathers drifting curled in the quiet air.
In Cornwall, storms will be whipping the black waves
And the white gulls twist in the hurling gale,
Screeching defiant against the battering cliffs.
There is a death for you: but not for me—
I owe the abbess a good death, a soft settling,
As that snowflake clings at the window—
Petal, pear-bloom .....

The pear-tree was a parting gift from Cador,
'A Cornish tree for a Cornish bird,' he said,
Putting a good face on it once the oaths were sworn.
'Gwen, Gwen,' he had cried 'should I let you fly
Into the sweet cage, be lured from your wildness.'
But I could not hear for the dancing of blood
In my ears, in my toes, in my finger-tips,
As Arthur was deaf to politic Merlin
'She is not good, my lord, for you to have.'
How we hated each other, Merlin and I.
'Men do not love,' I mocked 'to be robbed of their boys,
But a grown man should be free of tutors, surely.'
I came between them. He was right,
I was not good for Arthur. No-one asks
Was Arthur good for me. At Winchester,
The moment the crown touched, Gwen died in his eyes.
It was a queen he saw, his queen, his heir—
Well, God knows I was willing—how I wept,
Monthly a tear for every drop of blood.
And the petals fell but no fruit followed.

Three Springs I lay in the orchard grass,
Watching its white flowers dapple
The shining sun. In Autumn as we rode,
Arthur and I, to hunt by the river,
He checked there, frowning. 'A pretty thing,
But barren. Let the gardeners
Burn it. We owe the land
Good husbandry!' Next Spring I saw the sun
Naked over Lancelot's shoulder.

'Consider,' said the priest 'God's mercy,
Which makes of you
A brand plucked from the burning.'
I thought of Lancelot
Riding over the green field to save me from the stake.
Trumpets blowing, brassy in the sun,
Pennants in wind, the red blood spilling.
Men slaughter men with sword and lance
'Honourably': trees and women they burn—
Always afraid of female blood—
Barren, barren,
burning, burning .....

If he had let things be, I would not now
Owe to the abbess a good death, who took me in
While sisters clutched their uncontaminated skirts
As if I carried lust's infection with me.
A joke. Honest desire had long withered in me,
Starved in that garden of cultivated souls.
Arthur 'must' burn me: Lancelot 'must' save me—
How I dangled meanings for others to snatch
And set like stones in moral gold.
I am bruised all over on men's imperatives.
Lancelot 'must be freed'—I watched his feet
Dragging to make an honest woman of me—Mummery!
He might have freed himself with one honest word
When first he wished to go: but I must stage
Pageants of renunciation for him, put ashes in my hair
For penitence, be prisoner to his codes—
Oh noble cages, strange and golden:
Crown, Honour, Chivalry. Ashes from my pear-tree
Blew through the casement onto my marriage bed.
It is time they buried me.
I have been long dying.

E. M. BENNETT

The Feminine Gender

Having survived
early days and further
in his velvet prison—
in solitary but for
his six silken warders,
with no man's hand
to help him chip rocks
but every rock
polished clear of grime
to obviate the crime
of honest dirt;

having withstood
the good done to him
by petticoat law
and been beaten raw
by cohorts' whips of words
that mocked him and suggested skirts;

having then mastered all these
and become a man in his own right,
what does he do
but stampede the altar,
father four daughters
and sink into a backwater
where, if he ever struggles
to the shore
chiffon quicksands will smother
his last frantic call.

T. TREDREA

Raj with Rucksack

As the train slumped into the station a black foot thrust itself through my window. It was very bony and fine like something found in a tomb. The footowner maintained his position for a further ten seconds as the train came to a halt, shrieking away those others also trying to secure a foot-hold. I retrieved my rucksack from amongst boxes of chickens, pigs, etc., while being carried in a crush to the door. Behind me, arguing and banging suggested bodies and luggage being poked in through the windows.

Perhaps fifty shouting men and women were packed around the carriage doorway as if drawn by a huge magnetic force. I punched and shouldered my way out. Nobody seemed to mind.

"Excuse me please, sah'b."

A tall thin man wearing a red towel around his head cradled my elbow in his hand.

"Come on sir, you vant to see beautiful saris? rickshaw? hotel maybe? Come on, looking is free."

"No I'd rather ..."

"Alright, no vurries, come on; you vant fortune told? very cheap, I have Oxforhd degree. You vant money change? hashish? ... voman?!"

Throughout this I had managed to loosen his grip with a trick we used at school, and was fleeing towards the first class waiting room. At the entrance, several monkeys were crouched patiently on their luggage, guarding it. A battered railway attendant wished to inspect my first class ticket. I lent him two rupees and went on in.

At each of the three corners of a relatively calm and bare room, a fat and/or dignified man was dressing, painstakingly, as if for the first time. I eased my rucksack to the floor, and peered through a window at the platform.

One of the three men approached, and began the cross-examination by which a stranger is made to feel dutifully welcome. Had they drawn straws?

"Esc-huse me sihr, from vere are you coming?"

He was fat, with deep dark eyes like a spaniel's, as if he had been beaten expertly about the face; and his big sensuous lips slid across each other with an excruciating pleasure. I considered answering, 'from that train', or 'the platform' but thought better of it.

"Australia."

"Ah. And how long vill you be here?"

"Five feet eight inches."

He knitted his eyebrows, and his eyes were momentarily glazed.

"Are you married?"

"No, I'm Church of England."

"Good gracious." He glanced thankfully at a print of Krishna pasted on the wall amongst railway notices.

Through the window, I could see several thin people standing along the platform edge cleaning their teeth onto the track.

The man asked cautiously, "Vhyfore is it that you have not married?"

"I hold shares in an economic crisis."

"By Jove, you are qvite rhight sihr." He seemed relieved. "To vomen, ve men ahre but 'a pleasurable means to a measurable ends', isn't it? Ha ha ha."

This occasion of merriment seemed to call for him squeezing my upper arm for several seconds.

Outside I could see many of the poorer tooth-cleaners squatting along a wall with their pants down, looking absently about. This may also have been a queue for a train. The man still held my arm.

"You have eaten vell sihr, but you know, most of my people are very tin." This was borne out by the 'squatters', who looked like they were propped on the ends of bamboo sticks. The man had begun rubbing my arm.

"And vut dhoo you tink of Gud?" His lips slid back into a smile of grey, sharp-pointed teeth, like the mouth of a cave.

"He seems to have mellowed a lot since coming to your country," and I walked steadily over to the urinals. I took my station. He was beside me fumbling, breathing deeply through his nose and making occasional small throat-clearing sounds. I attended to the task at hand, trying to ignore the jerking of his head across at me. Finally my attention was taken by something like a warped saveloy emerging with some help from the underside of his rotund belly. With samurai-like skill I leapt through the doorway, snatching up my rucksack. The man's bulbous body writhed at its extremities by which he produced a hurrying motion, but he had first to deal with his own condition.

"A man can't have a pee in peace," I shouted to the attendant, who smiled and touched his hat.

I bustled past assorted beggars, coolies and holy-men, and found the oldest rickshaw-runner on the platform. This choice was based on the same principle that one throws pieces of sandwich to the-seagull-with-only-one-leg. Before I had fully climbed aboard or given a destination, he had raised the frail wooden vehicle and was running with it, dodging taxis and people flooding the station entrance. I fell back into the seat and decided to relax.

"The Salvation Army Hostel, please."

"O.K. sah'b," he said, without changing direction, "Sure ting, rhight-on."

The sinewy, half-naked old body pumped up and down, weaving us through cobbled streets choked with people and dust. Cows patrolled the streets with expressions of mild distaste. Their hides seemed flung like wet flannels over each skeleton. On the pavements, thin men were curled up on cloths, spread amidst putrid decay and the stench of urine. Around a group of street-sellers, people waved and shrieked at one another like children's marionettes. A massive sign overhead read, "Mustafah Singh's Hair Oil—Cools The Brain." Countless birds were being sucked across the sky.

*

Two days later, whilst out walking, I found myself in this same mud-brick district. I adopted the elbows-in, neck-in posture of someone imitating their own absence. The heat was sweating my back; a dusty, human heat. I marvelled at Man's ability to overpopulate in such a climate.

"Hello, sah'b, please, exc-huse me, vun moment, sah'b, ... etc." I strode unflinchingly on. Something soft and wet hit me on the back of the head. I strode cautiously on.

A few minutes later a gentle, leathery voice caressed my ear.

"How dhoo you dhoo sihr. To vere are you going?"

At first I walked on as one called to a distant mission; but he persisted at my side, not unlike that other dark presence mentioned in the Bible. I stopped and took off my large sunglasses. I had bought them oversized to allow for growing into, which was taking a long time.

"Per-haps ve can bhee of assistance to vun anudder." He produced these sounds by making his tongue ricochet about the inside of his mouth like a ball. He was a tall, thin man with a large head, standing so upright as to seem more fitted to travelling up and down than horizontally. The extravagant head rocked from side to side as he spoke. The effect was of a question mark hinged at the base of its curve.

"How do you reckon we could help each other?" The suddenness of my Australian accent unnerved him, and for some time after he would glance distrustfully at my mouth as we spoke, as if expecting a small snake to come out of it.

"Vot do you do?"

"I write on people."

"Ah, you make tattoos?"

"No. What do you do?"

"Vell, to tell you de truce, just betveen you and me, I am a ship's bosun, speaking for myself, personally." He smiled proudly, thick flesh ringed his eyes, suggesting indeed a lifetime of resistance to sun, wind and sea. "My name is Ramadas McFlattery, I am a Burmese Scotsman—you vill understand dis ting—and I have sailed as far nort' as Lubrushky and sout' as far as de Banyana Islands." There was a slight ginger tint in his dark hair, which was cut short and pushed forward like a balding swinger's. We walked on.

"Is it rhight dat you are now seeking some vay of leaving dis country?" He paused to flick some snot, carefully—as one removes a thread of chewing gum—into the gutter. This precision suggested good breeding.

"Dhoo you feel home-sick?"

"Only when I'm at home."

I told him my name and explained my disappointment with the country.

"Ah yes; 'de streets are not paved vid gurus', as you have discovered. But look..." He paused confidingly, levelling two bloodshot eyes at me. I looked away. "Look, if you like, ve need a hand abhoard my ship, vich is sailing tomorrow for Austrhalia. I tink ve could take you abhoard if you decide now."

"Don't I need some papers or some-such? I mean..."

"I can get dese tings easily. Vot do you say?" he smiled, "You'll have about fifty dollhars a veek?!"

I pursed my lips and knitted the eyebrows inscrutably, while I thought, "Hurray, home at last!"

"Well...Oh excuse me," I said absently, having bumped into a cow that stood across our path. It seemed to be listening carefully to a brick wall. "Well, sure, o.k., fine, why not?"

"Splendid. Dere are many men from America, Europe and Austrhalia on boarhd to make you feel velcome. Come, ve can talk about de details in a nearhby teashop. I hope dat you are good at darts. Ve play a lot on de ship..."

We strode, with a strikingly British resolve, to a sort of long, low tin shed filled with wooden tables and stools. Outside, about a dozen very ragged children crowded around us bleating, "Salaam sah'b, baksheesh" (gift), hands outstretched as if testing for rain. The chant was deafening, though the youngest ones gazed about vaguely. The man shoo'd them away like a villain in a Chinese melodrama. We sat.

"Vun small tin," he pointed at me with his little finger as if making a subtle point. "To obtain your papers from de port ortorities I vill need a hundred rupees. Can you manage it?"

"Sure. Can you return it fairly soon though?"

"Of course. Dis afternoon on boarhd de ship. Now I vill write you a note for de captain, explaining who you are and vot you intend to do. He likes to meet new crew-members first; a charming man. He is staying ashore at de 'Guruji Changrila Hotel'. Take a bus dere and he vill tell you your duties. You know dis hotel?"

When a bus finally did stop, I clung to its side steps by holding onto several other people also bulging out over the rapidly accelerating street. Near my destination, the driver swung the bus down a very narrow street, effectively scraping us from its side. I hadn't paid for a ticket, but assumed that the conductor—if he existed—was pinned somewhere in the bowels of the bus.

In the plush lobby of the 'Guruji Changrila Hotel', an air of rarified gentility hung over the several dozen black and/or white people mostly seated about. In one corner, two tweedy old matrons sat stonily absorbing tea. Their subdued voices were tight-throated and precise, but their conversation seemed to ramble like a child's. Above the polite clutter of small crockery, echoed mountainous guffaws. They belonged to a dark, blustering man of about fifty. He was large, with a waist-coat, walking stick and pipe. Perhaps he was the captain. I approached the reception counter.

"Do you have a Captain Worthystoke staying here?"

"I doubt it, thir, do you have the name written down? Ah, thank you. No. I should thay not, but I shall jutht check my regithter." He soon returned. "No. Thorry."

The afternoon sun had begun to drain into the greedy earth.

SHANE McCAULEY

Virus

bustling, laddered calves
in the spitting street—
nostrils flaring
by green-grocer's,
transfixed by odour of apple
but taking time to ogle
blonde girl, stretch-bra,
hands on alternate hips—
snared by blind glance,
windows fattening the soul,
the street symphony of bored feet—
only the machinery behind
mirror faces,
the head-splitting wrench of childhood,
remains,
a virus nourished on discontent.
in the midst of life we are in life
we are

PETER GOLDSWORTHY

Potato

o practical
potato,
        vegetable
most like earth,

among elegant
asparagus, intellectual
zucchini,

you
are unpretentiously
spud.

unlike
volatile noodle,
inscrutable rice,

you
function only,

tasteless as stone,

a most unfrivolous
root.

o wave
your green flag,
democratic potato,

you are the equal
of any other

potato.

RICHARD TIPPING

Standing Outside Saveways Supermarket in the Rain

rocking past 6am again:
just TRY, sometime, a month of sleeping
only when you crash from exhaustion, keep
everyone you know up as long as possible
in crucial fantastic conversation
(theyll all fade away one by one no matter
how hard you try) then watch the sun explode, go out
& help the rubbishmen throw your past life
into the truck!
its relatively easy
—nothing important is easy—once you start

mostpeople must find starting
the hardest part

Last night i climbed the stairs
to put an end to drifting
in & out of days unwound
like a nonstop bad homemovie:
to put an end with sleep i climbed
counting every step a reckoning
up the stairs to meet with what is mine.

i cannot make ends meet, the endless
drift of things, their prams & shopping baskets
hoolahooping on the morning tide, dewdrops
on plastic coats & Bungalong Flash
winning by a length from She's Right . . .
do i care to eat a Chiko Roll?

Pray for us now and at the hour
of waking halfway between evening
and flourescent light there is a moment
when our spirits might devour us

Throwing the Concise Oxford Dictionary
at a cockroach, meaning to do harm

Having no other means or end in view
but all the universe
imploding to a black hole the size of Toorak

Jesus will you never stop.

Both in the mooring of ships—Tropical Hibiscus
we call her—and the traffic bursting
over Gladesville Bridge, no sense remains, no pull
between enormous cargoes variously bound—
across the bay drift melancholy oils
dripping from the piers like tourist shops.

(What a sore & bloody strategy
slicing up ideas with your foot
like they were garlic salami
still bandaged from the last war!

my clock says 6.21—what a rush, as ric says
"6.21! i just love 6.21! what about ten past ten?! wow"
if you run fast to the wharf youll just catch
the first ferry & be at the Quay for a fresh slice
of cheesecake justintime to ride a tencenta
to Townhall Station, get a copy of lastnights Daily Mirror
from a bin, hop in to a Photo-booth for a few Snaps, then
climb the grizzly stairs to stare at City Clock till
"7.17" when the Blessed Muse comes past Abbeys
dressed as a doubledecker to the Quay!

soon youll be able to chat on
justlikethis & be an endless source of Information
Imagination & Insomnia
standing outside Saveways Supermarket in the rain

BRYN GRIFFITHS

Shark Killers

Our ship, silent in the scalding sun,
swings off Java in a quiet bay,
her engines stilled by the shotgun
crash and splinter of a piston
battering through steel skylights into air . . .
And now we fish, passing time
to the time when we are underway again,
till out of the green, tranquil deeps,
shimmering as if through glass half-seen,
a shark slides about the bloodied hook—
drives in to kill—
a dream of death—
sleeks away again through the still
levels of the sea as smoke drums
from the blurring wheel.
He hurtles on till the line snaps taut;
locks his jaw rigid with shock;
jams back the hook in splintering bone.
He dorsals the sea's calm
blue eye of death,
a frenzied wake,
slicing toward
the nothing of a shadow,
until we haul him aboard to die.
Here we slash wide his white belly
till his life pours upon the deck.
Here the mind listens
to his silent scream of killing
soaring high,
climbing forever from the fathomless flesh,
to throb and fade
through the humid tropic air.
And so he goes threshing into death,
staring strange and sightless
through the long hot day,
and already the flesh stills and corrupts.
Better had his heart's engine
stilled below water,
in the dark grottoes of coral,
than this last indignity of death in the sun.

LESLEY TAYLOR

"From the Heart"

..... Frieda James," Mrs Anderson said.

"Frieda James," I repeated after her.

"Yes. And an old girl of the school. You were here together for a while, I understand."

"A long time ago," I said.

"She remembers you very well."

"Does she," I replied. Yes; well I remembered her too, not that I had thought of her all the years and now that she had cropped up I was hardly pleased.

"It is an opportunity for her, Denise, and she will be wonderful with the girls."

Ah well, what did it matter really ... it was so long ago, and she was, by God, the unfortunate one of us, by any standards at all. So I put her aside; I had plenty of work ahead of me, correcting papers for my class and which I hoped to finish that night.

Mrs Anderson was our house mistress. The mother of a friend of mine, she had been like a mother to me. She was ideal for the job—an unusual state of affairs. My own experience of boarding schools was that house mistresses were hopeless, unqualified, underpaid flotsam, washed upon the shores of private boarding schools in refined widow—or spinster-hood. In this our Mrs Anderson was splendidly unusual. She even had a live husband kept in a home unit a block from the school and to whom, or to which, she returned every other evening and every other weekend. My job had been to replace her when she was off duty. Now she was to have Frieda James as full time assistant and I and the other live-in teaching staff would only have to relieve occasionally; though perhaps on more occasions than you might suppose. Frieda James was a cripple.

I got on with my work. At seven I went down to dine in the staff dining room, a grand little chamber sporting and supporting moulded gilt cherubs with tiny trumpets at the four corners of the ceiling (representing the four Winds!), and some massive mahogany furniture. This house, indeed mansion, had once belonged to my great-aunt—another Old Girl of the school and who had willed this property to her Old School, years before. Instead of to my mother. Or to me.... O, but who could afford to keep a mansion now? So here I lived in the Old Home of my Old Great Aunt and my great Old School, with the Boarders in the care of my great Old Friend, Mrs A.—you can see I had not gone very far—teaching and residing in the same Old ... and F. James about to join the fold.

Mrs Anderson was on duty this evening and was having her meal in the Great Hall with the girls. Don't be put off by this greatness and oldness of everything. We weren't so bad; and it was a very pleasant association for me, living and working where I felt I belonged.

Our Head at this time was a real autocrat; witty too but withdrawn and, well, rather Great. She presided at the dinner table like a Queen Elizabeth I. She was stern, she was erudite; capricious and cruel in small matters—great, however, in matters important. She had her pretensions too, and on this occasion her mood moved her, after glancing the length of the board, to exclaim—"No laggards? All present, I see. Yes. It is good that we should break bread together!" She then said grace, broke some bread for herself and gave the go by tucking in to the soup. We obediently lifted School-crested spoons and followed after.

Breaking away at her bread, whingey Miss Winebold whined out—"I believe we are to have a new assistant house mistress. An Old Girl of the school. . ."

Slurp went soup, slurp and much crumby Bread-Breaking.

"Frieda James!" dripped Howser, the new American history teacher (a complete Know-All), "I've been hearing so-o much about her. Such a very wonderful young person. I'm surely looking forward to meeting her."

You-all would, I slurped into my soup, crumbing some bread, but too afraid of the Head to hurl a bread pellet at the Deep or not so Deep South.

Well they all drooled on about the F. James character, right through crumbed cutlets (paper-frilled, a new cook) to Compote of Tinned Pears and the Head approving silently apart from a sort of condoning or blessing when she intoned—"Yes. It will not be easy for her. Miss James is a person of Great Courage. You will all be of assistance to her."

An appointment of good works, I thought nastily. Why should I grudge it? Well I wouldn't have had it been anywhere else but my own aunt's ex home, my own Old School—*my* home. I ate wordlessly through the meal, broken bread and all.

The following Saturday Frieda James arrived. Many trunked. In the years that had passed she had become broader, even taller. Her trunk had grown, though not the legs, still supported in leather and iron. She swung on her crutches as of old. Yes, with the ease of an ape through familiar forests as I clothed my features in a single respectable expression. She was as jolly as ever.

"Denise Lambert " she yelled at the very sight of me.

"Hullo," I said in nicely neutral tones, "How are you?"

"Fine So we'll be seeing a lot of each other!"

Still talks in exclamation marks I said in my head, "You two," whined the Winebolt, "will have such *lots* to talk about." I said naught and Frieda smiled richly. Yes, there were the same big teeth, rich red lips, small vivid blue eyes and highly coloured complexion. They must have stuffed her with vitamins all her growing years to compensate. Okay, okay, I am an ugly thinker.

She was marvellous, so breezy and so strong. The school girls were fascinated by a cripple with a personality so compelling. The staff too, prepared ahead for admiration, could not do enough—really they did so much we might as well have not had her.

She had been very popular in the year we had been at school together at thirteen or so, but her parents moved to another state and she had left us. I had been so relieved, for it had meant my return to normal. Two school terms of her had almost made some kind of psycho cripple of me. I wondered what might have happened had she stayed on for all the remainder of our school years. It couldn't really have gone on much longer; perhaps it would have been better—for both of us—if breaking point had been reached. Never mind—all so long ago.

Frieda settled in very quickly. Helped and assisted, vigorous and busy. She was a whiz.

Weeks went by, the halls resounded with Frieda's ebullient personality. How could I like it, in what was virtually my home and when I was jealous of the enthusiasm she roused in everyone and in which I could not join. No, I could not.

But time and term teetered on unmarked by any Happening (artwise or otherwise). Then Miss Hausen, the American teacher approached me one evening with a cigarette tin. "Collection," called she, gayness in her Southern voice.

"What this time, Lou?" I asked her—I quite liked her really, pain-in-the-neck though she was. She was what is generally called 'well meaning' (meaning: bit of an ass. Oh hell, I'm an arrogant swine. I honestly wish I was nicer).

"Frieda's birthday, of course. *You* should know."

"Why me?"

"We're going to throw a little party for her." (God, what next?) "You want a contribution, then," I slightly sneered and fished out a twenty cent piece and tossed it in the tin. God knows (my old friend) what made me so unguarded, so indiscreet—tired of it all I suppose, but I must have been having a Bad Spell.

"Well, Denise! That's not like you! You don't have to join in of course."

"Of course," I repeated rapidly, pulling out a ten from my wallet and cramming it into her hot little charity box. Leaving myself broke and sweating like hell with nerves and irritation. People are so bloody stupid, God. Lou gave me a disapproving American look and pushed off. I'd sort of hoped she'd offer $5 change. She had bulgy eyes, you know; as she left me they were angry-bulgy.

Did I hate everyone? Since Frieda had come I began to feel that I did. And still they admired her—we might have all been the same crowd; the same kids from that year at school, now grown. Frieda and I were the same, alright. Winefold and Hawser and the teen boarders all doubling for the rest of the pack.

I looked in on Frieda's birthday party for Tact's sake. Tact, another old friend of mine. Then I cleared off. Nonetheless, the good American Howdah tackled me next day, a Sunday it would have been (God forbid, you would think). Why? she wanted to know, Why? had I been so unfriendly—What? was the matter with me —and Here! was my ten dollar note back—she couldn't understand, she said, but it was mean—downright mean—and Frieda such a wonderful, brave girl—"I believe you're jealous of her popularity, Denise," she whooped, and (all pistons popping)—"How would you like to be handicapped as she is?"

Oh, crassness. Oh unforgivable, Goddam All-American Lou. How could you? Like I was becoming a leper in my own lair ... no, I wasn't being funny. I never really felt funny throughout the whole affair.

"Listen to me, Lou," I said then, "You are not minding your own business, are you? My attitude to Frieda is not your concern. Just let me be."

"But I can't understand," she moaned, almost in tears.

"You don't have to."

"But there must be something," she nagged. She was indefatigable. Yes, she was. Because she conferred with the Winedolt and the Winedolt tried her hand at reasoning with me too. I became so exasperated I lost my temper.

"Why, you really do hate her!" wondered Lou.

"You," I said, "have re-kindled an old hatred; you're hard at work fanning it to life. My past is mine, personally mine, and it is not yours."

"But surely it concerns Frieda?" And I said to them: "Shut up you two silly bitches. What are you trying to do?"

Lou, who never used bad words, said, "You're very wrong, Denise. You do yourself wrong when you speak like that."

It was like tangling with chewing gum. It was ridiculous, wasn't it? Anyhow, after that those two wouldn't speak to me at all—the Wineblot and the American Dream.

Things quietened down but Mrs Anderson asked me next what was wrong between me, the Howitzer and the 'blot'. "I wish (she said) you wouldn't play around with their names like that. It is rude."

"Meant to be," I murmured.

"My dear—what is the matter ... you don't accept Frieda for some reason—surely you can tell me?"

I opened up. For Anderson. "When Frieda came to this school," I said, "we were about thirteen. Everyone was overwhelmed by her affliction and her spirit—her absolute gusto. She arrived in the middle of a term—like now, huh?—and for some reason, because of some very appealing quality in me, she Chose me. This choosing was something she had to have: an extension of her personality-activity, so to speak ... do I go on?"

"Yes. But plainly. You're always elaborating."

"That's a camouflage, to cover the primitiveness of it all, dear Mrs. A.—a sort of figurative bunch of fig leaves to ..."

"Now Denise! Do try to tell me simply what it is that's made you angry?"

I put aside the leaves and climbed down. "Alright," I agreed, "I'll try. Well, for some reason she chose me as her victim. She was bigger than me and very strong from having to depend on her arms. I really couldn't cope with her."

"So she bullied you physically?"

"The rottenest, the most humiliating memory is how every day she'd find an opportunity to grab me, get me down, and sit her stinking buttocks on my head and face ... and up the top end of her those grinning red rubbery lips."

"But Denise—so long ago. You were only children."

"The kids loved it—they'd never seen such a splendid cripple. A regular side-show. Most of them got bored after a while, but she had her little group of special admirers. Like she has now, Mrs. A."

"Why did no one stop it? Couldn't you defend yourself at all?"

"She was a cripple. I never fought back and I couldn't be hiding from her and running away all the time. I just had to endure her passively—besides I was afraid of the crowd; they knew it was unfair, that's what made it so delicious. Coliseum Games. Anyway she had her impulses. I've my reaction, so don't say we were 'just children', Mrs.A., because that's shutting your eyes to something you didn't have to experience."

"Poor thing," Mrs. A. replied.

"Frieda? Oh yes." I was about to give a dreadful little laugh, but was saved by Mrs. A. going on—"she said something about you, something ... envious. But don't you see—with her strength and vitality it's absolutely tragic."

"Yes ... she might have been a Golfer." Oh, bad taste Denise. The remark spun off like a dud coin. "Let's forget it," I said.

One very sunny Saturday afternoon I was alone in the upstairs drawingroom. I heard Frieda coming out of the lift and across the hall with the thump-drag, thump-drag, of her crutches and iron feet. Coming in she shouted her cheery hullo and walked over to the open window. Outside the air was a wonderful hazy blue.

"I would like to go out there," she said loudly. "I do wish I could go out there." What she meant by 'there' was a flat, walled deck, formed by the roof of the huge bay windows on the ground floor. It was never intended to be used as a deck but some of used to climb out and sunbake there.

"Help me," she said looking towards me, "You could lift me over the sill."

"No," I said, "I couldn't." I knew my anger was showing. I had a terrible disgust of even touching her and I sensed she knew it all.

"Come on," she urged me. "How would you like to be me. You others sit out there."

"I couldn't get you out there," I said, "even if I wanted to."

"Not your broken arm?" she laughed. "You used to have to exercise it, I remember. You haven't let it go, have you? Remember when I put a head-lock on you?"

Poor bugger, you poor bugger, Frieda.

"Words now, Frieda," I said, "We're adult, so you'll have to use word-weapons."

"I could crack you," she said unoriginally, "like a nut."

"You're the nut," I said as amiably as I could. "How about giving up the ape-man stuff. You're supposed to be grown up." Oh, I said it as pleasantly as I could, for danger signals were popping all around. I could feel the emotion blasting out of her for she was just like old times—with something added—or lost.... Times never to be repeated, dear God, and while I'm addressing You, God, why is Frieda so ugly with me? Is it me?

"You always were a little shit," she was saying across the pink and cream carpet with no furniture between us.

So I stood very still, as you do with a dangerous animal, and silently calling on God—a thing I do frequently you must think I take His Name in Vain—but, to continue my narrative at what was, or is, its crisis point—Words it was this time (as I had already advised) and it came in blasts of invective. It was as though Frieda had never broken off from me, or lived between that distant school year and the present; although now that it was words that were directed at me, they were more hurtful to her than me. My mediocre little existence seemed to have touched off all the anger and pain that was in her—her little eyes so vivid, her lips so red and full and that glowing, peachy complexion—all intensified by her emotion. She called me so many things, mainly attacking my 'in' position at the school, but especially my junior school athletic prowess—that such small things could rouse her to this frenzy seemed mad and then I realised she *was* having a sort of mad seizure. Even her lips were slobbering. I, at last, was rendered beyond my usual facetious armour. "... living here," I remember her shouting, "... in this half-baked nunnery—you've got normal legs, why don't you go out, spread them, and get fucked—" and so on and on. I wanted to go—leave the room, rush out into the day; but I hovered there in a state of anxiety about her. It seemed to me she must collapse from the violence of her feelings; but when she finally stopped her shouting, she simply stood there, silent, with a sort of settling gloom on her face and I decided I could quit; and did. Then, as I closed the door, she began to scream.

Saturday afternoon and the whole building to ourselves. The kitchen staff and the housekeeper out, and those girls who had not gone out, down at the courts and the bottom garden. Sister then—I left at a run with Frieda's screams reaching out after me on the stairs.

At the hospital wing, two teen chicken-poxers sat playing cards together. "Where's sister?" I shouted at them.

"Sister?"

"Er," said the fair kid, "she's gone to the shop. Back in half an hour."

"Getting us some chocs," added the humorous, mousy one.

"When she gets back," I said, "... no, never mind," and I ran back to the house. But then I took the stairs slowly. I couldn't hear anything from the landing and when I reached the first floor everything was quiet. The drawing room door stood open and the room was empty. I did walk to the window and look down—she was not there. Thankyou, God, I said to myself or him—for my own sake.

In the night I was up vomiting and Mrs A., awake late, came to see who was throwing up so noisily. "You, Denise?" she said at the door.

"Only vomiting," I groaned.

"Only? Are you alright now?"

"Oh, yes," I said.

"Was it Frieda?"

"How do you know?"

"She was waiting in my sitting room when I came in this evening. She asked to be excused duty tomorrow. She was not herself at all . . ." I turned and retched into the lavatory bowl once more. "Let me," she said in her motherly way, and wiped my mug with a washer. "Come, come and lie down in my room." So I went and lay down in her room.

"You are ill . . ."

"No," I said, "Frieda is ill. I seem obliged to share in her pain." I was frivolous enough to laugh, "I was merely vomiting on her behalf," I added.

"Surely not, Denise. Surely not? I think you are too sensitive. More sensitive than Frieda—"

"No—weaker," I said. "You know now, I shall have to leave here."

I went away a few days later, staying at the Anderson unit until I found myself a bed-sit. And although I know I am the fortunate one of us, I feel disinherited and crushed.

Frieda made a success of her job at Ratho Park and when Mrs Anderson left at the end of that same year, she took her place. The girls all admire her, although I have heard there is often a butt or a victim, some girl or other that is, whom one hears of in 'amusing' encounters with Miss James. Presumably Frieda still has her impulses, they spring from the heart.

HAL COLEBATCH

In the Common-room she has white tea and biscuits

In the Common-room she has white tea and biscuits
speaks in a low, musical monotone with her peers,
reads The New Statesman, and at faculty parties
has two small whiskies or four small beers.

She grows roses in the garden after work,
has two gifted children, drives a nice red car,
holds reasonable opinions, and in discussions
is always careful not to go too far.

She is a slightly radical aristocrat, slim-hipped.
Her son knows electronics and her daughter sings.
If librarians and academics get together
she might well meet Philip Larkin at such things.

Sometimes on stormy nights you see her
riding a black Panther down the riven skies
with a black cape streaming, the panther's claws spread,
and her eyes flaming with the panther's eyes.

PETER GOLDSWORTHY

Grandpa's Elegy

I

piano player at the ozone,
grooving between chaplin
and keaton till replaced
by a wurlitzer

first bikie, only after
a dozen write-offs, condemned
to morris minors

middle-aged businessman
still worshipping machines,
racing locomotives
across the tracks

but always a narrowing of exits
finally only the weeping and violence,
mental wards and shock therapy

we never met, these myths
I have constructed from hints,
fragments of a kinship

II

the man I knew
lived in a drugged autumn,
a sleepout banishment spent
playing model trains,
coughing and farting among
motorbike magazines,
and walking grandchildren
to the crossing, freight trains
dieselling through the haze
of largactil and memories

o jazzplayer of legend,
psychotic and bikie,
however did you die
of old age?

JEREMY NELSON

Images of Hyde Park

O trees that guard my world
Make safe the paths
Through which I move

1.

On dactylic branches
That eager skies hold up
A white wind flickers,
Winds the nimble leaves—
Buddhist prayers
To drive off spirits.
A golden-shuttered
Linden day
All morning trembles
Shadow-light.

Each trunk's an axis,
Spins a world;
And standing near,
Someone watches.

2.

A tree enlightens attentive minds.
One branch is a metronome,
Another a bee swarm.

A leaf falls lightly.
Its last moment
Hovers
One arc from the ground,
Like a starling.
Then, between the wedges of air,
It swings and slides—
Dividing all into self,
Into this and that.

Brightness sculpts
Such moments.

3.

In the shadow
Of a great tree
Heavy flakes
Of light drift
Between leaves,
Settle on roses
And peonies—
Late summer's
Late afternoon.

4.

The sky is brittled
And black veined
With lacing branches
And frozen light.
The cold wings of gulls
Slice across
Its pale, empty panes.
In the dismal pool
Of a nameless soldier
Predatory birds,
Sick of sea salt,
Wash in silence.
Bronzed leaves fall
To mud and death.

5.

On a table
Under the branches
Of the lopped and ancient figs
Old men play chess,
Concentrate a mental fire
From winter's dullness.
They lean into each other
And measure death
To pawns and kings.

O

Which tree beckons most?
All have been wounded,
All have known,
In their soft nervous centres,
The brown jaws
Of the white ant.
At their lopped nodes
Old scars,
Rolled round with bark,
Form womb mouths,
Bulge with birth's head
And bear nothing

6.

The old trees shudder.
Their roots
Clutch for security
A spinning planet.
As the sun withdraws
Spurts of darkness
Stiffen into black.
Cats switch on and off.

7.

Dark roots
Throng the dead.
On black paths
Soaked in mirrors
Living faces
Pass.

JAMES J. LEGASSE

What's it Worth to you This?

Fran wanted to get back to the house, but didn't want to be there. She couldn't face another evening in the country snacking on sunflower seeds in the quicksand of a beanbag, another evening working on her fiction, another story about a frustrated housewife, unliberated and unhappy, another story that would end very realistically, very ironically.

She slows down for a red light, though her thoughts race forward: of Joan, those eyes closed as if trying to ignore a migraine; that mouth, pinched and scoffing ... Joan's hand, flicking the loose ash of a White Owl in the direction of the two larger-than-life landscapes over the bar: the black and white Ken Russell-like still congested with ant-size people madly and unsuccessfully struggling to climb an insuperable Everest of a mountain; the psychedelic canvas depicting Dorothy limping down the Yellow Brick Road, with Oz, the Emerald City, closing its bejewelled doors to her somewhere over the rainbow.

Red blinks amber, and Fran stalls. The car behind honks. She is irritated by its desire for her to get going. She forces the four-on-the-floor from third to first and jerks her way through the intersection.

"Trapped ... Alec, that husband of mine, Joan, that friend ... trapped, by their fading blue jeans, by their talk of liberation." Fran's car is barely negotiating the turns. "It's bad to have a raised-ranch with two baths and early American furniture; bad to have more than two children, bad to have kids at all: the commandments according to that husband of mine, that friend .. ."

A billboard advertising Coke is lit up so Fran can't miss "THE REAL THING" as she recalls the argument she had had with Joan and Alec the hour before. She wonders whether she had betrayed the fact that she had been emotionally moved by the film they were discussing, whether her argument about its structure was adequately intellectual and not sickeningly sentimental. Her words came back to her silently, like baseball scores that come from nowhere across the TV, moving through the scenes of *Search for Tomorrow* and disappear. "Romance ... quest ... with perils ... struggling to get to new place ... start new life ..."

Joan flicks the loose ash of a White Owl in the direction of Everest and the Emerald City. Joan dismisses Fran's argument by applying the only criteria she has come to expect of a good film. Joan stabs Fran with the pointed edges of her cynical consciousness-raised vocabulary: "melodramatic ... fantasy ... bourgeois ... life isn't that way ... too rosy to be real." Yankees, 6; Dodgers, 3.

Her car is slowing down. Fran doesn't realise her car is slowing down: gasp, shake, choke. She exerts pressure. The car is just under the speed limit. Fran is fast on her way.

"Home. Guess I was lucky to get the old house back. Good that Mrs Honey remembered me, that she never thought I was one of those 'spoiled brats of hippies' from the University.... The place hasn't changed much: same rust stains in the tub, same cracks in the wall. Funny—it hasn't changed at all these past few years. Still a house for transients.... My old nest...."

When Fran begged Mrs Honey to rent the farm to her a few months back, she had too much on her mind to do the place up properly, though she never had the instinct or desire to "domesticate" herself. She and Alec had worked out their priorities years ago, before they were married, and baking sour dough bread or restoring Victorian furniture were not among them. The world had to be fixed up ... before the house.

"Bricks and boards for bookcases, wooden crates for tables ... cheap, functional, grassroots, with it.... No curtains!" Fran smiles. "Trees outside provide privacy enough. Besides, what do I have to hide? My life is open, free. My marriage is open ... was open ... the divorce is ... the house unchanged ... for transients ... perpetual adolescents ... too rosy to be real...."

Fran is blinded by the headlights in her rearview mirror. They see through her. She feels pursued, stalked by the beast behind, but that is challenge enough. "Okay," she says out loud, "Okay!" She steps on the accelerator, hard.

Fran is in fourth gear through Plain City, a turn-of-the-century Ohio town. Small, adjacent, two storey shops, with wooden two-by-fours supporting non-functional though picturesque balconies, line Main Street. It's a Hollywood set, with the Post Office, bank, general store, and saloon, looking one-dimensional, like plywood facades propped up for *High Noon* or *The Fight At The O.K. Corral.*

One of the Brethren, a Mennonite man, moves toward a horse and buggy. He is dressed in broadfall pants, a denim workshirt with no pocket, and a wide-brimmed hat. He carries recently purchased tools from the auction barn at the end of the street. A Mennonite woman makes walking easy by using one hand to slightly raise the starched apron over her long dress. Her white face is framed by the blinkers of her black bonnet. She carries a quilt meticulously folded over her arm. A girl child follows carrying a rag doll.

Fran approaches the barn cautiously, aware of the congested street, careful of the gentle people from heartland America. She sees them in technicolor: Amish blue, grey, black. She imagines Obidah Schrock walking behind his plough, Sarah picking sweet corn, Amy feeding chickens. She feels transported—the Midwest, 1800's; or: Warner Brothers romanticising.

"How quaint," she thinks, unsure of her intended condescension, "a fantasy ... *The Wonderful World Of Disney ... The Waltons* ... Give me that old time religion ... I want a man just like the man that married dear old Mom." She is amused and moved.

A volunteer fireman is directing traffic. Dancing in the street, he gracefully motions her to turn right, to an open lot behind the barn. Fran tries to signal her intention to detour, but the dancing fireman is pleasantly adamant. The decision is his. She feels obliged to park, to stop.

Walking slow-motion to the barn, Fran tries to steady herself from the whirligig of her concerns. "Well, it appears to have four sides ... must be real. A green barn, huh? An Emerald City!" The jokes are strained, though cathartic.

She is surprised to discover how festive the place is, with little Mennonite women selling wedges of shoofly pie and mulled cider ... even popcorn!

Fran makes her way to the platform where the auctioneer is chanting in a language she doesn't quite understand. Certain words are recognizable, "bid", "worth", "five", but most need translation, which she is capable of providing once the unintelligible is given context.

"Tee-en? I ga five. Who'll gimme tee-en?"

The skinny blond assistant holding the carnival glass plate glittering in the floodlit light of the hall, is gleefully shrieking, yelping like a watchdog, a chichuahua, each time a hand in the crowd is raised.

The auctioneer and his assistant are a vaudeville duo, a novelty act, with a little dancing and a little singing and a few jokes.

"Now lookee here, ladies and gents, just lookee here. What we got here is a whatnot with spit-shine polish. Yes siree, can't get some of them mo-hog-un-ey pieces from merry old England to shine up as good as these oak dealies. And, lookee here, re-ul i-run nails and re-ul tree wood. What's it worth to you this? ... Tee-en? I ga five. Who'll gimme tee-en?"

"Con-man or faith-healer, the medicine man is alive and well and living in Plain City," Fran mutters to herself.

The merchandise is on the makeshift stage behind the auctioneer. On the wall, portraits of relatives hang in oval frames along with faded tapestries and timeless clocks with brass pendulums. There are sideboards and marble-top tables, water basins and jugs, tea sets and sea chests. It is her grandmother's attic and Fran is a little girl discovering the treasures of the past, the happy days, when possessions mean heirlooms and homes are furnished proudly and painstakingly with the clutter of character.

One particular item catches Fran's eye. It is a delicate tilt-top table with a pie-crust edge. "A perfect gem of a piece," she muses, mimicking what she imagines the auctioneer will say. "Lot 134. Still unsold." She wants it. "Alec would hate it ... too fussy, too pretentious, reminiscent of the days of British imperialism, when tut-tut-put-put military men with handlebar moustaches would sit in the library with their glasses of port on a perfect gem of a tilt-top table beside them, waiting for Indian servants to bring cigars."

The skinny blond man eventually brings the tilt-top out front. Fran gets up from her chair to stand by the wall in clear sight of the table and the auctioneer. She moves forward in little steps so as not to miss any of the goings-on: the seasoned middle-aged dealer in the front row wrapping another Royal Doulton vase in the newspapers she brought, packing the piece away as if it were a prize possession about to be transported cross country by unreliable moving men; the couple in their very early twenties holding hands and pointing to the table, mirror images of each other, their interest communicated through body language.

"Ah yes, just lookee here," the auctioner says in a wee voice as if he were talking to children. "Just lookee here. How's this for a perfect gem of a piece. Yes sir, won't find anything like this at Filberstein's downtown. No siree. What's it worth to you this? How much am I bid? Do I hear nidy?"

Hands go up when the price goes down to sixty. Fran's is not among them.

At seventy, her arm shoots up. The blond man shrieks, "Yip!"

The auctioneer is singing away, his voice becoming increasingly strident. The blond man punctuates the lines of the song.

"Seventy, seventy."

"Yip!"

"I ga seventy, eighty now, eighty now."

"Yip!"

"Nidy, nidy, nidy ... one hundred!"

Fran keeps pecking at the air, her heart pounding in time with a darting hand.

Two people are left bidding.

"Hundred tee-en, tee-en, tee-en."

Her arm is fixed in the air.

The middle-aged dealer goes back to her wrapping. The mirror-image couple sees Fran's arm out of the corner of their eye, and simultaneously restrain each other.

"Sold!"

The mallet hits the desk, thump.

Fran doesn't know what to do. She has just bought a table unlike any of the bits of straw she has in her reclaimed nest. She instantly regrets the purchase. "One hundred-ten dollars, I must be a fool," she thinks, as she crouches toward the cashier's window feeling that she better leave the barn quickly before she disgraces herself a second time. "What would Alec say if he knew? Will I have enough money for the rent this month? Where will I put it? Wait till Joan sees it; I'll never hear the end of it. God, what have I done?"

She is carrying the table to her car, carrying it one-handed by the stem, hiding it behind her, until she nearly scrapes a Volkswagen with its brass tips.

She is carrying it in front of her. She is holding the stem with both hands, like a schoolgirl carrying the flag in a Fourth of July parade.

When she gets to the car, Fran wraps the table in a plaid blanket she has in the back seat. She closes the trunk of the car, mindful not to slam it. She gets behind the wheel. She sighs and drives off, watching the signs along the road as if she were in unknown parts.

ANNE PARRATT

Oedipal

Now in the night
twilight of sleep and cold
thigh moulded
to the darkness of other years

we cross the tiredness
of scars and borrowings
and cuddle teddy bears,
toy soldiers and smuggled frogs

shading the light
of presence and present
with the gauze of butterfly wings
we climb trees again

and hold a maternal hand
at Even-Song.

PETER KOCAN

Cold

Once you have felt the cold
Enter into your bones and your mind
You will never be free of it.
No, never again.

You may have felt it almost from birth,
Seen it in your mother's eyes
Gnawed by unpaid rent
And grocer's bills, cowed by beatings.

Or felt it in your shabby adolescence,
Past throbbing dance-halls
You never entered; alluring,
Terrifying girls you never knew.

You may have felt it at twenty,
Alone in your furnished room
At night; or in rainy streets,
Your pockets empty, the landlord adamant.

Or felt it in the madhouse
Where every barb on the wire
Is a thorn to pierce
Hearts already pierced.

Or felt it, shivering, in a prison yard
Where every brick is a lost life
And a dead hope. O coldness
Of a million coldnesses!

It will be with you always.
And though you make your fortune,
Though you lie warm in a lover's arms,
Your tundra presses at the door.

KEVIN ROBERTS

Church Cemetery: Devon

after philip larkin

St. Prickledick in the Ditch
is quite
ill

a thermometer big as its steeple
hangs around its neck
showing only 100 quid
or red
out of the 50,000
needed for recovery

in the graveyard the headstones
are broken teeth
put up for the Tooth Fairy
carious stumps wondering
who snitched the threepence
or the zac

of course in Devon
nobody dies

they all Fell Asleep

some indeed
Fell Asleep on Jesus

a faux pas to remember

inside the gloom
deepens into despair
black wood with no dignity
except decent decay

I reach for my
cycle clips
to show reverence

and feel
only drying mud
on the cuffs.

KEVIN ROBERTS

clues

when you leave for work
all I have left of you
is a squat tan
bottle of Lentheric
long black comb with a spike
on the dressing table
a purple concave button
leather pony tail holder
black wooden pin
nailfile in an open leather case
tweezers like a pike's mouth

brush upturned entangled in
long black hair
red fountain pen and
a box of Choisel Paris

and a diary with black and
pink and purple
flowers

which I dare not open.

DUGALD WILLIAMSON

Saturdays ghosts. Sofala

No plastic sentiments here.
No raised marble polished white.
Beneath a bumpy "rock of ages",
runged with cast-iron frills lies
John Augustus Grimley
Departed this World in the Year 1874
Aged 5 Years
The Lord gave He took away
He will restore
He doeth all Things well

... all things well.
Three horses stand in the trees.
In pastures green ...
The air rustles dryly
an abstract blue nothingness
like the words of faith
denied by a scrape of metal
and stones which is
sharper nothing.
The prospector father, perhaps
turns away
a gambler with empty hands
feeling nothing as he turns to rust.

In the shifting wind a wattle tree, glittering gold,
flutters and droops like hope.
Thin swordgrass sifts
through twisted borders of sparse spears.
Eroded hills steal the failing light.
The handbuilt houses hoard neglect;
cobblestones, wooden axles, tyres.
One ramshackle pub still ekes a hazy
ache of memories from the old-timers here
in dry-veined eyes, dusty voices,
with death lounging round to jump a diminished claim.

TONY EVANS

John C. Hawes: A Centenary Appraisal

The previous reference to John C. Hawes in the pages of *Westerly* appeared in Volume 1 fourteen years ago. That valuable article by Cyril Brown and Patrick Hutchings was then the only published essay about the life and work, in Australia, of the eccentric pioneer priest-architect—apart from the biography *Hermit of Cat Island*.[1] Both *Westerly* and the biography by Peter Anson are long since unobtainable. Anson's book dealt with Hawes' twenty-four years in Western Australia in as many pages, without the writer himself visiting the State. He relied almost entirely on Hawes' own correspondence for his information, and those who know something about Hawes, and value the work he has left us, feel that those twenty-four pages are a poor recognition of the architect's place and importance in our history.

It was that *Westerly* article which first inspired my interest in Hawes and sent me on a pilgrimage to his buildings, scattered as they are across the Lower Murchison and Northern Agricultural districts of the State. When I first saw them in their bright, earthy colours, seeming to grow naturally out of their harsh bush surroundings, I thought that a colour film would be an ideal medium to tell their story. The rough texture of the stone, the red clay of the tiles against the deep azure sky, and the exciting visual relationship between the building masses as one moves around to view from differing angles, would, I knew, be a cameraman's dream. The dream waited eleven years and then the opportunity came to make the documentary *The Stones Cry Out*. Now others are making the pilgrimage having seen the film, as I made mine after reading *Westerly*. But television documentary is an impermanent medium; seen today and forgotten tomorrow. Documentary film makers tend to dip into their subjects only sufficiently to complete their project, then it's off with the old and on with the new. However, Hawes and his architecture have been a continuing interest for me, far outlasting the needs of the film. As each new piece of information comes to hand and each new thread in the tapestry is revealed, I feel more and more impatient that Hawes' work is not better known and more carefully preserved. That his architecture cannot be considered 'great' alongside the best in other Continents has to be admitted, but it's pretty well all we've got in Western Australia, at any rate as an example of a homogeneous collection of historic buildings designed and built with the loving care of one man. Hawes was an artist, a romantic, and deeply religious. He was an admirer of Ruskin and was fond of quoting:

> When we build, let us think we build forever. Let it not be for present delight, nor for present use alone. Let it be such work as our descendents will thank us for.

It is only when we search around our State for architecture that lives up to Ruskin's definition that we begin to appreciate how important Hawes' work has become. Admittedly, Hawes was an eclectic. He borrowed ideas: the twin towers of the Geraldton Cathedral from the Californian Spanish missionary style and the dome which has a fleeting resemblance to Brunellesci's cathedral in Florence, are good examples. It's this borrowing tendency that has probably weakened Hawes' reputation as an architect in some circles.[2] But it can be argued that Hawes was master of the elements he borrowed. Although he wasn't a stylist, he had a particular handwriting which is sincere and instantly recognisable in all his buildings, both here and in other parts of the world. Professor Hutchings provides a fitting answer to this criticism:

> I think it's very difficult to find an architect who doesn't borrow; borrowing is bad when all that is produced is pastiche. Now whatever anyone may want to say about Hawes architecture, it is never pastiche. You can recognise where every bit comes from, but he fuses them into a complete whole. Even Mullewa, which I think is one of his most extravagant conceptions, looks organic as it lies there on that great slope of red clay. The organic really comes alive when looking at that building; everything has been fused together and is beautifully articulated . . .[3]

Hawes deserves to be better known and appreciated, not only for the buildings he left us, but also because he was in his own life something of a phenomenon. His story reads like an incredible adventure of passion, danger, achievement and crippling disappointment. His life is as full of colour and controversy as, say, that of Francis Greenway and Burley Griffin, yet the two latter names take precedence in the history of Australian architecture. Like Burley Griffin, Hawes' work can be seen on three continents. Both Hawes and Burley Griffin migrated to Australia and built with enthusiasm in an environment that excited them; both suffered from antipathy and Australian philistinism and both left to continue their building in other countries where it was more appreciated. How this story of antipathy and rejection is repeated throughout Australian history, even to the present day!

John Cyril Hawes was born on September 7th 1876 and for someone who devoted so much of his life in preparation for eternity, it is a gentle irony that his birthplace and early home was in Paradise Road, Richmond.

John's father was a solicitor and a prominent member of the Evangelical branch of the Church of England; his religious views would be in complete contrast with those his son adopted in later years. He was probably a very dour self-righteous Victorian who seems to have been feared and even avoided by the younger members of the family.[4] Both father and mother (with whom John had a very close relationship) were responsible for a strict religious training based on long daily devotions and religious observances which we might find stultifying today. Anson recounts that John Hawes decided to become an architect at an early age when he was given an especially elaborate box of building bricks for a birthday present.[1] Like so much in Anson's book, this minutia is taken from Hawes' own reminiscences written with a memory sixty years old and muted by religious sensitivity.

Hawes studied architecture at the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Architectural Association schools in London and there came under the influence of the leading architects of the day. Among them were William Lathaby, a former pupil of Ruskin, and John D. Sedding whose crowning work is Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Square—beloved of John Betjeman who is currently engaged in promoting its preservation. Hawes, like his teachers, rejected Victorian Gothic and Neo-Classicism, preferring instead simpler forms and natural building materials without rich decoration. Hawes described his approach to building in this way:

> Slavish copying of bygone styles and periods is to be shunned; but the architecture should be reminiscent of the past, without pedantry and it should be varied without being fussy and freakish. Good proportions with dignity and repose are more important than ornament and decoration.[5]

Hawes completed his training in 1897, aged 21 years, and started work as a professional architect. One of his first buildings is still a well known landmark in Bognor, Sussex. A private house, still in the possession of the Hawes family, it displays the architect's individualism and his charming talent for making the design fit a special set of requirements. In this case, three brothers with a passion for sailing and the sea wanted a holiday home with a view of the ocean; yet the house itself was several hundred yards from the beach behind shops and boarding houses. The result is a residence built in the form of a tower with the bedrooms one above the other and the windows high enough to look over the sea. When I was shown over 'The White Tower' in England last year, I instantly recognised the Hawes characteristics and that strong 'welcoming' quality which is common to all his work. Unhappily, 'The White Tower' is under some threat from the developers; lack of appreciation of Hawes' buildings is not peculiar to Australia.

Hawes' early work was soon noticed by the leading architects of the period and he seemed likely to establish a prominent and successful niche in the professional establishment. He exhibited a scale model church in the Royal Academy exhibition of 1898 and this, in his own words, brought him 'recognition, publicity and praise' and pointed him firmly in the direction of ecclesiastical architecture.

> The very reason I threw myself as a young man so wholeheartedly into ecclesiastical architecture was the fact that in the London architect's office where I was an articled pupil we did little else but banks and pubs. In a spirit of revulsion and rank rebellion as soon as my time was up I deserted the temples of money and beer for the gothic temples of the true Jerusalem.[5]

His first major work in this category was St Christopher's Church at Gunnerton, thirty miles west of Newcastle in Northumberland. He wrote in later life that he thought it the best thing he ever did. Alongside this successful professional development, there developed another passion—the church, and more specifically the ritual and ceremony of the Catholic revival in the Church of England. John Hawes was captivated by the monastic ideal, doubtless stemming from his study of, and admiration for, medieval church architecture. He became associated with several abortive attempts to re-establish Benedictine and Franciscan communities within the Church of England. John was usually cast in the role of architect and builder and there are examples of his work of this period to be seen on Caldey Island, South Wales, Alton Abbey, Hampshire and Painsthorpe in Yorkshire. But always there seemed an element of conflict between Hawes the builder, and Hawes the religious. His artistic temperament and his professional pride were then—and throughout his life—a problem to his religious superiors. Hawes was an individualist, a loner, and his somewhat naive and sadly amusing attempts to live in religious communities were failures.

In 1909, when he was 33, the religious Hawes and the architect Hawes were given an opportunity to live in peace. He accepted an invitation to become a missionary in the Bahamas where a major part of his work was to be the rebuilding of churches which had been destroyed in a devastating hurricane. It was an uneasy peace and culminated two years later with a second religious conversion, to Roman Catholicism. There followed a short period of wandering in America and Canada mildly foreshadowing supertramp W. H. Davies—and scarcely less adventurous. John Hawes entered the Beda College, Rome, to study for the Catholic priesthood in January 1912.

It was while Hawes was studying in Rome that he met Bishop William Bernard

Kelly from Geraldton, Western Australia. Kelly was the foundation bishop of an arid bush diocese, in an area over 300,000 square miles. There were few churches and only ten priests. The bishop was unashamedly on a recruiting mission and Hawes was an attractive proposition. He was an enthusiastic and experienced missioner, he was unattached to any bishop or diocese and had a small private income and above all was a trained architect. Part of the attraction for Hawes in coming to Western Australia was doubtless Bishop Kelly's commission to design a cathedral for the diocese. For Hawes as an architect, the triumph of Christianity was inextricably interwoven with the beauty and grandeur of Christianity's buildings. Hawes was a romantic who saw in the beauty and permanence of Christian architecture the truth and beauty of faith itself.

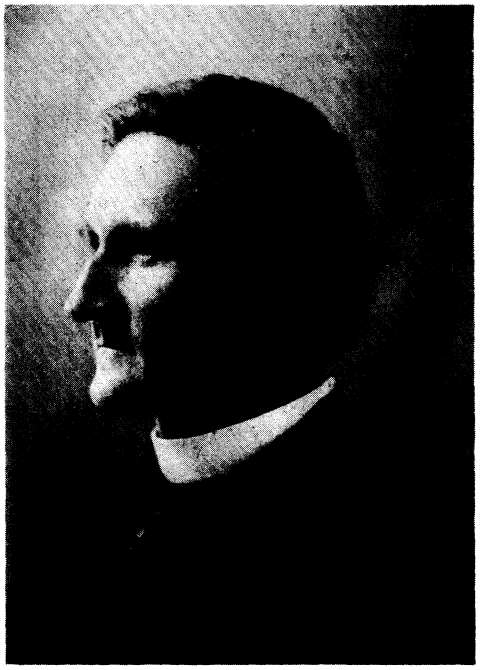
Hawes' first designs for the cathedral were drawn in Rome before he had seen the location. From Kelly's enthusiastic description, Hawes visualised a country similar to California which he had visited, and modelled his drawings partly on the Californian Spanish missionary style and partly on Italian Renaissance which he'd grown familiar with during his five years in Rome. It is interesting to note that those designs drawn in Rome were the basis of the present building, with only slight modifications made after Hawes arrived. Without being influenced by the current Australian fashion, this highly individual and uncompromising architect had rejected traditional gothic, and designed a cathedral which he believed was most suited to the climate and environment. Elsewhere in Australia, the missionary church accepted gothic as almost obligatory; a recognisable link with a European faith. Hawes argued that the style which suited the hot dry West was Romanesque from southern Europe and this predominates in practically all his work. The outside appearance of St Francis Xavier's Cathedral is mellow and welcoming, and fuses organically with the surroundings. It has become a rewarding tourist attraction; a symbol of the town of Geraldton. The bright freshly re-painted interior, with recent alterations in line with contemporary liturgical changes, is a disappointment to some people. Perhaps a better idea of what Hawes wanted for the interior can be seen from his sketch which he made for the souvenir brochure at the official opening of the partially completed cathedral in 1918. It was another twenty years before the church was finished due partly to lack of money and partly to the hostility of the second Bishop of Geraldton, Dr Richard Ryan.

Of the twenty-one buildings by Hawes in Western Australia, ranging in importance from the cathedral in Geraldton to the barely recognisable ruin at Yalgoo, the most fascinating and original is at Mullewa; the church and interrelated Priest's house. Parts of it are clearly Romanesque and the whole has a feeling of antiquity; the kind of building one would expect to find on the hot dusty plains of northern Spain. Professor Hutchings has said that it looks like a great slumbering dragon,[3] and from some points of view this is true. It seems to 'sprawl' over the red clay soil and at the same time to have grown out of that soil. The bright light catches the white domes and the red cordova tiles and the whole building has something of the secret of the great medieval cathedrals; it draws the visitor back again and again, welcoming him and inviting him to enter.

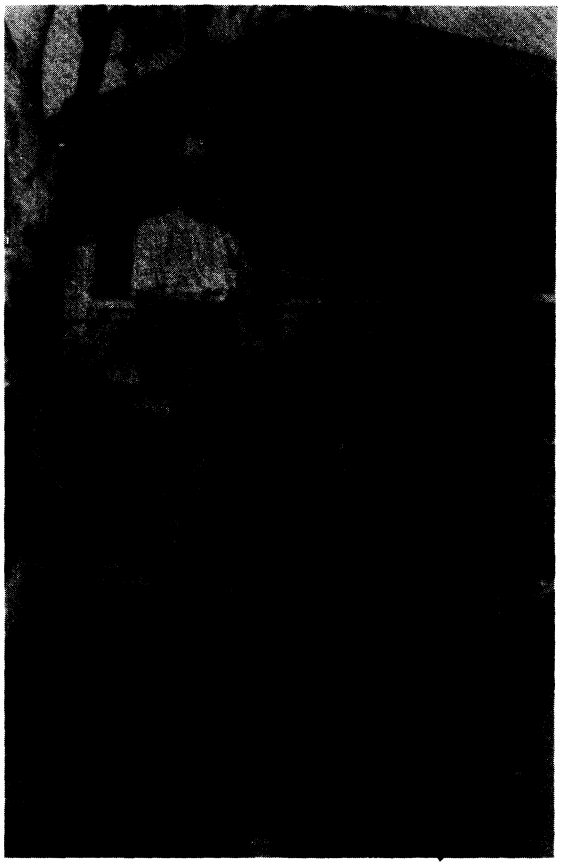
> I'm building into these stones at Mullewa, poor little feeble work that it is, my convictions and ideas as to what a church should be—ideas flatly antagonistic to the prevalent notions over here.[6]

There's a thinly veiled criticism in this quotation, directed at Hawes' colleagues and clients and uppermost in his mind must have been the lack of understanding and sympathy of his new bishop, Dr Ryan.

Professionally, Hawes was proud and stubborn, but his religious training and conviction would never allow public argument or recrimination. Hawes believed in absolute loyalty to his superiors, and only the briefest written hints about his

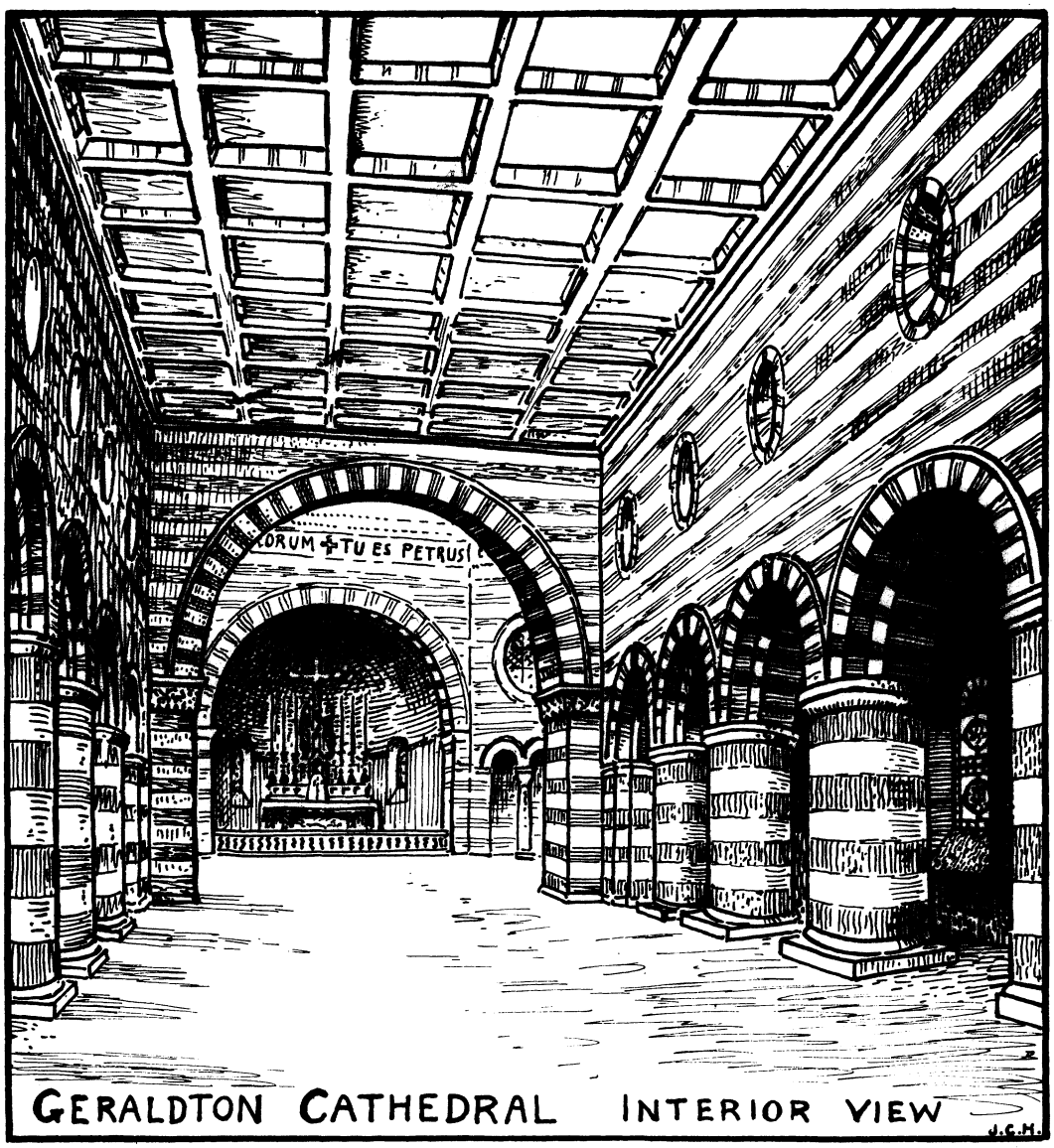


The Reverend John C. Hawes.

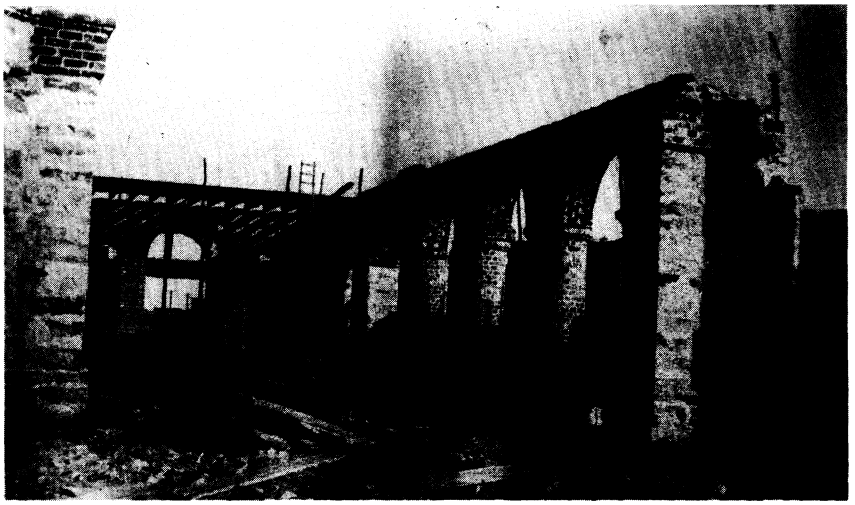


John C. Hawes: the 'bush missionary' on his horse, Babs.

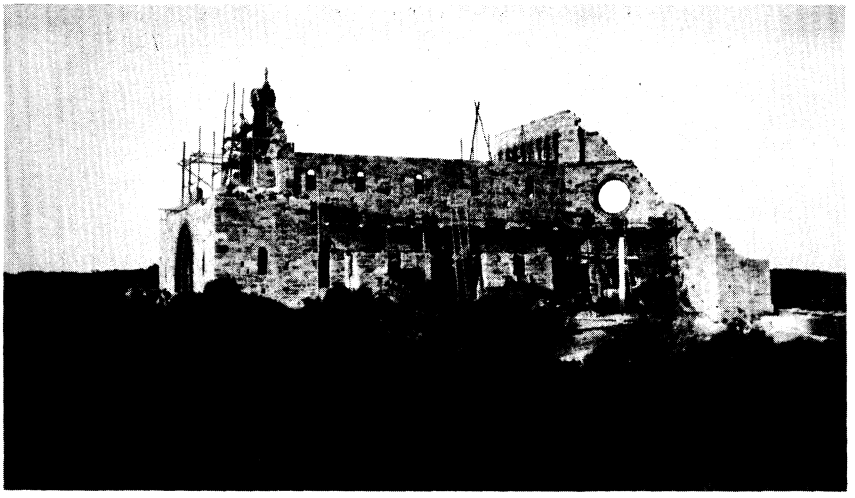
John C. Hawes, *circa* 1923. 'The bush architect and builder.'



Original pen and ink sketch by J. C. Hawes showing the proposed interior of St Francis Xavier's Cathedral, Geraldton.

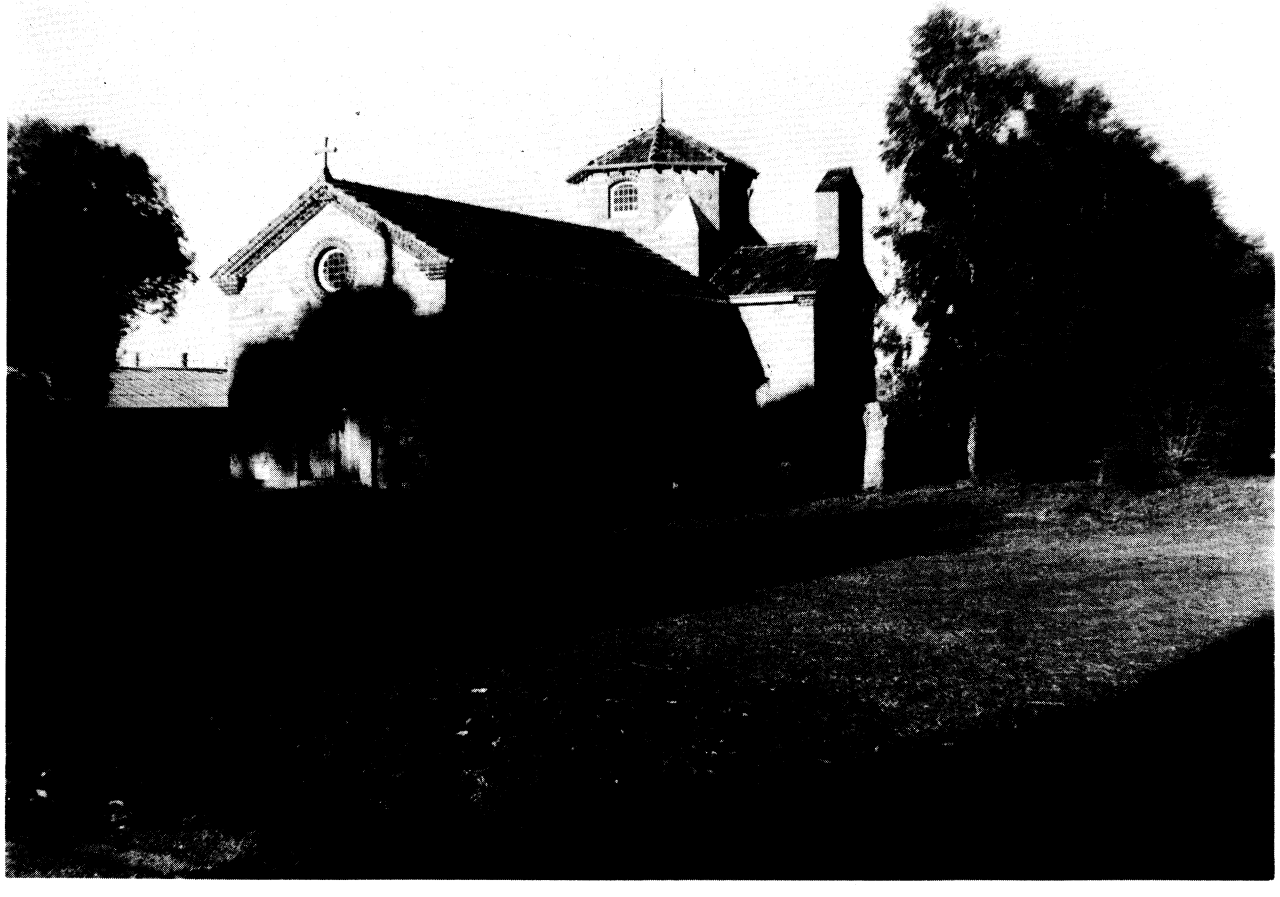


Geraldton Cathedral
Stages of
construction.

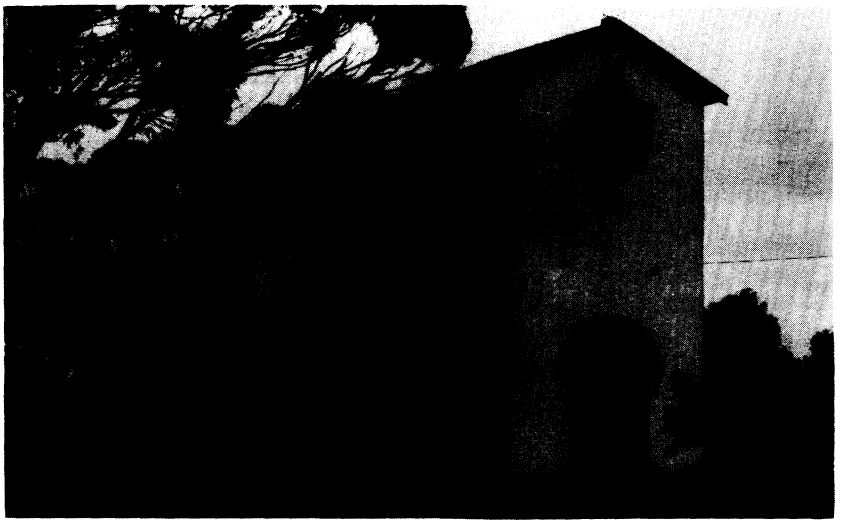


St Francis Xavier's Cathedral, Geraldton.

Catholic Church, Mullewa (1921-23). The north transept was added in later years, but manages to blend in sensibly with the original Hawes' building.

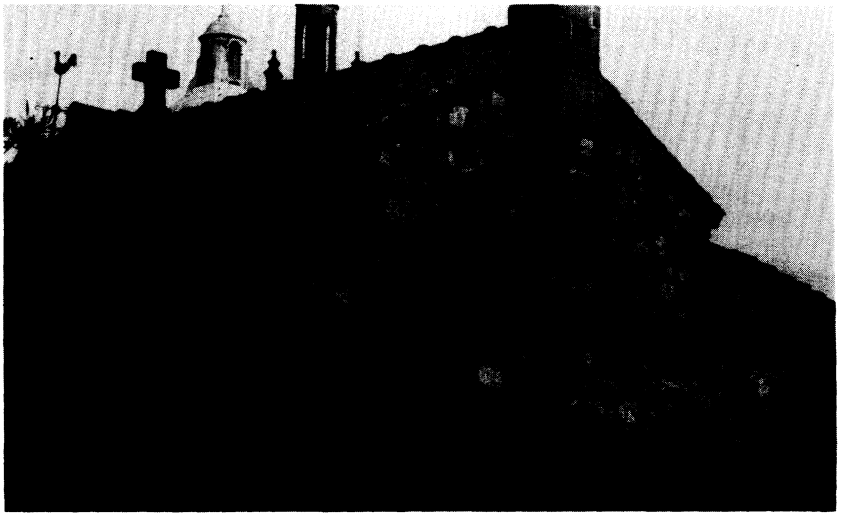


St Lawrence's, Bluff Point: the original church. The nave now completely removed.
and a modern brick octagon attached to the transept.



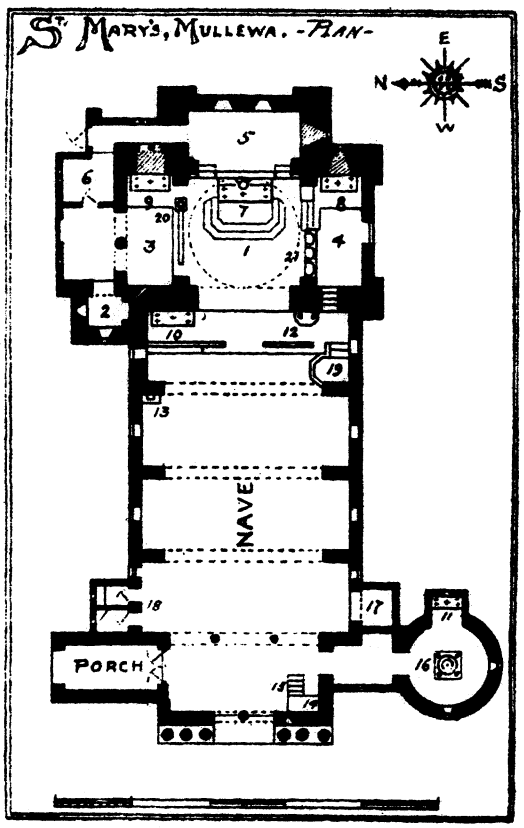
Catholic Church, Perenjori, after recent renovations.

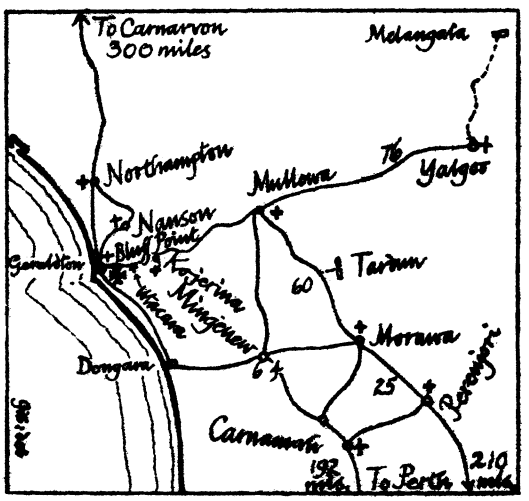
The Priesthouse, Mullewa, 1927.



The Priesthouse, Mullewa: Visitors' Entrance.

Proposed Cathedral—Perth





St Mary's, Mullewa

1. Dome and Sanctuary. 2. Bell Tower. 3. North Transept. (Note: The north transept has been extended since Mgr Hawes' time; the extensions can be seen in the illustration of the north-west side of the building. Notice the war memorial in front of the door in the west wall of the new transept.) 4. South Transept. 5. Sacristy. 6. Acolytes' Vestry. 7. The High Altar. 8. Altar of St Joseph. 9. Altar of St Michael and All Angels. 10. Altar of the Holy Rood. 11. Altar of St John Baptist. 12. Shrine of Our Lady. 13. Shrine of the Sacred Heart. 14. Shrine of St Teresa ("The Little Flower"). 15. Stairs up to Organ Loft. 16. The Baptismal Font and Baptistry. 17. Grotto for the Christmas Crib. 18. Confessional. 19. Pulpit. 20. Paschal Candle Stand. 21. Sedilia.

true feelings can sometimes be discovered.[7] In addition to the buildings which we can still see, there are folios of plans in the archives relating to commissions which were rejected for one sad reason or another. The most tragic was his three years work on a new St Mary's Cathedral in Perth. There is evidence that Bishop Ryan played a significant part in opposing the Hawes' designs.[8] Archbishop Clune had clearly indicated that he wanted Hawes as an architect and for a while supported him against the Irish gothic faction.[9] It was Clune who encouraged Hawes to consult Sir Giles Scott the eminent British architect, then working on Liverpool Cathedral and sent him to Europe to order the stained glass and mosaics.[10] It was while Hawes was away in England on this mission that the mysterious decision was taken to reject the Hawes designs and select the traditional gothic ones of Cavanagh. Hawes' diary contains a scathing comment about this *volte-face*; a clue to his bitter disappointment. Sir Giles Scott wrote commiserating with Hawes, saying that Perth had lost the opportunity of having the only distinguished non-gothic cathedral in Australia.[11] The present half-finished structure is a sad reminder of the unhappy episode.

John Cyril Hawes left Australia in 1939, primarily, he tells us later, for spiritual reasons. He had long believed that he was called to lead an eremitical life and that his secular priesthood in Western Australia was too busy and too public. Towards the end of his stay he'd been appointed Diocesan Architect and had received honours for his work mainly through the support and friendship of his third bishop, J. P. O'Collins. There is some evidence however that Hawes left Australia a frustrated and disappointed man.[8] He settled back in the Bahamas where he'd started his missionary work twenty years previously. He attempted to live as a hermit on the top of a barren rocky hill on Cat Island overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, but his architectural skills were sought after by local church officials and he became as busy there as he had ever been in Western Australia. As 'Fra Jerome' he lived a further seventeen years in his hermitage, designing, writing, painting, and generally administering to the local people who regarded him as an awesome but saintly figure. He died aged 80 in 1956.

The story of John Hawes and his work is an exceedingly complex one. He lived intensely and was a man of driving enthusiasms and deep convictions. Whether his religious life prevented his development as an architect of some importance, or whether (as he might have believed) his architecture frustrated his religious development, is only one of many puzzles for the biographer. His personality comes through as curiously muddled. He obviously enjoyed everything he did and was not above relishing notoriety and applause. Even on Cat Island towards the end of his life, he was a notably unsuccessful hermit; writing and receiving copious letters and contributing to architectural and spiritual journals; generally on the subject of himself. Inevitably he was discovered by the media and written about in popular magazines. One leading journalist visited him and eulogised:

> this modern St. Francis ... this internationally acclaimed architect ... a Christopher Wren with tourists coming to look at his buildings in a thousand years ...[12]

Although he was said to be upset by this publicity, his very mode of life and contact with the outside world naturally lead to it.

Hawes is buried in the tomb he carved out of the rock near his hermitage on Cat Island. His memorial in Western Australia is another tomb which he had prepared for himself in his fine Cemetery Chapel at Utakarra just outside Geraldton. Under a dusty old mat, dark and forgotten, is an engraved brass effigy of Hawes himself, which in the event was never needed. It is another piece of the Hawes puzzle; and provides the only opportunity for the enthusiast to make his own brass rubbing in Australia.

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6. Cf. Letter quoted in *The Hermit of Cat Island*, p. 168.
7. Information supplied to writer by Bishop J. P. O'Collins, Ballarat, 1973.
8. Information supplied privately to the writer, Perth, 1973.
9. Correspondence: Archbishop Clune to Hawes, dated 20th October 1922, Geraldton Cathedral Archives, Geraldton.
10. Correspondence: Archbishop Clune to Hawes, dated 18th December 1922, Geraldton Cathedral Archives, Geraldton.
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12. Article, *Colliers Magazine*, N.Y., 20th July 1953.

BUILDINGS IN W.A.

St Francis Xavier's Cathedral, *Geraldton* (1915-1938).
Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, *Mullewa* (1920-1923).
The Priest's House, *Mullewa* (1923-27). Used now for parsih meetings and mainly as a storehouse.
St Lawrence's Church, *Bluff Point*, Geraldton (1937). Only the transept remains; a modern brick octagon has been added.
Cemetery Chapel, *Utakarra*, Geraldton (1936).
Holy Cross Church, *Perenjori* (1937). Recently the exterior has been renovated.
St Mary's Church, *Northampton* (1936).
St Mary, Star of the Sea Church, *Carnarvon*.
Holy Cross Church, *Morawa* (1933). Subsequent alterations have left this church very different from the original designs.
Convent Chapel, *Yalgoo* (1920). A ruin, but still possible to appreciate the original concept.
Carnamah. A church of inferior design and subsequently remodelled.
Convent Chapel, *Nanson*. Used now mainly as a schoolroom.
Chapel of Ease, *Kojarena*. Now little used.

OTHER BUILDINGS

Nazareth House, *Geraldton* (1940).
C.B.C., *Geraldton*.
St John of God Hospital, *Geraldton*.
The Hermitage, *Morawa*.
The Hermitage, *Geraldton*.
Melangatta Homestead, North of *Yalgoo*.
Convent, *Tardun*.
The Farm School, *Tardun*.

TED MAYMAN

Sense of Place

The crisis of identity which has been a curious part of the Australian literary scene has never worried those several generations of happy extroverts who grew up in Kalgoorlie against the background of the Golden Mile.

They were sure of their identity; their sense of place. They had their own history, short but vivid, against which they polished their own legends. If pressed, they would admit they were Australians but first things came first. First, they were goldfielders. Goldfielders now have a problem. Can they sustain their identity?

In Kalgoorlie recently I heard lighthearted discussion on this grave issue among some elderly front bar characters—pensioners and a couple of turned-down miners —in the Piccadilly Hotel; a quiet workingman's pub.

Nickelfielders was suggested as an alternative. Also, at some future date, perhaps uraniumfielders. As an all-embracing identity mineralfielders was wryly put forward. Substitutes met the fate they deserved. Among themselves the front bar decided to retain their now slightly oldfashioned identity as goldfielders until they recovered from present and future shock.

For the cold winds of reality—the cost of production and the present price of gold—have touched the Golden Mile with numbing effect. Lake View, Great Boulder, North Kalgurli, the last working mines on the Mile, have been on 'care and maintenance' underground for some time, waiting to see what happens to gold. There is not much activity on the leases; no clank of tipping skips, no steady rumble of ore into the headframe bins, and no mine whistles impatiently for the changing shifts.

The North Kalgurli plant is concentrating nickel ore for Anaconda and Selcast. While the Oroya plant is still on gold, it is treating Mount Charlotte ore trucked in three miles away from the North End. Lake View, with aid from Homestake, the big American mining company, is pulling increased low-grade tonnage from Mount Charlotte, a nugget's throw from the planted tree which marks the spot where Paddy found the first Kalgoorlie gold. But the North End is not regarded as part of the Golden Mile, that once-crowded conglomeration of leases where the big mines have thundered ceaselessly, until now, for nearly eighty years.

At the turn of the century when Western Australia became part of the Commonwealth (and the goldfielders took the West into Federation) there were more than seventy leases scattered across that square mile or so of low hills dipping north and south near that once bustling acre of hotels called the Boulder Block, or by its official post office name of Fimiston.

In those days the Loop Line—the jolliest and busiest railway in the State—circled the perimeter of the mines of the Boulder Belt, with stations at Croesus,

Hill End, Trafalgar, Kamballie, before returning from Boulder City via Golden Gate and Kallaroo to Kalgoorlie. The Loop Line and its stations are now only vague memories, as are many of the leases it once served.

And what romantic names the leases had. True Blue, Iron Duke, Oroya, Eureka, Bank of England, Royal Mint, Talisman, Idaho, Old Mortality, Union Jack, Great Scott, Confidence, Jubilee, are a few. In those days, among the big mines that worked the richest mile in the world, were Kalgurli South, Australia, Associated, Great Boulder, Perseverance, Central Boulder, Lake View Consols, Ivanhoe, Golden Horseshoe and Great Boulder Main Reef.

Among those that remained in the heart of the Mile twenty years later, after amalgamation with neighbours, were famous mines such as Great Boulder, Perseverance, Lake View and Star, Chaffers, Ivanhoe and the Golden Horseshoe.

When the shafts went deep on the sulphides and the telluride ore in the early days, the wealth of the Golden Mile gave stability to Kalgoorlie and made it the capital of the Goldfields; that vast area of dry inland which stretched from the Murchison in the north to the Yilgarn and Dundas fields in the south.

Over the years the gold mines of the back country have closed down and the lights have faded in the many small towns they once supported. But the big mines of the Golden Mile, through ups and downs and booms and busts, have, in the past, been continuous producers. That they are silent now, waiting to see what the future holds for gold, is a hurt to Kalgoorlie's pride.

The future of Kalgoorlie, with its surrounding nickel areas and as a large administrative centre with a settled community is secure enough. Still, nickel has not the romance of gold which gave the people of the region a particular identity.

That this regional identity is not as strong as it was may be true ("Gawd, no. they kick where they see a head these days") but, historically, it played an important part in the State's development.

The discovery of the Coolgardie-Kalgoorlie goldfields in the 1890's came when the land booms of the Eastern States had collapsed. Wool prices were at their lowest, unemployment at its highest, and Australia was in the depths of an acute economic depression. Gold was important in those days. It backed the money systems and the expanding credit of the muscle-flexing nations of the world. To thousands of people the new goldfields offered fresh hope, perhaps a fortune, at least a job.

In the ten years to 1900 the population of Western Australia, a quiet agricultural colony, rose from 46,000 to 180,000—it quadrupled, a rate of growth that has not been passed in the present century.

They came from all over the world, but a solid majority came from the Eastern States. To several goldfields generations these 'Old Mates of Your Father's' and their yarns were important; they were part of living history.

To quote nostagically, maybe as barefoot boys in moleskin pants by their Irish parents' lonely slab huts in the Kelly Country they had watched Ned and Dan ride by to Euroa, to Jerilderie, on to Glenrowan. Or maybe they had come from the Cornish of the Bendigo mines, or had been 'pickey boys' for copper under Cap'n Hancock at Moonta. Or, as kids of twelve, had led whip-horses on the surface before going underground with their Welsh fathers on Ballarat or Clunes. Or perhaps they had drifted across from Queensland after the sheep station lock-outs, or from the Sydney docks after the maritime strikes. Or had been on Hall's Creek or the Murchison before Coolgardie was found, or maybe they had only sung the 'Shan Van Vocht' with Tassie O'Connor in Tom Doyle's Kanowna Hotel.

At any rate, whoever they were, they came in considerable variety, and their yarns of the days when they were young enriched the atmosphere of a region which already had a colour of its own.

It was a vigorous, independent, impatient mob who spread out over the many finds of the desert goldfields. The men and women led a hard, insecure life. Living conditions were primitive. Out of common problems faced in an area of great distance with a harsh climate, and isolated from the government in Perth, there was a distillation of regional attitudes and feelings. The goldfields came together as a community to help themselves and one another in times of trouble.

They were not passive receivers of news; they made their own. They spoke out. The many small local newspapers under fiery editors printed strong stuff, aptly reflecting community feelings, for goldfields people felt they were responsible for the boom the West was experiencing, yet were treated as 'riff-raff' by the government. On another level writers like 'Dryblower' Murphy, 'Cross-cut' Wilson, 'Bluebush' Bourke, and many other anonymous poets who wrote under pen-names—the wandering troubadours of the bush—echoed the tensions and trials as well as the laughter, of the goldfields way of life.

Sport and gambling and vice flourished, but there was plenty of energy left over for politics. Goldfielders gathered to discuss and debate, to attend political rallies and air their grievances loudly, mainly against the government. It was a period of democratic expression and action which, in the days of camel teams and horse drays, achieved astonishing results in a short time.

By 1904, within ten years of the discovery of gold, Kalgoorlie and Boulder had a surrounding population of 30,000 people, electric trams ran in the streets, a railway and the Goldfields Water Scheme—still one of the great hydraulic engineering works in the world—knitted the region to Perth; the political Labor Party of Western Australia had been established, and of the six original members of the State Parliamentary Labor Party, five were from goldfields constituencies.

Early in their history, gold, and the environment in which it had been found, had given the newcomers a community identity and a sense of place, that of goldfielders.

The reason for the growth of Kalgoorlie was, of course, the wealth of the Golden Mile. The mines, when they went deep, were fortunate in the quality of their work force. With the decline of the Victorian goldfields a hard core of experienced hard-rock men were among the thousands of 'T'Othersiders' who came West. Several generations on Ballarat and Bendigo and similar places had bred miners that were the best in the world, men with traditions and skills reaching back to the mines of Wales and Cornwall and the North of England, men without peer 'in bad air and on a dangerous face'. Some of their traditions and skills were passed on to a Kalgoorlie generation when sons followed their fathers underground.

When the First World War broke out the main mines were the Great Boulder, the Golden Horseshoe, Ivanhoe, Lake View Consols, Oroya Links, South Kalgurli, Hainault, Chaffers, Perseverance, and Hannan's Star. With their main shafts below 2000 feet and the diamond drills showing payable ore farther down the mines of the Belt were on good reserves, although costs were rising and the price of gold was fixed.

The 1920's, with costs rising relative to the price of gold, in those Gold Standard days fixed at £3-17-10½ a fine ounce, were years of apprehension. The shafts on the Mile had reached depths that made development costs high. The ore bodies were not as rich or as accessible as they had been. Machinery and treatment plants were out-of-date. Gold production, the only mineral that sustained Kalgoorlie, decreased.

The mines worked two shifts underground instead of three, and later most of them adopted a system of mining their ore by tribute, often, in mining, the last card to play. Under the tributing system a party of miners took over a specified

underground section and worked it for their own profit. The ore was treated by the mine plant and the company received a percentage for the service and a form of rental for the ground worked. The Perseverance, Ivanhoe, Lake View, even the Great Boulder, their fortunes failing, went over to the tributing system. The tributors, who were experienced miners and knew where the gold was and how to get it out, did much to save the mines.

Although the headframe wheels still turned and the mine whistles still blew, the decline of the famous Golden Mile brought gloom to Kalgoorlie. If the mines closed, it, too, would become another ghost town. There was unemployment and people left for other places. The gold of the wheat crops, not gold in the ground, loomed large in that decade, and many families went on to the new farms in the eastern wheatbelt which created bonds between one section of the farming community and the goldfields. There was also a drift to find work as lumpers on the Fremantle wharfs. Still, they were moves which helped to break down the isolation of Kalgoorlie and made its people feel more of a part of the State to which they belonged.

Then, out of the blue, the economic depression of the 1930's which staggered most of the world, hit Australia—and Kalgoorlie revived. Earlier, Lake View had confirmed new ore bodies on its Chaffers and Horseshoe properties and had modernized its plants. When Britain went off the Gold Standard the price of gold increased, bringing a new wave of prosperity for the mines of the Golden Mile and for the rest of the region as well.

There was distress elsewhere, but the depression years were boom days again on the goldfields and people once more flooded into Kalgoorlie; again perhaps for a fortune, at least a job.

When they were first discovered, the Eastern Goldfields had eased the hard times of the 1890's for the whole of Australia. Now, in the hard times of the 1930's, the revived goldfields did a great deal to make things easier for their own State. That boom days had come again was a dream come true to the goldfielders. The yarns of the adventurous way of life in the early days were real after all. Gold was important again, and their identity and background was confirmed and reinforced.

On Kalgoorlie their background was the Golden Mile where the mines, given new life, went on to achieve record production; to wane during the years of the Second World War.

After the war the Golden Mile continued to produce, annually, more than half the gold recovered in Australia. But mining for gold took place against the larger canvas of the national scene where bigger wool cheques and an expanding economy meant increased costs for all industries. For gold there was a fixed price of $35 an ounce set internationally many years before, and costs could not be passed on. There was a shortage of skilled miners and the turnover of the work force was high. The mines worked on patiently, hoping that the new mining and treatment techniques introduced would pay off when the price of gold advanced.

A rise in the price of gold was a first article of faith among optimistic goldfielders but when it came it was too late and anyway Kalgoorlie's third boom was not based on gold.

In the early '60's the mineral boom which fired the North West appeared to by-pass Kalgoorlie, which seemed to be living on myths of the past and, to some people, dying on its feet. Then, in 1966, Western Mining announced the discovery of high grade nickel sulphide ore bodies around Kambalda and raised the curtain on yet another beginning for Kalgoorlie, this time as the centre of a nickel province as well as for a dying goldfield.

In the next few years until the stock market burst and things settled down, another goldfields generation was blooded in a boom, just as some of their fathers had been thirty years before and possibly a few of their grandfathers in the Roaring Nineties. But a boom based on nickel, not gold.

Some of the Belt mines had nickel interests 'in the bush' but they still worked the Golden Mile, although now at a slower pace and on lower grade ore. There was flickering interest when the price of gold was set free and hovered around $150 an ounce and there was even talk that it might crack the $200 barrier. But the price rise took place against world inflation, staggeringly increased mining costs for everything, and the use of 'paper' gold under the watchful eye of the International Monetary Fund which sells off its hoarded stocks of gold if the price rises too high.

In the first few months of 1976 the price of gold has ranged between $100 and $105 an ounce. The cost of production has been considerably in excess of this price for some time which is why the last of the mines of the Golden Mile are now on 'care and maintenance' underground.

Those immense rectangular slime dumps, grey, yellow, purple, which rise high nearby and stretch out over the flats towards Hannan's Lake show something of the amount of underground mining which has taken place on the Boulder Belt.

More than ten years ago Lake View, reporting only on their own leases, said 'with workings going down on the Chaffers Shaft System to over 4000 feet the total length of the underground workings is no less than 170 miles exploring over 200 known lodes'. A conservative estimate of the total length of underground workings on the mines which crowded on and around the Golden Mile runs to more than five hundred miles; an astonishing figure for such a small block of country. Since the first shafts were sunk, to the end of 1975, over 100 million tons of ore have been treated for nearly 40 million ounces of gold.

It is all part of history now. Now that the government has ended any prospect of Federal aid for Lake View's Fimiston operations and for gold mining in general, it would seem that the mines will be on 'care and maintenance' for a long time to come. Whether the Golden Mile will produce again is anybody's guess.

Western Mining, which controls Kalgoorlie Lake View and Great Boulder, has been drilling for years via Kalgoorlie Southern Mines in the Hannan's Lake area for possible extensions of the Mile ore bodies at depth. Even if the Southern Deeps are proved, it would be an expensive, and doubtful proposition to mine.

Kalgoorlie's future may be against a background of nickel, but the legends of the gold of its past will live on.

Many nice things can be said about gold. It is beautiful to look at. It stirs the imagination to hold. It is ductile and malleable and in layman's terms it is almost indestructible. It is still to be produced artificially, like commercial diamonds. Gold preoccupied the human species long before there were mints or currencies or trade deficits. Man searched for it across seas and deserts in pre-history, leaving scars of his primitive diggings far and wide. If love of it was not the root, it was a lusty branch springing from man's thirst for adventure. In the Middle Ages he made valiant attempts to manufacture it, messing about with fuels and fluxes and furnaces and lead and mercury in vain attempts at transmutation. Perhaps, if it had not been for those old alchemists, in experiments to make gold, laying the foundations of modern physical science, there would be no rockets aloft and men landing on the moon. With a stretch of imagination, not a bad record for a commodity now rated as almost useless by many pundits.

With another stretch of imagination, gold, when it *was* regarded as a useful commodity, gave the people of Kalgoorlie and its surroundings regional characteristics. Individualism and improvisation were aspects of the early day character, passed on to others with the ebb and flow of life in and out of Kalgoorlie. Gold-

fielders were practical and pragmatic, with an underlying nonchalance and a tendency to take risks, for luck and chance were factors in their way of life. Also, in a way, against gold they developed a minor form of nationalism within their isolated region.

Although nickel has come to stay, and perhaps gold could be phased out, among old-timers with memories there will be no reassessment of identity. They will remain goldfielders.

BEVERLEY SMITH

Heyday of the Goldfields

1. The New Journalism

Wherever the prospector and miner went in Western Australia the journalist and compositor were not far behind. 'On the 'fields', wrote Grant Hervey in the Sydney *Worker* in 1904, 'considering the strict limitedness of the population, journalism flourishes like measles, and you can hardly throw a defunct marine out of the window without abrasing a scribe.'[1] Between 1892 and 1909 no less than sixty newspapers came into being in the goldfields towns. Forty-three began publication before 1900. Of these, nineteen continued beyond 1899, twelve beyond 1911. Of the seventeen established after 1899 and before 1909 four continued beyond 1911. Of the original sixty goldfields newspapers, only nine were in existence in the early twenties.[2]

In an iron humpy on the Murchison, goldfields journalism began. At Cue in 1892 Alexander Livingstone brought out the first issue of the *Murchison Miner*, with the resolve 'never to cease the battle for democracy'. Livingstone came from Charters Towers, Queensland. He could not spell, his grammar was unique and his misquotations were 'a perpetual feast'. His newspaper was said to resemble nothing so much as a sheet 'run by a cranky costermonger, set up in a blind asylum, inked with inferior cart grease and printed on a mangle'. During its brief life the *Murchison Miner* was 'agin the government':

> Already with election news
> Each print and township rings
> And soon again we'll meet to choose
> Our three and thirty kings.
>
> From Wyndham far to Eucla's strand
> Where Leeuwin breezes blow
> A murmur rises through the land—
> The Forrest gang must go.

Already the goldfields bard had begun 'to sweep 'is bloomin' lyre'.[3]

The pressmen and their readers shared the hardships of the inland desert. Stories of the press were apocryphal. In 1894 W. E. Clare established the *Coolgardie Miner*. Before embarking on this venture, Clare, a printer by trade, was working as a trucker. The printing plant was transported by dray and carried by hand 150 miles fom Burracoppin, and set up in a ten by twelve feet tent.[4] At a meeting of Menzies pioneers in 1897 a toast was proposed to the *Menzies Miner*

[1] Grant Hervey, "The Inky W.A., Visiting Versifier's Views", article reprinted from Sydney *Worker* in Kalgoorlie *Sun*, 27 March 1904.
[2] Newspapers are listed on p. 60.
[3] "Early Goldfields Journalism" by A.H., *Sun* Christmas number 1907.

as a newspaper which never tolerated injustice. The founding editor, Hugh Mahon, declared that he was not really a pioneer but that he had overcome some difficulties:

> His first plant was destroyed by fire at Fremantle in October 1895, and the second arrived in time to be consumed in a goodshed at Southern Cross. (Laughter) Before the embers had died out still another plant was aboard ship in Melbourne. Third plant arrived safely, transported at a cost of £35 per ton from Coolgardie, and the plant arrived in Menzies on 25th December 1895. Some of the machinery was smashed in transit and the type was hopelessly mixed. One compositor and a prospector with some knowledge and himself brought out the first issue. The *Bulletin* in acknowledging the first copy regretted that it had got mislaid among the postage stamps and tram tickets. (Laughter) Proud that he had outspokenly refused to wink at schemes to dupe investors or stand silent whilst some monopolist demanded concessions that would wring huge profits from the daily necessities of the working class.[5]

It was characteristic of all the newspapers that they undertook to report the world news and comment on public affairs. The leaders were well written and covered a wide range of topics. This was just as likely to be true of the *Day Dawn Chronicle* in a township of 2000 (1905) or *The Leonora Miner* with a local population of 1500 (1900) as of the newspapers in Coolgardie or Kalgoorlie. The leader writer of the *Kalgoorlie-Boulder Standard* during February and March of 1898 discussed the state schools, the Dreyfus case, the English novel, the alluvial disputes and a strike at Menzies. In each case the descriptive detail was preceded by a broad survey of the fundamental issues involved—the rights of capital and labour, the true nature of democracy, or an historical retrospect of the situation being discussed.

F. B. Vosper commanded great public influence through the *Coolgardie Miner* up to 1898, and from that year John Kirwan held similar sway as editor of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*. It was mainly as a result of their leadership that the men on the diggings obtained better working and living conditions, representation in parliament, and a voice in public affairs generally. On the issue of federation their influence was powerful indeed.[6]

In 1899 when the draft of the proposed federal constitution was accepted in the five other colonies, the Forrest government still did not submit the issue to referendum in Western Australia. With passionate polemic, the *Kalgoorlie Miner* led the wave of mounting protest which expressed itself in public meetings and petitions throughout Western Australia, and especially on the eastern goldfields:

> We are recruited from the pick and pith of half-a-dozen colonies and most parts of the world. The great chain of electric lights which glitter every night on the hills from the Boulder northwards shine on a wealth of manhood and intelligence which include some of the keenest intellects, engineers, scientists and specialists culled from half the civilised globe. The interests of the business men of London, Paris, Berlin and Adelaide generally are in the hands of not incapable representation; the mining skill of South Africa, Victoria and the United States—in a word the weight of population of exceptional intelligence cannot remain indefinitely at the mercy of a population of bucolics.[7]

4 "The Roaring Nineties, Goldfields Journalism and its rise", by Spinifex, *Sunday Times*, 14 July 1907.

5 *The Menzies Miner*, 25 December 1897.

6 D. Mossenson, *Gold and Politics, The Influence of the Eastern Goldfields on the Political Development of Western Australia 1894–1909*. M.A. Thesis University of Western Australia (Perth, 1953), pp. 58, 60, 322.

7 *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 22 February 1898, quoted by Mossenson, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

The referendum was held. The vote, 44,800 in favour, 19,961 against. The rallying cry had unified the goldfields in opposition to the Forrest government, but other parts of the colony, notably Albany, were equally vehement in support of federation. Apart from that, among the inhabitants of Western Australia who had lived there before the discovery of gold were people who identified themselves with national sentiment. From 1900, as diggers drifted away from the fields, the Western Australian community was becoming more and more a blend of sandgroper and t'othersider.

Here too, as in the area of politics and social reform, the newspapers had an important influence. In particular, it was Sunday journalism which fostered a sense of national identity, and especially through its policy of encouraging local writers.

It was long established practice for newspaper editors to solicit literary contributions from their readers. In 1880 the *Victorian Express* in Geraldton commenced a regular literary supplement modelled on English periodicals like Cassell's *Family Magazine* and the *Cottager and The Artisan*, which the *Express* regarded as a 'boon for the working man'.[8] Much of the content was reprinted from English and American magazines, including works by Mark Twain and Bret Harte, but the newspaper was already receiving local contributions in the late seventies. According to a paragraph in the issue of 28 May 1879 these items were 'the sort of talk or thinking aloud amongst the miners about Northampton and the workmen on the railroad ... not a finer or more generous lot of fellows in their way can be met with'.[9] On 25 August 1880 a notice appeared soliciting readers to submit original tales and sketches for a special number to mark the opening of the Melbourne exhibition. Gradually, more and more space was devoted to the literary columns in the belief 'that there was a large amount of literary talent in the North' (28 November 1883).

These developments run parallel with what was happening in the eastern colonies. The *Australian Journal*, founded in 1865 in Melbourne, from its inception encouraged local writers to send in literary contributions. From a serial by Edwin M. Merrall, *The Belle of the Snowy River: a Tale of Love and War*, setting the Kiandra goldfields, N.S.W., comes the following extract:

> Australian miners are shrewd, practical men. Their perfect freedom, which is part and parcel of their country, and their perfect independence, which is part and parcel of their occupation, has swept away all the littleness of spirit, that blind bigotry and unreasoning force, which at one time was, perhaps, their bane. (July 1875)[10]

One can readily picture with what interest this journal was read by 'the miners about Northampton and the workmen on the railroad'.

In 1889 the *West Australian Bulletin* in Perth offered prizes of half a guinea for good 'Australian Stories'. From 1897 the *Western Mail*, offshoot of *The West Australian*, offered prizes of £7, £4 and £2 for original stories, which were published in the 'Christmas Supplement'. The editor of the *Mail* at the time was Alfred Carson. formerly a proprietor of the *Geraldton Express*. Similar examples of literary encouragement can be quoted from goldfields newspapers. Charles Woodman, formerly editor of the *Adelaide Sporting News* and *Sport and Drama*, published a special literary issue of the Norseman *Miner* in 1896. On 23 October 1897 it was announced that owing to the success of the previous Christmas

[8] *Victorian Express*, 25 September 1878.
[9] *ibid*, 28 May 1879.
[10] The literary policy in the eastern colonies is discussed in an interesting article by Pauline Kirk in *Australian Literary Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, October 1971, from which this information is derived with acknowledgements.

number, which had revealed 'so much local talent', prizes of three guineas and one guinea were offered for the best original verse, preferably Australian. On 3 April 1897 the Coolgardie *T'othersider* offered a one guinea prize for the best original story with local colour, stating that 'people who can tell us anything interesting about the country they live in, about the people they meet or about the things that are happening around them, who can tell good stories or write good verse ... are requested to contribute to *T'othersider*'. The influence of the Sydney *Bulletin* was everywhere apparent, and was being reinforced by the practice of reprinting verse and other items from its pages.

The first Sunday newspaper in Western Australia was the Perth *Sunday Times*, subtitled 'A Journal of the People'. It was founded by F. B. Vosper in 1897. Vosper was one of the most brilliant of the many young men active in politics and public life on the goldfields; considering what he had already achieved in his editorial posts, great and small, from the *Murchison Miner* to the *Geraldton Express* and *Coolgardie Miner*, the future of the *Sunday Times* was full of promise. Tragically, Vosper died in 1901, and the development of his new venture passed to other hands. In that year the *Sunday Times* was bought by James MacCallum Smith and Arthur Reid. Smith had been associated with goldfields newspapers since 1894. In partnership with S. E. Hocking, subsequently owner of the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, Smith founded three newspapers in Coolgardie: a weekly, the *Western Australian Goldfields Courier*; *The Golden Age*, an afternoon paper; and the daily *Goldfields Morning Chronicle*, all produced at the same office. A fire destroyed the premises in 1895. After the fire the weekly newspaper did not reappear and in 1898, with the decline of Coolgardie, the other two newspapers went out of existence. In 1898 Smith and Reid established a Sunday newspaper in Kalgoorlie. As recalled by journalist J. E. Webb, 'MacCallum Smith [was] a humourless Scot who made every pound a prisoner'; and Reid, 'a likeable fellow, everything that his partner was not... Nature had combined with art of a sort to make him a gift to cartoonists, above all Hop of the *Bulletin*. He looked like Dickens' Fat boy in the fifties; eyeglass and struggling moustache added. The heat must have tried him cruelly, but his good humour seemed impervious to bodily discomforts.'[11] From 1901 Smith and Reid were joint proprietors of both Sunday newspapers, the Kalgoorlie *Sun* and Perth *Sunday Times*. Through ownership and staff appointments the *Sunday Times* was associated with the goldfields, and did a great deal to extend the influence of the goldfields throughout the state.

The Sunday newspapers had a distinctive character. They were probably affected by recent developments in England and America: Robert Blatchford's crusade for social reforms and popular political enlightenment through the Manchester *Sunday Chronicle* and the *Clarion*; the radical policies advanced by T. P. O'Connor first with his evening newspaper the *Star* and subsequently with the Sunday *Sun*; and the huge Sunday editions of the American press which featured America's best contemporary authors. The aims of the new journalism overseas were to reach the masses, to be critical of society, and to promote contemporary literature.[12]

The mission of Sunday journalism as it was then understood in Western Australia was to expose social abuses and provide reading matter of high literary standard. This aim was defined in 'The Press and the People', an article published in the *Sun* on 24 May 1903:

[11] J. E. Webb, *Alms for Oblivion*, Brookvale, N.S.W., 1966, p. 46.

[12] Harold Herd, *The March of Journalism. The Story of the British Press from 1622 to the Present Day* (London, 1952), pp. 186, 232, 286. Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism, A History of Newspapers in the United States through 250 years 1690–1942* (New York, 1942), pp. 482, 584. Laurence Thompson, *Robert Blatchford, Portrait of an Englishman* (London, 1951), esp. Ch. V.

> The Sunday newspaper has as a rule been democratic... They have where the interests of the public demanded it dared to defend the weak and to attack the strong... The true gutter press is the press that connives at filth and rottenness not the press that strives to remove them. In many respects the Sunday press is taking the place of the Sunday pulpit... Every Sunday this paper enters about 20,000 homes. The sermon it preaches is preached to a congregation of about 40,000 men and women... The burden of our weekly sermon is not some hypothetical world beyond the clouds but the real world in which we live and toil and suffer and enjoy... We want to remove injustice and wrong and to establish just conditions for all.
>
> We believe that to an exceedingly large extent human character is determined by social conditions. Society cannot get men to act like men so long as it treats them like brutes. Accordingly we seek to make men moral not by hypocritical religious cant, not by mere preaching of moral or religious sermons, but by helping to establish those just conditions out of which the higher type of character will naturally develop.

The *Sun* took this policy seriously and according to contemporary opinion with some success. In 1904 A. Hardy, president of the Kalgoorlie parliamentary Labor party stated at a public meeting in Kalgoorlie that

> There was a great deal that could be said in favour of the Sunday press which showed up various abuses and went into questions which the dailies would not touch with a forty foot pole. The Sunday journals took up the grievances of the people, and the workers knew from practical experience that those papers could always be depended upon to hold up the toilers' end of the stick in times of trouble.[13]

At the time the *Sun* consisted of twelve pages, the equivalent of four being devoted to advertisements. The contents included sport, social and personal gossip, a serial, articles on state politics, sensational 'exposure' stories and a column or two of verse. Cables and world news occupied negligible space. In 1911 the *Sunday Times* had reached a peak of development. It consisted of twenty-eight pages with eye-catching headlines and neat layout, covering sport, mining and agriculture, the world's news (in paragraphs), women's interests, science and inventions. There was an editorial and a labour column. A regular feature was 'In the Northern Hemisphere: The News that Doesn't Come by Cable', which on 8 January 1911, for example, included articles about strikes in Welsh coalmines, the negro in America, cancer research, and a plot to murder the Mikado. Page thirteen, which regularly commenced the second section, discussed industrial development, labour disputes and social abuses. Page twenty-five which commenced the third section was usually devoted to literature, the theatre and the arts. Since the pages were large and the type small each issue presented a formidable amount of reading. According to the tram-car advertisements, the Perth *Sunday Times* was 'The Biggest Sunday Paper in the Empire'![14]

During the first decade of the century the *Sun* and the *Sunday Times* were similar in viewpoint. Both attacked trusts and the growth of monopoly. It was argued that trusts would become as big and dangerous in Australia as in the United States. Monopoly was attacked both as a threat to small private enterprise and to the living standard of the workers. Within the state, the companies engaged in the timber industry and mining were most frequently under fire. There was recurring criticism of the urban landlord and the land monopolist, of sweating in the clothing industry, maltreatment of aborigines by the pastoralists and of bad conditions in various state institutions, such as homes for the aged. The effects of

[13] *Kalgoorlie Sun*, 3 April 1904.
[14] J. E. Webb, *Alms for Oblivion*, Brookvale, N.S.W., 1966, p. 56.

poverty—prostitution, outbreaks of bubonic plague and the high incidence of death through abortion—were freely discussed.

Both newspapers welcomed the growth of the Labor Party. In an editorial of 7 February 1904 the *Sun* expressed its pleasure at the prospect of rule by Jack Hardgraft instead of Tom Tallowfat or Phil Fairbelly. Before long, disillusionment was expressed at the breakdown of 'bowyang' government. The Daglish government had failed to introduce reforms and was indifferent towards unemployment on the goldfields. Throughout 1908 articles published in the *Sunday Times* raised the question: Where is the Labor Party? Is it really a party of the people? Is it going to pieces because of a leadership which drags the ideals of the party 'into the mire'? What was needed, it was argued, was a strong, earnest, well-informed and energetic Labor Party.

Both newspapers at various periods had labor columnists. A labor column consisted of brief paragraphs rather than a sustained argument, with numerous quotations of verse. For example, from February to August 1904 the *Sun* featured 'The Democrat: Toilers on Toil: Echoes from Laborland' by 'Jack Hardgraft', and 'In Laborland, The Way of the Workaday World, by Unity' from August 1909 to 1910. The *Sunday Times* featured a series of articles signed 'Tom the Toiler' during 1904 and the column 'The Sons of Martha: A Column for the Workers', which commenced on 6 May 1909.

Both newspapers made a feature of Western Australian history. The source material used seems to have been mainly the colonial newspapers and W. B. Kimberly's *History of West Australia*. During 1905 the *Sunday Times* published a series of articles on the townships of Western Australia by R. Clarke Spear. In February 1908 a series of articles on early history was begun. These were headed 'Fifty Years Ago—A Peep at Perth in '58—Archeological Delving in the Early Press—Reveals a lot of Interesting Facts'. The facts considered to be of interest concerned aboriginal leader Yagan; the massacre of aborigines at Pinjarra; stories about convicts and convict bushrangers; early discoveries of gold and epics of overlanding and exploration. Along with the facts went interpretation: Yagan was depicted as a hero justly defending the heritage of his race; the evils of transportation were related to the cry for cheap labour and 'British boodle'; and the convicts were depicted as men of true morality: 'They had no trades union but there was a masonry amongst them that was as binding as any society could evolve. In that little community of dishonour there was an unwritten code of honour that was seldom infringed.'[15]

To the *Sunday Times* early Western Australian history was the history of 'Groperdom'. Many of the incidents recalled highlight what were considered to be the shameful or autocratic aspects of the early years. The burden of shame associated with transportation was shifted from the convict to the society which condemned him and exploited his labour. Whatever was thought about the past there was no question as to the feeling of pride in the present and high hopes for the future. This is reflected in two series of articles: 'The Roaring Nineties' by 'Spinifex' (July 1908) and 'The Land We Live In: An Appreciation of Wonderful Western Australia' by 'Dimanchet Empson' (June 1908). Similar historical articles appeared in the *Sun* during 1902.

The first open invitation to literary contributors was made in 16 April 1899:

> SEND IT IN. The *Sun* wants good original matter from any source. If any of our readers know a good story with local colouring, a humorous anecdote with ditto, a bit of special news not already snapped up by some other paper, any interesting or amusing personal or local gossip, send it in to the *Sun*. The *Sun* will take it. The *Sun* will pay for it. We shall even take poetry provided

[15] *Sun*, 29 November, 1908.

> it is poetry or even decent verse and not merely drivelling doggerel. We don't want things that are only of interest to one person or even two persons. We want matter that can be read and understood with interest in any part of the colony or colonies. Send in the matter and state reasonable terms. If it is any good and worth the price we shall publish it and pay for it. All we demand is that it shall be fine, new and widely interesting.

The question of 'local colour' was still controversial. A fortnight after the *Sun* made its announcement a Mr Horan, addressing the Kalgoorlie Literary Society, said: 'Australia is particularly destitute of those romantic surroundings which seem to foster poetic interest elsewhere.' The *Sun* immediately sprang to the attack. As if to make us more destitute, it remarked, Mr Horan confined his attention to Kendall, Daley and Paterson. A correspondent also rebuked Horan for his aspersions against Gordon and slighting remarks about Australian life as a subject for poetry.[16]

On 8 March 1903 the *Sunday Times* began a column 'Rhymer's Refuge: Overflow Odes and Derelict Ditties', with the comment:

> A lot of mediocre verse not to speak of a good deal of drivelling doggerel reaches this office every month. Hitherto we have not given much encouragement to the purveyors thereof ... From this issue, however, we have decided to devote a column a week to the efforts of amateur climbers to find a firm foothold on the slippery slopes of Parnassus.

On the same day the *Sun* announced that it would publish a weekly column of original verse, chiefly Australian 'and even Westralian' in subject and tone. Copy would be carefully read and verses paid for liberally. A 'Notice to Contributors' which appeared in the *Sunday Times* on 15 March 1903, assured the contributor that his name would not be divulged but he must send 'honest convictions only'. He was requested to write in ink where possible, but 'the waybacker who cannot always reach an ink pot may communicate in pencil or with a fire stick ... Don't bother about defects of composition, grammar, etc. The Editor will see to all that and track up the point even if he has to put the X-rays on it.' Judging by an item in the 'Replies to Contributors' column on 21 February 1904, many of the contributors were in fact the 'waybackers'. So many verses had been received from one direction that the editor was prompted to ask if a poet's camp was up that way.

On 19 April 1903 the *Sunday Times* annouced that it had made an arrangement with several of the foremost Australian literary men for regular contributions. It was believed that this would prove to be one of the most popular and attractive features of the paper, since the work of such writers as Henry Lawson and 'Banjo' Paterson was just as avidly read in Western Australia as in any part of the continent. It was hoped that in future much of their work would appear for the first time in the *Sunday Times*. To begin, Henry Lawson had contributed 'The Cliffs', a poem written for the *Sunday Times*.

Lawson's poem was like an omen. It summed up the achievements of the past but foretold a bleak future:

> I sadly think in the twilight hour
> What I might have been had I known my power.[17]

The high tide of contemporary writing was on the way out and though the editor of the *Sunday Times* had good intentions they were not altogether fulfilled. Eastern Australian writers whose work was featured throughout 1903 included

[16] *ibid*, 30 April 1899.

[17] *ibid*, 19 April 1903. Lawson's journeys to Western Australia in 1890 and 1896, and his contributions to *The Albany Observer* and *Western Mail* are described by Dennis Prout in *Henry Lawson, The Grey Dreamer* (1963), pp. 80-82, and pp. 143-146.

Price Warung, P. Luftig, Grant Hervey, Will Ogilvie, Henry Kendall, Barcroft Boake and E. J. Brady. Work by Lawson was represented in the *Sunday Times* during 1905 and 1906, and in the *Sun* during 1902, 1904-06 and 1910. Very few items were printed for the first time, and much of the locally contributed verse was sustained on nostalgia. 'The Old Coolgardie Road' by S.G. is typical:

> Old mates! old mates! come back to me
> On the road you wont to tread,
> Brink back the loves that used to be
> The friendships that are fled.
> Bring back the faith, the strength,
> The youth of the seasons that are dead.[18]

In 1902 the *Sun* adopted the practice of publishing a special Christmas literary number. In 1904 the Christmas number was advertised in advance as 'a literary special', and it ran to an edition of 50,000 copies.

> Most of the tales and verses reflect life on the goldfields ... It has been our aim to print original matter because the syndicated stuff from England and Australia will fill the pages of most of our conservative contemporaries.[19]

The *Westralian Worker* gave an advance description of the *Sun* 1905 Christmas issue as 'Twenty four pages of Australian literature: nothing dull about it and no clipped or lifted foreign matter rung in. We doubt if a better sixpennyworth can be picked up this Christmas.'[20] The quality of these newspapers bears witness to a high degree of literacy and range of ideas in the community at large. Among the journalists associated with these developments, and well known to readers of the day, were Wallace Nelson, Jack Drayton, Alfred Chandler, J. E. Webb, Will Jones, R. Clarke Spear, Julian Stuart, Hugh Mahon, F. B. Vosper and Smiler Hales. The person most interested in literature and the encouragement of local writers was Andrée Hayward, an Englishman newly arrived in the colony. Hayward's first literary efforts received the encouragement of Western Australian John Drew. For the formative period of his career as a journalist one must return to the old-established sandgroper town of Geraldton, and to the pages of the *Geraldton Express*.

[18] *ibid*, 3 May 1903.
[19] *ibid*, 18 December 1904.
[20] *Westralian Worker*, 15 December 1905.

Andrée Hayward

The man chiefly responsible for the literary policy of the Kalgoorlie *Sun* and the Perth *Sunday Times* was Andrée Hayward. In 1915 A. G. Stephens wrote that the Western 'rough writers' owed much to Hayward's 'cultivated appreciation'; in 1910 Stephens referred to the *Sun* under his editorship as the 'home and refuge of Western poetry'. J. E. Webb, who worked with Hayward for over thirty years on the *Sun*, *Sunday Times* and Sydney *Bulletin*, recalled in 1950 that it was Hayward who had drawn together in Kalgoorlie and later in Perth 'a band of poets whose work was inferior only to his own'. In 1960 Frank Spruhan, reminiscing about the goldfields bards, recalled him with affection after the passing of fifty years: 'He was the literary father of all those oldtimers, and it was his encouragement and helpful advice that no doubt urged them to produce the best that was in them.'[1]

Wherever he went, Hayward wrote about Australian society and literature; in the *Geraldton Express* from 1895, the *Murchison Advocate* from 1898, the Kalgorlie *Sun* from 1901, the *Sunday Times* from 1903, again in Geraldton during 1905 and 1906 and continuously as editor of the *Sun* for at least five years from 1907. In his literary criticism he wrote of Australian writers past and present, and explored numerous byways of English, French and American literature for ideas that might be of use to writers in Australia. In his articles on local history, he popularized the epics of Western Australian exploration and put on record those incidents of contemporary life which might otherwise have passed into the unwritten history of the period—reminiscences of 'the ragged thirteen',[2] biographical notes on F. B. Vosper,[3] and accounts of the local press.[4] Other articles of reminiscence published in the *Sun* were probably the result of his encouragement.

Hayward's own verse includes some of the best of the period. Most of this verse was written for the *Geraldton Express* before 1898 under the pseudonym 'Viator' (Latin, the Wayfarer). In 1898, the *Express* office published a collection of his verse entitled *Along the Road to Cue and Other Verses*. There were three editions of this slim, paper-covered volume. His later verse signed 'Thomas the Rhymer' is slight by comparison. Increasing editorial responsibility left little time for anything more than topical rhyming, and he turned his attention to encouraging others with literary interests and talent. He achieved this by publishing the work of local writers, by writing articles of literary criticism, and through the influence of personal friendship.

Basic to all Hayward wrote was an enthusiastic interest in Australian life. He believed that Australian culture, already in the making, should be encouraged in every possible way. On 12 August 1899 in an editorial in the *Murchison Advocate*,[5] 'What Australians Read', he expressed concern at the amount of 'sickening trash'

1 The pre-eminent position of Andrée Hayward among the literary people on the goldrush to W.A. is evident from the pages of the goldrush press. Corroborative evidence is to be found in statements made by A. G. Stephens (1910-15), J. E. Webb (1950), and the late Frank Spruhan (1960). See J. P. Burke, *Off the Bluebush, Verses for Australians West and East*, edited by A. G. Stephens (Sydney 1915); A. G. Stephens, "The Manly Poetry of Western Australia", Perth *Leeuwin*, December 1910; J. E. Webb, Obituary on A. Hayward, *Sydney Bulletin*, 30 August 1950.

2 *Geraldton Express* Christmas Number 1898, *Sunday Times* Christmas Number 1905.

3 *Geraldton Express* Christmas Number 1898.

4 *Murchison Advocate* 15 April 1899, 13 May 1899, *Sunday Times* Christmas Number 1907.

5 *Murchison Advocate* 12 August 1899.

then circulating in Australia, including 'deadwood dicks' and 'comic offal' printed in London, at a time when excellent work was coming from Australian authors. He hoped that local governments would be patriotic enough to assist these writers —'perhaps the Federal Government will, when it comes along':

> They might begin at the bottom and insist that the youth of the country should be taught something about the history of the country, which they are not taught at present. For Australian records are rich in stirring stories of exploration, West Australian records particularly. How many boys are given the chance to learn something about them under the present educational system? A taste for the authors of the country would come later on and it is quite certain that deadwood dick's nose might be put out of joint eventually. When people must read something good stuff is as cheap as bad and much more wholesome. A candid friend of ours took up a dozen copies of this paper to Minara Gully the other day—'They will read anything there,' he remarked contentedly.

And so, true to his own convictions, Hayward wrote about Zola and Will Ogilvie,[6] and George Grey[7] for the people of Minara Gully; and again in 1909 expressed the view that the federal government should provide a grant for the encouragement of Australian literature.[8]

Charles Wilters Andrée Hayward, known to his friends as Andrée Hayward, was born in Huntingdon, Hereford, on 21 July 1867. He arrived in Western Australia in 1894. After spending several months in Cue, he began work as a reporter on the *Geraldton Express* and became sub-editor in 1896. It could be that the young man, influenced by his father, had expectations of Australia which prepared him for life on the goldfields. His father Johnson Hayward had emigrated to Australia in 1847. During seventeen years on the northern sheep runs of South Australia he enjoyed a sense of freedom and the charm of bush life which he never forgot. In his written reminiscences,[9] Hayward recalled some of his old 'mates': the Irish shepherds, some of them lags, and the runaway sailors who shared with him the long dray journeys from the inland. He arrived in the colony with £40 and departed a wealthy man. His son Andrée, one of twelve children all born in England, was educated at Rugby and Exeter College, Oxford.[10] He took the degree of B.A. (Jurisprudence) in 1888 and was called to the bar of the Inner Temple in 1890. For a brief period the young man practised as a lawyer in South Africa. It is said that he abandoned the legal profession when he failed in the defence of an African charged with stealing a pair of trousers.[11]

Fellow journalist J. E. Webb recalled Hayward as 'gentle in voice and manner, with a mildly cynical outlook on life and affairs. He could write stinging stuff when stirred to anger, but he rarely was. He had a literary style, and his articles, paragraphs and light verse were outstanding ... Hayward's judgement was sound and he had exceptional knowledge, a dry humour, and a scholarly style ... Like most journalists in this hard-drinking age in weekly journalism, even Hayward had ... his bad periods.'[12]

[6] *ibid*, 26 May 1900.
[7] *ibid*, 7 October, 1899.
[8] Kalgoorlie *Sun* editorial, 18 April 1909.
[9] Johnson Hayward's "Reminiscences" were published in *Proceedings of the South Australian Branch of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia*, Vol. 29. Andrée Hayward deposited the manuscript in the Archives of the Public Library of South Australia in 1928, the original title being "Incidents in my Australian Life".
[10] *Perth Spectator* 2 July 1903 and J. E. Webb, Obituary of Hayward, *Sydney Bulletin*, 30 August 1950.
[11] A. G. Stephens, "The Manly Poetry of Western Australia", *Leeuwin* (Perth) January/February 1911. Hayward's aversion to legal practice is also referred to in *Perth Spectator*, 2 July 1903.
[12] J. E. Webb, *Alms for Oblivion*, Brookvale, N.S.W., 1966, pp. 46, 49, 51.

Hayward's keen interest in Australian literature dates from student days in England when the critic D. Patchett Martin was writing about Adam Lindsay Gordon in the columns of the *Temple Bar*.[13] After a few years residence in Australia he was thoroughly familiar with Sweeney the Swagman, Steelman and Clancey, Lawson and 'Banjo', Hungry Tyson and 'Hop'—the authors, characters, illustrators and living legends of the bush, referred to with reverence in a poem published in the *Express* on 28 February 1896.

At first the young Englishman was amazed at the literary interests of the Australian working class. In this he might be compared with Francis Adams. Addressing the middle class English reader, Adams wrote in 1893: 'Nothing struck me more in a long and varied residence in Australia than the keenness of the popular instinct, not only in things social or political but (shall I be believed?) in things literary.'[14] At first Hayward did find it hard to believe. He describes how on one occasion he was travelling with a party of three teamsters, a Scot, a Queenslander and a Western Australian. They pulled off the track to rest the horses. There was no means of recreation except an ancient gun and two tattered novels, one by Scott, the other by Trollope. On request Hayward read them through from cover to cover 'before the most interested and absorbed audience any reader ever had'.[15] In a poem written in 1895 he describes an encounter with a swagman on the sandhills outside Champion Bay. The swagman criticizes verse in the local newspaper, saying it would make poor Gordon turn in his grave, and concludes with some blunt remarks on the state of the nation and the manifold trials of a dryblower's lot.[16] In another poem written in the same year, Hayward remarks on the fact that a newspaperman interviews all the celebrities but never the man with the swag and the cabbage tree hat. 'Yet once consult him, what sense! what fluency!'[17] In both these poems, Hayward derives humour from the incongruity of a ragged old swagman depicted as literary critic and political commentator. Within a short time Hayward's attitude changed from one of amused incredulity to respect.[18]

Fundamentally, Hayward respected the ordinary reader. He wrote simply in the firm belief that the ordinary reader of a newspaper could gain pleasure and interest from the best literature. In his early years in Geraldton he had been surprised to discover the swagman as literary critic and political commentator. Over the years he became accustomed to this phenomenon. One of the contemporary Australian writers for whom he had great admiration was Henry Lawson, and it was Lawson who wrote of the university of life. Hayward, the Oxford graduate, had plenty of opportunity on the goldfields to mix with graduates of the university of life on terms of equality, and he came to regard them with respect. In 1908 the *Sunday Times* published *Jarrahland Jingles*, a collection of verse by 'Dryblower', for which Andrée Hayward wrote the preface. Here he described 'Dryblower' as a man of ordinary education whose advantage it was to have been trained in the university of the world: city, bush and the goldfields.

The *Geraldton Express* followed literary developments in the eastern colonies with keen interest. It was probably Hayward who wrote the editorial of 24 Janu-

[13] Hayward's references to Patchett Martin. Gordon and the English reading public, editorial *Murchison Advocate*, 12 August 1899; and to his boyhood interest in Gordon, editorial Kalgoorlie *Sun*, 26 April 1908.

[14] Francis Adams, *The Australians* (London, 1893), p. 98.

[15] Kalgoorlie *Sun*, 25 December 1910, article "Murchison Memories".

[16] *Geraldton Express*, 23 August 1895, untitled.

[17] *ibid*, 1 November 1895, "The Man with the Swag and the Cabbage Tree Hat".

[18] Hayward was at Oxford in the 1880's. At the time University Extension work was being carried out under the influence of Arnold Toynbee in the belief that it was possible to bridge the gulf between the educated and the wage-earning class. University people were being encouraged to "live with the poor". Possibly Hayward was influenced by these ideas and therefore particularly susceptible to the " 'Orney 'anded" intellects of the goldrush.

ary 1896, 'A Glance at Australian Literature', which commences: 'The end of the nineteenth century bids fair to be remembered as a period of renaissance for Australian literature.' There follows critical comment on the work of Marcus Clarke, Kendall, Gordon, Brunton Stephens, Rolf Boldrewood, Kingsley, Trollope and Mrs Campbell Praed, leading to a discussion of Louis Becke, Ernest Favenc, Jennings Carmichael, Ethel Turner, A. B. Paterson and Henry Lawson. The Geraldton critic was cautious in making his judgment but it was a sound one. He concludes:

> That the rising authors of the *Bulletin* school are destined to inaugurate a new and striking epoch in our national literature is perhaps too much to prophesy. But it is certain that much of what has been written during the last few years by Australians, Australia will not willingly allow to die.

Other critical surveys which appeared in the *Express* between 1896 and 1898 include reviews of *The Man from Snowy River and Other Verses*, and *The Poems of Barcroft Boake*, an article on Henry Kendall, an editorial on Marcus Clarke and a review of Ogilvie's *Fair Girls and Gray Horses*. On 6 August 1897 an article on 'Australian Literature' by D. Patchett Martin was reprinted from the *British Australasian*. His comments represent a point of view which Hayward seems to have shared:

> The moral of the success of A. L. Gordon and his latest disciple Mr. Paterson is plain. Gordon and Mr. Paterson wrote as they felt and saw life in the Bush, untrammelled by English literary conventions, and thus they have been read and admired where men of greater literary culture such as Brunton Stephens, the philosopher-bard of Brisbane, and even Henry Kendall, the sweet singer of Sydney, fail to attract ... the former strikes a note that finds an echo in every human heart and mind capable of an impressionable or unselfish emotion; the latter with all their learning and other advantages appeal chiefly to the little knot of professional writers who delight in 'talking shop'.

Along with literary criticism, the *Geraldton Express* continued to reprint verse by Paterson and stories and verse by Lawson, sometimes from other newspapers, sometimes from collected editions.

It has been said that Hayward benefitted from the encouragement of John Drew.[19] In his verbal campaign against the Forrest government Drew looked upon literature as a useful weapon. He was well served by Hayward's gift for satire. On 21 August 1896 the *Express* published a full-page feature purporting to be 'A Bill entitled "An Act for the Extirpation of Noxious Journalists, Agitators and Opponents of the Forrest Government".' Catspaws were to be appointed to track them down in any building, tent, humpy, saloon bar or 'deadhouse' of a bush pub. A fine of £100 was to be imposed on anybody who sold their work or 'any poems, alleged poems, squibs or lampoons emanating from same'. This the *Express* drew up for finishing touches to be added by Attorney General Burt, in the belief that only his great preoccupation with other matters had prevented him from drawing it up himself.

Had the attorney general acted along these lines the first victim would have been the poet who signed himself Viator, the author of 'The Sneer of Septimus Burt', published on 6 September 1895. 'Miners are birds of passage,' said the Attorney General in 1893; 'Who are they to have a vote and maybe upset the settled policy of the Government? Enough of pick and shovel representation.' So much for 'the gibe of the glib-tongued lawyer', wrote the poet in reply:

> 'Tis a voice that has rung aforetime, since the days when the world was new.
> Wherever the sweating thousands have toiled for the favoured few,

[19] Webb, Hayward obituary, *loc. cit.*

'Tis the horsehair wig that is speaking to the roofing of cabbage tree,
Stiff broadcloth and speckless linen to moleskin and dungaree,
The puny quill to the pickaxe, the gown to the clay-stained shirt,
The man of the words to the worker—the voice of Septimus Burt.

For a murmur rose from the goldfields and some grew grave at the cry,
(Like cattle chafe at the thunder in the calm of a cloudless sky),
'A vote is a free man's birthright; ye have fooled us long with your tricks,
Let the will of the people govern and not the will of the Six.'
So some in high places hearkened and sprung to their feet alert
For they knew that the storm was on them—not such was Septimus Burt.

Quoth he, ' 'Tis a senseless clamor, you fight with a hopeless cause
Your work is to ply the pickaxe and ours to frame the laws,
Get back to the shaft and the windlass, with your tools in your horny clasp,
Nor trouble your wits with matters too deep for your wits to grasp;
Go scratch in the dirt like rabbits; go, tunnel like moles in the dirt,
Thank God for heaven-sent rulers like me,' cried Septimus Burt.

Viator, Prospect Good, Crosscut, Bluebush, The Prodigal, Saladin and Dry-blower—these were the pseudonyms of poets who wrote for the Sunday press, along with numerous casual contributors whose identity is today unknown. By 1907 their efforts had attracted the attention of A. G. Stephens, the leading literary critic of the period. In an article published in the *Sun* and *Sunday Times* Christmas edition of 1907, Stephens is quoted as stating that "... a surprising quantity of good stuff has been written" in Western Australia. Hayward, who almost certainly wrote this article, goes on to say:

> Nowhere else in the world is verse such an essential ingredient of the local journalism. Most Westralians write rhymes it would seem, and everybody reads them. It is inspiring to find in the youngest community of the Empire so intelligent an appreciation of the lyric art and so numerous a body of capable men who if they don't always get over the borderline of poetry write verse which is occasionally humorous, occasionally pathetic, but always racy and manly.

He expresses the hope that somewhere in the jarrah forest or striding through the mulga is the genius who will interpret Australia for the world—"the wild free life of the goldfields, the emotions engendered by man's grim battle with the mulga and the sacred institutions of mateship and bush womanhood".[20]

In Hayward's eyes the generation of prospectors were pioneers not only of mines, industry, towns—but pioneers too, in another sense, as whole communities shared in the process of self expression and communicated with one another. Hayward believed that Australian culture would in the future rest on these foundations.

[20] "The Westralian Inky Way. Bush Ballads and Goldfield Rhymes", *Sun* and *Sunday Times*, Christmas editions, 1907.

The Riot Where No-one Was Hurt

They have riots, I know, in the land of the spud
Which are not unattended with spilling of blood
As the blackthorn encounters the constable's crown
And the stalwart policemen like ninepins go down.
When the amiable Hindu is ripe for the fray
There are nice little shindies in peaceful Bombay,
Things get lively at times in Hyde Park and the Strand
When the suffering Socialist gets "out of hand",
But except in Westralia—'tis safe to assert
There was never a riot where no-one was hurt.

What a blood-curdling story they pitched us last week
Of a tumult colossal, Homeric, unique!
Of a crowd of wild diggers some ten thousand strong
Who bustled and chevied a Premier along.
Of ears that were deafened by salvoes of groans
Of lives that were threatened by bludgeons and stones!
You'd have thought from the published reports of the fray
Red Hell had broke loose in Kalgoorlie that day,
And that scores had been trampled to death in the dirt
In that terrible riot—where no-one was hurt.

Every Tom, Dick and Harry uprose in his ire
(At least all who'd a shilling to spend on a wire)
And swift to J. Forrest their messages flew
"My God, we are proud of such heroes as you."
There was steady consumption of whiskies and beers
As they proffered him cannons and raw volunteers,
And swore (though the offer was just a bit late)
To give up their lives for the Law and the State,
And condemned in expressions incisive and curt,
That throne-shaking riot where no-one was hurt.

Where the roofs of Kalgoorlie gleam bright o'er the plain
They are carefully checking the lists of the slain,
There's a square yard of glass come to grief in the shops
And five buttons the less among seventeen cops.
There's a lame dog who's met with a happy release,
There's a bellman in quod for a breach of the peace.
There's a couple of crest-fallen pressmen for both
Know they'll never again be believed upon oath.
And Sir John! Yes, his hat and one cuff of his shirt
Got crushed in the riot where no-one was hurt.

ANDRÉE HAYWARD
Geraldton Express, 1/4/1898

To the Bulletin

Hail! Red winged herald, who may count thy readers
Through crowded cities or by lonely camps?
A fig for *Australasians* and *Leaders*—
Thy beacon blaze outshines their feeble lamps.
How oft thy charms have lightened life's dull burdens
Killed the long hours, lit up the cheerless scene
Would I might render thee a fitting guerdon
My *Bulletin*.

Breathes there a man, short of the veriest dullard
Whose pulse vibrates no quicker as he reads
Those stores of forceful English plain and coloured
That strips the trapping from the Fat Man's creeds?
Satire that cuts and epigrams that tickle
Mixed with calm logic or with pungent slang
These make thy dreaded name a rod in pickle
For many a gang.

O chronicle adorned with fact and fancy
Along this page what well-known figures pace!
Sweeney the swagman, and the drover Clancy
Or Steelman—harder than the hardest case.
What memories flock of Banjo's swinging ballads
Of Lawson, name of names to conjure with!
Of her who deftly mixes fashion's salads
Our Sappho Smith!

Hop's facile pen turning subjects solemn
To laughter-moving shapes, we know right well—
The cynic's candour of the "Wild Cat column",
The quips of Titus Salt or Silas Snell
Bedford and Becke, Montgomery and Dyson
Make thee an anvil where they strike their sparks
And then come little tales of "Hungry Tyson"
Or old man Parkes!

A heaven of chase and war so tell the Maoris
Await the warrior who bravely dies.
The Moslem's thoughts turn upon dazzling Houris
That smile behind the gates of Paradise.
So when my spirit wakes from Death's dark slumbers
I crave not harps or crowns or "glorious sheens";
I do but ask—perennial Xmas numbers
Of *Bulletins*.

ANDRÉE HAYWARD
Geraldton Express, 28/2/1896

No Title

I'd a fancy to stray on a quite recent day
Where the sandhills look down upon Champion Bay
The masts of the Mayhill show grim from the spot—
(Mute comment on harbours where pilots are not)
When a strange voice apprised me I wasn't alone—
It might have been either a curse or a groan—
The mystery cleared before reasoning's laws:
A man was the author—a paper the cause.
And approaching I saw (I'm as curious as most)
The man was a swagman—the paper, the *Post*.

He looked up with a sigh as my footsteps drew nigh
There was warmth in his greeting and wrath in his eye
And his words (to repeat them verbatim I'm loathe)
Seemed to mainly refer to his "adjective oath"
And some "dashed blany nonsense", 'twas thus that he spoke,
Sufficient to sicken a rational bloke.
Yet I felt that his language could hardly be blamed
When I saw he'd a file of the journal I've named,
And the pars that had moved him so strongly to speak
Were, to alter a letter, distinctly *unique*.

Quoth he, testy and gruff, "Now, boss, ain't it enough
For a cove to wade through half a page of such stuff,
Then to take next week's number and strike some more worse
Set up as if someone had thought it was verse?
Here's this stuff on the 'lection—rant, rubbish and rave—
Enuf to make Gordon turn round in his grave."
He wound up his remarks by expressing a doubt
That the country was rotten and law was played out
When such squeakers as this in the papers could bleat
While they jugged coves for using bad words in the street.

He was just passing through on his way from the Cue
He'd had luck of the poorest and trials not a few
Yet he swore that the flies, thirst, sand, bad water—what not—
The manifold trials of a dryblower's lot
When a reef or a prospect is voted no-go
When the water is scarce or the tucker bag low
While the fever fiend stalks over township or scrub
And the battleaxe whiskey kills swift from the pub—
That all evils like these, some more which I miss,
All hardships and troubles were nothing—to this.

But he'd no time to lag so he shouldered his swag
With one vast final curse at "the adjective rag"
That could publish such trash; and he passed from my view
While the atmosphere round him seemed lurid and blue,
And the roadside was strewed like the leaves on the sward
With the sheets of the print that his soul had abhorred.
So returning I mused on his wrath at the faults
Of rhythm that stumbles and metre that halts.
And this time-honoured couplet which memory guards—
Swans sing before they die; twas no bad thing
Should certain persons die before they sing.

VIATOR
Geraldton Express, 23/8/1895.

Goldrush Newspapers, Western Australia

(D = daily, W = weekly, F = fortnightly,
2/w = two issues weekly, 3/w = three issues weekly)

BOULDER
Miner's Right, 1894–97 D
The Evening Star, 1898–1918 D

BROAD ARROW
The *Broad Arrow Standard*, 1897–98 2/w

BULONG
The *Bulong Bulletin and Mining Register*, 1897 2/w

COOLGARDIE
The *Coolgardie Miner*, 1894–1917 (1894 W, 1895–1913 3/w, 1913–17 W)
Western Australian Goldfields Courier, 1894–95 W
The *Golden Age*, 1894–98 D
Coolgardie Pioneer, 1895–1901 W
The *Coolgardie Review*, 1895 W
The *Goldfields Morning Chronicle*, 1896–98 D
The *T'Othersider*, 1897 W
The *Herald*, 1899–1901 D

CUE
Murchison Miner, 1893 W
Murchison Times, 1895–1942 (1894–1914 3/w, 1914–16 2/w, 1916–42 W)
Murchison Advocate, 1898–1911 W

DAY DAWN
Day Dawn Chronicle, 1902–09 (1902–04 W, 1905–09 2/w)

ESPERANCE
Esperance Chronicle and Dundas and Norseman Advertiser, 1896–98 2/w
The *Esperance Times*, 1896–98 2/w
Esperance Echo, 1905 W

EUCLA
Eucla Recorder, 1898 (one issue)

KALGOORLIE
Kalgoorlie Western Argus, 1894–1938 W
The *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 1895– D
The *Hannan's Herald*, 1895–96 D
Kalgoorlie–Boulder Standard, 1897–98 D
Sun, 1898–1929 W
Westralian Worker, 1900–1912 (1912–49 in Perth) W
Goldfields Advocate, 1902–03
Hannan's Hatchet, 1902 W
Westralian Clarion, 1903 W
Sunday Figaro, 1903–04 W

KANOWNA
The *Kanowna Democrat and North East Coolgardie Advertiser*, 1896–97 2/w
Kanowna Herald, 1898 3/w

KOOKYNIE
The *Kookynie Advocate and Northern Goldfields News*, 1903–04 W
Kookynie Press, 1903–11 W

LAVERTON
Laverton Morgans Mercury, 1899–1919 W

LAWLERS
East Murchison News, 1901–11 W

LEONORA
The *Mt. Leonora Miner*, 1899–1928 (title varies) W
(*Northern Grazier and Miner*, 1929–44, incorporates the *Mt. Leonora Miner*)

MALCOLM
Malcolm Chronicle, 1897–1905 W
Mt. Magnet Mercury, 1897

MARBLE BAR
The *Pilbara Goldfields News*, 1897–1923 (at Port Hedland from 1912) W

MEEKATHARRA
Meekatharra Miner, 1909–18 (title varies) W

MENZIES
The *Menzies Miner*, 1895–1901 W
The *Miner's Daily News*, 1896–98 D
North Coolgardie Herald and Menzies Times, 1896–1911 D
Menzies Weekly Times, 1897 W

MT MAGNET
Northern Mining Register and Murchison Goldfields Gazette, 1896–97 W
Mt. Magnet Miner and Lennonville Leader, 1897–1926 W

MT MORGANS
Mount Morgans Miner, 1901–03 W
The *Morgans Courier*, 1904–11 W
The *Mount Morgans Mercury*, 1906–09 W

MULLEWA
Mullewa Magnet and Yalgoo Mount Magnet Post, 1896 W

NORSEMAN
The Norseman Pioneer, 1896–97 (title varies) W
The *Miner*, 1896–97 2/w
The *Norseman Times*, 1898–1920 (formed by merger of the *Norseman Pioneer* and the *Miner*) W
Norseman Sentinel, 1903 W

SANDSTONE
Black Range Chronicle, 1907–15 W

SOUTHERN CROSS
The *Southern Cross Times*, 1893 one issue, 1900–17, 1920–40 W
The *Southern Cross Herald*, 1894–96 W
The *Southern Cross Miner*, 1899–1902 W

GRAEME WILSON

A Small Anthology of Modern Japanese Poetry

Sickbed

I cough red gouts of blood,
        my stomach's very own
Scripture of sunset patterns
        turning the twilight red.

Night thickens, and I feel
        this flesh becoming bone
As in a dream of chilling clouds
        I lie on a stone-hard bed.

Natsume Soseki (1867-1916)

Winter Twilight

One leafless tree upon the dusk's blank page
Extends the black shape of the letter Y.

As though to stem the sense of desolation
Which from that tree flows clearly as a cry,
Low in the dark, the evening star's full-stop
Gold-punctuates the sky.

Against that utter stillness, nervously,
Like specks of platinum ground sharply fine,
Thin powder-snow falls slowly to set prickles
Upon the trembling of the telegraph-line.

Yosano Akiko (1878-1942)

The Goddess of Mercy

I stand as though I were
All that could ever exist,
And the goddess seems to smile
On her individualist.

Aizu Yaichi (1881-1956)

Flies

On the paper window some headstrong insect
Bumps as the day begins to die.
Again and again it bumps and buzzes.
I lie in the dark. I hear that fly.

Saito Mokichi (1882-1953)

Chieko Climbs the Wind

Chieko, crazed beyond all use of language,
Makes signs to peewits and blue maggotpies.

Yellow along the hummocks ranged to break
The sea-wind's flick, the fine pine-pollen lies.
In May's clear breeze the beach of long hours shimmers.

Now seen between the pines, Chieko's gown,
Now vanished, flickers whitely. On white sand
White mushrooms grow which, slowly bending down,
I pick as in her wake I follow slowly:
For now, no longer woman, she'll have none
But maggotpies and peewits for companions.

Chieko flies, her wings of hair undone:
Into the morning sky, her favourite playground,
Chieko flies to dazzle the bright sun.

Takamura Kotaro (1883-1956)

Cat

The cat, though innocent tonight, allows
Its eyes, that sometimes drowse,
Sometimes to move in anguish.

Idle cat,
Too self-contented to remember that
Sometimes the lights die out; too fat to care;
Too certain that the certain night will wear
Of all rare stars, your starriest, most rare.

Yamamura Bocho (1886-1924)

Cliff

I don't know how this feeling can be said:
But somewhere in the hollow of my head
There seems to be a cliff; whence, every day,
Another loosened fragment falls away.

Ishikawa Takuboku (1885-1912)

Concert

The body is a concert of sensation.
Eyes trumpets, ears the chimes, the lips a flight
Of flutes, the nose a veil of violin.

Discard those rot-maimed cheeks, their desolation,
On lawns that glow with dandelion-light.
This skin is like the touch, the pressing-in
Of a loose-strung samisen's third vibrant strand.

Consider this. The secret of that boy
Is ladybird-like, is silk shot red and blue
Where both sides of organic function band
In one sleek gleam. Discard, distrust, destroy
Feelings whose iridescence proves them skew.
The black cat's studied stare is pure deceit.
Ground-cherries, orange-red, swell fat with seed.
Green sunlight burns from cool wine-cellar racks.
Excise sensation. Scrape out the complete
Network of nerves that jerk you with their need
To answer colour's jab, the light's attacks.

The bare-skinned torment of that purple-gold
Lizard frisks off to find leafed ease among
Damp nettle-beds, dwarf groves of scallion-green.

The trickles of illusion; uncontrolled
Fears, tremblings, tears; even the inner-sprung
Drives of inveterate sex . . . Dispel them, and be clean.
Dispel them all! The trumpets and the spring's
Flute-musiced mood of my imaginings.

Kitahara Hakushu (1885-1942)

Two Haiku

For the hydrangea-blossom
The August mountains are
Never sufficiently high,
Never sufficiently far.

The eyes of a horse
That has lost a race,
How they stare and stare
At a human face.

Iida Dakotsu (1885-1962)

Pinefield by the River Tone

At noon on Sunday my gay mood pervades
Even the grasses,
Even their dullest blades.

Though buds have not yet burst, a boy's dis-ease,
His yearnings, burn,
Scorch red the crotch of trees
And that boy's friends, chummed in a common char,
Think about girls,
Their arms, how warm they are.

Come back alone to this old spinney where
Acrid remembrance
Smoulders from the air,
I vent myself in study of that high
Vacuity,
The blue blank of the sky
Where, though the sunbeams furtively glissade
Along my back,
The essence of all shade,
The chill of something darker than despair
Lurks in its blue
Illimitable lair.

Now, in a landscape of late autumn dry
As this burnt stone
My lips are blunted by,
I struggle to gulp down like scalding spit
An unforgotten
Thing; the disgust of it.

Hagiwara Sakutaro (1886-1942)

Gods

These leafless trees, how noble and how stark!
A totally sombre colour wraps them all.
If with these fingernails I score their bark,
Drops of some violet ooze will form, and fall.

The tops of these trees concern themselves with sky
And in that sky, ah sadly, lose their way.
These sad stripped trees, so lank, so lorn, so wry,
These dreamless, flowerless trees can yet convey
Convictions of magnificence.

They have the air
Of something god-like, trees that are truly bare.

Muro Saisei (1889-1962)

Rhinoceros and Lion

A rhinoceros runs. A lion clamped to its back
Bites, and the blood jets out as the rhino twists
An agonised neck. Its tiny eyes, jet-black,
Implore the sky. The cool blue sky consists
Of blueness, coolness and the drift through day
Of some blank moon.

It's just a moment's scene
In some wild place a thousand miles away.
Therefore the action's frozen. In between
The animals' stopped shapes the blood stands still.

Simply and endlessly, rhino and lion fill
Time with the will to live, the drive to kill.

Maruyama Kaoru (1889–)

Gold Dust Miners

Love's luckless gold-dust miners, we,
Adrift in its faithless desert, dare,
Though lost, to be more utterly
Lost: for the dazzling truth is there.

Sato Haruo (1892-1966)

The National Flag of the Sky

So long the dusk delayed
The summer could but drag.
Then, when at last it made
Its scurry from the beach,
It left abandoned there,
White on the sandy sward,
A starfish and a swag
Of jellyfish.
And these,
Seized in the wind's cold reach
And slapped on a notice-board,
Glared from the scarlet air
With all the energies
Of an islamic flag.

Horiguchi Daigaku (1892–)

Thief

At the dawn of the constellation of the pale skeleton,
Astride his own reflection warped in the frozen mire,
The thief who stole the pot, that shining celadon
The shop had singled out to put on view,
Suddenly halts his long black feet; and, clapping
Both hands behind his ears, stands listening to
The wind's thin fingers skinnily unwrapping
High tinny tinklings from the telegraph-wire.

Miyazawa Kenji (1896-1933)

Thunder Moth

After thunder, the thunder-moth
Visits the village. Isabelled
With lily-pollen from the headman's garden
She hesitates, seems briefly held
At the police-box by the crossroads,
Then on the wind's enormous swell
Over the tall pasania sails
Higher than the fire-tower-bell.

Miyoshi Tatsuji (1900-1964)

Blackboard

The afternoon's late sun
Shines on white curtains, there;
And gives my sick-room, somehow,
Almost a classroom air.

My favourite English teacher
In my Junior High School days
Always, I remember,
Would clean the board, erase
An afternoon of chalk-marks
With one decisive sweep;
Then, with his books beneath his arm
And sunshine in a deep
Swathe on his shoulders, stalk away.

So, too, I'd wish to go,
To wipe life's dirty blackboard clean
With one great swingeing "So".

Takami Jun (1907-1965)

Hand

The palm of the hand is not aware it dies
As, with a natural ease,
It shrinks upon itself a little,
Sets,
And begins to freeze.

Saito Fumi (1909–)

Woman of Sagami

That person, from my naked body's
Finest point, withdrew
First my ring of antique gold.
Then my hairpins too
Slowly he groped and disengaged,
And laid them down beside
Our pillow. I could feel the skin
Beginning to elide.

Then, for the first time, I could feel
The skull's true jelliness:
Even the smallest bone began
To melt, to deliquesce.

And after that a violent force,
Too violent to escape,
Fangled my naked body back
To surety of shape.

Anzai Hitoshi (1919–)

Lighthouses

A lighthouse, like a poet, watches
Nothing but dangerous things:
Tides on the rise, the shapes of storm
Behind wind-whimperings.

A poet, like a lighthouse, builds
Out of experienced hurt
An understanding of loneliness.

Because their light, their spurt
Of luminance, is always stolen
By the mere stretch of distances,
Their inner depths are more profound
Than any darkness is.

Yamamoto Taro (1925–)

Growth

At three, I had no past.

At five, my past stretched back
As far as yesterday.

At seven, it extended
Back to the age of warriors.

At ten, it stretched away
Into the time of dinosaurs.

At fourteen, it began
To be what the textbooks say.

At sixteen, I looked back
With terror in my heart
At time's infinities.

And now, aged eighteen years,
I look at time and know
I know not what it is.

Tanikawa Shuntaro (1931–)

Street

Dark street: a wretched town:
Rain and the weather cold:
Our mackintoshes slippery:
The brolly wet to hold.
How mad we were at taxicabs
Which spurned our signallings
But, in the end, we started,
Clinging as wetness clings,
To walk,
To walk,
To walk.

What future had we then?

I remember that we walked
Soaked to the very skin:
But I do not remember
Ever that I was in,
Somewhere, a warm hotel-room,
I don't remember where
We lay in one another's arms
Holding the warmness there.
I don't remember what
In that forgotten bed
We, in our love-making,
Did;
Or what we said.

Shiraishi Kazuko (1931–)

Love Song

I want to eat this woman.
I want to eat the lot of her
Unsugared,
Without broiling:
I want to eat her raw.

I want to cut her head off:
I want to tear off arms and legs,
Nip nipples off,
Pull out each separate hair.
I want to make them mine.

I want to eat this woman's song:
I want to eat the barley-field,
The trees, rape-blossoms too.
I need to gobble spring.

I want to kill this woman's man.
Fish swimming in this woman,
Worms creeping, slithering snakes
And the frolicsome rhinoceros,
I want to drive them out
To keep this woman living.
I want to summon sun into this woman.

I want to suck this woman's spirit.
I want to catch the clouds,
The sky,
The moon
And every separate star.

I want to be with this woman.
I want to protect this woman.
I want to eat this woman's father,
Mother,
Brothers;
Even
Inedible God.

Nakae Toshio (1933–)

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

STEFANIE BENNETT—lives in Townsville and Magnetic Island, North Queensland. Her publications include seven books of poetry, and she has been editor of poetry anthologies. Current editor of 'Cochon' International.

HAL COLEBATCH—born in Perth and is at present a doctoral student in politics at the University of W.A. Has published stories and poems, articles and reviews. His first book of verse, *Spectators on the Shore*, was published in 1975.

TONY EVANS lives in Perth where he is a radio and television producer for the ABC. He has made a film on Hawes, *The Stones Cry Out*, and more recently a film based on a Goldfields murder, *Hands of Gold*. He is working on a biography of Hawes.

BRYN GRIFFITHS—born in Swansea, Wales, now lives in Scarborough, Western Australia. A full-time writer of plays, film and television scripts, specialising in documentaries. Has published eight volumes of poetry, poetry being his main interest.

PETER KOCAN—born in 1947, at Newcastle, N.S.W. Has worked as a labourer, jackeroo, and process worker. Published a book of verse, *The Other Side of the Fence*, in 1975. Has lived for some years on the shores of Lake Macquarie, 'an area of great natural beauty'.

JIM LEGASSE—an American in Perth, is a Senior Tutor at the University of Western Australia. Has published articles and notes on educational methods and literary studies. *What's It Worth To You This* is his first published short story.

TED MAYMAN—lives in Floreat Park, Western Australia, grew up in Kalgoorlie in a mining family—his grandfather and father 'walked the track' together to Coolgardie. Has written short stories and was a writer for the R.A.A.F. War History Section. Writes part time for the W.A. Education Department. His publications include *The Mile That Midas Touched*, with Gavin Casey.

SHANE McCAULEY—born in England, has lived in Western Australia since 1959, and is completing an Arts degree at the University of W.A. Has had stories and poems published in Australian journals.

JEREMY NELSON—is a Sydney poet who has published poems in Australian quarterlies and poetry magazines. He is a teacher of English.

ANNE PARRATT—has published two collections of poetry, and verse in poetry magazines, as well as winning poetry awards in literary competitions.

GRAHAM ROWLANDS—lives in Adelaide, and has published poetry in Australian magazines and newspapers, and anthologies. His work includes three collections of verse. Writes book reviews and articles.

BEVERLEY SMITH—teaches at the Department of General Studies, South Australian Institute of Technology. Her article in this issue is the first part of a longer discussion of early Western Australian Goldfields writing. Two further parts are to be published in Nos. 2 and 3 of 1977.

JENNIFER STRAUSS—lives in Melbourne and teaches at Monash University, specialising in Middle English Literature. Has published a volume of poems, *Children and Other Strangers.*

LESLEY TAYLOR—a mature age student in Arts at Macquarie University. Commenced short story writing last year.

TERRY TREDREA—lives in Cottesloe, Western Australia, and has published poems in Western Australian publications. Twice travelled and worked in Europe and Asia. Now studying speech therapy at W.A.I.T.

DUGALD WILLIAMSON—is a graduate of Melbourne University, has been a lecturer at Mitchell College of Advanced Education in Bathurst. At present preparing a Ph.D. in Cinema at Griffiths University, Queensland, and living in France to do research.

GRAEME WILSON—was born in London, and lives in Hong Kong. He has been the British Civil Aviation representative in the Far East since 1969, and has held a number of positions in the British Civil Service. His publications include a number of translations of Japanese prose and poetry, and he has a collection of versions of Korean poetry in publication. Is compiling a further book, a sequence of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean poems under the provisional title of *Tao: Buddha: Zen.* He has broadcast on Tokyo's N.H.K. programme, the BBC and the ABC.

westview

a quarterly review of the arts
in Western Australia

The assistance of the Western Australian Arts Council
in producing this section of WESTERLY
is gratefully acknowledged.

Playhouse *The Gentle Hook* l to r: Leslie Wright, Leonie Martin-Smith, Alan Cassell. Design: Bill Dowd

Playhouse *A Man For All Seasons* l to r: Elizabeth Crosby, James Beattie, Joan Sydney, Leslie Wright. Design: Bill Dowd

THEATRE
the first half of 1976

There was a considerable amount of valuable work done around Perth theatres during the first half of 1976. However, as a total picture begins to emerge, it becomes clear that there is a lack of balance in programming and large sections of the community are being alienated. By these sections I do not mean the mythic masses who might be wooed away from their television set (a quixotic proposition anyway), but the potential public who actually likes the theatre and would attend if suitable plays were shown.

Perth theatres seem to suffer from various forms of schizophrenia. Forces largely outside the respective managements' control, ensure that most venues (and there is a surfeit of them) are used for the wrong purpose. In addition there is so great a discrepancy between what cultural and intellectual fashions demand, and what the public actually wants to see, that the whole purpose of theatre-going seems to be changing. The much discredited "nice night's entertainment" has been replaced by a challenge to work out what new puzzle is being presented (good, but not invariably satisfying), or a test of desensitivation (am I tougher than last year? can I take more violence? do I understand more of the swear-words? does it worry me less that my vocabulary is shrinking?)

The unsuitable use of venues has two disadvantages: it reduces the effectiveness of the presentation, but it also fails to establish a firm identity of the nature of the particular theatre in the mind of the public. One only has to think of the more bizarre examples—the Entertainment Centre used for classical ballet, the exquisite Octagon Theatre for lectures, the Concert Hall for opera, the splendid Her Majesty's for the occasional tawdry commercial comedy, whereas the Playhouse, home of the National Theatre in Western Australia, tries to be a showcase for everything, one week trying to cram a musical on to its modest stage, the next tries to fill its large, acoustically disastrous auditorium with good productions that can count on a faithful audience of less than half of seating capacity. There is a constant feeling that the whole place is battling under emergency conditions, and that when the state of emergency is over, and everything sorted out, the right venue will be found for each kind of activity, and audiences may grow and build up loyalties.

There are, in fact, two examples of this kind of development: the Greenroom, the experimental wing of the Playhouse in its tiny theatre upstairs, has a near 100% audience continuously. Its restricted seating capacity is precisely right for the kind of play—and audience. The plays appeal to the intellectually adventurous, or the curious, or the toughminded, or possibly to those who would like to be. It is almost a closed society, as evidenced by the fact that quite recently a play was extended—not for any admirable qualities but merely because of its calculated pornography—without a ripple being caused in the world outside. This at precisely the same time as the forces of law and order were still haggling over the damage to the community of the brief and innocent moment of nudity in the 1975 production of *Equus.*

The other example is far removed from the ethos of the Greenroom. It is the phenomenon of the amateur group devoted to keeping mediocre drama in a state of half life. One might cite the example of the charming Old Mill Theatre, with its faithful audience ensuring near capacity houses for their pleasantly presented productions of innocuous rubbish.

In both cases there is a clear connection between the fare provided in an appropriate place for a consumer who deliberately and knowingly chooses what is offered.

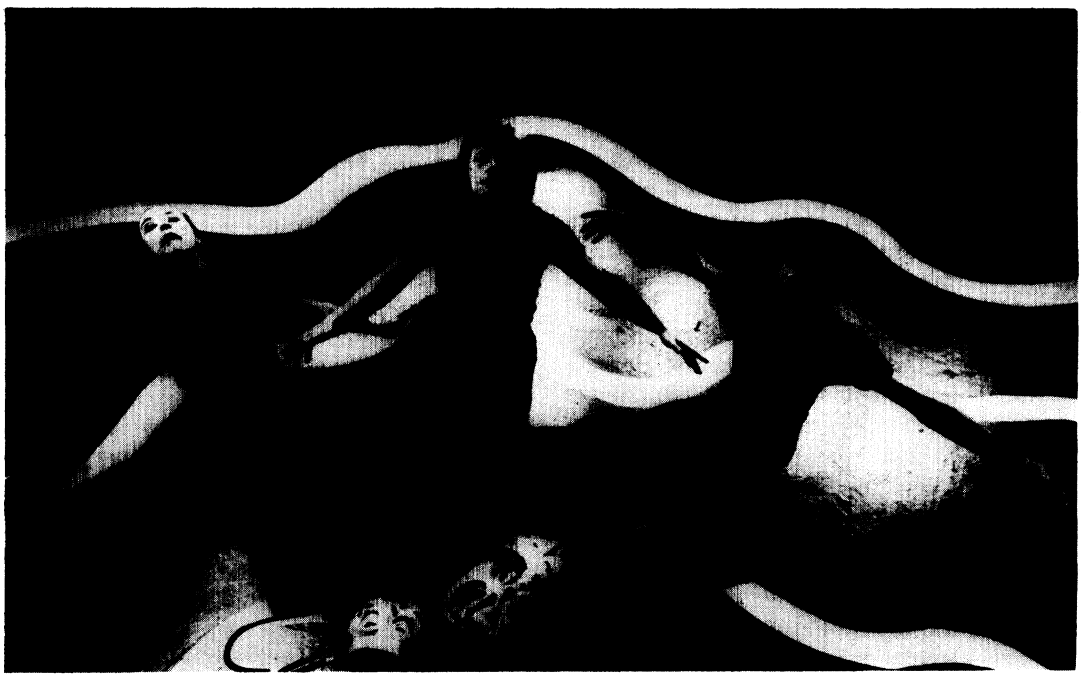
With the larger enterprises the picture becomes blurred. There seems too often to be an uneasy compromise between the desire for artistic expression and the reluctant admission that an audience is needed to justify performances. The compromise does not work. Over the six months under review there were roughly 50% "difficult", that is, experimental or incompetent plays (and a great part of the public refuses to acknowledge the difference, just as a great part of devoted "modernists" in the theatre cannot see the difference between good and bad light entertainment because most of it is despised). The remaining 50% were divided between a small handful of classics, and the rest "safe" modern plays, of which few had

the advantage of being actually enjoyable. It is due to this imbalance in presenting what is fashionable or outrageous, or genuinely intellectually challenging, rather than embracing the whole spectrum of what is available, that audiences dwindle further. The occasional "unbending gesture" does not help either. The occasional farce by Ben Travers or even Feydeau does not restore the balance—this area being adequately catered for by the periodic commercial visitations of such gems as *Move Over Mrs Markham* and *Why Not Stay for Breakfast.*

It is the intelligent middle-level theatre that has virtually disappeared from our theatres, as has also the feeling that Perth is seeing the most recent work regarded as interesting or important overseas. The Playhouse in particular, whilst pursuing the worthy aim of presenting much Australian work has reached a stage of losing its sense of judgment, and puts on rubbish merely because it is Australian, presumably an over-reaction to the bad old days when even a good play could not find a home because it was Australian.

Taking the London Critics' choices for the past three years—by no means an infallible guide, but it does provide a frame of reference—we find that we saw almost all the plays chosen from the 1973 selection, but from 1974 only *Knuckle* and *Kennedy's Children* reached us, whereas since then we seem to have lost touch altogether. We have seen neither Stoppard's *Travesties,* nor the earlier *Jumpers,* neither Ayckbourne's *Absent Friends* nor the earlier *Norman Conquests,* neither Trevor Griffiths' *Comedians* (nor the earlier *The Party*), nor Simon Gray's successful *Otherwise Engaged*, nor for that matter have we seen, closer to home, David Williamson's interesting and mature piece *The Department.*

The overwhelming impression, as will be seen from the chronological jottings below, seems to be a polarisation of the aggressively modern, where the spectrum has been reasonably well covered, to the excessively tame, evidence of an uncertainty in taste—playing safe because the selection is aimed at a vaguely defined audience who is being catered for without much belief in



Playhouse Greenroom *Kaspar* centre: Malcolm Keith. Design: Mike Morris

Playhouse *The Slaughter of St Teresa's Day* l to r: Joan Sydney, Rod Williams, Jenny McNae. Design: Bill Dowd

the value of the enterprise.

Despite this somewhat gloomy overall impression there were, of course, many highlights during the year—productions of considerable merit, a great deal of very good acting, and moments of sheer joy.

The year began overloaded with Festival offerings, and nothing could rival the rich variety of February and March. Honours were shared equally between local talent and visitors: the New Fortune Theatre came triumphantly to life for a few weeks with Purcell's *Faery Queen* using in a lavish and truly festive way the enormous resource of talent grouped about the University, from the Dramatic and Choral societies to the Dance and Theatre workshops and orchestras, the whole thing bearing the characteristically imaginative stamp of John Milson. Out at W.A.I.T. the W.A. Theatre Company, with its own spectacular, a futuristic production of *The Tempest*, probably scored its most notable success to date, in equal parts due to the brilliant production and design of David Addenbrooke and Peter Parkinson and the moving and graceful performances of Edgar Metcalfe as Prospero and Martin Jones as Ariel. One felt that this was one of the few occasions when the old game of updating Shakespeare had been carried through with complete success.

The presentation at the Octagon of the two Athol Fugard plays, *Sizwe Banzi is Dead* and *The Island*, performed by the African actors John Kani and Winston Ntshona, demonstrated the absolute necessity of ensuring visits by representatives of alien cultures—it was an overwhelming experience, not merely seeing a different style of acting, but one was actually in touch with a different style of existing.

The Hole in the Wall had two hits and a miss. There was the totally enjoyable production of Anouilh's *The Rehearsal*, stylish and presented with wit and charm, again made impressive by a strong performance by Edgar Metcalfe and sophisticated playing by Pat Skevington and Harriet Craig. Its earlier presentation of the colonial musical *The Currency Lass* was less successful—interesting as a museum piece but not really funny enough to stand up in its own right.

In a late evening time slot the same theatre presented Ron Blair's searing one-man play *The Christian Brothers* with Peter Carroll, who had created the part in Sydney, giving an outstanding performance as the elderly, neurotic teaching Brother addressing an unseen class of boys.

By contrast the Playhouse's audience-appeal piece, Pinero's *The Magistrate*, with the year's "festival import" Hugh Lloyd, lacked sparkle. There is a tendency in Perth to use a heavy hand with farces, turning what should be a souffle into a suet pudding. One suspects that there is an unadmitted element of disdain here—putting on a show for the yokels and playing it broad. A similar flaw runs through the approach to comedy on Australian television, and one fears that this may become a sort of house style and that within the span of a generation all knowledge of a light touch with comedy will be totally stamped out.

April was memorable for two small-scale (physically at least) avant-garde plays—Arrabal's self-indulgent essay in role-playing, *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria*, produced with great tact by John Milson at the Hole in the Wall, and Peter Handke's piece of linguistic philosophy *Kaspar*, produced in fine expressionist style by Mike Morris at the Greenroom. In both cases the direction and acting was outstandingly good. It was difficult theatre at its best. Geoff Gibbs and Andy King shared acting honours in the Arrabal, Malcolm Keith dominated as Kaspar.

The Playhouse's resuscitated *The Slaughter of St Theresa's Day*, an early Peter Kenna play, was quite overshadowed. One felt the production of this not entirely satisfactory piece of Australiana (as also the rather unmemorable but enjoyable *Kid Stakes* by Ray Lawler, a Festival import from the Melbourne Theatre Company) had some justification. There is some point in familiarising an Australian audience with as many aspects of its own culture as possible, which demands a certain tolerance toward flawed work, whereas there seems little point in bothering with imported mediocrity.

Gradually, one felt, the creative spark was

Hole in the Wall *A Toast to Melba* Mary Haire. Design: John Milson

growing dimmer. May was fair but June was grim. The Hole in the Wall delighted us with *A Toast to Melba*, Jack Hibberd's irreverent look at our cultural history, presenting "the Australian Kookaburra" in football socks, with Mary Haire being an appealingly hoydenish primadonna, and versatile actors such as Ivan King and Martin Jones getting a chance at multiple roles.

The Playhouse tried to out-West-End Shaftesbury Avenue and gave us an elegant set by Bill Dowd and a glamorous leading lady in Leonie Martin-Smith in *The Gentle Hook*, a silly and badly-written thriller by the long-lasting Francis Durbridge, in a pointless bit of rivalry with similar material presented more successfully on television.

Upstairs in the Greenroom, that rare phenomenon, a play written in Western Australia, *Everyone's a General* by Mary Gage, provided an unfashionable experience in a charming and well-mannered little English family drama that showed a playwright with a gift for dialogue, and much promise for future work with more relevance to contemporary Australia, both in form and subject matter.

On the fringes, on the W.A. University campus at the old Dolphin the University Dramatic Society presented a lively bit of lunch-hour theatre (something one would like to see far more of). David Zampatti and David Higham jointly produced Barry Oakley's *A Lesson in English.* It was a marvellously suitable play, obviously relished by the mainly first-year students who, disguised as a class of school kids (ringled by Karl Zwicky), filled the centre block of the auditorium whilst Tony Harrison as the distracted teacher hectored them in wicked satire of bad teaching methods. It is a slicker and more facile play though reminiscent of *The Christian Brothers*, but it made fine theatre, and the production deserved more attention than it received.

In contrast, the W.A.I.T.'s Theatre-go-round which used to be most impressive seems to have lost some of its lustre. The June production of Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour* was a dead weight. A dated and contrived play that once had some shock value because of its somewhat naively brave approach to lesbianism, it seemed a waste of several talented performers. One felt the same about an earlier production of the minor Brecht play *Man is Man*—which raises queries about the obligation of a Theatre Arts course to be more discriminating about the value of the plays attempted. Possibly these particular plays lend themselves to experimentation in a way that more accomplished plays do not.

At the same time at the Playhouse, Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons*, beautifully costumed, but suffering from a crucial piece of miscasting, was a worthy but plodding "prestige" production. One also felt it was put on for the benefit of schools and their syllabus requirements, so possibly here the criticism of choice should be aimed at the prescribing committees rather than at the theatre.

Upstairs in the Greenroom, things were no better. A seemingly interminable one-man poetry reading, an autobiographical ego-trip by Ian David, jerked a somnolent audience into fitful attention with lights darkening and brightening and occasional naughty words causing daring titters. June was a very dark month in that theatre. The poetry evening was called *Idyll Mantis* but subtitled "you must remember this . . . ."

July restored one's faith a little. The first and best event was Ray Omodei's *Hamlet* at the Hole in the Wall. It had been announced as a new and challenging Hamlet and one feared the worst. It turned out to be a lucid, painstakingly thought-out and stylishly presented version, almost austerely devoid of intrusive innovations, and one began to suspect that this was, in fact, a startling novelty: simplicity and intelligence. One can only welcome it. Malcolm Keith made an interesting, energetic anti-hero of his Hamlet.

The Playhouse had an all-Australian July. In the main auditorium was John Power's *The Last of the Knucklemen*, a lively, rough, thoroughly authentic picture of life in a mining camp in the North West, with a range of fine performances by Leslie Wright, Geoff Gibbs and Dennis Miller. Some of the audience gasped with shock at the language, which in this play had the rare distinction of being used for purposes of

Hole in the Wall *The Architect and the Emperor of Assyria* Geoff Gibbs. Design: John Milson

Hole in the Wall *The Rehearsal* Harriet Craig, Bill Dunstone. Design: Graham Maclean

characterisation rather than aggressive attitudinizing. Little did they know that above their heads in the Greenroom, Bill Reed's *You Want It Don't You Billy?* was going beyond mere linguistic aggression, and entertaining its patrons with a couple of hours of simulated rape and masturbation and graphically verbalised sexual phantasies of the impotent. This degrading spectacle was held together by the flimsy "thriller" framework of a prowler, a lonely cottage, a psychotic husband and a neurotic wife, and the whole thing neatly supported the police statistics that most people get murdered by their best friends and spouses. Rod Williams, Steve Jodrell and Helen Hough wasted their considerable talents in this enterprise directed by Mike Morris who gradually emerges as a dynamic young director specialising in the weird, which is as likely to be a work of genius as total garbage.

The W.A. Theatre Company scored in one of its rare productions, a revival of Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, with a vigorously sustained performance by Joan Sydney as Martha (staying drunk too long, but moving into a complex and subtle characterisation in the third act) and a simply stunning piece of acting by Alan Cassell as George. It was one of those revivals one attended half-heartedly and was swept away with surprise at a first-rate production by Edgar Metcalfe.

The New Dolphin Theatre on the W.A. University campus finally opened 18 months after Sir Michael Redgrave had laid its foundation stone. The first production, directed by Aarne Neeme, was (somewhat unwisely) Edward Bond's *Early Morning*, an ambitious undertaking and probably better suited to a less festive occasion. This piece of black kitsch, although giving wonderful opportunities for Monty-Pythonesque episodes of insanity and violence, with its gruesome mixture of cannibalism and grotesquely distorted Christian symbolism, all in its framework of historical parody, strikes me as a play to work up to rather than inaugurate a season. Even so, the U.D.S. shows a wealth of talent, and it will be interesting to see whether the New Dolphin will be allowed to retain its function as a theatre, exclusively for the presentation of drama.

The above survey has for reasons of space had to be selective, and the points made about specific productions superficial, not allowing for adequate treatment of such important elements of grouping, design, successful ensemble playing or the distinctive style of the group concerned.

The illustrations will go some way towards making up for this. Particular attention is drawn to the following aspects: from the Playhouse productions, note the strong emphasis on appealing to the visual sense in the two plays that had little to offer to the imagination—the smartly elegant set for *The Gentle Hook* and the lavish costumes for *A Man for All Seasons.* By contrast, the Greenroom production of *Kaspar* achieves much with the simple and effective set and costumes and masks, relying on stark design and colour. *The Slaughter of St Theresa's Day* illustration shows the effectively simple unforced sleaziness of lowclass Australia in the 1950s, showing how the Playhouse's policy of concentrating on local plays is evolving a sure sense of style which is however being lost in other areas.

From the Hole in the Wall productions, the emphasis is on costume, and (though not shown in the illustrations) evocative sets which rely on a few selective touches to suggest more than the actual stage area can accommodate: Mary Haire suggesting a statuesque Melba, Geoff Gibbs as Arrabal's Emperor in a costume demonstrating the kind of difficulties the play entails with an audience a few feet from the actors. The scenes from *The Rehearsal* and *The Currency Lass* show the theatre's fondness for creating period charm and overcoming the difficulties of the physical limitations of the acting area.

Comparing the Perth scene with any overseas city of similar size and population, the quality and quantity of theatre available stands up remarkably well. On the other hand, audiences do not compare in either number or response. It is here that the real challenge lies.

Margot Luke

Hole in the Wall *The Currency Lass* l to r: Frank Stinton, Jenny McNae, Barbara Dennis, Ian Mackellar, Kathleen Edgar, Roland Paver. Design: Maurice Jones

Playhouse photographs by Simon Cowling
Hole in the Wall photographs by Sally McConnell

VISUAL ARTS
artistic maturity?

This month's exhibitions at the Western Australian Art Gallery included an exhibition of the work of ten local artists. It was a very good show indeed, beautifully presented and demonstrating the quality and diversity of work being produced by contemporary West Australian artists. As such, it was something of a landmark in the history of art in this State. Ten years ago, such an exhibition would not have been possible, for the depth of talent just wasn't here. Now things have changed and local art has, as it were, been given the public seal of approval: the foreword to the catalogue told us that this "is the first of a new programme of exhibitions which will be held bi-annually and which will endeavour to make our artists better known to the general public."

Upstairs at the State Gallery was another equally exciting exhibition. Consisting of plans, models and a sectional mock-up, it was a detailed introduction to the new Art Gallery. At last, after almost 70 years of operation in woefully inadequate and unsuitable accommodation, the Western Australian Art Gallery is to have a new building of its own.

The plans and model show it to be a visually interesting building, based on a hexagon shape and with four main levels. It is set in a spacious and well-landscaped site. Inside there is vastly more room for permanent and temporary exhibitions, service and storage: a system of movable panels, free-hanging from roof-mounted tracking, ensures maximum flexibility of all available space. Most importantly, the new building is to be fully air-conditioned, thus guaranteeing the controlled environment necessary to prevent the deterioration of delicate works of art. It is the lack of air-conditioning in the present Gallery which has stopped many important international exhibitions coming to Western Australia.

In the light of these two significant developments we could be excused for feeling that a milestone has indeed been reached in Perth. Before deciding one way or the other, however, the whole art scene needs to be considered more closely. One exhibition does not indicate any kind of artistic maturity, just as any amount of touring masterpieces won't create great artists overnight. They both help, but only as part of something much more complicated: a whole set of factors which must exist, interrelate, and continue to interrelate.

For example, there must be a continuing stream of talent, a variety of expression and a willingness to experiment in all fields of artistic activity; there must be artistic outlets—galleries to display all that is being produced locally, to import stimulating and relevant material and willing to accept their role seriously and take the occasional risk. There must be an efficient system of review and criticism, to inform and educate the public, and to provide critical feedback for the artist. And there must be an open-minded, informed and interested public, willing to support art intellectually and financially. If any of these is missing, or if they fail to interrelate, artistic maturity just isn't possible.

Using the last six or eight months as a sample period, how well does the Perth art scene measure up? Does the present optimism indicate that artistic maturity is within our grasp or is this just another in a long line of frustrating false starts?

Fairly predictably, painting is still the most practised and most advanced of the visual arts. At the Festival of Perth, in February, we had our usual opportunity of seeing three months of good exhibitions squeezed into three weeks. Again as usual, overseas and eastern states painting was well represented. There was a collection of Indian art at the Skinner Galleries, and exhibitions by Robin Angwyn, George Lawrence, John Coburn and Leonard French. The last of these was probably the strongest—French's Journey series, sixteen strident paintings based on a trip the artist made through the United States in 1965—66. They were powerful, even monumental pictures, filled with symbols of struggle, death and destruction, and creating out of the America French must have seen (and known from his study of American literature) an infernal place of smoke, fire and skulls. The show was doubly interesting for the contrast it provided with a newly-completed mural by French in the Social Sciences Building of the University of Western

Australia. Here we saw the artist in a more positive mood, depicting across eight large panels the symbolic evolution of the life-force.

The only other notable showing by an eastern states painter was an exhibition of coloured drawings by Michael Shannon at the Fremantle Arts Centre. Concentrating on flowers, vegetables and studio objects, they ran the spectrum from cool elegance to controlled exuberance, and demonstrated a fine handling of line and colour.

On the whole, though, Perth has seen comparatively few good exhibitions from the east so far this year.

Local painting on the other hand, is alive and doing very well. An early show which met with good public and critical response was *Three Realists*, combining the work of three younger painters, Ashley Jones, Mark Beilby and Ken Wardrop. This signalled the first local expression of an international movement away from abstraction and conceptual art and towards a newer form of realism, known variously as hyper-, super- or photographic realism, and characterised by a subject matter from the urban environment, rendered in sharp focus and often composed with the randomness of a quickly-snapped photograph. Perhaps surprisingly for a style of painting often said to be limited by the banality of its subject matter, each artist gave clear evidence of an individual approach and artistic concern.

Another example of the local application of an international style was the retrospective exhibition of Elise Blumann, held at Gallery G. Born in Germany and trained in the early years of the century when expressionism was the dominant mode, she moved to Australia in 1939. The retrospective included work from both periods, ranging from 'Malcesine' of the late twenties to sketches produced only last year.

The earlier European paintings, mostly portraits, were very elegant, and revealed a beautifully controlled use of a low tonal range, a mannered but incisive line and a stylization of forms, all of which unmistakably dated the paintings as examples of European post-impressionism. By comparison, the Australian paintings seem much more engaged. The harsher light and shadows, sharper focus and new colours of Western Australia forced the artist to reassess her style and produced a fresher, more spontaneous and more deeply felt art, best demonstrated in a fine series of landscape paintings from the forties. One feels that in the Swan River foreshore she depicts in these paintings, Elise Blumann found her true subject matter and produced her most timeless art.

This was a very satisfying exhibition and a classic example of a European sensibility adapting itself to a new environment and learning to see again. It was also a most interesting example of the early use of expressionism to capture the Australian landscape. Mrs Blumann is something of a pioneer in the artistic civilization of Western Australia, and although there was no further development of her discoveries in her own time, just occasionally in the pink gumtrees and broad brush-strokes of these landscapes one catches a glimpse of the style Guy Grey-Smith was to develop in his paintings of the 'Torbay' period, fifteen years later.

A promising first appearance was made by Doug Chambers in his one-man exhibition at the Old Fire Station Gallery. The paintings were for the most part quite large, and revealed a great interest in the problem of pictorial space and the abstract concept of progression. His constant use of door and window motifs suggested not only pictorial space, however, but an inclination towards the exploration of interior space and states of mind. One could feel, moving behind these paintings, a lively intelligence which was not afraid to extend itself.

In direct contrast was Ian Wroth's show of watercolours at the Fremantle Arts Centre. Produced as a result of a trip to Italy, the paintings managed to suggest, in their celebration of the colour, light and shadow of squares and cathedrals, the great enthusiasm of a young artist encountering the glories of Italian civilisation for the first time. It was quite surprising to see such a large exhibition totally rendered in watercolour, but the medium suited

his subject matter perfectly, and Wroth used it with skill and obvious relish.

In fact, for a medium which is often thought of as being on the decline, watercolour seems to be flourishing, an impression strengthened by the State Gallery's choice of *The Art of Watercolour Painting* for its travelling exhibition for 1976. This was a large show (although only about half the 70 paintings will go on tour) and traced the history of watercolour from its beginnings through to the present day, using British and Australian watercolours from the Gallery's permanent collection. As well as demonstrating the development and techniques of the medium, the exhibition also highlighted the great importance of watercolour in the history of Australian art. It was used by the earliest explorers and settlers to record their impressions and was popular in the colonial era. Nearly all of the Heidelberg painters used watercolour, some of them very well, and it has a continuing place in modern Australian painting, with gouache being especially popular.

This brings us on to the State Gallery's current exhibition, *Ten Western Australian Artists.* As mentioned earlier, it was beautifully presented and of a surprisingly high standard. The more senior painters, especially Guy Grey-Smith, Robert Juniper, George Haynes and Brian McKay, are working in established styles within which they continue to develop their individual interests. In the younger painters Margaret Woodward, Ross Morrow, John Pasco and Garry Zeck, there is not always the same impression of finality, but one feels a certain achievement in most of their work, and in Zeck's weathered canvasses with their calligraphic figures and Pasco's marvellous large gouache, a distinct promise of good things to come.

Underlying nearly all of them, I would maintain, is the landscape and the effort it calls forth to find ways of seeing it and making art out of it. In Grey-Smith and Juniper, two artists with very different styles, there is the common feeling that only an aerial view can hope to encompass such a broad sweep of landscape; in Zeck we find a fascination with the sense of the great age and decayed tradition which is already present in this "most bare, most spare, least haunted, least furnished of all lands"; in Haynes, Pasco and McKay a constant effort to record the light, whether bright or sombre, and the colours it creates.

Overall, it's a very heartening exhibition, not only for the high standard of work which was included, but because of the equally good work which wasn't.

But perhaps the greatest eye-opener in the show is the sculpture. Two local sculptors are represented, John Worth and Lou Lambert, and both produce very accomplished pieces. Worth's clean twisted shapes are as strong as ever, but recent experiments with the look of the surface—painting one and allowing another to weather—has invested them with greater authority. It is, however, the two 'Kazoo Screw' sculptures by Lou Lambert which really steal the show. Made out of thin flat strips of steel, and painted natural colours—green and orange, blue and yellow—they twist and turn across the gallery floor and into the air, hinting at their organic origin and proclaiming their joy in being alive. The eye cannot help but return to them, and one feels that two or three, wisely placed, could do wonders for any city block.

In fact, just as the sculpture steals this show, so too sculpture in Perth is at present giving painting, printmaking and the rest a run for their money. There have been two very good visiting sculpture shows at the State Gallery—the Barlach/Kollwitz exhibition during the Festival, and the Thailand sculpture a few months ago—and these seem to have created a good deal of interest. A group of local sculptors have formed the Western Australian Sculptors' Association, and their first show, the *Sculpture In The City* exhibition, mounted on the steps of the G.P.O. in Forrest Place during the Festival, was a great success. It helped break down the notion of a sculpture as a hammer and chisel affair by alerting the public to the wide variety of sculptural styles being practiced in Perth.

Another institution which shares the same aim is Praxis, a co-operative gallery started and run by a group of young artists and sculptors. It provides a venue for all types of experimental

art and art activities not acceptable to commercial galleries, and has already had several very stimulating group exhibitions, most notably a display of 'found objects'. It specialises in exhibitions with a theme, such as the *Head Show*, the *Light Show*, and the *Ego Show*, and is happy to accept entries from any interested person, artist or not. Indeed, one of the main objectives of Praxis is to break down the mystique and elitism which has built up around art and artists, and to induce the average person to participate. Considering the wit, irreverence and enthusiasm they have already shown, they could well succeed.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about the resurgence of sculpture in Perth is the relative youth of the people involved. Mark Grey-Smith, for example, although not yet thirty, has already spent several years studying here and abroad, and in his first one-man exhibition at the Old Fire Station demonstrated a strong and individual style. Like his father, he derives inspiration from the Western Australian landscape, reducing it in sketches to skeletal curves and lines which form the basis of complex geometric sculptures in a truly international style. Theo Koning, whose witty and beautifully-made assemblages have been a highlight of many Praxis exhibitions, is also well under thirty. With sculptors like these coming up through the local scene, we have much to look forward to. The only thing we must remember is that sculptors need a different kind of support than painters, and unless commissions come forward, and public interest continues developing, they could well be lost to greener pastures.

In printmaking there is also a good deal of activity. Very early in the year, the Fremantle Arts Centre showed an excellent exhibition, *Five New Zealand Printmakers* (which gave us a glimpse of Robin Whyte, a superb printmaker who must be in world class), and a few months later there was an equally attractive exhibition of modern Japanese prints at the Undercroft Gallery. Both these shows included prints in styles ranging from abstract, op, figurative, surreal, to minimal, and gave some indication of the possibilities in modern printmaking.

Locally, the most interesting development was the Fremantle Arts Centre's inaugural *Print Award Exhibition.* Its aim was to attract printmakers from other States to display their recent work in Perth, and to encourage printmakers working within Western Australia. It was advertised throughout Australia and received a very good response, with the 60 or so prints exhibited providing a good representation of the styles and quality of contemporary Australian printmaking. Almost half came from the eastern states, including work by Bea Maddock, Allan Mitelman, Geoff Le Gerche and Kate Briscoe, but the local work was equally impressive, especially prints by Col Billingham, Guy Grey-Smith, Ashley Jones and Katrina Lievense.

The winner was also a West Australian entry, 'Aubergine still-life', by Ray Beattie. A colour etching, its seemingly innocuous subject matter displayed a profound power to disturb. It was an imaginative and technical tour de force, and signalled the entrance on to the print scene of a formidable talent. It is to be hoped that this commendable venture continues to produce such stimulating work in years to come.

The other main event of the printmaking calendar was not so successful. This was the annual exhibition of the Printmakers Association of Western Australia held at the Undercroft Gallery and including some 70 prints by 27 members. Although there were some good prints by Miriam Stannage, Helen Taylor, Peter O'Neil and Baynard Werner, not to mention another very good series by Ray Beattie, the overall standard was disappointing. Nearly all the entries demonstrated technical competence, but very few had anything new or different to say, or showed any real imaginative force.

One must conclude that there is a nucleus of good printmakers working in Perth. Sometimes they are painters who like the possibilities offered by printmaking, but increasingly they are younger artists, some of them still students, who specialise in printmaking, and do it very stylishly indeed. They are willing to experiment with styles and techniques and have something interesting to say. It is to them we must look

for the future development of printmaking in this State.

In the field of crafts, ceramics is probably the most active area. As in sculpture, there have been two important exhibitions, both at the State Gallery. The first was the Australian Ceramics touring exhibition, which showed very clearly the trend away from the utilitarian and/or decorative tradition in Australian ceramics, and towards a freedom of subject matter and technique which moves ceramics closer to sculpture. The same trend was also present in the Fred and Mary Marer collection of ceramics, but although many of the pieces were uncompromisingly sculptural, most artists retained a delight in surface texture and finish.

On the local scene, ceramics has been undergoing a remarkable revival. There are now so many galleries and craft-shops displaying ceramics that it is difficult to keep up with new developments. With this in mind, perhaps the most indicative exhibition so far this year was the *Ten Western Australian Potters* show at the Undercroft. Although most of the major artists were represented it was evident that, as in the printmakers' exhibition, there was an abundance of solid craftsmanship and a definite lack of imagination.

An exception was Robert Bell, whose large conceptual work, composed of strips of wet clay arranged on a grid on the gallery floor, was supposed to dry and crack during the course of the exhibition. It didn't, but it still had the desired effect of making us rethink our approach to the whole idea of ceramics and the possibilities of the medium. Another of Bell's entries, 'Degree in Ceramics', was just that; a large hanging piece made up of many smaller slabs on which was written 'degree in ceramics'. The highlight of the exhibition, it was witty, a little subversive—and appropriately enough it was purchased by a tertiary institution.

So, although other areas of artistic activity haven't been as convincingly represented as painting, the year so far has shown promising developments on nearly all fronts. The established artists are continuing to produce work of high quality which remains relevant to the local scene, and talented younger artists are coming up through the art schools. Many of them are travelling overseas to further their studies and their work shows a healthy iconoclasm and a willingness to pursue new lines of development. The variety of approaches is expanding, especially in painting and sculpture, and there appears to be no current 'established' style which demands conformity. Moreover, there has been a steady stream of excellent touring exhibitions to stimulate artistic interest and highlight some of the newer trends elsewhere.

While the talent may be here, however, it will inevitably come to nothing without the right support: from galleries, critics and the general public. In the next issue I want to discuss the extent of this support in the Perth art scene.

John Cruthers

CINEMA
reflections on the film festival

It's Saturday night. Australian film director Fred Schepisi is there to introduce and discuss his beautiful film, 'The Devil's Playground'. The Windsor Theatre (the best Festival venue to date) is packed to the rafters. It's the high point of the Festival and yet Chairperson David Roe ends a list of 'Thank You' s with one for the audience, "Thanks for coming to what may be the last Perth International Film Festival."

There are gasps of surprised disbelief. How can this be? Look, we're all here!

The truth is that, behind all this apparent success, lies a yawning financial deficit which would be vastly greater if it wasn't for the dedicated and largely unpaid work of the group of committed enthusiasts who have brought the Festival to Perth for the past five years.

As a non-profit cultural organisation the Perth Film Festival is run on a shoestring. A drop in public support this year has tipped the Festival into debt and perhaps into a tailspin from which we may not pull out.

In spite of this sobering thought we all get a charge out of Fred Schepisi's multi-award winning 'The Devil's Playground', arguably the best Australian feature to date.

We swell with a nationalistic pride at seeing how far Australian film making has come in this present 'Renaissance'.

We enjoy talking to Fred Schepisi who has directed his own introspective and revealing script with sure-footed grace. We marvel at the remarkable performances he has coaxed from his child actors.

Schepisi has special cause to be pleased with his performance. He has not only invested six years of his life in his project (not to mention a great deal of his own money) but he scripted, directed, produced it and is now distributing it, personally.

The long hard battle has left him tough, confident and bankable. He has several other features on the stocks and backers are queueing up to put money in.

He speaks sceptically of the forty investors who had each promised to invest one thousand dollars in his dream project and who, on the day the promises were called up, dropped out. He gets a great deal of satisfaction in telling these same people, now waving brave cheque books, exactly what they can do.

May he go on to make a million and many more fine films.

The Festival got off to a splendid start. Opening night we had Eric Rohmer's latest film 'Die Marquise Von O'.

Every frame looks like an Ingres painting and the Marquise herself resembles some luscious, ripe 'Grande Odalisque'.

Rohmer's masterly story-telling builds the story, block by deliberate block, and sets up a delicious comic situation reminiscent of Molière. Rohmer truly has an elegant touch with his comedies of manners.

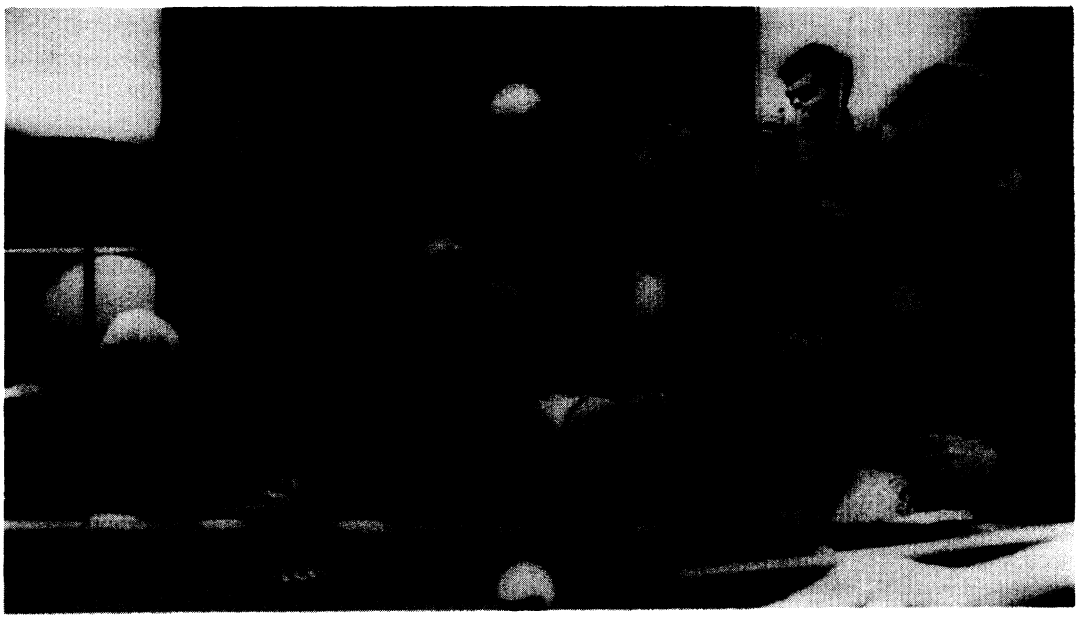
Next morning the *West Australian* film critic makes me wonder if we are attending the same Festival. *Australian* film critic Mike Harris is also unimpressed. In film buff's parlance he quotes a line from the forthcoming Arthur Penn movie 'Night Moves', "Watching a Rohmer movie is like watching paint dry."

Ah, but what jewel-like paint.

In the first few days David Roe and Festival Director Sylvie Le Clezio are depressed. Bookings are down compared with previous Festivals. (It is a drop apparently shared not only by other Australian Film Festivals but also by the commercial cinemas. Colour television is largely blamed for a drop in attendances of around thirty per cent.)

Analysis of the figures suggests that the hard core of Perth film buffs have enrolled and that they are attending more screenings. It is the 'swinging voters' who have stayed away. Instead of last year's situation where there were six major films packed to the doors and thin attendances for the rest, this year attendances per session are more evenly spread. However although this might indicate a more mature audience the Festival is unlikely to survive its crippling deficit.

Mike Harris and I decide to award the 'Golden Scissors' to those directors who cannot bear to leave any of their precious shots on the cutting room floor. This after seeing 'Eadweard



The Devil's Playground Australia

Muybridge : Zoopraxographer', a twenty-five minute study suitable for those film historians who prefer their films one hour long. Thomas Koerfer's 'Der Gehulfe' ('The Assistant') also qualifies. It is a fat film inside which there is a lean and rather intriguing film trying to get out.

(Later in the Festival we darkly discuss the possibility of awarding the 'Golden Shredder' to a couple of films that shall remain nameless . . .)

What sets the Perth International Film Festival apart from other Australian Film Festivals is the single-minded support it offers to independent filmmakers.

The Perth Festival is a Member of the International Federation of Independent Festivals. It hooks up directly with Cannes, Berlin, Edinburgh, Pesaro and Rotterdam. This enables us, here on the edge of the world, to see films literally hot from the maker's hands.

The English-speaking link with Edinburgh makes it worthwhile for the film maker to go to the expense of a sub-titled print.

The Edinburgh connection poses Director Le Clezio with a problem of logistics. A film has to arrive in Perth on time, be screened and then airfreighted to the eastern states for screening to potential Australian distributors before being air expressed to Edinburgh. One missed date and there are real headaches.

The Festival takes very seriously this responsibility for giving independent filmmakers (mostly newcomers who haven't yet got the backing of the international distributors) a showcase for their films. Filmgoers all over Australia thus get a chance to view outstanding films they would not otherwise see.

The system works. Before the Festival is over many of its offerings have been snapped up. For instance, this coming summer Festival of Perth will include 'Die Marquise Von O', 'Wives', 'Autobiography Of A Princess', 'The Ceremony' and 'Grey Gardens', as well as some fine shorts. Add to this some superb films previously brought to Australia under the auspices of the Perth Film Festival—Herzog's 'Every Man For Himself And God Against All' and Makaveyev's 'The Ratcatcher And The Switchboard Operator' and one immediately sees how a wider audience benefits from the multiplyer effect of the Perth initiative.

There are many last-minute alterations to the programme during the fortnight, but as David Roe says, "Either you have a safe Festival with last year's films (as they do largely in the eastern states) or you see the latest films on offer and put up with some inconvenience."

All in all, the Perth audience seems to prefer the occasional inconvenience.

Even the Festival 'ring-ins' are of high quality. When Jacques Rivette's 'Out One Spectre' didn't show, the replacement film was Andrzej Wajda's latest effort, 'Land Of Promise', a splendid baroque work about the ills of capitalism at the time of partition in Poland. It was spectacular, bravura stuff from a master story-teller with villains so uncompromisingly villainous that they surprised by not twirling their moustaches. Wajda should be right with the Party after this.

My special 'Fastest Critics In The Land' award goes to the couple who, on hearing the very first sonorous note of Schoenberg's music in 'Moses und Aron' got up immediately and left.

I endured somewhat longer, but I confess that ten minutes into the opus, when God spake thuswise: 'Get thee gone', I went.

"But at least," said Chairperson Roe, "you don't whistle, stamp and jeer. Perth provides the best Film Festival audience in Australia. You give the filmmakers and the rest of the audience a go. 'Moses und Aron' would have caused a riot in Melbourne."

However, being the best film audience in the country will be small consolation if we lose the Festival.

Director James Ivory's imaginative use of some vintage archival footage from the great age of the Maharajas formed the absorbing warp of a superior drama 'Autobiography Of A Princess', a film unusual in being if anything too short. We could have done with learning more about the time-soured past of the Rajah's aging tutor (exquisitely played by James Mason) and his exiled Princess (Madhur Jaffrey), hiding her anger under a mask of too-good manners that only slipped occasionally.

If it's Thursday this must be India . . . By the eighth day Festival fatigue has set in. I give up referring to the constantly changing programme and, in the brief gaps between sessions, stand to eat.

I missed the titles of one film about India and after twenty five minutes I whisper perplexedly to my friend, "Taxidermy's an unusual subject for a Marguerite Duras film, surely?"

She looks at me pityingly in the half dark. " 'Calcutta Song' is tomorrow. This is 'Burra Sahib'."

In the event I preferred it to the Duras.

Was there too much emphasis on political documentary and not enough on experimental filmmaking? That was a question I heard asked several times as the Festival progressed. Certainly we were offered a tough and uncompromising diet of documentaries, and where indeed was the flashy experimentation and stunning technique of this year's equivalent of Makaveyev, Herzog and Terayama?

Perhaps, in the best of all possible worlds, there could have been a better balance but, in the end, the fascination of seeing our complicated selves in the mirror of documentary film won out.

The impassioned polemic of the political documentarists constantly poses us the question, "In such a situation, would I have stood up and been counted?"

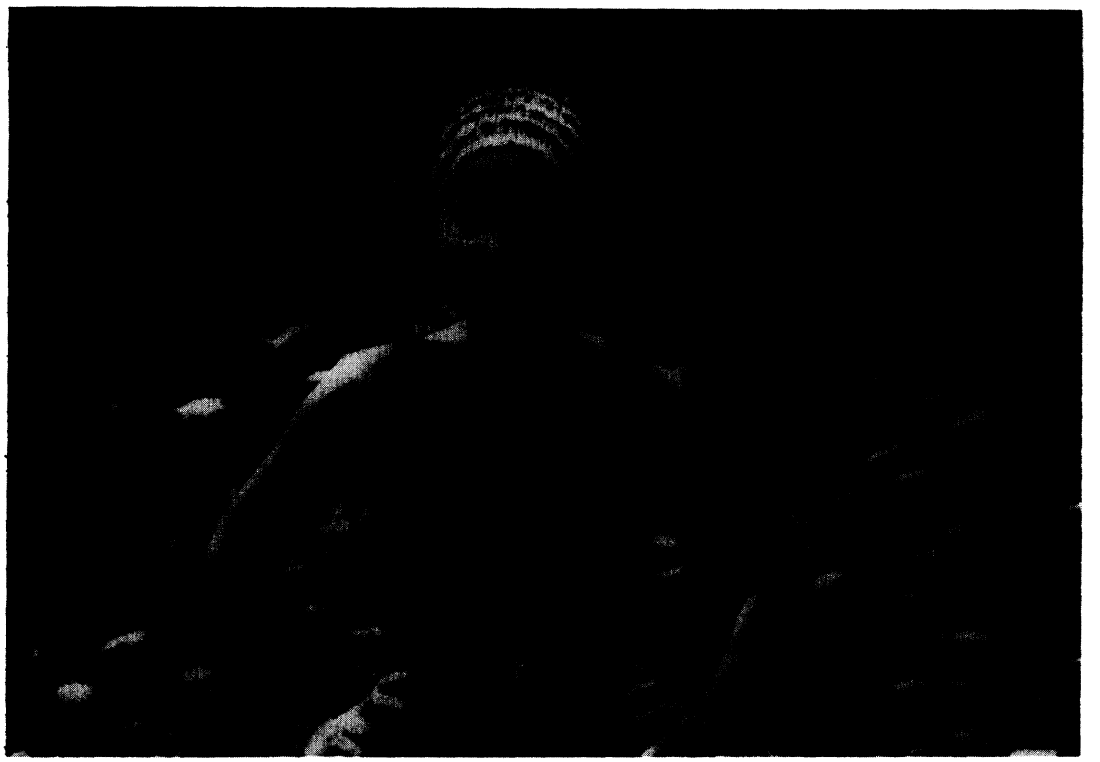
That question was posed disturbingly many times in such films as 'Chantons Sous l'Occupation' (collaboration), 'California Reich' (Fascism), 'Nightcleaners' (exploitation), 'Hurry Tomorrow' (the abuse of personal freedom). But nowhere more than in two powerful documentaries about the recent tragic events in Chile.

Guzman's 'La Batalla de Chile : Coup d'Etat' gave a general historical view and tended to contain too much polemic but it did contain some incredible footage of the bombing of Allende's palace. Power truly does come out of the end of a rifle.

The best of the two, 'Companero', particularised the effect of this contemporary

Serail France

The Assistant Switzerland



Grey Gardens USA

political gangsterism in the person of Victor Jara, Chilean stage-director turned folk singer of the revolution. Jara was tortured and murdered by the military junta who overthrew Allende's democratically elected government. The very personal account of the tragedy from Jara's English wife, Joan Turner, left us shaken and profoundly moved.

'The Confessions Of Winifred Wagner' shakes up a few preconceptions about the nature of loyalty and friendship. This film, in the form of a straightforward, talking-head type interview with Frau Wagner, points up the real danger of the Hitlers of this world—that they are not monsters, but are all too plausibly human.

"I know he had his dark side," says this iron lady, safe behind her facade of thirty years' silence on the matter, "but I never knew it . . . and if Hitler were to walk in the door today, I would be just as pleased, just as delighted to see him . . . I will always remember him with deep gratitude."

Director Syberberg's questions are wondrous subtle, but cobra-fascinating Frau Wagner is so assured that we come away not knowing how much of her is real and how much is the performance of a controlled and gifted actress.

"It is easy not to be a Nazi, if there is no Hitler."

The visit of French film director Christine Lipinska sums up, as well as anything, the trials, tribulations and triumphs of the Festival.

With a spur-of-the-moment, late-night phone call to her Paris apartment Festival Director Le Clezio turns Ms Lipinska into a willing international jetsetter. The Perth Festival is her first experience of being a guest director. She earns it by having made a well-reviewed first feature, 'Je Suis Pierre Riviere'. (Later this year she is to be a guest at the Venice Film Festival then goes on an invitation tour of five U.S. universities. The world opens like a flower for a talented young film director.)

Lipinska has faith in the French Diplomatic Corps. She sends her film on ahead in the diplomatic bag. She arrives. It doesn't. Director Le Clezio burns up the international phone wires. The advertised screening time is postponed indefinitely. For a time it seems to be touch and go if it will arrive on time; if at all.

At last it arrives. We see it and enjoy that unique Festival privilege of being able to discuss a new film with the director in person.

A few days later, in his farewell speech, David Roe is able to announce that 'Je Suis Pierre Rivière' has already been bought by an Australian distributor. All the headaches, anxieties, cables and international calls have been justified.

The film itself is good enough to cause any aspiring film director over the age of twenty five to slash his, or her, wrists.

The same can be said of 'The Singer And The Dancer', the first feature of the other twenty-five-year-old woman guest director, Australian Gillian Armstrong.

Single handed, Gill Armstrong would seem to justify the much-criticised film school concept.

Armstrong was in the interim programme of the school and obviously learned her business well. Her film shows a mature professionalism and skill.

On a derisive budget of around $25,000 she managed to employ top writer Alan Marshall, top photographer Russell Boyd and top actress Ruth Cracknell and put together fifty minutes good enough to be bought commercially.

("You're lucky, Gill, to be so young and to have such a clear idea of what you want to do in life." "But I'm not young," she replies earnestly, "I'm twenty-*five*.")

It's interesting to compare the work of Gill Armstrong with that of Christine Lipinska. Armstrong writes about women, Lipinska is more broadly philosophical. (She told me that some women's movement people, interested in showing her work at a forthcoming festival of women's films, wouldn't even talk to her after viewing her feature at Cannes.)

There is a lack of maturity about Armstrong's handling of her flashback sequences and her younger actress Elizabeth Crosby might usefully have been directed more firmly.

Lipinska, although having chosen a story which is more dubious in its appeal, is supremely

confident in her direction of her cameras and her cast. Her montage of violence is brilliant and assured.

Perhaps it is this confidence that marks the difference between European and Australian filmmakers. They know exactly who they are. We are still trying to find out.

The film buffs' very own documentary, 'Hollywood On Trial', provided the best joke of the Festival. One of the 'Hollywood Ten', Edward Dmytryk, said of the backlash now operating in Hollywood, "A lot of those right-wing guys are finding it tough to get jobs these days." Cut to Ronald Reagan.

David Roe swears he didn't plan for Ford to win the Republican nomination a few days before.

'Iracema' affects me more than any other film in the Festival.

Brazilian director Jorge Bodansky prises open our unwilling eyes with the crowbar of his hidden cameras and makes us look upon the crushing realities of life in today's Brazil.

In 'Iracema' Bodansky apparently used only one professional actor in his cast, Paulo-Cesar Pereio, who plays Taio, a truckdriver who prowls the savage Transamazonia Highway in a successful no-questions-asked search for quick wealth.

Bodansky uses Taio to set up scenes with dispossessed land owners, Indian slaves and roadside prostitutes. None of them are aware they are being filmed by the cameras hidden in Taio's truck: all of them are victims of the insane headlong rush for wealth in today's Brazil.

The greed of the system and its pitiless results—the raw wasted tracts of land and the burned out people—are all sobering enough, but the plight of Iracema, a thirty-cruzeiro Belem whore at fourteen and a worn out five-cruzeiro roadside trollop one year later is a gut-wrenching descent into hell.

To be born poor, part-Indian and a woman in South America doesn't bear thinking about.

The old showbiz dictum is "Leave them laughing." The final movie 'Ghost In The Mirror' did just that, if unconsciously. Woody Allen must have a standing invitation to the man who wrote the sub-titles in splendidly fractured English.

Before I fled the scene I noted a couple of gems from the lovely lady ghost. To a suggestion from the stern Buddhist scholar that she is distracting him she replies, "Don't worry, I can control myself and serve you on the side." Later there followed my favourite line, "So sorry, I was controlled by a bogy into doing this dirty trick." Lucky old him.

In terms of national and international prestige the Perth International Film Festival is, quite simply, the most significant single cultural event in Western Australia's calendar. And yet the Festival is in jeopardy. Before the fortnight is over David Roe is talking to Arts Minister, Graham MacKinnon about the short term problem of bailing out the Festival financially and, more importantly, about the longer term future of the event.

Roe already has had offers from other States more cognisant of the international publicity and prestige that can accrue from a significant film festival.

The questions are: Will we fight hard enough to retain it? Do we fully appreciate the value of what we have enjoyed for the past five years? Will the State Government understand fast enough not just the cultural, but also the industrial implications of the Festival?

The moment is come for the State Government to take a series of bold and imaginative steps towards the development of a viable film industry. Such an industry would provide a local employment infrastructure as well as export earning potential.

With its potential for drawing overseas attention to the State our internationally significant Film Festival would form a vital piece of such a structure. It is vital that we support it in every way we can.

We would all share the loss and the blame if, through lack of community and individual effort and foresight, we lost this valuable asset conceived and run by gifted Western Australians for Western Australians.

Bill Warnock

TELEVISION
Power Without Glory

It is not and never has been easy to settle on, still less define an Australian style, and when it comes to TV it is more difficult still. Yet Oscar Whitbread and his team of scriptwriters, actors and technicians who made *Power Without Glory* have done just that. In fact my trouble with the first few episodes, though I did not recognise this at the time, was that it was too Australian: the action was stilted, the acting seemed peculiarly graceless, the environment monotonous, strangely dispiriting. You spent your time in the dingy streets of Carringbush (Collingwood), with the peeling weatherboard houses, the dark kitchens with butchers' calendars on the walls, most people perennially anxious about money, out of work but not daring to protest, their women as preoccupied with keeping up appearances as the men with their gambling.

Gradually, I have come to realise that I didn't like this because this was all too familiar: this is Australia, an Australia at least as real as the sunburnt country inhabited by long lean heroes, rebelling like Ned Kelly when they are not fighting wars against impossible odds or droving herds of cattle across the interior. Above all, the style of *Power Without Glory* is Australian. It is an awkward, lounging affair because that is what we tend to be: awkward because we're still like adolescents without any real awareness of our passionate selves and therefore without authority over ourselves or our relationships, and lounging because we have decided, it seems, that the best defence against such bewilderment is to pretend not to care.

In other words, Whitbread and his team have translated Hardy's Marxist convictions into televisionary terms. What are these terms? Essentially, I think, these terms are not so much visual as sociable. Reading a book is a solitary pleasure but, as McLuhan says, TV is essentially a domestic matter. The set is our equivalent of the Roman's lares and penates, his household Gods; the family gathers around it and there for our devotion is displayed, on a small screen, the world outside reduced to a series of manageable images. In this age after Watergate, *Power Without Glory* gives us an Australian version, images of our own corruption, but properly muted, understated, without undue moral emphasis—too much of anything, especially moral passion, embarrasses us.

This is the story of the making of one of Australia's great fortunes (and how many, even the most dinkum, fair-go blokes, secretly long to be like Jack West, rich and powerful, even if at the expense of so many others). Part of the attraction of the story lies also in the fact that, allowing for certain embellishments, it is substantially true: something like this happened once, though there's also the comforting thought (if you need it) that "things aren't like that anymore"—so our civic leaders tell us. Jack West (we all know who is meant), out of work in the great depression of the 90's, begins laying odds and, incidentally, fixing the results, on pigeon races and ends owning several racecourses, a string of racing stables and thoroughbreds and controlling most of the gambling, legal and illegal, in the state, with a large section of the police force and several members of Parliament in his pay. As distinct from the novel, the TV version tends to play down the melodramatic possibilities of this story. Partly this is because the small screen tends to understatement, but partly also because the editing is tight-lipped: incidents like Jack's victory in the Victoria (Melbourne) Cup, the unaccountable disappearance at sea of one of his men who knew too much, the explosion in the house of an overzealous detective, are cut back to merest suggestions. What Whitbread seems to be aiming at is a different kind of pleasure, the melancholy pleasure of intelligence contemplating corruption.

Recently Max Harris, everybody's popular pundit, warned us of the dangers of over-kill; he might have been reflecting on *Power Without Glory*. For it's as if its makers realised—as the Whitlam government perhaps failed to do—that you attack popular Australian pieties at your own risk. Therefore in presenting the dark underside of the Lucky Country *Power Without Glory*, unlike the novel, goes carefully. True, it is informed with moral passion, but the passion is muted, the tone melancholy. If the text is the preacher's that "money is the root of all evil", its exemplification is in human terms: we watch

the gradual destruction of Nelly, John's wife, for example. Initially a nice young girl from Carringbush, shy but inwardly confident in herself and her good looks, she withers as John transplants her to the great house on the hill to deal with servants, society ladies and their snobbery and to bear the burden of guilt for John's ruthless ways.

All this said, the question arises: why watch all this? We all know the unenviable reputation the ABC has for being "educational" and hurry to seek pleasure by turning elsewhere, to more hedonistic channels. Why should we choose to dedicate 26 Mondays to *Power Without Glory* when another channel offers us *Upstairs, Downstairs* with its butlers and belted earls? You will only cling to the ABC, I suspect, if like me, you are a devotee of Australiana. From the days of Dad and Dave on the radio and reciting Banjo Paterson at school, I have always been especially excited when art told me about myself and my world; not about the great world of overseas but about gum-trees, or, better, because more familiar, about brick villas. What I like about *Power Without Glory* is the light it throws on the nature of our society and its values, and I like also its ironic treatment of nostalgia, so fashionable at the moment: the old days, it suggests, were neither good nor gracious and—this, to lovers of *Upstairs, Downstairs*—the foundations of a great house may be illegal gambling, cheating, bribing police and corrupting politicians.

But all is not high moral muckraking here. On the contrary, the social criticism is implicit, for you to apply to the extent you wish. I must also pay tribute to the actors. There is not a weakness in the large cast, and the gallery of types and grotesques is another tribal pleasure the series offers. There they are, for all tastes and persuasions: curly headed Irish rogues, an upright and honourable union organizer, Jack's sworn enemy; policemen of all sizes and moral dispositions, tall and lugubrious and corruptible —shades of the constable in *The Magic Pudding* —stout and bushybearded and unctuous and also corruptible or lean and keen a la Sherlock Holmes and incorruptible; a good-hearted Irish priest, winkin' at gambling and booze with a twinkle in his eyes and a tall, austere and witty Archbishop, the prince of the Church (we all know who that is, of course); a dreadnought mum (Nelly's)—all praise to Heather Canning for the way she plays her with spine-chilling refinement and ruthless determination to get for her Nelly John, the young man with money and then to back him ever after, might being right always in her book. But most powerful, inevitably, is Martin Vaughan's characterization of Jack West. Indeed, the whole vision of the series depends on him. Where the novel can range more widely, be more explicit, the criticism here is summed up in Jack West, its embodiment: emotionally frozen, uncouth yet fearfully self-possessed, quick-witted, ruthless, deadly in determination, yet hopelessly inept as a human being, he is your capitalist not as a monster but as an emotional cripple. The product of slums and the depression of the 90's, he is a figure of resentment, lacking all moral authority and therefore master of force though very often also, without knowing it, its victim.

This, then, is the fascination of this series. It has turned an energetic but ample-minded novel into a tricky, understated and stylish TV series. What it will do for Australia's already tarnished image overseas, if it is sold there as the ABC hopes and deserves, is debatable. But maybe it will evoke some wonder, that Australians are not, after all, savages, mere creatures of sensation and self-complacency, that wit has a place here as well as muscle. In effect, as the very title suggests, we are at best a puritan people; we find no real glory in power and our best kind of pleasure is contemplating the horrible truth about ourselves. *Power Without Glory* is only for this kind of person and offers only this kind of pleasure. The rest, the unthinking patriots, had better stick to *Upstairs, Downstairs,* revering the English ruling classes and their rulers, the servants.

Veronica Brady

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It could be called the Bikie Meanjin, since there are two short stories on that theme. There's also Rex Mortimer's essay on how his Chinese experience came to propel him out of the Communist Party, a letter from Italy, plus an important poetry section including a translation of Mandelshtam's *Ode to Stalin*. *Meanjin Quarterly*, University of Melbourne, Parkville, Victoria 3052.

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ASPECT, Vol. II, No. 1 includes: Interviews with Jean Genet, Magdalena Abakanowicz, David Perry. Article on Gary Shead and contributions by local and European writers. Annual Subscription: Aspect, 9 Cambridge St., Paddington, N.S.W. 2021. $8.00, single copy $2.00.

AUSTRALIAN LITERARY STUDIES—The October 1976 issue includes articles on Australian literature in Sweden, Keneally, Marcus Clarke's library, Lawson, Patrick White, the dismissal of Brennan from the University of Sydney, an interview with Frank Hardy. Subscription, $10.00, to University of Queensland Press, St Lucia 4067.

SPAN No. 2, April 1976, contains information about writers' visits, awards, grants and scholarships; a guide to Australian little magazines; to the Papua Pocket Poets series; and information about other publications, and conferences and festivals, of countries of the South Pacific region. Subscription enquiries to the Honorary Secretary, SPACLALS, Department of English, University of Queensland,

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westerly is published by the English Department, University of Western Australia, set in Times type-face and printed by Alpha Print Pty Ltd, Perth, W.A.