

A Jindyworobak Publication

Colin Thiele

Conditional Culture

REX INGAMELLS

IAN TILBROOK

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The purpose of this book is to show that the blossoming of a distinctive Australian culture depends on certain conditions, and to indicate broadly what those conditions are.

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CONDITIONAL CULTURE

I. FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.

(1)

The affinities of the early settlers with Australia were peculiarly trammelled by uncongenialities. They easily appreciated the blue, sunny days of the Australian spring; the yellow flame of the wattle and the clear torrent of a magpie's song stirred their potentialities for reacting favourably to what was exotic yet conformist to their ideas of beauty in nature. On the other hand, blankness greeted their yearnings for snow-covered landscapes and the call of the skylark. What their feelings must have been during December of blazing heat, pestering flies and clogging dust can only be imagined. Most of them would have preferred the bitterest weather in England, just as most Australians to-day would prefer excessive heat to that bleakness.

The convict system, a condition of early colonial development, so adulterated the aesthetic outlook of all colonists as to render more distasteful than they would otherwise have been many unorthodox manifestations of the environment. While such unobtrusive discoveries as duckbill platypuses and quongdong trees could be tolerated as novelties under any circumstances, the unavoidable gum tree and mallee, constituent of endless areas of bush and scrub, received, besides the stigmas of monotony, inhospitality and treachery, a darker spiritual aura, a resonant pathetic fallacy.

The affinities of the pioneers with the bush were exceedingly limited in any case, and, for the greater part, conditional on their hopes of material success. Very many early pastoralists went out-back to make their fortunes as quickly as possible and forsook the scenes of their labours as soon as they considered themselves sufficiently rewarded. Numbers of them returned "home," while others, pending further pastoral pursuits conducted by overseers, lived as cocks of colonial dunghills and with lavish resplendence on the best sites in the suburbs of Sydney, Melbourne, and Hobart. They had been opportunists in their attitude to the bush; they had proved themselves practical men: in the active tasks they had set themselves there was no room for the growth of any but superficial affinities saturated with their practical egoism.

Even when, as after the enforcement of pastoral boundaries, pioneers spent lifetimes in struggles and ruminations, the urgencies of colonization and difficult living conditions prevented fully sympathetic awareness of environment arising.

Although, with the passage of two and three generations, Australia came to produce white men who loved the life of the bush; and although some of these, well-educated and travelled,

might perhaps live more happily nowhere else, new circumstances arose to choke, at that stage, any speculative tendencies which might have defined to some extent the path for a fresh culture.

By trebling, and doubling again, the population of the Australian colonies; by introducing thousands of individuals from overseas, being overseas conditioned, and by stimulating another more feverish phase of practical activity: the goldrushes made the formulation of new cultural standards impossible for another generation or so.

Next, the speeding up of communication; the enormous growth of commerce and industry; the stupendous strides of science in its application to everyday life: in short, all the complexity of influences which have taken control of group and individual life has opposed the flowering of a culture which must in many ways be *primaeval*. The first law of security in modern life is synchronization with world-forces, whether in the matter of balancing the budget and ordering the affairs of families or nations.

Most Australians live in cities which have much in common with European cities. Owing to the routine of life and the dissemination of overseas ideas and habits, it is sometimes difficult for Australians to think of themselves as such. Nevertheless, the British stock which settled here, no matter whether in country or town, has undergone profound changes. Acclimatization has been going on in subtle ways for several generations until Australians are now a people with distinctive physical and temperamental characteristics.

Pre-war national self-consciousness led to the expression of superficial, *larrikin* sentiments, best summed up—in spite of certain redeeming features in the writings of Lawson and Patterson—by the term *jingoism*, and hardly intelligent rallying cries for a culture. Such a phenomenon was comfortably directed during the war, in alliance with the *jingoism* of Empire, and, for the most part, expired with face to the foe. That which remains has no longer the centre of the stage.

(2)

Whether convicts or freemen, most of our early settlers were misfits here. Whether they arrived by choice or force of circumstance, they were pioneers, and, as such, were at continual grips with unfamiliar circumstances. They could feel at home only in so far as the new environment harmonized with their heredity and traditions. British stock could find much less in common with Australia than with America, where nature is much more in keeping with European preconceptions as to what it should be. Such was the environment in Australia that spiritual affinity with it could grow only after generations of radical adjustment—of mutations in habits of thought, feeling, behaviour, and custom—and the shedding of habits which were excrescences in this country. For, just as the country, in producing life, must now do so to a large extent in accordance with the design of man,

so man, to live at all, must do so to a large extent in accord with the laws of natural environment.

This is no less true of man's aesthetic than of his practical life; and of basic importance to aesthetic life is the appreciation of natural beauty at first hand.

Men, even if they wished to kill all the native flora and fauna of this country and to substitute those of the Old World, could not do so. In so far as Australians have changed natural conditions, the result, for the greater part, even where most aesthetic, bears the stamp of human volition. This means that if Australians are really to appreciate natural beauty at first hand, they must seek to do so by turning to indigenous nature. If they do not, or if there is little beauty there to appreciate, their aesthetic life must be impoverished.

There has, indeed, been enough sincere appreciation of distinctive beauty in Australian nature to suggest that those who see little are prejudiced. The mental and emotional training of such people is invariably patterned on Old World cultural conventions. These conventions are not necessarily standards of values from which there is no appeal or to which there are no corollaries.

Norman Douglas, who has spent most of a long life in clarifying for mankind a standard of values derived from the Mediterranean, and who has never been to Australia, has written about gum trees from a rigidly circumscribed Old World point of view.

"You walk to this building along an avenue of eucalypti planted some forty years ago. Destesting as I do the whole tribe of gum trees, I never lose an opportunity of saying exactly what I think about this particularly odious representative of the brood; this eyesore, this grey-haired scarecrow, this reptile of a growth with which a pack of misguided enthusiasts has disfigured the whole Mediterranean basin. They have now realized that it is useless as a protection against malaria. Soon enough they will learn that, instead of preventing the disease, it actually fosters it, by harboring clouds of mosquitos in its scraggy so-called foliage. These abominations may look better on their native heath: I sincerely hope they do. Judging by the 'Dead Heart of Australia'—a book which gave me a nightmare from which I shall never recover—I should say that a varnished hot-pole would be a god-send out there. But from here the intruder should be expelled without mercy. No plant on earth rustles in such a horribly metallic fashion when the wind blows through the everlasting withered branches; the noise chills one to the marrow; it is like the sibilant chattering of ghosts. Its oil is called 'medicinal' only because it happens to smell rather nasty; it is worthless as timber, objectionable in form and hue—objectionable above all things in its perverse, anti-human habits. What other tree would have the effrontery to turn the sharp edges of its leaves—as if these were not narrow enough already!—towards the sun, so as to be sure of giving at all hours of the day the minimum of shade to mankind?"

"But I confess that this avenue of *Policoro* almost reconciled

me to the existence of the anaemic Antipodeans. Almost; since for some reason or other (perhaps on account of the insufferably foul nature of the soil) their foliage is here thickly tufted, it glows like burnished gold in the sunshine, like enamelled scales of green and gold. These eucalypti are unique in Italy. Gazing upon them my heart softened, and I almost forgave them their manifold iniquities, their diabolical thirst, their demoralizing aspect, precocious senility and vice, their peeling bark suggestive of unmentionable skin diseases, and that system of radication which is nothing but a scandal on this side of the globe."

This piece of natural description is very stimulating. While there are certain mistatements due to ignorance, there is sincerity in the whole: it is the outcry of a civilized European who feels his sense of values to be outraged. Mr. Douglas would be outraged at the thought of himself taking an attitude of orthodox respectability; yet he does so here. There is, indeed, truth in the passage, but not—as Mr. Douglas has said in parallel circumstances—the whole truth. It would be as easy to caricature an oak and a weeping willow as loathsome examples of senility and obeseness: it is a matter of point of view. Mr. Douglas's caricature is, indeed, so excellent that one recognizes the gum and could recognize no other tree in it. I am a devout reader of his prolific writings, have enjoyed "South Wind," "Siren Land," "Old Cabria" (whence this quotation comes), "Alone," "Looking Back," and several other of his books; and cannot gainsay the author's fundamental sanity and genius, yet there is one thing I know well which Mr. Douglas does not. I mean the gum tree in its infinite variety of species and individuality. I have yet to witness a single withered, fire-scarred, flood-marked example which does not look beautiful drenched in sun-glamour at the end of day or sparkling with dew in the early morning. And there are massive and magnificent trees which look beautiful at any time of the day or night. Mr. Douglas has not seen any, as I have done, grotesque and ugly, ghastly in glare and mirage, insanely clutching and huddling under the stars, and horribly tortured under the glimmer of a red moon; yet I am not alone in seeing a stark and vivid beauty about them even then.

In spite of sternness, Mr. Douglas does relent for an instant, and catches a fleeting glimpse of beauty in the gum trees: ". . . their foliage is here thickly tufted, it glows like burnished gold in the sunshine, like enamelled scales of green and gold." Thank you, Mr. Douglas, for the mite! It symbolizes a first step. Before long, the strange, unorthodox beauty of the Australian gum tree, and many other manifestations of beauty peculiar to this country, will find a sure place in the standards of general culture, which will be one stage nearer universality and so much the richer.

(3)

"Jindyworobak" is an aboriginal word meaning "to annex, to join," and I propose to coin it for a particular use. The Jindyworobaks, I say, are those individuals who are endeavouring to free Australian art from whatever alien influences trammel it,

that is, to bring it into proper contact with its material. They are the few who seriously realize that an Australian culture depends on the fulfilment and sublimation of certain definite conditions, namely:

1. A clear recognition of environmental values.
2. The debunking of much nonsense.
3. An understanding of Australia's history and traditions, primaeval, colonial, and modern.

The most important of these is the first. Pseudo-Europeanism clogs the minds of most Australians, preventing a free appreciation of nature. Their speech and thought idioms are European; they have little direct thought-contact with nature. Although emotionally and spiritually they should be, and, I believe, are more attuned to the distinctive bush, hill and coastal places they visit than to the European parks and gardens around the cities, their thought-idiom belongs to the latter not the former. Give them a suitable thought-idiom for the former and they will be grateful. Their more important emotional and spiritual potentialities will be given the conditions for growth. The inhibited individuality of the race will be released. Australian culture will exist.

II. ENVIRONMENTAL VALUES.

(1)

The natural distinctiveness of the Australian continent from other lands of the world is too fundamental to vanish in the period of human history. The massive gum trees along the banks of the Murray, the gums and the mallee and the tea-tree that straggle about this vast continent; the empty spaces of our deserts; and the atonal music of the magpie and the good-natural mockery of the kookaburra—these are things that must remain. They belong to the indestructible spirit of the place about which D. H. Lawrence has written in a superb piece of natural description at the beginning of "Kangaroo." But D. H. Lawrence realized that spirit, however intensely, only in a small part: he did not feel at home in the bush, although its power gripped him. There are thousands of Australians to-day who, if they have not found eloquent tongue, feel, nevertheless, with childlike devotion, the familiar beauty and utter loveliness of the outback environment in many of its moods.

Our pioneers, or the majority of them, were Englishmen who brought to this country the English manners and customs of the moment of their migration. As long as they lived they were strangers in a strange land. Many of them may have become more or less used to their new environment, but they never could become one with it. The background of their minds was made up of other associations. Yet they were isolated from the current movements of fashion and culture in the old country: in this sense they slipped behind the times. The English manners and customs which they inculcated into their children were bound to be considerably out of date by the time those children reached

maturity. Thus the word "colonial" was justified, in so far as it signified rawness and lack of sophistication.

Although fresh influences were continually coming in, these were neither sufficient nor strong enough to compete with the isolation and environmental resistance, and could work only superficially. Hence any genuine culture that might develop in Australia, however it might be refreshed and inspired by English influences, would have to represent the birth of a new soul. A fundamental break, that is, with the spirit of English culture, is the prerequisite for the development of an Australian culture. Without the fact of ultimate individuality, separate identity, any general sense of culture in any country must be misty and anaemic. However strong and innumerable, however desirable and inevitable, however traditional our cultural ties with Europe may be, it is not in these ties that we must as a people seek our individuality. Its quintessence must lie in the realization of whatever things are distinctive in our environment and their sublimation in art and idea, in culture.

Australian culture is at present in a nebulous stage, because our writers have not come clearly to any such realization. I do not wish to be misunderstood. Some of the greatest Australian literature yet to be may have no local colour at all. Its settings may be in China or Mars. Our best poetry must deal with universal themes; and whether or not the Australian environment forms a background is a matter for individual poets. But all this does not affect the essence of my argument. The real test of a people's culture is the way in which they can express themselves in relation to their environment, and the loftiness and universality of their artistic conceptions raised on that basis. When, for example, someone begins a novel and sets the scene in Australia, he cannot hope to produce great art unless he has a true conception of environmental values. When our writers understand these, they will look at most of what they have written to date and say, "That is the way not to write about Australia."

The biggest curse and handicap upon our literature is the incongruous use of metaphors, similes, and adjectives. It is usual to find Australian writers describing the bush with much the same terminology as English writers apply to a countryside of oaks and elms and yews and weeping willows, and of skylarks, cuckoos, and nightingales. We find that dewdrops are spoken of as jewels sparkling on the foliage of gum trees. Jewels? Not amid the stark, contorted, shaggy informality of the Australian bushland. Nothing could be more incongruous. Jewels? I see the pageantry of the Old World, and of the march of history from the time when the Norman ladies came to England to the present day, when glittering cosmopolitan crowds mingle in the casinos of Monte Carlo and the ornate ballrooms of Venice; I see the royal courts of England, and those of France and Spain now forgotten; and I see, if you like, a vice-regal gathering or a theatrical party in Adelaide—but I do not, cannot, see jewels metaphorized off on gum trees, which are so far removed from all the things with which jewels are traditionally associated. I cannot deplore too

vehemently the dangerous habit of using figures of speech with regard to essentially Australian things which call up such a flood of Old World associations as to glose over all distinctiveness. It has been a piteous custom to write of Australian things with the English idiom, an idiom which can achieve exactness in England but not here.

(2)

We look to poetry for the keenest perception and expression of aesthetic values; so that, if we want to find how the Australian natural environment has been appreciated by the British stock which has become acclimatized here, we cannot do better than to study the appropriate section of its poetry. It soon becomes obvious that the very achievements of English poetry have been the fetters of Australian. When will our poets realize that by writing variations upon Australian themes in the wide and established range of verse vocabulary which tradition has built up in England, they are dodging the issue and compromising their intelligence? Individuality can only discover itself where there is an independent spirit; and the individuality of nearly every Australian poet so far has been subservient—subservient to the spirit and idiom of English poetry.

Here are the first two stanzas of George Essex Evans's poem, "On the Plain," which is dealing with an Australian scene; but there is not a hint of Australian individuality in the whole fourteen lines, because they are simply webbed about by the spider of northern verse idiom:

"Half-lost in film of faintest lawn,
A single star in armour white
Upon the dreamy heights of dawn
Guards the dim frontier of the night,
Till plumed ray
And golden spray
Have washed its trembling light away.

"The sun has peeped above the blue;
His level lances as they pass
Have shot the dew-drops thro' and thro',
And dashed with rubies all the grass,
And silver sound
Of horse-bells round
Floats softly o'er the jewelled ground."

"Armour white," "frontiers of the night," and "jewelled ground" are inexcusable.

An English poet, A. E. Housman, writes very beautifully and appropriately:

". . . when the light in lances
Across the mead was laid,"

but "lances" cannot be associated with the Australian landscape, which is primitive, and has on European mediaeval associations. "Spears" is obviously the right word. Metrically, of course, it would require the revision of the whole line, and it would not even occur to a writer whose mind is still subservient to the language of the English countryside.

All our poets show this fault. Gordon writes:
"Hark! the bells of distant cattle
Waft across the range
Through the golden-tufted wattle,
Music low and strange;
Like the marriage peal of fairies
Comes the tinkling sound. . . ."

It is all very well for Australian children to be told Old World fairy tales—which demand more make-believe from them than they do from English children—but our poets are creating false associations which they try to fit fairies of the "Midsummer Night's Dream" tradition into the mood of the bush. Picaninies and Gumnut Babies are at least more appropriate.

When will our writers achieve a sense of the fitness of things? Kendall wrote:

"On the tops of the hills, on the turreted cones,
Chief temples of thunder,
The gale like a ghost in the middle watch moans,
Gliding over and under. . . ."

That is false to the very roots of its inspiration, and therefore not poetry, but plain doggerel. The Australian hills were in Kendall's mind, but they might as well have been the Alps surrounded on all sides by civilizations centuries old. The atmosphere of the bush, the brooding solitude of ages of time passing over the sombre, stark beauty of twisted trees was intrinsically lost on him. Kendall is practically valueless as an Australian poet.

It is so easy, considering the dearth of good Australian writing, for a person who has any knowledge of the literature of England to think of the bushland grass and trees as "jewelled" on a summer dawn; and it is easy, in the same way, to think of the hills as appearing like the turrets of Norman castles or being "crowned" with stars. This last image spoils these otherwise perfect lines from Evans's "Australian Symphony":

"The grey gums by the lonely creek,
The star-crowned height,
The wind-swept plain, the dim blue peak,
The cold white light."

Such imagery does not convey one atom of the individuality of the Australian landscape. People of other countries can gain no real conception of this land by reading such trash.

If we cannot apply typically Old World imagery to the Aus-

tralian landscape, what can we substitute? Obviously, only such imagery as is truly Australian. This limits the field! Any writer's field at any time should be defined and limited by his subject.

Here is a modern instance, taken from Roderick Quinn, of the type of inaccuracy against which culture in this country must fight:

"Out in the dark where the night-winds hurry
And dead leaves carpet the silent bush. . . ."

The word "carpet" makes the bush seem like a drawing-room or, at best, like Epping Forest or Sherwood. Inexpressibly beautiful as these forests may be, it is an insult both to their own individuality and to that of our own bush to write in that way.

How much more vivid is it to read such lines as these from Evans's "On the Plains," from which I quoted earlier! Although even here we note unsuitable exoticisms in such expressions as "motley," "vanguard," "monarch," and "satrapies," the fundamental impression is one of inspired observation, in which the spirit of the place lives:

"Afar I mark the emu's run;
The bustard slow, in motley clad;
And, basking in his bath of sun,
The brown snake on the cattle-pad;
And the reddish-black
Of a dingo's back,
As he loit'ring slinks on my horse's track.

"And now I watch, with slackened rein,
The scattered cattle, hundreds strong,
As, slowly feeding home again,
The lazy vanguard feeds along
To the waters cool
Of the tree-fringed pool
In the distant creek when the moon is full.

"Slip girth and let the old horse graze;
The noon grows heavy on the air;
Kindle the tiny campfire's blaze,
And, 'neath the shade, as monarch there,
Take thou thine ease:
For hours like these
A king had bartered satrapies."

The last stanza, of course, which begins with three splendid lines, degenerates into a welter of incongruity. Evans and Gordon were equally unaware of any essential distinction between the poetical language of Australian landscape and that of England. Their best writing, like their worst, was spontaneous; accompanying their spontaneity, they had no such adequate sense of self-criticism as must be the condition of sustained merit.

P. R. Stephensen has very broadly delineated the development of Australian poetry in the following terms:

"From Gordon, the Englishman, writing about Australia in an English way, to Kendall, the Australian, writing about Australia in an English way; thence to Lawson and Patterson, the Australians, writing about Australia in an Australian way. . . ." Stephensen should have said: ". . . to Lawson and Patterson, the Australians, writing about Australia in a larrikin Australian way; and what we now want is Australians writing about Australia in a literary Australian way."

Even in Lawson and Patterson we find certain English tricks of thought and expression, incongruous in poetry of the Australian countryside. Thus Lawson writes:

"The cattle-tracks between the trees
Were like long dusky aisles,"

which simile robs the cattle tracks of any vigorous reality or faithful idealism. But such infidelities are exceedingly rare in Lawson and Patterson. We find many whole poems which contain not one unsuitable exoticism. Australians should be prouder of these two writers than they apparently are. They are not great writers; they are very limited in their powers, and too often sing-song and jingoistic, melodramatic and sentimental; but, in their own way, they are faithful to the spirit of the place. Such poems as "Outback" and "Clancy of the Overflow" have a significance. Their significance lies in the purity and forcefulness of the vision in them, however circumscribed this may be.

Significant as was the lesson taught by Lawson and Patterson, it has borne very little fruit in those that followed after. Dorothea MacKellar's poem, "My Country," marks an advance; but we must conclude that luck played a part, because elsewhere Dorothea MacKellar falls into the old, happy feeling, deplorably uncritical flow of so-called inspiration. The happy flow of emotion without a keen sense of values and unwavering honesty of criticism is quite incapable of maintaining consistently such a standard of worth as MacKellar's one poem.

Doctor Johnson wrote: "What we wish to do with ease we must first learn to do with diligence."

And there is a lesson in that for all Australian writers.

One of A. A. Bayldon's short poems, "The Swamp," has caught as well as anything else I know something of the grotesque side of the Australian place spirit:

"Huddled round leering pools, the haggard trees
Await their doom, the black ooze to their knees.
Sighing together, when, with elfin spite,
A small breeze whispers of a world of light,
They strain crooked limbs toward that bright blue plain
The dank sweat drips—a stifling hush again.
In goblin gloom maimed weaklings moaning fall
Into the pools ahunger for them all."

This poem would be perfect were it not for the two epithets, "elfin" and "goblin." The words "cunning" and "reeking" are the first substitutes that occur to me. The poet at the time of writing, with a little extra critical attention, might have thought of better. I may be thought to be quibbling here, to be running a theory to death. Poetry, it is said, is among the materials of poetry. But I maintain that poetic idiom with a Hans Andersen flavour, while it may be suitable to Europe, is not suitable for an Australian outback scene. Integrity! Integrity!

I trust that it is now plain what I mean by environmental values: the distinctive qualities of an environment which cannot be satisfactorily expressed in the conventional terms that suit other environments, scrupulous care being necessary for the indication of their primal essence.

The whole of the English vocabulary is ours for appropriate use, but we must discriminate. D. H. Lawrence came to Australia from the centres of northern culture, but his description of the bush is appropriate. He was a great writer and instinctively avoided incongruities. The huge electric moon he saw above the bushland scene was the same he knew the world over, symbolical of the old lesson that Art is international, universal, but its expressions specialized and individual.

III. DEBUNKING NONSENSE.

(1)

The reason why Australian culture is not yet something unmistakably defined is that its individuality, its permeating essence, has been smothered with exoticisms, which, unless most carefully handled—and they have not been—are absolutely impossible of permeation. Australian writers have too often imitated English writers, instead of assimilating lessons from their styles and working out styles of their own on the basis of inspiration of their own.

Good writers in Australia have been very few, and great examples of indigenous literature are rare.

Australian literary criticism has been of little help.

H. M. Green's "Outline of Australian Literature" is disappointing—little more than a catalogue. "Australia," says Mr. Green, "belongs, by race, politics and language to a great civilization that reaches back for thousands of years, and it is constantly receiving an inflow, ideal as well as human, from the centre of that civilization." Again, he says, "When we add that Australia has her own peculiar characteristics and problems, we shall realize that her literature, a reflection of her civilization, is likely to diverge in some, perhaps in important respects, from the course taken by the parent literature."

In these two quotations we have distinctly shown to us the two forces which must be synthesised into an Australian culture, the temperament of the land and that of the people, in so far as it has its roots elsewhere, but the indication of the necessary dis-

tinctiveness which must result from this synthesis is too cautious, ridiculously cautious. Australian literature **must**, to develop, diverge in **important** respects from the course taken by the parent literature.

There has been too much of this pro-English pandering. Not that anyone—especially Mr. Green—means to pander. But it has been in our bones too long, and it comes out where we might least expect it. "The Outline" is useful as a catalogue of (for the most part) feeble Australian writers, but there its value ends. There is no spark in the middle of it. Mr. Green speaks of the need for criticism in Australian literature, yet the shaft of his criticism is so mild as to be of little use. It dodges the issue. The question is: What is wrong with our Australian literature? The answer is: Our writers have not looked at Australia with any honest perception of its values. They have taken the easy course, followed the line of least resistance; they have simply appropriated English methods of expression without attempting to hammer out a really suitable idiom of their own. A scientific attack seems necessary for the first stage in view of the facts; spontaneity can then be of the right sort.

Every civilized culture (the two terms are not synonymous) and every literature contains within itself countless exotic elements which have been assimilated and permeated and coloured by the individuality of the particular culture. But that individuality is the all-important thing. It is the distinctiveness, the essence, the **sine qua non** of the culture.

Yet, in a valiant editorial which, however, misses most points, Mr. P. R. Stephensen says: "We admire the English, we love them frequently, we never fail to respect them, we are astonished by their spectacle of culture, and by their castles, churches, and ruins. . . . But . . . unless we can use imported English culture here as one element (concede it to be the most important element) in building up our indigenous culture, it is a meaningless nothing to us."

I cannot concede, as Mr. Stephensen does, that imported English culture is the most important element in Australian culture, even if it does at present, unfortunately, occupy the front of the scene. The most important thing in any **man**, surely, is that spark of individualism which is the man himself and distinguishes him from other men. He has a body like other men, but it is the individuality of the man which transcends the body and gives his presence significance. The same with a nation. The same with a nation's culture. However indispensable imported elements of culture may be to a people, before there can be said to be an indigenous culture among them there must be self-awareness, a form of egoism, perhaps, but certainly a genuine feeling of the nation's individuality.

Ours is a country of endless contrasts, of beauty and terror, of fertile lands and empty deserts. It is a country of moods, of

ever-changing, incalculable moods. But always the land's individuality, the spirit of the place (which Stephensen learnt vaguely without analysing), is there, speaking through the medium of the mood, for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear.

The growth of spiritual affinity of the people with the country has been slow and difficult and, up to the present, very imperfect. But the time has come when, to use Professor Hancock's metaphor, the roots have gone down deep into the soil; and when the imperfections must be obvious to anyone who makes the effort to think intelligently—and can be remedied.

(2)

On February 16th, 1935, "The Age" published the blind criticism by Professor Cowling, which drew forth the brave but scarcely less blind retaliation of Mr. Stephensen.

"Australia," said Cowling, "is not yet in the centre of the map and has no London"—both of which contentions are true and do not matter a bit. Australian individuality lies in other things, and certainly not in merely conforming to a type of Old World civilization. "There are no ancient churches, castles, ruins—" the Professor continues, "the memorials of generations departed. From the point of view of literature this means that we can never hope to have a Scott, a Balzac, a Dumas. . . ." The Professor was right again: we do not want a Scott, a Balzac, a Dumas. Novelists of their calibre we want and will have; but the inspiration of Australian novelists must be different. It is in such a distinction as this, fully extended over the whole field of Australian literature, that the power and uniqueness of our creations must rest; it is in the development of individuality that the future holds promise.

We have not, as the Professor indicates, traditions of monarchies peculiar to Australia, of baronial castles, of civil and international wars dating back for centuries, of tourneys, and of daffodil days and Philomela nights. But we have other traditions worth having, such as no other country possesses, and these are the things which are valuable to us culturally. The history of Australia abounds in a wealth of dramatic material, ready to be shaped by the careful literary artist, and waiting to be coloured by the play of his imagination. Nor is our history confined to the days since the first white settlement was made here. It goes back to the voyages of Captain Cook, and further still to those of the earliest navigator who set out from Europe in search of the great South Land. In another sense, Australian tradition goes back to the country of native legends; of the tjurunga, the boomerang and the spear; of the bark gunyah and the nomad aborigine. The first white settlers found Australia like this, and their experience and observations are part of our heritage. Finally, the period between 1788 and the present day affords an inexhaustible fund of tradition, vivid and human, to do with wheat farmers, squatters, drovers; with whaling and mining; with convictism and bushranging; with the extension of roads, telegraphs

and railway; with the foundation and growth of capital cities and thousands of country towns; and so on. Life here has been lived fully, and the human heart has experienced intensely.

Cowling's reaction to gum trees is the same as Douglas's. The distinctiveness of these trees clashes with his preconceived notions as to what trees should be.

(3)

The real reason for the lack of good Australian novels is not, of course, paucity of historical material. It is the bewilderment of European culture in an enigmatical environment, the failure of writers to perceive a different, yet perfectly reasonable, standard of values. The finest novels we possess owe their best effects to just such a new perception. The outstanding ones so far are, in deed, depressing in their general atmosphere; but this is, in large part, because the nature of the human themes involved in them have been—owing to historical circumstances derived mainly from Old World civilization—such as to demand that treatment. "For the Term of His Natural Life" and "The Fortunes of Richard Mahoney" are cases in point. The place spirit could not be so powerful in these books were it not that their authors were strongly conscious of Australia's *primaevalism*. In the first the appreciation is a gloomy one, primarily because of the gloom of convictism, the theme; in the second the atmosphere is depressing because the mind of the misfit Irishman, Mahoney, is the dominant theme. The authors have dealt with the Australian environment in the only appropriate ways under the circumstances; but it is grossly erroneous to assume, as some do, that the whole truth is defined by correctness of view of specific types. Particular effects, both in "For the Term of His Natural Life" and "The Fortunes of Richard Mahoney," provide ample illustration of the possibilities for splendid literary expression of the happy and the beautiful in the Australian environment. Brian Penton's "Landtakers" is another example of a great Australian novel, the general conception of which is depressing and which yet contains vivid perceptions of loveliness in the environment. There is, for instance, the description of the valley which Derek Cabel selected for his station, on the day when he first set eyes on it.

To come fully into its own the Australian novel must vindicate itself on the happy as well as on the pessimistic side. There is endless scope for the accomplishment of this task.

Despite the fact that there have been hundreds of Australian novels published, those that are worth while may be counted practically on one hand. Add to those mentioned above "A House is Built," by the Misses Barnard and Eldershaw, and you have perhaps the four best Australian novels to date.

"A House is Built" may be a little too reminiscent of "The Forsyte Saga," so that its original value suffers in imitation; but there is much more to it than that. The imitation is superficial: the individuality and power of the book is everywhere in evidence. The period with which it deals lives as we read. The description

of Sydney, as seen by James Hyde on the day when he made known his intentions of settling there, breathes the authentic atmosphere of the early settlement—or, obviously, as nearly authentic as painstaking research and inspired intuition could make it.

(4)

Sh!—Sh!

Why?

Because the great-grandfathers and great-great-grandfathers of some very well respected Australian families sported the broad arrow.

It would be a public spirited action worthy of high respect if some Australian with a convict skeleton in his cupboard would unlock it, publishing a faithful history of that forbear.

The action would be one worthy of more than a knighthood, because it would go far towards debunking the craven and idiotic inferiority complex of many Australians where the plain facts of history are concerned.

What are the plain facts of our history?

Certainly they are not merely that Captain Cook found in New South Wales "some of the finest meadows in the world," that brave and free pioneers brooked lifetimes of hardship to wrest sustenance from the hostile interior; and that from such heroic beginnings our country has advanced to magnificent adulthood.

Such an account is so damnably false that no plea of brevity or generality can justify it.

That the authorities behind the Sydney celebrations bandied a great lie is clear for all who have the strength to resist hypnotism to see. Five capital cities of Australia and the country around them owe important degrees of their early development to convict slavery; no state—not even bragging South Australia—can say that convictism left it entirely unaffected.

The first chapter of Australia's story tells of courage, endurance and triumph; but it tells also of failure, of misery, degradation and bestiality, of situations and incidents innumerable, which can be adequately described only by the full range of synonyms for these unwholesome words.

That chapter being of the past the sense of its tragedy only, not its tragedy, remains. There is no need to dwell even upon this; it is reasonable to show that there was, indeed, much in the penal system which was just and endurable, but blatantly and altogether to ignore the fact of convictism in what was supposed to be a comprehensive programme of national commemoration is barefacedly false, so essential and vivid a person is Sticker Convict in the story of Australia.

IV. THE CULTURE OF THE ABORIGINES.

Of Australia's traditions I have already said something in general; and, as these and the facts of her history may readily be studied by the student, in books and archives, I need say little more.

There is, however, one factor of the past which is too little understood and which must be of primary importance to the proper evolution of our culture; and to this we should give much thought. It is the culture of the aborigines.

They are now a forgotten people. One by one the tribes have vanished from their hunting grounds. No longer do the tribes go out in the dark before the dawn to stalk the kangaroos; no longer do they fish, with their spears or nets, in the rivers or billabongs or at the edge of the sea. They no longer hold their sacred corroborees under the twisted fire-reflecting branches of massive gum trees or among the stunted mallee. The blacks that remain are a degenerate, puppet people, mere parodies of what their race once was.

With the extension of white settlement, the blacks who lived practically undisturbed under their old conditions are confined to a few main areas, not very amenable to white penetration, in the centre and northern parts of the continent. In such regions as Cape Yorke Peninsula, Arnhem's Land, and that stretching from the Cambridge Gulf to King George's Sound, there are many thousands of aborigines. But the vast majority of tribes, those whose hunting grounds consisted of the most fertile country in Australia, have vanished. These were the finest tribes physically; but they have none or few pure-blooded descendants. The most immediately pressing problem of aboriginal welfare concerns the thousands of half-castes and others who live in continual contact with white settlements.

Contrary to general conception, the passing of the aborigines meant the passing of a culture that was age-old. Mr. T. G. Strehlow, who is, perhaps, more qualified to speak with authority on the Central Australian blacks than is any other man, once informed me that the legends of the Luritcha, Aranda and other tribes are essentially similar to those of ancient Greece. I have read many such legends as set down by scholars, some of them in manuscript by Mr. Strehlow himself, and they certainly prove the fertility of the aboriginal mind in imagination and poetry based on the realities and mysteries of environment.

Here are a few lines of aboriginal song, as translated by E. R. T. Gribble, which have more of the spirit of the enlightened poetry written in Akhnaton's court than anything else I know:

"The bird with the pretty skin flies round and goes down,
down."

"The whale, the whale, goes deep down, and throws up the
water-spout.

The big mountain far-away looks like smoke, far-away."

The laws, the customs and the art of the Australian aborigines went to make a culture which was closely bound in every way with their environment. In spite of the complexities of their totemic, tribal and intertribal systems, their outlook on life was basically simple, and, in the finest flowerings of their arts of poetry, drama and painting, they showed themselves masters in sublimating with pristine directness and unselfconsciousness the highlights of their primaeval life. Sympathetic students will find in such flowerings intense and universal qualities of tender loveliness, vivid beauty, stirring and noble daring, moving pathos and stark tragedy. Aboriginal art, though primitive, was many-sided, and there seems to have been no limit to the fundamental human qualities which it could express.

Although such a culture has itself, for the most part, died with the tribes, something of its spirit has been preserved. Sincere students are continually investigating, and, with painstaking care, are recording and co-ordinating the results. This synthesising of sporadic observation and ideational research is, unfortunately, now that the best of the culture is dead, the only way of attempting appreciation of it. The fact that the blacks had no written language apart from a few picture signs means that by far the greater part of their culture is forever lost to our appreciation. But an assimilation of much of the spirit of it and the natural identifying of that spirit with many of our own experiences, in cultural expression, is essential to the honest development of Australian culture.

When I see wommeras, spears, bullroarers, boomerangs, dilly-bags, message sticks, tjurungas and wax figures in the aboriginal sections of our museums, and when I read scientific treatises and pioneer reminiscences dealing with aboriginal occultism, funeral rites, initiation ceremonies and so on; I am strongly conscious, often unhappily so, of much in our colonial tradition. As a people it is our duty to be familiar with these things. In them must spread the roots of our culture. Our culture must make artistic realizations of these things and the spirit permeating and engendered by them acceptable to the world.

Thoughtful introspection must lead us to serious consideration concerning the aboriginal question of the past and present and practical action of more than one kind concerning that of the present. The stage has been reached when, after a vigorous era of colonization, Australians should take stock of past and present and so give effective thought to the future.

Our traditions are twofold. Inextricably woven with the transplanted European culture are our experiences of the Australian environment. How far we and this environment have changed and reacted through contact, we owe to self-honesty to understand, and such an understanding can arise properly only through cultural expression. But to ensure imaginative truth our writers and painters must become hard-working students of aboriginal culture, something initially far-removed from the engaging and controlling factors of modern European life.

From aboriginal art and song we must learn much of our new technique; from aboriginal legend, sublimated through our thought, we must achieve something of a pristine outlook on life.

Sydney, Hobart, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, and thousands of towns stand, where a century and a half ago, was virgin bush. Roads, railways, and telgraph lines link one part of Australia to another; homesteads, ploughed fields or fields of waving wheat and blocks of vineyards have appeared everywhere since 1788. Even the greatest rivers have been transformed by locks; and large dams and immense reservoirs have been constructed, while swamps and lagoon-lands have been reclaimed.

In so far as the white man has set his seal upon it, Australia is European. From grazing sheep and cattle, from rabbits, foxes, and prickly pears to aeroplanes, wireless, cricket matches, talking pictures and beer, Australia bears our seal. Yet we are influenced by her environment more powerfully than we know. Let us be honest about it.

COMMENTARY

Mr. Ingamells, in assuming the role of critic on an Australian culture, has, together with his timely message, the depth of perception necessary for his task.

Perhaps, more than any other Australian writer to-day, his work is distinctly and uniquely Australian.

Unlike so many critics who, by a strange paradox, fall into the errors they see in others, he is, himself, remarkably free from the colouring of a traditional past.

Mr. Ingamells' criticism is to the point and has the fervour of enthusiasm that some men can devote to the ideas in which they believe.

He may be regarded by some as a faddist so much does he emphasise the importance of environmental values, discrediting the jingoistic pre-war literature and denying it a place in true Australian culture. Nevertheless, be that as it may, he is a devotee of the universality of his field. His ideas of what is valuable and what is distinctly Australian—inseparable these terms must be if Australian culture is to be enriched—bear the hall-mark of universal truths.

To admit, as he does, that culture in Australia is singularly removed from conditions of environment, that what culture we have come to possess is permeated with exoticisms, is to arouse a deeper appreciation in the potentialities which await development.

Potentialities there are. But let us examine their significance to conditional culture. "There is no new thing under the sun," but there is always a differentness. It is with this that we are concerned.

Now Australian people are not, as human beings, different from those people who have spread from Central Europe over the entire surface of the globe. One might choose men at random from any English-speaking country, place them in a small society of their own and then, when the shuffling is completed, find little or nothing, no peculiar characteristics apart from different complexions to distinguish any one from the other.

Australian people have no outstanding characteristics which make them uniquely a product of their environment, although Mr. Ingamells contends that they have. They have been, as this book reveals, influenced too strongly by the traditions around which their culture has entwined. This culture, at its best, is but imitative. Not only in the embryo, but in every stage of its development it reveals the trace of parodying. But can it be otherwise, now more than at any time past? If the early settlers failed to create a distinctive and original culture in the comparative isolation of their new environment, can we, who are relatively nearer the heart of the Old World by reason of communication now at our disposal, shake off our traditional fetters and free culture from its lamentable excrescences?

In consideration of this, one must, in analysing cultural tendencies, look less to the external and physical nature of men and more to the reactions they make to the environment in which they live.

It was to a land empty of achievement—virtually a desert quite barren of any trace of a familiar culture—that the colonists came, yet a land in which a primitive culture had already existed for centuries. To what extent was this aboriginal culture—not vastly superior or inferior but different from that of other races—to influence the civilization fated to find itself, as a seed in a field which had not previously been sown?

Now, just as it is impossible to eliminate from a seed those elements acquired in its previous environment, so it is impossible for man to dislodge himself from the old without permeating the new with that which is characteristic and inherent in his nature. Therefore, it is quite erroneous to conclude that Australia has yet attained a culture distinctly its own.

It may be contended that, so long as man is reproduced with all his attendant complexities—himself, as heredity and environment have chosen him to be—in a continuous, unbroken line, his cultural attainments cannot be other than those which are already observed to be coloured by the past. Quite true. But this is not to say that, at some period there may not have been influences calculated to establish a basis on which a culture peculiar to Australia has been laid.

To determine these influences, to define them is no easy task.

Mr. Ingamells has shown that the concern of the white settlers was to establish themselves, to build from the natural re-

sources at their disposal, conditions which would ensure their material security and success. That they proved themselves capable and practical people there is no doubt. And it is well that it should have been so. Man must first adapt himself to the physical conditions of his environment, that is, the will to live must be paramount. Life must first be sustained and perpetuated before it can have any cultural significance.

In fact, so successfully did the people adapt themselves to material ends, they quite over-looked indigent nature as a condition of the social life they were gradually to build up. In a word: they received munificently from nature and gave nothing in return,

Their philosophy, if this inevitable necessity of existing materially can be so-called—I doubt it—was obviously that of getting. They saw little or nothing in nature of spiritual significance and value. They had no philosophy commensurate to the environment in which they lived. Their philosophy, like their religion, accompanied them to this land and was introduced together with the paraphernalia of pioneers—picks and shovels and tinned meats.

Originality? It would be an immense pretension to believe it, or that originality in the aesthetic world could possibly have come from such trammelled minds. As there were no philosophers thinking in terms relevant to the spiritual values in nature so there were few writers—too few to influence the rising tide of agriculture and commercialism—concerned with their art in associating it with the environment in which they lived and wrote.

Mr. Ingamells has already covered this ground in his essay on "Environmental Values." It needs no further outline. The facts are obvious enough. The subject is worthy of consideration by those whose consideration is of importance and account.

May I ask, Mr. Ingamells, what form this new culture must take? It is agreed that originality is an essential of good literature and originality has been wanting. It is incumbent on Australian writers, then, to concern themselves with their art, for their field is unique and abounds with potentialities.

A new culture we will come to possess, but it seems apparent that it must be built not on the foundations already laid, lest it become too vividly coloured by that which it is desirable to avoid, but on the spiritual values that are, and remain for all time, impressionably a part of nature. Completeness is not achieved by similarity, but by contrast. Our culture is indistinct because art has not flourished nor been encouraged towards a synthesis of material and spiritual things.

The material world has been predominant, and art, being a corollary of it, has been too little responsive to the spiritual values. Without these culture must always suffer impoverishment. Nature has been denied her place in the seed-time of cultural tendencies.

Any amount of wealth cannot give a country or a nation culture. Australia has gained wealth and prestige in two and three generations of settlement. But as popularity is sometimes mistaken for greatness, let us not mistake wealth for culture.

Material acquisitions are an expression of life, but they are not necessarily a manifestation of the degree of culture attained. A country, a nation might be tremendously rich and yet possess no culture of merit.

The city of Johannesburg, South Africa, is a case in point. A wealthy city, it has in the space of a few years acquired almost everything with the exception of cathedrals and castles that has characterised the culture of Europe. The art gallery, universities, and many other public buildings are faithful reproductions of Roman and Grecian architecture, but the workmanship is shoddy. The buildings, beautiful as the designs make them, bear the stigma of mass production. This, I maintain, is not culture, but an expression of its deficiency.

So we in Australia have material manifestations of life. But these, I am happy to concede, have grown gradually in the building up of the dominion. They have been wrung from the soil, and because of the struggle which preceded them they are justly deserved.

There is culture in Australia—two cultures: they sprang from two pivotal points and have diverged along separate paths. The one, which has already been considered and acknowledged, has its roots in the traditions of England. It is colonialized. The other, of which but a vestige remains, primitive and true to conditions of environment, is the culture of the aborigines. Of the two, the last-named can alone be credited as being distinctly and uniquely Australian.

No, reader, you need not be surprised at this admission, no, outraged because you may not agree. You are proud of your Australian birth, you enjoy considerable status—even so, this, if your scale of values has not been distorted by prejudice, should occasion you no hurt. You would, if your reactions to your environment were adjusted according to these values, possess something of the universality of mind which sees things as they are and yet might be. You should be liberal enough to give credit where it is due. The broadness of mind, previously referred to, which characterises Mr. Ingamells and the Jindyworobaks, and gives his criticism the merit I believe it deserves, should be yours. If not, your attitude is that of betrayal to the culture you wish to defend.

When we speak of culture we must think of something which spreads beyond a material expression of it. Not what we have, but what we are. Culture concerns itself not only with things intellectual and polished—universities, cathedrals, academies, and town gardens—but with that stream of humanity which moves

whether the influence propel. What the individual, the nation is, is the measure of culture, not what it has.

The individual, then, is to be considered as an important part of a country's culture. And with the individual his philosophy, his religion and his whole aesthetic life comes into account.

We speak of the individual: but what do we mean? Does individual personality really exist to-day? Yes, I believe so—in the artists. By the artists I mean those people who are endeavouring to create aesthetically something of significance and value to Australian culture. You will grant that my question is reasonable if you hesitate and reflect for a moment on present tendencies in social life: a Saturday afternoon, for instance, on a racecourse, a football field, and in a betting shop. The individual is swallowed up in the crowd and he seldom leaves it. I said previously that the early settlers had no philosophy commensurate to their environment, so it is not surprising to find the typical Australians of to-day with none. Perhaps they do not require one, so long as they are inclined to gregariousness they won't. Philosophy, like religion, is something for individual personality. It effects lives or it does not. The individual is the measure of his faith. For him it is a way of life. The individual sees in life an idea to believe in and live for. The remainder—the majority—need no way of life, it seems. They all go the same way. Religion has been referred to. The reference is justified, for where there is no spirituality—primitive or otherwise—there is no culture. I have mentioned primitive religion purposely. It belongs to the culture of primitive people, and, to mediaeval times with regard to the religion of Western civilisation. But it has no place in the cultural life of to-day. It must be, like philosophy, an ever-growing thing. Indeed, so closely is it to be identified with philosophy that they might be said to be branches of the same tree. They must grow together, nourished in the soil of universal truths. It is here that the spiritual values in nature, co-ordinated and made significant by philosophy, are to be recognised as essentials of true religion. Religion, then, can be said to be true only in so far as these values are related to the life of man. It means advancement, self-fulfilment, self-realization. In these only can human personality transcend the narrow limits imposed on it by conventionalized religion. Contemporary religion is conventional; therefore, it is incomplete as it stands. Its completeness will come only when those things now valuable in science—philosophy, ethics, and literature—are recognised as important elements in the structure of religious thought. Religion no longer occupies a special field of its own. It belongs, with the arts and sciences, to culture, to the universality of life. Any tendency to dissociate it renders religion unimportant and meaningless. It would, by such dissociation, have historical significance, but then only as the fossilized remains of an earlier culture.

The individuals, the artists, are the hewers of wood and the drawers of water in so far as culture is concerned. And culture is necessarily slow if the position of many artists is a criterion of its

growth. Great art is born out of struggle. The true artist does not mind the struggle, nor does he mind the precarious existence often forced on him by his devotion to art to the exclusion of pursuing material ends. They make their clothes last longer; they sell some of their books if the selling of them means a new publication, a picture or some philosophical or scientific research work. For them culture is paramount. For this and through this the struggle goes on. If they sometimes fail to achieve the ends they set themselves, it is that of a workman, who, having the desire to work, has yet no work to do. Their art, like the initiative of the workman, suffers for want of fulfilment. If he expresses his art under such handicaps it must always be, to a certain extent, subjective to his personal reactions. If art then is a corollary of life, it is comparatively easy to trace the vein of pessimism which Mr. Ingamells has referred to in the few great Australian novels.

He says that "the Australian novel must vindicate itself on the happy as well as on the pessimistic side." Agreed. But is it possible if the circumstances surrounding the artist's life causes a reaction of depression and despair? To vindicate the Australian novel on the happy side it is first required to assist, if assistance be needed, the artists who will produce the essential character, that uniqueness which must be if Australian culture is to out-grow its past and present tendency to exoticisms.

From time to time money is endowed on universities, churches and charitable institutions to assist them financially in carrying on community education and reform work. But the artists, having no institutional methods, nor establishments, fall just out of line with this community benevolence. It doesn't reach him. His academy is the vast arena of life; his study is man and the conditions which surround his life. The artist is at school on the city pavements and in the solitude of bush environment.

His art is, and it seems must be, at all times, if he cannot live by it, subservient to the necessity of living. This is regrettable and is, unfortunately, too often the case. Their struggle is a conflict against, rather than with contemporary conditions of life. Thus their art, the supreme expression of their lives, seldom reaches a point that can be considered complete in the sense of self-fulfilment.

It would be a gesture worthy of the highest honour if some public-spirited gentleman with a love for the advancement of culture were disposed to institute a fund whereby the literary man would find some monetary assistance and incentive to create for Australian literature a place under the sun.

A Dumas, a Balzac we will have, writes Mr. Ingamells. I believe it: if not because of such consideration, then in spite of it.

If the artist in the writer believes, as he sincerely does, that he is as essentially a part of the community as the doctor,

the lawyer, and the plumber, his requirements are none the less as important as theirs.

Not the least of these requisites is that his literary work should receive the best criticism available. At present, the monopolist reviewers of current literature—the press—provide, at best, but briefs about books. As criticism it is valueless. The reviewers have no opinion to express, or they are, in keeping the peace and pleasant security of the press intact, too conservative to express it. It is not what they say, as little as it is, but what they leave unsaid. In short, they are, like the press of which they are a singular and inglorious product, concerned only with the exterior, the superficialities of life. For them things are only skin deep. They see only the skin.

On the question and criticism of modern poetry they are remarkably silent. There is no precedence with which they may compare it. Modern poetry leaps ahead. It leaves a gap temporarily. The critics, so called, are unable to bridge it. They bow to the conventional by way of compromise—not too distinctly mind you, for they like it to be known that they are moderns in a modern age, bless them. But they want independence of thought and the courage to express it. It is useless to think independently and leave the thought unexpressed.

If "men talk only to conceal the mind," their silence is sometimes an eloquent testimony of their thought.

If Australian culture needs good literature, so does it need capable critics.

Australia will produce its Dumas and Balzac, Mr. Ingamells, only when it produces critics comparably as great as the men they presume to criticize.