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### MORE AIDS FOR THE AUST. LIT. INDUSTRY

*Australian Voices Poetry and Prose of the 1970's* ed. Rosemary Dobson. Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1975; *Five Plays for Stage, Radio and Television* ed. Alrene Sykes. Portable Australian Authors series. Brisbane, University of Queensland Press, 1977; *The Radical Reader* ed. Stephen Knight and Michael Wilding. Sydney, Wild & Woolley Pty. Ltd., 1977; *Radical Cousins* Joseph Jones. Brisbane, University of Queensland Press, 1976; *Bards, Bohemians, & Bookmen* ed. Leon Cantrell. Brisbane, University of Queensland Press, 1976; *The Literature of Australia* ed. Geoffrey Dutton. Ringwood, Penguin Books Australia, 1976; *Women in Australia* An annotated guide to records ed. Kay Daniels, Mary Murnane and Anne Picot. Volume 1. Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service, 1977; *Australian Literature* — a reference guide. Fred Lock and Alan Lawson. Australian Bibliographies, Melbourne, Oxford University Press, 1977; *Adelaide A.L.S. Working Papers. An Unprofessional Journal*. Vol. 11, No. 2, March 1977. University of Adelaide, 1977; *Another One for Mary*, Vol. 1, No. 4, March and April, 1977. Published independently by *Another One for Mary*, 80 Gage Street, Firlé, S.A. 5070.

If we are going to have an industry in Australian Literature — and if we are honest and practical we shall admit we do have one, and a good thing too — it is well if the industry is efficient. The ten books under review are all symptoms of and contributions to this efficiency. The word "symptom" is used advisedly, or at least with decision, since efficiency can become a disease, although it is not a disease with which things Australian have been noticeably afflicted in the past. To the present, however, the study of Australian Literature in its more formal aspects has not been conducted in a manner so efficient as to be injurious to the health of Australian Literature or to those who study it. The present miscellaneous but highly interesting collection of books has been got together because each individual item exhibits not only what might be called "efficiency", or even "professionalism", but also because it exhibits what might be called "humaneness" or even "soul".

Moreover, although these publications are fairly diverse in nature, when one has them piled up on the desk, one feels that they are somehow *compatible* and that they would not object to being thrown together by a well-meaning reviewer. If it seems ridiculous to assert that a reference guide to Australian Literature can, in any sense of the term, have a "soul", the

reviewer can only point to page twenty-three, for example, where The New Encyclopaedia Britannica is listed under "Other Reference Sources", and the editors comment in their annotation: "Easier to use than it sounds; a good source of general information. There is an American bias in the selection and treatment of subjects". It is the note of reassurance and the sensible even if subjective warning about the American bias that add some human warmth to the general cool professionalism of the entries in this bibliography. So far as this reviewer has had occasion to consult the reference guide, it has been accurate and helpful. Fred Lock and Alan Lawson say in their introduction that "If errors have crept in, as they are sure to have done, corrections will be gratefully and penitently received." Professionalism can say nothing better, and the users of the reference guide would be further contributing to sensible professionalism if they take the editors at their word. *Australian Literature — a reference guide* consists of eighty-four pages of legible print and it used to cost \$2.75 — but that depends upon your bookseller.

To take next the publication which differs most from the reference guide to Aust. Lit., the reviewer registers regretfully that an intention to write personally to the editors of *Another One for Mary* to congratulate them on the journal and take out a subscription has not yet been fulfilled. A great many worthwhile Australian publications must have foundered in the last one hundred and fifty years on just such unfulfilled intentions. John Kingsmill is the editor of *Another One for Mary*, and Paul Kelly is his assistant: some excellent photography and graphic work are contributed to this issue by a number of obviously originally-minded people, including the editor. What connection, if any, the journal has with Mary Martin Bookshop Pty. Ltd. is not clear — there is a nicely balanced letter of praise and encouragement to do even better from Max Harris and a brief note from what is probably a firm of Adelaide solicitors concerning libel policy. The former letter sets the tone of this critical yet constructive journal and the latter letter prepares one for a very human and kindly article by Lloyd Davies, "A Tit for Tatty", over the human and artistic problem of Dorothy Hewett and her libel involvements. There is also a lively interview article about Steve J. Spears and an amusing contribution in the epistolary mode by david szplendi (he initiated the lower case type) called "The Man Who Thought He Was Henry Handel Richardson". Students and lovers of Aust. Lit. who have been shaken about by this most difficult and challenging of Australian writers should place david szplendi's article next to Dorothy Green's beautiful critical biography of H.H.R., *Ulysses Bound* (1973).\*

\* It is only those who are firmly at home with their faith who can conceive of such inspired irreverence as that displayed towards H.H.R. in szplendi's clever little satire.

*Another One for Mary* is of local interest, of course, but even if the reader lives in some remote place like Darwin or Townsville it would be worth the subscription, which was sixty cents in April, 1977, with the probability of extra for postage.

Also coming from Adelaide is the *Adelaide A.L.S. Working Papers*, subtitled inaccurately "an unprofessional journal". This clearly-printed, stapled journal has been arriving sporadically on the reviewer's desk for some four issues, and the friendly Serials Librarian at James Cook has just given an assurance that it will be catalogued immediately and made available to students and other interested readers. One challenges the claim of "unprofessional" since the journal articles appear to be adequately researched and well written: they have the pleasant tone of a good post-graduate seminar discussion where material and ideas are contributed and debated by an interested peer group. This issue contains an introduction to the letters of John Henry Browne, written from New Zealand and Australia between 1845 and 1860, compiled by Gail Mahon, the great-great-granddaughter of Browne and a final year Honours student in the Department of English at the University of Adelaide. Ms Mahon's work is well presented and will be interesting to students of Australian and New Zealand History and Literature. It is a pity that there is not more deliberate development of inter-relationship in these four areas — that is, Australian and New Zealand History and Literature — but this article is a useful contribution to such an inter-relationship.

This issue of *Adelaide A.L.S. Working Papers* also contains the more or less obligatory article on Patrick White, this time David Tacey's "The Secret of The Black Rose: Spiritual Alchemy in Patrick White's *The Aunt's Story*": but to say that an article on White is more or less obligatory in any collection of articles on Aust. Lit. is not to dismiss either White or the present article. The other full-length article concerns the Rolf Boldrewood-Louis Becke relationship, mentioned by Grove Day in his Twayne's World Author Series survey of Becke, and this article by Mark Gilbert does something to mitigate if not to eradicate the impression that the author of *Robbery Under Arms* may have been something of a literary bounder, by gad, upon one occasion at least. In all, *A.L.S. Working Papers* are worth tracking down by those who have not yet made use of them, and as the editors Brian Elliott and Robert Sellick said in the first issue, they maintain an interest "in what makes and supports Australian Literature, as well as in the literature after it is made."

The first volume of *Women in Australia* is an annotated guide to records of material relating to the study of women in Australia held at present in Tasmania, Western Australia and South Australia. The three editors set out clearly their achievement and accepted limits, and one feels the work can be consulted with confidence. The annotations are concise

and revelatory without the slightest hint of unscholarly proselytizing. For example, item 55 from the File relating to Industrial School for Girls, 1883, from the Archives Office of Tasmania:

Miss Sinclair (the teacher) says 'owing to the irregular periods at which the girls are able to come into the school, it is impossible to work from a time table'. The reasons for this irregular attendance are found in the letter of Mrs Salier (hon. sec. of the school) who writes that because the 'school is of an industrial character and partly self-supporting the first object of the ladies' committee is to train girls for useful duties . . . the elder girls go to their lessons when they can be spared from their washing'.

Whatever one feels about priorities in women's education, the items relating to material on Margaret Catchpole, transported to Botany Bay in 1801, suggests that a woman can achieve a fair amount of liberation without precise spelling, as item 359 from the Battye Library, Perth, indicates:

' . . . i might a gon to Lived with maney of the saillrs that is to a Binn thear wife and might a Lived very well But I hav no inklanashun I have a pieces of ground and i am thinken to Bild a houes or Buing a Cow . . . ' (Margaret Catchpole to Uncle and Aunt Howes, 8 October 1806).

The full value of the National Research Programme inaugurating the annotated guide to records of women in Australia will be realized only when the material held in all Australian states — and that held overseas — has been surveyed. Volume One is a promising beginning, and will be welcomed by historians and sociologists as well as by literary critics and researchers.

The 1976 revised edition of *The Literature of Australia* edited by Geoffrey Dutton is not as well printed as the first edition of 1964 but its content — roughly about half of it is unchanged — is just as good, representing on the whole the best thoughts of the best academics and creative writers of our time pressed into the not ignoble service of literary history and criticism. Anyone who has worked with the original edition will probably feel that it is as well to supplement the new with the old, if possible. For example, Katherine Brisbane's chapter on Australian Drama (1976) is very helpful, but it gains when supplemented by Eunice Hanger's survey and critical opinion published in 1964. Thomas Shapcott has replaced Evan Jones in writing about Australian Poetry since 1920, and again one would like to have the old survey as well as the new. Both poets begin by paying tribute to the Lindsays, especially Norman Lindsay, and Thomas Shapcott enlarges upon this by drawing attention to the "myth" which he suggests is an exaggeration of a reality, that there is a polarization, reflected in Australian poetry, between "hearty heartless Sydney and consciously conscience-ridden Melbourne". Both the old and the new survey are useful to the beginning student, both are sensitive and both quote extensively

enough to illustrate their points. Harry Heseltine has enlarged his original survey of Australian Fiction since 1920 without altering his basic stance and values. The latter part of the chapter, concluding with the work of Frank Moorhouse and Michael Wilding, is a skilful and successful attempt to find a path in the great growth of Australian fiction over the past six years. Heseltine makes the final suggestion that "if Australian culture at large is adopting significantly new configurations, the literary imagination is still located at the points of change and growth." This statement is a heartening one apropos Australian Literature, and returns one thoughtfully to a terse sentence in Ian Turner's introductory chapter on The Social Setting of Australian Literature:

Affluence has not proved such a favourable environment for self-cultivation as nineteenth-century optimism had hoped.

In 1964 Stephen Murray-Smith contributed a chapter on The Novel and Society, and while missing the old chapter, the student will find that the new chapters by Clement Semmler on the novels of Christina Stead and Dorothy Green on the novels of Martin Boyd illustrate more fully some of Stephen Murray-Smith's earlier comments about the strength and weakness of the "radical literary tradition" which has played an important part in the structure of Australian literature, and the failure of many of our earlier writers "to give at least an illusion of 'embracing it all' ". Murray-Smith's desire to find in Australian literature more than just an *attempt* to see life steadily and see it whole is a desire shared by most of the critical historians who have contributed to this edition. That this desire is implicit in their approach to their various subjects gives this volume a recognisable quality as a literary history and as literary criticism.

Such a Sophoclean vision, or perhaps it was more an Arnoldian one, to see things steadily and see them whole, seems also to have animated the writers of the essays contributed to *Bards, Bohemians, & Bookmen* edited by Leon Cantrell in an attractive volume produced by the University of Queensland Press, and dedicated to Cecil Hadgraft, recently retired as Reader from the Department of English at the University of Queensland. Cecil Hadgraft is a scholar and teacher of perception and literary skill. His lectures were notable for their urbanity and wit, qualities not often found in the daily run of University teaching, and his research and writing have given much to Australian scholarship. The contributors to *Bards, Bohemians, & Bookmen* have taken seriously their responsibility to write useful and on the whole original pieces on many varied aspects of Aust. Lit. If the diligent scholar has thought out for himself before some of the ideas expressed, he will find in any one essay at least a few thoughts that had not previously occurred to him, and the essays are gracefully written, so that one can recommend them to undergraduates with confidence.

In a collection of high standard it is unfair perhaps to single out any

particular essays, but Dennis Douglas's chapter discussing two of Patrick White's plays in their relationship to the drama of Strindberg and the German Expressionist Movement of the early twentieth century is particularly original in approach. Terry Sturm has contributed an interesting analysis of Brennan's *The Wanderer*, in which he adopts an approach complementing an earlier series of articles by Noel Macainsh published in *LINO*, Vol. 3, 1974. A valuable aspect of *Bards, Bohemians, & Bookmen* is that the essayists have combined close reading and precise reference with an attempt to place their specific topic within a perspective of Australian literature and the phenomenon called "literature" in general. Leon Cantrell is to be congratulated as editor of this collection and one wishes only that Val Vallis could have been coaxed, seduced or in some manner gently forced into contributing more than the few words he adds in tribute to Cecil Hadgraft. The only person who might possibly have achieved the feat of making Val Vallis commit to paper a few thousand of the inimitable phrases that comprise his lectures would have been Cecil Hadgraft himself, and obviously he knew nothing about the proposed edition.

The next collection of respectable scholarship to be reviewed is *The Radical Reader* edited by Stephen Knight and Michael Wilding and comprising eleven very interesting articles on such varied topics as literature and society, the influence of Benedetto Croce, the radicalism of John Milton, the appeal that Chaucer's poetry can have for the radical student — the essay is not called that but it seems to this reviewer that that is what it is about — and the outlines of a feminist literary criticism. Again the pieces are well written and should convince an undergraduate reader that although literary criticism cannot rest on certainties anymore than can mathematics, it can nevertheless be factually precise and concise in expression. The essays are not iconoclastic, and certainly not more radical than, for example, the criticism of D.H. Lawrence, but they are just as provocative as Lawrence's criticism and by subduing their own undoubtedly strong personalities to the decorum of lit. crit. in a way that Lawrence did not do, the contributors emerge as very strong academic personalities indeed. That they have willingly engaged in the production of this *Radical Reader* suggests that the contributors are just as strong as human personalities. The editors invite contributions for future anthologies, and it is hoped that other radical classicists and radical romanticists will accept the invitation. Essentially the philosophy that underlies these essays seems to be human socialism, but no thinking voter of any persuasion will find in them anything intellectually offensive. That is to say, that only a reader in a momentary (of course) fit of stupidity would dismiss *The Radical Reader* as unworthy of serious attention and recommendation.

While on the topic of radicalism — which by definition simply means a desire to get to the roots of a matter — this reviewer can also recommend *Radical Cousins* by Joseph Jones. This is an original and fairly carefully

researched study of the interaction that took place between American and Australian democratic writers in the nineteenth century. One adds the modifying "fairly" with regret, but it is a fact that Professor Jones seems to have been unaware of research in this area which had already been published — in *Australian Literary Studies*, for example — when he was undertaking his own research in Australia. Nevertheless discerning students of Aust. Lit. will want to consult this text even if it does not have top priority as an item to be purchased. The attempt to quote prices in reviews appearing six weeks after the event of the books concerned may as well be abandoned. It is to be hoped that in places where American and Australian Literature are taken seriously the librarian will acquire multiple copies of *Radical Cousins* since it is of value to historians as well as to those who study literature.

The last two books to be reviewed are anthologies of purely creative writing in Australian literature. *Five Plays for Stage, Radio and Television* edited with an excellent compendium of comments, letters and interviews by Alrene Sykes, comprises Louis Esson's *The Drivers*, Alan Seymour's *The One Day of the Year*, David Williamson's *What if You Died Tomorrow*, Douglas Stewart's *The Golden Lover* and Ted Roberts's *Lindsay's Boy*. This edition in the Portable Australian Authors series is obviously good value for anyone who does not already own all the texts except that of Ted Roberts's television play, and even so the editor's Introduction and other apparatus make the volume worth the purchase. In outlining the history of Australian stage, radio and television drama, Alrene Sykes can hardly say anything that is not probably already known, but she does have an original and thoughtful stance and anything she writes about Australian drama deserves respect and serious inquiry.

*Australian Voices Poetry and Prose of the 1970's* was compiled and edited by Rosemary Dobson in 1974 and published in 1975, and the only exception one can take to the collection is in the dating of the title. In July, 1974, there was still more than half the decade to come, and for better or worse Australian voices have not hushed themselves in the last three years and are not likely to quieten in the next three. An attempt such as this by Rosemary Dobson to keep track of what is being said daily in poetry and prose must be applauded, and her selection appears to be exceptionally fine and representative. Some writers who might almost be described as "fugitive" but who are special favourites of this reviewer are included, for example, Harold Stewart, J.M. Couper, Nene Gare, R.F. Brissenden and Philip Martin, and if these writers object to being called fugitive, the reviewer replies that the word was intended as a compliment and a delicate hint that even more of their work would be welcome.

The anthology shows a distinctive spirit in including a story by Ted Egan, a fine poem by Bobbi Sykes, an article on Australian suburbia by

Bernard Smith and another on the beginning of an Australian intelligentsia by Manning Clark. Also represented are many of the best of our established poets and prose writers and many of our younger poets and prose writers. One feels that since Australian publication today is so prolific, any writer omitted from a specific collection will undoubtedly be read somewhere else as the interested reader turns to follow up the work of someone already encountered. For example, Fay Zwicky is included in Rosemary Dobson's collection, although she is not included in *Festival and other stories* edited also in 1974 by Brian Buckley and Jim Hamilton, whereas the latter anthology of prose does include Christina Stead and *Australian Voices* does not, and so on. What the Aust. Lit. industry and the interested reader needs is someone to make an anthology of those good writers who slip between the rather wide mesh of enterprising anthologists, and who do not, for a variety of reasons, publish monograph editions of their work. Even while the bookshelves sag and the eyesight fails, let there be no immediate end to the making of anthologies of this quality.