NOEL MACAINSH

THE HIDDEN CIVILIZATION OF NORTH QUEENSLAND

– MRS CAMPBELL PRAED'S *FUGITIVE ANNE*

Mrs Rosa Caroline Campell Praed (1851-1935), born on her father's station, Bromelton or Bungroopin, on the Lower Logan River, inland from Ipswich,[1] was the author of some 45 novels, about 20 of which relate to Australia. Her family had extensive and important connections in Queensland and England. She was very successful as a writer in her time, particularly through the circulating-library system. Today, however, her name hardly survives except within the cramped space of literary histories. These works mostly praise her reservedly if they are old, or discern reasons for neglect if they are of recent origin. These days, she is deplored for her now unfashionable politics, for her plots, and for her interest in current ideas of her times. Conversely, in a "conservationist" age, she is praised for her "real love of certain aspects of the Australian countryside," for her "place-sense," something which apparently earned her no particular merit with her readers at the time. Nevertheless, unfashionable or not, she demonstrates attitudes and insights, records experiences, hopes, visions and even aberrations, that are either inadequately expressed elsewhere or not at all; thus her work if not always of high literary value often has considerable interest as cultural documentation. Even in her most fanciful works, she often draws on a basis of personal experience and reflects actual interests of her readers. Her novels, *Policy and Passion,* 1881, *Outlaw and Lawmaker,* 1893, and *Nulma*,1897, are cited as valuable for their depiction of certain aspects of political and social life in nineteenth-century Queensland.[2]

Another aspect of Mrs Praed's work, of direct concern here, has been noted by J.J. Healy in his "The Lemurian Nineties,"[3] namely the way in which Mrs Praed, in common with other Australian writers, used anthropological and geological speculations to fill an artistic "void," to solve the "historical

dilemma" of writing when not enough time had passed for a distinctive Australian world to emerge. There are a number of questions that might be raised here about Healy's formulation of the "Lemurian" response; these questions would concern not only the nature and motivation of the readership of these novels set in Australia but also the circumstances at the time of the world-wide interest in remote places, real or imaginary, as settings for Lemurian-type romances. Not only may the lack of "a distinctive Australian world" be seen to have played a role, but the stressful presence of distinctive social features, Australian or otherwise, may also be seen to have had its part too in forming the tastes of those readers who, as Healy tells us of the writer Ernest Favenc, had a weakness for "the half-known, mysterious regions of tropical Australia."[4]

The picture is further complicated when we learn from Cheryl Frost[5] that Favenc and others actually perceived these regions, at least North Queensland, as acutely oppressive. Frost writes that "examples of pioneers and visitors who looked on the North Queensland environment as opporessor could be multiplied almost indefinitely."[6] Favenc is given as a prime example of this reaction, which may be seen as bearing significantly on Healy's statement that Favenc had "a distinct need to romanticize life in Australia. . . ."[7] This need to romanticize has been seen as a general feature. For instance, B.F. de Vries, in his informatively titled article, "The Lure of the Wild: A Romantic Motive for the Exploration of the Australian Interior, 1830-70,"[8] asserts that exploration at this time took place in an entirely different climate of thought from that of earlier times, that the growth of both romanticism and empirical scientific inquiry produced an ideal milieu to encourage exploration, that the "rugged beauty of wild land which was once abhorred, became first accepted, and then praised, and even worshipped. This new fascination for wilderness was expressed in a mystique about unknown regions, unusual landscapes, and strange people." [9] Nevertheless, Healy's article is valuable indeed for the attention it draws to a "spate of novels, spawned by the Lemurian debate"[10] that appeared in Australia in the 1890s. However, although he gives Mrs Praed a pre-eminent position among writers who use legends of lost continents, such as

Atlantis and Lemuria, in interpreting Australian landscape, he does not mention Mrs Praed's own novel *Fugitive Anne,* which is surely a key exhibit here, nor does his survey of source material include the important figure of Ignatius Donnelly, quoted by Mrs Praed in her novel.

Mrs Praed's novel, *Fugitive Anne : A Romance of the Unexplored Bush*, 1902, is set in North Queensland. In some ways, it is a "pot-boiler," which is not so much a reflection on the author's restrictive horizons as on her willingness in this instance to do her best for her pot-boiler readers. The social values of the book and presumably its appeal are clearly orientated to persons of refinement, that is those, who, while maintaining their social pretensions can nevertheless lower their aesthetic standards, if they ever had them, in the interests of a "rattling good read." Their number was obviously large. Which is not to say that *Fugitive Anne* has no aesthetic standards. H.M. Green struck the balanced view when he wrote "and there is a romance of adventure among the blacks in what was then unexplored country, and the discovery of a secret race that would delight readers of Rider Haggard: this novel, *Fugitive Anne* . . . contains some character-drawing and descriptions in which Mrs Praed is not far from her best, including an interesting sketch of a young aborigine."[11]

Apart from the theme of discovery, there is also the theme of a young woman's emancipation, a theme never far from Mrs Praed's heart. Anne Summers, in her *Damned Whores and God's Police,* aptly summarizes this theme. She states that

> Rosa Campbell-Praed . . . created superb if implausible heroines who dashed all over the country, achieving extraordinary feats though usually ending up with a suitable male companion. A revealing feature of her writings was her proclivity for having her female characters dispense with weak, cowardly or uninteresting men and take up, legally or otherwise, with more exciting characters. She had a marvellous, if unconventional, romantic strain, one that was definitely at odds with the current literary tradition even though it generally used its settings and even some of its themes.[12]

This is certainly applicable to the chief protagonist. Mrs Praed

wrote of herself that "conventionality is a burden to me, and society a penance. The wild cawing of rooks is sweeter to my ears than the song of the nightingale."[13] One might add in parenthesis that if Thematic Apperception Tests are a true guide to sex differentiation in readers' expectations of fictional stories,[14] then Mrs Praed's stories, with their unpleasant beginnings and pleasant endings, are designed more to please a female audience than a male one.

In outline, the story of *Fugitive Anne* is as follows: The Eastern and Australian passenger boat *Leichhardt* is steaming between the Great Barrier Reef and the shore. It is early morning. The boat is expected to arrive at Cooktown during the night, having stopped at the newly established station on Thursday Island.

Eric Hansen is on board. He is a scientist bound on a mission of exploration of Australian fauna, having been dispatched by a learned society in his own country, Denmark.

Mrs Bedo, formerly Anne Marley, a failed Queensland singing-student, now a first-class passenger, is presumed locked in her cabin. Her husband, Elias Bedo, formerly a bullock-driver who struck gold at the Charters Towers Diggings, is now a rich man. He is thumping on the cabin door. But Bedo's wife, Anne, has disappeared. Bedo immediately presumes she has got through the porthole and escaped him. Anne is "a northern girl, born and bred on the sea-coast. She knows every sort of water-dodge and can swim like a fish." Anne, a girl of twenty and a bride of four months, is willing to brave sharks, crocodiles and blacks to "escape from a loathed bondage" (p.13). A letter to her mother is found, in which she explains her artificial life with Bedo and how she is risking escape to the coast by swimming. Eric Hansen mourns the loss of Anne with whom a common bond of interest in the Bush has arisen.

Next a black-boy and a Lascar are walking along a road. The black-boy is the former cabin-boy Kombo from the *Leichhardt*, and the Lascar is Anne disguised. They are heading for Anne's deserted sheep-station, on which the bank has foreclosed. Anne carries a revolver and "would shoot herself rather than return to her husband." She acquires a horse and dresses as a man. The blacks may seem "treacherous as a race" but Kombo

is faithful to Anne.

They journey north to her uncle's property pegged out at the very limits of civilization, at the base of Cape York Peninsula. The region is unexplored, for "if the ill-fated Burke or Kennedy ever reached it, they did not return to tell the tale" (p.49). It is the country of the Maianbar and Moongarr tribes and of strange legends. Anne remembers "the explorer Hann's account of his find of fossil remains in North Australia, the wonderful antediluvian animals scientists had discovered to exist in this oldest continent of the world – the gigantic iguana, the Australian diprotodons, the monstrous kangaroos, the enormous horned turtle" (p.50). They come to the uncle's station. It is strangely deserted. Everyone has been murdered! They hear black-troopers and escape to a cave. When strange tribesmen appear, Anne awes them by singing to the tune of Gounod's *Ave Maria* the words *Ave Baiamè*, after the "title of the Black's Great Creator" (p.75). She thus becomes a goddess of the Maianbar tribe. This exalted position has many difficult moments and she must keep her wits about her, even to the extent of singing *God Save the Queen* to bring the rains down at a critical moment of impending tribal warfare. Amid her difficulties, she thinks of Eric Hansen and wonders if they will ever meet again.

The Maianbar tribe has legends of a strange people, not black, not white, but "red as the setting sun," with women having "flowing red-gold hair." They were a tall people who had built houses and altars to their god, Mirrein the Tortoise, symbolized by a fire-breathing mountain.

A white man is discovered in the forest. It is Eric Hansen. He does not know that Anne is so near. She now sings "through the loneliness of that northern forest that last song she had sung on the *Leichhardt*, a song Eric Hansen had loved – the immortal plaint of Gluck's Orpheus – *Che faro senza Eurydice* " (p.115). On realizing that it is Anne, Eric utters her name in "that deep, tenderly masterful voice." She faints. He had been searching for Anne and the marsupial tiger. She addresses him as "Mr Hansen."

Eric, or rather Mr Hansen, speculates on a pre-historic race dwelling in the unexplored heart of Australia. He tells

Anne of his experience in the Yucatan forests, exploring the remains of an ancient race that also worshipped a tortoise, or how he had unearthed hieroglyphic monuments and found similarities with certain Egyptian hieroglyphs, suggesting a connection. He tells her of Atlantis, "of Donelly's book tracing all civilizations to that centre" (p.129). He speculates that the same race that "built those Cyclopean ruins discovered in Easter Island" has given rise to these strange legends in the North of Queensland.

Anne's husband is hot on her trail because she has been proven as entitled to a Baroness title, and a large fortune depends on his finding her. Anne, Hansen and Kombo flee deeper into mysterious country dominated by the Tortoise and Crocodile mountains. They find lotus flowers growing in a pool, then a series of monoliths placed in a definite circle, and in the centre a large round stone supported on another, an altar. Instead of "degraded aboriginals," there are signs of an ancient civilization. The area must have been populous: "It confirms Brasseur de Bourbourg's theory, that there was once a vast continent with a great civilization, extending from Chile and Peru to Australia. Remains have been discovered in the islands of Polynesia, but till now none in Australia" (pp.164-5). This civilization may be connected with ancient Mayan civilization. The Pacific Islands, says Hansen, "were once the seat of a great civilization. Pyramids, towers, mounds that show sites of great cities, the stone-lined canals in Strong Island and Lele – these are well-known to South Sea navigators, but they have never been scientifically explored. I have often thought, Anne, what a rich virgin field lies there – what untold treasures may be buried in the Ladrones, the Marquesas, the Gilbert groups, and many others of the South Sea Islands" (p.189). "Australia may have been colonized by some of the Mayan race" (p.190).

But, unbeknown to them, they are being observed by people having "strange looking heads . . . surmounted by flat caps of undyed wool or lines, in each of which stood up a tuft of feathers; the faces of a curious types – long, with high cheekbones; the foreheads high, slightly retreating, and having a compressed appearance; the features thin, but powerfully moulded; the eyes of hazel or blue, almond-shaped and ex-

tremely piercing, beneath strongly curved brows; the hair wiry, straight, and of a dark chestnut colour; the skin reddish brown" (p.193). One of these observers wears a short cloak over a jerkin of tanned leather.

Oblivious of these figures, Anne sings "Home, Sweet Home," then is shocked to see some twenty of these strangers. Hansen notes that they speak a corrupt dialect of the ancient Mayan tongue. In the knowledge that all religious mythologies have a prophecy of the reincarnating of a divinity, he presents Anne to the strangers as a goddess. The Red Men greet her. Anne sings in reply a few bars of Italian opera. Eric learns that there had once been a city of pyramids, temples, palaces, carvings, but that a cataclysm had buried them, live in a rock city.

It is explained to Anne, that as a goddess she cannot marry. Eric is forbidden to her. Furthermore, the legends of the Red people, the Acans, state that the goddess is to lead them to a new land. Anne cultivates the idea of an Exodus of the Acans from their rock city in the mountain, hopefully to the Port of Somerset on Cape York Peninsula. Hansen, half bewitched by a strange woman, is loathe to leave before translating the hieroglyphs of the Acans. He dreams of reading a paper before the Royal Geographical Society of London. Plots and love-rivalries in Acan are making life uncomfortable for Anne and Eric.

Anne's husband is discovered and seized. The Acans are enraged at the sacrilege of her having married. She is brought to trial and must die. On the way to her death, Anne sings her *Ave*. At the Place of Death, there is a storm, and Eric Hansen thundering at full voice in Mayan gives the impression that he is bringing the elements down in judgement on the people. It is too late to save Bedo; the unsatisfactory husband is summarily thrown over a cliff. The dormant volcano of Tortoise mountain is now erupting. In the confusion, Eric frees Anne, and, together with Kombo, they escape.

The Epilogue to the Novel then advises us that "about a year later a good many extracts such as the following might have been culled from the London daily papers:– 'At the Albert Hall last evening, in the presence of Royalty, and of an immense and appreciative audience, Mr Eric Hansen delivered

his very remarkable lecture on the prehistoric antiquities of Northern Australia. This was the Danish explorer's first appearance as a public lecturer in England, though in his own country, and in Germany, he has related before several learned societies the tale of his marvellous exploits, and those of his wife the Baroness Marley, whose recent accession to that old title – so long in abeyance – adds a fresh flavour of romance to the exciting story. Indeed, nothing more thrilling has ever been imagined in fiction than the wanderings, the escapes, and the subsequent marriage of this adventurous pair. It is an open secret that Lady Marley and Mr Eric Hansen have been received with favour in high places, and are in fact the lion and lioness of an exceptionally brilliant season. So that, apart from the enormous scientific value of their discoveries, as demonstrating a connection in past ages between the almost extinct civilizations of the ancient Americans and Australia, it was to be fully expected that the young explorer – himself a fascinating personality – should form a centre of attraction for the representatives of fashion, science, and the culture, who crowded the Albert Hall last evening' . . . Then, to use that somewhat elaborate phraseology of the *Daily Recorder*, we are further informed that 'the highly intelligent and humourous aboriginal, Kombo, whose occasional ejaculations in the native tongue were a source of diversion to the audience, was seated during the lecture on the platform behind his master, and afterwards received a special share of attention. . .' So much for the newspapers. But for a full and scientific exposition of the results of Eric Hansen's and Anne Marley's explorations, the reader is referred to the work they are about to publish, entitled, *With Cannibals and Acans in Unknown Australia.*"

It can be seen from the opening remarks that the time of the novel's action is set shortly after the establishment of the station on Thursday Island, that is 1877. Mrs Praed's sister, Elizabeth, had married John Jardine, who established Somerset in 1863, on Albany Island, at Cape York. This station, selected by Sir George Bowen as a garrison post, coaling station and harbour of refuge, was envisaged as becoming a second Singapore. However, it was discovered in due course that a heavy riptide in Albany Passage made it a dangerous harbourage, whereas

Port Kennedy at Thursday Island was an excellent harbour. Mrs Praed followed the news of these developments closely, and it contributed to her novel. Her brother, Thomas, also provided material in his letters describing his wanderings in the Far North.

One notes that the surname of Anne's husband, Bedo, finds an echo in *My Australian Girlhood,* published in the same year as *Fugitive Anne.* There the name Zack Bedo refers to a rough bushman whom Mrs Praed knew in her earlier years at Naraigin station about 350 miles north of Leichhardt's Town (Brisbane). But unlike the Elias Bedo of the novel, we read that "He was a good creature, Zack Bedo."[15] The possibility of a model from the life, however, seems much stronger in the case of the cabin-boy Kombo, for, also in Mrs Praed's Naraigan years, there was Tombo, a black-boy who recited Edgar Allen Poe's *The Raven*, and who sang songs in his own language set to operatic airs. Perhaps Tombo also gave the cue for the tomboyish Fugitive Anne herself.

Mrs Praed indeed appears to have received much stimulus for this novel from her early Naraigin years among the blacks and in the Bush. It seems that the blacks were close to her. She recorded in 1885 that "I am oppressed sometimes by an insane longing to fire a volley of 'Black's yabber' across a London dinner table."[16] But in view of the frequent inter-racial hostilities in South Queensland, from the 1840s onwards, and her mention of the Grant massacre, one may wonder whether Mrs Praed's closeness to the blacks was not a romantic pose. Possibly, people of her kind had initially fear of blacks; after their decimation and degeneration into either servants (station hands) or drunks, they were viewed by 'gentlemen squatters' with loathing and scorn.

Of the Bush, she could significantly state, "just as in the golden age, fauns and nymphs, and the great god Pan, and Apollo himself, walked the pagan forests, so fabulous monsters dwelt in the primeval bush. The Bunyip, perhaps, was the last survival of Lemurian mythology – for it is not said that Australia is a remnant of that prehistoric continent, and that the monoliths on Easter Island are the work of Lemurian builders?"[17] Perhaps it could be observed here that the popular

press occasionally records that people in Queensland still find 'stone carvings' and 'pyramids' in the Bush here.

For instance, *The Townsville Daily Bulletin*, June 29, 1978, p.3, carried a report of the discovery of Egyptian-type stone pyramids near Gympie, Townsville and in the Gordonvale district near Cairns. These and other artefacts were advanced as evidence of Cooktown and Gympie having been ancient Egyptian colonies established for the purpose of extracting gold and other valuables needed for Egypt's economy. *The Australian*, 28 October, 1981, carried a letter claiming the discovery of Egyptian and other Middle-East artefacts in Australia. And so on. It might also be said that Mrs Praed's mention of the "marsupial tiger" in North Queensland appears to be yet another item of romantic misplacement.

Also, the stock figure of the scientific explorer, exemplified here in Eric Hansen, was familiar from Mrs Praed's early years. We are told that she "grew up full of the idea of finding Leichhardt, and saw more than one great exploration come to success or grief." A Dr J.H.L. Zillman[18] tells us that "the Hon. Murray-Prior and his beautiful daughter, in after years the celebrated English authoress," would visit the Mission Station where Leichhardt had called and where he was still expected to return, even though this was far prolonged beyond the time allowed. Amalie Dietrich also had begun her ten years of botanizing wanderings in Queensland in 1863, collecting for the Godeffroy Museum in Hamburg. She had collected botanical specimens on Curtis Island, a few years before Mrs Praed had gone there in the early 1870s with her husband, to live with him on his cattle station "Monte Christo."[19] But the actual model for Mrs Praed's scientist may well have been Carl Lumholz (1851-1922), a Norwegian zoologist, who, on behalf of the University of Christiania, visited Australia in 1880 and for about four years worked mainly in the central and northern parts of Queensland. He made his observations available in a book, *Among Cannibals* (1890), an admirable illustrated work of both scientific and literary value. Not only is the title of his book like that of Eric Hansen's but it is also reported that he was likewise blue-eyed, blond and handsome.[20]

The notion of escape from the "loathed bondage" of marriage, a recurrent theme in Mrs Praed's work, associates with her own discontent in a marriage which finally broke down about the turn of the century. In *The Bond of Wedlock* (1887), she refers to "marriage, this terrible insoluble problem of civilization, which created all the evil."[21] Anne Marley's dressing as a man, accompanied by her faithful companion and servant, Kombo, may perhaps be seen as a rough metaphor of Mrs Praed's own dominating relationship with Nancy Harward, a woman fourteen years her junior, whom she met in 1899. Nancy, with whom Mrs Praed subsequently lived for many years, appears to have been a selfless slave; indeed Mrs Praed's novel *Nyria* (1904) is based on Nancy's alleged reliving of her life as a slave-girl in ancient Rome, meeting her death in a lion pit. Colin Roderick tells us that "mysterious was the fate that brought these two women together, each to minister to the other where man had tried and failed."[22] It seems that the two women thought that their life together stemmed back through successive reincarnations to life in the legendary world of Atlantis. In 1932, Mrs Praed wrote of Nancy, "no one – even my own children – ever loved me as she loved me."[23] Fugitive Anne, however, does not flee so far from convention.

The notion of the blacks as "treacherous" and the discovery by Anne and Kombo of the total massacre of whites by blacks at her uncle's property suggests the real-life tragedy that Mrs Praed records in her autobiography, "the Eurogan tragedy, where our neighbours the Grants – a whole family, mother, daughters and sons – were outraged and murdered, was a horror that couldn't fade quickly from the mind."[24]

The elevation of the fictitious Anne Marley to a goddess of the Maianbar tribe, brings to mind the account given by Professor Logan Jack in his *Northmost Australia* of a white woman who lived upon Prince of Wales Islands as wife of a native chief, in the days of the Jardines. She was a castaway, who appears to have had no option but fall in with her native captors, even to the extent of bearing 15 children. She was eventually discovered by sailors from a French vessel that chanced to anchor nearby.

The reference by Eric Hansen to "Donnelly's book tracing

all civilizations to that centre" of Atlantis brings us back to the Lemurian theme raised by Healy. In his survey of the idea of Lemuria, Healy mentions the coining of the name by a "C.L. Sclater" in the 1850s, to fit a lost continent between Madagascar and Malaya. Presumably the reference here is to Philip Lutley Sclater. Healy appears to draw his information largely from *The Problem of Lemuria* by Lewis Spence, 1933, which leads him to assume that since Madame Blavatsky and Rudolf Steiner became interested in the lost continent, "Mrs Campbell Praed in the London of the 1880s would have contracted this atmosphere of interest."[25] But this is to overlook Mrs Praed's direct reference to Donnelly and the great role of his book not only in her writing but in the so-called Lemurian-debate generally.

Ignatius Donnelly's *Atlantis : The Antediluvian World,* was published by Harpers in 1882 and underwent twenty-three printings by 1890. It has been described euphemistically as a work of "intuitive scholarship" and as "probably the most influential pseudo-scientific work of the later nineteenth century."[26] Its author has been described as a short, fat, red-headed Minnesota politician who was an "energetic, erratic, learned, misdirected cultural force."[27] He was immensely popular but his later contributions to the Shakespeare-Bacon controversy, in which he claimed that Bacon had written not only Marlowe's and Ben Jonson's plays but also *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Don Quixote*, finally raised too many eyebrows. It has been said that "Ignatius Donnelly, American politician, scholar and author. . .had the remarkable distinction of having created three of the golden myths of our day, myths that have gained tens of thousands of adherents, have permeated the thought and culture of later years. . . . These three myths are the concept of Atlantis as the mother of all civilization, the demonstration by mathematical means that Bacon wrote Shakespeare's plays. . .and the explanation of geological features by cataclysms from the sky."[28] He wrote three novels that circulated by the hundreds of thousands among left-oriented workers and farmers. One of them, a negative utopia, *Caesar's Column*, 1889, sold more than a quarter of a million copies.

In his *Atlantis*, Donnelly states, "there can be no question

that the Australian Archipelago is simply the mountain-tops of a drowned continent, which once reached from India to South America. Science has gone so far as to even give it a name; it is called 'Lemuria,' and here, it is claimed, the human race originated."[29]

This version of Lemuria, it might be noted, does not square with Sclater's earlier definition of the continent, which, like the related notion of Gondwanaland, lay between Madagascar and Malaysia. Mrs Praed clearly prefers Donnelly's Lemuria to that of Sclater. Indeed, her Lemuria appears to have no connection with the distribution of the lemur, a small mammal akin to the monkey, as in Sclater, and everything to do with Donnelly's version of Atlantis.

Her descriptions, placed in the mouth of Eric Hansen, of the spread of Mayan peoples from the forests of Yucatan, to across the Pacific, tally with Donnelly. The descriptions given by Mrs Praed of the Red Race fit Donnelly's description of the ancient Phoenicians, Egyptians and presumed inhabitants of Atlantis. Donnelly tells us, "Adam was, it appears, a *red* man."[30] He also tells us that the Central Americans, who, in Mrs Praed's *Fugitive Anne*, have colonized North Queensland, are red.[31] The legends of tortoise-gods, Atlantean religions and fire-breathing mountains are also to be found in Donnelly's account of the red peoples. The "Brasseur de Bourbourg" referred to by Eric Hansen was a French priest who deciphered old American writings on the basis of a description of the phonetic alphabet of the Mayas, given by Diego de Landa, first bishop of Yucatan. Both these men are mentioned in Donnelly's book, as part of his evidence for Atlantis.[32] There can be no question these days that Donnelly's theory, like his mythical continent, is well and truly sunk. Nevertheless, his vision of the golden past, "of Edens that once existed," had a wide and stimulating appeal. It has been remarked of Donnelly that "scores, perhaps hundreds, of works of fiction stand in his debt, and a strong strain in modern science-fiction would not be understood without recourse to Donnelly."[33]

Mrs Praed's hidden civilization, like that in Bulwer Lytton's *The Coming Race* (1874), a writer whom she much adired, has a "female" location, is contained in a "body," inside a mount-

ain or within the earth, is reached by a tunnel or shaft, in distinction to "male" locations on a rocky headland, peninsula, crag, mountain-top or similar. It seems that Mrs Praed's Acans are also somewhat like Lord Lytton's Race of Vril, where the woman have "one privilege. . .the desire for which perhaps forms the secret motive of most lady asserters of woman rights above ground. They claim the privilege, here usurped by men, of proclaiming their love and urging their suit; in other words of being the wooing party rather than the wooed."[34] An Acan woman employs mesmeric force on Eric to this end, a staple of occult romances at this time.

With regard to the novel's happy ending and the arrant snobbery evoked there, as well as throughout the novel, one could hardly do better by way of comment in the space left here than quote from Brian Elliott's "Tea on the Piazza with Mrs Campbell Praed": "It is tremendously important to Mrs Praed, and to her colonial readers, to get this business of status clear. Status was very precarious under colonial conditions: one had to hold on tight, or lose it. Without it, one descended to being *merely* colonial, which was unthinkable. One must be *colonial-plus,* or cease to matter. So one was much preoccupied with it."[35]

Perhaps the thought of being lionized at a Royal Society meeting in front of Royalty is not the content of everyone's aspirations, but there is no doubt that Mrs Praed's novel functions as a trope of that dream, in which the man becomes successful and the woman gets the man. Like Donnelly's load of archeological stardust, which became a book "vital for certain temperaments," Mrs Praed's work too might fire youthful imaginations not only to daydream and speculation but also to quest for the unknown in the real world. Freud may tell us that exploration is sublimation and that burrowing into old mountains for lost civilizations is somewhat regressive. But who knows, whether in Quinkin country or wherever, that there is not yet scope for epoch-making discoveries, for female liberation, and for true love in the arms of a scientific and successful man, even blue-eyed, red-skinned, of thin features, with high cheekbones and chestnut hair.

NOTES

[1] Rosa Caroline Campbell Praed's father, the Hon. Thomas Lodge Murray-Prior, M.L.C., Queensland, was the son of Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Murray-Prior, an Irishman, 11th Hussars, who was at the battle of Waterloo. He was born on November 13, 1819, at Wells, Somersetshire, and was educated under Rev. Win. Drury at Brussels, Monsieur Girong at Reading, and Dr Burney at Gosport. He emigrated to Sydney, arriving in May 1938; and subsequently he proceeded to Queensland, and ultimately became first Postmaster-General of the Colony. He was married first at South Creek, New South Wales, to Matilda, daughter of Thomas Harpur, of Cecil Hills, Liverpool, N.S.W., who died on November 25, 1868. Rosa was born on March 27, 1851, as indicated in the text. At the age of three years she was taken with the family to Naraigin station about 350 miles to the north, and, some six years later, to a farm at Moreton Bay and to Brisbane, and then to Maroon on the Upper Logan, where she remained till after the death of her mother. In 1872, she married Campbell Praed, son of a well-known London banker, and nephew of Winthrop Mackworth Praed, the poet. Her husband took her to his station on Curtis Island, off Gladstone. This experience is recorded in her *The Romance of a Station.* They sold the property and went to England in 1876. She commenced writing in about 1880, her first novel being *An Australian Heroine.* Apart from travels, she remained in England, dying in 1935 at the age of 84.

[2] H.M. Green's *A History of Australian Literature*, 1961; E.M. Miller and F. Macartney, *A Bibliography of Australian Literature,* 1956; Raymond Beilby and Cecil Hadgraft, *Ada Cambridge, Tasma and Rosa Praed,* Melbourne, 1979; and Colin Roderick's *In Mortal Bondage: The Strange Life of Rosa Praed,* 1948. H.M. Green points out that this latter work "contains a good deal of new and interesting material about this very 'Australian' woman novelist of the nineties and early nineteen-hundreds. . . ." He goes on to sound a justifiable note of warning, however," unfortunately the style in which the book is written, the whole atmosphere that has been imposed upon it is that of a popular thriller" (Green, pp.1275-6). This work nevertheless remains an important source. Cf. also Colin Roderick, *Twenty Australian Novelists,* 1947, for extracts and explication of Mrs Praed's *Longleat of Kooralbyn,* 1887.

[3] J.J. Healy, "The Lemurian Nineties", *Australian Literary Studies,* 8, No.3 (May 1978), 307-316.

[4] Ralph Boldrewood's Preface to Ernest Favenc, *Tales of the Australian Tropics,* 1894, quoted by Healy, p.313.

[5] Cheryl Frost, "Landscape in Early North Queensland Writing", *LiNQ*, 9, No.1 (1981), 12-33.

[6] p.15.

[7] Healy, p.313.

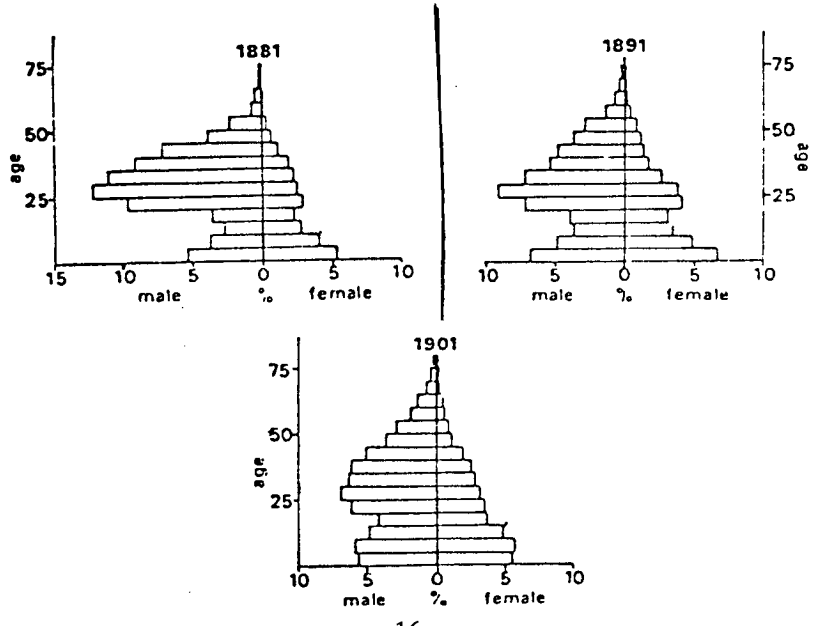
[8] B.F. de Vries, "The Lure of the Wild: A Romantic Motive for the Exploration of the Australian Interior, 1830-70", *Australian Historical Geography Bulletin*, No.1 (August 1980), 27-31.

[9] p.28.

[10] p.311.

[11] Green, p.239.

[12] Anne Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police : The Colonization of Women in Australia*, 1975, p.39. Since little specific material is readily available on the proportion of males and females in the North Queensland population at the time of the novel's setting and writing, the accompanying diagrams may be of interest. They are taken from R. Sumner, "From Foundation to Federation: A Profile of North Queensland based on the Census", *Journal of the Oxley Library*, Vol.1, No.1, 1980.



[1] Mrs Campbell Praed, *Australian Life: Black and White,* 1885, p.28.

[14] Robert May, "Sex Differences in Fantasy Patterns", *Journal of Projective Techniques and Personality Assessment,* 1966, No.30, 576-86.

[15] Mrs Campbell Praed, *My Australian Girlhood,* 1902, p.175.

[16] *Australian Life: Black and White,* p.28.

[17] *My Australian Girlhood,* p.43.

[18] Sydney *Truth,* 7 April, 1918.

[19] This information is taken from Ray Sumner's forthcoming book, *Amalie Dietrich,* particularly from Chapter 4, Gladstone.

[20] R. Sumner, "Among Cannibals, Carl Lumholz in North Queensland", *Journal of Australian Studies,* No.1, 1974.

[21] Quoted Beilby and Hadgraft, p.38.

[22] Roderick, *In Mortal Bondage,* p.208.

[23] Beilby and Hadgraft, p.29.

[24] Praed, *Australian Life: Black and White,* p.31.

[25] Healy, p.310.

[26] Cf. "Ignatius Donnelly and Atlantis" by E.F. Bleiler, 1976, Introduction to the Dover republication of original 1882 edition: Ignatius Donnelly, *Atlantis: The Antediluvian World,* Dover Publications, New York, 1976, p.ix.

[27] p.viii.

[28] p.v.

[29] p.32.

[30] p.193.

[31] p.473.

[32] For those who may be interested in gaining rational perspective on this

legend, there is not only Bleiler's introductory essay on Donnelly but also J.V. Luce, *The End of Atlantis : New Light on an Old Legend,* Paladin, 1970, and Otto Heinrich Muck, *The Secret of Atlantis,* Fontana, 1978, transln. of *Alles über Atlantis,* 1976. Muck, a scientist, states, "it must be understood that very little evidence was available when he [Donnelly] was writing."

[33] Donnelly, p.xx.

[34] The Right Hon. Lord Lytton, *The Coming Race,* London, 1874, pp.228-9.

[35] Brian Elliott, "Tea on the Piazza with Mrs Campbell Praed", in John Press, ed., *Commonwealth Literature*, London, 1965. This quotation is one of the few hits in a rambling essay which would be better called "Waffling to Myself on the Piazza Far from Home on the Occasion of Having Bought Myself an Old and Unwanted Copy of *The Head Station* by Mrs Hardly-Remembered Praed at Some Bookshop in Florence Dirt Cheap." Amid the cultural tripping is the statement that the Isabella variety of grape has "gone out." However, in the North of Australia, this very useful variety is going well; it is not out but in.