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Michaelmas Term, 1966

# ARTS

The Proceedings  
of the  
Sydney University Arts Association

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2. To encourage and assist members to keep in touch with new developments  
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3. To enable members to maintain and extend associations with one another;
4. To improve the equipment and resources of the Faculty of Arts.

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# ARTS

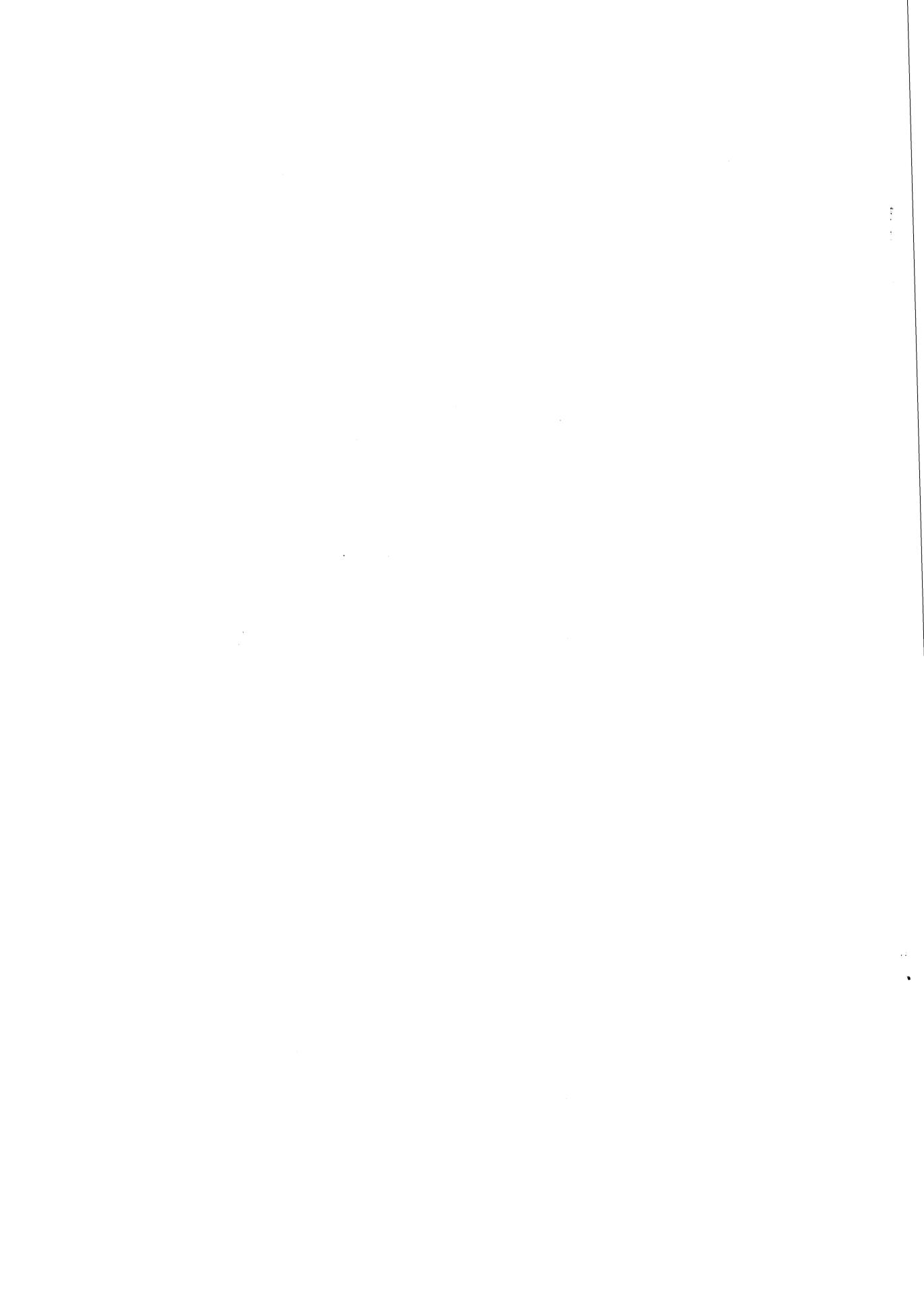
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## CHILDREN'S BOOKS: A HUNDRED YEARS SINCE "ALICE"

By KATHLEEN M. COMMINS\*

THIS is a notable year for anniversaries in children's literature. Two hundred years ago the acknowledged father of children's book publishing, John Newbery, published *Goody Two-Shoes*. One hundred years ago Macmillan published *Alice in Wonderland*. In that same year Walter Crane began illustrating children's books, and Rudyard Kipling was born.

Newbery's first book for children was *A Little Pretty Pocket Book*, priced 6d., which when sold with a ball or pincushion was priced 8d. He was meticulous in his attention to details in the preparation of his children's books, just as he was for all his publications.

The earliest extant copy of *Goody Two-Shoes* is one of the third edition bearing the date 1766, the first having been published a year earlier. As a children's book it would be forgotten but for its one-time repute, the praise given it by distinguished men, and because it was almost the first piece of original English fiction written to amuse children only.

As for the fame of *Goody Two-Shoes*, this is what Charles Lamb wrote to Coleridge:

"*Goody Two-Shoes* is almost out of print. Mrs. Barbauld's stuff has banished all the old classics of the nursery . . . Science has succeeded to poetry no less in the little walks of children than with men. Is there no possibility of averting this sore evil? Think what you would have been now, if instead of being fed with tales and old wives' fables in childhood, you had been crammed with geography and natural history!"

It is interesting that *Goody Two-Shoes*, a story of rural England, was unblushingly put forward by Newbery with the statement that it was from a "manuscript found in the Vatican with illustrations by Michael Angelo". The real achievement of the book, often attributed to Oliver Goldsmith, is that Newbery demonstrated with it the high possibilities in publishing for children. He made the first venture and was responsible for a collection of books intended for children. They were cheap, they could be bought for sixpence, they were gay and full of pictures.

To-day his name lives in the annual award in the United States the Newbery medal, given for the "most distinguished contribution to American children's literature".

\* The Presidential Address delivered at the Twelfth Annual General Meeting, 30 September, 1965.

The award was established in 1922 by a twentieth century John Newbery in the person of Frederick Melcher.

*Goody Two-Shoes* is largely forgotten although it was still being produced regularly in England until well into this century as a so-called "children's pantomime" (that odd and typically English entertainment which was neither a true pantomime nor suitable for children). By contrast *Alice in Wonderland* remains one of the indestructible treasures of our literature. The centenary of its publication occurred on 4 July of this year.

"Alice" was created on a summer afternoon in Oxford on 4 July, 1862. Charles Dodgson, a young tutor in mathematics, entertained three little girls at a picnic with a story about one of them. The girls were the daughters of the Dean of Christchurch, George Henry Liddell, and Dodgson had a special affection for Alice Liddell.

That picnic turned out to be one which shook the English speaking world. Quotations from the book are part of everyday conversation. When someone says, "I doubt it", don't you want to add "said the carpenter and shed a bitter tear?"

"Alice" is the story of childhood itself, its wonder, its vigour, its freshness, its wisdom. It is full of nonsense but cleverly logical. "Alice" widened the horizons of children, freed their imaginations and was a refreshing change from the rather gloomy high moral tone of the books they were used to. "Alice" recognized that children should be entertained. It was written to give pleasure to children (particularly Alice herself) and to please the author.

This is Dodgson's recollection of the picnic written twenty-five years after the event:

"Many a day we rowed together on that quiet stream the three little maidens and I—and many a fairytale had been extemporised for their benefit. Yet none of these many tales were written down: they lived and died, like summer midges, each in its own golden afternoon until there came a day when, as it chanced, one of my little listeners petitioned that the tale might be written out for her. That was many years ago, but I distinctly remember now, as I write, how in a desperate attempt to strike out some new line of fairy-lore, I had sent my heroine straight down a rabbit-hole to begin with, without the least idea what was to happen afterwards . . ."

And seventy years later Alice herself could still remember that picnic vividly. This is what she said of it:

"Nearly all of *Alice Adventures Underground* was told on that blazing summer afternoon with the heat haze shimmering over the meadows where the party landed to shelter for a while in the shadow cast by haycocks near

Godstow. I think the stories he told us that afternoon must have been better than usual, because I have such a distinct recollection of the expedition, and also, on the next day, I started to pester him to write down the story for me, which I had never done before . . ."

When Alice was 80, Oxford University conferred on her the degree of Doctor of Letters, with the citation, "awakening with her girlhood's charm the ingenious fancy of a mathematician, the moving cause of this truly noteworthy contribution to English literature . . ."

The story, when written, lay about on a table in the drawing room of the Deanery until Henry Kingsley chanced to see it. He urged Mrs. Liddell to persuade the author to publish it. Dodgson consulted his friend, George Macdonald, who took it home to read to his own children. When his son Greville declared that "there ought to be sixty thousand volumes of it", Macdonald supported Kingsley's suggestion.

Dodgson had made many drawings when he wrote the story. He asked Ruskin whether his own illustrations were good enough. When Ruskin said they weren't, Dodgson engaged Tenniel.

It was on publication on 4 July, 1865, that *Alice's Adventures Underground* became *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and the author called himself "Lewis Carroll".

This year, to mark the centenary, a dramatized version of "Alice" was presented in the Christchurch Meadows, Oxford, from 15 to 26 June. The play was directed and adapted by Adrian Benjamin, who described it thus:

"The dramatized version does not follow any of the numerous stage versions, but instead it follows the book faithfully incorporating a narrator, in the person of Lewis Carrol, this preserving the irony, wit and whimsy so easily lost when the classic is diluted into pantomime. Although the story with its mock violence and teasing subtleties cannot fail to amuse children, we have not neglected that side of it intended to exalt the curious to the logical and to reduce morality to madness."

If "Alice" freed the imagination and marked the real beginning of modern literature for children, what has the last 100 years produced?

In the years from 1865 to World War I, almost half a century, some of the great storytellers for children wrote their memorable tales.

Of Dodgson's contemporaries the greatest undoubtedly was George Macdonald, whose fairy tales are gifts of the imagination. They reveal a very different world from that of Dodgson. His books such as *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871), *The Princess and The Goblin* (1872), *The Princess and Curdie* (1882) are visionary. Who can forget the North Wind, beautiful with

her flowing hair, blowing in through the knothole in the loft where Diamond slept, to carry the little boy away on wonderful journeys over land and sea. It has magic of spirit as well as of imagination.

*Mopsa The Fairy*, the tale of a little boy who finds a nest of fairies, puts them in his pocket and flies into fairyland on the back of an albatross, was written by Jean Ingelw in 1869. In the same tradition Oscar Wilde wrote *The Happy Prince* and *A House of Pomegranates* in 1888 and 1891.

Speaking of fairy tales, there are those, of course, who find no merit in them, however excellent their style. It is claimed that they are too brutal, too silly, too unreal. I think G. K. Chesterton demolishes such critics in his *Essay on Fairy Tales*. This, regrettably, is now out of print, but these are some of his thoughts:

"If you kept bogies and goblins away from children they would make them up for themselves. One small child in the dark can invent more hells than Swedenborg. One small child can imagine monsters too big and black to get into any picture and give them names too unearthly and cacophonous to have occurred in the cries of any lunatic. Fairy tales then are not responsible for producing in children fear, or any of the shapes of fear; fairy tales do not give the child the idea of evil or of the ugly; that is in the child already because it is in the world already. Fairy tales do not give the child his first idea of bogey. What fairy tales give the child is his first clear idea of the possible defeat of the bogey. The baby has known the dragon intimately ever since he had an imagination . . . What the fairy tale provides for him is a St. George to kill the dragon . . ."

In the same essay Chesterton adds this personal comment:

"I had just finished looking through a pile of contemporary fiction and had begun to read *Grimm's Fairy Tales* as a natural consequence. The modern novels stood before me in a stack; and you can imagine their titles for yourself. There was *Suburban Sue: A Tale of Psychology*, and also *Psychological Sue: A Tale of Suburbia*; there was *Trixy: A Temperament* and *Man-Hate: A Monochrome* and all those nice things. I read them with real interest but curiously enough I grew tired of them at last, and when I saw *Grimm's Fairy Tales* lying accidentally on the table I gave a cry of indecent joy. Here at last one could find a little common sense. I opened the book and my eyes fell on these splendid and satisfying words: *The Dragon's Grandmother*. That at least was reasonable, that at least was comprehensible; that at least was true."

Of a very different genre is *Little Women* written by Louisa Alcott and published in the United States in 1867. It marked the beginning of realistic

family stories. This was a time when reticence was the fashion, but Louisa Alcott knew that girls wanted truth and reality and so she shared the intimacy of her own family life—and the Marches are amazingly real. It is rather remarkable that a quiet New Englander, nearly a century ago, opened the door to thousands of readers to share a family home, one full of moral earnestness, innate refinement and liberality of thought. Louisa Alcott has many imitators to this day—although sometimes, as you browse among the bookstalls, you might not think so.

When "Alice" banished the belief that instruction was the primary object for the young, abundant tales of adventure appeared. George Alfred Henty told stories of great campaigns designed by him to give English boys a sense of the greatness of the British Empire; Robert Louis Stevenson wrote *Treasure Island* in 1883 and it immediately won acclaim as the best boys' story since *Robinson Crusoe*; Jules Verne took children on vast journeys in *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under The Sea* (1869) and in *Around The World in Eighty Days* (1872); and Mark Twain gave us *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1871) and *The Adventures of Hucklebury Finn* (1884). These are acknowledged classics.

Earlier I mentioned that this year was the centenary of Rudyard Kipling's birth. He was born on 30 December, 1865. In 1894-95 the *Jungle Books* were written. The world created by Kipling in these stories is one of impelling reality, an elemental world in which the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence, obedience to the law and a high moral code are the outstanding qualities. Kipling is immensely convincing.

The *Just So Stories* published in 1912 are inimitable, perhaps incomparable. Kipling is one of the world's great story tellers and his gift to children's literature is inestimable.

*Stalky & Co*, the irreverent, amazing story of his own schooldays, at the United Services College, Westward Ho! Devon, perhaps does not fall exactly under the heading of "Children's Literature". There were certainly some headmasters of the time who wished the book had never been written and who condemned it heartily from the pulpit and in letters to the Press as subversive of schoolboy behaviour!

Between 1870 and 1911 that prolific storyteller, Mrs. Molesworth, wrote more than 100 books of which *The Cuckoo Clock*, *The Children of the Castle*, *Carved Lions*, *Peterkin* and *Two Little Waifs* are outstanding. Mrs. Molesworth knew children and she created personalities readily recognized by her readers.

Mrs. Ewing, Kate Greenaway, Rider Haggard and Mrs. Nesbit were all making their considerable contribution in these years. Andrew Lang was retelling the great legends, folk tales and fairy tales. Then there was Grahame.

In 1885 Kenneth Grahame wrote *The Golden Age*. This was followed three years later by *Dream Days*. Ten years elapsed before he gave the world the wealth of beauty, fun, joy and nonsense, and the enduring and endearing characters of *The Wind in The Willows*.

There is another book of these years that needs a special mention. It is *The Secret Garden* published in 1911 by Frances Hodgson Burnett. It made an immediate impact and has continued to do so. An experiment carried out by *The Times*, London, in 1957 proved this.

In collaboration with a world authority on children's books, Miss Kathleen Lines, *The Times* selected the 99 best books for children. The books on the list were restricted to works which could be judged as literature, and excluded instructional and other books whose merits were not primarily literary. It also limited the selection to books written specially for children. The aim was to present as wide a variety of children's books as possible, all of which were still living works, and which could be expected to live in the future. It included only books currently in print.

*The Times* had the satisfaction of knowing from the response among readers of all ages that the 99 books were well chosen, and that it was justified in its claim that children who read even half of the number listed would have nibbled at world literature, would have some inkling of the variety of books to be sampled, and would acquire some critical sense.

*The Times* asked its readers to select the 100th book. By an almost overwhelming vote the honour went to *The Secret Garden*. *The Times* had excluded it from its list because it doubted whether its qualities and appeal were as timeless as those of other books. Miss Lines did not want it excluded because she believed in its appeal, and was not surprised when it was an outright "winner"—and remember this was the year 1957, when the Russians first put a satellite into orbit.

Mary of *The Secret Garden* is a sour and nasty little girl with a bad temper. I don't think there is a child anywhere who doesn't have some days like Mary and therefore who does not understand her. Children respond to Mary. They know that something doesn't have to be familiar to be real. That is one reason why they can wander about in time as well as in space, and be as happy and as at home in the nineteenth, eleventh or first centuries as they are in the present.

Because children are demanding, positive in their likes and dislikes and intolerant of condescension and artificiality it is not easy to write for them. It is even more difficult to create a world in which very young children are at home, to make within the limits of a small child's experience a book full of action, interest and joy.

No writer created more genuine classics for these very young children than Beatrix Potter whose *Tale of Peter Rabbit* was published in 1902.

To begin with this wonderful book could not find a publisher. Miss Potter in 1901 printed a small edition for private circulation with only the frontispiece in colour. It was then that Frederic Warne & Co., who had previously rejected the manuscript, decided to publish it with coloured illustrations in 1902.

It is the rare combination of reality and fantasy which gives Beatrix Potter's books their quality. She manages to humanize her animals, but still keeps them animals, and her simple lucid prose sets her stories apart. Remember this small extract from *The Tailor of Gloucester*:

"The moon climbed over the roofs and chimneys, and looked down over the gateway into college court. There were no lights in the windows nor any sound in the houses, all the city of Gloucester was fast asleep under the snow."

This short extract from *The Tale of Mr. Jeremy Fisher* illustrates the effect she obtains with simple words:

"Once upon a time there was a frog called Mr. Jeremy Fisher; he lived in a little damp house amongst the buttercups at the edge of the pond.

"The water was all slippy-sloppy in the larder and in the back passage.

"But Mr. Jeremy liked getting his feet wet; nobody ever scolded him and he never caught cold!"

To-day the miniature books of Joan Aglund Walsh with their coloured stylized drawings are reminiscent of the Potter magic. Some of Miss Walsh's best are *A Friend Is Someone Who Loves You*, *Love Is a Special Kind of Feeling*, and *A Pocket Full of Proverbs*.

The real development in children's books came after World War I when publishing houses began to establish children's departments. Macmillan, the publisher of "Alice", were the first company to have such a department. To-day there is even greater emphasis on this kind of development and few publishers of consequence have failed to set up children's departments.

To-day far more children's books are published than any one person can read, so that it is useless to complain, as some do, that all the classics have been written. To-day's writers have a bigger audience and a different kind of reader. Television, radio and other activities compete for the child's time, and one might say do the same for his mind. But the books pour forth unendingly from the presses.

In the United States last year more than 3,000 children's books were published. In the United Kingdom the total was 2,469. The figures for January to August of this year in Britain are 1,535 new books.

The years between the world wars are illumined with the names of John Masefield, the poet laureat whose *Midnight Folk* written for children in 1927 is

still a favourite. Hugh Lofting delighted young and old with his Dr. Dolittle books, Arthur Ransome, a colossus of story telling adventures, and a wonderful craftsman began his prolific career with *Swallows and Amazons* (1931); Alison Uttley, a gifted writer, produced *A Traveller in Time*, one of a long succession of fine stories; Walter de la Mare, A. A. Milne and John Buchan gave to children some of the best stories yet written.

These are names as well known in the adult world of fiction as among the juveniles. Agreed. But what is significant is that these writers wanted to communicate with children. They illustrate the truth of what all concerned with children's literature know, and that is that a good book for children is a good book for anyone. A good book for children is not and has never been the sole property of children—think of *Treasure Island*.

C. S. Lewis, author, critic, theologian, who wrote the Narnia books for children is more emphatic about what is a good book for children. "I am prepared to set it as a canon", he wrote, "that a children's story which is enjoyed only by children is a bad children's book."

In the last analysis a writer writes a book because he or she has something to say and enjoys saying it. Sometimes it is something for children, sometimes it is something that deals with ideas beyond a child's experience. It would be an enormous loss if it was believed that writers for children are only capable of speaking to children. So many of them move freely from one field to another.

All children's authors of any note have from time to time testified that in writing for children they are writing to please themselves. A. A. Milne in an essay on "Children's Books" (included in *By Way of Introduction*) said that many children's authors failed because they approached their task in a mood of relaxation, feeling that they could get away with more or less anything on the plea that they were writing down to the child. But warns Mr. Milne "a children's book must be written not for children but for the author himself. That the book when written should satisfy children must be regarded as a happy accident . . . Whatever fears one has, one need not fear that one is writing too well for a child. It is difficult enough to express oneself with all the words in the dictionary at one's disposal: with none but simple words the difficulty is much greater".

Let me remind you of Mr. Milne's deceptive skill in writing of childish things. Pooh and Piglet are leaving the house at Pooh Corner to look for a house for Eeyore, having found time for a "little something". This is how Milne describes the scene:

"The clock was still saying five minutes to eleven when Pooh and Piglet set out on their way half an hour later. The wind had dropped, and the snow, tired of rushing round in circles trying to catch itself up, now fluttered

gently down until it found a place on which to rest, and sometimes the place was Pooh's nose and sometimes it wasn't, and in a little while Piglet was wearing a white muffler round his neck feeling more snowy behind the ears than he had ever felt before."

In spite of the testimony of great writers, there still lingers in the minds of many a blithe assumption that to work for children is to work at the bottom of the ladder. It is pointless to try to fix the blame for this prejudice common to too many adults.

Distinguished writers, even professors who write for children, have met this attitude from their colleagues. Library systems and teachers' colleges without adequate collections of good children's books to inform and inspire the student teachers share the blame. Newspapers mostly ignore children's books. Some parents, pre-occupied with sophistication, often rush children into adult situations before they are ready.

The general reader tends to lump all children's books together as dull and to regard any adult book as superior. This is manifestly absurd but nevertheless the attitude is disheartening to the writer of children's books.

The author who writes for children creates a young world, a fresh world, and a world as it seems to children. Problems there are, grief and fears, and hurts are felt as keenly as in later life. But in normal childhood the problems are soluble ones, the griefs are brief and usually subject to comfort. The grown ups, however disappointing they may be as individuals, are, on the whole, sources of strength and tenderness. Common things are as wonderful as the rare. It is grown ups who exclaim when a school of porpoises are seen off the beach. To the young the crabs on the shore are just as interesting.

In spite of the avalanche of children's books on the market to-day, many of them could be described as merchandise instead of books, and in spite of the plague of books written to order, there are writers whose integrity as artists is easily recognized.

At the present time our cinemas are crowded at all sessions of *Mary Poppins*. This is a delectable film with Julie Andrews as a very pretty nanny. The books are just as enchanting. They happen to be written by an Australian, Mrs. P. L. Travers, who lives in London. The first *Mary Poppins* appeared in 1934 and the fourth of the saga appeared in 1952. To-day you might be forgiven for thinking that Walt Disney created *Mary Poppins*.

Because the film has received such acclaim editors have discovered Mrs. Travers. In *The New York Times* Book Review Children's Book Section last May, Mrs. Travers was asked to give her views on fantasy. She is a forthright person and wrote that she disliked the word because, through misuse, it had

come to mean something contrived, "far from the truth and untrustworthy". She was then asked how she would foster imagination in children in a technological age.

Her reply is worth recording: "I would just say feed and warm them (the children) and let imagination be—though wonder, I think, is a better word."

It is this sense of wonder that has made her books such a joy.

Now that *Mary Poppins* is so well known from the screen version there is a danger that the original Travers version will be overlooked and not given to children to read. The high quality of Disney's pictures is not to be found in the books he publishes because these are only used to promote his films. Let us compare the opening of the Disney and the Travers' books. This is Disney:

"It was spring—always a proper time for new beginnings and old memories. There were barrows loaded with flowers on every street in London. In the little park near Reeves Hill the children were flying kites. They were laughing and racing against the wind, falling down, some of them dirtying their stockings and scuffing their shoes, but always laughing. Beyond the park railing, on Cherry Tree Lane, the fountain had been released from its long winter silence. It spouted a noisy important stream into a broad stone basin that was pink with the petals dropped from the overhanging cherry trees."

Now listen to the original:

"If you want to find Cherry Tree Lane all you have to do is ask a policeman at the crossroads. He will push his helmet slightly to one side, scratch his head thoughtfully, and then he will point his huge white gloved finger and say 'First to your right, second to your left, sharp right again, and you're there. Good morning.'

"And sure enough if you follow his directions exactly you will be there—right in the middle of Cherry Tree Lane, where the houses run down one side, and the Park runs down the other, and the cherry trees go dancing right down the middle."

This sort of experience can be repeated again and again. *Peter Pan* as a film suffered a worse fate than *Mary Poppins*. If I remember rightly the name of Sir James Barrie was not even to be found in the small print.

To-day's books look pretty. They are well packaged—most of them are passable. The thing is to find those which will delight. We cannot wait for the verdict of history, but in your search you can eliminate the pleasant little stories of childish adventures, those filled with good photographs surrounded by texts that too often are dull; eliminate most of the cloak and dagger themes, many of the information books, many biographies and fictionalized history. When you

have done that you will, by comparison, have reduced the mountains to small hillocks—just as you do in the world of adult books.

Among those which have been rescued from the mountainous heaps you could find a rich and convincing novel about Alfred the Great by C. Walter Hodges called *The Namesake*; Lucy Boston's eerie, imaginative and subtle *An Enemy at Green Knowe*; and the exciting novel *Save The Khan*, by B. Bartos Hoppner. Rosemary Sutcliff's vivid stories of early Britain, particularly Roman Britain, such as *Eagle of The Ninth*, *Warrior Scarlet* and her most recent one about the Picts and Scots, *The Mark of The Horse Lord*, are stirring, exciting, and informative.

For exquisite artistry in unfolding tales of miniature people, Mary Norton's stories of *The Borrowers* are an inspiration. The idea of a tribe of miniature people living under floorboards, behind the wainscoting in old houses, battenning on human beings, borrowing for their needs from pantry, parlour, bedroom and kitchen, afraid only of the awful fate of being "seen", is marvellous.

We all know these people exist. Well, don't we? As Kate the chronicler worked it out:

"How else to explain the steady inexplicable disappearance of certain small objects about the house? Not only safety pins, needles, blotting paper, match boxes, and those sort of things, but even in Kate's short life she had noticed that if you did not open a drawer for any length of time you never found it quite as you left it—something was always missing—your best handkerchief, your lucky sixpence."

These people are not fairies, elves or leprechauns. In Miss Norton's remarkable fantasy, Pod, Arriety, and Homily are drawn as tough, struggling, delightful folk like the nicest families of our own world. They have characters we can all recognize, their troubles are so near our own that we can sympathise immediately, their joys, particularly the joys of young Arriety, somehow represent the true joys of life. Not only the Tom Thumb detail grips the reader, there is high drama and a beautiful excitement made up of secrets and mystery.

Among the elite of to-day's writers are William Mayne, whose stories are easy reading but are infinitely rewarding, especially those like *A Swarm In May*; Edward Ardizzone, whose illustrations are as distinctive as his stories; Noel Streatfield who is infinitely successful in telling a story packed with information about careers; Eleanor Farjeon, whose many gifts to children include *Martin Pippin in The Daisy Field*, *Italian Peepshow* and her poetry. She died at the age of 84 this year.

There is tremendous emphasis to-day on books of information about complicated subjects. I suppose there is so much to be explained and to be related to common experience such as rockets, spacecraft, radar, television, etc.

These non-fiction books appear in attractive formats and are popular, but too many of them make things appear too easy. One cannot escape hard work in the search of true knowledge. Foolishly, I think, some adults encourage children to concentrate on non-fiction books. They think this is more meritorious. It is getting dangerously close to the old idea that children's books are meant to instruct.

Reading for its own sake, for pure enjoyment must never be set aside as a waste of time in favour of reading as a means for acquiring information.

The child who has access to the excellent books drawn from the great body of traditional literature, folk and fairy tales, legends and hero stories, as well as the best writing of authors of yesterday and to-day, will pick up all kinds of information, will broaden his background, will develop imagination and a sense of humour, and will grow naturally and deeply in humanity and understanding.

In conclusion I want to say something of our Australian writers. They are highly competent and the best of them are as well known overseas as they are here. They bring to the young reader a knowledge of their own background and heritage. No longer is the setting of every children's book somewhere on the other side of the world.

Norman Lindsay's *Magic Pudding* won world recognition long ago and in any company finds its place for its lusty good humour, nonsense and spontaneity. This wonderful tale was first published in 1918 and has been through about 20 editions. A most elegant new edition was published in 1963. It also appears in the Penguin paperbacks. Some people, indeed, think it is the best Lindsay ever put onto paper in any form—but this is neither the time nor the place to go into *that*.

Ethel Turner in *Seven Little Australians* touched as many hearts as Louisa Alcott did in *Little Women*. Mary Grant Bruce enchanted generations of children with her Billabong books. Mrs. Aeneas Gunn with *We of The Never Never* and May Gibbs with *The Adventures of Snugglepoot and Cuddle Pie* are among others who delighted the young.

To-day Nan Chauncy, Joan Phipson, Eve Pownall, Betty Roland, Fay Brinsmead, Eleanor Spence, Patricia Wrightson, Mary Durack, Judith Wright, Elyne Mitchell, Ruth Park, Nuri Mass, Elisabeth Macintyre, Carol Odell, and Noela Young command attention. Their work is known and admired beyond this country. Their contribution to our national literature must await the verdict of time. Meanwhile the quality of their writing is high and they are an effective voice for Australia in their field.

In this year's June issue of *The Junior Bookshelf*, this authoritative review of children's books published by the British Library Association, there is an

article by Marcus Crouch on Nan Chauncy. Although she was born in England all her writing has been done in Tasmania. Three times she has won the Australian "Best Book of The Year" award, and one of her books, *They Found a Cave*, has been made into a film. Mr. Crouch pays this tribute to Mrs. Chauncy:

"In Nan Chauncy we have a writer with a rare and exciting scene, a vision and a philosophy. With increasing power and mastery of her medium and its technique, she has drawn a picture of a satisfying and sane way of life, 'shut in and secret' indeed, but nevertheless sharply relevant to those who are bound by the wheel of an urban society."

You will notice that in that list there are no men. It seems the women are more prolific. But Ivan Southall, George Finkel, John Gunn, R. S. Porteous and Len Evers are most successful. When Len Evers shared the "Book of The Year" award some years ago with his *Racketty Street Gang* he told me he had written it because he wanted to write "a rattling good yarn" for boys which was realistic. He thought that there were too many women about with a namby-pamby attitude to children. I suggest that too many Australian men think it "namby-pamby" to write for children.

I have not tried to give you a critical evaluation of children's literature in the last 100 years, but rather to outline some of its splended achievements since "Alice". There is no time to tell you of the spectacular development in picture books. In the creation of picture books Walter Crane, Randolph Caldecott and Kate Greenaway were the great originators. They set standards of excellence in technique, storytelling details, gaiety and perceptive insight. It is a field in which, regrettably, we have not done well in Australia to date.

What I hope I might have done tonight is to persuade you that children's books are not just something you think about as Christmas and birthday presents for the young of your families. Children's books deserve to be considered as part of our literary heritage and their authors and artists treated seriously. At this point I feel rather like Huck Finn, except that he wrote a classic book and I have given a pedestrian address, but this is what he said on his last page:

"There ain't nothing more to write about and I am rotten glad of it, because if I'd a knowed what trouble it was to write a book I wouldn't a tackled it and ain't going to no more. But I reckon I got to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest because Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and sivilise me, and I can't stand it. I been there before."

OUT OF PRINT—OUT OF MIND (AUSTRALIA'S GOLDFIELDS  
WRITING)\*

By NANCY KEESING

IN Sydney, in the month of January, 1851, from a ship out of America, landed a returning Australian "forty-niner" called Edmund Hammond Hargraves. To his eye certain features of the Californian goldfields had resembled country he remembered near Bathurst in New South Wales. He stepped ashore full of "confident expectations" that he was about to alter Australia's future history. On the 12th of February following, at Lewis Ponds Creek, a tributary of Summer Hill Creek, which is itself a tributary of the Macquarie River on which is built Bathurst, Australia's first inland city—on 12 February, 1851, Hargraves found gold in his first experimental dishful of earth and gravel. To his eighteen-year-old guide he exclaimed: "This is a memorable day in the history of New South Wales. I shall be a baronet, you will be knighted, and my old horse will be stuffed, put into a glass-case, and sent to the British Museum."<sup>1</sup>

There can be few countries, if any, in modern times whose historical progression is cleft (short of war or disaster), by a dividing line as dramatic and as demonstrable as that which split Australia's history—the series of gold discoveries and gold rushes which Hargraves initiated. In February, 1851, a certain set of social, economic and ethnographic conditions applied. By February of the following year the picture had altered not only radically, but in a fashion which was to set the scene and determine the course of Australia's history for the remainder of the nineteenth century and far beyond.

\* This paper was delivered to a meeting of the Sydney University Arts Association on 4 November, 1965. It had originally been prepared to introduce a Seminar on Australian Literature at the Conference of the International Federation of University Women in Brisbane last year. Miss Keesing had to meet the problem of an audience which included both some overseas visitors and others who had virtually no knowledge of Australian literature and also some graduates whose knowledge of Australian writing was wide, and she composed a paper deliberately containing many sweeping generalizations and simplifications. For example, she has found it convenient not to mention any of the numerous gold discoveries before Hargraves and she has not discussed the controversies which raged about Hargraves himself, including his exact role in the discovery of gold and the extent to which, in fact, he did rely on the resemblances between the Californian goldfields and the country in New South Wales. As the interest is primarily literary, Miss Keesing has tended to follow the early historical view.

<sup>1</sup> E. H. Hargraves, *Australia and its Goldfields* (1855), pp. 116.

For every one, and every activity in the country, 1850 marks the end of one period and the beginning of another. This is true whether one considers the condition of aborigines; aspects of Government and Government policy; agricultural methods; taste; art and literature; methods of transport . . . The list is virtually inexhaustible.

This being so it is astonishing to reflect how little attention is paid to the writing of the period. Two years ago I began compiling an anthology of first-hand accounts and contemporary writing about Australia's goldfields. All but a fraction of one per cent of the material I have collected is out of print and most of it is rare. In this anthology I am trying to represent every Australian State, and every stage of goldmining. I am not considering fiction, second- or third-hand accounts, or later rehashes of other men's words. Much of what I have chosen is not "literature"; but to qualify it has to be readable, entertaining and interesting. I have letters so nearly illiterate and painfully written that one can imagine the muddy composer curling his rheumatism-stiffened joints around pen or pencil, and ready to desist were it not for the power of family love urging him to communicate some of his odd, antipodean experiences to people at home. I have omitted a great deal of pompous, flowery, moralizing dullness whose complacent authors would probably turn in their graves if they could know that the unschooled letter-writer in the next tent would be preferred a century and more ahead. I have included many official documents, reports, despatches, and letters which are not only full of interest, but are often examples of excellent prose. I have not discovered any work or piece of work which I consider "great" in the sense of being a true classic. But a large amount of this "applied literature" is truly classic for our goldfields, and that it is so little known is unaccountable.

In using the term "applied literature" I follow H. M. Green<sup>2</sup> who in turn follows Oliver Elton. That is, I suggest that while some of the documentary writers of the goldfields wrote poorly but interestingly and some wrote adequately and sometimes well, others wrote often, or sometimes, "literature". The late P. R. Stephenson in a Commonwealth Literary Fund lecture said: "In all categories of factual writing there are at least some books which have literary merit, and it is an error of criticism to exclude any book from the field of literature merely because it is a work of information rather than imagination."

At first the changes which the gold discoveries caused in Australian writing were more a matter of quantity of books than of altering approaches or styles. From the times of the earliest explorers and continuing through the beginnings of white settlement in Australia, the largest body of literature concerning the country was composed of "applied writing". Work in this mode can be traced in an unbroken line from the earliest diarists (Tench, etc.) down to present-day

<sup>2</sup> H. M. Green, *A History of Australian Literature* (1961), pp. xiv *et seq.*

exponents who are as various as, for example, W. J. Dakin and Alan Moorehead. By the end of 1851 the steady stream of goldfields books was beginning to flow, but, as I have said, they are nearly all unprocurable and only two, to-day, can easily be bought.<sup>3</sup>

Some have been reprinted in small editions—a few in Dr. Mackaness' series of historical monographs. But these often date from twenty and more years ago and few have been re-issued in a form likely to interest the generality of book buyers.

This hiatus seems the more extraordinary when one considers that Australia has always been intensely proud of its goldfields. The long suppression of Convict literature is far more understandable. Indeed, one of the swift alterations in our society after 1851 was that Australians could suddenly see themselves as a nation of worthy, industrious diggers and glorious gamblers instead of, as before, a people roughly divided between convicts and their glorified gaolers. This new self-vision was not unrealistic. Although transportation to New South Wales had ceased in 1840, time-serving convicts, freed and ticket-of-leave men still accounted for a high proportion of the population ten years later. The gold-impelled immigration of the decade 1850-1860 altered that proportion swiftly and for ever. Even among longer-established residents the subtle social balance swung. "Joe Blow—ticket-of-leave man" (and remembered as such often after years of honest farming or trade), suddenly and frequently became "Joe Blow—successful digger". Not only acquired wealth altered his status. The goldfields themselves were, by their nature, the most potent levellers of class distinctions.

Critics were not wanting to bewail such changes. One of these must serve to illustrate as well as to amplify. He is an early representative of the growing tribe of English observers, a gentleman called J. R. Godley who, as will be seen below, arrives at a most fascinating prophecy by reasoning from the most objectionably snobbish set of premises imaginable. Godley writes in 1853<sup>4</sup> of the social changes wrought by gold in Sydney. Precisely similar accounts exist a-plenty for Melbourne at this time. "The inconvenience felt by the upper classes at Sydney from the scarcity of labour" is the theme.

Labourers in 1853 were still more prone to try their luck on the fields than to keep their traditional places. Godley grants that:

"Most of the upper classes have had a large share in the general prosperity. The banks have realized untold profits. All the merchants have done well; some have made large fortunes in the last two years. Even the

<sup>3</sup> Mrs. Charles Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold Diggings of Australia in 1852-3. Written on the Spot*. Ed. P. Thompson (1965).

A. Fauchery, *Letters from a Miner in Australia* (1965). Trans. from the French by A. Chisholm.

<sup>4</sup> J. R. Godley, *Extracts from the Journal of a Visit to New South Wales in 1853*. (Reprint from Fraser's Magazine, Nov.-Dec., 1853.) Pp. 511 *et seq.*

stockowners, though of course they have had the hardest battle to fight, are probably better off than ever, the increase in the price of wool and of meat having more than compensated for the increased cost of production."

(In other words, the pastoralists, in order to compete with the goldfields, and many of them already hit hard by the increasing shortage of servile convict labour for ten years past, had had to pay reasonable wages for the first time, and provide adequate rations for their men. They had also been forced to invent new methods of farming and sheep running in order to conserve available and expensive labour. The English-style shepherd and sheep-washer, for instance, vanished about this time from the Australian scene, while fences and stockyards altered the landscape.) Godley proceeds:

"But the present effect of the abundance of money on those who were well off before is not pleasant. They are no longer the rich *par excellence*; they are jostled at every turn, often outbid and outshone by those who had been their inferiors, perhaps their servants. The wife of one of the highest functionaries of the Government was in a shop looking for a dress. One was shown to her . . . she said it was too dear. A common labourer who was standing by told the shopman to 'let her have it; he would pay for it'. A captain of a vessel looking among the sailors' haunts for men, addressed one, evidently a common seaman, and asked if he would ship. 'What is the size of your vessel?', said the man, consideringly. 'There she lies', said the captain; 'she's a barque of 400 tons.' 'Just the vessel I want', said the other, pulling out an immense roll of notes, 'If you'll sell her I'll buy her, and ship *you*'."

Godley adds:

"All this sort of thing is very galling to one's aristocratic pride, quite independently of one's positive discomfort. The gentleman . . . finds it very difficult to console himself for being thrown into the shade as regards outlay and display by men whom he would not in old times have allowed to wait at his table . . ."

We are now close to Godley's prophecy. It is a paradox, being in one way utterly wrong and one that could only have been uttered by a man of his generation and class, though not all these shared his sentiments. Yet in another way it is most curiously right. Here it is:

"If things continue long as they now are, I must say I shall not be at all surprised at the best people going. I can conceive no social state more disagreeable to live in than a community in which the labouring class is composed of gamblers (all gold diggers become gamblers in habits and character), and the aristocracy, that is, the richest and most powerful people

are the *successful* gamblers. At the same time, though the emigration of the more educated and civilized people from New South Wales would be a natural consequence of the existing state of things, it is not the less a very deplorable consequence, and must aggravate all the evils of that state of things immensely. Perhaps this prospect of a perpetual straining off of the best portion of society is the worst element in the probable future of Australia . . .”

*On his own terms* Godley was wrong. Relatively few of his “successful gamblers” left Australia. They and their descendants were far too well off where they were and, like Richard Mahony, a victim of precisely this kind of predicament, men who returned to England often found, after a brief experiment with life there, that there are great advantages to remaining a large frog in one’s own small puddle. But in another sense Godley was right. We are still bedevilled by the annual loss to Europe of some of our best creative and interpretative minds who find our climate intolerable for reasons not unlike those he foresaw. This conflict has been explored by many Australian novelists—notably Henry Handel Richardson and Martin Boyd.

Other observers, no less than Godley “gentlemen” by class and education, were differently stimulated by the atmosphere of rapid social change which surrounded them in Australia. The quaker William Howitt, a well regarded and established writer, was a man of sixty when he arrived at Ballarat in 1852. His age prevented him neither from bringing a very penetrating approach to goldfields society, nor from discovering a highly profitable goldfield himself. His book, *Land, Labour and Gold* is long, far-ranging and well written. One would suppose it invaluable to any sociologist. Needless to say it is out of print. Howitt’s prophecy also has validity. He says:<sup>5</sup>

“One of the things which strikes you everywhere [on the fields] . . . is the blunt, rude, independent manner of the common people. These men, in England, had a score of wealthier and more educated classes above them; but here they are relieved from the high pressure of such a state of society . . . They get more money than at home, possess and ride on horses, carry guns, and keep dogs. On these diggings there are the most huge, savage, furious dogs kept that I have seen anywhere. At every tent is chained one or more of these stupendous brutes . . . In fact, it is impossible that such thousands of the coarsest, rudest, and most ignorant of the English population, well sprinkled with felons from Sydney and Van Diemen’s Land, should thus meet together without becoming anything but agreeable or polite. There are, it is true, many exceptions, and much good-nature among them . . .”

<sup>5</sup> W. Howitt, *Land, Labour, and Gold; or Two Years in Victoria*, 2 vols. (1855), Vol. I, Letter xix, pp. 342 *et seq.*

Here is Howitt's prophecy:

"It will take a century to work this miscellaneous gathering of rude people out of the scum. As they get money, they will, however, as in America, in time give their children some education; but out of them will grow, as is plain to see, a go-ahead, self-confident, Yankee sort of people. It is really amusing and amazing to see what a knowing race of lads there is already amongst them: lads perfectly precocious in their experiences . . . They set up for themselves before most lads at home go out apprentices . . . Their spring, like that of the climate here, is an almost indefinable streak between winter and summer . . ."

Howitt then goes on to describe one of these boys, but for variety I shall offer part of a verse account by Charles Robert Thatcher,<sup>6</sup> known as "The Inimitable Thatcher" to the Victorian diggers. He was a professional entertainer.

Here the boys grow up without  
The slightest education  
To teach them to succeed in life,  
In following their vocation:  
Of course they cannot read at all,  
Nor can they write their name  
And the only mark they ever make

Is when they *mark* out claims . . .  
[We went to the bar in a bowling saloon]  
Expecting then to hear  
These infants call for lemonade,  
Or else for ginger beer;  
But the orders they gave staggered me  
As if I had been shot,  
*For one sang out for a gin cocktail,  
And the other brandy hot!*

In surprise I had my nobbler,  
And I was going out,  
When one of the lads came up and said  
"I'll toss you for a shout!"  
I couldn't refuse, so I tossed and won,  
It's true now what I quote—  
He drank with me, and then to pay  
Tossed down a five-pound note!

<sup>6</sup> R. Thatcher, *Thatcher's Colonial Minstral* (1864), from *The Rising Generation*, pp. 101.

I left a hole I'd shepherded,  
 Of course I was to blame,  
 And I found a child in petticoats  
 Had been and jumped my claim;  
 And when I asked him to come out,  
 He at me took a sight,  
 And said, "*Old boy, that slews you*",  
 And pulled out a miner's right!

The nearly unbelievable point is that these accounts are scarcely exaggerated. But it took less than Howitt's hundred years to alter the people and see most of them at least partly educated. The precocity noted here was shared by middle class boys, one of whom recalled his adolescence in a very lively book of gold-fields reminiscence called *Banking Under Difficulties*.<sup>7</sup> His name was G. A. Preshaw and he was the son of an Edinburgh surgeon who arrived at Ballarat in 1852 to practise medicine and gold digging. At first Dr. Preshaw left his wife and children in Melbourne lodgings, but after a few weeks when he had established himself at the diggings he sent for his thirteen-year-old son who left his mother and sister and set out alone. "Although my fare was paid to ride on the dray, I was so anxious to say I had performed the journey to the diggings on foot, that I walked every inch of the way . . ." [It was a distance of approximately seventy miles.] "I was a young digger", Preshaw wrote, "but there were no schools . . . and all hands had to make themselves generally useful." On his own account he had luck, and having made a respectable "pile" by his late teens, he turned to a more settled occupation and joined the Bank of New South Wales.

In 1860 the Bank sent Preshaw to Kiandra in New South Wales where a rush had just broken out. He remained at Kiandra throughout the astonishing winter of 1861 when, in conditions now popular for winter sports, but fantastically disagreeable for gold digging, the mountain town had its brief spell of golden fortune. Preshaw's journey to Kiandra was adventurous. William Howitt often expressed astonishment that in this egalitarian society every Jack owned a horse. But for some reason young Preshaw had not learned to ride. From a coastal steamer he was rowed through the surf to a beach near Bega on the New South Wales south coast, and instructed by the Bank to purchase a horse and find his way to Kiandra from the coast. He found this assignment even more difficult than most of his contemporaries would have done and his journey, into increasing

<sup>7</sup> G. A. Preshaw, *Banking Under Difficulties, or Life on the Goldfields of Victoria, New South Wales and New Zealand* (1888), pp. 53 *et seq.*

cold and snow, was slow. At Kiandra the Bank of New South Wales turned out to be a calico tent where an assistant:

“ . . . was perched on a piece of bark which rested on two logs, a stream of water running under him; in fact right through the building. I was puzzled to account for this, but on examination found it was caused by the snow, which was a foot or two deep at the back of the tent, thawing . . . No fireplace, so of course no fire; no door to the tent, but merely a piece of calico with a piece of sapling at the bottom, which was rolled up or down as occasion required. The counter was . . . four saplings stuck into the mud with a few rough boards on top”.

Each day the bank's treasure had to be transported to and from the police camp by pack horses. There, in the absence of a safe, it rested under the Police Commissioner's bunk and was never touched. Preshaw considered this phenomenon spoke volumes for the honesty of the police!

When Kiandra rush slackened Preshaw was sent to Lambing Flat near Yass which he reached (after running the gauntlet of bushrangers) at the height of the disgraceful anti-Chinese riots. Of these riots he gives an account which is rare for its dispassionate objectivity. Later he went to the New Zealand goldfields for the Bank.

*Banking Under Difficulties* is of especial interest in the context of this paper. The early chapters are taken from Dr. Preshaw's notebooks and in them the early tradition of astonishment at the outward aspect of the goldfields prevails. Dr. Preshaw, fresh from Edinburgh, remonstrates with a blasphemous teamster and tries to reform his language and approach to religion. He is very conscious of the incongruity of his “Highland bonnet, blue guernsey, long boots, a leathern belt, and a staff for protection . . .” in an Australian setting. But his son breaks away from all the earlier witnesses. His view is comparatively classless for he arrived young in the country, and by the time he comes to write he is an Australian. Through his work we see emerging a type whom our friend Godley would have been hard put to place in an appropriate layer of class stratification. One brief example must serve. It describes Kiandra; and it is important to remember that every material article in that settlement from furniture to food had been painfully transported over snow-bound trails by pack-horses.

“The great attraction to Kidd's hotel was its restaurant, for in no other on the diggings could a meal be obtained owing to the cold, the difficulty of procuring provisions, and the general discomfort which prevailed. The chance of a good meal, hot, quickly served, and to be eaten with the assistance of knives, forks and plates, was hailed by hundreds with more than delight. To gentlemen . . . unaccustomed to cook out of doors over a miserable fire in the rain, to poor wearied diggers, arriving after a tiresome tramp of miles over bleak swampy plains such an opportunity was not to be lost . . .

“The restaurant was crowded—and such a crowd. Gold commissioners, bankers, squatters, swells come to see the rush; burly diggers just as they had left their work, shanty-keepers, bullies, loafers, and niggers all pierced with cold and impelled by hunger, that great leveller of distinctions, jostled and pressed eagerly . . . Long before the time stated for each meal the seats, intended to accommodate about fifty, were occupied by sixty or seventy hungry men, who passed the interval of waiting in horse-play, interspersed with vehement demands for the ‘grub’. At last the portcullis was opened, and a very Babel commenced; shouts of ‘Irish stew’, ‘liver and bacon’, ‘roast mutton’, were mingled with the clatter of plates and rattle of knives until, all being served, comparative quietness lasted . . .”

In this dining room one night a horrifying fight broke out. The outnumbered “white collar mob” (the phrase is Preshaw’s), bankers, swells, etc., retreated, and left the field open for a wild free-for-all. Space permits only a short quotation:

“There must be something attractive to the Irish mind in a free fight; they got up this one certainly for the pure love of the thing. Fellows at the far end of the room who had nothing to do with the original row, directly it was started would jump up, give a yell, and then go for the next man. Another, seeing the fray from afar, would run to the battle ground, force an entrance, and ‘wire in’, without taking pains to ascertain the respective sides; enough for them that kicking was to be done; so long as that luxury was to be had they were not to be restrained . . . someone went down, then the more fortunate ones at hand seemed to at once arrive at an understanding, they caught one another by the arms to steady themselves, and kicked and jumped on the poor wretch with the most savage satisfaction, each kick being accompanied by a grunt of approval, or a hiss of earnest . . .”

The examples I have chosen to quote so far are not adequate to indicate the wealth, scope and variety of early goldfields writing. Because the books themselves are not easily accessible it has been impossible to give references to volumes. Therefore at this point it will be appropriate to introduce a very generalized, but not, I think, an unjust view of goldfields writing as it emerged over some fifty or sixty years.

The written material covering the early rushes in New South Wales and Victoria is copious and remarkably well written both by professional and occasional authors most of whom were educated in Europe. Towards the end of the century the Western Australian and Northern Territory descriptions fall off sadly in quality. Descriptions of the Queensland fields are less in quantity than those from Western Australia which they resemble in their patchy artistry. One can postulate reasons for this decline in style. It may be partly perhaps, due to the great sameness of experience and landscape especially in Western

Australia. Another cause may well be that by the end of the century the sheer novelty of *reading* about gold had dissipated (though not, of course, the novelty of finding it!). But more important barriers to good writing were conditions at the later diggings. In Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory diggers endured exhausting physical hardships which often made immediate literary effort impossible—memoirs of these fields are commonly written many years after the events they describe. Shame may sometimes have been an inhibiting factor—at some remote goldfields aborigines (and others) were victims of cruelty and ignorance. Again in the later and especially in the remoter diggings the pattern of population differed very much from that in accessible places which had a good climate. The actual labourers, especially in Queensland and the Territory, were in a greater proportion of rough and tough to educated and observant. Certainly few women ventured to the harsher mining areas. But the most important single reason for the overall superiority of the early work is, I am sure, its immediacy. It was written close in time to the places, people and actions it describes and it gains in freshness and detail what it sometimes loses in shapeliness. This body of writing was called forth by the great European and British curiosity about Australia and its goldfields. For many intending migrants the question—America or Australia?—was crucial. Australia, trying desperately to attract migrants, supplied book after book.

These books were liable to be written by anyone, if not as it sometimes seems by everyone. Probably the most eminent author to visit these shores during the gold period was Anthony Trollope. Others bettered him at his own game for identical places. In support of this observation here are two accounts of the road to Gympie—a Queensland field discovered in 1867. Trollope says:<sup>8</sup>

“But the wonder of the journey was in the badness of the roads and the goodness of the coachmanship. I have been called upon by the work of my life to see much coaching . . . I have seen something of driving over the Alps and other European mountains; something also of driving in America. I have now travelled over the Gympie road, and I feel certain that not one of my old friends of the box . . . would, on being shown that road, have considered it possible that a vehicle with four horses should have been made to travel over it. There is often no road, and the coach is taken at random through the forest. Not unfrequently a fallen tree blocks up the track, and the coach is squeezed through some siding which makes it necessary for the leader to be going one way while the coach is going another. But the great miracle is in the sudden pitches . . . and then the equally sharp ascents . . . ”  
etc., etc.

<sup>8</sup> A. Trollope, *Australia and New Zealand*, 2 vols. (1873), Vol. I, pp. 78.

Trollope's "rival" here is David Kennedy, Jnr.<sup>9</sup> He was one of the "Kennedy Family"—a troupe of Scottish singers of traditional songs and entertainers. In the early 1870's the Kennedy family travelled to most of the Eastern goldfields by coach. The writer must have travelled the Gympie road almost exactly the same time as Trollope was there.

"On each side of us rose high banks surmounted by lofty trees, which towered up like walls. Coach and horses seemed to dwarf as we passed through this precipitous vegetation . . . The thickset, straight, tapering timber was interwoven with parasites, like natural trellis-work, with long leafy tendrils trickling down from a great height . . . Birds whistled, some of them with quaint songs, one having great resemblance to a vigorous kiss or 'smack'. Just before reaching the mountainous portion of the journey, some rain fell, creating a steamy marshy smell.

". . . 'Folks generally swear here', said Patrick [the coachman] with an air of information, at the foot of a formidable ascent—'a good long oath; it makes the horses go better.' No doubt; but—hm—we could never think—ahem! of—the very thing! use the names of Scotch songs. We started up the hill. 'Jo-o-Ohn Grumlie!' shouted one; 'Ye Banks and Bra-a-aes!' shrieked another; 'Get up and bar the door—oh!' yelled a third, frightening one of the leading horses, who sticks manfully in his collar. On we go. 'Oh, why left I my Ha-a-ame!' takes us an immense distance . . ."

This must serve to support an argument that the lively amateurism still to be found in Australian letters has a long history. Indeed, much of the best goldfields material is to be found, not in books, but in the writing of officials of all degrees from Governors and Magistrates to Sergeants of Police. Some of this literature has never been collected between covers—much of it remains in manuscript. The affair at the Eureka stockade provides a convenient demonstration of many kinds of writing about one central topic. It is interesting to notice, even from the very short quotations which will be used, how many and varied "voices" can be heard from the 1850's. At that time many of the goldfields authors spoke, like Godley, in the tones and cadences of the eighteenth century. Others, including most of the journalists, sound as modern as this morning.

The Eureka incident, although it occurred when the goldfields were less than four years old, provided a point of cleavage for goldfields attitudes which is comparable to the cleavage the actual gold discoveries made in Australian history. Eureka may also interest us to-day because of what has been made of it (as a symbol) since then. "Eureka" means many things to many people. Yet it has

<sup>9</sup> David Kennedy Junior, *Kennedy's Colonial Travel*, pp. 85.

not been treated well or fully in fiction or poetry by anyone. The story is contradictory and violent, but as full of the very dilemmas which most haunt our own times as any creative writer might wish.

Very briefly, to refresh our memories, this is what happened. From the outset of gold digging in Australia licences to dig were compulsory for every miner. In New South Wales the early Gold Commissioners were reasonable men and on the whole the licensing system worked smoothly in that Colony. In Victoria conditions were more chaotic in every way. For various reasons many highly unsuitable men were selected as Commissioners and for the Police force there. Some of these reasons were unavoidable—the fields were so rich and accessible a counter-attraction that it was difficult to recruit suitable men or to induce them to remain long on Police salaries. Writers of every class from Howitt and Preshaw Senior and the journalists of the day, down to every last mother's son who wrote home from the Ballarat and Bendigo diggings, tell their stories of unjust licence raids, unjust fines, bribery, corruption, actual cruelty and of class discrimination against the diggers. The Victorian Governors were slow to right these wrongs, although it is obvious that some of the problems were nearly insoluble. Nor were licence raids and tent burnings the only grievances. Short-sighted, unfair land laws were another cause of popular agitation equally with grievances arising from the fact that diggers had no right to parliamentary franchise.

The main Victorian fields occupied a fairly compact geographical area. These diggings, in 1854, after three years of intensive alluvial mining, were reaching the end of their days as a practically guaranteed source of wealth to unskilled men without capital. Intimations of change were abroad—mechanized and capitalized reef mining were beginning despite difficulties again inherent in the mining regulations.

Miners' organizations pressing for reform were no new thing on these fields by 1854 and there undoubtedly were, and had for two years at least, been many "foreigners" among the agitators. Not only were Americans present in large numbers, but there were Europeans from all the countries upheaved by the various wars of the time, plus deserters from ships, plus Chinese (who were not involved in the Eureka affair) plus, although they were not strictly "foreigners", a big population of disaffected Irish. Among the Europeans were many who had undoubtedly left their homelands one jump ahead of political prisons. Some of these men were opportunists, others genuine idealists. Among the men either arrested or wanted after the Eureka business, or killed in the Stockade, were Irish, German, Canadian, Welsh and British nationals; Americans; the famous Italian, Carboni Raffaello, and one American negro.

In 1854 Hotham, the new Governor, arrived in Victoria and toured the diggings peacefully. He promised reform and set afoot a number of moves

towards reform, but not very speedily. The slowness was not altogether his fault. Major decisions had to be ratified from London and shipping was slow. He did rectify one glaring wrong—a disgraceful miscarriage of justice which had been abetted by magisterial corruption. Hotham then imagined the Ballarat field would simmer down. Some first-hand accounts of some of the events which followed will be quoted shortly. In reading them it is important to keep in mind that all the obvious mis-timings and tactless actions of November, 1854 were, according to the letter of the law, absolutely unavoidable. This is not hindsight—so much was obvious at the time. In reading the Eureka material one's inward ear keeps hearing the voices of Nazi war criminals pleading in defence that "this was the order. We did what we were told according to the letter of our country's law as it was. We obeyed the commands of our superior officers." (Naturally there is an *immense* difference of degree. But it is a true difference *only* of degree.) Said Governor Hotham:

"So long as the law, however obnoxious and unpopular it may be, remains in force, obedience must be rendered or government is at an end."

Individual acts of lawlessness and cruelty were, however, avoidable. These acts occurred on both sides. Common to both sides also was a feeling of utter conviction that only force, as a solution, remained. There were several public meetings at which many miners publicly burned their licences and the newly invented Australian flag was flown. The miners elected leaders and began military drill behind a very flimsy barricade hastily erected from pit props on the Eureka lead.

The Government forces therefore attacked instead of hesitating any longer or waiting to defend their camp. Just before dawn broke on Sunday morning, 3 December, 1954, they easily stormed the stockade with a force of 276 men—troops and police combined.

Our first voice from the past is that of a twenty-year-old watchmaker born at Posen, then in Prussian Poland, but trained for his trade in Sheffield in England.<sup>10</sup> He had just arrived at Ballarat and by the end of a week had found a site for his tent which had been erected by a carpenter. It is now Thursday, 30 November, 1854:

"I prepared to start business. I was cleaning the small window, which was a necessary feature for my watchmaking business, about ten o'clock when Charles Dyte came running along, calling out: 'Hyman, put up your shutters!'

'Why?'

'The riot's begun.'"

<sup>10</sup> From an unpublished account by Hyam Levinson (by kind permission of Mrs. Aimée Selby and Frank Levinson, Esq.).

(The watchmaker was not to know that on this day the Commissioners Rede and Johnstone were to stage a licence hunt which ended in the reading of the Riot Act and the first concerted attack by the miners on Government forces.) His voice continues:

“There was nothing to be done. I had my stock of watches in my pocket. I stood and awaited developments. Presently the force came from the camp—a few hundreds of troopers and a number of foot-soldiers. The troopers formed in two lines ready for action. They were on the higher ground. Lying down on the ground they levelled their rifles, as it seemed to me, right in my direction. As I stood at the door of my tent, a digger came. Without saying a word to me, he went past the calico door of my tent inside it. He took out a revolver. I said: ‘Hullo, mate. What are you going to do?’

‘I’m going to shoot that ————— fellow, and he pointed to Captain Wise, in command of the military.

I objected. ‘There’ll be a volley, and we’ll both be shot.’ He persisted. ‘Well’, I said, ‘I don’t want to interfere, but I’ll have to go for protection.’ He showed no sign of desisting, so I called out to the troopers . . .”

(After this matters became very sticky for the watchmaker. Captain Wise rode up to interview him—Wise was destined to receive a fatal bullet at the Eureka Stockade the following Sunday morning—and a little later a posse of angry diggers confronted the young tradesman, furious because he had informed on one of their number.)

“I tried to explain, but it was useless. They were all Germans. They all attacked me. I was struck again and again. My window was smashed; my tent pulled down. I ran and they pursued me. I ran to a store where I had bought my provisions, but the situation was too dangerous for its occupants and they turned me out. I ran down the road with my pursuers after me. As I ran I saw my friend Samuels at his door. He happened to know German; so he stopped my pursuers and asked them what was the matter, so as to give me time. A mile or so away from my tent a Manchester friend’s shop offered me refuge. I ran inside and hid under a stretcher. There I hid for three days, those fellows hunting for me meanwhile and swearing to kill me if they caught me. Meanwhile all my belongings at my tent were stolen . . .”

It is still Thursday, 30 November, and by candlelight Gold Commissioner Rede sits down to write a report on the day’s events to the Colonial Secretary in Melbourne.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Further Papers Relative to the Discovery of Gold in Australia*, 1854-5 [1859] [1878], xxxviii, 107, 321. (Enclosure No. 4 in Hotham to Grey, No. 7 of 20 December, 1854.)

“Sir,

According to my instructions . . . to send out the police in search of licences to-day, I have the honour to inform you that Mr. Assistant Commissioner Johnstone, accompanied by the usual number of police, went into the gravel pits, where they were pelted with stones and obliged to retire. I sent down more police to support them, and soon after my presence was required; a mob was assembled on the road . . . I harangued them, telling them so long as the law was in force I would maintain it . . . I appealed to the well-disposed to retire, and some did so; but as there was still a considerable number, and I heard that the Eureka mob would join, I read the Riot Act, and sent for the military to support the police; the mob dispersed . . . Several shots were fired on both sides; one policeman had his head cut open, and one of the horses of the mounted 40th Regiment was stabbed; a miner was shot through the hand, and eight prisoners were made . . . I had large quartz thrown at my head. Had anything like a serious resistance been made there would have been considerable slaughter; our object was gained, we maintained the law . . . ”

While Commissioner Rede wrote his despatch the correspondent of *The Geelong Advertiser* sat up late. First he wrote a full report of the argument at the gravel pits, the Riot Act reading and the fracas which followed. He concluded his day's report thus:<sup>12</sup>

“We had very heavy rain from eight to eleven o'clock during the night, accompanied with thunder and lightning. The weather appears just now to be as unsettled as men's minds.

“The diggers hold that they are right at present. The camp does the same. The public can judge from the facts before them. The opinion of most disinterested persons here is, as the authorities assert, that they were but carrying out the law; but it is asserted that the hunting for licences, as matters stood, was alike unwise and indicative of a wish on the part of the authorities here to hurry on a collision . . . ”

By the next night the same journalist was to write:

“Many fear that harm will be done to-day. I can only say that things look as bad as they almost possibly can. Is there no peacemaker? . . . ”

Governor Hotham's voice adds its comment now:<sup>13</sup>

“The aspect of affairs now became serious; the disaffected miners formed themselves into corps, elected their leaders, and commenced drilling; they possessed themselves of all the arms and ammunition which were

<sup>12</sup> *Loc. cit.*, Enclosure No. 6 in Hotham to Grey, No. 7 of 20 December, 1854.

<sup>13</sup> *Loc. cit.*, Hotham to Grey, No. 7, 20 December, 1954.

within their reach, they established patrols, and placed parties on the high roads . . . searched all carts and drays for weapons, coerced the well affected, issued orders, signed by 'secretary to the commander-in-chief of diggers under arms', despatched emissaries to the other diggings to excite the miners, and held a meeting, whereat the Australian flag of independence was solemnly consecrated, and vows proffered for its defence . . . a riot was rapidly growing into a revolution, and the professional agitator giving place to the man of physical force . . ."

There was no peacemaker. Charles Ferguson, an American digger who was later to join the ill-fated Burke and Willis expedition as a foreman, takes up the tale.<sup>14</sup> Since 1 a.m. on the Sunday morning he had been out of the Stockade searching for some suspected spies:

"Just as I arrived at Bakery Hill, we saw the whole body of troops ascending the hill. We immediately . . . determined to make our way back to the stockade . . . We had barely arrived there when the pickets came running in with the information that the enemy were upon us . . . Had I been but a moment later I should have been shut out, for the stockade was in a brief time surrounded. They had come down on us just as the light of day was breaking in the east. We were formed in line . . . the Fortieth Regiment was advancing, but had not as yet discharged a shot. We could now see plainly the officer and hear his orders, when one of our men . . . stepped a little in front, elevated his rifle, took aim and fired. The officer fell. Captain Wise was his name. This was the first shot in the Ballarat war. It was said by many that the soldiers fired the first shot, but that is not true, as is well known to many . . ."

Ferguson further describes the fighting and tells of the escape of Vern, a German miners' leader. He describes the death of Ross, the young Canadian who said:

"'Charlie, it is no use, the men have all left us', and the next instant he said, 'My God, I am shot', and fell . . . It was said that Ross was shot after he surrendered, but that was not so . . ."

In some respects Ferguson is an unreliable chronicler. He greatly exaggerates troop numbers, etc. But he is one of the fairest of men and the subsequent story of how his friends obtained his release from prison makes splendid reading. (Carboni Raffaello mentions being chained to him one night.)

*The Geelong Advertiser's* correspondent was early on the scene and was appalled at the sight of the thirty or so corpses which littered the stockade.

<sup>14</sup>C. D. Ferguson, *The Experiences of a Forty-Niner During Thirty-Four Years' Residence in California and Australia*. Ed. F. T. Wallace (1888), pp. 284 *et seq.*

He described what he saw fully adding:<sup>15</sup> "The spectacle was so ghastly that I feel a loathing at the remembrance . . ." We in this century are more used to such horrors, but even so the anguished accounts of eye-witnesses on that morning are still moving. All the writers were especially touched by the misery of a number of women and small children.

"A poor woman and her children were standing outside a tent; she said that the troopers had surrounded the tent, and pierced it with their swords. She, her husband, and her children were ordered out by the troopers, and were inspected in their night-clothes outside . . ."

Some of the true issues of the Eureka affair have been obscured because of the indignation which this sort of savagery aroused. One miner who lived near the Eureka lead was awakened by the sound of early-morning gunfire. He and his companions went to a nearby vantage point to watch the fight. This man was not a member of the miners' Reform League. He wrote:<sup>16</sup>

"Had we gone on, we would doubtless have shared the fate of other passive spectators, who were so ruthlessly shot down by the infuriated troopers."

He saw columns of smoke from a number of burning tents and was stopped by an Irishman, fleeing with his wife and children, who begged a drink of water:

"The poor woman, crying bitterly, presented to our mind a picture of distress, as, nursing her infant in her arms, she bewailed in heartrending tones the loss of all their little possessions—tent, clothes, everything—burnt and destroyed by the troopers."

Another eyewitness described the troopers going among the tents with a pot of burning tar.

Mrs. Shanahan had more determination than some of her sisters. Her husband's store, inside the stockade, had been a centre for the miners' leaders. During the first of the affray some bags of flour saved her from being hit by bullets—her prudent husband was hiding in an outhouse. Her account tells that:<sup>17</sup>

"There was a knock at our tent door, and a trooper and a soldier came in. 'Shoot that woman', said the trooper. The foot soldier said, 'Spare the woman', and the trooper said, 'Well, get out of this, the place is going to be burnt down.' They set fire to the place, but before it was much burnt I managed to put it out . . ."

<sup>15</sup> W. B. Withers, *History of Ballarat* (1870), pp. 115 *et seq.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

Of tent burnings and the intimidation of women and children the official reports give no inkling. To include this short selection of writing about Eureka, Pasley, Officer-in-Charge of the Royal Engineers, may have the last word:<sup>18</sup>

“A feeling of relief appeared to pervade the whole population at finding themselves suddenly released from the reign of terror which had been established by the insurgents.”

One can only repeat how extraordinary it seems that no good novel or poem; no painting or series of paintings (like those which commemorate certain bushrangers) have used these episodes as source material.

To sum up and conclude: The early goldfields writing in Australia was usually the work of migrants to the country. These writers owned very different class and educational backgrounds. The accounts are highly descriptive of every aspect of life and range from journeys by sea and overland to the ordering of domestic chores; from outlines of digging and extractive methods to tales of encounters with bushrangers; from crime, accidents, fabulous good fortune and disastrous bad luck to descriptions of religious organization and observance.

Although the “creative” writing of this period (predominantly fiction and poetry) is outside the compass of this paper there are some generalizations which may fairly be offered about it.

Technique aside, this “creative” writing has two main faults. Firstly, and this is particularly true of the fiction, the books are over-weighted with description. Matter which constitutes the chief strength of a documentary work can often be disastrous in a novel. Secondly, even for their period (naturally one must keep in mind fashions in plot and emphasis then prevailing), the novels are commonly too melodramatic. Yet this melodrama is frequently not false at all. It is inartistic because ill-digested—the books too faithfully mirror either actual occurrences or things which easily could have occurred. Paradoxically many actual, attested events would have seemed absolutely incredible had they not happened to be absolutely true.

There is an art in telling the truth well and this art is highly developed in Australian goldfields literature. Moreover, despite the unaccountable “loss” of this whole body of work, its influence has persisted although sufficient critical weight has never been accorded it. (H. M. Green, for instance, discusses only a fraction.)

The whole field of criticism *must* suffer from imbalance when important writing is insufficiently accounted or when ignorance of material prevails. For example, it is fairly generally supposed that the great number of amateur paragraph and sketch writers who were so much a feature of *The Bulletin*

<sup>18</sup> Enclosure No. 8 in Grey to Hotham, No. 7 to of 20 December, 1854, *op. cit.*

during the 'nineties, were a pristine phenomenon conjured forth by Archibald and his assistants. May they not, rather, have been logical descendants of "amateur" goldfields memorists and newspaper correspondents? This seems the more probable since the tradition of goldfields writing then persisted still and indeed was continuing, although in an altered way, in Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory.

I offer a hypothesis which may well be demonstrated by research. I think this flair for "applied" or "documentary" writing which was perforce a dominating feature of Australian literature from its earliest times, and which was reinforced, directed and newly moulded by the accident of gold, remains as a stronger and more influential force in our literature than we usually acknowledge. The best of our later nineteenth century and early twentieth century novelists were precisely those who learned how to weld exotic background and highly coloured characters into forms which are art. Where these problems are not well solved, mysterious questions remain.

My hypothesis might well explain many of the puzzles which exercise students of Australian creative writing. These puzzles may be particular, as when one asks "Why did Henry Handel Richardson present Richard Mahony so unconvincingly at the very outset of her trilogy, when, later, she took such pains to document every last detail of his behaviour processes?" Or there are very general questions: why, for instance, has Australian drama been by and large so stodgy, documentary and undramatic? Why have so many novels suffered from an almost compulsive surfeit of description?

I disapprove the sort of approach which guesses at a result and then proceeds to stretch points so that a set of premises is invented to justify intuitive conclusions. Nevertheless, I mention a guess. When the whole body of nineteenth century Australian literature is properly assessed it may be found that a number of Australian writers (including some of our own time) have been less old-fashioned, less unexperimental than we have supposed. Could it be that in a way only dimly realized by its practitioners, Australian literature as a whole has been part of a wide, quite un-European experiment? Writers are partly the result of their own reading. Not only in prose, but very clearly in some present-day Australian poets, one discerns strong influences from a background of applied writing of which most of us have read a good deal. The best of present-day Australian poetry is very unlike either English or American poetry in flavour, feeling and subject-matter. Why?

My main interest in rescuing some prematurely buried "corpses" has been to amuse myself and, I hope, to provide entertainment for other people. But behind this interest lie deeper preoccupations—these questions and questionings.

## THE NATURE OF MIND

By D. M. ARMSTRONG\*

LET me begin by saying something about my predecessor in this Chair, Professor J. L. Mackie. Professor Mackie has gone to another University and still has many years of academic work before him. This is not the time, therefore, to attempt any summing up of his thought and influence. But having been a pupil of his, and later a friend, I should like to pay tribute to his teaching and thinking. He had one of the finest critical minds in Australian philosophy, and his departure to England is a very great loss to Sydney University and to the philosophical community in Australia.

I am sure, however, that Professor Mackie will think it no denigration of him if I say that this Chair of Philosophy still lies in the shadow of his great predecessor, John Anderson. Anderson was my teacher, as he was Mackie's, and the extraordinarily wide-ranging and profound intellectual system that he constructed and taught, not to speak of his deeply-considered social and political attitudes, was the formative intellectual influence on both Mackie and myself. I, at any rate, have moved away from many of Anderson's methods and conclusions, but I am conscious of the permanent intellectual debt that I owe him, and the permanent intellectual mark he has left upon me.

\* \* \*

Men have minds, that is to say, they perceive, they have sensations, emotions, beliefs, thoughts, purposes and desires. What is it to have a mind? What is it to perceive, to feel emotion, to hold a belief or to have a purpose? Many modern philosophers, of whom I am one, think, that the best clue we have to the nature of mind is furnished by the discoveries and hypotheses of modern science concerning the nature of man.

What does modern science have to say about the nature of man? There are, of course, all sorts of disagreements and divergencies in the view of individual scientists. But I think it is true to say that one view is steadily gaining ground, so that it bids fair to become established scientific doctrine. This is the view that we can give a complete account of man *in purely physico-chemical terms*.

\* An Inaugural Lecture delivered on 10 May, 1961, by D. M. Armstrong, B.A. (Sydney), B.Phil. (Oxford), Ph.D. (Melbourne), Challis Professor of Philosophy in the University of Sydney.

This view has received a tremendous impetus in the last decade from the new subject of molecular biology, a subject which promises to unravel the physical and chemical mechanisms which lie at the basis of life. Before that time, it received great encouragement from pioneering work in neurophysiology pointing to the likelihood of a purely electro-chemical account of the working of the brain. I think it is fair to say that those scientists who still reject the physico-chemical account of man do so primarily for philosophical, or moral, or religious reasons, and only secondarily, and half-heartedly, for reasons of scientific detail. This is not to say that in the future new evidence and new problems may not come to light which will force science to reconsider the physico-chemical view of man. But at present the drift of scientific thought is clearly set towards the physico-chemical hypothesis. And *we* have nothing better to go on than the present.

For me, then, and for many philosophers who think like me, the moral is clear. We must try to work out an account of the nature of mind which is compatible with the view that man is nothing but a physico-chemical mechanism.

And in this lecture I shall be concerned to do just this: to sketch in outline what may be called a Materialist or Physicalist account of the mind.

\* \* \*

But before doing this I should like to go back and consider a criticism of my position which must inevitably occur to some of you. What reason have I, it may be asked, for taking my stand on science? Even granting that I am right about what is the currently dominant scientific view of man, why should we concede science a special authority to decide questions about the nature of man? What of the authority of philosophy, of commonsense, of religion, of morality or even of literature and art? Why do I set the authority of science above all these? Why this "scientism"?

It seems to me that the answer to this question is very simple. If we consider the search for truth, in all its fields, we find that it is only in science that men versed in their subject can, after investigation that is more or less prolonged, and which may in some cases extend beyond a single human lifetime, reach substantial agreement about what is the case. It is only as a result of scientific investigation that we ever seem to reach an intellectual consensus about controversial matters.

In the Epistle Dedicatory to his *De Corpore* Hobbes wrote of William Harvey, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, that he was:

". . . the only man I know, that conquering envy, hath established a new doctrine in his life-time".

Before Copernicus, Galileo and Harvey, Hobbes remarks:

“. . . there was nothing certain in natural philosophy”.

And we might add, with the exception of mathematics, there was nothing certain in any other learned discipline.

These remarks of Hobbes are incredibly revealing. They show us what a watershed in the intellectual history of the human race the seventeenth century was. Before that time inquiry proceeded, as it were, in the dark. Men could not hope to see their doctrines *established*, that is to say, accepted by the vast majority of those properly versed in the subject under discussion. There was no intellectual consensus. Since that time, it has become a commonplace to see new doctrines, sometimes of the most far-reaching kind, established to the satisfaction of the learned, often within the lifetime of their first proponents. Science has provided us with a method of deciding disputed questions. This is not to say, of course, that the consensus of those who are learned and competent in a subject cannot be mistaken. Of course such a consensus can be mistaken. Sometimes it has been mistaken. But, granting fallibility, what better authority have we than such a consensus?

Now this is of the utmost importance. For in philosophy, in religion, in such disciplines as literary criticism, in moral questions in so far as they are thought to be matters of truth and falsity, there has been a notable failure to achieve an intellectual consensus about disputed questions among the learned. Must we not then attach a peculiar authority to the discipline that can achieve a consensus? And if it presents us with a certain vision of the nature of man, is this not a powerful reason for accepting that vision?

I will not take up here the deeper question *why* it is that the methods of science have enabled us to achieve an intellectual consensus about so many disputed matters. That question, I think, could receive no brief or uncontroversial answer. I am resting my argument on the simple and uncontroversial fact that, as a result of scientific investigation, such a consensus has been achieved.

It may be replied—it often is replied—that while science is all very well in its own sphere—the sphere of the physical, perhaps—there are matters of fact on which it is not competent to pronounce. And among such matters, it may be claimed, is the question what is the whole nature of man. But I cannot see that this reply has much force. Science has provided us with an island of truths, or, perhaps one should say, a raft of truths, to bear us up on the sea of our disputatious ignorance. There may have to be revisions and refinements, new results may set old findings in a new perspective, but what science has given us will not be altogether superseded. Must we not therefore appeal to these relative certainties for guidance when we come to consider uncertainties elsewhere? Perhaps science cannot help us to decide whether or not there is a God, whether

or not human beings have immortal souls, or whether or not the will is free. But if science cannot assist us, what can? I conclude that it is the scientific vision of man, and not the philosophical or religious or artistic or moral vision of man, that is the best clue we have to the nature of man. And it is rational to argue from the best evidence we have.

\* \* \*

Having in this way attempted to justify my procedure, I turn back to the subject of this lecture: the attempt to work out an account of mind, or, if you prefer, of mental process, within the framework of the physico-chemical, or, as we may call it, the Materialist view of man.

Now there is one account of mental process that is at once attractive to any philosopher sympathetic to a Materialist view of man: this is Behaviourism. Formulated originally by a psychologist, J. B. Watson, it attracted widespread interest and considerable support from scientifically-oriented philosophers. Traditional philosophy had tended to think of the mind as a rather mysterious inward arena that lay behind, and was responsible for, the outward or physical behaviour of our bodies. Descartes thought of this inner arena as a *spiritual substance*, and it was this conception of the mind as spiritual object that Gilbert Ryle attacked, apparently in the interest of Behaviourism, in his important book *The Concept of Mind*. He ridiculed the Cartesian view as the dogma of 'the ghost in the machine'. The mind was not something behind the behaviour of the body, it was simply part of that physical behaviour. My anger with you is not some modification of a spiritual substance which somehow brings about aggressive behaviour; rather it is the aggressive behaviour itself; my addressing strong words to you, striking you, turning my back on you, and so on. Thought is not an inner process that lies behind, and brings about, the words I speak and write: it is my speaking and writing. The mind is not an inner arena, it is outward act.

It is clear that such a view of mind fits in very well with a completely Materialistic or Physicalist view of man. If there is no need to draw a distinction between mental processes and their expression in physical behaviour, but if instead the mental processes are identified with their so-called 'expressions', then the existence of mind stands in no conflict with the view that man is nothing but a physico-chemical mechanism.

However, the version of Behaviourism that I have just sketched is a very crude version, and its crudity lays it open to obvious objections. One obvious difficulty is that it is our common experience that there can be mental processes going on although there is no behaviour occurring that could possibly be treated

as expressions of these processes. A man may be angry, but give no bodily sign; he may think but say or do nothing at all.

In my view, the most plausible attempt to refine Behaviourism with a view to meeting this objection was made by introducing the notion of a *disposition to behave*. (Dispositions to behave play a particularly important part in Ryle's account of the mind.) Let us consider the general notion of disposition first. *Brittleness* is a disposition, a disposition possessed by materials like glass. Brittle materials are those which, when subjected to relatively small forces, break or shatter easily. But breaking and shattering easily is not brittleness, rather it is the *manifestation* of brittleness. Brittleness itself is the *tendency* or *liability* of the material to break or shatter easily. A piece of glass may never shatter or break throughout its whole history, but it is still the case that it is brittle: it is *liable* to shatter or break if dropped quite a small way or hit quite lightly. Now a disposition to *behave* is simply a tendency or liability of a person to behave in a certain way under certain circumstances. The brittleness of glass is a disposition that the glass retains throughout its history, but clearly there could also be dispositions that come and go. The dispositions to behave that are of interest to the Behaviourist are, for the most part, of this temporary character.

Now how did Ryle and others use the notion of a disposition to behave to meet the obvious objection to Behaviourism that there can be mental processes going on although the subject is engaging in no relevant behaviour? Their strategy was to argue that in such cases, although the subject was not behaving in any relevant way, he or she was *disposed* to behave in some relevant way. The glass does not shatter, but it is still brittle. The man does not behave, but he does have a disposition to behave. We can say he thinks although he does not speak or act because at that time he was *disposed* to speak or act in a certain way. *If* he had been asked, perhaps, he would have spoken or acted. We can say he is angry although he does not behave angrily, because he is *disposed* so to behave. *If* only one more word had been addressed to him, he would have burst out. And so on. In this way it was hoped that Behaviourism could be squared with the obvious facts.

It is very important to see just how these thinkers conceived of dispositions. I quote from Ryle:

"To possess a dispositional property *is not to be in a particular state, or to undergo a particular change*; it is to be bound or liable to be in a particular state, or to undergo a particular change, when a particular condition is realized." (*The Concept of Mind*, p. 43, my italics.)

So to explain the breaking of a lightly-struck glass on a particular occasion by saying it was brittle, is, on this view of dispositions, simply to say that the glass broke because it is the sort of thing that regularly breaks when quite lightly

struck. The breaking was the normal behaviour, or not abnormal behaviour, of such a thing. The brittleness is not to be conceived of as a *cause* for the breakage, or even, more vaguely, a *factor* in bringing about the breaking. Brittleness is just the fact that things of that sort break easily.

But although in this way the Behaviourists did something to deal with the objection that mental processes can occur in the absence of behaviour, now that the shouting and the dust have died it seems clear that they did not do enough. When I think, but my thoughts do not issue in any action, it seems as obvious as anything is obvious that there is something actually going on in me which constitutes my thought. It is not simply that I would speak or act if some conditions that are unfulfilled were to be fulfilled. Something is currently going on, in the strongest and most literal sense of 'going on', and this something is my thought. Rylean Behaviourism denies this, and so it is unsatisfactory as a theory of mind. Yet I know of no version of Behaviourism that is more satisfactory. The moral for those of us who wish to take a purely physicalistic view of man is that we must look for some other account of the nature of mind and of mental processes.

But perhaps we need not grieve too deeply about the failure of Behaviourism to produce a satisfactory theory of mind. Behaviourism is a profoundly unnatural account of mental processes. If somebody speaks and acts in certain ways it is natural to speak of this speech and action as the *expression* of his thought. It is not at all natural to speak of his speech and action as identical with his thought. We naturally think of the thought as something quite distinct from the speech and action which, under suitable circumstances, brings the speech and action about. Thoughts are not to be identified with behaviour, we think, they lie behind behaviour. A man's behaviour constitutes the *reasons* we have for attributing certain mental processes to him, but the behaviour cannot be identified with the mental processes.

This suggests a very interesting line of thought about the mind. Behaviourism is certainly wrong, but perhaps it is not altogether wrong. Perhaps the Behaviourists were wrong in identifying the mind and mental occurrences with behaviour, but perhaps they were right in thinking that our notion of a mind and of individual mental states is *logically tied to behaviour*. For perhaps what we mean by a mental state is some state of the person which, under suitable circumstances, *brings about* a certain range of behaviour. Perhaps mind can be defined not as behaviour, but rather as the inner *cause* of certain behaviour. Thought is not speech under suitable circumstances, rather it is something within the person which, in suitable circumstances, brings about speech. And, in fact, I believe that this is the true account or at any rate a true first account, of what we mean by a mental state.

How does this line of thought link up with a purely physicalist view of man? The position is, I think, that while it does not make such a physicalist view inevitable, it does make it *possible*. It does not entail, but it is compatible with, a purely physicalist view of man. For if our notion of the mind and of mental states is nothing but that of a cause within the person of certain ranges of behaviour, then it becomes a scientific question, and not a question of logical analysis, what in fact the intrinsic nature of that cause is. The cause might be, as Descartes thought it was, a spiritual substance working through the pineal gland to produce the complex bodily behaviour of which men are capable. It might be breath, or specially smooth and mobile atoms dispersed throughout the body; it might be many other things. But in fact the verdict of modern science seems to be that the sole cause of mind-betokening behaviour in man and the higher animals is the physico-chemical workings of the central nervous system. And so, assuming we have correctly characterized our concept of a mental state as nothing but the cause of certain sorts of behaviour, then we can identify these mental states with purely physical states of the central nervous system.

At this point we may stop and go back to the Behaviourist's dispositions. We saw that, according to them, the brittleness of glass or, to take another example, the elasticity of rubber, is not a state of the glass or the rubber, but is simply the fact that things of that sort behave in the way they do. But now let us consider how a scientist would think about brittleness or elasticity. Faced with the phenomenon of breakage under relatively small impacts, or the phenomenon of stretching when a force is applied followed by contraction when the force is removed, he will assume that there is some current *state* of the glass or the rubber which is responsible for the characteristic behaviour of samples of these two materials. At the beginning, he will not know what this state is, but he will endeavour to find out, and he may succeed in finding out. And when he has found out he will very likely make remarks of this sort: "We have discovered that the brittleness of glass is in fact a certain sort of pattern in the molecules of the glass." That is to say, he will *identify* brittleness with the state of the glass that is responsible for the liability of the glass to break. For him, a disposition of an object is a state of the object. What makes the state a state of brittleness is the fact that it gives rise to the characteristic manifestations of brittleness. But the disposition itself is distinct from its manifestations: it is the state of the glass that gives rise to these manifestations.

You will see that this way of looking at dispositions is very different from that of Ryle and the Behaviourists. The great difference is this: If we treat dispositions as actual states, as I have suggested that scientists do, even if states whose intrinsic nature may yet have to be discovered, then we can say that dispositions are actual *causes*, or causal factors, which, in suitable circumstances,

actually bring about those happenings which are the manifestations of the disposition. A certain molecular constitution of glass which constitutes its brittleness, is actually *responsible* for the fact that, when the glass is struck, it breaks.

Now I cannot argue the matter here, because the detail of the argument is technical and difficult, but I believe that the view of dispositions as states, which is the view that is natural to science, is the correct one. I believe it can be shown quite strictly that, to the extent that we admit the notion of disposition at all, we are committed to the view that they are actual *states* of the object that has the disposition. I may add that I think that the same holds for the closely connected notions of capacities and powers. In this lecture I will simply have to assume this step in my argument.

But perhaps you can see that the rejection of the idea that mind is simply a certain range of man's behaviour in favour of the view that mind is rather the inner *cause* of that range of man's behaviour, is bound up with the rejection of the Rylean view of dispositions in favour of one that treats dispositions as states of objects and so as having actual causal power. The Behaviourists were wrong to identify the mind with behaviour. They were not so far off the mark when they tried to deal with cases where mental happenings occur in the absence of behaviour by saying that these are matters of dispositions to behave. But in order to reach a correct view, I am suggesting, they would have to conceive of these dispositions as actual *states* of the person who has the disposition, states that have actual causal power to bring about behaviour in suitable circumstances. But to do this is to abandon the central inspiration of Behaviourism: that in talking about the mind we do not have to go behind outward behaviour to inner states.

And so, you see, two separate but interlocking lines of thought have pushed me in the same direction. The first line of thought is that it goes profoundly against the grain to think of the mind as behaviour. The mind is, rather, that which stands behind and brings about our complex behaviour. The second line of thought is that the Behaviourist's dispositions, properly conceived, are really states that underlie behaviour, and, under suitable circumstances, bring about behaviour. Putting these two together, we reach the conception of a mental state as *a state of the person apt for producing certain ranges of behaviour*. This formula: a mental state is a state of the person apt for producing certain ranges of behaviour, I believe to be a very illuminating way of looking at the concept of a mental state. I have found it very fruitful in the search for detailed logical analyses of the individual mental concepts.

Now, I do not think that Hegel's Dialectic has much to tell us about the nature of reality. But I think that human thought often moves in a dialectical

way, from thesis to antithesis and then to the synthesis. Perhaps thought about the mind is a case in point. I have already said that classical philosophy has tended to think of the mind as an inner arena of some sort. This we may call the Thesis. Behaviourism moves to the opposite extreme: the mind is seen as outward behaviour. This is the Antithesis. My proposed Synthesis is that the mind is properly conceived as an inner principle, but a principle that is identified in terms of the outward behaviour it is apt for bringing about. This way of looking at the mind and mental states does not itself entail a Materialist or Physicalist view of man, for nothing is said in this analysis about the intrinsic nature of these mental states. But if we have, as I have argued that we do have, general scientific grounds for thinking that man is nothing but a physical mechanism, we can go on to argue that the mental states are in fact nothing but physical states of the central nervous system.

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Along these lines, then, I would look for an account of the mind that is compatible with a purely Materialist theory of man. And I am currently engaged in the attempt to work out this programme in a large-scale work. There are, as you may imagine, all sorts of powerful objections that can be made to my view. But in the rest of this lecture I propose to do only one thing. I will develop one very important objection to my view of the mind—an objection felt by many philosophers—and then try to show how the objection should be met.

The view that our notion of mind is nothing but that of an inner principle apt for bringing about certain sorts of behaviour may be thought to share a certain weakness with Behaviourism. Modern philosophers have put the point about Behaviourism by saying that, although Behaviourism may be a satisfactory account of the mind from an *other-person point of view*, it will not do as a *first-person* account. To explain. In my encounters with other people, all I ever observe is their behaviour: their actions, their speech, and so on. And so, if we simply consider other people, Behaviourism might seem to do full justice to the facts. But the trouble about Behaviourism is that it seems so unsatisfactory as applied to our *own* case. In our own case, we seem to be aware of so much more than mere behaviour.

Suppose that now we conceive of the mind as an inner principle apt for bringing about certain sorts of behaviour. This again fits the other-person cases very well. Bodily behaviour of a very sophisticated sort is observed, quite different from the behaviour that ordinary physical objects display. It is inferred that this behaviour must spring from a very special sort of inner cause in the object that exhibits this behaviour. This inner cause is christened "the mind", and those who take a physicalist view of man argue that it is simply the central nervous system of the body observed. Compare this with the case of glass.

Certain characteristic behaviour is observed: the breaking and shattering of the material when acted upon by relatively small forces. A special inner state of the glass is postulated to explain this behaviour. Those who take a purely physicalist view of glass then argue that this state is a *material* state of the glass. It is, perhaps, an arrangement of its molecules, and not, say, the peculiarly malevolent disposition of the spirits that dwell in glass.

But when we turn to our own case, the position may seem less plausible. We are conscious, we have experiences. Now can we say that to be conscious, to have experiences, is simply for something to go on within us apt for the causing of certain sorts of behaviour? Such an account does not seem to do any justice to the phenomena. And so it seems that our account of the mind, like Behaviourism, will fail to do justice to the first-person case.

In order to understand the objection better it may be helpful to consider a particular case. If you have driven for a very long distance without a break, you may have had experience of a curious state of automatism, which can occur in these conditions. One can suddenly "come to" and realize that one has driven for long distances without being aware of what one was doing, or, indeed, without being aware of anything. One has kept the car on the road, used the brake and the clutch perhaps, yet all without any awareness of what one was doing.

Now, if we consider this case, it is obvious that *in some sense* mental processes are still going on when one is in such an automatic state. Unless one's will was still operating in some way, and unless one was still perceiving in some way, the car would not still be on the road. Yet, of course, *something* mental is lacking. Now, I think, when it is alleged that an account of mind as an inner principle apt for the production of certain sorts of behaviour leaves out consciousness or experience, what is alleged to have been left out is just what is missing in the automatic driving case. It is conceded that an account of mental processes as states of the person apt for the production of certain sorts of behaviour may very possibly be adequate to deal with such cases as that of automatic driving. It may be adequate to deal with most of the mental processes of animals who perhaps spend most of their lives in this state of automatism. But, it is contended, it cannot deal with the consciousness that we normally enjoy.

I will finish off this lecture by sketching an answer to this important and powerful objection. Let us begin in an apparently unlikely place, and consider the way that an account of mental processes of the sort I am giving would deal with *sense-perception*.

Now psychologists, in particular, have long realized that there is a very close logical tie between sense-perception and *selective behaviour*. Suppose we

want to decide whether an animal can perceive the difference between red and green. We might give the animal a choice between two pathways over one of which a red light shines and over the other of which a green light shines. If the animal happens by chance to choose the green pathway, we reward it; if it happens to choose the other pathway, we do not reward it. If, after some trials, the animal systematically takes the green-lighted pathway, and if we become assured that the only relevant differences in the two pathways are the differences in the colour of the lights, we are entitled to say that the animal can see this colour difference. Using its eyes, it selects between red-lighted and green-lighted pathways. So we say it can see the difference between red and green.

Now a Behaviourist would be tempted to say that the animal's regularly selecting the green-lighted pathway *was* its perception of the colour-difference. But this is unsatisfactory, because we all want to say that perception is something that goes on within the person or animal—within its mind—although, of course, this mental event is normally *caused* by the operation of the environment upon the organism. Suppose, however, that we speak instead of *capacities* for selective behaviour towards the current environment, and suppose we think of these capacities, like dispositions, as actual inner states of the organism. We can then think of the animal's perception as a state within the animal apt, if the animal is so impelled, for selective behaviour between the red- and green-lighted pathways.

In general, we can think of perceptions as inner states or events apt for the production of certain sorts of selective behaviour towards our environment. To perceive is like acquiring a key to a door. You do not have to use the key: you can put it in your pocket and never bother about the door. But if you do want to open the door, the key may be essential. The blind man is a man who does not acquire certain keys, and, as a result, is not able to operate in his environment in the way that somebody who has his sight can operate. It seems, then, a very promising view to take of perceptions that they are inner states defined by the sorts of selective behaviour that they enable the perceiver to exhibit, if so impelled.

Now how is this discussion of perception related to the question of consciousness or experience, the sort of thing that the driver who is in a state of automatism has not got, but which we normally do have? Simply this. My proposal is that consciousness, in this sense of the word, is nothing but *perception or awareness of the state of our own mind*. The driver in a state of automatism perceives, or is aware of, the road. If he did not, the car would be in a ditch. But he is not currently aware of his awareness of the road. He perceives the road, but he does not perceive his perceiving, or anything else that is going

on in his mind. He is not, as we normally are, conscious of what is going on in his mind.

And so, I conceive of consciousness or experience, in this sense of the words, in the way that Locke and Kant conceived it, as like perception. Kant, in a striking phrase, spoke of 'inner sense'. We cannot directly observe the minds of others, but each of us has the power to observe directly our own minds, and 'perceive' what is going on there. The driver in the automatic state is one whose 'inner eye' is shut: who is not currently aware of what is going on in his own mind.

Now if this account is along the right lines, why should we not give an account of this inner observation along the same lines as we have already given of perception? Why should we not conceive of it as an inner state, a state in this case directed towards other inner states and not to the environment, which enables us, if we are so impelled, to behave in a selective way *towards our own states of mind*? One who is aware, or conscious, of his thoughts or his emotions is one who has the capacity to make discriminations between his different mental states. His capacity might be exhibited in words. He might say that he was in an angry state of mind when and only when he *was* in an angry state of mind. But such verbal behaviour would be the mere *expression* or *result* of the awareness. The awareness itself would be an inner state: the sort of inner state that gave the man a capacity for such behavioural expressions.

So I have argued that consciousness of our own mental state may be assimilated to *perception* of our own mental state, and that, like other perceptions, it may then be conceived of as an inner state or event giving a capacity for selective behaviour, in this case selective behaviour towards our own mental state. All this is meant to be simply a logical analysis of consciousness and none of it entails, although it does not rule out, a purely physicalist account of what these inner states are. But if we are convinced, on general grounds, that a purely physical account of man is likely to be the true one, then there seems to be no bar to our identifying these inner states with purely physical states of the central nervous system. And so consciousness of our own mental state becomes simply the scanning of one part of our central nervous system by another. Consciousness is a self-scanning device in the central nervous system.

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As I have emphasized before, I have done no more than sketch a programme for a philosophy of mind. There are all sorts of expansions and elucidations to be made, and all sorts of doubts and difficulties to be stated and overcome. But I hope I have done enough to show that a purely physicalist theory of the mind is an exciting and plausible intellectual option.