

**No Wrang – Jist Different: Some resemblances between Scottish Drama of the 1970s and the Australian New Wave<sup>1</sup>**

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Imagine a country built on the labours of its urban working class, with a literary tradition that sentimentalised its rural environs from the latter nineteenth century onwards. Imagine, too, a theatrical tradition which drew heavily on music hall and popular entertainment, and a postwar period in which plays dealing in any depth with the contemporary social issues, and indeed, everyday spoken language of its people were few and far between before the 1970s. Now, reflect upon an artistic awakening in the subsequent period, in which a long-repressed latent nationalism began to stir in the minds of the country's public, and a new wave of theatre writers and practitioners began to reflect upon a country close to the British Empire, but profoundly de-centred. Consider how these artists began to re-imagine their nation's history through an eclectic use of popular forms and epic. So, too, the life and language of its contemporary urban people began to be represented, but also problematised by violent and oppressive representations of masculinity, and the blight of sectarianism among its peoples. That country could, of course, only be Australia.

This, at least, would have been the author's thinking before arriving in Scotland in the 1980s. Since then, I have often reflected upon the striking similarities between what has become known as The New Wave Australian drama, commonly estimated to have begun around 1968 and the revival of new Scottish Drama from about 1970 onwards. Perhaps, on reflection, this should be unsurprising. Both countries, after all, have shared a subaltern culture status for much of their history over recent centuries, often being perceived as adjuncts to the British Empire both by themselves and the colonial centre. In the postwar period, each also seemed to settle into an unquestioning role within this international hierarchy for a generation. The departure from this established pattern of North Britishness and obedient servant of Empire respectively would occur in part through pure economic pragmatism. As

Richard Finlay has observed, the growth of nationalism in Scotland paralleled the decline of its share of Britain's traditional heavy industries from the 1960s onwards.<sup>2</sup> (Finlay 2007) So, too in Australia, from its peak of 41.3% of Australia's export market in 1952-3, Britain's share fell steadily, and with their first application to join the EEC, Australian governments, foreseeing the inevitable, sought out new markets for its primary and secondary industries. (Bolton 1990, p. 91)

There were, of course, also significant differences. Australia has, since federation existed in a state of what might be called Devo Ultra-Max, having a full parliament of its own, albeit one with a foreign head of state.<sup>3</sup> If the desire for the removal of this final vestige of empire was truly catalysed by the signature of the Queen on the recommendation of her Governor General Sir John Kerr for the dismissal of Gough Whitlam's elected government in 1975, it had been a growing groundswell in Australian culture and politics since the publication of Donald Horne's *The Lucky Country* in 1964. Horne's often unflattering appraisal of Australian national identity in the Menzies era exposed a considerable cultural divide between British and Australian senses of self, and became the seminal text on Australian culture for the younger generation of the time. (Horne 1964) The sense of a coherent identity lent to Scotland by the British Empire also broke down in parallel to imperial decline. The bookends of Winnie Ewing's by-election win in Hamilton in 1967 and Margo MacDonald's in Govan in 1973 marked a significant change in Scottish identity. If full independence, as T M Devine has pointed out, was not on the agenda of most SNP supporters (Devine 2012, pp. 574-80) of the time, a different cultural and economic deal seemed paramount.

Subaltern nations are often flattered in Empire histories for some quality which contributes to the imperial project. Scotland's and Australia's military prowess are often spoken of in military histories in terms so similar that they are virtually interchangeable. But just as Ewen A Cameron has pointed to a level of exaggeration in the creation of this myth about Scotland, (Cameron 2010, pp. 102-105) so too, the 'digger' tradition often espoused by conservative historians has tended to downplay

the pointlessness of the Dardanelles campaign, and completely ignore such episodes as the notorious 'Adelaide River Stakes'.<sup>4</sup> But whatever the validity of the myth, its incorporation into national identity undoubtedly added to an image of a masculinity troublingly dogged by emotional inarticulateness, sectarian bigotry and violence. Both the new Scottish Drama of the 1970s and the Australian New Wave would return to these subjects repeatedly.

### **Eras of Ideological and Aesthetic Change**

Like all artistic forces designated as 'movements' by mass media and scholarly critics, there may be some grounds for dissent from both the New Wave and the Scottish revival as quite the coherent entities they seem. Randall Stevenson has pointed out that through the 1950s, the oeuvre of George Munro has been somewhat neglected as a forerunner of the 1970s socially conscious theatre boom. (Stevenson 2001 online) In Australia, Maryrose Casey and Jodi Gallagher have pointed to the relative critical neglect of earlier work, particularly that of Mona Brand within the Australian New Theatre Movement, which ran from the 1930s, and continued to exist (though barely) in parallel with the New Wave. (Casey and Gallagher 2009 online) This neglect might in fact be in part attributed to the Communist Party links of the New Theatre, which suffered a good deal of persecution through the 'Red Scare' period of Australian history, but found itself equally disdained by the New Wave generation of critics and writers, which, with many a New Left affiliate among its ranks, saw the old Communist Party as quite as much the enemy as the Anglophile conservative inheritance of the governments of Sir Robert Menzies that had dominated Australian post-war history.

Whatever the contestable elements of the New Wave's history, and of the Scottish drama revival, there can be little doubt that eras of cultural production of some moment occurred in both countries in the period between the late 1960s and latter 1970s. Judged in terms of the number of new plays produced alone, something quite substantial was afoot. In Scotland, Randall Stevenson points out that (Munro's

work notwithstanding – and, one might add, that of Glasgow Unity in general) a number of factors tended to hamper from the latter 1940s until the 1970s the development of a drama spoken in indigenous dialect, addressing local issues. Not least among these was the growth of the prestige of RP through the development of television as a source of information. (Stevenson 2011, pp. 73-84) The remarkable upsurge of new Scottish work after 1970 is attested by Ian Brown's exposition on the work in the 1970s of such traditional repertory theatres as the Royal Lyceum and Dundee Rep (Brown, 2001 online) as well as through such new writing organisations as the Traverse, and a myriad of smaller touring venues. Writers like John McGrath, Bill Bryden, Tom McGrath, Hector MacMillan, Roddy MacMillan, John Byrne and Brown himself would benefit from this flowering. Meanwhile, the Scottish Society of Playwrights, founded in 1973, would assist in bringing new writing to the fore in Scottish theatre with extensive, and sometimes assertive, negotiations with the Scottish Arts Council and individual theatre companies. (Bain 1994, pp. 16-24)

If the 1970 election of Heath's conservative UK government may have reinforced in some respects Scottish artists' desire to assert their difference from their southern neighbours, the backlash against a generation of Liberal/Country Party coalition government informed their Antipodean counterparts with a greater degree of certainty. Menzies had been Prime Minister since 1949. He had retained power through ruthless opportunism and populism, as well as by exploiting the divisions in the Australian Labor [sic] Party (ALP), a topic to which this article returns. Menzies kept much of the welfare state (established by several ALP governments long before the UK's postwar version) intact, but promoted an anglophile view of Australia, with much emphasis on the benefits of Empire and the pageantry of monarchy. Australian nationalism, which had been asserted progressively through the two world wars by such events as Gallipoli, the notorious 'Bodyline' Ashes test series of 1932-33 and the fall of Singapore, had begun to recede during Menzies's term of office. For him, Australia was a kind of England with crocodiles. Increasingly, such innovations as television reinforced with imported programs from Britain and the USA the same cultural anti-localism already identified in Scotland. (Fotheringham 1992, pp. 66-69) His gesture towards drama funding occurred through the setting up of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust in 1954, as part of the celebration of the new Queen's first

visit to Australia. The reader might guess at the funding priorities of this body from its name, though it might, in mitigation, also be credited with the creation of such important educational bodies as the National Institute for Dramatic Art. A few commercial hits, such as Sumner Locke Elliott's *Rusty Bugles* (1948) and Ray Lawler's *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* (1955) reached a wide, even international, audience. Serious theatre in Australia through much of the post-war period, however, tended to be restricted to touring English (or occasionally European) productions or slavishly imitated versions of West End work.

Menzies retired from office in 1966, and his anointed successor, Harold Holt, (Brodie 1988, p. 112) was the son of the Australian theatre entrepreneur T J Holt. Perhaps because of these origins, though no doubt in part because of the increasing general impatience for change in the theatre, Holt drew up plans for a new, more locally focussed body, the Australian Council for the Arts. Holt will mainly be remembered for his infamous shibboleth 'All the way with LBJ', whereby he promised to extend Australia's troop commitment to the Vietnam War. But for his sudden death,<sup>5</sup> this is something for which he might have received much abuse from the generation of dramatists soon to emerge. His hastily appointed successor, John Gorton, was obliged, without the same enthusiasm, to enact some of Holt's funding structures, and although only small proportions of this money would reach the new generation of Australian theatrical innovators, this proved, alongside an increasingly restive political atmosphere, to be enough.

While the half-dozen writers most often associated with the New Wave would arguably be Alexander Buzo, Dorothy Hewett, Jack Hibberd, Barry Oakley, John Romeril and David Williamson, they, like the seven Scottish writers cited above, are perhaps only the most prominent names among many. What, for our purposes, is so striking about their work is their frequent resonances with their kindred spirits in the far North.

## History, Popular Theatre, Poetry and Colonialism

Small nations are more frequently obliged to re-examine their histories than centres of Empire. Since, however, the tools which they are given to approach the past are geared towards affirming an orientalist view from the centre, some means must be found to avoid iteration through the language of the coloniser. In both Scottish and Australian drama, forms of popular entertainment have been employed to express an experience of history separate by its localised narrational apparatus from the histories of the centre. As Femi Folorunso has commented: ‘Materials from the music hall and its confederates have not only been appropriated in contemporary Scottish drama: the appropriation itself has become the technical means of continuing the popular base of the drama.’ (Folorunso 1996, p.183) The virtuous circle described can easily be observed in most of John McGrath’s oeuvre and is especially striking in *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* (1973), upon which there has already been a widespread commentary. So, too I have written elsewhere of Ian Brown’s use of such devices as melodrama and music hall in establishing forms of detachment from frequently reiterated, semi-mythologised history in such works as *Mary* (1977). (Cramer 2002, online)

In Barry Oakley’s postscript to his rambunctious historical epic *The Feet of Daniel Mannix* (1971), he comments of his formal model that

humour, vaudeville, farce is a kind of fish-eye lens that gives events and characters a new perspective, an ironic distance. Mannix, Wren, Dr Effort and the other characters in the play have one leg in history and one in theatre, and this interaction gives the play depth. (p. 84)

It should be explained that Daniel Mannix (1864-1963) was the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne from 1913 until his death at 99 years in 1963. For much of this time, he wielded as much power as many of Australia’s Prime Ministers, his pulpit politics, inspired by his Irish Nationalist origins, having a particular resonance with Catholics in the most populated states, Victoria and New South Wales. Mannix was an ambivalent figure for the left. His campaigning for a No vote in the two referenda

held by William Morris Hughes<sup>6</sup> on the issue of conscription (both defeated) during the First World War won him many admirers among political progressives. So did his consistent championing of the rights of the poor (albeit only the Catholic section of this group). The same section of Australian society, however, came increasingly to detest him for his hysterical anti-communism. This led to his active hand in the creation of, first, 'the movement', a clique of right-wing anti-communist ALP MPs, then B A Santamaria's Democratic Labor Party,<sup>7</sup> a breakaway party. This, by manipulating the preferential voting system, denied the ALP power through several elections in the 1950s and 1960s. His campaigns to create state-funded sectarian schools also failed to impress liberal-minded Australians.<sup>8</sup> The cantankerous Mannix spent as much time in conflict with a series of Popes as with Australian politicians. All learned to treat him with wariness.

All this detail may seem redundant, but all of it, and far more, is included in Oakley's sprawling mock heroic epic, first produced by one of the beacons of the New Wave, the Australian Performing Group at Melbourne's Pram Factory. The debate included may seem relevant to Scotland today:

MANNIX: You know what I mean. The Irish. You people sent them twelve thousand miles in the stink of ships' holds and you persecute them still.

TATE: Are you mad? This is 1913. All that is past.

MANNIX: Injustice! From those days until now! Once it was whips and triangles. Now you do it by status and stealth. I refer to ed-you-cation! Your schools are secular!

TATE: And Free! And we're proud of it Sir. The facts are not twisted in our classrooms.

MANNIX: Not a whisper of the word of God to be heard in any of them. And the Catholics' taxes help pay for it. Let us use our taxes to support our schools!

TATE: If you want a private system, then pay for it. (p. 9)

Here, as elsewhere in the play, the language employed seems to veer wildly between Ciceronian rhetoric and Victorian melodrama, but the staging is critical. This debate takes place entirely as part of a tag-team wrestling match in a ring, with Mannix, Victoria's Education Minister Frank Tate, future ALP Prime Minister (1929-1931) James Scullin and the burly figure of *The Melbourne Argus* newspaper as participants. Similar language juxtaposes effectively with action when a Wild West shoot-out occurs between Prime Minister Hughes, armed with a rifle, and Mannix, who sports a bullet-firing giant crucifix. So, too, when Mannix is pursued across stage by Lloyd George, each paddling a bathtub, the, as it were, bathetic effect is critical in affecting a re-appraisal of a notorious, often emotively narrated, incident in Mannix's career.<sup>9</sup>

At a time when, for the first time in their history, young Australians were being conscripted to fight in a distant foreign war,<sup>10</sup> rather than defend their home soil, Oakley's satire assumed an importance in reclaiming history. Irrational anti-communism sees Oakley's Mannix set up his home as a castle in Hammer-Horror style, complete with a giant red rubber octopus, symbolising the red menace, which crashes down on Dr Effort's<sup>11</sup> head in a key scene (p. 70). The same irrational anti-communism accounted for much of the public support for Australia's participation in the war. While in 1966, the 'kick the commie can' tactics of Harold Holt had won an election by a considerable margin, (Ham 2007, p.263) by 1969, the coalition Government had held power by only the slenderest of DLP preferences.<sup>12</sup> By the time of this play, Oakley's radicalism played well to its public. His style, however, was hardly an isolated phenomenon. John McCallum gives a cogent account of this school of work of the period, which he calls vaudeville history, citing the work of Romeril, Hibberd, Ron Blair and Bob Ellis among other exponents of the form. (McCallum 2009, pp. 163-166) Oakley's own later mock biography of Robert Menzies, *Beware of Imitations* (1973) must have come perilously close to libel action.

One play that failed to avoid this fate was Dorothy Hewett's *The Chapel Perilous* (1971). Her writing became the subject of legal action from one of her ex-husbands.<sup>13</sup> Hewett's semi-autobiographical play came from the, perhaps unexpected, quarter of Perth. This reaction, however, might say more about the prejudices of the East Coast cognoscenti of Sydney and Melbourne than the artistic community of Western Australia. This was livelier than the generally conservative ethos of that state

might indicate. Hewett's story uses Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*, or perhaps more correctly the reinterpretation of the myth by Eliot, Tennyson and Frazer<sup>14</sup> (Novakovic 2009) as a narrative vehicle. It tells of the quest for personal fulfilment of Sally Banner from her days of religious schooling in wartime Western Australia and in an atmosphere of stultifying conservatism.<sup>15</sup> Her lesbian passion for a fellow student causes trouble with the nuns. We then follow her through her early heterosexual encounters and on to her relationship with the post war Communist Party. From this she is expelled, not so much for her rejection of Stalin as, in a classic case of blaming the victim, for creating too much sexual tension between her male lovers.

Hewett's nationalism at first manifests itself in the prologue, where as Sally rebels politically and sexually, the nuns enforce a chorus of 'Jerusalem' upon the more obedient girls at the school. Constantly interrupted, this runs throughout the scene (pp. 9-26). The mock-Englishness of this outpost of empire is emphasised by the broadcast of the declaration of war by Chamberlain (pp. 15-16), rather than Australia's own Prime Minister, Menzies, in his first term (1939-41). But neither does Hewett endorse the martial myth of that image of Australian independence, the returned soldier. In the figure of her father, the sexual hypocrisy of this trope of Australian myth is repeatedly lampooned, perhaps most notably through a splendid single line: 'FATHER: I never much liked that book. Havelock Ellis. All those positions marked in red ink. Some I'd never heard of. And I was an Anzac' (p. 36). Sally's own Arthurian myth is based in a very Australian landscape, but its ideological obstreperousness clearly distinguishes it from the more comfortable sentimental bush literature of earlier eras: 'SALLY: I rode forward through the blackened land. I found the forests burning and the fields wasted, waiting for rain. Upon a slope I saw a glimpse of light. Then I came to the Chapel Perilous' (p. 5). Of the bush, whatever its place in her personal mythology, Sally comments 'I always felt its essential hostility', (p. 38), as strong a rejection of the rural idyll as the repudiation of the Kailyard happening at the same time in Scotland. Just as in Scotland, poetry in theatre became a means for Hewett of interrogating history. As Anne Varty observes of Stewart Conn's work of roughly the same period, 'the careful pairing of history with fiction exposes the fictionalising qualities of historiography and the parabolic veracity of literary expression'. (Varty 2011, p. 147) Thus an unchallenged anglophile

history of Australia would be filtered, with disturbing effect, through the autobiographical/poetic perspective of Hewett's Western Australia.

As a poet, Hewett was keenly aware of the jarring effect of her own verse, placed into the mouth of Sally, against the quotidian dialogue of the authority figures who speak from behind masks and through loud speakers, haunting her through life. The masks never change. The Headmistress, Sister Rosa and The Canon continue to revisit her in the form of the masks, though behind them we find figures as diverse as the local Communist organiser, Saul (pp. 82-83), her youthful lover David (p. 87) or her lesbian crush Judith (p. 88). The Chapel of the title is ever present onstage, behind rostrums and pillars, as is the stained glass window to which Sally throughout avoids bowing, despite endless commands to do so. The final image of the play illuminates the window to reveal an image of Sally herself. Hewett altered her ending after the initial Perth production, to show Sally bowing to this image at the play's climax, which, as she explained in a prologue added later, caused a good deal of controversy:

When I was writing *The Chapel Perilous* I was never conscious of it being a thesis play. I dislike thesis literature [...] For many young women, Sally is the first modern liberated feminist in our literature: I believe this is a historical and literary accident. Sally Banner came to life at a time when liberation and freedom began to be on the agenda, as indeed were repression and bigotry. She reflects her time and appears to have passed through her time to become variously to others a modern day symbol, an ego-tripper of monstrous proportions, a boring self-advertiser, a vulgar hotpants and a heroine of liberation. No one seems to view her, as I do, with quiet, calm acceptance. I seem to have created some kind of female *doppelganger*, which is both humbling and irritating, because, like the albatross, I suspect she will always be slung round my neck (p. xix).

If, however, Hewett was uninterested in thesis work, she was certainly not shy of ideological commentary. The scene in which the 'spectacle' elements of Australian politics are turned into a fairground show complete with barkers enticing passers-by into fleshpot strip shows and 'red scare' ghost trains (pp. 57-62) somewhat echoes

Oakley's chamber of horrors at the Mannix residence. Her oeuvre, which included other such similarly resolutely anti-naturalist pieces of the time as *Bon-Bons and Roses for Dolly* (1972) and *The Tatty Hollow Story* (1974) (McCallum, pp. 116-120) has never been easy for academia to classify. As Leonard Radic records, some discourses among the feminisms have attacked Hewett for creating 'a set of beautiful and seductive heroines who behave like *femmes fatales*, defining themselves in terms of their appeal to men'. (Radic 2006, p. 234) Others, however, such as Peta Tait and Elizabeth Schafer have read Hewett with greater historical sensitivity, seeing the personal/political aspects of sexual politics so prevalent at the time as of greater significance. (Tait and Schafer 1997, pp. viii – xi)

Conn's poetry in *The Burning* (1971, in Conn 1973) comes through his attempts to incorporate contemporary language with an imagined approximation of sixteenth-century Scots speech. As he puts it in his preface to the play, 'I have aimed at the idea rather than the reality: at a harshness of diction, yet suppleness of rhythm, capable of suggesting the period and coping with the play's contemporary concepts' (p. 8). These contemporary concepts might well, in part, reflect the civil disorder that accompanied Edward Heath's increasingly obsessive attempts to curtail trade union rights through the early 1970s. Certainly, Conn's story shows a less sentimentalised version of James VI than had appeared in earlier dramas and re-tellings. Here, the King cuts a bloodthirsty swathe through Scotland in pursuit of his cousin, Francis Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, dragging individuals from every order of Scottish society – from peasantry to lower aristocracy – into the violence. The play's most heightened language comes through the reconstruction of song and verse, illustrating simultaneously the earthy origins of peasant ballad and its interchangeable status as a focus for witchcraft. This here is a tangible reality of rural life encouraged by Bothwell, rather than a simple product of James' paranoia. A critical scene sees the folk song 'Berwick Brigge' introduce a ritual presided over by Bothwell. In this, a skewer is run through a wax effigy of the King before soldiers, who arrest all present but the elusive Earl, interrupt the rite ahead of a series of grisly interrogations (pp. 48-54).

The play climaxes at a final confrontation between Bothwell and the King. The former, having gained access to the King's bedchamber, utters a prophetic speech about the rights of grass-roots movements against arbitrary power

BOTHWELL: You see yourself as the one and only true power. Absolute. And any force opposing you not power but the violation of power. Mere violence. In time to come you will realise you are but an infringer of power. Already there are movements afoot. To make rulers act in accord with the will of their people, not their own whim. (p. 99)

From here, *The Burning* resolves to an anticlimax as terrible as the violence that preceded it, for in a simple compromise, James absolves Bothwell and agrees to co-exist with him. The carnage that has enveloped the other characters of the play is lightly forgotten by both. That, at this point, James should close the play with a prayer in the broadest form of Scots we have heard him utter (p. 101) seems significant. It acknowledges a form of nationhood more expansive than his earlier definitions. It should be recalled in relation to this denouement that the play debuted at the Lyceum in November 1971, at a time when the Upper Clyde Shipyard occupation was at its latter stages, and the high-handedness of the Heath governments Trade Union legislation had come forcibly into question.

Conn's sense of Scotland as a nation in the midst of a rise in national consciousness that would reach full flower in the Thatcher years is, like Australian nationalism of the same era, not without ambivalence. As Ian Brown points out, Conn attempted to distance himself from the idea of a conscious 'history play', perhaps because of the propensity of earlier manifestations of the form to be 'inclined to the sentimental and fey'. (p. 86) Yet, there is surely a reason for the selection of this monarch. James is seen variously as the man who brought Scottish monarchy to England, or the Scottish king who became English, in a still heated historical debate, one open to endless re-interpretation on both sides of the Border. Like his mother before him, the circumstances of his upbringing rendered James distant from the people he governed, yet *The Burning* offers no alternative in Bothwell's cynical populism. There is little to contradict the view of James, presented in this play as weak and treacherous, of Bothwell that he is 'an evil man [...] neither true Protestant

nor Catholic ... and have nothing ... but secret and unholy ambition' (p. 25). Nor can there be much to say against Maitland's assessment of him: 'you are but England's errand boy' (p. 23). More than anything else, *The Burning* is concerned with dispatching comfortable national myths. Just as Hewett's protagonist sees no real connection with the romanticised bush landscape, so Conn's peasantry and middle classes seem only to come to grief from the brutalising state after they perform their songs to a mystical, redemptive nature.

### **Sport, Masculinity and Imagined Enemies**

One way in which small countries marginalised by great empires find means of expression is through their sporting heroes. Bill Bryden's *Benny Lynch* (1974) explored the tragedy of a sporting hero destroyed, in part by the macho culture that produced him. The figure of the Glasgow flyweight boxing champion of the 1930s proved so compelling a symbol that he would be revisited in 1985 by Peter Arnott with *The Boxer Benny Lynch*, while a more recent world champion was examined in Tom McGrath's *Buchanan* (1993). In the 1970s in particular, such working-class dramas as Tom McGrath and Jimmy Boyle's *The Hardman* (1977) and John Bett's *Street Fighting Man* (1978) also featured a series of (usually West Coast) characters to whom violence was part of self expression. This, as Joyce McMillan has pointed out became an almost obsessive recurrent theme of the period, spilling over to affect the behaviour of actors under Chris Parr's artistic directorship at the Traverse. (McMillan 1988, pp. 79-80)

In Australia, similar themes are explored, and in an uncannily similar choice of subject. Jack Hibberd's *The Les Darcy Show* (1974, in Hibberd 1976) examines a popular Australian myth of striking similarity to the story of Benny Lynch. Darcy was an Australian welterweight boxing champion, who, through the historically significant period of the First World War, took on and defeated a series of international contenders, before being signed by a shady American fight promoter for a world championship bout in New York. Departing Australian shores shortly before Hughes'

second conscription referendum, Darcy was labelled a draft-dodger and coward in some quarters of establishment Australia. By the time of his arrival in the USA, he had been banned, on political grounds, from fighting in New York and other significant American boxing capitals. He was, instead of challenging for a world belt, sent off to a series of gruelling tent 'exhibitions' which eventually occasioned his death at 21 in 1917.

Hibberd's approach, in common with Oakley, was to employ all the resources of popular theatre, seeking similar audiences to those of John McGrath, even if his ironic prose occasionally belies this:

The list of theatrically deprived areas in our society is long and unflattering: the working classes, the young, the old, women, migrants, blacks, wretches on kidney machines and even those pretenders to the new middle classes whose tastes under the veneer of respectability are really rather rough and earthbound [... Popular theatre can] jolt and agitate within a context of sheer local enjoyment, a whirl of community and an awareness of shared heritage and its absurdities (pp. 5-6).

One of these absurdities was surely sectarianism, which mixed as it occasionally was with Australian nationalism, became an issue fraught with the kinds of ambivalences that Hibberd delighted in foisting on his audiences. Thus Marg, Les Darcy's mother, exclaims: ' (*dashing in; to the audience*) War! War! Britain has declared war on Germany. There's talk of Australia being involved. No son of mine is going to fight for the potato-pilfering Poms. I'll write to Bishop Mannix!' p. 117). If there are complex and contradictory discourses to disentangle here, there is no less ambiguity about concept of 'mateship,' a cherished, oft ideologically exploited Australian male ideal. This sees Les Darcy ignore both mother and lover Winnie to prove his virile credentials, only to be lamented over at the climax: 'WINNIE: His face was distended and vermillion. Septicaemia the quacks said. More like every boxer in the world had punched it for a week.' (p. 129)

This concentration on the hard man is reiterated throughout the period, notably in the wife-beating protagonist of David Williamson's *The Removalists* (1971) whose misogyny is outstripped by that of the two policemen called to his home.

Interestingly, the much-travelled Melbournian Ian Turner, who writes the play's introduction, confesses he finds the city of Sydney frighteningly violent, but nevertheless adds:

But compare any Australian city with, say, Glasgow – a terrifying urban jungle in which the rawness of the buildings and workaday life is matched by a twitching raw nerve of violence – and Australia seems a society at peace with itself. (Williamson 1972, pp. 8-9)

So, too, in Williamson's *The Club* (1977) male drunken hooliganism and violence (equally distributed between the genders) plays a key part in the behind-the-scenes functioning of a Victorian VFL football club.

In John Romeril's *The Floating World* (1974, in Romeril 1975) we meet a typical 'ocker' war veteran, Les Harding, a former prisoner of the Japanese on a reconciliatory cruise to Japan. His encounter with an English ex-naval officer while characteristically drunk and 'chundering' rings true to the form of nationalism often expressed by his generation:

LES: We digger chaps didn't see much of you British Navy chaps in the Straits of Johore.

ROBINSON: No, we –

LES: Sold up the river again – just like the first one.

ROBINSON: Couldn't be everywhere at once old man.

LES: Churchill. First Gallipoli – then Singapore.

ROBINSON: Still, he did pull us through – in the end.

LES: His pud, that's what he pulled, in between brandies. A great lump of (*He retches*) – shit with a cigar on one end. (p. 7)

Whatever the justness of Les's feeling of grievance, there is beneath it a deferral of any consideration of Australian identity beyond the country's

historical resentments. The Englishman is only one of many bogeymen for Les, as Katharine Brisbane comments in her introduction:

Our fear of authority, in fact of being governed by an alien – in turn historically by the Poms, the Micks, the Wogs, the Yanks, the Chinks, the Nips – comes from a deep-seated inability to come to terms with ourselves. It is the overwhelming need to conform, the energy spent on keeping up one's defences, that brings about tragedy in Romeril's work (p. xxx).

In contrast to many in the New Wave, who seemed for the most part to be supporters of Gough Whitlam's left-leaning social democratic ALP, Romeril applied a more orthodox Marxism to his social analysis. Les, who descends into nervous breakdown on the cruise, is not compelled to this by an encounter with Australia's many imagined enemies past or present, but by the vacuity of his own consumer culture. When his wife declares him as 'mad as a snake' early on (p. 23), she little recognises that their lives together will become a real source of madness.

Imagined enemies similarly motivated much in Scottish theatre of this time. In Hector MacMillan's *The Sash* (1973, in McMillan 1974) the blight of sectarianism is played out through Oedipal conflict in a Glasgow tenement. Widowed patriarch Bill MacWilliam (the quintessentially grotesque name giving a hint to the bleak humour of the text, not to mention MacWilliam's identification with the Orange Order's hero-King William III) makes advances to his son Cameron's girlfriend Georgina in the young man's temporary absence:

Aw the things ah've believed in aw ma life, Georgina. Ah'm no just gawnie let them die oot! Away doon deep, maybe, it's ... it's t'dae wi puttin' the best seed intae, (his hands hover near her body) intae the best young Prodisant ground. Intae ground where he knows it'll be untainted. Where it'll grow; strong, like oor forefathers ... loyal, ... and (nods at the previous use of the word) pure. (pp. 27-28)

The rationalisation of semi-incestuous lust as religious purity denotes an extravagant investment in myth which overpowers the sense of a unified nation as

much here as it does in *The Feet of Daniel Mannix*. The action of *The Sash* takes place – almost inevitably – on the 12th of July, as Bill dons his Orangeman regalia in preparation for the annual afternoon constitutional-with-menaces. Yet this year is different, as Cameron refuses to join him, and his Catholic downstairs neighbour Bridget, accompanied by her niece Una, a pregnant single girl sheltering from violence in Northern Ireland find themselves compelled to interrupt Bill's drunken preparations for his day out.

As MacMillan's subtext points toward a Scottish working class as divided artificially against itself as its Australian equivalent earlier in the century, the play explores the fallacies underpinning both sides of the divide. When, at the height of his conflict with his father, Cameron points out '(quite softly, gently) Dad, the Orange lodges were startit t'keep folk like us doon' (p. 61), he is simply ignored. So too, the ambivalences of Una's Catholicism, informed by a Scottish-born socialist, are missed by all but Cameron: 'The writins a James Connolly have always been more the family bible. An the priests were never too fond a' that'. (p. 46) The power of the respective national/religious myths of Scotland and Ireland is enough to overwhelm the indecisive allegiance formed by Cameron and Una, as MacMillan's final image indicates:

*The two young folk are left alone now. Isolated in separate splashes  
of light. Not looking at each other.*

*But both minds are concerned with the same problem.*

*We cannot expect more. (p. 72)*

Macmillan adds that 'in the right theatre', the cast might return for a chorus of the anti-sectarian, socialist 'Men of '98', but the qualification he adds seems as depressingly powerful as the song (p. 72).

## Language and Identity

In Donald Smith's account of Scottish theatre after 1950, the revolution of the 1970s is marked out by its emphasis on indigenous dialect:

In the 1970s, Scottish playwrights staked their claim to a share of the theatre space and, whatever the production context, Scots actors became increasingly confident in speaking in their own voice. The ground rules had shifted. (Smith 1998, p. 270)

So, too, in her seminal 1971 account of the Australian New Wave 'Not Wrong – Just Different', first published as a feature in *The Australian* newspaper, Katharine Brisbane speaks of a group of writers who:

show, to an awesome degree, how rich, vivid and accurate our colloquial tongue is. For years we have called ourselves inarticulate because we do not, as a nation, speak the tongue that Sir Robert Menzies speaks. (2005, p. 166)

In an essay on the first great academic archivist of the New Wave, Margaret Williams, Julian Meyrick points out that the origins of this movement were more diffuse and less immediately local than is sometimes represented by subsequent historians. (2009 online) So, too, Joyce McMillan speaks of the international cross currents that influenced new writing at the Traverse in the 1970s. Each movement was, to an extent, the product of broader currents, especially in European theatre. (McMillan op cit, pp. 46-47, pp. 69-71) In a forum discussion in 2009, several practitioners of the New Wave acknowledged a large debt to Grotowski in particular.<sup>16</sup> But this makes each nation's embracing of local accents still more significant.

The politics of accents is explored in Oakley's *Marsupials* (1979, in Oakley 1981), where the middle-class couple Frank and Sue are visited by Tom, an expatriate Australian anglophile, and former lover of Sue. Frank's discontent with English

influences on Australia have been exacerbated by the take-over of his publishing company by an English multinational, and his subsequent redundancy (p. 10). Tom, when he arrives to stay, comments 'you're threatened ... by a real Englishman at the office and an imitation one at home' (p. 18). But their long argument about what Frank calls 'the Australian soul' (p. 20) – the sense of betrayal from those left behind that accompanies leaving the country – is, here, a half-truth which masks the sexual, emotional and economic anxieties originating in Frank and Sue's Melbourne home. So too, in another Oakley play, *A Lesson in English* (1969, in Oakley and Blair 1976) an ill-judged attempt by an anglophile high school teacher, Stone, to instruct his libidinous Australian teenage class in a canonical English classic, Marvell's 'To His Coy Mistress', leads to rebellion and breakdown for the schoolmaster. Yet it emerges that the advancement of an anglophile canon is as much about Stone's repressed sexuality as any particular imperialist agenda (pp. 26-30). Oakley's attitude, then, seems to be 'a plague on both your houses', with hegemonic and ill-considered notions of national or empire identity seen as equally culpable in the creation of comfortable myths, masking other issues.

Perhaps the most disturbing and powerful use of the rhythms of Australian vernacular occurs in Alexander Buzo's one act piece *Norm and Ahmed* (1968, in Buzo 1973). In it, a young Pakistani student is accosted late at night on a pavement next to a construction site on a Sydney street. The interruption of his walk home comes from Norm, a middle aged Australian veteran (he says) of Tobruk. Buzo uses the pace and pausing of 'strine' idioms to strong effect, as the conversation between the two men ranges across politics and nationhood, with Norm's occasionally media-inspired clichés ('We're not such a bad mob out here, you know. We might be a bit on the rough and ready side, but our heart's in the right place' – p. 24) mixing with a more original colloquial phrasing ('Yeah, you were terrified. You looked as if a kick in the crutch and a cold frankfurt'd finish you off' – p. 6). Norm's discourse is in part an aggressive assertion of his own version of masculinity – when Ahmed attempts to escape his conversation early on, he asks:

NORM: Then what's the matter, you think I'm a drunk? You think I'm one of those old piss-pots who go around the place annoying decent people?

AHMED: No, not at all.

NORM: You think I'm a poofter, then, don't you? That's what you're thinking, isn't it? You think I'm one of those poofsters in Hyde Park who go around soliciting blokes. (p. 4)

What emerges over a long alternately hostile and warm conversation is Norm's aching loneliness, Ahmed's mild radicalism, and the latter's suspicion of Australian media myth-making:

AHMED [...] one of the, uh, less desirable aspects of your society, to my mind, would be the tendency of the mass media to be the mouthpiece of the big commercial and military interests ... the, uh, free press, as it were. They brainwash the people. (p. 7)

Add to this Ahmed's identification of bogus elements of the Anzac myth ('I feel sorry for the Anzacs, poor fellows. However the Anzac legend is often invoked in support of ... other campaigns' – p. 11) and one might expect an explosion from the reactionary Norm. Yet the two, despite differing ideologies and educational attainments, seem to reach a mutual understanding. Suddenly, though, in the play's final seconds, Norm savagely beats Ahmed, and throws his limp body over the fence of the construction site with the exclamation 'Fucking boong' (p. 26)<sup>17</sup>

The cause of Norm's attack has been the source of much critical debate and disagreement. It is hard, though to resist the conclusion that spoken language is at its heart. The reaction to an Australian accent is not dissimilar to that of the Scot at the centre of empire in its provocation of responses that preclude what is being said in favour of the origins of who is saying it. While some forms of Scots accents have in recent surveys been revealed to be trusted by the British public in general, there might perhaps be more stigma attached to the speaker from Easterhouse or Niddrie than the accent of Gordon Brown. Certainly Norm's 'strine' might be seen as alarming, by

comparison to a ‘Sydney University’ accent, or a Sir Robert Menzies one. Norm, in his own home town also plainly feels this:

NORM: I suppose you get a lot of people who admit that you speak better than they do, eh? I bet a lot of people say you speak better than the average native-born Australian.

AHMED: Yes, I have been paid that compliment.

NORM: Yes, I could very well ... envisage that. (p. 21)

Norm’s attack takes place mainly because his words fail to signify a coherent place in the world, only a series of absences and negations. His inability to historically ground himself is symbolised by his abhorrent terminology for indigenous Australians, another unconscious signal that even the place he calls home is not, historically, his. Very like the violence committed by the Rouger in Roddy McMillan’s (1973, in Craig and Stevenson 2001, pp. 339 - 394), it is a product of the consciousness of a language in a place where class identity, nationality and even the solid compensations of a profession no longer mean much.

*The Bevellers* locates itself in a dingy underground industrial plant that makes and repairs mirrors. There the men of the macho workforce urgently need to take a look at themselves. In it, the youthful Norrie arrives for a first day at work, only to be subjected to an escalating register of oppression, with taunting, bullying and sexual and physical violence contributing to his decision, at the climax, to leave the job. What seems striking about the source of this brutality is that much of it, as with Norm and Ahmed, is provoked by the victim’s command of language. Even the abrupt but relatively forgiving foreman Bob finds Norrie’s articulacy with language (this time the logocentric variety) suspicious:

BOB: Whit kina stuff did they learn ye at school?

NORRIE: Usual. Bit o maths, science, techy drawin, composition an’ that.

BOB: Whit we ye good at?

NORRIE: English.

BOB: English?

NORRIE: Aye. Might not talk very good, but I was a'right when it came tae writin it doon.

BOB: Wasnae exactly ma best subject. Mebbie you're wan o these fellas wi the itch.  
(p. 364)

There follows the suggestion that this 'itch' sets Norrie suspiciously aside from the workers around him. So too, his desire to preserve and comprehend the written word in the shape of a newspaper recovered from the frame of a an old mirror acts as a provocation to the Rouger and Joe, who delight in burning it before him, dubbing him 'teacher's pet' (pp. 365-66).

The arrests resulting from the Melbourne première of *Norm and Ahmed* were not replicated at the opening of *The Bevellers* at the Royal Lyceum in Edinburgh, but there seems to be a similarly provocative subtext to the play's language. For Gilbert and Tompkins, the language of Buzo's play was interpreted as 'a nationalist move by which Australia declared a metaphoric independence' through use of colloquial idiom and slang. (1996, pp. 167-68) Local language is also at the centre of *The Bevellers*. As Randall Stevenson has pointed out, the play boasts an 'expletive inventiveness that verges on the baroque'. (op cit, pp. 73-84, p. 74) Sentences such as Bob's 'It's blohorable, so it is. Diablastic and blohorable', (p. 350) and Peter's 'Go! You? I've seen more go in a haun-reared, Abernathy fuckin' biscuit. Ya common schoolboard-faced, sodomistic pig, ya!' (p. 351) indicate a specifically local turn in arcane obscenity. This claiming of contemporary idioms among MacMillan's characters might also have a bearing on the treatment of Norrie's skill in 'English'.

The sources of anxiety in *The Bevellers* are many, but there can be little doubt that the generation gap represented between such older characters as Bob and Peter, and the younger Rouger, Joe and Charlie derives some of its power from economic instability. Bob speaks with affection and care about his craft, but acknowledges that (along with a good deal of Scottish secondary industry of the time), it is in decline, with a shop floor 'on its last legs' (p. 379) soon to join others of its kind in closure.

Bob repeatedly mitigates the uncouthness of his working culture in the same manner as Norm:

You might think this is a rough trade and rough folk in it. But that's jist because we havenae broke away fae the ould days – no a'thegither anyway. Ye cannae wipe oot years o' hard men an' hard graft jist because the machinery changes a wee bit. No that it's a' that different, mind you. (p. 363)

But for the younger generation, the value systems that underlie this projected self-image are no longer valid, with little future in this working environment. With the definable certainties of Scotland's role as the workshop of the Empire no longer available, and a class divide symbolised by the Imperial remnant of the public school cadets who march past above the basement level factory, there seems little to affirm these characters. The Rouger emphasises the trap in which the characters find themselves: 'You'll never be amongst it young-yin. They're up there an' you're doon here an' even if you wer grindin yur guts tae get up therr amongst it, next year when they go by you'll still be doon here, like the rest o' us.' (p. 387) Yet there is not even real certainty that the shop will exist next year. Like Norm, characters like The Rouger have no historically coherent narrative from which to draw identity, and only violence to signify existence.

### **A Note on Indigenous Australians**

On the subject of Indigenous Australians, it might be noted that the New Wave were predominantly white writers. Buzo was plainly concerned about aboriginality, as was Hewett, whose *Man From Mukinupin* (1979) includes the violent rape of an indigenous woman in a scene that, as Gilbert and Tompkins point out, culminates a many-layered commentary on colonial exploitation.<sup>18</sup> Yet, the theme was not a predominant one among New Wave writers. Perhaps the exception, as so often, lay in the oeuvre of Romeril, whose work frequently involved indigenous Australian characters. Elsewhere, indigenous writers, working within a tradition closer to the

naturalism of Jim McNeill and Peter Kenna, explored issues of identity. They included Kevin Gilbert with his *The Cherry Pickers* (1971, though written in 1968) along with Robert Merritt (*The Cake Man*, 1975) and Gerald Bostock (*Here Comes the Nigger*, 1977). These plays would anticipate the significant raising of consciousness that would accompany the work of Jack Davis in the 1980s. Throughout the 1970s, nonetheless, the fringe theatre groups of the New Wave provided space and workshopping for the incipient drama of indigenous peoples, and premièred indigenous new work, among this, the hit all-aboriginal political revue show at the Nimrod in Sydney, *Basically Black* (1972). Meanwhile, the indigenous director Brian Syron directed several significant New Wave premières, perhaps most notably Hibberd's *Dimboola* (1976). (Brisbane, op cit, pp. 336-38)

### **Conclusions: Journeying into the 1980s**

A few years back, the author was criticised by a fellow expatriate Australian for 'letting the side down' regarding a feature I had written in *The Scotsman* about the, then, new blockbuster film *Australia*. (Cramer 2008, online) This I felt did for my country what *Braveheart* did for Scotland. If the vision of the burly but dim Australian bushman needing to be led by an English mistress infused with an (ahistorical) entrepreneurial spirit of neo-liberal economic zeal seemed offensive, this might have owed something to the early discoveries I made with the work of the New Wave. This was in no way a movement lacking in self-criticism, nor did it allow Australians to simply blame foreigners for their own mistakes. It did, however, revive a conversation about what a mature Australia might look like.

Just as the Scottish revival of the 1970s has been said to have somewhat diminished after the disappointments of the 1979 devolution referendum, so after 1979, if it had not ended before, had the New Wave. In Scotland, that change included a surge of new writing by women, exploration of varieties of non-macho identity including a lively strand of playwriting on gay themes and the rise of a new generation, particularly under the aegis of Jenny Killick at the Traverse in the mid-

1980s. (Cramer op cit, pp. 165-76) For Australia, too, through the work of Jack Davis, Katherine Thomson, Janis Balodis, Stephen Sewell, Daniel Keene, Andrew Bovell and others, there continued a different ideological and historical interrogation of Australian identity. These writers would examine previously neglected or marginalised issues, such as global politics, multiculturalism and the nation's relationship with its original indigenous population. The discourses established would, in some respects, continue to echo those in Scottish theatre, in part perhaps because of both nations' inheritance of a more radical political spirit than experienced by countries closer to the centre of empire.

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Endnotes.

<sup>1</sup> This article is dedicated to the late Professor Richard Madelaine of the University of New South Wales, a great teacher and friend.

<sup>2</sup> Richard J Finlay, 'National Identity: From British Empire to European Union', Anthony Cooke et al (eds), 2007. *Modern Scottish History 1707 to the Present, Vol 2: The Modernisation of Scotland, 1850 to the Present*. Dundee: John Donald, , pp. 23 – 46  
Dundee: John Donald, 2007, pp. 25-46.

<sup>3</sup> It may be worth noting that both Scotland and Australia would later hold referenda that would subsequently be hotly debated. I need hardly expand upon the controversy that attended the notorious 40% rule in the Scottish devolution referendum of 1979. So too, the 1999 independence referendum in Australia has frequently been dubbed 'rigged' by republicans. In an attempt to nullify the vote winning potential of Prime Minister Paul Keating's policy proposal of a referendum seeking an elected Australian head of state, opposition leader and avowed monarchist John Howard promised a referendum along the same lines. After his election in 1996, Howard was as good as his word, but having called a constitutional convention that seemed destined to fail from the start, Howard formulated a referendum which proposed that a 'Yes' vote would result in a head of state appointed by parliament (in effect, Howard himself) rather than popular vote, and added a clause that proposed a significant rewriting of the Australian constitution to accompany a 'Yes' vote. The bizarre upshot of this saw several of the most prominent Australian republicans switch sides to campaign for a 'No' vote, which was upheld, despite reasonably consistent opinion polling before and since in favour of an Australian head of state. As recently as June 2013, as I have suggested in a recent feature for *The Scotsman*, the ill-judged gesture by Prime Minister Gillard (at the apparent advice of her Scottish Spin Doctor John McTernan) of knitting a toy kangaroo for the new royal baby may well have played a part in her unseating.

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/steve-cramer-uk-parallels-with-gillard-collapse-1-2987763>

<sup>4</sup> This was the events surrounding the Japanese bombing of Darwin in February 1942, when much of the military garrison reacted to an incorrectly anticipated invasion by first looting the town, then stealing any available transport to flee. Although such historians as Peter Grose have attempted to mitigate the actions of military personnel on the day, and praise those who remained at their posts, the event remains largely unmentioned in Australian martial annals. See: Peter Grose, *An Awkward Truth*, Sydney (Allen and Unwin), 2009.

<sup>5</sup> In the hot Christmas break of 1967 Holt took a swim at Victoria's Portsea beach, and was swept away by the rip. His unrecovered body has spawned an increasingly bizarre series of conspiracy theories, though he was probably simply eaten by sharks.

<sup>6</sup>The Welsh-born 'Billy' Hughes was Prime Minister of Australia from 1915 until 1923. His reputation compares, perhaps unfavourably, with that of Ramsay MacDonald in the UK. Elected as leader of the ALP, Hughes crossed the floor with a few supporters a year after his election to form a coalition with Joseph Cook's conservative Liberal Party, in order to facilitate the second referendum. His reputation among Labor supporters is one of treachery and bloodthirsty warmongering. His period as leader of the opposition to the ALP government of John Curtin (1941 – 45) won him few friends on the right, with infighting and obstructionism blemishing the last days of the United Australia Party.

<sup>7</sup> Santamaria's dark prognostications upon Australia's moral and political future, delivered in a declamatory, down-from-the-mountain style through endless television and radio broadcasts, were such rich fare for satirists that Max Gillies, a leading performer of the New Wave for whom Oakley wrote several parts would still win rapturous applause for his imitations on television a decade after the electoral elimination of the DLP in the 1974 Federal Election:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_9AOEa96hOE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_9AOEa96hOE)

<sup>8</sup> The great Australian historian Manning Clark's classic history of Australia provides a compelling commentary on how, after a series of increasingly ugly sectarian battles (both physical and political) each state of Australia embraced secular and free public education between 1871 and 1895. By the time of Federation in 1901, this principle had become (paradoxically) sacrosanct. (Manning Clark, *A Short History of Australia*, New York (Mentor), 1963, pp. 144 –149).

<sup>9</sup> In August 1920, Mannix's attempt to visit his homeland saw his ship intercepted by a British gunboat sent at the personal orders of Lloyd George, who regarded Mannix as a dangerous subversive. He was detained in Cornwall, and prohibited from visiting even the cities of Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow, presumably amid fears that he would spread Catholic dissent. In Oakley's play, Mannix comments: 'Lloyd George the Welshman. The same dwarfish size and overgrown ego as your compatriot Hughes in Australia.' (p. 18)

<sup>10</sup> A strictly limited form of Compulsory Military Service had been introduced without referenda by Curtin's government when Australian territory was directly threatened by Japanese invasion in the Second World War. Menzies seized upon the precedent to introduce his own, Foreign Policy inspired, version in 1964. Bolton, *op cit*, p. 16, pp. 157-158.

<sup>11</sup> Dr HV Evatt was leader of the ALP from 1951 until 1960.

<sup>12</sup> In David Williamson's *Don's Party* (1971), this latter election forms the subject of the play, in which a group of mainly ALP supporting bourgeois radicals gather for what they (and most Australian political pundits of the time) assume will be a victory party. In a satire which attacks these trendies as fiercely as the DLP and Mannix, they become increasingly drunk, abusive and lecherous. Williamson's small 'c' conservatism set him somewhat aside from most of his fellows in the New Wave, and perhaps also accounted for his widespread international commercial success. David Williamson, 1973. *Don's Party*, Sydney: Currency.

<sup>13</sup> Dorothy Hewett, 1972. *The Chapel Perilous*, Sydney: Currency. The author's 1985 reprint of this edition still sports the prominent injunction 'Not for sale in Western Australia' on its cover. Any losses to the publisher in the Western state would no doubt have been more than compensated for by the interest this created in the rest of Australia.

<sup>14</sup> Jasna Novakovic, 'The Chapel Perilous: The Paradigm of Fertility Overshadowed by the Quest', *op cit*, Double Dialogues: Enter the New Wave  
[http://www.doubledialogues.com/issue\\_eleven/novakovic.html](http://www.doubledialogues.com/issue_eleven/novakovic.html)

Novakovic brings a fascinating level of detail to the sources of Hewett's play, contending that Sally's misinterpretation of the myth propels much of the action.

<sup>15</sup> Hewett, like Oakley was older than the majority of the, then unknown, New Wave writers, and also like Oakley (a novelist), already had a substantial 'literary' reputation as a published and acclaimed poet.

<sup>16</sup> 'Enter The New Wave: Melbourne', Double Dialogues: Enter the New Wave, op cit, [http://www.doubledialogues.com/issue\\_eleven/1-2\\_new\\_wave\\_melbourne.html](http://www.doubledialogues.com/issue_eleven/1-2_new_wave_melbourne.html)

<sup>17</sup> 'Boong' is an extremely offensive racist term, referring to Aborigines. The last two words of Buzo's play caused protests and arrests at the first Melbourne production. Sadly the offence seems to have been caused by the first word, rather than the second.

<sup>18</sup> Gilbert and Tompkins, op cit, p. 214.

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