

# *Nationalism, Landscape, and Class in Anglo-Australian Fiction*

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ALTHOUGH AMBIVALENCE IN NATIONAL allegiance is still a concern of twentieth-century Australian novels like *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony* it is naturally a more acute concern in the nineteenth century. In the fiction from the 1850's one can see a steady shift from allegiance to Britain as Home, as source of values, fashion, and enlightenment and as Beatific Destiny for those whose perseverance, thrift, and luck enabled them to transcend the rigours of Australian pastoral or mining life to a sense of Britain as an interfering but otherwise irrelevant country whose climate was abominable and whose people were ridiculously mean and small-minded. By the end of the century attacks on Britain in the *Sydney Bulletin* led an English journal to call it "one of the lowest and most mischievous papers in the British Empire . . . [whose] particular mission is sowing bad blood between England and her colonies."<sup>1</sup> Significantly such sniping was not confined to colonial journals. Henry Lawson wrote a virulent satire on English provincialism in *Argosy* during his visit to England,<sup>2</sup> while the Sydney-based *New Zealander*, Arthur H. Adams, wrote a sketch set in an English pub to convict the locals of total ignorance of colonial history and to imply they were impecunious, tight-fisted, and dishonest.<sup>3</sup> The sketch draws a heavy distinction between a colonial's enthusiasm for the Empire and an enthusiasm for England and the English. Since this piece appeared in *Black and White*, a journal whose raison d'être was promotion of the Empire, it registers a significant shift away from accepting the parent-child model of the Empire, or seeing any inherent superiority in the English character.

Perhaps the clearest framework in which to see the issues is that provided by Henry Kingsley in *The Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn* (1859) and its repudiation by Joseph Furphy in *Such Is Life* (1903) as populated by "slender-witted, virgin-souled, overgrown schoolboys who fill . . . [that] exceedingly trashy and misleading novel with their insufferable twaddle."<sup>4</sup> Furphy's hostility to *Geoffrey Hamlyn* was such that he incorporated one of its characters in order to satirize the ethos of the earlier novel. This ethos has been analyzed by Julian Croft as "creole," in the sense that the Australian-born characters are made to manifest an inferiority in sense of self-worth, in experience, in physique, in morality, and in class.<sup>5</sup> Immense claims (apparently endorsed by the author) are made for the inherent superiority of European culture and English nationality. At the other end of the spectrum the nationalistic, egalitarian ethos of *Such Is Life* has long been praised, although G. A. Wilkes has recently shown that this view needs to be modified a little.<sup>6</sup> "Tom Collins" is a widely-read inheritor of European culture yet he feels no consequent inferiority in the way of Alice Brentwood, who could not conceive of "being in some great European city, and being asked if you were British, having to say, No!"<sup>7</sup>

The Anglo-Australian temperament made an inevitable shift between these positions, but it did so by a sort of zig-zag development adjusting to physical environment, speculating on eugenics, delighting in enhanced economic prospects, repudiating interference from Europe, and even welcoming a new level of morality, but the received attitudes which were hardest to extirpate or even modify were those of class. "Class" for these writers was almost never understood in the modern sense of groups with an identifiable role in the productive processes of a society, and even less as the dynamic historical phenomena which proceed from that role.<sup>8</sup> Rather it meant "rank," or what Dahrendorf termed "estates," that is, levels of social hierarchy based on birth and a system of traditional privileges and duties.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps the most fundamental difference between the concept of class in these novels and in post-Marxist debate is that in the former "class" is predominantly a quality of individuals, whereas in the latter it expresses the individual's relation to collective forces and action.

While the novels do occasionally depict class conflict,<sup>10</sup> they more often depict individual characters whose bearing, manners, imagination, and even morality are seen as a product of their class. Predictably in a colonial society, refinement of manners and imaginative breadth (but not necessarily morality) are usually assigned to the well-born English characters. As a result there are a series of tensions manifest in which enthusiastic republicanism or strong identification with the landscape and climate conflict with social views which seem to have undergone no comparable modification. Thus in Ada Cambridge's Melbourne novel, *A Humble Enterprise* (1896), the heroine is rewarded with marriage to the socially superior hero precisely because she has been prepared to buckle down to hard, practical work (running a tea-shop) and not allow herself to look above her station until the declaration of love is safe in hand. This reflects no change in social attitudes in relation to moral status and suitability of marriage partners from those in *Jane Eyre*. Again, in Guy Boothby's *The Marriage of Esther* (1895) the heroine is keen to distinguish between Australians and the English, and to identify with the former, but the moment she is led to believe that an indigent Englishman in her employ is really a disgraced marquis she naturally falls into addressing him as "my lord," and expresses sympathy for the degradation that must be felt by the English nobility who fetch up among Australian riff-raff when they were born for higher things.

Henry Kingsley's own attitudes are rather less homogeneous than Croft's reading of *Geoffry Hamlyn* suggests, and the fact that it was much more generally available than his other novels when the nationalistic, egalitarian models of the Australian consciousness were being developed by Hancock, Palmer, Ward, Phillips, and others, has made Kingsley something of a whipping boy for those who are keen to welcome an emancipated indigenous culture. But while *Geoffry Hamlyn* can validly be seen as an almost totally anglophile starting point, Kingsley himself moves away from this quite significantly in his next Australian novel, *The Hillyars and the Burtons* (1865). In both novels the shape of the fiction influences the attitudes expressed to the country. *Geoffry Hamlyn*, as Leonie Kramer has pointed out,<sup>11</sup>

is really more about the *English* living in Australia than about the English living in *Australia*, and the emphasis is all on the transportable but still integrated group who reassemble in Europe at the end of the novel, even down to the last stud groom. In Cecil Hadgraft's words, "as English gentlemen of substance, they possess their little self-contained world wherever they are, observing with tolerance the odd behaviour of aborigines, convicts, colonials, and the rest outside their circle."<sup>12</sup> No such self-contained world exists in *The Hillyars and the Burtons* and so in a number of ways the opinions endorsed by the novel are quite different. One such is the attitude to the English migrants arriving in Australia, who instead of being the temporary adventurers like Sam Buckley are either the scum of aristocratic Europe against whom the local politician, James Oxton, inveighs, or genuinely talented folk of the lower orders who have as much to offer the colony as it does to them.

The discovery of that vast continent which we call Australia is an important era in the history of the world. For it opened, in the first place, a career for young gentlemen possessed of every virtue, save those of continence, sobriety, and industry, who didn't choose to walk and couldn't afford to ride; and, viewed from this point, its discovery ranks next in importance, after the invention of soda-water, — a sort of way of escaping cheaply from the consequences of debauchery for a time. But not only did the new country turn out to be the most wonderfully scentless cesspool for a vast quantity of nameless rubbish, convicted and unconvicted; but it gave an opening also for really honest, upright fellows like Charles Morton, with no more faults than the best of us, except the very great one of being educated in such a way that no possible career is open to them. What is a fellow to do if his father chooses to play his game of whist with fourteen cards, and if he happens to be the fourteenth?

(pp. 238-39)

The irony here suggests that Kingsley is far more detached from the assumptions of the English gentility than he had been in *Geoffry Hamlyn*. Australia is still the land of opportunity certainly, but the practice of using it as a place of exile for English society's less happy members is repudiated.

James Oxton identified proprietorially with Cooksland because of what he had created in its social system, but his daughter,

Gerty, does so in much more fundamental ways. Gerty is the most extraordinary character in either of these two narratives. She is charming but almost pathologically naive, and is devoted to the Australian landscape and climate in a way unmatched by any other character in early Anglo-Australian fiction. Gerty does not just admire the Australian landscape as a lesser alternative to Beautiful Britain, she *lives* off the landscape and starts to die spiritually the moment she is separated from it. At her first glimpse of England she rejects it utterly: "Oh dear, dear me. Is this, this England, George? What a nasty, cold, ugly, dirty place it is" (p. 124). She continues to crave the warmth and openness of Australia:

"Take me back dear — take me back to the old forest again. We shall never be happy here, dear. The flowers all smell like poma-tum; there is no real warmth in the sun. And it is all so close and confined. . . . I want to go back to the bush, and feel the sun in my bones." (p. 171)

She does at last get back "to feel the sun in her bones" in a way that is quite surreal. Having fled from her husband she makes her way to Melbourne and then overland to Albury. From there according to Kingsley's geography, there is just a narrow strip of New South Wales to be crossed before arriving at Cooks-land. This trip becomes a sort of purgatorial passage which Gerty, compelled by some unexplained inner logic, crosses on foot. It is both an education for her baby and a sacrifice of herself. She introduces the baby to flowers, animals, and birds of the country but becomes ill and loses her reason: "She had trusted her old friend the Bush a little too far this time. As she very sensibly said, she was glad it did not happen before" (p. 136).

This sense of the land as something which requires placating, which demands sacrifice, is an extraordinary vision for this time. It prefigures the discussion at the end of the nineteenth century of whether Australia could hope to develop a national literature without war and bloodshed.<sup>13</sup> The land as a purgatorial force has since become a recurrent motif in the Australian imagination. A. D. Hope's "Arabian desert of the human mind," Voss's journey into the centre, and Heriot's journey in *To the Islands* are all examples. Kingsley suggests that the sacrifice of one

generation is required for the preparation of the environment of the next. The Australian landscape can make terrible demands:

In spite of his madness, though, he walked stoutly onwards. The country through which they walked was one of the richest and most beautiful in the world, but it was not ready for human habitation. It was still in its cruel, pitiless phase. It was only in the state of preparation, — a state which it requires generally a great sacrifice of human life to alter into a state of readiness for what we choose to call a state of civilization. It was exceedingly rich, and it looked wonderfully beautiful. Every morning, great inexorable Mother Nature looked over the eastern hill tops, passing through phases of crimson glory into orange glory, until she had done her day's work, and laid all the magnificent landscape to sleep, under a haze of crystalline blue. And then she would sleep herself; and say dreamily, "Children! children! here is room for millions of you. Come." And then in the evening she would wake up once more, into new glories of crimson and purple, and once more fall asleep into dark night, sighing sometimes, in dry wandering winds, which rustled through the grass upon the thirsty wolds, "Children! children! you have come too soon, and you must die." (p. 388)

*The Hillyars and the Burtons* is a novel which develops themes of love and sacrifice and of the opposition between love and duty, themes which no doubt influenced the portrayal of Australian life and landscape. But there can be no doubt that Kingsley's overall imaginative engagement with Australia contained much profounder elements than we would suspect from reading only *Geoffrey Hamlyn*.

One of the reasons for the longevity of English class attitudes in Australia is their interconnectedness with so many other facets of life. "Class" is of course a semantic hydra with meanings in economics, in politics, in manners, in morality, in education, and in eugenics. Robin Gilmour has argued that in Victorian England the middle class developed the concept of the "gentleman" as a way of extending and democratizing the cachet of the aristocracy, and in so doing stressed the element of gentle conduct over that of genteel birth.<sup>14</sup> Some of the tensions of the Anglo-Australian sensibility reflect this (such as the unprincipled-English-gentleman-versus-honest Australian pattern of Mrs. Campbell Praed's fiction) but in general the Anglo-Australian writers

thought of class in terms of breeding, manners, imaginative breadth, and a curiously compelling ability at anything from philosophy to fighting.

Perhaps the best examples of the range of contradictions and tensions generated by the class attitudes are found in the fiction of Rolf Boldrewood and Mrs. Campbell Praed both of whom enjoyed a good deal of popularity in the 1880's and 1890's, and both of whom asserted strong allegiances to aspects of Australian life while still finding attractiveness in what we would think of as antithetical or at least conflicting social values. Boldrewood came to Australia aged four and turned to fiction after a career as squatter, magistrate, and Goldfields Commissioner. *Robbery under Arms* is one of the few nineteenth-century Australian novels which was popular in its own day and has continued to be read. Although the claims for it have always been muted, Boldrewood has been seen as producing "the first thoroughly Australian character in fiction,"<sup>15</sup> and as bringing to the Australian novel a wealth of realistic detail. Against this one must set the romantic, aristocratic hero, Starlight, who was praised by Desmond Byrne as being of the heightened stature a romance required<sup>16</sup> and gently ridiculed by almost everyone else since. Alan Brissenden has pointed out the fundamental Australia-England schizophrenia in Boldrewood's novels,<sup>17</sup> but not, I think, the extent to which the "English gentlemanly" aspects of the romance compromise the portrayal of the more realistic characters. Captain Starlight is an extremely genteel and chivalrous bushranger who, while not exactly robbing from the rich to give to the poor, at least combines robbery with the protection of ladies, scrupulous satisfaction of debts of honour, and swanking round in society with the very police commissioners who have sworn to catch him. Starlight is a master actor who adopts a "Jemmy Green" role when necessary. This can be an effective way of prosecuting the business, as when his ingratiating performance helps force up the prices of stolen cattle he is selling, but for the most part it is simply a reflection of the narrator's (and Boldrewood's) identification of moral, intellectual, and imaginative superiority in Starlight's breeding and class. Thus Jim, the narrator's brother, muses, "He's a wonderful clever fellow, the Captain. I've often

thought when I've been by myself in Melbourne, sitting quiet, smoking at night, and turning all these things over, that it's a wonder he don't shoot himself when he thinks of what he is and the man he ought to be."<sup>18</sup> Jim is good-natured and easily influenced, but lest we suspect the author of any irony here we have a similar vote of confidence from Jim's father who is a hard-bitten pragmatist. He is discussing Starlight's system for falsifying brands: "... This is all his notion; and many a man has looked at his own beast, with the ears altered and brand faked, and never dreamed he ever owned it. He's a great card is Starlight. It's a pity he ever took to this kind of life" (p. 37).

The so-called realistic characters, then, are made to testify to the innate superiority of this representative of English gentility and to regret his straying from the path of virtue. This suggests a desire by the lower classes to protect and maintain the position of those higher up the social ladder, like a faithful butler tending a drunken head of the household. Improbable as this may seem, it is an idea Boldrewood makes explicit elsewhere and which is echoed by other writers.<sup>19</sup>

*Robbery under Arms* is a highly moral novel. It opens with Dick Marston reproaching himself in his condemned cell, and thus puts all the action into a "what-a-fool-I've been" framework. But the Marstons' protective attitude towards Starlight seems to be shared by Boldrewood also, for such remorse and mundane retribution as fall upon Dick and Jim are not allowed to besmirch the superior Englishman. Starlight is wounded in a shoot-out with the police and in his dying moments reveals his identity to the titled police officer he used to know in England, and with whom, we understand, the secret will stop, as its revelation would cause pain to a certain English lady. The reader is supposed to be chastened by the dire example of Dick's fate, but also to endorse the clubby protection of Starlight's "honour."

Boldrewood's prejudices in favour of the English gentleman are made explicit by characters in his other novels. In *A Sydney-Side Saxon* we are given the patriarchal story of a Kent lad who emigrates to Australia to better himself and who comes to own vast tracts of New South Wales and to sire a reasonable proportion of its population. But his lifetime of endeavour and success



seems to have done nothing to modify his sense of fundamental human worth, and faced with a whiff of aristocracy on its uppers he is only too eager to pull a helpful forelock:

But there's something about gentlefolk and old blood — people may talk as they like — that stirs the heart of a true-born Englishman. When you think of what they're born to, and the way they're brought up in a good county family, and you see one of them brought low in a strange land, it melts the very heart within you, and you feel as if you couldn't do enough for them.<sup>20</sup>

Whereas Boldrewood came to Australia as a child and remained there, Mrs. Campbell Praed was born there and left permanently in her mid-twenties. She is one of Australia's first expatriate writers. This is of importance because it suggests that her audience was always partly, and became increasingly, English rather than Australian. In the preface to her second novel she announced that it was "to the British public that I, an Australian, address myself, with the hope that I may in some slight degree aid in bridging over the gulf which divides the Old World from the Young."<sup>21</sup> Such a statement may have helped to prepare an English audience for a novel set entirely in Australia, but it would be misleading to accept this as the chief impulse of her fiction. Praed certainly used her Australian experience to good effect in her novels and maintained a slightly self-conscious nostalgia for the country, but Australianness was never a problem for her — she never had to explain it to herself — and hence the Anglo-Australian tension was always subjugated to other themes and interests. Nevertheless it is probably significant that some of her most effective depictions of Australian life were written shortly after she had left the country (*Policy and Passion*, 1881) and just after her only subsequent visit to Australia in 1894 (*Mrs Tregaskiss*, 1896; *Nùlma*, 1897).

Praed demonstrates a range of attitudes to the Australian landscape which combine her childhood experiences with a dash of the "weird melancholy" dictum of Marcus Clarke. The landscape of the fiction set in the Ubi (Logan) district is generally attractive while that set on the Leura (Burnett) is harsh and forbidding. Praed's younger heroines usually identify with their

physical environment and find it an interesting and pleasant background to their amours. The sense of identity is often strengthened through their either speaking snatches of an aboriginal language or having an aboriginal name (Koorali, Nulma, Oora, Nuniana). For the older heroines the physical environment may have aspects of grandeur, but it serves more to stress the isolation and endurance of these characters. The closest Praed comes to the sort of metaphysical identification with the land shown by Gerty Oxtan is with Oora in *The Lost Earl of Ellan* (1906). Praed draws on aboriginal lore to express this identification.<sup>22</sup> Humans allegedly have a tripartite identity of *bunna* or physical body, *wunda* or nature soul, and *toki* or immortal spirit. Oora's nature soul is the dominant force of her consciousness:

The great grim wild had for Oora something of the fierce joy of the sea, something of the compelling fascination that had drawn her to the Strange Man. The sight of these endless gum-trees, gaunt, hag-like, often lightning-blasted, was to her as the sight of a great company of friends. The voiceless midday hush of the Bush had a dreamy influence upon her, soothing the heart-pain by which she was continually tortured. The mysterious stirrings and whisperings in the forest towards evening, spoke to her of destiny and of fulfilment.<sup>23</sup>

For several heroines, however, the social, intellectual, and imaginative life of Australia offers no such fulfilment. They (like Praed herself as a girl) feel restricted and dissatisfied and look to Europe as the source of ideas and taste. This preference is usually expressed by Australian women, not men, and is exploited in the novels by various English seducers who use the women's colonial diffidence to prosecute their evil designs. Praed, then, sees the English-Australian conflict in a way comparable to Henry James's opposition of Europe and America.<sup>24</sup> The Englishman is assured, sophisticated, sensitive, but selfish and corrupt. The Australian is unpretentious, frank, selfless, capable, and loyal. The glitter of the "knowledge" and wider experience is shown to be false when the gentleman turns out to be really a cad. What is interesting about this pattern — which can be found in such novels as *Policy and Passion* (1881), *Nulma* (1897), and *The*

*Maid of the River* (1905) — is the change in the attitude to the woman's initial impulse to a wider world of ideas. In *Policy and Passion* the reader sympathizes with Honoria's repudiation of her father's ambitions for her:

"Papa . . . I understand your feelings but I cannot sympathise with them. My money may be Australian, but I am not. I have not an ounce of genuine Australian blood in my veins . . . I cannot get up an enthusiasm about wool, and tallow, frozen meat, intercolonial jealousy, and all that cant which people talk about this glorious country of the future, which seems to me like the boasting of a silly child who fancies that the great world is interested in its capers. I care only for my native land because it is the scene of my life — I would change it if I could. I care only for politics because they are your triumph or defeat. All my yearnings are after England, and English people. Like must to like." (p. 256)

This desire to enlarge her experience makes her an easy prey to Barrington, the unscrupulous Englishman who manages to convince her that he is just the experience she has been waiting for, but at the last minute his villainy is exposed and she eventually ends up with loyal Maddox and throws in her lot with Australia. The question of allegiance is resolved by the use of a Garden of Eden motif. Because of her coquetry, at the start of the novel Honoria is known as "The Enchantress of Kooralbyn." (Kooralbyn is an aboriginal word meaning "Place of Snakes.") Gradually, however, the power of fascination is transferred to Barrington who becomes the tempter. The transition is symbolized in a delicious scene in which Barrington is bitten on the wrist by a snake: "Suddenly Honoria bent forward, and before either of the men could say nay, she had placed her fresh young lips to the bleeding wrist and was drawing the poison from the wound" (p. 201). This quasi-sexual, quasi-vampirish strand is joined with motifs of mesmerism and fascination to show that Honoria's desire for experience is a dangerous thing. It is not countered by any sort of alternative Australian experience (even though, since Dyson Maddox was an explorer who had been speared by the Aborigines, something of the Mysteries should have been available through him) but only through the conventional assertion that the circumscribed life is the best and healthiest that is avail-

able. The conflicting allegiances are not resolved: one pole is simply repudiated on moral grounds — a form of censorship. The claims of the English upper classes to a monopoly of imaginative life in the novel remain unchallenged.

Although in two later versions of this narrative pattern we see a triangle of English (or Scottish) seducer, young Australian girl, and loyal Australian lover, Praed seems to become less interested in the Anglo-Australian dimension than in the male-female one. Both Núlma and Nuniana are more “natural” than Honoria and both identify strongly with Australia. Nuniana in *The Maid of the River* (1905) is seduced by Alec Stewart after a “Scotch marriage” and bears him a child. Alec, it transpires, already has a wife in a lunatic asylum at Parramatta, and so cannot marry her. When Nuniana later discovers that Alec’s wife has died and that he is planning to marry a society belle she brings a successful breach of promise suit and Alec is disgraced. The nationalist element enters at the end when she finally accepts her Australian lover’s reiterated proposal.

It was time that he should take a wife, beget children and make for himself a definite place in the world. If he could not have what he wanted in Australia he would seek it out of the country of his birth. . . . The honesty of the Bush ran in his very blood. He have been born a grave, frank and faithful son of the gum forests, the hills and the plains. He was a true Australian — and Oh! what a pity that such offspring of the soil should leave its own free strong land and give priceless gifts and energies to the propping up of a decaying civilisation. It was men like him of whom Australia stood in need to guide her counsels and to develop her resources.<sup>25</sup>

Perhaps the most striking difference between this rendition of the seducer story and that in *Policy and Passion* is the acceptance of Australianness. While both novels conclude with a rather jingoistic tag, the vulnerability of Nuniana does not depend upon any implied superiority in English imagination or civilization. Consequently Nuniana can fight back.

Similarly, an Honoria figure emerges in the person of Susan Galbraith in *The Lost Earl of Ellan* (1906). Susan is Sydney-educated and like Honoria has aspirations to English society, and dreams of encountering a prince in drover’s habit. This is close

to what happens in the first third of the novel but whereas Honoria's passion was one of the main themes of the earlier novel, Susan's infatuation and aspirations are progressively trivialized and she is supplanted as the earl's lover by her more indigenous sister, Oora, with whom he is shipwrecked. Wolfe could be the saviour and protector of Susan when she is thrown from her horse, but when it is a question of struggle against elemental forces, he in turn must be protected by Oora and her aboriginal charm. Oora's confidence in love comes directly from her identification with the metaphysical forces of the land. The inevitability of the one becomes a paradigm of the other:

To Oora's mind, that secret yearning she had ever felt for a companionship which should satisfy the transcendental side of her own being, was inseparably connected with the Nature forces of which she seemed partly compounded. For her love would have the resistless might of great salt waves; it would have the flowery and the doomful quality of the spring after rains, cruel and deadly in time of drought. It would be sweet as wattle and creek jasmine, dreamy as the fragrance of certain scrub blossoms, maddening as a wild plant the blacks ate before their *corroborees*. Something of all this would love have for Oora — something of the melancholy of gidya stretches, of the fantasy of forest growth, of the sorcery of gaunt storm-blasted gums. It would hold her, as the Bush held her children, with an inexorable fascination from which she could have neither the desire nor the power to escape. (pp. 258-59)

This strongly indigenous metaphysic contrasts, however, with some of the other elements of the story. The most obvious change of tack is at the denouement when Wolfe is cleared of the murder he believed he had committed and is free to marry Oora and claim his earldom. Admittedly no return to England is spelled out, but neither is anything done to dispel the clear assumption that this will take place, thus alienating Oora (like Gerty Oxtou) from everything that gives her life meaning. The thematic contrast between the sisters is compromised by the demands of an essentially social romance.

Præd's continual subscription to the eugenics of the gentleman also cuts across the thematic preferences of the novel by setting up a conflicting scale of human value. It is not surprising that

Susan thinks in this fashion and is able to detect at sight "the unmistakable look of a gentleman" even though Wolfe is "unkempt, unshorn, stained with grime and perspiration, and evidently dog-tired" (p. 2). Nor is it surprising to find that one English gentleman can recognize another: "The gaunt distinguished-looking face showing birth in every feature, the fine poise of the head, the well-shaped hands, which in three weeks or so of inactivity had lost something of their roughness, the fashion of speech — all convinced [Cordeaux] that . . . he had to do with a gentleman" (p. 303). It is a little disturbing to find that Susan's father keeps a copy of Burke's *Landed Gentry* on the station, but no doubt it is shelved next to the *Bloodstock Annual*: "Wolfe comes of pure stock. He's got a pedigree marked on him as plain as you see it on any thoroughbred" (p. 63). The disquiet intensifies, and we recognize a subservience similar to that of Boldrewood's Marstons when Praed tells us that Flinders Dick (who is capable of filling an awkward silence with the laconic observation, "See them damned old crows? . . . Puts me in mind of the top rail of a killin' yard" [p. 307]) still "thought as much of 'blood' in a man as of pedigree in a horse" (p. 304). Even Oora whom with her tripartite ontology one would expect to have scant interest in the niceties of eugenics and social distinctions wonders, the first time she sees the ill and emaciated Wolfe, "why he was among the second-class passengers, seeing that he seemed much more of a gentleman than most of the men in the saloon" (pp. 120-21).

Praed had a nostalgic love of Australian scenery and was able to use it skilfully and effectively in her fiction. She was able to portray characters whose emotional, political, and even spiritual allegiances were strongly located in the country. But she seemed to be incapable of refashioning the social romance pattern to reflect evolving attitudes of class in Australia of which she was no doubt aware. Consequently, as in other Anglo-Australian novelists one finds a continual tension between aspects of theme or narrative which show clear signs of emancipation from English models, and only spasmodic success at examining and refuting the alleged innate superiority of the English upper classes.

Furphy's strictures on Kingsley are based on two converging strands of preference: that for realism and that for democracy. Furphy's sense of Australian life is bound up in the detail of bush occupations so that he finds the vaguely conceived activity in the romance pattern of *Geoffry Hamlyn* not just irrelevant or silly but actively offensive. More fundamentally he reacts against the lingering effects of the English class system. The alleged acquirements of the gentry are parodied throughout the novel. In the first sentence Tom welcomes his new state of unemployment as though it marked his entry into the leisured classes, and for the rest of the book their claims to sensitivity, breadth of vision, and their love affairs are subtly ridiculed through him. What saves Tom, and what would for Furphy redeem any real gentleman in life if not in fiction is Tom's openheartedness. In contradistinction to the vision of most of the earlier Australian novelists, Furphy's "aristocracy [is to be built on] service and self-sacrifice, in which he that is chief shall be servant."<sup>26</sup> To bring this about, though, centuries of social history and decades of Anglo-Australian literary tradition must be overturned. For Furphy, "there is no such thing as a democratic gentleman; the adjective and noun are hyphenated by a drawn sword."<sup>27</sup>

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> *The Queen*, 98 (28 December 1895), 1198.
- <sup>2</sup> "Letters to Jack Cornstalk," *Argosy*, 72 (1900), 213ff.; 73 (1901), 76-82, 181-93.
- <sup>3</sup> Arthur H. Adams, "A Colonial Point of View," *Black & White*, 11 April 1903, pp. 486-87.
- <sup>4</sup> Joseph Furphy, *Such Is Life* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1962), p. 205.
- <sup>5</sup> Julian Croft, "Is *Geoffry Hamlyn* a Creole novel?", *Australian Literary Studies*, 6 (May 1974), 269-76.
- <sup>6</sup> G. A. Wilkes, *The Stockyard and the Croquet Lawn* (Melbourne: Edward Arnold, 1981), pp. 33-48.
- <sup>7</sup> Henry Kingsley, *The Recollections of Geoffry Hamlyn* (London: Ward Lock & Co., n.d.), p. 257.
- <sup>8</sup> R. W. Connell and T. H. Irving, *Class Structure in Australian History* (Melbourne: Longman, Cheshire, 1980), p. 9.
- <sup>9</sup> Ralf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959), pp. 6-7.
- <sup>10</sup> For example, miners versus police in Boldrewood's *The Miner's Right*,

squatters versus unionists in Praed's *Mrs Tregaskiss*, convicts versus Authority in O'Reilly's *Moondyne*.

- 11 Leonie Kramer, "Introduction" to *The Hillyars and the Burtons* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1973), p. [8].
- 12 Cecil Hadgraft, *Australian Literature* (London: Heinemann, 1960), p. 44.
- 13 See for example G. Bell, "Australian Literature," *Cosmos Magazine*, November 1894, p. 165.
- 14 Robin Gilmour, *The Idea of the Gentleman in the Victorian Novel* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981), pp. 5-6.
- 15 H. M. Green, *An Outline of Australian Literature* (Sydney: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1930), p. 55. This idea has not gone unchallenged, however; see A. A. Phillips, *The Australian Tradition* (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1958), pp. 63-65.
- 16 Desmond Byrne, *Australian Writers* (London: Bentley, 1896), pp. 210ff.
- 17 Alan Brissenden, *Rolf Boldrewood* (Melbourne: O.U.P., 1972), p. 17.
- 18 Rolf Boldrewood, *Robbery under Arms* (London: Macmillan, 1892), p. 383. Subsequent references are to this edition.
- 19 The Boldrewood example is discussed below. Cp. Guy Boothby, *The Marriage of Esther* (New York: Appleton, 1895), p. 82, and Mrs. Campbell Praed, *The Lost Earl of Ellan* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1906), pp. 8-10.
- 20 Rolf Boldrewood, *A Sydney-Side Saxon* (London: Macmillan, 1891), pp. 165-66.
- 21 Mrs. Campbell Praed, *Policy and Passion* (London: Bentley, 1881), p. vi. Subsequent references are to this edition.
- 22 Praed's terms are invented or adapted but the idea of a totemic spirit as well as an individual one is widespread in aboriginal belief.
- 23 Mrs. Campbell Praed, *The Lost Earl of Ellan* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1906), p. 339. Subsequent references are to this edition.
- 24 This parallel was first pointed out in an interview with Praed in *The Queen*, 15 February 1890, p. 237.
- 25 Mrs. Campbell Praed, *The Maid of the River* (London: Long, 1905), pp. 415-16.
- 26 *Such Is Life*, p. 41.
- 27 *Such Is Life*, p. 205.