A Study of the Aesthetic Theory and Creative Writings of Norman Lindsay, and their relationship to the work of Kenneth Slessor and R. D. Fitzgerald.

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Submitted to the University of Sydney in fulfilment of the requirements for a Doctorate of Philosophy in English Literature.
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NORMAN LINDSAY.
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Prefatory Note.

Discussion of a possible relationship between the works of Douglas Stewart and Norman Lindsay has been omitted from this thesis out of deference to Mr. Stewart's professed antipathy to such a study.

Discussion of Norman Lindsay's aesthetic theory has been principally limited to his writings which relate to this subject. Reference is made to his paintings or drawings where these provide illustration or clarification of the subject in hand.

Material which relates to this study but which has been published since August 1971, when the first version of this work was submitted, has been consulted where accessible and included in this thesis where pertinent.
Acknowledgments.

My thanks are due to the following people who all provided generously of their time in answering questions and offering information relating to Norman Lindsay and his work: Mrs. Rose Lindsay, Mrs. Rita Young, Mrs. Jane Glad, Mr. Jack Lindsay, Mr. R. D. FitzGerald, Mr. Harry McPhee and the late Mr. Kenneth Slessor.

I should also like to thank Mr. FitzGerald for permission to quote from private correspondence between himself and Norman Lindsay, and the Librarian of the Fryer Memorial Library, the University of Queensland, for permission to quote from letters from J. Le Gay Brereton to A. G. Stephens; and from Norman Lindsay to A. G. Stephens. Details of these letters are to be found in the Bibliography.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to the Librarians of the Fryer Memorial Library and the South Australian Libraries Board for help with the checklist of works relating to Norman Lindsay.
INTRODUCTION.

This thesis provides detailed evidence of a relationship between the ideas of Norman Lindsay and those of Kenneth Slessor and R. D. FitzGerald. The study is based primarily upon Lindsay's theory of aesthetics as expressed in his written work, particularly Creative Effort.

After a biographical introduction which outlines the scope and emphases of Lindsay's literary and pictorial work, consideration is given to his novels. These are discussed insofar as they exemplify aspects of Lindsay's ideas on art and ethics. A brief outline of the principal premises in Creative Effort is followed by a discussion elucidating the major informing principles of that work, and in conjunction with this is included an account of his writings for periodical publications. The more ethical ideas of Creative Effort are discussed particularly in relation to the ideas of Nietzsche, and certain strictures which have been made against the book are shown to need considerable qualification. The more important analogues of ideas in Creative Effort are also indicated.

The discussion of Vision which follows, shows that the critical tendency to assume a precise correspondence between the ideas of Norman Lindsay and of Vision, and to proceed from such an assumption to suggestions about the influence of Norman Lindsay on Australian poetry, is to obstruct an understanding of both the nature and the
extent of Lindsay's influence on Slessor and FitzGerald. This chapter also suggests the impact of certain of Norman Lindsay's poetic theories, in particular his emphasis on the importance to art of clearly defined form (the "concrete image") and of a joyful acceptance of life, as being fully comprehensible only in the context of a knowledge of Australian poetry of the 1910's and 1920's.

The flexibility and scope of Lindsay's ideas on art and ethics is suggested by the diversity of manner in which the work of Slessor and FitzGerald shows a relationship to those ideas. Extensive consideration of the work of both poets in the light of the ideas of Norman Lindsay was seen to involve considerable qualification of much existing commentary relating to their poetry.

* * * * * * * *

The argument offered in the discussion of Lindsay's novels in Chapter Two is substantially original, as is the material in Chapter Three which pertains to Lindsay's periodical writings and which demonstrates his lifelong advocacy of certain ideas relating to art and ethics. Creative Effort has received little critical attention, and Chapter Three in particular and the thesis in general may be said to break fresh ground insofar as the discussion of its ideas, as these are contained not only
in Creative Effort but in other of Lindsay's writings of a fictional and non-fictional nature, and in the work of Slessor and FitzGerald, is concerned. The section on Vision broaches ideas about both a journal and a period of Australian poetry that have as yet received little attention in the study of Australian letters. In Chapters Five and Six, a radical reassessment of the nature of the poetry of Kenneth Slessor and R.D. FitzGerald is offered in the light of its relationship with the thought of Norman Lindsay.

Of the Appendices, three are of a bibliographical nature, providing details of textual variants in the works of R. D. FitzGerald and Norman Lindsay which have not previously been noted; the remaining Appendices gather together material relating to the poetry of the period covered in Chapter Four. This material has hitherto been accessible only in scattered form in MS collections and in journals, the majority of which have now ceased publication.

The Bibliography includes a checklist of works by and relating to Norman Lindsay, which was drawn up with the kind co-operation of the Librarians of the major libraries in all states of Australia. To the best of my knowledge, this checklist provides the only detailed source of information relating to the literary work of Norman Lindsay.

August 1975.
CHAPTER ONE.

BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION.
CHAPTER ONE.

BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION.

Norman Alfred Williams (1) Lindsay was born at Creswick, Victoria, in February 1879, the fourth son of Robert Charles Alexander Lindsay. Norman's father, who took his medical degrees at Belfast and Edinburgh Universities, had come to Australia in 1864, setting up practice on the Creswick goldfields and marrying Jane Williams, whose father, the Rev. Thomas Williams, was one of the first Methodist missionaries in the Fijian Islands (1840-53).

In publishing an extensively illustrated account of his years in Fiji, (2) the Rev. Williams manifested two distinguishing traits of the Lindsay family: an enthusiasm for autobiographical documentation and a facility in painting and drawing. (3) The Rev. Williams early encouraged in the young Norman Lindsay an appreciation of the visual, by taking him to the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery and expounding on principles of draughtsmanship and technique, especially as these applied to his favourite work.

1. Not "William", as it is frequently given. "Williams" is a family name, that of Norman Lindsay's maternal grandfather.
3. Daryl Lindsay records of the Rev. Williams:

   Among other things he was an artist of considerable, though untrained, talent as the drawings in his Fiji and the Fijians show . . .

   There is little doubt in my mind that the interest of the Lindsay family in art and a number of characteristics which I see in my brothers - their determination and their ability to use their hands and apply themselves to whatever they took up - stem from this source through my mother.

   Daryl Lindsay, The Leafy Tree, Melbourne 1965, 4.
Solomon J. Solomon's "Ajax and Cassandra", the large and vigorous nude sweep of which resembles several of Lindsay's own oils.

An interest in the visual was further fostered in Lindsay by the ill-health he suffered as a small boy. Forced to be sedentary for much of the time, he developed habits of keen observation and an interest in drawing. He early made illustrations based on the works of Dumas, Shakespeare, Cervantes and others, as well as drawing from the imagination and experimenting with nude forms, a tendency which alarmed his mother and which she tried to thwart. Lindsay's early bent

See also letter from Mary Lindsay to Harry Chaplin, held in the Chaplin collection, Fisher Library, The University of Sydney, Item 9. This is an extensive collection of printed and MS material relating to Norman Lindsay and presented to the Fisher Library by Mr. Harry Chaplin in 1970. Hereafter referred to as the Chaplin collection.

Lionel Lindsay has recorded how these habits of observation persisted into later years. Writing of the period shortly after Norman moved to Sydney in 1901, he says:

When I was staying with him at Blue's Point he would crawl every night along a stone wall fronting a terrace, remaining perdu for a couple of hours, to record with delight on his return the antics of some fat cit. engaged with a lady in the exercise of her profession, or the exquisite pantomime of a domestic row. He passed many an afternoon lying on a hillside to watch, through a fine Ross Deerstalker I had given him, the antics of children at play, the happenings in backyards, and verandas, piecing together the "things seen" into a lively character sketch. He would relate these with enormous gusto and humour, transferring to his drawings, gestures and expressions that he had fixed in a retentive memory. (Comedy of Life, Sydney 1967, 133.)

6. See Comedy of Life, 49, also the illustrations included in the article by John Hall, "Norman Lindsay", *Lone Hand*, VI, 34 (February 1910), 350.

7. John Hall, "Norman Lindsay", records that Lindsay's instinct from the first took him to romantic forms; for his earliest drawing, according to the memory of his mother, was a copy of Achilles. He never made many actual copies, but improvised from a visual study of the enormous family bible. (350)

8. See *My Mask*, 56.
in this direction was however only strengthened by the maternal
opposition, as well as by considerations of a lucrative nature;
nude drawings were most favoured by school acquaintances, whose
commissions he seems to have accepted. (9)

Lindsay's literary inclination first revealed itself
when he edited and printed the school's monthly journal, (10)
but in general he demonstrated little scholastic ability and
his schooldays were most remarkable for the freedom he enjoyed
to read and illustrate at leisure in the fields, owing to the
absent-mindedness of a kindly headmaster. (11) In 1895 he
accepted with relief the opportunity to join his brother Lionel
in Melbourne, convinced that he had exhausted the interests and
possibilities of Creswick. He later came to consider this
conviction as having been mistaken. "I was leaving behind me
in Creswick", he wrote in My Mask, "as full a life as I was ever
to live thereafter". (12) The strong hold which his Creswick
life retained on his imagination is evident from his novels.

Until his appointment to the Bulletin in 1901, at the
age of twenty-two, Lindsay led a hand-to-mouth existence by
ghosting drawings for Lionel on a popular police gazette of the
time, The Hawklet. Lindsay came to value highly his experience
with this and other such journals, as their editorial inclination
for the sensational story, which it became Lindsay's job to
illustrate "from the life", acquainted him with all walks of

9. See My Mask, 50; also see Lindsay's novel Mr. Gresham and
Olympus, New York 1932, in which Peter Gresham is cast in
this role.
10. For material pertaining to this monthly, called The Boomerang,
see the Chaplin collection, Items 1 and 2.
11. See John Hall, "Norman Lindsay", 350; also Mr. Gresham and
Olympus, passim.
12. My Mask, 78.
life. Such acquaintance he felt to be necessary for an artist. Lindsay has himself left detailed accounts of these years in My Mask, \( \text{(13) } \) A Curate in Bohemia and in Rooms and Houses. \( \text{(14) } \)

Lindsay's considerable capacity for work early showed itself. \( \text{(15) } \) In addition to undertaking a variety of free-lance work, he attended art school at the Melbourne National Gallery, where he was once again to discover that the concepts he expressed in his drawings tended to arouse opposition. He had

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13. See Chapters 9-16. Lindsay's first published illustration appeared during this period as the accompaniment to some verse published in one of the short-lived journals of the time, the Free Lance, of which Lionel Lindsay was an editor. (My Mask, 105).

14. One incident of this period, which shows Lindsay's generous nature and which is not recorded in these volumes, but which was published as a short story in the Lone Hand (Norman Lindsay, "The Stranded Trapezeist", Lone Hand, n.s. I, 5 (April 1914), 319-322 and 370-374), concerns a down and out trapezeist whom Lindsay helped re-establish. The autobiographical nature of the story is suggested by the self-portrait which Lindsay included in his illustrations for the story, and is vouched for by the man who acted as Lindsay's general help for the last decade of Lindsay's life, Mr. Harry McPhee. Mr. McPhee, who now possesses the original drawing for the story, along with numerous other paintings, drawings, and sculptures by Lindsay, says that Lindsay used to recall the trapeze episode with pleasure. (Conveyed to the writer in conversation, July 1970).

15. John Hall, in a description which recalls that of Durer in Slessor's poem, "Nuremberg", writes of Lindsay during his Melbourne days:

> Of all that band . . . Norman Lindsay burned the midnight oil upon his return to his den; and when the last citizen had deserted the streets and but the clack of an occasional cab horse passed and echoed and died away, a yellow window, high up and lonely in the city catacomb, indicated the place where he sat working quietly at the problem of his art. Until recently he was always a night worker. Even in winter, when a fire was an impossible luxury, he sat with a blanket about his legs, until the morning light discovered him, as carefully crafty as Durer, toiling over his exposition of Boccaccio.

("Norman Lindsay", 354. See also My Mask, 145.)
retained his fondness for the nude figure, and was increasingly attempting to express in pictorial terms his sentiments about the nature of life which, strengthened as they were by his study of artists such as Rubens and by his readings of such authors as Rabelais and Nietzsche, were, in their anti-Christian and overtly sensual nature, little to the taste of several of his contemporaries. In his autobiographically based novel, Rooms and Houses, the young art student, Partridge, who represents Lindsay, is warned of the resistance which may meet the man who attempts to express in his work a personal concept of life:

'I suppose you must go your own way, Partridge. I regret it should be a way that the highest and noblest tradition in art has rejected. It seems clear that you are determined to make your appeal to the senses, and not to the intellect. Art should not arouse emotion. It should inspire thought — high thought. Goethe's dictum is authoritative, 'the True, the Beautiful and the Good. It cannot be rejected. But it appears that you reject it.'

Partridge might have protested that gay and lovely ladies, lyricism, and the whole spectacle of life visualised from a viewpoint of its drama and humour was his concept of the True, the Beautiful and the Good, but a paralysis of thought based on a conviction of futility confounded utterance in him.

It was the 1904 pen drawing, "Pollice Verso", which provoked the first really heated public outburst of moral indignation against Lindsay's work. The drawing depicts

See also Norman Lindsay, Bohemians of the Bulletin, Sydney 1969, Chapter 13, and My Mask, 105-106.
17. See Harry F. Chaplin, Norman Lindsay: His books, manuscripts and autograph letters in the library of, and annotated by Harry F. Chaplin, Sydney 1969, iv. Hereafter referred to as Chaplin, Norman Lindsay. This volume is a descriptive bibliography of the Chaplin collection held in the Fisher Library.
6.

a roistering, vigorous mob, celebrating the crucifixion of a
figure in the background; the anti-Christian sentiment is quite
clear. Whether the public was more opposed to the picture on
the grounds of its sentiment or of its nude figures remains a
matter for conjecture.

Lindsay held certain anti-Christian sentiments, the
moral grounds for which he argues most fully in Creative Effort,
from early youth, (18) and he would not have wished his con-
victions on this matter to be glossed over. Yet such has been the
case. Chaplin's comments on "Pollice Verso", for instance, show
an attempt to modify the drawing's implications. (19)

18. See My Mask, 40 and passim.
19. Chaplin's tendency to modify certain of the issues on which
Lindsay held his deepest convictions, is discernible in the
annotated catalogue he compiled to his very valuable collection
of material on Lindsay (Chaplin, Norman Lindsay). In this
catalogue Chaplin frequently omits from the extracts he gives of
the collection's contents, Lindsay's more strongly worded letters
and phrases.

Included in the collection's "Redheap Miscellany" (Item 36) is a
bitter letter from Lindsay about Brian Penton, whom he refers to
as Australia's "most hated editor". This is excluded from the
sketch given of the contents of the Item, as are Lindsay's
vitriolic observations, included in Item 36(b), on the
"despicable values of newspapers".

There are some less easily understandable omissions in
Chaplin's Norman Lindsay. A letter from Mary Lindsay to Chaplin
on the matter of the townspeople of Creswick on whom certain of
the characters in Lindsay's novel Redheap were based, refers to
these people simply by the initial "J" ('those reputable "J"
women' and 'these "J" people'). Chaplin in his extracts of this
letter omits the "J" (see 31).

Items are occasionally misdated. The date of one of Lindsay's
Bulletin essays on Browning is incorrectly given (for 4 April
1953 read 8 April 1953; see 78); Lindsay's Bulletin article on
William Gaunt's March of the Moderns appeared on 8 June 1949,
not 18 June 1949 (see 81), and the letter from Peter Hopegood to
Hugh McCrae, cited on page 29, is dated 28 March 1932, not 28
November 1932.

Chaplin's comments on the collection's material are at times
misleading. His statement that Peter Hopegood in the above letter
analyses Redheap "at considerable length" is an exaggeration.
Hopegood's comments are in fact few, and scarcely in the nature of
analysis. Shortly after this, Chaplin describes a collection of

(footnote continued on next page)
writes:

Its aesthetic motif was completely misunderstood. There was no intention of Christian significance in the crucified figure, which was the symbol of Asceticism. The jeering crowd represented Epicureanism - the challenge of Pleasure to Asceticism. This was one of the few occasions when Lindsay turned on his tormentors, which he did in a reasoned reply in the columns of the Bulletin.

Lindsay does not need this apologia: there is decidedly an "intention of Christian significance" in the figure of this drawing, as also in other of Lindsay’s works, both written and painted. (21) Lindsay believed very strongly, and argued throughout his life, "all the harm to life is done by the self-elect of God, the people’s Saviours and Messiahs who cause throats to be slit by the million". (22) In this connection Beverley Nichols has recorded an interesting conversation he had with Lindsay on the subject of his etching, "Micomicon" (1921), on the occasion of a visit he and Melba paid Lindsay in 1924:

It was not till I went with him to his studio, which is a sort of wooden shack at the end of the

19. (continued)
collections relating to Redheap "from American newspapers and journals all favourably reviewing the novel" (see 31), yet in this collection of clippings (Item 36) is included a decidedly unfavourable review of Redheap (by Frederick Howard, "Norman Lindsay's Right to Adolescence", Stead's Review, June 2nd, 1930, 15-16).
Some transcription errors make curious reading. In a letter to Hugh McCrae, cited on page 17, Lindsay wrote, "I am more than ever convinced that both our minds come to the problem of expression previously equipped for it by the efforts of other minds". In Chaplin’s Norman Lindsay, this is rendered as, "... by the errors of other minds".
20. Chaplin, Norman Lindsay, iv.
21. See also Lindsay’s large pen-drawing, "In Vain the Christian". For Lindsay’s own discussion of his early "Dionysian" and anti-Christian attitudes, see My Mask, 40.
22. My Mask, 148-149.
garden, that I began to understand . . .

Lindsay's dislike of Christ. He danced round with portfolio after portfolio, producing drawings which were a riot of pagan beauty, a miracle of design. But the beauty and the art he seemed to pass by. It was the satire - the anti-Christian satire - which he was longing to show me.

'Look,' he said. I looked. He was holding up an immense engraving crowded with figures. I have a dim memory of light shining through pillars, of an endless staircase, of a conglomeration of strange, dishevelled shapes, darkly etched in the foreground.

'Amazing,' I said.

'Yes - yes - but don't you see him?'

'Him?'

'Jesus Christ, man. Look.'

He put his finger on to the design. It touched a pale face - sickly, anaemic, almost half-witted. It was like a patch of fever in the riotous health and brutality which crowded it on all sides.

He laughed loud and long. I could not laugh. I felt absurdly, desolatingly shocked. Not, I think, by what Lindsay had shown me of Christ. But by something which he had shown me of myself. (23)

Chaplin is mistaken in denying the anti-Christian intent of "Pollice Verso", as also in suggesting that Lindsay was himself the author of the "reasoned reply" to its critics.

Having attempted in vain to draw up his own defence, Lindsay finally asked his brother Lionel to do so. The incident was important for him in that it stung him into a determination to learn how to write competently. (24) An apparently less competent but nonetheless "desperate, and quite irresponsible urge" to write had been Lindsay's from his earliest youth, (25) as had a keen interest in reading.

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25. Letter from Norman Lindsay to Harry Chaplin, 2pp., n.d. (January 1964); Chaplin collection, Item 9.
Lindsay remained throughout his life an avid reader. By the time he was twenty-one he was familiar with several of the authors for whom he was to cherish a special affection, especially Rabelais, Petronius and

26. For an indication of the scope of Lindsay's reading, see his own accounts:
(1) in books, My Mask, 40-41, 78, 83, 135 and 227; The Scribblings of an Idle Mind, Melbourne 1966, 43-45 and passim; Rooms and Houses (see overleaf), and Creative Effort;
(2) in articles, especially the articles Lindsay wrote for the Bulletin (see Bibliography);
(3) in letters, particularly those to Douglas Stewart, lengthy excerpts from which were published in the Bulletin, February 2nd, 1955, 23-32 (see Bibliography). See also several letters in the Chaplin collection, for instance Items 40 (contemporary American novelists), 110 (Dickens), 112 and 113 (Trollope and Australian writers).

See also the prefaces and illustrations Lindsay supplied for the works of Australian writers such as Hugh McCrae, Arthur Adams, Brian James, Douglas Stewart, Kenneth MacKenzie, Kenneth Slessor, Francis Webb and R.D. Fitzgerald, to take a random selection. Where possible, Lindsay's prefaces have been included in the Bibliography, but his work as illustrator of books has been considered to be beyond the scope of this thesis. Illustrations to the works of the above writers, and to the works of Dickens, Petronius and Nietzsche, are referred to simply as a suggestion of the possible extent of Lindsay's reading.

In this connection see also Lindsay's pen drawings, for illustrations of Defoe (The Pen Drawings of Norman Lindsay, Sydney 1918), for Marguerite of Navarre's Heptameron (Norman Lindsay, Selected Pen Drawings, Sydney 1968), and others.

Secondary material on Lindsay's reading includes:
Daryl Lindsay's Leafy Tree, 46 and passim; Lionel Lindsay's Comedy of Life, 58; John Hall, "Norman Lindsay", 354-355, and Jack Lindsay, Life Rarely Tells, London 1958, 35 and passim. Similarly scattered references to Norman Lindsay's reading are to be found in Jack Lindsay's The Roaring Twenties, London 1960, and Fanfrolico and After, London 1962.
Nietzsche. (27) He says in *Rooms and Houses* of Partridge's work that it was an effort to compact in form a spiritual amalgam of the works that most inspired it, and as he had for years worn out pocket editions of Henry IV, Antony and Cleopatra, Rabelais, and constantly reread Petronius and Theocritus, the Contes Drolatiques, Don Quixote, Tom Jones, Zarathustra and the Antichrist, and, reverting to a plastic inspiration, considered Rubens' Silenus and his Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus the two greatest pictures ever achieved on earth, it was inevitable that an impassioned absorption of these works must arrive at combustion point somewhere, however inadequate his metier may have been to express it in pictorial form. (28)

Lindsay has recalled trying in 1901 to explain to J.F. Archibald a "concept of life and art based on Rabelais and Nietzsche", (29) and this concept he was substantially to retain throughout his life. This is not to suggest any rigidity about Lindsay's ideas, but simply that ideas based on Rabelais and Nietzsche

27. John Hall, "Norman Lindsay", records that a little "Rabelais" was never out of his pocket ... He wore out three of this edition - the one immortalised by Browning - and was always cutting little wood blocks to embellish it; one of these copies, filled with strange and charming drawings, is today a treasured possession of Julian Ashton. (354)

Lindsay seems to have been familiar with several editions of Rabelais. In *Mr. Gresham and Olympus* there is a reference to "Rabelais with Dore's illustrations - that Holy Book! " (110), and in a letter to Douglas Stewart, Lindsay stated his dislike of Cowper's Rabelais and said he was "weaned" on Le Motteux and Urquhart's translation. ("Some Letters from Norman Lindsay", Bulletin, February 2nd, 1955, 24).

28. In *Bohemians of the Bulletin* Lindsay recalled the same authors:

Falstaff and Panurge were the avatars of a gay and bawdy earth, derived from Rabelais, Shakespeare, the Satyricon of Petronius, the Idylls of Theocritus, and . . . Nietzsche's Zarathustra. (97)

The exaltation I was given by that inspired work transfigured for me all profundities in life and art. One does not merely read such works... The passion inspired by them is absorbed into the very substance of the ego. It was Nietzsche's "Questions of Conscience" which compacted for me the moral problem in self-expression I had to face:

Are you one who goes alone, or one who goes with the mob. This is my way. Which is yours? The way exists not.

Nietzsche's works acted as a catalyst. They produced in Lindsay a feeling of bad conscience about not having used his powers in the function of a serious artist, as a consequence of which, he produced a set of sixteen pen-drawings illustrating the Decameron of Boccaccio. Lindsay has left a revealing and characteristic account of his state

30. In later life Lindsay readily recalled "the little shilling edition of Nietzsche's Zarathustra, in Thomas Common's translation, which I had picked up in Cole's Book Arcade". (Bohemians of the Bulletin, 97.) This is volume XI of Oscar Levy (ed.) The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Edinburgh 1909.
31. My Mask, 124.
Lionel has also commented on the effect of Nietzsche on himself and his circle, of which Lindsay was at the time a member (see Comedy of Life, 52).

The Contra Wagner and Antichrist had been my discovery. Up to this Gautier and George Moore had been our spiritual guides, but here was new light, and fresh wind that blew away all that encumbered our ideas, a philosophy founded on physiology, a return to living values, with art enshrined as the praise of life.

How much we owe to Nietzsche, as artist, as stimulus, as the supreme critic of decadence: No one has suffered more from misinterpretation, yet the world owes to him the destruction of Pessimism as a philosophy, and a spiritual return to man as the measure of all things. (Comedy of Life, 122).

of mind when working on these drawings:

My affair with Katie Parkinson began shortly before I set about the Decameron drawings, and had a good deal to do with the ardour that inspired them. Blood and spirit are one thing. It has long been my conviction that when spirit is seeking a release from mental stultification, a love affair will give it wings. It is that impact from without which frees the image within . . . Casual love affairs have not enough weight to release emotional intensity. They are a prime essential to the early adventure of life; they bestow self-assurance and self-esteem . . . But as an emotional dynamic, a love affair must be dramatized by compact and conflict; by as much internal and external disturbance as possible; and brought to a crisis in action. My affair with Katie had all the necessary ingredients to eject me out of a pleasant enough state of intertia into a ferment of activity, physical and mental.

The Boccaccio drawings Lindsay considered to be his first attempts to express himself through his art. Due to the pressure of other commitments, however, the months thereafter saw only sporadic attempts in this direction, although henceforth the informing principle of Lindsay's life and work was to be an ever-increasing and consciously persistent effort to use his powers as a serious artist to achieve the utmost self-development by constantly striving to clarify and express his convictions about the nature of life and art.

Lindsay's initial efforts in this direction were at first hampered by circumstance. Of the period immediately prior to his move to Sydney in 1901, Lindsay has written:

I had a . . . serious conflict to bother me, that of trying to find some objective for work worth doing while turning out trade rubbish to meet the increasing expenses of a

33. My Mask, 147. Katie Parkinson became Lindsay's first wife.
home with a wife and child in it. That brief urge to an initial experiment in self-expression in the Boccaccio drawings had petered out with marriage, and I never really caught up with it again as a valid excuse for my existence till after the 1914 war. . . the few works of any quality produced in those years, such as "Pollice Verso", "Dionysius", "The Crucified Venus", and the like, had to be squeezed into such time as I could take off from my money-grubbing obligations.

It was the Decameron drawings which were however responsible for taking Lindsay to the Bulletin. Its editor, J.F.Archibald, was shown and admired the drawings, and consequently offered Lindsay a position such as made possible a living for him, his wife and son (Jack) who had by this time arrived.

Lindsay was engaged on the Bulletin as a black and white artist and illustrator. His work rapidly became well known, and in 1910 one writer confidently predicted of him that he was likely to "leave as big a name in the history of black and white

34. My Mask, 156.
35. A friend of the family took the drawings to Sydney and showed them to Archibald. Letter from Mary Lindsay to Harry Chaplin, n.d., Chaplin collection, Item 9.
36. There has been some evasion of this issue, as well as an occasional confusion which leads to Jack being cited as Lindsay's brother rather than as his son. Lindsay's marriage to Katie Parkinson in 1900 was the direct result of Katie's pregnancy; Jack was born shortly after the marriage. Lindsay admits this freely in Rooms and Houses (passim) and in My Mask (154), and would have laughed at attempts to gloss over the fact. Both Daryl Lindsay (Leafy Tree, 56) and Godfrey Blunden, ("The Artist: His Life and Work", 48) date the marriage as 1899, and the tribute which the Australian Broadcasting Commission televised shortly after Lindsay's death (November 1969), while correctly dating the marriage in 1900, stated Jack's birth as 1901. Jack Lindsay himself says that Norman's and Katie's was a marriage of necessity (Life Rarely Tells, 64).

There were two other sons born of this marriage, Ray in 1903, and Philip in 1906. Lindsay's daughters by his second wife, Rose, were born in 1920 (Jane) and 1922 (Helen).
as Rembrandt, Daniel Vierge, or that master artist, Charles Keene". (37) But to A.G. Stephens, writing in 1912, Lindsay's work was starting to show signs of decline. Stephens referred in the Bookfellow to Lindsay's poor draughtsmanship, and laid the charge that Lindsay was becoming another Leonardo in that he was dissipating his talent in too many directions. (38) A further attack by Stephens on Lindsay's work in 1924 roused Hugh McCrae to Lindsay's defence. (39) Stephens' consequent threat to "attack" McCrae on account of this defence, drew from Lindsay the following letter:

Dear Stevens,

I hear from McCrae, (otherwise I would not have known it) that you have been at your old lunatic again of attacking me. This is all right and quite in order, and has my full approval. But I hear that Mac has been defending me against you .... I hear finally that as a result of Mac's defence of me, you have written him a threatening letter to the effect that it may be now 'necessary' (that word is delightful) for you to attack him.

... I will not have you going round wheezing at McCrae's coat tails without saying 'Shoo' at you in public ....

38. A.G. Stephens, "The Moral of Norman Lindsay", Bookfellow, I, 12 (November 1912), 290. The charge was repeated in the Bookfellow, III, 2 (February 1914), 40: "... instead of trittering away his talent in a dozen futile directions, Mr. Norman Lindsay should have stuck to his penline job". Stephens had highly praised Lindsay's Boccaccio drawings in a review in the Bulletin, August 18th, 1900.
40. Lindsay's correspondence shows that he often mis-spelled Stephens' name. (See the collections of Lindsay letters held in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, and in the Australian National Library, Canberra).
So take one of those smokers heart deep breaths of yours and think about it. You know that like all cowards who are forever attacking something or somebody, you can't stand up to attack in return. But once again, I won't attack you if you attack Mac, but by the living spirit of humour, I'll explain you.

in all cheerfulness,

Norman Lindsay.

That which Stephens considered a dissipation of talent was rather a proliferation of talent. By 1912 Lindsay had, apart from his work for the *Bulletin*, published several articles and short stories, and also the first number of *Norman Lindsay's Book*. (42) *A Curate in Bohemia* appeared in the following year. (43) Further, having become increasingly restless with pen and ink work, Lindsay had in 1906 (at the age of twenty-seven) turned to the medium of wash. (44) From 1906 to 1909 he drew one hundred wash illustrations to the *Memoirs of Casanova*, and the desire to find a London publisher for these illustrations (45) seems to have been a principal reason for

41. Letter from Norman Lindsay to A.G. Stephens, 2pp., February 17th, 1924, held in the Fryer Memorial Library, the University of Queensland.

42. *Norman Lindsay's Book Number 1*, Sydney 1912; Number 2, Sydney 1915.


44. Blunden, *The Artist: His Life and Work*, reports Lindsay as saying:

I had acquired a more or less fluid technique in the method of getting values by direct pen stroke ... A little more of that facility and my hand would have become automatic and I would have ended my days turning out machine-made works without a spark of inspiration. (50)

45. The Casanova drawings failed to find a publisher in either England or Australia. Rose Lindsay took them with her when she visited the United States in 1940, and they were burnt in a train fire. The drawings had been insured for transit across the sea, but not across land. Lindsay's reaction to the drawings' destruction was quite cheerful, whereas his wife Rose, nearly suffered a breakdown over the event. Conveyed to the writer in conversation with Rose Lindsay and with Lindsay's daughter, Mrs. Jane Glad, February 1970. Lindsay came to feel that the fire was a fitting nemesis for work which he regarded as inferior. See *My Mask*, 223.
his first trip overseas, which he made in 1910.

Lindsay lived in London for fifteen months (1910-1911), working initially on illustrations to the Satyricon, which were published in London in 1910. He also visited Paris several times, where he became acquainted with the works of the post-Impressionists, which he reviled. He had resigned from the Bulletin in order to go to England, and only the Bulletin's timely cable of a new offer on higher terms prevented him from accepting an offer by Harper's Magazine to work in New York.

He returned to Australia early in 1912 and immediately suffered a breakdown as a result of a severe attack of pleurisy. It was during the period of consequent hospitalisation that he first became seriously interested in the craft of the novelist.

After his discharge from hospital in 1913 Lindsay settled in Springwood. In the years following he not only continued to sustain a considerable output for the Bulletin.

46. The Satyricon drawings were published in London in 1910, under the direction of Ralph Straus (see Bibliography). Lindsay had taken with him a copy of the Satyricon, and while in Naples, with the references afforded by Pompeii, decided to illustrate it. (See My Mask, 195, and Lindsay's article, "The Stones of Antiquity", Bulletin, December 12th, 1951, 2; also Blunden, "The Artist: His Life and Work", 51. In his Preface to his Selected Pen Drawings, Sydney 1968, n.p., Lindsay mistakenly gives as the immediate reason for his trip to London in 1910, the desire to find a publisher for the illustrated Satyricon).

47. For information about Lindsay's trip overseas in 1910, see "Rose Lindsay's Memoirs", Bulletin, (fortnightly instalments, February 18th, 1953 to May 13th, 1953); March 18th, 1953, 27. These "Memoirs" were later reprinted with only minor alterations in Rose Lindsay, Model Wife, Sydney 1967.


Lindsay says that until this period of hospitalisation, the only novelists he had read in his adult years were Petronius, Cervantes, Fielding, Scott, Balzac and Dickens. He was also fond of detective stories and historical romances.
but contributed numerous articles and drawings to other journals, continued his work in pen and water colour, steadily increased his concentration, first on etching, then on oil painting, and also produced several volumes of fiction and non-fiction. Such a brief sketch can do but little justice to his astounding capacity for work, which ceased only with his death.

The files of the Bulletin testify to Lindsay's activity up to, as also from, the outbreak of war in 1914. Lindsay was thirty-five in 1914. Since 1907 he had been publishing brief articles and short stories (principally in the Lone Hand), some of which were later to appear in revised form in Saturdee. (49) Two volumes devoted to Lindsay's stories and sketches appeared in 1912 and 1915, (50) and in 1913 he published his first novel, A Curate in Bohemia, based on his experiences during his Melbourne days. During the latter part of the war he wrote The Magic Pudding, (51) while in 1915 he had published an enthusiastic appreciation of Louis Stone's novel Jonah, (52) which he had read while in hospital in 1913. This was Lindsay's first published article on the art of the novel.

In a 1916 article called "A Modern Malady", Lindsay first attempted to express in print his ideas on the nature and

49. See Bibliography, and Chapter Two of this thesis.
50. Norman Lindsay's Book Number 1, Sydney 1912.
   Norman Lindsay's Book Number 2, Sydney 1915.
51. See letter from Norman Lindsay to Harry Chaplin, 4pp., n.d. [August 1912]; Chaplin collection, Item 12(b).
52. Norman Lindsay, "An Appreciation of Louis Stone", Lone Hand, n.s.V, 1 (December 1915), 37-39. The publication of this appreciation meant a great deal to Louis Stone, whose novel had at this stage received scarcely any acknowledgment. See Lindsay's chapter on Stone in Bohemians of the Bulletin.
function of art. (53) He here stated a conviction that was to inform virtually all his later writings, the conviction that the most important aspect of a work of art was its expression of the artist's individual and joyful vision of life. From 1916 on, Lindsay increasingly began to publish his ideas on the nature and function of art, and this may be directly related to two factors: that of the Great War, and that of his acquaintance, while overseas in 1910-1911, with the work of the post-Impressionists.

Lindsay regarded post-Impressionist painting as a manifestation of the moral disruption which had engendered the first world war and was becoming increasingly prevalent on a world scale. More specifically, in what he saw as post-Impressionist painting's utter formlessness and retrogression to the crudest primitivism, he considered it to be the expression of an attack on the established values of great art. (54) Lindsay felt the need to state his own convictions about the proper values expressed by great art, and this need was strengthened during the war years by an allied desire to attest a faith in the worth of man, in the face of the horrors of which war had shown him capable. The war seemed to demonstrate that savage blood-letting was fundamental to man, and this led Lindsay to ponder the truth of his former conviction that man could be happy if only freed from restraints.

54. Lindsay's essay, "Paint and Primitivism", in his Paintings in Oil, Sydney 1945, n.p. and his article "Art and Berenson", Bulletin, June 29th, 1960, 2, are among the most succinct expressions of his views on what he termed "modernist" art movements.
and hypocrisies. Hence Lindsay strove to find a basis for values in life and art, the immediate outcome of which was the publication in 1920 of *Creative Effort*, which was sub-titled "An Essay in Affirmation". This was an enormously important work to Lindsay, and he was intensely disappointed with its failure to command any public attention. The work received scarcely any acknowledgment. Nonetheless he put his disappointment aside and determinedly persevered with other work. His prolific pictorial work continued to arouse as intense admiration as opposition, while his literary output steadily expanded.

During the twenties, Lindsay contributed generously to *Vision*, brought out a second edition of *Creative Effort* in 1924, and published further short stories and several non-fictional articles on painters, poets, critics, writers and on the purpose

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55. See over, 63-65.
56. Arthur Adams paid enthusiastic tribute to Lindsay's painting in his novel, *The Australians*, London 1920 (see Chapter 20, 199-201). Lindsay appears in the novel under the name of "Nigel Chard".

William Orpen attacked Lindsay's work when it was shown in an exhibition of Australian art in London, in 1923. Lindsay replied to this attack in a lengthy letter, "Lindsay's Reply to Orpen", *Art in Australia*, Third Series, 6 (December 1923), n.p.

The inclusion of Lindsay's work in this exhibition had aroused considerable opposition in Australia, and Lindsay's painting was at this time the subject of such dispute that the Sydney Morning Herald decided to support the populace in its demands that Lindsay's contribution be withdrawn. The whole affair aroused in Lindsay anger and some bitterness, and it seems to have been only a matter of chance that his work was finally exhibited in London. For details of this affair, see Rose Lindsay's *Model Wife*, 216-224.

For an indication of Australian opinion in the twenties about Lindsay's painting, see the anonymous review, "Exhibition of Norman Lindsay's Work in Adelaide", *Art in Australia*, Third Series, 9 (October 1924), n.p.
of art. (57) *Madam Life's Lovers* appeared in 1929. This was, in essence, an attempt by Lindsay to make a better success of certain of the salient ideas in *Creative Effort*. *Redheap*, which had been written in 1918, (58) was published in 1930.

In 1930 Lindsay was the focus of a sustained public attack, the immediate occasion of which was the publication and banning of two of his works, one an etching and the other his novel, *Redheap*. The consequence of the attack was a second trip overseas.

*Art in Australia* had devoted its December 1930 issue to Lindsay's work, and it included a reproduction of his etching, "Self-Portrait", in which Lindsay depicted himself as handcuffed and overborn by two very ample female nude figures. The issue was banned because of this etching, the more ludicrously so

57. See Bibliography.

An anonymous writer in the *Triad* in 1923 said:
We sometimes feel that Australia's one living genius should not write. His mordant notes on this and that are all caviare to the general and they seldom make satisfactory reading. That is because he wants to express deep convictions in a little space, hurriedly . . . and it can't be done. The passion of his sincerity makes him often virtually incoherent. When he sticks to line he is never incoherent in the least; he is never less than superb.

"Norman Lindsay", *Triad*, VIII, 7 (April 10th, 1923), 38. See Bibliography for the articles to which the above writer may be referring. There is possibly an allusion to *Creative Effort*, the first edition of which had appeared in 1920, but reference is more likely to be to the articles Lindsay had published in *Art in Australia*. The first issue of *Vision* did not appear until May 1923.

For another comment of the period on Lindsay's writing, see James Colwell (ed.), *The Story of Australia*, 6 vols., Sydney 1925, VI, 212-215.

58. Letter from Norman Lindsay to Harry Chaplin, 4pp., May 18th, 1950. Chaplin collection, Item 36(b).
since the etching itself was "inspired by the attack on his pictures which had been sent to the London show", (59) that is, to the Australian Exhibition of Art held in London in October 1923. The works Lindsay had included in this exhibition had received much praise but also severe censure on the grounds of their alleged crudity. Lindsay successfully fought the threat of prosecution over Art in Australia, (60) but was less successful in fighting, in the pages of Smith's Weekly, (61) the ban on Redheap which had been imposed during 1930 by Australian Customs officials. Jack Lindsay records that Norman

had been much embittered by a renewal of abuse in Australia - and . . . as they [he and Rose] walked through the Sydney streets on their way to the liner they read the Smiths-Weekly posters: Will Norman Lindsay Be Arrested? . . . They felt the need to get away from Australia for a while, and visited the U.S.A. as well as England. (62)

While Redheap had been banned in Australia, it had been enthusiastically received in America, (63) and the Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, which had published the American edition of the novel under the title Every Mother's Son, expressed interest in further novels by Lindsay. When Lindsay arrived in New York in 1931 he was treated as a celebrity. Charles Higham has remarked how difficult it is to realise the extent

59. Rose Lindsay, Model Wife, 247; John Hetherington, Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian, Melbourne 1973, 154-158.
61. "Norman Lindsay Girds His Pen and Declares Armageddon", Smith's Weekly, May 10th, 1930, 8, 11; also "Norman Lindsay Loses His Temper at Last with Officialdom", Smith's Weekly, May 31st, 1930, 8.
62. Jack Lindsay, Fanfrolico and After, 220.
63. See the Chaplin collection, Item 36, for several American clippings and reviews of the novel.
of Lindsay's popularity in America, a difficulty partly occasioned by adequate lack of documentation of this period.

The Americans regarded Lindsay principally as a novelist who "did some painting on the side". Lindsay met both artists and writers of note while in New York. He supplied several illustrations for the *Cosmopolitan* magazine and also contributed various articles to the magazines *Fortune* and *Saturday Review*.

Lindsay was becoming increasingly interested in the publishing of novels, insofar as he was increasingly convinced of the importance of the novel to a country's culture. In an interview published in the *B. P. Magazine* in 1934, Lindsay is quoted as saying:

> The novel is the most suitable means for reaching the minds of the people. . . . The novel penetrates everywhere; it is the cheapest and easiest method of distributing ideas. We cannot emphasise too much its importance in making Australia part of the great movement in the world's advance in culture.

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66. Mentioned by Rose Lindsay in conversation with the writer, February 1970. See also *My Mask*, 229.
67. See Blunden, "The Artist: His Life and Work", 57; *My Mask*, 238, and Hetherington, Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian, 189-192. I have been unable to trace the articles Lindsay is said to have written while in America.
68. "Art and Commerce: Interests are Interwoven", *B. P. Magazine*, VII, 1 (December 1934), 20. This journal is the official organ of the Burns Philp Company.
Towards the end of his stay in New York, while he was hesitating about renewing his permit and staying for a further six months, Lindsay received news of the 35% tariff imposed by the Australian government, as a depression measure, on books entering the country, and he decided to suggest to American publishers a scheme for setting up a printing house in Australia. But the scheme failed to find support:

The answer he got was that Australia was a preserve of the English publishers, who insisted on the copyright over the "colonial" market on any American writers published by them. Norman had spent most of his time in New York with publishers and seemed to be taking the publishing of books rather seriously. He decided that he might be able to move an English firm to do something about it.

Lindsay once again travelled to England but there, as in America, failed to draw any support. While in England, however, he met up with P.R. Stephensen, and determined with him to set up in Australia a press for the purpose of publishing Australian books. Hence was the Endeavour Press born.

70. Jack Lindsay records that the London Daily Herald offered Lindsay a position as guest-cartoonist during this period. Fanfrolico and After, 220.
Lindsay stayed while in London with Brian Penton, with whom he was at this stage still on good terms. (See My Mask, 239, for Lindsay's later opinion of his break with Penton.)
71. See Lindsay's own account of the press in My Mask, 240.
Stephensen himself warmly acknowledges Lindsay's efforts over the press, in his Kookaburras and Satyrs, Sydney [1954], but other writers tend to acknowledge only Stephensen's efforts. Cyril Brown, for instance, writes:
In 1932, Stephensen came home, and founded the Endeavour Press, in association with The Bulletin, to revive the book-publishing policy of A.G. Stephens. In that capacity he in twelve months published a variety of books . . .
(Cyril Brown, Writing for Australia, Melbourne 1956, 43).
Brown mentions among the authors published by the press, Louis Stone, Miles Franklin and E.J. Brady and Paterson, but not Lindsay, whose Saturdee was the first work issued by the Press (see Chaplin, Norman Lindsay, 37).
for Australia in March 1932, (72) and set up the press as
planned, only to find that there was not enough Australian
material to hand for it to survive. (73) The press did issue
a few titles, including *Saturdee* and Penton's *Landtakers*, but
it was taken over during the depression by the *Bulletin*. (74)

Prior to his efforts with the Endeavour Press, Lindsay's
interest in publishing had shown itself particularly in
connection with the journal *Art in Australia*, which he helped
inaugurate (75) and which he later endeavoured to persuade to
establish a literary magazine, for which he offered to supply
all the art work free of charge. (76) Norman also contributed
most generously to the financial solvency of the Fanfrolico
Press, both in the way of money (77) and of the illustrations
he supplied for it. "When Jack went to London and started the
Fanfrolico Press," writes Rose, "Norman devoted almost every
evening to illustrating books for it." (78)

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72. Model Wife, 264.
73. Lindsay has written:
The Press folded up because it was before its time in
publication. I did all the reading on it, and there
was not enough good stuff forthcoming to keep a
publishing house going. I think I only got about
seven novels worth publishing. And no poetry.
Note held in the Chaplin collection, Item 46(b).
74. Douglas Stewart, in the title essay in his *The Flesh and
the Spirit*, Sydney 1948, 275, says that Lindsay "was
largely responsible for the establishment of the Endeavour
Press by the Bulletin, and was associated with the whole
group of novelists brought out by it."
75. Norman Lindsay's Foreword, in Chaplin, *Norman Lindsay*, i.
76. Comment by Chaplin on matter in a letter from Norman
Lindsay to Brian Penton, cited in Norman Lindsay, 28.
77. Vouched for by Rose Lindsay in conversation with the
writer, February 1970.
P.R.Stephensen says that the name of the Fanfrolico Press
'was suggested by Norman, as a whimsical variant of
Rabelais' "Fanfreluche"'. *Kookaburras and Satyrs*, 19.
Lindsay's consistent interest in publishing and his support for such ventures is an aspect of that concern and enthusiasm he always maintained for the creative efforts of others. Many writers have offered warm testimony of the support Lindsay always offered to writers who submitted their manuscripts to him. (79) The Catholic poet Francis Webb's acknowledgment is the more interesting because it suggests that Lindsay's animosity towards religions was much more uncompromising on paper than in conversation. Webb is not the only writer to have admired the flexibility and tolerance which Lindsay always showed in conversation, to the views of others. (80) Webb wrote:

At least I am qualified to say something of Norman's influence upon the very young writer who has come into his wide and generous orbit. And I can declare that influence to be most fruitful and wise. A most important feature of it is its leniency and humility in personal relationships; there can sometimes be an almost arrogant finality in Norman's printed expression of his views, but he will make all kinds of concessions freely and happily when he and the man inspired by him are at odds over some fundamental. This point cannot be overstressed . . . .

Let me conclude by saying that I feel and know Norman's greatest artistic and personal virtue to be his charity, that virtue which is highest of all. (81)

In his consistent encouragement of other writers

Lindsay himself never failed to set an example of achievement

Lindsay's model Rita also considered Lindsay very courteous and kind. She recalls the frequency with which Lindsay gave money to the "down and out" who knew of his studio in Bridge Street and called frequently. (Conversation with the writer, 1970).
won by conscious and persistent effort. The 1930s was a particularly fruitful decade for his achievements as a novelist. Mr. Gresham and Olympus was published in New York in 1932. (82) It was followed by The Cautious Amorist (New York 1932); Saturdee (Sydney 1933); Pan in the Parlour (New York 1933); The Flyaway Highway (Sydney 1936), and Age of Consent (New York 1938).

In addition to the publication during the 1930s of half a dozen novels, that aspect of Lindsay's work which increased most notably from the late thirties onward was his literary work for the Bulletin, in which journal his numerous articles and book reviews were to appear almost exclusively for the next twenty years. Douglas Stewart's appointment in 1941 as editor of the "Red Page", the Bulletin's literary section, would seem, in the light of his close friendship with and admiration for the works of Lindsay, to be related to the fact that the Bulletin saw so much of Lindsay's work in these years. (83) For twenty years Lindsay regularly discussed in its pages the works of Australian and overseas writers, expounding his views on the major principles of construction in the novel and repeatedly putting forth his ideas on the nature and function of art. An account of these writings is to be found in Chapter Three, as his ideas on the nature and function of art, as expressed in the Bulletin, are best considered in conjunction with his most thorough and sustained expression of those ideas in Creative Effort.

82. Published in England in 1932 under the title Miracles by Arrangement.
83. Douglas Stewart resigned from the Bulletin in 1961 to join the editorial staff of Angus and Robertson.
Concurrent with his unceasing literary activity, Lindsay was at this time endeavouring to master what was for him a relatively new medium of painting, that of oils. (84) Most of his etchings had been done between 1918 and 1926, and the biggest output of watercolours from 1920. (85) By the mid-1930s he found he had exhausted the medium of water-colour and lost interest in every other plastic medium, so he sought a fresh return to painting by venturing into oils and by once again taking a studio in the city (number 12, Bridge Street, since demolished). It was here that he first worked with Rita, who was to become one of his best-known models. (86) Although the greater part of his energies were now devoted to oil painting, Lindsay published a further three novels. Seven years after Age of Consent, he published the novel for which he always retained a special fondness, The Cousin from Fiji (Sydney 1945). This was followed by Halfway to Anywhere (Sydney 1947), and by Dust or Polish? (Sydney 1950). His autobiographically based novel, Rooms and Houses, was written (though not published) by at least 1953, (87) and his autobiography, My Mask (published posthumously) was completed at almost the same time as he resigned the tenancy of number 12, Bridge Street, and returned in 1957 to settle again at Springwood, aged seventy-seven. (88)

Lindsay's final years at Springwood scarcely saw a diminution of activity. (89) He continued his work with oils,
as also his contributions, both fictional and non-fictional, to the Bulletin and Southerly. He maintained a prolific correspondence as well as offering unstinting help, as he had always done, to writers seeking his opinion and guidance of their work.

Lindsay had several volumes in preparation which he brought out during the 1960s. These were chiefly collections of drawings and paintings, (90) along with a volume of recollections about the Bulletin, (91) and a volume of essays of a more general nature. (92) Rooms and Houses, written fifteen years earlier, was published in 1968.

Lindsay was to the last deeply concerned with the cultural life of Australia, which he felt to be embodied more in its literature (and especially in its poetry, for which he felt an ever-increasing regard in his later years), than in its painting. In a letter written in 1965 to R.D.FitzGerald, on the occasion of FitzGerald's lecturing tours of the United States and Ireland, he was pleased to remark on FitzGerald's excellence as "ambassador representing the poetry of this country in authoritative terms":

You have done this job in such an admirable way that I'm convinced a way has been opened for the movement of at least poetry. I have not the same expectations for our paintings. The mechanism which makes replicas of words and forms is against it. (93)

90. See Bibliography.
Another letter to FitzGerald contains Lindsay's somewhat wistful statement of his hopes for that slender volume, *The Scribblings of an Idle Mind* - the work which of all his publications perhaps least deserves the recognition he wanted for it:

I've also written a rather mad work which I had no intention of writing. I've labelled it *The Scribblings of an Idle Mind*, but the damned thing took charge of my pen, and I suddenly decided to publish it, mainly with the objective of trying to reach America with it; in the hope of capturing some attention to this country's culture, as defined in its poetry.

The care with which Lindsay prepared his home at Springwood, so that it might be administered by the National Trust as a permanent exhibition of his works, (95) argues also his unfailing concern for the culture of Australia. Writing of these preparations to Harry Chaplin in 1968, Lindsay expressed the conviction, "I believe that what I am doing here will establish a tradition which will become apparent in years to come." (96)

He himself devoted a lifetime to establishing that tradition: the tradition of cultural awareness and self-expressing activity, to be achieved through the perpetual effort of self-expression towards the constant revelation of an essentially optimistic and joyful vision of life. He died on November 21st, 1969, and was buried in the Methodist cemetery at Springwood. (97)

95. See Sandra Hall, "Norman Lindsay: preparing his lifetime for the National Trust", Bulletin, August 30th, 1969, 45-47.
97. As Lindsay's daughter, Mrs. Jane Glad, explained, Lindsay was thus given back to the Methodists, with whom there was a link in the person of Lindsay's missionary grandfather, the Rev. Thomas Williams. Conveyed to the writer in conversation, February 1970.
CHAPTER TWO.

THE NOVELS OF NORMAN LINDSAY.
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THE NOVELS OF NORMAN LINDSAY.

The following discussion of the novels of Norman Lindsay concentrates principally on the attitude that informs certain of the novels, insofar as these express in fictional form the ideas and ethics which Lindsay argues in *Creative Effort*. (1)

Although Lindsay early experimented with the art of prose fiction, and had by the early 1900's written some stories, (2) attempted novels on his own (3) and collaborated with others in at least one instance, (4) his first published written work, a brief sketch of an aspect of the story of Helen of Troy, did not appear until 1907, when he was twenty-eight. (5) The 1904 "Pollice Verso" experience previously alluded to seems to have either stimulated or coincided with a more persistent effort to write on Lindsay's part. Rose Lindsay records that when Norman finished drawing "Pollice Verso" he began writing a story called "Thieves of Gaiety" (which was, after much re-writing, finally published under the title *The Flyaway*

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1. See Chapter Three below.
2. See the unpublished MS *The Amatore*, dated 1901 and held in the Fisher Library, the University of Sydney. See also the collection of Lindsay manuscripts held in the Chaplin collection, Items 85-104. Chaplin in his *Norman Lindsay* (77) comments of these that "some of the foregoing are very early writings by the author". These MSS are for the most part undated, although the approximate dates of composition can in some cases be conjectured by either the stories' themes or their dates of publication. MSS in this collection written prior to or around 1904 I would suggest as Items 90, 91, 93 and 104 only.
3. See *My Mask*, 50.
5. See Bibliography.
Highway) and that *A Curate in Bohemia* (6) and the *Saturdee* stories were also being written at the same time. (7) From 1907 to 1916 Lindsay contributed several short works on a variety of matters to the *Lone Hand*. (8) These were generally on themes which were to persist in his later writings: on the necessity of celebrating life and of the importance of self-development and self-expression. In the early *Saturdee* stories these are seen as depending on the use of the imagination, and as involving freedom from hypocrisy and self-deceit, along with persistent courage in resisting the opposition of others. The revisions Lindsay made to the early *Saturdee* stories for their publication in 1933 as the novel *Saturdee*, (9) chiefly relate

8. See Bibliography.
9. The London edition of *Saturdee*, published in 1936, included an additional chapter, "High Play" (Chapter Seven). The following stories in revised form appeared in *Saturdee* as indicated in brackets:

"Saturdee", *Lone Hand*, III, 15 (July 1908), 316-326 (Chapter One, all editions).
"Brothers", *Bulletin*, December 10th, 1908, 16-17 (Chapter Three, all editions).
"Fatty Bennet", *Lone Hand*, IX, 52 (August 1911), 314-322 (under the title "Blackmail", Chapter Six, all editions).
"The Pariah", Norman Lindsay's Book Number I, Sydney 1912, 25-32 (under the title "A Guest is Sacred", Chapter Thirteen, 1933 edition and Chapter Fourteen, subsequent editions).
"The Outcasts", Norman Lindsay's Book Number II, Sydney 1915, 89-98 (Chapter Five, all editions).
"The Interfering Adult", *Lone Hand*, n.s. IX, 2 (February 1919), 11-12 (Chapter Eight, 1933 edition and Chapter Nine, subsequent editions).

An additional small boy story with the same characters as the *Saturdee* series, "A Great Event", *Lone Hand*, VII, 37 (May 1910), 51-60, did not appear in *Saturdee*.
Chaplin, Norman Lindsay, 74, incorrectly describes "Brothers" as the first of the *Saturdee* series.
to sharpening the authenticity of the presentation of small-boy psychology, as Lindsay experienced it in Creswick, and do not in any important way affect their thematic content. (10)

10. In their original form the stories are more evidently being told by an adult, in that words and phrases which small boys do not use are attributed to them. In the revised version Lindsay has more successfully and completely caught the spirit of his subject, and one is less aware in this version of the author's manipulations in presenting his subject. The following brief list partly indicates the difference between the two versions. The small boys have been afflicted with a new parson who objects to all sorts of small boy behaviour, and in the first version of the story ("The Interfering Adult"), the list of such objections, though supposedly chanted by the boys themselves, is clearly an adult's list. The parson's objections were:

- To dogs being chased,
- To hens being chased,
- To cows being chased,
- To cows' tails being twisted,
- To goats being chased,
- To Chinamen being pelted,
- To cats being plucked.

("The Interfering Adult", 12)

In the Saturdee version, "Chinamen" has become "Chows", which was the colloquial youthful idiom in Victorian country towns in the 1890's, and "blokes" and "cobbed" are likewise appropriately idiomatic. The parson in the Saturdee version objects to:

dogs fighting,
blokes fighting,
goats being ridden,
calves being ridden,
hanging onto carts,
hanging onto cows' tails,
birds being pelted,
goats being pelted,
Chows being pelted,
blokes being pelted,
blokes being panted,
blokes being cobbled.

(Saturdee, Sydney 1933, 121. All references are to this edition) According to Jack Lindsay, Lionel Lindsay considered the Saturdee stories to be "infinitely better in the Lone Hand text" (The Roaring Twenties, 71).
As in other of Lindsay's novels, where the protagonists' imaginations are only activated after their discovery of a member of the opposite sex, (11) so in *Saturdee* it is only when Peter Gimble, the central figure, (12) starts to "go with girls" that his creative faculty is inspired (he writes a sonnet to his girl), and his life given a centre of interest which promotes self-development. Peter's newly-awakened consciousness of the feminine image leads him to increasingly realise his own potential, and to increasingly affirm both self and life. This affirmation is won in proportion as Peter overcomes the opposition of others. He increasingly discovers that the bigger one's aspiration, the bigger the obstacles erected by others to its fulfilment. Peter's mother's customary efforts to restrict his activity by not allowing him out of the house at nights and at weekends are redoubled when she discovers that he is "going with girls". Life's biggest rewards are subsequently seen to be for those who have sufficient vision and courage to resist the restrictions which others would impose on them. "Take Destiny by the throat and the jade will give you anything", (13) Peter comes to realise, or, as Lindsay puts it in *Pan in the Parlour*:

> She was astonished at another instance of the grand copybook maxim that the rewards of life are for those who do that which it pleases them to do. (14)

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11. Discussed below.
12. Peter does not represent Norman Lindsay, who figures in *Saturdee* as Conkey Menders. See *My Mask*, 46-47, and *Chaplin, Norman Lindsay*, 48.
These rewards are chiefly dramatised as the rewards of self-realisation. The feminine image increases Peter's consciousness of himself; it boosts his ego, stimulates his imagination and challenges his enterprise. This idea recurs in *Halfway to Anywhere*, particularly explicitly in an authorial comment on adult reaction to youth's discovery of sex:

If adult envy, disguised as moral reprobation, condemns an event that can bestow on the intrepid adventurer such spiritual ecstasies, it must be referred to the one rational concept of an earth: that it exists to affirm the human will by action, thereby increasing the content of the human ego.

*Saturdee* is not simply a loose accretion of a series of episodes in the life of a small boy, but an excellently sustained depiction of a small boy's emotional development towards his realisation of himself as he progressively frees himself from the restrictions and interdictions of others. Lindsay has in *Saturdee* created his small boys and the small boys are presented as fashioning themselves, largely by the use of their imaginations. Lindsay emphasises time and again in his writings that his concern as both writer and critic is not simply with a transcription of reality but rather with creative vision. *Saturdee* is itself "an act of creation, not of compilation", as Lindsay said of Boccaccio's *Decameron*. (16)

There is realistic treatment of the events and

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15. *Halfway to Anywhere*, Sydney 1947, 141. All references are to this edition.
characters in *Saturdee*, but the difference between this realism, and that which Lindsay objected to in the works of the "dun-coloured realists", Flaubert and Zola, has been best stated by Lindsay himself. Writing of Balzac's stories, he said:

> A nice balance is kept between drama, exalted sentiment and humour. Sardonic as many of the episodes, the key in which they are related is never sardonic. It gives everything to passion and nothing to sentimentality. For that reason there is a vital reality in these stories which has nothing to do with a realistic idiom, for the imageries of fantasy run riot through them. Because all passions are reduced to their stark essentials, men and women were never so alive elsewhere in fiction as they are here.

(17)

On this account reality has not so much to do with a realistic idiom as with freedom from sentimentality in the depiction of characters and emotions. The idiom may itself be realistic but the essential factor is that it present "imageries of fantasy", either the characters' or the author's. In the works of Flaubert and Zola Lindsay objects not so much to the realistic presentation of material, the recording of day-to-day events, as to such recording unenlivened by any vision (either on the part of author or the characters themselves), such as gives meaning to daily affairs. The writer's perspective is urged as of crucial importance. Lindsay is not so much interested in the literature of fact as the literature of the imaginative sense of fact; his concern is always with the effort that

17. "The Delicate Art of Bawdy", 33-34.
imposes a vision, with imaginative effort.

The importance to the imagination of the feminine image, and the necessity of the imagination to man's effort to apprehend the fulness of life and develop his own potential, is again proposed in *The Flyaway Highway* (1936). The Flyaway Highway is the name given the road of the imagination; large possibilities for experience are given to those who travel along it. The book suggests that it is possible to gain access to various modes of life from all periods of history by the use of the imagination. Further, the concept of time, as measured by the clock, can be broken away from in that the imaginative life so lived is the timeless life of the mind. (18)

The Flyaway Highway suddenly appears in the middle of a suburban garden to two children who have in play stumbled across a satyr lurking in the bushes. (19) The fact that it is a satyr that is discovered, and that this discovery follows immediately on the discovery of a little girl by a small boy, is an explicit suggestion of the nature of the self-awareness of which both children rapidly become conscious. The satyr may be seen as a projection of the satyric instinct within the self. The children's next and, in the terms of the novel, logically consequent discovery is that of the Flyaway Highway, the road of the imagination.

18. This idea is expressed in Slessor's "Nuremberg" and "Out of Time". See Chapter Five below.
19. There is possibly a graphic allusion to Hugh McCrae in Lindsay's drawing of the satyr.
Once having embarked on the Highway, the children become involved in several adventures apparently set in various periods of history and spanning several days and nights. When at length they find themselves back in the garden, they do not feel themselves to have been physically absent at all; moreover, the apple which they had abandoned partly eaten when the satyr first made his appearance is found to be still lying on the grass, still fresh and only partly eaten. The children are perplexed at this evidence contrary to their conviction that for several days they have overcome the physical and temporal limitations of the garden:

"Well, I give up how it's done," said Murial Jane. "Me too," said Egbert. "That's the idea," said Silvander Dan. "Give up trying to find out how it's done by simply going on doing it."

"The question is, can you go on doing it without knowing how it's done?" said Murial Jane. "Of course you can" said Silvander Dan. "Didn't you know that bothering your head about things is the reason that things bother you. Just let them happen and they'll happen all right. That's what this Flyaway Highway is here for, just to prove you can have a good time on it by refusing to have a bad time off it. That's the trick for a flyaway trip on the Highway."

(20)

The stress here on imaginative action and on confidence in action is thoroughly characteristic of Lindsay's fiction. Also characteristic is the manner in which the road to imaginative action is opened up: by an encounter with the opposite sex, which leads to the recognition of life's possibilities because it stimulates

20. The Flyaway Highway, Sydney 1936, 119-120. All references are to this edition.
an awareness of the potentialities within the newly-awakened self.

These ideas are to be found in all of Lindsay's novels, although the prominence accorded them varies. They are fundamental to Redheap, the special emphasis of which falls on the necessity of acting according to one's own moral code.

Ethel Piper, one of the central characters of Redheap, (21) early becomes aware of "a clamorous demand that she should cease to be herself in order that weaker egoisms might flourish", (22) early realises that "she was surrounded by people who demanded that she should live by the prescription of their desires and not her own". (23) Her final rejection of her lover, Jerry Arnold, is based neither on consideration for Arnold's wife nor of the disapproval of the townspeople, but on her realisation that "it was self identity that found itself threatened by a lover who demanded the right to dispossess all other lovers". (24) In terms of the morality which the novel advances, Ethel receives unqualified support in her

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21. In a letter to H.F.Chaplin, May 18th, 1950, Lindsay says that "Redheap was written ... in 1918, during World War I". Chaplin collection, Item 36(b). The novel was banned on its publication in 1930, not because of its alleged sexual ethics but because it was considered to calumniate certain of the inhabitants of Creswick ("Redheap"). See letter from Mary Lindsay to H.F.Chaplin, Chaplin collection, Item 36(e); Lionel Lindsay's Comedy of Life, 134-135, and "The Philosophy of Norman Lindsay" (anon.), Illustrated Tasmanian Mail, May 28th, 1930, 1.

22. Redheap, Sydney 1960, 284. All references are to this edition.

23. Ibid, 283.

determination to live according to her own lights, her own moral code, and not according to the prescriptions of others, which necessarily oppose self-realisation.

Ethel's nineteen year old brother Robert is similarly approved in his final course of action. His involvement with Millie, the daughter of a neighbouring parson, leads to Millie's pregnancy, but Lindsay arranges no marriage of convenience. At the close of the novel Robert happily leaves Redheap for a job in the city, while Millie just as happily moves to another town in order to have the baby. Lindsay as novelist refuses to pander to what he saw as majority opinion, in this case Victorian country town opinion, in these matters, and time and again in his novels he alludes to or dramatises the attempted enforcement of moral codes on others. Bill and Waldo in Halfway to Anywhere, for instance, find themselves "up against mankind's universal conspiracy to defeat its own freedom of action for the malignant satisfaction of defeating it in others". (25)

Lindsay saw the uncritical or coerced acceptance by one man of the moral code of another as resulting in the extinction of self-development and the paralysis of personal potential to the extent of a complete abnegation of personality. In Redheap Lindsay pointedly dramatises this by the contrast of Mr. Piper with his father Grandpa Piper, known as "the ancient".

Grandpa Piper constantly eludes the impositions that

25. Halfway to Anywhere, 147.
other members of the family would place on him by feigning
deafness and immobility. He insists on keeping in his own
name the draper's business on which the family livelihood
depends, but in which he has been inactive for several
years. It is the family's haunting dread that Grandpa will
one day manage to "escape" to the city and destroy their
financial security by an extravagant spree with a woman.
Grandpa Piper does in fact finally manage such an exploit,
much to his own and the author's satisfaction. (26)

In complete contrast to Grandpa Piper, his son, Mr.
Piper, has succumbed for so long to his family's domination
that he has become quite effaced, a virtual nonentity in
his own house. Mr. Piper exhibits neither speech nor
vitality, and makes his presence felt only obliquely in his
mute but constant measuring, as befits his profession of
draper, of any object within reach, be it the length of a
window ledge or the head of one of his children. Lindsay's
novels often present characters such as these, demonstrably
successful or unsuccessful in their efforts to resist the
domination of others and in the allied effort to achieve
self-realisation. (27)

26. Lindsay based Grandpa Piper on a person who created a
similar scandal in the Lindsay family. See note by
Norman Lindsay held in the Chaplin collection,
Item 35(c). In this note Lindsay also identifies
certain of the other characters who figure in Redheap.
See also My Mask, 33.
27. See for instance Hilda Hipslop of Pan in the Parlour, whose
courage in simply leaving home and getting married in the
face of parental threats contrasts sharply with the
behaviour of her sister Freda, who submits to parental
control in these matters. Lindsay's novels argue that the
consequence of such submission is the disaster of prolonged
virginity and embittered spinsterhood.
Another prevailing type is the stubborn old person. When the stubborn elderly are presented in an ugly light, however, it is not so much on account of any particularly ugly habit that they may happen to possess (such as an intemperate addiction to gin), as because their imperious demands would interfere with and impose restrictions upon the lives of others. In particular are the elderly seen as posing a threat to youth's fulfilment of its sexual instinct, the importance of which is stressed time and again.

Involvement with a woman is seen in Lindsay's novels as of crucial importance to the male; by this alone can he achieve that self-awareness and self-confidence which leads to acts creative and procreative. Man's joy and delight in woman extends to embrace a delight in the world, and woman, influencing man either as an image carried in the mind or as a tangible reality becomes both the centre and ordering means of his activities, as both Saturdee and Redheap suggest.

In Lindsay's novels, self-realisation is also opposed to conduct which operates on a 'safety first' principle. In Redheap, Ethel Piper's sister Hetty follows this principle in regard to sexual conduct in her attempts to win Niven, the doctor at the local hospital. In the course of an extended flirtation with Hetty, Niven comes to find himself strongly attracted to Ethel, whose confidence in her own sexual prowess acts as a catalyst on his own instincts and forces him to acknowledge the essentially sterile and mutually self-defeating nature of his relationship with Hetty. Hetty's failure to win Niven is largely to
be ascribed to the safety first principle of conduct on which she operates, the refusal to give of herself sexually until she has secured Niven in marriage.

Robert Piper's tutor, Mr. Bandparts, along with Ethel and Grandpa Piper, often functions as Lindsay's spokesman in Redheap, and he at one stage declares of the inhabitants of Redheap:

Petrified in caution, these bumpkins. Safe! Removed from the spiritual stimulus of risk. They could at least take a saturnalia once a month and hunt each other's wives about the bush, but damme, they don't even climb a back fence to earn a neighbourly punch in the eye. Why, they never reach even the indignity of rolling in a gutter. How can they know that the stars exist?

(29)

Any actual woman so pursued need not matter as much as does the male's conception of her desirability. Lindsay persistently urges that it is frequently the ideal or dream conception of a thing, rather than the thing itself, which is important. Mr. Bandparts declaims:

Reality exists not in a pub, but in the dream conception of a pub. Thus we posit the eternal contest between Desire and the effort to attain it. We never realise that the conception of desire is its realisation and the effort to achieve it by the gesture of action a mad fantasy. That gesture but announces to consciousness that an image of desire has been achieved.

(30)

28. Lindsay confesses to giving Mr. Bandparts his own rather disgruntled outlook on life at the time of writing the novel (My Mask, 76). Bandparts himself was based on Lionel Lindsay's bibulous tutor, Jack Martin (My Mask, 35).
29. Redheap, 86.
30. Ibid, 311.
The individual's ideal conception of a thing is for him its reality. The most usual ideal conception portrayed in Lindsay's novels is the ideal of a woman, but in Mr. Bandparts' case the ideal conception is that of a public house. Man will keep on celebrating life in a public house because he cherishes a conception of an ideal public house, which conception he perpetually hopes to see materialise, and in the pursuit of which he is involved in continual effort. In Pan in the Parlour Lindsay expresses the idea succinctly: "Life's perfect moment - the expectation of happiness which is also happiness itself", (31) while a related notion is presented in Halfway to Anywhere, when Bill Gimble and Waldo Feddler are described in the process of making a miniature reproduction of a mining shaft. This "recreation of man's work in miniature" is said to call up "from unknown sources the knowledge that life as an image is the only reality, while its factuality is doomed to extinction". (32) Later in the same novel there is an authorial comment on Bill Gimble's desire for women. Bill has seduced Minnie Triggs, but he wishes most to seduce the unattainable Polly Tanner who, precisely because she is unattainable, serves another function:

Not that Bill had displaced Polly Tanner from her proper function, which was to keep alive in him an image of unattainable desire by her aloofness as an unattainable girl. Perhaps that image was an even greater reality (33)

31. Pan in the Parlour, 255.
32. Halfway to Anywhere, 22.
33. This idea is discussed further below.
than the outright realism of a Minnie Triggs; but Minnie confirmed the possibility of its attainment, while also relieving the effort to attain it of perturbations and unrests. (34)

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Redheap's Hetty Piper is partly akin to a series of women, usually of middle age, who appear in Lindsay's novels and who desire both distraction from a life grown tedious and renewed affirmation of the ego. These women utilise the male to this end, while giving nothing in return. Mrs. Weir of Madam Life's Lovers is of this type, as is the middle-aged Mrs. Gresham of Mr. Gresham and Olympus. Mrs. Gresham encourages the attentions of a man who has excellent reasons for expecting to become her lover, but who, after numerous evasions and excuses on Mrs. Gresham's part, finally comes to realise her motives. "That's all you want me for, then;" he observes bitterly, "to convince yourself that you can still pull a man to you". (35) Mrs. Gresham is also punishing herself in a manner similar to Hetty Piper who, in refusing to give of herself sexually until she has secured Niven in marriage,

34. Halfway to Anywhere, 143.
35. Mr. Gresham and Olympus, New York 1932, 183. All references are to this edition. Lindsay's inscription in a copy of this edition of the novel, held in the Chaplin collection, Item 44, reads: "This is the first edition of this novel, and the authentic text". In an inscription in a copy of the London 1932 edition of the novel, which was published in England under the title Miracles by Arrangement, Lindsay explains that "Brian Penton, who was looking after the publication after I had left England, revised the American on his own responsibility. The American is the authentic ending". Chaplin collection, Item 45.
is suppressing the most important means whereby she can hope to achieve full realisation of her potential.

The sympathy with which Lindsay finally portrays Hetty in relation to her painful realisation of the high cost to her happiness of her safety first principles regarding sexual matters (a sympathy which nonetheless also acknowledges the justice of Ethel's assertion that Hetty deserves to be tormented), is not as apparent in those of Lindsay's later works which present similarly self-suppressing women. This is particularly so of Freda Hipslop of Pan in the Parlour (1934), who has long "protected" herself, or allowed her family to "protect" her from the "disaster" of a lover (Bill Tarran), and who is treated with scant sympathy indeed. This is especially evident at the novel's conclusion when Freda's younger sister, Hilda, becomes mistress of the very house which Freda herself had hoped to possess with Tarran. In Age of Consent (1938), Freda's position has been taken to extremes and is outrightly ridiculed in the person of Miss Marley, an aged spinster who exists chiefly on a diet of romantic reverie. Age of Consent also presents other of the ideas discussed above, but in a more straightforward manner than does Pan in the Parlour, which constitutes one of Lindsay's major fictional expressions of his theory of the interdependence of senses and intellect.

Bill Tarran, the protagonist of Pan in the Parlour, is a middle-aged physicist who has thrown up a promising career to return to the country home of his youth and raise poultry. His physicist colleague, Quaritch, believes
Tarran's abandonment of physics to be explicable in terms of the disillusion which the war effected in Tarran, and it is this disillusion which Tarran himself largely blames for his present inertia. Quaritch muses on the matter:

He had a lectureship in physics at twenty-four, and a mind fizzling with new ideas .... Then that damned war - All the same, putting moral slackness onto the war is a poor trick! Why go to war if you intend to grab it as an excuse to chuck up work? Tarran's got that virus - self-spite. He got that bit of shrapnel in the leg and he's limped through life ever since. Makes a joke of himself for having been potted at by high explosives like a dangerous rabbit. Pretty degrading, but all the same -

Quaritch bluntly warns Tarran that he is in danger of losing altogether the ability to make an act of will if he refrains too long from doing so:

Look here, you can't stultify the action of will beyond a certain point and recover it; not after forty, anyhow. You'll be forty next year, - you've got a year to find out whether you're a moral corpse or not.

As the novel develops, it becomes apparent that Tarran is in a state of moral inertia because his emotional faculties are in abeyance. The novel's action is principally designed to suggest that man can only sustain an intense, creative involvement with his work when he is in a state of emotional fulfilment. For a long time Tarran remains unaware of the true cause of his malaise, and fully believes his early insistence to Quaritch that the reason for his present leisurely mode of existence, poultry

36. Pan in the Parlour, 10-11.
37. Ibid, 9.
keeping, is that he no longer has any interest in research work. Although Quaritch is himself unable to fathom the true reason for Tarran's mental inertia, he nonetheless immediately rejects Tarran's explanation of lack of interest: "No interest! that's the cheapest sort of trick to escape bad conscience". (38)

In the terms of the novel Tarran has reached a crisis over work because of an emotional crisis, a failure to respond with any real intensity to the female form. He has drifted into an engagement with Freda Hipslop, a twenty-eight year old virgin for whom he feels little more than a tepid and easy-going friendship. Freda, whether through fright or frigidity, remains passively unresponsive to Tarran's rather automatically proffered advances, and fails to provide the stimulus to both emotion and intellect that Tarran needs. At the novel's conclusion Tarran packs his bags in preparation for a return to work, but this renewal of his conviction in the worth of work has only come to him after the emotional resolution of an ardent affair with a married neighbour, Irene Treadwater. Tarran's passionate reaction to Irene's female form stimulates his resolution to work. (39)

The dependence of man's work on his reaction to the

38. Pan in the Parlour, 11.
39. Richard Weir, of Madam Life's Lovers, likewise learns that the experience of love or passion restores faith in earth life; he learns as does Tarran that love "calls intention back to life" (Madam Life's Lovers, London 1929, 157. All references are to this edition). The spelling "Madam" should be noted as this is frequently cited incorrectly as "Madame"; e.g. Chaplin, Norman Lindsay, passim.
feminine form and on a state of emotional intensity is more lucidly dramatised in Age of Consent where the artist Bradly Mudgett gains enormously in confidence and achievement after he has become involved with Cora, the young girl who acts as his model. His studies of the female form resolve his previous difficulties about tonal composition in his paintings: Cora's form "forced a translucence on all other [tonal, or colour] values". (40) Once the artist, argues Lindsay, has learnt to focus attention on the female figure, then the colours and tones of nature, indeed nature herself, will fall into the proper perspective, that of providing a backdrop against which the female form is highlighted.

After working with Cora as his model, Bradly finds himself possessed of a new resolution over work which he had previously fumbled because of lack of self-confidence and the lack of a centralising image. "For the first time in his life he surrendered to an emotional debauch over work". (41) A rather diffident man in relation to the selling of his work, he gains in confidence and courage to the extent of pricing his paintings at double his usual modest fee. Cora not only helps Bradly's work, she also arouses his awareness of himself as a male, but Lindsay does not emphasise Bradly's passionate response to Cora herself so much as he emphasises his response, as an artist, to her image, and the importance of this image to

40. Age of Consent, New York, 1938, 60. All references are to this edition.
41. Ibid, 154.
his art. Bradly gains self-fulfilment as much through the creative effort which has taken new life since centred on the female image, as he does through his emotional involvement with Cora herself. Nonetheless it is made clear that his intellectual creative effort is dependent on the accompanying more sensual experience: the mental image and its employment in art is dependent in the first place on a sensual response to physical form. The energy for work in general depends on a state of emotional disturbance or intensity.

This theme is particularly apparent in Pan in the Parlour, where Tarran himself early announces that a full life is "a life full of emotional disturbances", (42) yet without grasping or acknowledging the fact that a life of emotional disturbance itself depends on man's ability to react to the female form. In its theoretical form this idea is best put by Gilbert Treadwater, Tarran's aptly named wealthy neighbour, who feverishly attempts to justify his inherited wealth by the writing of novels. Gilbert often depends on Tarran as an audience for his ideas, and at one point exclaims to him:

"Look here, Tarran, you can't deny a reaction to form without denying an objective in life, and if you haven't got an objective you're either an idiot or you're impotent .... I say that either you are human rubbish or you react to form."
"Well, what about it?"
"Admit that, and you admit that there's a fixed point where your universe begins."

(43)

42. Pan in the Parlour, 66.
43. Ibid, 177.
Gilbert here unwittingly states his own case, for it is the very fact of his own failure to react to the female form of his wife Irene that is causing him great trouble with the writing of his current novel. It is only when jealousy over the behaviour of Irene with Tarran arouses him to a realisation of his wife as a woman, that he can summon the resolution to throw his ill-starred novel into the fire, and start life anew on a basis of increased physical and mental perception. Gilbert's heightened emotional and sensual awareness will, the novel suggests, resolve his problems as novelist. Tarran had early observed to Irene, "What right has he [Gilbert] to pretend to the adventure of art unless he makes an emotional fool of himself?", (44) and Gilbert later comes to ponder the same question: "Negation of action by dodging intensity of emotion. Modernism. But I tell you it doesn't work out in art. You must have a dramatic apex or you are reduced to flat half-tones." (45)

A dramatic apex in work can be rendered only by the artist who has reached such an apex in his emotional life. It was Gilbert's inability to reach this apex that consistently robbed of any consequence his efforts to present a dramatic focus in his creative work.

Lindsay emphasises this conviction by the device of parallel situations. The marital situation of Irene and Gilbert Treadwater is somewhat similar to that of Olga and

44. *Pan in the Parlour*, 83.
45. Ibid, 297.
Andrew Cornet. The latter is middle-aged and hampered by feelings of sexual inadequacy that render him frigid in the face of the challenge that his young wife poses to him as lover. Andrew attempts to compensate for this unhappy situation by devoting enormous energy to his career as chief engineer on the town's mining trench. His jealousy is finally aroused to a high pitch by the way the Pan of the novel's title, Andrew's nephew Laurence, encourages Olga to enjoy herself at a town ball. Andrew, who does not dance and has as usual refused to attend the function, is ultimately propelled there by a tormented desire to confirm his suspicions of his wife's infidelity with Laurence. Not only do his fears prove groundless, but he himself becomes the defaulting marriage partner by returning for a brief interlude the ardour of a local barmaid who has long doted on him. The consequent emotional crisis between Olga and Andrew reunites them in a bond far stronger, because of its satisfactory physical nature and hence stronger mental commitment, than any which existed formerly. Andrew's brief liaison with the barmaid is thoroughly endorsed in the terms of the novel in that it provides the means whereby Andrew gains the confidence to approach his wife as a lover, and this, in turn, is

46. Olga Cornet is very like Cecelia Bunthorpe of _The Cousin from Fiji_ in her girlish liveliness and her verbal characteristic of unpunctuated breathless babble. Olga and Andrew Cornet are based on Lindsay's sister Pearl and her husband Colin McPhee, who was in charge of dredging operations in the old diggings at Creswick. _My Mask, 42-43._

47. In _Madam Life's Lovers_, Lindsay presents a more extreme form of Andrew's situation in the person of Mr. Weir, who completely lacks the courage to seduce his wife and at length dies appropriately of "heart failure" (_Madam Life's Lovers, 81)._
suggested as supplying him with renewed intellectual satisfaction in his work. Towards the novel's conclusion, Irene muses that "Thought is form, as Gilbert had said".\(^{48}\) The novel demonstrates the pertinence of this for not only Gilbert but for Tarran and Andrew. Their reactions to feminine form liberate their thought and work, and thus is postulated an inter-dependence between senses and intellect. Andrew's sexual fulfilment provides him with an intellectual satisfaction that his work alone could not provide, despite the energies he expended on it. Indeed, Lindsay discriminates, as in other of his works, between various types of activity,\(^{49}\) and proposes in \textit{Pan in the Parlour} that the frenziedly active man may not so much be leading a full life as escaping from a full life. Tarran asks Andrew:

"Tell me, do you find the responsibility of your job a full life, or is it a good solution for dodging a full life?"
"What do you mean by a full life?"
"Well, a life full of emotional disturbance, I suppose."\(^{50}\)

Tarran also discusses with Irene the reasons for her husband Gilbert's activity, and suggests not only that Gilbert is trying to justify a bad conscience over unearned wealth, but also that he "uses a mental disturbance over work only to escape it in life":\(^{51}\)

\(^{48}\) Pan in the Parlour, 327.
\(^{49}\) This is particularly a concern of R.D.FitzGerald. See Chapter Six.
\(^{50}\) Pan in the Parlour, 66.
\(^{51}\) Ibid, 83.
"Gilbert's will power is vitiated by never having had to work for a living. His novels aren't bad, either; I've read half of two of them. If he'd had any sort of money struggle, or any sort of emotional conflict with life, they would have been good."

Tarran then goes on to expound, in distinctly Lindsayan terms, a theory of hypotheses:

"... there's no such thing as work. As a thing in itself, I mean. Work is a hypothesis which achieves reality according to the force of its projection. It's the explosive contact of energy versus inertia. In other words, Faith versus Frustration. An individual expresses himself and the mob resists him. A pure automatism, but necessary to both. Friction has to be kept up somehow. That is, if you believe that the system of mechanics which we call life is worth keeping up."

Lindsay had earlier expressed Tarran's problem in similar terms:

The violent years of youth had taken him away from it [his country home] to their proper industry of girls, booze, friends, and the quest of hypothesis.

Tarran's quest for hypotheses has foundered because of his emotionalfounderings. His consequent physical inertia, his essential lack of any deeply-felt response to women, is likewise vitiating his intellect. After a neighbourly encounter with the young and vital Olga Cornet, Tarran begins to vaguely perceive the mutual dependence of intellectual and physical vitality:

52. *Pan in the Parlour*, 82.
53. Ibid, 82.
54. Ibid, 38.
There was presented to him a discovery that by displacing a mental objective in life, he had displaced certain other vitalities. In short, he had interludes of forgetting that women existed for a special function.

All very well taking life as a tolerably good joke in youth, whose mechanics compensate for mental impotence. But even cog-wheels wear thin; there is such a phrase as "the inertia of steel". Psychology's complacent assurance that potency is purely a mental phenomenon is not so reassuring as it should be. Behind the approach to middle age there lurks a Terrible Doubt .... (55)

The Terrible Doubt is ultimately dispelled with Irene's assistance, yielding Tarran the double boon of emotional and intellectual resolution. The experiences of Tarran, Gilbert and Andrew are designed to confirm Gilbert's exclamation, "Action! What significance can action have without its mental image?". (56) An image of form, a mental conception of female desirability, is necessary as investing with meaning an otherwise purely physical act, and as providing some centralising focus for all other efforts. Acts of the intellect or of the will are not possible without emotional stimulus, as Irene points out when she declares to Gilbert, "You can't intellectualize an act of will; you can only get at it by an emotional conflict of some sort". (57) In Creative Effort Lindsay put the matter in theoretical form when, in denying any clear cut distinction between mind and matter, senses and intellect, he wrote of: "the eternal paradox of that effort to conquer the problem of intellect by the senses which obstruct the effort, but without which the effort cannot be made." (58)

55. Pan in the Parlour, 43-44.
56. Ibid, 181.
Rooms and Houses is Lindsay's last-published fictional dramatisation of the importance and function of the form image. Lindsay presents himself in this novel in a dual role: as young Partridge, the struggling artist who scratches a living from free-lance work for short-lived journals and news sheets published in Melbourne in the 1890's, and as the late-middle-aged Grantham who, after a life of idleness made possible by the generous endowment of an unwise parent, has written a book of aphorisms which represents Creative Effort, and which is titled The Gods Go Slumming, a title which "defined a sardonic approach to its attack on moral valuations". (59)

Partridge is engaged by Grantham to illustrate the book, and although he is enthusiastic both about the commission and the book itself since its ideas confirm his own, the venture founders for several reasons, but principally because of Grantham's ill-judged affair with the grasping Miss Smackle, which utterly destroys whatever will he had left for work. (60) Prior to this, while Grantham is still attempting to work on the book, he becomes increasingly reluctant to publish it because he knows himself to be incapable of meeting the criticism which he suspects it will arouse. He completely lacks the

59. Rooms and Houses, Sydney 1968, 62. All references are to this edition. This novel had been largely written by at least 1953; see "Some Letters from Norman Lindsay", Bulletin, February 2nd, 1955, 24. The cast for the novel is given by Norman Lindsay in material held in the Chaplin collection, Items 79 and 80.

60. This theme had received its first expression in Lindsay's short story "The Succubus", published in Vision II, August 1923, 50-57.
courage of his convictions in the face of a public test. Further, he encounters considerable difficulty in finding a suitable form of expression for the book. Partridge discovers on one of his visits to Grantham that the latter has abandoned the work and started a new one instead, the manuscript of which Partridge glances over:

It appeared to be a prologue to the work, for it compacted a concept of the creation of human consciousness by art, tracing its growth since Homer first projected his vision of human identity based on the earth's dynamic of love and hate. So far a richly stored mind might carry a writer used to precision in thought and a special theme on which to exploit it. It was quite another thing when the proposal was to put that theme into a constructive and dynamic form. There were a few sheets which experimented with dialogue between a group of immortals, and there, apparently, Grantham had given the effort up....

It puzzled Partridge to account for this collapse of inspiration on such an excellent beginning. At that time it was impossible for him to know that idleness is more destructive to creative energy than drink or drugs, and that its nemesis is physiological by breaking the nerve contact between a conscious concept and the stored images of form which alone can give a constructive unity.

It is not only Grantham's idleness that is impeding the work's progress, but his unsatisfactory emotional life. Once again we have the conviction that Lindsay so often uttered (62) as to the necessity to the artist of full emotional experience, for only by such experience can he hope to transfer to canvas or paper a vigorous and life-affirming image. Grantham himself realises that the problem

61. Rooms and Houses, 212.
62. For instance, in Creative Effort, Madam Life's Lovers, My Mask, Age of Consent and Pan in the Parlour.
he is encountering with the form of his book derives in part from an unsatisfactory emotional life. "A love affair," he reflects,

is not only an affair with a woman. It is also a daemonic conflict between the ego, which generates the concept of its external factuality. Out of that conflict between fact and image all creation is born and only a love affair can drive it into generation. How the devil can I get a dramatic unity into this damned work I am trying to put into form when I have never dramatized the act of love? (63)

Grantham's diagnosis of his malaise is correct in the terms of the novel, but his prescription for its cure selects entirely the wrong female. The empty-headed Miss Smackle is not only incapable of restoring his will to work, she entirely disrupts whatever will remained to Grantham. She cannot meet his need for the catalyst that will engender emotional and intellectual satisfaction, and enable him to invest his work with a suitable force and form. Instead of centralising Grantham's efforts and providing the stimulus of a mental image of desire which may transfer itself as stimulus to other work, Miss Smackle vitiates his efforts. There is an observation pertinent to this in Madam Life's Lovers: "the difference between the good conscience of a love affair and an episode of desire is that between an inspired work of art and the mere exercise of a faculty". (64)

One of Grantham's central convictions is "that the image of life is its only reality". (65) He presents a paradox:

63. Rooms and Houses, 129.
64. Madam Life's Lovers, 125.
65. Rooms and Houses, 228.
"By despair we project a hypothesis of joy. All realities which affirm life as an image are based on its refusal to confirm them as a fact."

"Hanged if I believe that theory. Girls and liquor are two facts which disprove it," said Tarrant.

"Which still leaves you uncertain which reality you seek in the arms of a girl. The girl herself, or the idea of her."

"The girl - the girl."

"Then if a savage went to bed with her, she would be the same girls [sic] to him as to you?"

Grantham is seen as carrying this point.

The idea of reality as consisting in the individual's image of life is urged in other works besides Rooms and Houses, as has been discussed. In Age of Consent, Lindsay says of the protagonist, Bradly Mudgett:

Bradly never looked at a newspaper. Reality was another thing to him than its statement in words .... Thought's profundity was in the eye, which alone had power to relate the thing seen to the image which made it a thing understood ....

In Rooms and Houses it is said of Partridge:

Partridge did not question a belief that desire created its own ordained objective in the bedlamite muddle of existence; an objective only to achieve reality by its imagery in art,

and Partridge himself quotes an axiom from The Gods Go

66. Rooms and Houses, 125-126.
67. See also Norman Lindsay, "The Stones of Antiquity", Bulletin, December 12th, 1951, 2: "What is reality? It is an image of life created by art, thereby becoming an integral content of the human mind - once absorbed, an indestructible content. Indestructible."
68. Age of Consent, 25.
69. Rooms and Houses, 25.
Slumming:

The image of life in art transcends its actuality on earth. Therefore the image is a greater reality in space than the earth from which it was drawn. (70)

Such visions are, for the individual who holds them, more real, in the sense of more durable and important, than any tangible reality offered by earth.

Grantham at one point muses on the possibility of establishing a gallery "devoted to frankly gay and licentious paintings", holding that such a gallery "would help to concrete that dream-licentiousness which keeps our minds alive". (71) This idea was more fully discussed by Lindsay in his article "The Delicate Art of Bawdy", where he wrote:

Fantasy must insist that desire is inexhaustible, and so it is, as an image. That image must be drawn from the flesh, even though the flesh is so swiftly exhausted of desire. But if the writer, the artist, allows the flesh to make a fool of him there, so much the worse for his art. Creation in art must have a full experience of life, but if it allows that experience to dominate creation it is creation which becomes exhausted. Physical chastity is as essential to the image of desire as experience in desire is essential to the creation of its image. (72)

The function of art is frequently discussed in Rooms and Houses. To Partridge's assertion that "There's something damned disgusting about the process which saves the people souls", Flack replies, "Art isn't a nightcart

70. Rooms and Houses, 62-63.
71. Ibid, 51.
72. "The Delicate Art of Bawdy", Southerly, XX, 1 (1959), Norman Lindsay Number, 35.
for that scavenger's job. Besides, the moment the people get saved they want to scrag the artist". (73) Both Flack and Partridge hold that "fascination with mankind as a spectacle is the complement of a rejection of man as the self-acclaimed arbiter of moral values in life and art." (74)

If the artist is not the arbiter of moral values what then is his function, and that of art?

In The Scribblings of an Idle Mind, Lindsay stated that "our main business on this earth is to enlarge the human ego in all that pertains to self-creation, and that is the function of creative art". (75) In a Bulletin review in 1960 he wrote:

The aesthetic appeal of art has least to do with its prime function, which is to educate and refine the senses and enlarge the area of consciousness. (76)

Art's function is toward the development of the artist himself, and toward the promotion of self-realisation in others. (77) The images portrayed in art are of prime importance in prompting such self-awareness, as Age of Consent most graciously suggests:

Cora stared at the painting with an impassive face. Opinion of it was beyond her, but she must have got some thrill of narcissism from that image of herself with the hitched-up frock and the sweetly modulated legs vanishing into upside down

73. Rooms and Houses, 41.
74. Ibid.
77. See too P.R. Stephens, The Foundations of Culture in Australia, Sydney 1936, 28: "Our contribution to the world's thought is the definition of ourselves: in literature, art, and all the civilized achievements."
reflections of themselves, for she put out a leg to examine it with a vaguely astonished air, as if its reality only arrived to her by its painted replica. (78)

This quotation aptly illustrates one of the basic tenets of Creative Effort.

78. Age of Consent, 152.
CHAPTER THREE.

CREATIVE EFFORT.
CHAPTER THREE.

I

CREATIVE EFFORT.

Creative Effort is Norman Lindsay's most sustained exposition of his ideas concerning the nature of art and of life. (1) He had formulated certain fairly definite ideas about man and society by the time he joined the staff of the Bulletin in 1901, aged twenty-one. These ideas had been both strengthened and partly informed by his reading of authors such as Rabelais, Petronius and in particular Nietzsche, (2) and may be broadly termed as anti-Christian and life-affirming, as several of his early works attest. (3)

1. Lindsay's related expositions in journal publications are discussed later in this Chapter.

2. Lindsay writes in My Mask, 123-124:
   All that one seeks in art and life is confirmation of [an] innate concept [of life]; and the works that most confirmed mine for me in those early days were Rabelais, certain plays from Shakespeare, Balzac's Contes Drolatiques, Bohn's classics, notably the Satyricon of Petronius, the love lyrics of Propertius, and the Idylls of Theocritus; and, for their direct stimulus to the practice of my métier, the paintings of Rubens and Durer's engravings. For the precise statement of that concept in words, there was Nietzsche. I got his Zarathustra in shilling parts translated by Thomas Common, and the exaltation I was given by that inspired work transfigured for me all profundities in life and art.

3. See for instance the stories, verbal sketches and illustrations in the Norman Lindsay Books (1912 and 1915); several of the plates in his Pen Drawings (1918), especially "Pollice Verso" and "The Crucified Venus", and also the short stories and sketches Lindsay contributed to the Lone Hand in the years up to about 1914 (see Bibliography). These early works show that "love of energy and fertility, ... and contempt of other-worldliness and of the lies by which men shrouded cruelty and repression", to which Jack Lindsay has referred (The Roaring Twenties, 67).
They show his conviction that life is essentially a comic spectacle to be explored without illusion and to the end of developing the self.

Lindsay's beliefs, and particularly his optimistic assumptions about the basically good and happy nature of man, were however severely challenged by his experiences of post-Impressionist painting and of the Great War, as previously mentioned. The 1914 war, which seemed to Lindsay to demonstrate the truth of Nietzsche's conviction that man was an essentially bestial creature who exulted not in the arts of life but in the arts of death, strengthened his conviction of the general moral corruption he saw signified in the post-Impressionists' depictions of the bestial and ugly aspects of life. Lindsay reviled these works because he saw them as the expression of a hate for life, and as manifesting both a moral degeneration and a breakdown of the traditional values of art, which he believed to be based on a disciplined study of the nude and to involve a celebration, not a rejection, of life. Lindsay was driven to reconsider the tenability of his former assumptions, and endeavoured to find both a justification for the worth of work and, in a more general manner, a basis for values in both life and art.

Creative Effort was therefore written as both protest and affirmation. In a recent letter, Lindsay stated:

4. See Chapter One.
5. Lindsay was especially shaken by the death of his brother Reg on active service. According to Norman's wife, Rose, it was only on the occasion of Reg's death that she ever knew Lindsay to weep. Conveyed to the writer in conversation, February 1970.
I wrote Creative Effort to clarify my own concept of the creative principle in life and art, as revealed to me by all that is greatest in the inspired works of poets, painters, prose writers, and musicians. An experience I had in England, from which I had just returned, drove me to release the disgust and horror it inflicted on me by the written word.

This was an exhibition of pictures by the Post Impressionists, which had excited exultation in all those half witted loons to whom the latest must for that reason be the best. To me, it was a horrifying revelation. It smelt of the jungle. (6) It debased every value in art with its crude brutalities. I need not specialise in them. We have seen half a century of them which inflicted on this earth the darkest era which has overtaken it. (7)

I was taken with a fanatic urge to try and contest its evil by a reassertion of all the values in great art which it had violated, and that begot Creative Effort. I wrote it without effort almost as if it had been dictated to me. (8)

Up until the outbreak of the first world war Lindsay had for his own satisfaction produced occasional works which were given over to depicting his personal convictions, but it was not until after the war that he became really interested in self-expression:

That brief urge to an initial experiment in self-expression on the Boccaccio drawings had petered out with marriage, and I never really caught up with it again as a valid excuse for my existence till after the 1914 war. (9)

6. Lindsay felt very strongly about this, and continued to attack what he considered disintegration and "anti-life" tendencies in modern painting. See particularly his essay "Paint and Primitivism" in his Paintings in Oil (1945).
7. Reference is to the two world wars.
8. Unpubl. letter to the writer, n.d. but received September 26th, 1969.
9. My Mask, 156.
The 1914 war, however,

shocked me out of inertia and the mere exercise of a metier, to find subject-matter and a concept of life in a conflict which tore down the flimsy façade of a civilized stage-setting, and exposed mankind driven by all the passions, from the most brutal primitivism in its hates and lusts to exalted heroism in war.

Much as Lindsay consequently reassessed his former convictions, his earlier anti-Christian and life-affirming attitudes, though considerably qualified and at the same time more keenly founded, were absorbed into and underpinned the ideas he expounded in his subsequent work. P.R. Stephensen emphasises one aspect of Lindsay's thought when he writes of his "Aesthetic of Dionysos":

Dionysian ideas have emerged, and re-emerged, into "Western" civilization, periodically, for at least three thousand years, at times of literary and artistic Resurgence, or Renascence, or of intense Creative Effort. Though not in the academic sense a scholar, Norman Lindsay ... felt and also perceived that an Aesthetic of Dionysos could save the "modern", mechanized, war-torn world from hate-engendered horrors. In arriving at this determination, he was influenced by the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, that "Apostle of Joy"; but Norman's general reading was wide. His ideas came from many sources, and ultimately from within himself.

The "Lindsay Aesthetic", as I may term it, a practical application of Nietzschean ideas in the Twentieth Century, was antichristian, a Crusade in reverse ... based on "the trans-valuation of all values".

Though an over-simplification of "the Lindsay Aesthetic", Stephensen's statement has caught much of its spirit.

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10. My Mask, 243-244.
Lindsay was forty-one and widely known for his paintings, etchings and drawings when *Creative Effort* was first published in 1920. Although he had by this time written three novels (of which only one, *A Curate in Bohemia*, had been published), as well as several shorter works of fiction and non-fiction, his literary reputation rested principally on a work written for children, *The Magic Pudding*. The publication of *Creative Effort* did not substantially alter this situation.

There are available scarcely any comments from readers of *Creative Effort* in the 1920's and 1930's. Both Hugh McCrae and Jack Lindsay were highly enthusiastic about the book, but Jack records that it embarrassed and puzzled contemporary readers. Such contemporary comment

12. McCrae wrote to Lindsay, "The whole is flawless and stands a masterpiece, both in argument and expression". R.D.FitzGerald (ed.), *The Letters of Hugh McCrae*, 69.

Jack Lindsay, however, considers that McCrae "loved Norman as man and artist, drawing deeply from both aspects, but Norman's theorizing made his hair stand on end, increasing intolerably his itch to bolt into the green places of intuitive thought". *The Roaring Twenties*, 100.

For Jack's enthusiasm about *Creative Effort*, see the concluding chapters of his *Life Rarely Tells*, 175, the chapter "Delphic Springwood" in his *The Roaring Twenties*, and the journal *Vision* (see thesis, Chapter Four).

13. See *The Roaring Twenties*, 73.

On a recently published letter from Norman to Lionel Lindsay (n.d. but conjectured 1919) there are to be found the following comments by Lionel on *Creative Effort*:

As to the Germanic *Creative Effort*, like all ill-read people N.L. made a "discovery" of everything new to him, but horribly boring to others who had long digested and discarded the follies of religion and philosophy.

(Southerly, XXX, 4 (1970), 296.)
as exists on the work is decidedly unsympathetic. (14)

Despite the initial lack of any encouraging public reception in Australia for Creative Effort, Lindsay decided to bring out a further edition in England in 1924. An acquaintance of Lindsay's had shown the book to the London publisher Cecil Palmer, who believed that the interest which had been shown in Lindsay's work in the 1923 London Exhibition of Australian Art suggested a potential market for the book. Palmer wrote to Lindsay:

Without question the Australian Exhibition in London was a huge success, and because of it I agree with you that there ought to be a fairly considerable potential public for a book of the nature of Creative Effort, and I can most certainly say that as the outcome of a little advance publicity that I have given the matter, there are already signs of genuine interest. (15)

But the "signs of interest" failed to materialise into anything more substantial. Lindsay has written of the production and reception of the second edition:

14. In 1936 P.R. Stephensen complained that much of Creative Effort was meaningless and that "it would have been a joke in good taste if the Australian Customs Department had banned Creative Effort on the grounds of its philosophical obscurantism". (P.R. Stephensen, "The Bunyip Critic", The Publicist, 5-6 [November-December 1936], 9). In the course of time Stephensen's attitude to some of Lindsay's ideas became much more sympathetic, as his comments in his Kookaburras and Satyrs (8ff) show. Apart from the occasional sympathetically inclined stab-in-the-dark ("Whatever one thinks of it now, certainly Norman Lindsay's Creative Effort had a tremendous if abortive energy". Brian Elliott, "Critics on Criticism", Australian Book Review, VII, 2 [December 1967-January 1968], 45), most recent commentary on Creative Effort is unsympathetic. See for instance the views of Vincent Buckley, Judah Waten and Evan Jones, which are discussed in later pages.

15. Letter from Cecil Palmer to Norman Lindsay, January 28th, 1924, 3. The Chaplin collection, Item 23.
Cecil Palmer wrote to me, saying he would like to produce an edition, under terms which might reach a larger public. I at once read through the work, rewriting sections which needed clarification, (16) and sent off the amended edition to the publisher. The work was published. And fell dead from the press. I never saw a mention of it in any of the literary journals.

He goes on to record that the failure of the book

angered and depressed me. I have never cared a hoot for all the attacks and censorships imposed on my other works, literary or pictorial, but this failure hit me badly. I could not see that I had built a wall of sand to arrest the assault of the waves. It turned me violently against the book. I hated its futility, and threw every copy of it that I came by into the fire. All through the years any recollection of it made me grit my teeth. (18)

16. See Appendix for textual variants between the two editions.
17. Unpubl. letter to the writer, n.d. but received September 26th, 1969.
18. Ibid.

See also Lindsay's comments on Creative Effort in My Mask, 26. A measure of his disappointment in the reception of the book is given by the fictional reception he portrayed Lionel as according Creative Effort, in Rooms and Houses. In the following excerpt, Lindsay is called Grantham, author of a fictionally titled Creative Effort, which is being read by Lionel, called Tarrant:

Tarrant was a reader who made a personal matter of either acclaiming a writer or wanting to murder him. And Grantham took possession of him after half a dozen aphorisms, and he had to relieve the pressure of appreciation by reading the work aloud, with outcries of affirmation ....

'Listen to this! ' he cried.

' "There is a universal illusion that in the Underworld's attack on Greek and Roman civilization, the Christian won. Reject that foolery, I beg. If Jesus had won, the earth would now be Mahomet's desert." '

'By thunder, that's final. Where the hell has this man been hiding that we haven't heard of him. How old do you say he is? Over fifty. And he's got a world reputation in his vest pocket ... " Rooms and Houses, 73.

See the autograph note by Lindsay which gives "the cast for Rooms and Houses"; the Chaplin collection, Item 80.
Lindsay came to regard both the style and matter of *Creative Effort* as wanting. In an interview with Kenneth Slessor in 1930 he indirectly suggested this when he declared his conviction that "the emphasis of a statement in morals or drama loses half its weight unless laughter and mockery join issue", (19) and in *Rooms and Houses*, referring to the style of the fictionally titled *Creative Effort*, he wrote:

I have no difficulty over what I propose to say in this work. My difficulty is to find a form in which to say it. The aphoristic method is too slight and the essay too cumbersome. No expression of thought is effective unless it also entertains. (20)

The matter of *Creative Effort*, Lindsay came to consider as logically unsound:

I haven't read this work since it was printed and don't intend to. It would exasperate me, and I suspect I would, at this date, violently repudiate half the concepts it thumps. Doubtless Art is the Principle which constructs and integrates the human mind, but the statement of that principle in this book quite overlooks the fact that Art may also be the principle which disintegrates and destroys the human mind. My only excuse for failing to note this inevitable duality is that this book was written before the modern aesthetic mentality was swamped by the imbecilities of modern primitivism in Art. (21)

This is however an unreliable comment on the book, for Lindsay did attempt to come to grips with *Creative Effort* with

20. *Rooms and Houses*, 93. Lindsay also here declared, "what I require is a fantasy in the form of a narrative which will use personalities as the protagonists of ideas". *Madam Life's Lovers*, which appeared nine years after *Creative Effort*, was such a fantasy.
21. Inscription in a copy of *Creative Effort*, held in the Chaplin collection, Item 20b.
the said "duality". His concern in Creative Effort is not
only with "good" art but with "bad" art, art which, as he
sees it, "disintegrates and destroys the human mind".

Despite his apparent rejection of Creative Effort,
Lindsay to the end of his life substantially retained the
ideas he put forward in it. (22) He rejected in fact not so
much the matter of the book as what he saw as its failure to
command a satisfactory response from the reading public, its
failure "to arrest the assault of the waves" of cynicism,
defeatism and formlessness which Lindsay saw contemporary
art as expressing, and which he held anathema.

* * * * * * *

Creative Effort consists of two essays, the title
essay and "The Hidden Symbol". Lindsay explains in his
foreword to the latter that after writing "Creative Effort"
he felt it necessary to enlarge and clarify some of its more
difficult issues. The two essays were written consecutively
and published together. (23)

Lindsay is the first Australian writer, apart from
Christopher Brennan, to offer a system of ethics in any form.
Creative Effort offers a system of aesthetics also, but this
is developed principally in terms of, and for the sake of the

22. This is demonstrable from his novels and numerous articles,
and particularly from The Scribblings of an Idle Mind and
My Mask.
23. As is shown by the MS copy in the Mitchell Library,
Sydney.
ethics. The work's central ethical conviction is that creative effort offers man the most viable means of full self-development and self-fulfilment.

The book takes the form of an extended essay which is frequently a "dialogue with the self". Lindsay is as much attempting in Creative Effort to clarify for himself the bases on which art can be held to be the most viable means available to modern man for the full realisation of his potential, as he is suggesting those means to the reader.

The following discussion does not attempt any exhaustive analysis of Creative Effort on philosophical, ethical, religious or literary grounds. The aim has been first to try and "reduce 'Creative Effort' to some sort of manageable terms", as Nancy Keesing remarked, (24) and second, to provide such explanation as seems necessary in order to meet criticisms of the book which are not wholly warranted. The major issue discussed in this connection is the charge against Lindsay of elitism and intolerance, especially religious intolerance.

Lindsay begins by stressing the non-prescriptive nature of what is offered; he insists that he is not attempting to win converts for any hierarchy of the elect. The book is offered essentially in the nature of a personal statement, but one nonetheless having a more general relevance than the purely personal.

Lindsay states his concern to be with man and the direction of his soul. Man develops by individual effort;

life is a matter of continual development by perpetual effort; the concern for man therefore manifests itself as a concern with the type of effort which best promotes his development.

Creative effort, by which is understood the effort that issues in creative expression, is posited as morally the highest effort in that it encourages not only the development of the individual (which is of first importance), but of mankind as a whole. Creative Effort is devoted to arguing the importance of the individual creative effort which, although principally benefitting the individual who makes the effort, is also, by its very nature, an effort made on behalf of man.

Lindsay states at the outset that the highest morality consists in a concern with man's spiritual direction: "The moral problem of life is its own development", (25) "The one moral condition is mental achievement". (26) The highest morality is therefore a concern with the creative effort by which spiritual direction is fostered and expressed: "The highest intellect is that which is able to manifest the deepest perception of itself". (27) Creative effort, by which man achieves that self-perception which is fundamental to self-development, depends on intellectual effort, the "universal principle of morality". (28)

25. Creative Effort, London 1924, 155. All references are to this edition, which contains a revised and slightly fuller text than that of the Sydney 1920 edition.
27. Ibid, 176.
28. Ibid, 164-165.
for effort, in the teleological or religious sense; there is only the possibility of individual advancement by effort.

In order to demonstrate the contention that in creative effort lies man's best means of spiritual development, Lindsay begins by considering other of the means, such as political and sociological effort, whereby western man has sought fulfilment. The frequency with which man has ended in despair his search for spiritual fulfilment (29) is suggested as arising from misdirected effort, which is itself the consequence of mistaken convictions about the nature of man and society. Lindsay considers the most common of these mistaken convictions to be the belief that mankind as a whole can change its nature. (30) He denies the possibility of such change, as he also denies the notion that the affairs of existence, understood as the maintenance of physical life and social order, actually improve from one generation to another. Affairs relating to existence are held not to improve but simply to alter. Man must therefore not seek his spiritual development in the efforts made for sociological or political improvement, because the inherent impossibility of achieving such improvement can only promote despair. Moreover, even the achievement of alteration (as opposed to improvement) of sociological or political affairs is far from constituting a satisfactory means of self-development, since, once the goal of alteration of circumstances is achieved, the scope for further effort is thereby critically reduced. The doubly self-defeating

29. Creative Effort, 3.
30. Ibid, 7-8.
nature of such efforts can only induce despair.

Nietzsche is for Lindsay an outstanding example of a gifted individual who misdirected his efforts in this manner. After outlining what he considers to be Nietzsche's achievement in arguing the "death of God" and the revaluation of values, Lindsay discusses the way in which, subsequent to these achievements, Nietzsche "lowered" his attention to political affairs. Nietzsche came to desire a state which was in reality as fine and ordered as his imagination conceived to be theoretically possible: his despair was the inevitable consequence of the impossibility of realising such a desire. Man's "passion to create something finer than the creator himself" (31) must find effective direction in creative rather than political effort.

Lindsay sees existence in Nietzschean terms as a process of eternal recurrence. A distinction between "existence" and "life" is drawn at the outset of Creative Effort. Existence, understood as the maintenance of physical life and of social order, (32) does not for Lindsay constitute "life", (33) which is defined in Shavian terms as Consciousness, or Mind. (34) Lindsay frequently stresses that simple existence and the maintenance of physical life do not of themselves promote mental development, which depends on both effort and art. Art belongs to life, and political activity to existence, the essentially static nature of which

31. Creative Effort, 16.
32. Ibid, 4.
33. Ibid, Chapter Four, 28ff and passim.
34. Ibid, 60ff.
ensures the inadequacy of political activity as a means of self-development. Political activity leads toward the establishment of a "created state", a static (created) political or social arrangement. Lindsay says of Nietzsche:

Nietzsche mistook the road of man's destiny. His search did not lead him to the one enduring element of man's life - which is creative effort, but to that which is least durable - the created state. (35)

The created state is achievable, its goals are in theory attainable. The importance to Lindsay of having unachievable goals is that the achieved goal suggests the static man, whose effort and, consequently, whose development have ceased. Self-development depends on continual effort, and is entirely opposed to a state of stasis, which implies cessation of development.

A consideration of political, religious, social and artistic achievements leads Lindsay to the conviction that the only really lasting thing, in the sense that it outlasts the physical life of the individual, is effort:

One thing alone in existence is manifest, permanent, indestructible, and that is the individual effort to create thought and beauty. This passion to create something finer than the creator himself is the one permanent and enduring element in man. (36)

Although the products of art do not themselves always last (indeed, "we know that every one of these emblems of effort will inevitably perish in time" (37)), what does last is the effort that produced them. Lindsay is not suggesting

35. Creative Effort, 15.
36. Ibid, 16.
37. Ibid, 165.
any sort of perpetual after-life of effort, but rather that a man's creative effort endures in that it is transmitted down the generations as a tradition of effort, an impulse to effort in others. The works of Rubens and Rabelais, to take but two instances, have stimulated Lindsay's own creative impulse, and even were the actual works of these artists to perish, the tradition of their creative, self-expressive effort would remain, handed down the generations by links of blood:

Sixty or seventy years is too short a time to transmit a condition of progress, even if all strove for the same condition, which is manifestly impossible. All that can be transmitted is a tradition of progress, and this becomes obsolete even before it can be transmitted. (38) (my italics).

More clearly:

The one thing that endures is the human intellect that refuses to be submerged by the savagery of earth conditions, that accepts the problem of life here as the problem of its own growth, and in growing achieves its effort, passes that on as the stimulus of fresh effort, and ascends to a higher effort elsewhere.

And this achievement is of the earth, rendered back to earth in Blood and Spirit. (39)

It is in the idea of the transmission of the impulse to progress, through links of blood and memory, that R.D. FitzGerald has a particular affinity with Lindsay.

Religion, one of the most traditional means of spiritual fulfilment, is scrutinized as was political activity

38. Creative Effort, 99.
and determined inadequate as a means of self-realisation. The bulk of the criticism of *Creative Effort* has centred around Lindsay's religious views, but he does argue his religious convictions fairly consistently in relation to his central thesis of self-development. He concentrates always on the aspect of religions he first raises, and that is the moral evasion they allow. Religion is considered pernicious in that it weakens man's sense of individual responsibility, which is the first essential for development. (40) In the chapter titled "Man and God", Lindsay argues at length how religions symbolise man's cowardice and irresponsibility. (41)

Religions also induce a static condition of spiritual acceptance, which is entirely opposed to a conviction of struggle as being essential to life. Lindsay argues that it is necessarily the case that social and physical conditions do not improve on earth, for conflict and imperfection provide the essential stimuli whereby effort is generated. The existence of pain, ugliness and imperfection provides the spur to the effort man makes to overcome them and improve himself beyond them. (42) The constant conditions of physical turmoil and conflict on earth are therefore fundamental to human development. (43) The universe operates in all matters on a principle of "energy versus inertia"; death, as Lindsay argues in the chapter of that name, is the essential foil to life, as is ugliness to beauty and so on. (44)

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41. See over.
42. See Chapter Two, "The Essential Struggle".
43. See Chapter Six, "The Surface Problem of Evil".
44. *Creative Effort*, 59.
Stress is essential to life as it activates effort, and the "squeals of pain" which man utters at such stress are due to his cowardice. The "truly brave souls are the Gay souls", (45) those who, with courage and "the gift of cheerfulness", rise above these essentially stressful conditions to the effort of creative expression.

Earth existence is in itself "non-moral", but it affords material for a moral valuation. Earth's prime use to the artist is that it exists as the material by which to make "a definite imagery in self-projection", (46) which effort stimulates the mental awareness of both self and others. It is not existence, but art, which enlarges the perceptions and inculcates values:

It is a fact, you say, that women are beautiful. But how do you know that you would ever have known the beauty of women if Art had not pressed upon you the artist's higher vision of it. (47)

More concisely: "You perceive the beauty of this work of Art. Then this work has taught you to perceive its beauty." (48)

The creative effort is made, however, not principally to stimulate perception in others, but to advance the development of the individual who makes the effort. (49)

Effort's "mission on earth" is first dependent on the mission to the self, as Lindsay terms it. (50)

45. Creative Effort, 104.
46. Ibid, 20.
47. Ibid; 31; this idea is central to the third and fourth chapters.
48. Ibid, 23.
49. Ibid, 24.
50. Ibid, 21.
The only means of affecting or influencing mankind is first by developing the self. The end of effort on earth is self-development, and Lindsay tirelessly insists that it is only by benefitting the self in this way that the self can benefit others.

Self-development is also held to be necessary in terms of a life beyond the grave. The grave is regarded not so much as a finality as the occasion of a birth into an after-life, called "futurity". (51) Earth existence is regarded essentially as a test or probation period in which man develops himself for futurity. (52) For Lindsay, a notion of futurity is a necessary working hypothesis, (53) necessary in order to get things done here and now. Lindsay constantly urges the necessity to man of a hypothesis such as will enable him to keep faith in the worth of the work by means of which he continually develops his potential. (54)

Art is of such vital importance to man that only such acts as cause its destruction may properly be termed evil, in that they also affect mind. "Created works of Art" not only manifest mind but have the stimulus to "form thousands of other minds". (55) Their destruction is therefore detrimental to the development of mind in general.

Bad art also has a detrimental effect on mind. This is the issue that Lindsay came to charge himself with overlooking. Yet the detrimental effect of bad art on mind is

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51. Creative Effort, 62.
52. See Chapter Five, "The Direction", also the conclusion to Chapter Four, "The Creative Stimulus (2)".
53. Creative Effort, 33.
54. See particularly the conclusion to the Epilogue.
55. Creative Effort, 48.
acknowledged and confronted by Lindsay in Creative Effort, as is evident in his discussion of the works of Michael Angelo and Milton, which he abhorred. Although his discussion of these artists lacks insight and balance, it does show that he was aware that the conviction that good art can influence mind to the good, must also entertain the possibility that bad art can exercise a deleterious effect on mind.

In the concluding chapter of "Creative Effort" Lindsay briefly discusses the "smaller arts", by which term he means those arts that essentially offer an entertainment based on some aspect of "the problem of daily existence". (56) He argues the grounds on which he considers these arts to be of less moral worth than other types of creative expression. The emphasis of the "smaller arts" is seen to lie on technicalities, problems of style, rather than on spirit and individual vision. Further, and most importantly, the smaller arts, which are "imitative" or "objective", "take something from Life" only, whereas creative effort also "gives something to Life". (57) This rather broad distinction provides the basis for the very lengthy discussion in "The Hidden Symbol" of the differences between "creative" and "objective" vision, which will be considered further on.

The above ideas are developed throughout Creative Effort by means of a type of circular dialogue. Ideas are constantly returned to for qualification and amplification, and although this involves some repetition, the repetition

56. Creative Effort, 79.
57. Ibid, 85.
is on the whole effective. The least satisfactory sections of the work tend to be those where repetition and amplification are insufficient, where the ideas are expressed so abruptly or obscuresly as to make their precise meaning doubtful or their relevance to the whole difficult to discern.

**Creative Effort** is in part a reasoned attempt to argue for art as a secular religion, an attempt to replace Christianity with culture: to construct, without the benefit of Christian sanctions and revelation, a "new morality". Peter and Arnold had attempted much the same problem. The importance of **Creative Effort** primarily lies, as is the case also with Nietzsche's writings, in its ethics rather than its philosophy. Lindsay offers no real contribution to epistemology or any other philosophical discipline; his more philosophical doctrines are developed solely in the interests of his ethical ideas.

Several of the ideas in **Creative Effort** can be found in other writers, but without the specific meaning they acquire in Lindsay. The only writer who can definitely be said to have influenced Lindsay is Nietzsche. Lindsay's reading was however wide and as he refers in **Creative Effort** to other writers by name, it is likely that he drew on their works also, but he remains substantially original in his synthesis.

The procedure adopted in relation to the question of Lindsay's indebtedness to other writers, especially to Nietzsche, has been to attempt to determine the substantial philosophical and ethical analogues in **Creative Effort**.
by reading the works of those authors Lindsay actually names in Creative Effort. The most important authors in this connection were found to be Nietzsche, Plato, George Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde. (58) A reading of the works of these

58. Shavian analogues in Creative Effort are numerous, perhaps understandably in the light of the fact that both Lindsay and Shaw were exponents, generally speaking, of the ideas of Nietzsche. As with Plato, examples of analogous ideas could be cited indefinitely, but the following are a few instances.

Both Lindsay and Shaw held that nature follows art, and that art is a most potent force in moulding people's behaviour. Shaw argues this in several of his plays, and expresses the idea cogently in the preface to Three Plays for Puritans:

The worst of it is that since man's intellectual consciousness of himself is derived from the descriptions of him in books, a persistent misrepresentation of humanity in literature gets finally accepted and acted upon.

(Three Plays for Puritans, London 1901, Harmondsworth 1954, xx.)

Lindsay's stress on creative art as a means to self-knowledge and as a means for the creation of Mind, is like Shaw's:

For mark you, Tavy, the artist's work is to show us ourselves as we really are. Our minds are nothing but this knowledge of ourselves; and he who adds a jot to such knowledge creates new mind as surely as any woman creates new men.


In the same play Shaw argues that "life is the force that ever strives to attain greater power of contemplating itself" (149), that life is a development towards intellect:

Life was driving at brains - at its darling object: an organ by which it can attain not only self-consciousness but self-understanding. (159)

Despite many similarities in the works of Lindsay and Shaw, Lindsay's references to Shaw are unsympathetic. See Creative Effort, 199, also The Scribblings of an Idle Mind, 101.

For brief indication of some general affinities of the ideas in Creative Effort with those of Plato and Wilde, see below.
writers showed that the ideas of Nietzsche are most prevalent in those sections of *Creative Effort* dealing with the ethics of human behaviour. Certain of Lindsay's more aesthetic ideas resemble Wilde's, while certain of his more metaphysical ideas are in a general manner analogous to Plato's.

However, with the exception of Nietzsche, to whose *Thus Spake Zarathustra* Lindsay constantly refers, it was found impossible to ascertain which of the above named writers Lindsay actually read, and which works of these writers. Despite extensive reading of the works of those authors actually named in *Creative Effort*, the possible sources for, or works influential in the writing of *Creative Effort* were found to remain highly conjectural. A discussion of conceptual sources for *Creative Effort* must, with the exception of the writings of Nietzsche, be substantially hypothetical, and both the scope of such a project, and of that of any extensive citation of analogues of ideas in *Creative Effort*, was decided after considerable research to be too large for inclusion in this thesis.

The relation of Lindsay's ideas in *Creative Effort* to those of Nietzsche, especially to *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, is dealt with in some detail, both because of Lindsay's own declaration of indebtedness to this writer and because, as far as has been possible to ascertain, the ideas of Nietzsche bulk larger in *Creative Effort* than do the ideas of any of the other writers mentioned in this connection.

Nietzsche is the writer most frequently referred to in *Creative Effort*. He and Plato are considered by Lindsay to be "the Two Greatest - the only two utterances in
These writers influence Lindsay's style as well as his matter. The bulk of *Creative Effort* consists of a blending of Nietzschean aphorism and paradox with a quasi-Platonic dialectical method, but unfortunately Lindsay does not have the formal consistency or coherence of these writers. He has not managed in *Creative Effort* to blend several diverse elements into a manageable whole, and the marks of his isolation, which was both geographical and intellectual, are more apparent in this than in any other of his works. Nonetheless he does attempt in *Creative Effort* to define the hypotheses on which his dialectic will be built, and to defend his propositions by argument and analogy. If *Creative Effort* is considered in relation to its mode, a more just assessment of its achievement is arrived at.

Lindsay is in *Creative Effort* practising the Platonic dialogue method as a mode of literature (as also did Wilde), and this medium by its very nature presents the challenge of keeping certain central issues to the fore, while qualifications and objections to them are raised and resolved. Lindsay tends to balance issues one against the other, rather than narrowing down to any one point of view which necessarily excludes the adoption or entertaining of other points of view. *Creative Effort* is a considerably more complex work than a merely doctrinal work. It offers a flexible system of ethics, a number of moralities which are hierarchically ordered.

The Nietzschean model is used in Creative Effort to better effect than the Platonic, and also with particularly good reason. Lindsay was in his time in much the same position as regards the mainstream of ideas pertaining to ethics as was Nietzsche in his. Both, that is to say, were outside it.

Thus Spake Zarathustra is Lindsay's most acknowledged source, (60) but his adoption of its terse, epigrammatical style is not wholly successful. The Nietzschean model may in part account not only for Lindsay's tendency to effective repetition, for the constant returning to issues in order to qualify and redefine, but also for his tendency to strong assertions of opinion. Lindsay's outspoken manner, (61) combined with some obscurity of expression, does create in Creative Effort a stumbling block to sympathy and comprehension.

Evan Jones objects to the "turgid and random aphorisms of Lindsay's major manifesto, Creative Effort", (62) and castigates as "extravagantly jejune" Lindsay's opening distinction between existence and life. But this distinction, later repeated as that between

the bare struggle for existence and the higher effort of intellectual development.
The lower process we call Existence - the higher, Life. (63)

60. See not only Creative Effort but Bohemians of the Bulletin, 97, and My Mask, 124.
61. Commenting on Norman Lindsay's skill as a writer generally (there is no evidence to suggest that the comments are directed towards Creative Effort), W.L.Power in 1932 observed that there was in Lindsay something of the Irishman who issues a challenge to tread on the tail of his coat. When he utters a commonplace of psycho-analysis he will, as likely as not, do it in such a way as will inevitably earn him hostility ... (W.L.Power, "Norman Lindsay", Hermes, XXXIX, (1932), 7).
63. Creative Effort, 132.
is made simply in order to make clear at the outset that the emphasis is to be on the life of the mind. The existence/life distinction is in itself a common enough idea, but its initial expression in Creative Effort, with its reference to "common minds", does seem to involve an arrogant flourish. (64) Alienation of the reader's sympathy is likely to be effected by certain habitual references of Lindsay's such as those to "common minds" or "the human pigsty". Nietzsche's similarly contemptuous epithets (he alludes, for instance, to mankind as the "bungled and botched"), (65) may have reinforced Lindsay's tendency to adopt a tone which does not tread lightly on the sensibilities of others. Lindsay combines in Creative Effort the procedure of the essay, the form of which, as Pater remarked, admirably lends itself "to a many-sided but hesitant consciousness of the truth", (66) with the assertion of certain opinions about which there is no diffidence or half-light in his own mind. However unacceptable some of Lindsay's ideas may be, they are nonetheless liable to distortion unless seen in the larger

64. Creative Effort, 2.
65. Nietzsche's Zarathustra persistently expresses his disgust at:
   this rabble that stinketh to heaven,
   - At this gilded, falsified populace, whose fathers were pickpockets, or carrion crows, or rag-pickers, with wives compliant, lewd and forgetful: - for they are all of them not far different from harlots.
   Oscar Levy (ed.), The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Edinburgh 1909, XI; Thomas Common (transl.), Thus Spake Zarathustra, 330. All references are to this edition.
perspective of his aesthetic as a whole, with which they are usually consistent.

This is the case with Lindsay's initial declaration that Creative Effort is addressed to the few, as with his distinction between common minds and higher thoughts, high minds. (67) Although Lindsay's aesthetic may be called "aristocratic" in that its concern is with the few who are willing to make the effort towards self-development, its scope is all-embracing:

The impulse of all high thought, high effort, is to bring these as a gift to Life. Above all, it wishes to give to those worthy of receiving; to add its vision of beauty, and its clarity of mind to the dignity of a clean and orderly existence; (68)

and again:

... this aristocratic ideal makes no claim to dominate other souls. Its effort is dominion only over self. It vindicates the individual achievement; the creative effort of the One that may embrace in its effort the higher effort of mankind. (69)

Lindsay's artistic paternalism clearly shows itself in his repeated insistences that "If the effort is made by man, it is also made for man". (70)

It is necessary to insist on this since it is Lindsay's supposed scorn for mankind that has aroused particular antagonism. Vincent Buckley, for instance, accuses Lindsay of producing "an anti-intellectual

68. Ibid, 6.
69. Ibid, 3.
70. Ibid, 110.
piece of nervous excitement which has very little claim to be discussed in terms of its ideas", (71) and which is characterised by:

a scorn for ordinary human beings, an unbalanced hatred of Christianity, and an anti-Semitism which might be almost amusing if it weren't so repulsive. (72)

He also charges Lindsay with wanting to create a peerage for a "Dionysian aristocracy", (73) but it is precisely such a tendency that Lindsay denies throughout Creative Effort. Speaking of Nietzsche's dream of a secular leader who would execute the "mission of forcing mankind to become upright, courageous, strong and beautiful", Lindsay writes:

It was a high dream, but a vain dream. It pre-supposed that power over others is given to those worthy of power. It never is, for those truly worthy of power disdain to use it. (74)

He also emphasises that there are no rules for the application of his aesthetic on a universal scale. "Virtue", Lindsay writes, "is in disciplining oneself, not in being driven to discipline by rules", (75) and he has as little desire to be the leader of a "movement", which desire he spurns as showing ethical weakness, an inability to move save in the track of another, as he had a genuine desire for his efforts to be recognised and properly assessed.

72. Ibid, 27.
73. Ibid, 26.
74. Creative Effort, 14.
75. Ibid, 115.
Judah Waten in a recent pamphlet laid against Lindsay much the same charges as did Vincent Buckley. Judah Waten's discussion shows scant evidence of familiarity with Creative Effort, which he mistitles:

We cannot avoid saying that an objective study of the work of Brennan, Baylebridge and Norman Lindsay will show that anti-humanism outweighs other trends, (76) that in their work you will find jingoistic, racialist, obscurantist and Nietzschean ideas, a belief in an elite and a dislike of the ordinary people.

In a theoretical form the anti-humanist trend first found its expression in Norman Lindsay's 'Creative Effort in Australia'.

Many of the apparent strictures against man to which critics have taken objection arise from Lindsay's anger at man's refusal to use his potential. Life is essentially a "process of becoming", of continual effort and continual development, but man often refuses the effort necessary to continual development, constant "becoming".

Lindsay fuses a Platonic concept of life as a

76. These trends were explained as "social realism, democracy and psychological development or conflict".
77. Judah Waten, Report of Literary Trends, [Sydney 1966]. This is the script of a talk addressed to the editors of the Marxist journal, The Realist, and to those connected with the Australasian Book Society.
process of becoming (78) with the Nietzschean concept of

78. This idea is most fully argued in Plato's Theaetetus, which also advances a distinction between knowledge and opinion, a distinction roughly analogous to Lindsay's distinction between Truth and Knowledge respectively.

Plato's theory of knowledge depends as does Lindsay's on a distinction between the knowledge provided by the senses and that provided by the mind. Both writers hold that man perceives through the sense organs but that Mind is the only knower (see also Plato's Phaedo, Creative Effort 135-138 and passim, and below, 104-105.)

The distinction between knowledge and sense-perception forms the basis of Plato's theory of Ideas, or Forms, certain elements of which resemble Lindsay's doctrine of the form image. See Plato's Republic for the idea that physical phenomena are themselves only "images" of reality, and for the metaphor of the cave, by which this idea is partially conveyed (F.M.Cornford (trans.), The Republic of Plato, Oxford 1941, Book X; for Lindsay's use of a similar image, see Creative Effort 21, 275).

Also see Plato's Republic, Book XIX, and R.Hackforth, Plato's Phaedo, Cambridge 1955, 99D-102A especially, for the argument of the reality of the super-sensible world, for the discussion to establish that mental images are a truer representation of reality than sense images, for the reason why these mental images are "images", or Forms, and in what way reality can be studied in them. Connected with this, also see Plato's Phaedo for the idea of the method of attaining to real knowledge, that which Lindsay calls Truth, by the use of hypotheses (Creative Effort, 33, 137).

Platonic analogues of the ideas in Creative Effort could be extended indefinitely (a recent article by Jack Allison, "'Futurity': Norman Lindsay's Creative Stimulus", Meanjin, XXIX, 3 1970, 348-349, suggested certain Platonic affinities in Creative Effort) and could also be qualified as indefinitely. Although Lindsay's ideas often recall Plato's, such as the association of the true, the beautiful and the good, close consideration of the ideas of both writers reveal the details of the ideas to differ as often as they agree.

In a recent letter to the writer, Jack Lindsay said:

Certainly N. had not read Plato till I re-met him in 1919; it is possible he had read something about him. I should have to re-read C.E. before I could be positive. But generally speaking he was philosophically illiterate apart from Nietzsche .... Plato he did read after I talked of him.

(Unpubl. letter from Jack Lindsay to the writer, 1p., R.d. but March 1970.)
eternal recurrence. Existence is seen in Nietzschean terms as a process of static eternal recurrence; conditions may alter from one generation to another, but they do not substantially improve or progress. The process of existence itself does not progress; it is a static process of eternal recurrence. Life is also held to be, like existence, a cyclic and eternally recurring process, but its individual components, men, can themselves progress. There is individual progression within a cyclic process, and this progression is achieved by the effort of self-expression as it is manifested in creative art:

We accept Creative vision as the highest expression of mind because its objective is unattainable, therefore it exists by a continuous effort of seeking, and therefore is in a continuous state of developing.

Lindsay alters for his own purposes Nietzsche's more absolutely static notion of recurrence. Nietzsche

79. Lindsay does not have a very strong notion of semantic accuracy, and he confuses this issue by statements such as "effort ... like life, continues. It does not progress. It continues!" (19). Yet throughout Creative Effort he insists on the ability of the individual to advance by his own efforts: "progress is possible on earth, but only the progress of the individual" (100). In Scribblings of an Idle Mind, he defines progress as the enlargement of the individual consciousness (104).

It could be the case that in Creative Effort Lindsay does not see the power, or quality, of effort, as increasing over the generations; his idea seems to be that although the tradition of effort is given to the individual, each man has to start afresh. In Scribblings of an Idle Mind, Lindsay makes it clear that he holds there is to be a progression of effort as a whole, in that the achievements of one generation depend on the efforts of the past. Hence would Wagner's achievement have been impossible without Beethoven's, Beethoven's without Mozart's and Mozart's without Bach's (61-62).

80. Creative Effort, 171.
argued that everything recurs an infinite number of times, and exactly as before. Each man was held to live an infinite number of times in the future, and in exactly the same manner as he had done in the past. (81) The main distinction between the Nietzschean and Lindsayan doctrines is that Lindsay is more optimistic than Nietzsche in that he posits a non-static recurrence at the level of life. (82) For both writers the idea of an eternal return, of a cyclic and infinite movement, is perfectly consistent with the view that does not include an ultimate. The view of man as God, tending to nothing outside himself, suggests that things can only be conceived cyclically, instead of as tending to a given end.

81. O Zarathustra ... behold, thou art the teacher of the eternal return ...
   Behold, we know what thou teachest: that all things eternally return, and ourselves with them, and that we have already existed times without number, and all things with us ...
   - So that all those years are like one another in the greatest and also in the smallest ...
   But the plexus of causes returneth in which I am intertwined, - it will again create me! I myself pertain to the causes of the eternal return.
   I come again with this sun, with this earth, with this eagle, with this serpent - not to a new life, or a better life, or a similar life:
   - I come again eternally to this identical and selfsame life, in its greatest and its smallest, to teach again the eternal return of all things, -
   - To speak again the word of the great noon tide of earth to man, to announce again to man the Superman.
   Thus Spake Zarathustra, 270-271. (The doctrine of recurrence is itself a very old one.)

82. Lindsay comments in Creative Effort, 13, that for Nietzsche, eternal recurrence was always on an earth level. Lindsay is the more optimistic of the two writers, both in his allowance of progression within the recurrence, and in his extension of the recurrence to futurity.
The idea of the recurrence is intrinsically related to Nietzsche's idea of the übermensach, or "overman". (83) Lindsay's idea of recurrence is similarly related to his concept of the creative artist. For both Nietzsche and Lindsay, the emotional significance of the recurrence is that it is a most extreme form of life-acceptance, of acceptance of all life, the painful and bestial as well as the beautiful and good.

Lindsay took from Nietzsche more than a notion of recurrence; more importantly, he found in Nietzsche's works cogent support for his views on religions, especially the Christian religion. The negation of the "Dionysian" or joyful life-impulse, which negation both Nietzsche and Lindsay associated with the Christian religion, is for both writers only one of the grounds for the ethical rejection of Christianity.

Lindsay's strictures on religion are not simply personal prejudices having no connection with his aesthetic. They constitute an integral part of it. Lindsay's opening rejection of any claim on his part to dominate other souls is entirely in keeping with his later objections to religious creeds, for it is precisely the claim of religion to dominate the soul of man which Lindsay finds pernicious. Such domination is seen as the passing of the individual conscience into the safe-keeping of a priest, and hence as the evasion of self-knowledge. "Those who wish to shelve

83. This is more usually, but less accurately, translated as "superman".
the problem of Conscience," writes Lindsay, "accept a code of social morality", (84) yet

without an individual sense of responsibility, human morality has not even begun . . . (85) the true morality insists that each man must save himself. That is, he must develop himself. (86)

In allowing men to evade the responsibility for their own actions Christianity opposes the effort toward self-knowledge. On the same terms Lindsay objects to the popularisation of Freud's notions of the subconscious as allowing man to place on the subconscious the responsibility for his behaviour. To give one's conscience into the keeping of a priest is to evade effort by swapping it for a set of rules:

For God is the emblem of man's irresponsibility, his childishness, his cowardice. It represents his desire to shelve the problem of Life, to thrust the burden of it from his own shoulders. (87)

All Lindsay's strictures on religion stem from this objection. Not only Christianity but all creeds are rejected, since "the lowest morality exists in a general expression of belief, in agreeing to a common formula suitable to the lowest intelligence in the community", (88) since to accept a creed is to abandon further effort toward self-knowledge:

84. Creative Effort, 92.
85. Ibid, 5.
86. Ibid, 116.
87. Ibid, 66.
88. Ibid, 67.
Faith exists by repudiating inquiry, by wilful ignorance, by submission to any will but one's own.

By the road of Faith one arrives at the final Evil - repudiation of Effort. (89)

Lindsay's criticism of religion is dominated, as was Nietzsche's, by ethical motives. Neither is interested in the metaphysical truth of Christianity or of any other religion; rather are religions considered in the light of their social effects and their effects on individual development.

Lindsay shares Nietzsche's conviction that Christianity weakens man. It not only eases him of responsibility but paralyses action by fear, and turns man's strength inward against himself until he perishes through excessive self-contempt and self-pity. Compassion is for both writers a sin, a self-destructive emotion, involving a contemptible self-pity. (91) Man's love and

89. Creative Effort, 68.
90. See Creative Effort, Chapter Nine, "Man and God". In Thus Spake Zarathustra there is a conversation between Zarathustra and the Pope on the subject of the crucifixion:
"Thou servedst him to the last?" asked Zarathustra thoughtfully, after a deep silence, "thou knowest how he died? Is it true what they say, that sympathy choked him; - That he saw how man hung on the cross, and could not endure it; - that his love to man became his hell, and at last his death?"
Thus Spake Zarathustra, 317. The Pope answers cheerfully that indeed Christ "suffocated of his all-too-great pity" (which Lindsay cites in Creative Effort, 12), and a little later Nietzsche presents his "ugliest man" as fleeing from the persecution of the compassion of others.
91. Zarathustra concludes with a re-iterated and emphatic rejection of the concept of "fellow-suffering" (402).
compassion involve a self-protective fear and cruelty, which expresses itself also in the levelling instinct. Nietzsche insists on the crucifixion as an aspect of man's love; men "knew not how to love their God otherwise than by nailing men to the cross!" (92) and Lindsay similarly inveighs against the self-protective levelling instinct which is anathema to individual development. (93) It is easy to accept Lindsay's statement that the hip-pocket companion of his youth was "the little shilling edition of Nietzsche's Zarathustra, in Thomas Common's translation, which I had picked up in Cole's Book Arcade". (94)

Nietzsche distinguishes more clearly than does Lindsay between the various types of Christian faiths, but both are especially opposed to the type of Christianity which is exemplified by Pascal. In Beyond Good and Evil, Nietzsche distinguishes the Christianity of Pascal from that of Luther or Cromwell, and argues that it resembles in a terrible manner a continuous suicide of reason .... The Christian faith from the beginning, is sacrifice: the sacrifice of all freedom, all pride, all self-confidence of spirit; it is at the same time subjection, self-derision, and self-mutilation. (95)

93. Creative Effort, 67, 119 and passim.
95. Oscar Levy (ed.), The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Edinburgh 1909, XII: Helen Zimmern (transl.), Beyond Good and Evil, 65. All references are to this edition. Nietzsche's Beyond Good and Evil is referred to as well as Zarathustra, because the former expresses certain concepts rather more concisely, for present purposes, than does the latter. All the ideas cited from Beyond Good and Evil are expressed also in Zarathustra, and retain the same sense as in Zarathustra.
Lindsay is nauseated, as was Nietzsche, by repentance and redemption, and hence his particular attack on Christianity. The crucified Christ is seen as an image of man's own self-contempt and self-pity, and proof of his hatred and fear - "we see that all [Jesus'] tenderness and pity for man springs from the meanest of all human emotions, self-pity". (96) These emotions are anathema to self-development and the effort toward self-knowledge. Writing of Tolstoy, Lindsay says:

we need not be deceived by [his] humanitarian cries. These are but natural mimicry, uttered as unconsciously as a tiger wears stripes. Love for man is expressed here by hatred for man. This animal would smash the Hermes of Praxiteles in order to place upon its pedestal a grimy workman, dull, stupid, ugly and mindless, and write above it the legend of its hatred.

"Behold this terrible emblem of my self-pity." (97)

And of Bunyan:

[he] grovels, foams at the mouth, bursts into howls, tears, prayers ... The spectacle is disgusting ... the weak mind succumbs. It cries for mercy. From the depths of its self-pity it dreams of unending love, tenderness, and escape from itself. (98)

Throughout his writings, especially in Zarathustra and Beyond Good and Evil, (99) Nietzsche inveighs against the notion that sympathy and compassion

96. Creative Effort, 118.
97. Ibid, 232.
98. Ibid, 233.
99. See especially the section of Beyond Good and Evil titled "Our Virtues".
are admirable. (100) He urges that man must dispense with clogging pity for it springs fundamentally from a base fear, a desire that he himself be not injured. This lowly impulse is the basis for the "love thy neighbour" ethic; it is a self-regarding, self-protective impulse, as Lindsay also insists. Lindsay's concept of creative effort, and Nietzsche's of the "will to power", both demand the highest self-knowledge and courage, as also a love and honouring of man, who should be daring, upright and assertive. Man is held to be the creator of his own values; the relativity of morality is insited upon by both writers. (101)

Religious creeds are damnable in that they yield a spiritual quietism which is utterly opposed to effort, which can only be achieved by a struggle with the self.

Lindsay writes that "man must strive with destiny in order

100. "Wherever sympathy (fellow-suffering) is preached ... there is a hoarse, groaning note of self-contempt". Beyond Good and Evil, 165.

101. Nietzsche writes:
It is obvious that everywhere the designations of moral values were at first applied to men, and were only derivately and at a later period applied to actions . . . .

The noble type of man regards himself as a determiner of values; he does not require to be approved of . . . . he knows that it is he himself only who confers honour on things; he is a creator of values. He honours whatever he recognises in himself: such morality is self-glorification. In the foreground there is the feeling of plenitude, of power, which seeks to overflow, the happiness of high tension, the consciousness of a wealth which would fain give and bestow: - the noble man also helps the unfortunate, but not - or scarcely - out of pity, but rather from an impulse generated by the super-abundance of power. Beyond Good and Evil, 228.
to go beyond himself. He must conquer the unknown, which is not in God, but in himself". (102) Further, "morally the Christian is a bad mind, because it has sought to place this submission to doctrine, which it calls God, as a higher thing than individual development". (103) Man should be daring, sceptical, challenging; as Lindsay declares in a different context, (104) "take Destiny by the throat and the jade will give you anything."

Lindsay regards the ascetic and puritan aspects of Christianity as life-denying, and the church's political aspects as being as damnable as its spiritual aspects, since the church in its secular sphere is concerned with present material circumstance and not with the higher Life spirit. To the suggestion that the church encourages Art, Lindsay retorts, "What! The Catholic church has encouraged Art! Yes, the dunghill encouraged the rose to grow in order that all might admire the dunghill". (105)

Lindsay does argue his evidence for the near disastrous effects of religions on the achievement of creative effort. He instances how its hatred for man effects itself in works which preach doctrines of gloom and sexual inhibition; how it perverts the course of natural development in a mind like Pascal's, and depresses and discourages man from a courageous acceptance and love of all life. The works of Milton, Dante and Michael Angelo are referred to in this connection. Even the achievement of

102. Creative Effort, 272.
103. Ibid, 142-143.
104. Saturday, 254.
105. Creative Effort, 70.
Dickens, a writer much loved by Lindsay, is qualified on the grounds of his submission, be it conscious or otherwise, to the ethos that Christianity produces in a society; in Dickens' case, the effect in his life and work of the Christian ethos was the patent evasion of matters sensual.

Anti-Semitism does not bulk large in *Creative Effort*. It is noticeable how this aspect of Lindsay's work has been deplored by recent commentators, but contemporary sensibility is much more highly developed on this issue than it was in the twenties, when *Creative Effort* was published. It is only since the thirties that men have become extremely touchy about anti-Semitic sentiments, and such sentiments are generally consistent in the terms of Lindsay's moral aesthetic. Judaism is particularly attacked in so far as it serves as the focus for several of Lindsay's objections to creeds in general.

106. By Vincent Buckley and Judah Waten, as cited, and most recently by Max Harris, in a view of *The Scribblings of an Idle Mind*, titled "This is racial rubbish, Mr. Lindsay", *The Australian*, September 17th, 1966, 13.

107. Nonetheless, statements such as the following:

> The common mind has always worn the trappings of Christianity, thousands of years before it tagged the name of an obscure Jew to its resentment against all efforts to rise above the level of its dictum that all men are equal in the sight of God. (*Creative Effort*, 11)

and persistent references to "an obscure Jew" (Ibid, 89) and "a Jew like Jesus" (Ibid, 116), indicate an obsessiveness that may impair rather than promote a conviction of the intellectual validity of the point at issue. This is also, on occasion, the case with Nietzsche's writings. See for instance *Zarathustra*, 300.
Lindsay has much of Nietzsche's vigour and astuteness in matters pertaining to human morality, but lacks his ability to write exulting and lyrical prose. The figurative wealth and sustained lyricism of *Zarathustra* (108) is not to be found in *Creative Effort*, despite overt stylistic similarities of aphorism and tone. Lindsay's matter accords with Nietzsche much more closely than does his style. Lindsay's insistence on there being no "The Truth", (109) his refusal to supply rules for the achieving of his ethic, and his claim that his work is only for those who themselves make a sustained effort, are very much in the spirit of Zarathustra's exclamation:

> Here lies my way - where lies yours? I answered them which inquired of me 'the way'. For the way - existeth not! (110)

and his cry:

> I am a railing alongside the torrent; whoever is able to grasp me may grasp me! Your crutch, however, I am not. (111)

Lindsay is arguing throughout that man use his potential, and develop self-respect. The latter insistence is fundamental to his idea of the image in art. This idea, the "doctrine of the form image", is most fully developed in "The Hidden Symbol", to which we now turn.

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108. See especially the Songs in Parts 2, 3 and 4 of *Zarathustra*, and particularly the whole of the Third Part, which is with justice considered by Nietzsche's commentators as a pinnacle among his writings.
109. *Creative Effort*, 141.
110. *Zarathustra*, 175.
111. Ibid, 43.
Lindsay was left at the conclusion of "Creative Effort" with the conviction that "something more was needed beyond its affirmation in general terms of a belief in Life and Art". (112) In "The Hidden Symbol" he therefore went on to provide further discussion and practical application of certain of the concepts which had received only brief mention in "Creative Effort".

In "The Hidden Symbol" Lindsay concentrates on three closely related ideas: on the distinction between "objective" and "creative" vision; on the nature and effect of the form image in art; and on demonstrating the inextricable and interdependent nature of the relationship between the senses and the intellect.

Lindsay prefaces "The Hidden Symbol" with a warning about the inadequacy of the terms of language:

All such terms as Life, Death, Existence, Mind, Art, Vision, Consciousness, are not capable of finite definition. They must remain the symbols of an individual expression of mind ... (113)

Nonetheless it is necessary to attempt to determine what Lindsay means by the terms he uses. The title term is a synonym for the human mind: "the Hidden Symbol, which we have only agreed to call Mind". (114) Mind is understood as a symbol in the sense that it is held to be the symbol of a perfection that goes beyond earth life. Whatever its earthly expression may be, itself remains hidden. (115)

112. Creative Effort, 129.
113. Ibid.
114. Ibid, 292.
115. Ibid, 134.
The mind is itself, in its near perfection, both the hidden symbol of an absolute perfection held to exist beyond the earth, and the evidence of that perfection, of a higher life:

We seek for the one evidence that connects us with that higher life, and that is the symbol of a higher perfection of life than earth life can offer us. (116)

Lindsay first concentrates in "The Hidden Symbol" on the nature of mind and this involves a consideration of the relationship between senses and intellect. He states this relationship to be:

the eternal paradox of that effort to conquer the problem of intellect by the senses which obstruct the effort, but without which the effort cannot be made. (117)

The nature of the interdependence is then stated to be "the insoluble problem of intellect". (118) An understanding of the manner and the extent to which knowledge depends on feeling is one of the fundamental yet ultimately insoluble issues with which man must concern himself. Lindsay's conviction is that "by our intensity of feeling we arrive at an intensity of knowing". (119)

The demonstration of this contention involves an examination of the nature of mind. As we do not know what the actual nature of mind is, but as we know something of its effects (what it produces, how it manifests itself), it is to a consideration of these effects or manifestations

116. Creative Effort, 139.
117. Ibid, 132.
118. Ibid, 132.
119. Ibid, 291.
that we must turn:

If we cannot explain the symbol of Mind, we have much that Mind reveals. Therefore our search must go to understand the nature of that revelation. (120)

Lindsay's argument is that mind is revealed in art. The art that reveals mind is termed "creative art", which is broadly distinguished from that which fails to reveal mind, "objective art". "Creative" art reveals mind, which fosters "a type of knowing" by which man arrives at an "intensity of feeling".

But the mind manifests two types of knowing, only one of which promotes intensity of feeling. One type of knowing is empirical, and more properly termed "observation". (121) The other type consists essentially of imaginative concepts perceivable only by the eye of the mind, and it is these which offer man the only viable means of attaining to "Truth". Truth is a personal apprehension, never to be fully embraced but continually to be sought, and therefore involving continual effort, continual self-development:

We understand that truth is an element which must not be known, but which must be known to exist.

Truth, in short, is a problem, not of development, but of developing. (122)

Were "Truth" to be known, effort and hence development would cease. "Observation" on the other hand stops at

120. Creative Effort, 134.
121. Ibid, 138.
122. Ibid, 135.
finite knowledge, at the thing known, at the fact observed. It is moreover a process common to all men with sight, neither requiring nor developing intellect. Finite knowledge is expressed in "objective art", imaginative or personal "truth" in creative art.

The stress is constantly on the extreme importance of the mind. It is only by the use of the intellect, by the projection of hypotheses, that man can enlarge or develop knowledge:

To enlarge a knowledge of [a] thing, a hypothesis of it must be projected in order to continue to record a higher power of sensory perception by it. All knowledge comes into existence by what power we have to project a hypothesis beyond the record of the senses, in order that the senses may be trained to record the hypothesis. (123)

In this lies the crux of the interdependence between mind and matter, senses and intellect. Lindsay expresses himself less cryptically on this matter in *My Mask* where, after announcing that the pistol-shot of orgasm is nothing much to fuss over, and that he no longer has any desire for physical experience of this sort, he insists that he nonetheless refuses to abandon "desire as a mental image". (124) The mental image of desire, though no longer increasing his potential for sensory experience, is nonetheless unfailing in yielding him the material for art:

One may keep the spirit alive, but the flesh goes back on it. Experience must be counted of value only when it adds to our store of

123. *Creative Effort*, 137.
mental imageries, and mental imageries are acquired by emotional reactions to experience. One is in a closed circle when one has lost the emotional stimulus to acquire a fresh supply. For myself, I can still draw on my accumulated store of mental imageries. I can still make pictures. I can still stir a response from those who desire to possess them. But to me, they are only a few more examples added to a pile of works which has gone a little in excess of respectable proportions. And the urge to go on adding to them, other than that of using up time, is lessened by the fact that there is no precise objective in the future towards which to move with them.

That objective is a prime essential to all effort. It may be an illusive one. It may not be attainable. It may not be worth attaining. But one must have it dangled as a carrot a little ahead of one's nose. The nuisance is, I can't fool myself any longer into doddering in quest of it.

In accordance with his insistence that self-revelation is of the essence of art, Lindsay is himself a most candidly self-revealing artist. In My Mask, as in Creative Effort, he candidly explains himself, consciously exposes the basis of his action motivation.

He employs a functional hypothesis, one with truth in it, but truth of a personal and imaginative rather than demonstrable order. His concern is not so much with the actual "truth" of a hypothesis as with whether or not it works in generating action and effort.

The necessity for hypotheses and ideals is proposed as of general relevance to man, although the

125. My Mask, 243.
126. See Creative Effort, 139, 170 and passim. See also Lindsay's article, "Boswell's Fools", The Australian Outline, December 1933, which is a condensation of much in Creative Effort concerning self-revelation as of the essence of art.
details of Lindsay's own hypotheses are not meant to be prescriptive. Their effect, which is their expression in art, is however of pertinence to all men. Lindsay says of finite knowledge, or observation: "it has no intellectual stimulus because it offers no revelation of the universal mind, in which resides the symbol of Truth." (127)

The presentation in art of finite knowledge offers no revelation of that self which is part of the universal mind and which is revealed in creative expression: "The effect of Truth is to reveal yourself to yourself, and what can you know of yourself by knowing a theory of atomic forces?" (128)

The impulse toward mental imageries is considered inexplicable. If man knew whence they derived, the effort of seeking and expressing them would cease. (129) Their importance is that they are essentially visions of perfection, of perfection higher than earth life offers, (130) and as such they are the symbol of man's striving towards something more perfect than himself. Mental imageries are both substance and cause of creative art. (131)

The nature of creative art is discussed in some detail by examining several types of artistic expression and delineating in each case the "objective" or "creative" aspects. In a letter to Hugh McCrae, Lindsay said of "The Hidden Symbol":

127. Creative Effort, 139.
128. Ibid.
129. Ibid, 141.
131. Ibid, 141.
This last work I am busy about, "The Hidden Symbol", is an effort to divide creative from non-creative minds by the evidence of a symbol of beauty which is sought, not the emblem of beauty which is found. The creative mind has that symbol already in the mind; it does not need to go searching for an earthly emblem of beauty in order to express its own inner sense of beauty; but the non creative mind must peer and botanise till it finds something to sing about.

The bulk of the second part of "The Hidden Symbol" is devoted to distinguishing between creative and objective vision. The former "seeks to make", and "creates from an inner perception of what form should be", while the latter "seeks what is made", and "re-creates from what form is." (133) The distinction is between a vision of life which gives direction for life, as opposed to that which is simply a temperamental taste for the spectacle of existence. (134)

Lindsay is drawing a common enough distinction here; Oscar Wilde for instance asserted:

What you, as painters, have to paint, is not things as they are but things as they seem to be, not things as they are but things as they are not,

and further:

The artist is not dependent on the visible and tangible. He has his visions and his dreams to feed on. (135)

Lindsay goes beyond Wilde, however, in attempting to

132. Letter from Norman Lindsay to Hugh McCrae, 4 pp., n.d., Chaplin collection, Item 22(d).
133. Creative Effort, 174.
demonstrate the distinction between the types of vision by discussing several works. It is important to remember that his procedure as regards his discussion of these works is interpretative rather than critical. He does not attempt any thorough-going critical discussion: he concentrates on isolating those elements which bear on the distinction he is making between creative and objective vision.

Lindsay first insists that the nature of art is neither decorative, as Wilde had also insisted, nor solely entertaining. Lindsay queries:

When your interest in a work of art is aroused, ask yourself whence it springs; for there can be only two issues involved.
One is the sense of flattery and entertainment that causes you to forget your mind by recalling to you the episode of your existence.
The other is that which forces you to realise yourself by recalling to you the eternal elements of your mind.
All objective vision is that which entertains by recalling the actuality of existence.
All creative vision is that which reveals the universal problem of mind, of which your mind is an element.

136. Wilde wrote:
What is the difference between absolutely decorative art and a painting? Decorative art emphasizes its material: imaginative art annihilates it. (Art and Decoration, 52.)

If a man has any message for the world he will not deliver it in a material that always suggests and always conditions its own decoration .... Bookbinding (for instance) ... is not, in the first instance, a mode of expression for a man's soul .... Between the arts that aim at annihilating their material and the arts that aim at glorifying it there is a wide gulf. (Ibid, 199-200).

137. Creative Effort, 181-182.
The purpose of art is not to soothe and flatter the ego, not to foster self-forgetfulness but self-realisation. Lindsay had earlier insisted:

Is it not the mission of intellect that you should realise yourself?
And is realisation a means of contentment?
Does not the revelation of your own mind rather startle and perturb you? ...
It may hardly make us happy to be dragged face to face with ourselves, to be forced to realise where we have failed, where we have been stupid, where we have given up effort; but we cannot be said to be intellectually alive unless we are so made aware of ourselves.
And Creative art, which reveals its own vision of the passion, beauty, and pain of life, forces the realisation of these things on us. It drags us out of all inertia of mind, all Nirvana of entertainment. (138)

Further, "On earth, the material of all creative effort is Life, in order that its message may stimulate other lives", (139) but such an effect will only be achieved by him who has first achieved self-knowledge:

Each man, whatever his degree, must leave the earth a better place than he found it. That is, he must leave the earth a better man than he came into it. And he can do this solely by accepting the test of life, acquiring knowledge and self-discipline, by clarifying his thought, and by individual achievement, whether it be in the service of life or the service of existence. (140)

The power to "perceive and analyse and put in created form the vision of Life" (141) is the highest moral effort man can make. Not all men are capable of the highest effort, but they can at least make some effort, even if "it is

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139. Ibid, 110.
140. Ibid, 113-114.
141. Ibid, 106.
only an effort to understand themselves". (142)

It may be difficult to distinguish between creative and objective vision because both use the same physical and technical means in their expression, (143) but the distinction can be made by considering two aspects of a work of art: its spirit, and the way it reveals mind, that of both the artist and the subject. (144) Lindsay provides several illustrations for this.

He selects examples in painting (Rembrandt, Velasquez) (145) and in literature (Shakespeare, Dickens) (146) such as point contrasts, arguing that the creative work is the one which in each case may be distinguished by its vigour and spirit. These characteristics reveal the artist's mind, as well as that of his subject: "the value of these efforts will not be their technical ability to create works, but their spiritual ability to reveal Mind." (147) Boswell is the outstanding example of the writer who not only lets us know Johnson, but lets us know himself, although Lindsay considers Boswell's revelation of self to have been chiefly unintentional. "It is quite as a gratuitous and noble generosity," he writes, "that in the act of exposing Johnson Boswell also reveals himself". (148)

If the artist cannot reveal himself, he should at least reveal for us the minds of his characters. Lindsay's

142. Creative Effort, 87.
143. Ibid.
144. Ibid, 170.
145. Ibid, 183.
146. Ibid, 191.
147. Ibid, 170.
much loved Dickens falls below Shakespeare in this respect. Despite the excellencies of the depiction of Sairey Gamp, "we know everything about this old woman but what she thinks", (149) whereas Shakespeare, in his characterisation of Falstaff, reveals "the very springs of ... his being". It "is the ... revelation of mind that makes Falstaff a created character, and Sairey Gamp a recreated fact". (150) Dickens stopped at a faithful recreation of what meets the eye, whereas Shakespeare penetrated beyond such physical perception to an imaginative grasp of one of the essential motives governing action and being. In Falstaff's case (as also in Samuel Johnson's), this motive Lindsay considered to be the terror of death.

Similar distinctions are drawn between Dora Copperfield and Ophelia, Dickens and Flaubert, and others. Dante and Milton are discussed together as haters of life, (151) with Michael Angelo their counterpart in paint. Lindsay's views are somewhat one-sided, but the distinctions he discusses do in fact exist, and it is clear that he is concerned with the works of these artists only insofar as they illustrate the distinction between creative and objective vision.

Besides giving numerous instances of objective and creative vision, Lindsay also discusses the effect on man of the form image in art. (152) The images of man and

149. Creative Effort, 192.
150. Ibid, 193.
151. Ibid, 212.
152. See the long section "Creation - Revelation - Exposure".
society in the works of Dickens, Petronius, Rabelais and Rubens teach us to love life, whereas Zola and Flaubert teach fear and evasion, and foster an image of man as a contemptible and cowardly creature. Lindsay argues the morally detrimental effects of such depictions in much the same way as Shaw argued when he stated in his preface to Three Plays for Puritans:

The worst of it is that since man's intellectual consciousness of himself is derived from the descriptions of him in books, a persistent misrepresentation of humanity in literature gets finally accepted and acted upon. (153)

In 1930 Lindsay stated:

I have made an exhaustive search for the self-annihilation image in art, and I conclude that the only retort to it is a little Satanism and laughter, and a fresh return to work. It flatters the gods too much to take their system seriously. (154)

He explained that by the "self-annihilation image" he meant "the image of self-contempt", and argued that art should fight against such a view of man, that it should present to man a challenge, an image of himself to which he might aspire. Hence his predilection for ample females:

I never take it as a test of form to handle gracefully slim girls' bodies, because all young things of earth, from turnips to kittens, supply imageries - but the weighted body, with all man's etiolated terrors of it to make a bad conscience over its imagery, is the supreme test of creative courage. (155)

154. Kenneth Slessor, "An Interview with Norman Lindsay", Art in Australia, Norman Lindsay Number, December 1930, 10.
155. Ibid, 16.
Images depicted in art should praise and inspire man; praise in a certain way and inspire to certain deeds. Nor are these restricted or restricting notions, for what is essentially stressed is the attitude desirable in the image. It should express a celebration of love and of life in any of the infinite ways this can be expressed.

For Lindsay, the art image has an intrinsic moral function. While any artistic expression of beauty is deemed a moral good, (156) the highest good is achieved by the spirited utterance which has as its subject the female, since such an image ultimately encourages the propagation of life. In his discussion of the effects of the form image, ethical considerations always take precedence over aesthetic considerations. Michael Angelo's "The Last Judgment", for instance, is chiefly criticised on the grounds that its lack of technical form (as Lindsay sees it) is morally detrimental in that it encourages physical formlessness in mind. (157) Against formlessness in art, there could for Lindsay be no more serious charge.

Whereas in "Creative Effort" Lindsay had concentrated principally on ethical ideas, in "The Hidden Symbol" he

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156. There are two curious eccentricities in Lindsay's views on this matter. First is his assertion that vitality creates beauty: "vitalization of an image must beautify it" (Creative Effort, 49). Yet Lindsay would certainly deny that a vital depiction of man's brutality could be considered beautiful.

Second is his curious conviction that art should stimulate a passionate desire since on the passionate vitality of sexual intercourse depends the intellectual and sexual vitality of those it produces. Enfeebled intellects and homosexuals are believed to be the direct products of passionless embraces on the part of their parents (Ibid, 190. See also The Scribblings of an Idle Mind, 50-53.)

157. Creative Effort, 54ff, 211ff.
provides more detailed explanation and illustration of his ethical theories as they relate to art. His theories of ethics and aesthetics cannot really be separated; his aesthetic ideas are always predominantly ethical. The aesthetic ideas to which Lindsay returned in "The Hidden Symbol" are those which had been concisely set forth in "Creative Effort" as follows:

We accept, as a first moral principle, that the experience of Art is the experience of Life. But Life cannot be experienced unless a vital power of sensation is aroused, therefore Art which is to serve Life must stir sensation, both physical and mental, as deeply as possible ....

Art, to be morally vital, must be gay, laughter loving, seeking joy as the symbol of its highest exultation ....

Art, to be vital, must seek Beauty in all forms, Beauty in tone, light, mass, conception, image ....

Art, where it touches the most vital of all issues, which is sex, the stimulus of Life's re-birth, will be frank, licentious, shameless, seeking every image which may ... impose on the mind that embrace in passion which may be transferred to the embrace of the body .... (158)

The characteristic pattern of Lindsay's theory is new, although many of its constituent parts are to be found, variously developed, in earlier writers. Notions of the interdependence of senses and intellect, of the functional or working hypothesis, and of the distinction between objective and creative vision, are not of themselves new concepts, but the synthesis in which Lindsay employs them is new.

158. Creative Effort, 49-50.
One of the most prominent characteristics of Creative Effort is a quality which may be termed a general radical optimism. In this lies much of Lindsay's relation to Sessor and FitzGerald. Neither of these writers is an "objective" artist in Lindsay's sense; both create from, and impose on, the given, an outlook and spirit that is frequently like Lindsay's. To claim this is to imply the necessity for a considerable revaluation of the work of these poets and this is attempted in the following chapters.

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II.

RELATED JOURNAL AND PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS.

The ideas Lindsay put forward in Creative Effort were to be urged, variously expressed, in all his subsequent writings. A consideration of his journal and periodical publications, which span more than sixty years, (159) show how consistent was Lindsay's promotion of the ideas he propounded in Creative Effort.

Lindsay had contributed several articles and stories to journals prior to the 1914 war but it was not until about 1916, for reasons already mentioned, (160) that his writings became more overtly serious in purpose and that he began to publish articles on the nature and function of art. (161) His fiction likewise showed a change of emphasis in that it came more directly to stress certain ideas and beliefs. (162) In "The Master of Time", a short story published in the London Aphrodite in 1928, the protagonist expounds, in distinctly authorial terms, views on the function of art and on the course of behaviour proper to man on an earth devised

159. See Bibliography.
160. See below, 17-20.
Also see Lindsay's succinct statement of his reactions to "modernist" art and to the 1914 war in his review, "Art and Berenson", Bulletin, June 29th, 1960, 2.
"The Inevitable Future", Art in Australia, Second Series, 1 (February 1922), 22-41;
"Social Purpose as a Manifestation of Art", Art in Australia, Third Series, 3 (February 1923), n.p.
162. See Bibliography for Lindsay's pre-war publications of fiction in journals and periodicals.
as a satanic jest by malignant gods:

Art, we know, is the Gods' choicest weapon of attack on Man, since it is the one thing that can save him from the Earth. Beauty, Gaiety, Passion, Love, Delight in the body, all exaltation which brings vitality to the concrete Image in Art; these Man has been given in order that he may reject them . . . . All that goes under the heading of the People's Morality, that of Saviours and Saved; all priest-led rabbles, all that is psychologically understood as 'suppressed', in short, the mere human brute in his first straight jacket [sic] of restraint, we put aside . . . .

We are concerned with Man only when he becomes least Man - that is, where he responds to Art. (167)

The distinguishing feature of Lindsay's journal and essay writing increasingly became its concern with Australian culture, and the importance to this culture of the novel. This is evident in the relatively few articles Lindsay published in the 1930's, (164) as also in his numerous contributions to the Bulletin over the twenty year period 1941-1961. He was proud to assert, in a Bulletin review of a collection of Australian short stories in 1941, the superiority of

164. See the two articles on censorship published in Smith's Weekly, mentioned previously; an essay on culture in Australia: "A Footnote to the Future", in G.R.Hoff and E.H.Shea, The Work of Eileen McGrath, Sydney 1931, 15-23; an article stating that commerce owes it to a country's culture to invest its wealth in the service of that culture: "Art and Commerce: Interests are Interwoven", B.P.Magazine, VII, 1 (December 1934), 20; a discussion of self-revelation as of the essence of art: "Boswell's Fools", The Australian Outline, 1 (December 1933), 3; an article on the necessity to a country's culture of good novelists: "The Australian Reader?", in The Australian Author, Sydney 1935, n.p.; and, on the novelist's task of increasing the people's consciousness, the article called "Fenton's Inheritors", Bulletin, September 30th, 1936, 2.
In a review published the following year he was delighted to endorse the humour and gusto of Eve Langley's novel, Pea Pickers. The most helpful way of indicating the scope of Lindsay's work for the Bulletin in these years, and the extent of his interest in the art of the novel and its importance to a country's culture, has been considered to be by itemisation.

In 1943, Lindsay reviewed or wrote articles on the following:

- Douglas Stewart's *Ned Kelly* (March).
- *Coast to Coast 1943* (June).
- The Australian novel, its tendency to be a mammoth chronicle (August).
- Steinbeck and Hemingway, discussing sentimentality in their works as compared to that in Dickens (September).
- The surge of murder mysteries which appeared in the 1920's, arguing that these were evidence of a repressed desire for blood-letting (November).

1944, "Milton and Michelangelo", a discussion in the same terms as that which appeared in *Creative Effort* (February).

"Art and the 'Herald'", a critical and unfriendly appraisal of the Herald's art criticism (April).

Book review, "Art and Science" (September).

1945, On Browning's "Childe Roland" (June).

On the Bulletin's services to Australian Literature (August).

165. "Australian Prose", *Bulletin*, October 1st, 1941, 2. Hemingway and Steinbeck were particularly discussed.
167. Full references are supplied in the Bibliography.
120.

On Cecil Mann (October).

On Gaunt's *Aesthetic Adventure*, and a discussion of the vogue for primitive art, especially as it is a peculiar characteristic of excellent prose stylists (November). His essay, "Paint and Primitivism" in his *Paintings in Oil* (1945) is on the same theme.

On "Banjo" Paterson, a tribute with reminiscences (much the same account as in *Boheminans of the Bulletin*) (December).

1946, Two articles on the craft of the novel (May and June).

Anecdote about Miles Franklin (as in *Bohemians of the Bulletin*) (September).

1947, Book review of Osbert Sitwell's *The Scarlet Tree*, which points again to the penchant for primitive art in an excellent prose writer. Maintains action as the only way to properly record/reveal personality (February).

On Johnson and Boswell (July).

On Gaunt's *British Art* (July).

On A.G.Stephens (*Southerly, VIII, 4* [1947]).

1948, On Howard Hinton (February); very like Lindsay's essay in the *Memorial Volume* to same.

On censorship (September).

1949, Tribute to McCrae and review of *Story Book Only* (April).

On Gaunt's *March of the Moderns* (June).

1950, An assessment of the *Bulletin*’s black and white artists (February).


On Sinclair Lewis, who died January 10th, and whom Lindsay met in the United States (February).

1952. Tribute to Munnings. Lindsay warmly praises his oils, his horses and gypsy caravans, and inveighs with some bitterness against the "modernist" studio world (April).

On Boswell in Holland (August).

On the Letters of Rachel Henning (September).


On modern painting; a review of the exhibition of "modernist" French paintings at the New South Wales Art Gallery (March).

On Browning, and the uselessness to biographers of the text-book psychological approach as this is inadequate to catching and conveying the distinctively individual mind (April).

On Dickens; how the theatre has had a bad effect on his writing in that it is responsible for the fustian and melodrama in his work, yet how marvellous Dickens is when he writes of the theatre, and jests with it (Mr. Wopsle as Hamlet in Great Expectations) (April).

Reflections on Vision; (Southerly, XIV, 4 (1953)).

1954. On a rereading of the works of Stone and Dyson (April).

On ship models (November).

1955. On Norman Douglas, whom Lindsay considers one of the wisest men of his generation (January).

On J.F. Archibald (an account similar to that in Bohemians of the Bulletin) (February).

Several of his letters to Douglas Stewart reprinted; these are chiefly on literary matters and discuss several writers (February).

On Kipling and Maugham (May).

On John Cowper Powys (May).

On Louis Becke's By Reef and Palm (September).

On bush balladists (October).
1956, On Johnson (review of Clifford's *Young Samuel Johnson*) (March).

On McCrae (Southerly, XVII, 3 (1956), McCrae Number).

1957, On the characters in *Redheap* (September).

1958, On Pepys (March).

1959, Article on the art of bawdy in the Lindsay number of *Southerly*, (XX, 1 (1959)).

On Browning (Southerly, XX, 4 (1959)).


On art criticism and Berenson, whom Lindsay greatly admires (June).

Book review of the English Stuarts (August).


On Robert Louis Stevenson (March).

On Max Beerbohm (May).

Lindsay's work for the *Bulletin* ceases rather abruptly at this point, (168) and he published very few articles in the next eight years before his death. (169)

Lindsay's journal articles show certain continually recurring emphases. The preceding itemisation indicates his

169. See Norman Lindsay, "Looking Back in Anger", *The Age*, July 9th, 1966, 21, and "Have We Reached Maturity?", *The Age*, July 16th, 1966, 25. Both articles discuss Australia's literary growth since World War II, comparing it with her pre-war literary stagnation. See also Norman Lindsay, "The Question of Ned Kelly's Perfume", *Bulletin*, March 18th, 1967, 36-37. This is a general article on changing fashions in male dress, and, as far as I have been able to ascertain, is the last article Lindsay published.
persistent and vigorous concern with moral values in art. He deplores the moral degeneration and chaos which he sees in primitivism and abstraction in art as both expressing and fostering. (170) In his discussions of Steinbeck and Hemingway, he argues with considerable force that the "moronic and repulsive" hero protagonists of works such as Of Mice and Men, are as sentimental in their way as is Little Nell. The veiled nature of this "sentimentality" and the moral evasion of the author which Lindsay believes it to signify, are matters to be exposed and resisted in that they constitute an anti-life force and hence pervert the proper function of art, which is to applaud life. (171) Lindsay's concern for right values in life as in art, both literary and graphic, is also abundantly clear in his extremely appreciative articles on critics such as Bernard Berensen, artists such as John Lane Mullins and writers such as Norman Douglas.

Lindsay tirelessly insists that art must be "for life". Of the 1942 Coast to Coast anthology, he commented that the stories on the whole are "for life". They are all engrossed with the fundamental passions of humanity . . . There is nowhere in them a grouch against life either as a monstrous imposition or a bad joke. (172)

170. For example:
"Writers and Artists", Bulletin, November 21st, 1945, 2.
172. "Yes or No from Coast to Coast", Bulletin, June 16th, 1945, 2.
Lindsay began this review by stating that his aim in reading the anthology had been to see how, in wartime (1942), the stories revealed the spirit of the nation. He went on:

The subject-matter used to express that outlook [the outlook on the spectacle of existence which is either fascinated or horrified by it] has nothing to do with the state of mind exposed or revealed by it. Hemingway and de Maupassant, for instance, both cover aspects of life which are, in the conventional idiom, brutal and horrifying, but where Hemingway is repelled and outraged by his own subject-matter de Maupassant is delighted and fascinated by his. Again, where both Aldous Huxley and Dickens are engrossed with a sociological inspection of life, Huxley can only spit disgust and loathing for a spectacle which enchants Dickens. It is hardly fair, perhaps, to compare little men with great men, but there is no other way of accenting the significance that great men accept life and little men reject it. (173)

Lindsay argues this conviction time and again. (174)

There is also an emphasis on the self-revelatory nature of art, on the necessity for revelation of character in art. This is pursued at particular length in the 1946 article, "The Craft of the Novel". (175) Lindsay's conviction is:

173. "Yes or No from Coast to Coast", Bulletin, June 16th, 1943, 2.
174. Douglas Stewart urged much the same point of view when he wrote that the English aesthetes of the 1890's did not serve the cause of art: they betrayed it. They did not infuse into human existence something gay and gallant, as had Burns and Byron, but something corrupt and miserable, squalid and miserable. A strong man can make debauch an adventure; with the aesthetes - this was their real sin against life - it was a surrender.
If the writer's intention is not psychological revelation, but political propaganda, then his story is outside serious consideration as a work of art.

Lindsay is especially interested in biographers and diarists for this reason. It is the revelation of self that he chiefly applauds in the works of Boswell (177) and Pepys, while it is Dickens’ "evasion of self" in the matter of sex that qualifies for Lindsay an otherwise superb achievement. This qualification is itself however qualified by the fact that Lindsay could almost forgive Dickens this evasion, because of the tremendous love of life that his works promote and show their author to have possessed. (179)

Lindsay was also convinced that only in action is

176. Norman Lindsay, "Yes or No from Coast to Coast", Bulletin, June 16th, 1943, 2. See also "Munnings and Modern Art", Bulletin, January 21st, 1953, 2.
177. "In Search of a Villain", Bulletin, July 16th, 1947, 2. "The New Boswell", Bulletin, February 28th, 1951, 2. "Boswell in Holland", Bulletin, August 6th, 1952, 2. Lindsay also highly praises Boswell for his preservation of Johnson, who would have perished, Lindsay believes, had his works alone been left to speak for him. Lindsay considers Johnson's works interminably dull and pompous, yet he cannot but admit that on Boswell’s evidence, Johnson’s opinions were well worth having. He himself cites Johnson with approbation: "Sir, if you see a fool rolling downhill, give him a kick to send him faster". Undated letter from Norman Lindsay to Kenneth MacKenzie, held in the Mitchell Library, Sydney (Lindsay Papers MS 503/7, Papers A i A-L).
See also "The Young Sam Johnson", Bulletin, March 21st, 1956, 2.
man's character revealed. (180) He held that the reliance of contemporary novelists on an explanation of men's psychological states for an understanding of their actions resulted in both bad construction and moral evasion. To attribute the responsibility for man's behaviour to the uncontrollable subconscious is to relieve him of the burden of responsibility for his own behaviour. This is the ethical foundation for Lindsay's conviction that the technique of the successful novel depends principally on action. In a letter to Douglas Stewart, Lindsay wrote:

I don't think the ballad in its early form should come back. It would be only an intellectual exercise if it did. But I do hope the tale in verse will be experimented with. I suppose, since Tennyson, Masefield is the only tale-teller in verse who was widely read. And tale-telling is badly needed in the novel, too. I've just read again The Wrecker by R.L.Stevenson and it made me realise how completely the suspense motive as action has vanished from the modern novel, where that motive is transferred to states of mind. And who the hell cares for the spiritual conflicts of the intelligentsia? (181)

Certain of the issues which Lindsay discussed in Creative Effort are expressed with considerably greater clarity in his reviews. On the question of whether art should arouse emotion, for instance, he wrote in the Bulletin:

Emotion in art is an infernally vexed question. Should art arouse emotion? Of course. But not

the wrong sort of emotion. It is not the emotional content of the subject matter that is in question, but the projection of the writer's emotion into it that is the obnoxious element. Once the writer demands that we should suffer with him for his too intense awareness of an emotional intensity, we are in the area of second-rate art - stage art. It was this same vulgar appeal to generous emotion that made Dickens ruin half his work, that excited even Balzac to overdo emotional stress as an actor overacts drama. It made a mess of a great deal of Henry Lawson's work.

Emotionalism in the writer is based on self-pity, the most degraded of all emotions. It has tainted nearly all prose for the past decade . . . . (182)

He also clearly stated in what way the demand that literature be concerned with the preoccupations of its lifetime be understood:

Leslie Rees quotes an opinion to the effect that literature cannot be indifferent to the preoccupations of its own time. This is true, but unless the preoccupation is understood no concept can lead writers further astray. To snatch material for art from the immediate action of life is to create second-rate art. (183)

He goes on to argue that the artist is not a journalist. Shakespeare, for instance, gives no hint of the religious fanaticism of his day or of the trouble with Spain, but what we do get of all of this through Shakespeare is the dramatic intensity with which he envisioned a life of colour and violence. It is to a concept of life generated from such a source that the artist must go. (184)

Lindsay's journal articles quite clearly reveal the principles on which he bases his critical estimations. In
his journal essays on Dickens, Boswell and Pepys in particular, there is an amplification of discussion and a specifying of instances that gives Lindsay's observations more validity than they are easily seen to have in Creative Effort, where his discussion of these writers can tend to abruptness and rigidity of expression. The rather rigid categorisation that Creative Effort at times suggests about Lindsay's literary criticism needs to be qualified by a consideration of the criticism he later published in journals. The matter is made the more difficult at present by the absence of any detailed bibliography of Lindsay's literary criticism in journals, (185) although a collection of his critical writings is proposed for publication. (186)

One further feature of Lindsay's critical writings in journals and periodicals is the way in which he tends to attribute his own convictions and states of mind to the writer under discussion. This is particularly evident in the lively article he wrote for Southerly on Robert Browning. (187) Lindsay considers Browning's biographers particularly useless and evasive. Basing his facts on letters between Browning and some of the women with whom he formed attachments, letters which only came to public light in 1937, Lindsay puts forward an estimation of Browning which repudiates the traditional claim of Browning's biographers that he was the devoted husband, the "morally

185. The Bibliography to this thesis attempts to provide this material.
186. Chaplin, Norman Lindsay, iii.
conventional" Victorian. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, far
from being accorded the sympathy usually given her by
Browning's biographers, is presented by Lindsay in very
hostile terms: "A prunes-and-prism prude, she must have
had a corrupting effect on a free sex imagery in
Browning's poetry." (188) Lindsay envisages other men's
conceptions of sexual relations as being the same as his
own: Browning knew "intimately the relations of men and
women, in all the complexities of sex-conflict". (189)
Again: "Browning must have acquired a fair assortment of
casual love affairs - for, however slight those may be,
they are the substance out of which the image of femininity
is created in art." (190)

Lindsay discusses what he terms Browning's "mask",
suggesting that he at times wore the false one
unconsciously:

So complex are those inner conflicts between
what Yeats calls the True Mask and the False
Mask in those who are endowed with the
creative faculty that the creator himself is
the most confused about which mask he is
wearing in the action of work . . . . from
[Browning's] actions it becomes pretty clear
that there was a great deal of False Mask in
Browning's efforts to maintain the legend of
a perfect love-match in his marriage with
Elizabeth. (191)

Robert Browning repeatedly becomes Lindsay-Browning.

Lindsay credits Browning with his own theories of

189. Ibid, 185.
190. Ibid, 196.
191. Ibid, 185.
mental imageries:

At the core of all Browning's thought lies the conviction that the image of desire is a greater reality than the actuality from which it is drawn, since the image is an indestructible content of the mind while the actuality is a shadow-graph passing into non-existence in the event of its happening. All expectations of happiness exceed their realization; all aspirations of achievement fall short of their attainment. The image of desire is insatiable but its rewards are swiftly satiated. The spirit eternally dances ahead of the flesh, which toils in pursuit of it, doomed to frustration. All those pessimistic outcries denouncing the flesh for its inability to satisfy desire . . . Browning's concept of the image of desire as the only enduring reality utterly repudiates. (192)

Of "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came" Lindsay argues that the tower which Roland, the type of artist, finally reaches, is "in short, Self - a completed entity by the power of self-expression". (193) Rubens and Beethoven, when discussed by Lindsay in Creative Effort, similarly become Lindsay-Rubens and Lindsay-Beethoven.

192. "The Mask of Robert Browning", 192-193. Lindsay wrote in My Mask, 243:
One may keep the spirit alive, but the flesh goes back on it. Experience must be counted of value only when it adds to our store of mental imageries, and mental imageries are acquired by emotional reactions to experience.

One of Lindsay's most clearly written and cogent essays is "The Delicate Art of Bawdy". This is less a treatise on bawdy than a discussion of the status of the comic and the humorous, with a warm tribute to writers in these modes, especially Balzac. This essay succinctly puts much of the matter of Creative Effort and of Lindsay's novels.

After an extremely appreciative account of Balzac, Lindsay concludes with a general defence of the art of comedy:

Most critics of Balzac's works pass the Droll Stories as of little consequence compared to his novels; a work tossed off as a diversion rather than a serious contribution to literature. To me, it is one of the greatest of his works. Will the illusion never be dissipated that humour is an inferior quality to gravity in art? For the very few prose works of high quality dedicated to the spirit of humour there are scores and scores of works created in a serious idiom, or, to use the cant term of critical virtuosity, "works to be taken seriously". Is the Satyricon not to be taken seriously? Or Don Quixote or Tom Jones? As a supreme act of creation, is Falstaff to be taken less seriously than Hamlet, or Mrs. Gamp than Lady Dedlock? It seems to me that these sapient critics of works to be taken seriously are confusing the humorous with the comic.

He then draws a distinction between these two: "The comic consists of satirical comment on the passing scene and is as ephemeral as the social habits, customs and conventions from which it is drawn."

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Humour, on the other hand, is:

that supreme clarity of vision that sees mankind precisely as it is and not as false sentiment and human dissimulation assumes it to be . . . . It is the rarest of all gifts, for its spiritual content is a delight in the whole spectacle of life, whether that inspires laughter, horror or pity . . . .

. . . the gay Olympus of bawdy . . . is generated by delight in the spectacle of life expressed in terms of wit, lyricism and humour.

This is one of Lindsay's most concise statements of what was for him a cardinal tenet. Throughout all his writings his stress lies constantly on the necessity for art to applaud life. His periodical and journal discussions of the art of the novel continually stress its importance as a medium for the dissemination of ideas such as will encourage in others, by the artist's own revelation of it, "a delight in the spectacle of life".

This conviction is moreover the ethical basis for the more theoretical ideas of Creative Effort. Lindsay's idea of the art image, for example, in the service of which he argues the distinction between creative and objective vision and the interdependence of senses and intellect, is developed always to the end of the conviction that images in art should applaud life and inspire man to the effort of a full and celebratory life by the constant development of his sensual and intellectual potential. The moral importance of art, which was seen as paramount in Lindsay's fictional works, also constitutes the very essence of his journal and periodical publications and of his courageous, if somewhat uneven, Creative Effort.

CHAPTER FOUR.

VISION.
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I.

Certain of the ideas which Lindsay expressed in Creative Effort were also put forward in the journal Vision, which ran for four issues from May 1923 to February 1924. The bulk of the theoretical and critical articles which appeared in Vision were written by Norman Lindsay and by his eldest son Jack. Vision may be regarded as an abstraction of Creative Effort, as may Madam Life's Lovers, in that it concentrates on certain salient ideas of Creative Effort, principally on those which argue the necessity to man of the experiences of passion and love, and of a gay and courageous outlook on life. (1)

Vision was more an abstraction than a comprehensive expression of Lindsay's aesthetic, hence it is not possible to adequately assess Lindsay's influence on Slessor and FitzGerald by looking to that journal alone. Those ideas in the poetry of Slessor and FitzGerald which bear a relationship to the ideas of Norman Lindsay, derive from a larger association with Lindsay's ideas - from acquaintance with Lindsay himself, and with Creative Effort and other of his works - than from their expression in Vision.

1. This rather broad generalisation serves to point a similarity between Madam Life's Lovers and Vision in relation to Creative Effort, but should not obscure the differences between the two publications.
It is necessary to distinguish between the ideas of Vision and Creative Effort, and to assess the separate bearings of each on the work of Slessor and Fitzgerald, because discussions of Norman Lindsay's influence on Australian poets have tended to rest on Vision rather than on Creative Effort as the source for Lindsay's ideas.

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Although the ideas promoted in Vision had, prior to its publication, largely been expressed by Norman Lindsay, they had also in part been expressed by other writers, notably Hugh McCrae. McCrae's work shows certain elements of what may be termed the "Vision aesthetic" in its use of satyrs and mythological figures such as Pan to portray an amorous and thoroughly life-embracing spirit. These were not however characteristics of McCrae's poetry only, as is shown by a survey of the verse published in the Bulletin and the Lone Hand from the years following 1895. (2) The pre-Vision work of Adrian Lawlor, for instance, who became one of the contributors to Vision, shows that he was bound to have considerable sympathy with a venture such as Vision. In his pre-Vision Bulletin articles Lawlor keenly endorses "that attitude of thirsting for the infinite characteristic of the Elizabethans", likewise Marlowe's Tamburlaine for his "vital and heady

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faculty of wonder, and extraordinary vigour". He consistently stresses the necessity of the imagination to literature and proposes a "conception of life as an affair of pre-eminently wonderful occasions". (3) Robert Hughes indicates scant knowledge of Australian poetry from about 1895 to the 1920's when he remarks:

But Lindsayism did have disastrous effects on Australian poets in the twenties, reducing talents as diverse as McCrae's, O'Dowd's, Gellert's and Slessor's to vitalist bumbling about nymphs and shepherds. (4)

The very fact that Lindsay can be said to have influenced so many poets, (5) as also the fact that Vision did draw writers to its ranks, suggests that the ideas expressed by both Norman Lindsay and Vision may not only have inspired but may also have struck a responsive chord in other writers, by confirming or supporting convictions which, whether explicitly formulated or not, already existed. An aesthetic code is often formulated after its main elements have been practised for a period. Vision did not so much

3. Adrian Lawlor, "The Faculty of Wonder", Bulletin, April 14th, 1921, 2. See also his "Poets' Adjectives", Bulletin, September 23rd, 1920, 2, in which he abhors "dreary literalism, and the realistic method in poetry".
5. Slessor considers that:

The briefest of roll-calls of poets who have been moved by . . . Norman Lindsay's doctrine of poetic values, profoundly or slightly, directly or indirectly, would have to include such names as Hugh McCrae, Rupert Atkinson, Leon Gellert, Jack Lindsay, Robert Fitzgerald, Ronald McCuaig, Kenneth Mackenzie, Douglas Stewart and Francis Webb - all of these have felt its impact in one way or another, or have been quickened, even if unconsciously, by his example, criticism or correspondence. (Kenneth Slessor, "Australian Poetry and Norman Lindsay", Southerly, XX, 1 (1959), 10.)
form any particular outlook from its genesis as express a spirit and outlook that already existed for some years before the "Vision aesthetic" received any definite formulations.

Vision was born principally of Jack Lindsay's enthusiasm for the ideas of Creative Effort: (6) "The overwhelming impetus [for Vision] came from my father Norman, who was the mountain Jehovah with myself as his noisy and unoriginal disciple in the plains." (7) Vision offered Jack a principal outlet for his work at the time, but for Norman it was only one outlet among many, and he was reluctant to become involved in the venture because of the pressure of other commitments. (8) Nonetheless he contributed generously, under the pen-names of Charles Patridge and James Flack (9) as well as under his own name. Between them, he and Jack wrote nearly all Vision's non-fictional articles, as well as a substantial portion of the fiction, and it was only with the fourth and final issue that their names ceased to dominate the list of contributors. Jack also contributed several poems and penned all the forewords. The scope of his contribution is partly indicated by the number of pen-

6. See Life Rarely Tells, Chapters Twenty Two and Twenty Six. "Norman had sent me the proofs of his book, Creative Effort, which I read through for the tenth time . . . ", 174.
7. Jack Lindsay, "Aids to Vision", Southerly, XIV, 3 (1953), 204.
names he adopted: Jean Andrade, Rupert A. Bellay, Peter Meadows and James Cunningham. (10)

Although they derived from Creative Effort, the ideas expressed in Vision tended on the whole to be distorted and rendered either obscure or simplistic by being propounded as abstract maxims with little supporting or elucidating context. For this Jack must be held chiefly responsible. That he did not express Norman Lindsay's ideas more ably is a matter of regret principally because it is to Vision rather than to Creative Effort that discussions of Norman Lindsay's influence on Australian poetry tend to refer. (11)

The appearance of the first issue of Vision in May 1923 (12)

12. Jack Lindsay was the principal editor, while Slessor edited the poetry and Frank Johnson managed the financial and printing affairs. Work was begun on a fifth issue of Vision, and the "skeleton copy" of this issue, which includes a sketch of the proposed list of contents and their contributors, is held in the Fisher Library, the University of Sydney. Jack Lindsay's manuscript foreword for Vision V is in the possession of Mr. Walter Stone of Sydney. I have been unable to gain access to this MS. The spirit of Vision was in some of its aspects revived in London towards the end of the decade, when Jack Lindsay published, as part of his Fanfrolico Press enterprise, the journal called the London Aphrodite, August 1928 to June 1929. He and his co-editor P.R. Stephens declared the aim of the journal to be the affirmation of life and beauty, and carried it on in much the same editorially vigorous spirit as was evident in Vision. Norman Lindsay worked hard in the service of the Fanfrolico Press, providing much graphic material as well as two short stories (see Bibliography). Indicative of both Norman's and Jack's enthusiasms were the titles issued by the Press, among which were the works of Sappho and Petronius, Byron's Manfred, The Antichrist of Nietzsche, Lysistrata and Homer's Hymns to Aphrodite.
rather startled the reading public, and the journal was accorded a mixed reception. Current comments and notices, some of which are reprinted in Vision II, (13) show that opinion ranged then, as now, from enthusiasm to bewilderment and outright hostility.

"J.B.D.", in a Bulletin article discussing a then current vogue for tedious and sentimental lauding of the past, took Vision as a current case in point and objected to its "sentimental adoration" of the geographical and physical human beauty of Greece, and the products of the past. (14) Jack Lindsay issued a trenchant reply, stating clearly the intention of Vision in reviving the gods of the past:

We used the names of the Greek gods only because, since in them is projected for the first and only time an image of Man as divinity, they must remain as symbols for all who continue to seek divinity in Man and not in abstractions.

He further explained:

By Hellenism we mean . . . the element of mental exaltation that accepts Life, as opposed to the Primitivism which expresses either rage or hate for it, as in Dante, or resignation to it, as in Dostoievsky. Hellenism is all that has strength to face terror and questioning; to leap into the abyss; to create a beauty out of the material of earth that surpasses earth; to have courage for the spectacle of Man, and by that courage to seek in him immortal elements of beauty. (15)

14. "J.B.D." [John Bede Dalley], "The Cant of Archaism", Bulletin, May 24th, 1923, 10. "J.B.D." tartly remarked that Greek wine was more likely to be the source of physical illness than the inspiration claimed for it by the Vision writers. Cited in illustration was the "verbal sketch" naming Rose Lindsay, i.e. the short story "Metamorphosis" by Peter Meadows [Jack Lindsay].
John Le Gay Brereton was led to wonder if *Vision* was a joke on Norman’s part. In a letter to A.G. Stephens he wrote:

What did you make of *Vision*? Is N.L. satirizing (apart from the pun) the whole spirit of the paper? See what he says of distortion of the image and look at the picture just above. (16) If a girl with goat’s legs were possibly an image of beauty, she would undoubtedly have appeared in Greek art along with Pan. Lindsay’s goat-girls are mostly quite ugly and apparently purposely so—and some of them how carelessly drawn! Turn to the pictures that balance the open page at the preface. First, apparently, a clean normal maiden talking to a young satyr, who sits and looks a little astonished—he is quaint, not ugly. Opposite, a leering goatish woman with hoofed and hairy legs is uttering her sly mischief, and the young satyr has become repulsive and hideous. Well, the young men seem to me to be busily distorting the image all the time and putting goat’s legs on the woman. They think it startling and new, of course; but what does N.L. think of it? Is he ironical, or is his comment unconscious? (17)

One George S. Beeby went to the length of writing a full-length satire on *Vision*, which he titled *In Quest of Pan*, Being a narrative of the adventures of certain Hyperboreans in Search of the Ultimate Form of Art Expression. (18) Beeby’s satire was on the whole of kindly intent, written in good spirit and showing a thorough grasp of the ideas propounded in *Vision*.

While some more recent readers have taken care to ascertain, from its forewords and articles, at least some of

16. Le Gay Brereton is referring to the Foreword to *Vision I*, which was written not by Norman but by Jack Lindsay.
18. Sydney 1924.
the principles on which Vision operated:

The inspiring principle was a repudiation of the national point of view in literature as false to the continuous and universal tradition of art generally, along with rejection of negative or decadent inclinations, loose form;

others, at a loss to determine the precise aims of either the journal or of Norman Lindsay's works, have cavalierly referred to:

the flamboyance, disputatiousness, and general rattiness of the Lindsays in the 1920's hey-days of Vision and of Norman's Apollonian theorizings. The bush-ballad and bushwhacker era was, like Henry Lawson himself, dying on its feet in the early twenties. There was not only a lack of poetic direction, but a dismal shortage of poets. It was just the time for an anti-national outburst of bohemianism, and the Lindsays were quick to take advantage of it, swarming like ants all over the Sydney intellectual scene.

H.M. Green considered that "The essence of Vision was in fact a flamboyant and youthful extravagance, in living and loving and also in thinking," and generally speaking this is a fair comment on the poems, articles and reprints that appeared, along with copious illustrations,

20. Max Harris, Kenneth Slessor, 7.
in the journal's four numbers. The predominant themes were of love and passion, of adventurous and lively spirits. John Tregenza has rightly pointed to the appeal, to the Vision poets, of ages in which "ill-regulated passion exceeded - ages at least full of vitality and energy". Nearly all the prose fiction published in Vision dealt with human questing and passion, and with encounters

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22. The following list of a selection of the poetry and reprints which appeared in Vision gives some indication of the spirit of the journal and the type of material it encouraged:

- McCrae's "Creative Effort" and "Heigh an' Scrape" (Vision I), "Hunt's Up" and "Song" (Vision II);
- Slessor's "Rubens' Innocents" (Vision I), "The Man of Sentiment" (Vision I and II), "New Magic" and "Thieves' Kitchen" (Vision II), "Adventure Bay", "The Mask" and "Goodnight!" (Vision III), "The Embarkation for Cythera" (Vision IV);
- Jack Lindsay's "Aphrodite" and "Pastoral" (Vision I), "The Centaur", "Beleaguered" and "301 B.C." (Vision II), "Beethoven" and "Porto Bello" (Vision III);
- Also, Vivian Crockett's "Serenade" (Vision I), Michael Fagan's "Don Juan in Heaven" (Vision III), Adrian Lawlor's "The Young Courtesan" and R.D.FitzGerald's "The Dark Rose" (Vision IV).

Among the reprints were Wyatt's "They Flee from Me" (Vision I), Francis Thompson's "Tom O' Bedlam" (Vision II), an excerpt from the Memoirs of Casanova and the pastoral fourth section of Hugh McCrae's "Joan of Arc" (Vision III), which Slessor considers to have been Vision's only serious achievement for poetry ("Spectacles for the Fifties", 217). Vision IV contained a brief excerpt from Havelock Ellis' Little Essays of Love and Virtue.

Translations from Heine and Catullus appeared in Vision I. The first of these translations is signed "L.C.", but the same poem later appeared under the title "From Heine" in the London Aphrodite II, October 1928, '125, with the translation this time ascribed to Kenneth Slessor (for text of poem, see Appendix, xxxix.)

between the sexes. The treatment often tended to fantasy (24) or to part-fantasy. (25) There was also straightforward narration of tales on some theme of passion, (26) and included here are the three stories Norman Lindsay published in Vision. One of these, titled "Shame", relates how a young art student, "shamed" by the laughter of his friends into losing his virginity, finds himself in consequence "transformed . . . with the mad exultation of knowledge". The story concludes:

And yet there is some theory that virtue wears an air of lofty pride, while vice in public hangs a guilty head. Avaunt you who compute maxims for the nursery! Shame is the portion of an unfulfilled desire, while upon those who haste to her wedding, Life, the wanton, bestows her favours of arrogance and pride. (27)

Norman elaborated on the moral importance of sexual experience in his article "The Sex Synonym in Art", (28) which is

24. "Flea" by Les Robinson, Vision III; "The Adventure of Art" by Jean Andrade [Jack Lindsay], Vision I; "Satyricon" by Philip Lindsay, Vision III.

"The Succubus" was Lindsay's first excellent expression of the Rooms and Houses theme of the eventual ruin of a middle-aged man partly as a consequence of his passion for an empty-headed but grasping woman. The protagonist of "The Succubus" is based on Douglas Fry, who was one of Lindsay's acquaintances. See My Mask, 179, and Rose Lindsay's Model Wife, 144-148.

28. Vision I. Clement Semmler, in his book For the Uncanny Man, Melbourne 1963, 37-41, casts doubt on Lindsay's discussion of James Joyce in "The Sex Synonym in Art". Semmler considers it extremely unlikely that Lindsay would have had access to a complete copy of Ulysses in May 1923.
chiefly a discussion of the moral value of the image in art.

The four numbers of Vision clearly conveyed a conviction of the necessity to man of a bold, gay and passionate approach to life. In his article "France, the Abyss", Jack Lindsay concerned himself with distinguishing between those artists who exhibit a "lyric acceptance of life" and convey such an acceptance in "concrete lyric imagery", and those who succumb to self-pity, as did Villon, or to hate, depression and resentment as did Milton, Rousseau, Flaubert and Zola. But Jack offers more a statement of the necessity for a "lyric acceptance of life", rather than any reasoned demonstration of such necessity. Similarly, the article's contention that French "primitivism" in the arts strikes at the "mental stability of life" fails to carry weight because little evidence is adduced in its support. (29)

That concern with the principles of human behaviour which was so evident in Creative Effort is more apparent in the third and fourth numbers of Vision than in the first and second. The forewords to Vision III and IV affirm a Nietzschean concept of life, some of the tenets of which, such as the necessity for freedom from self-deception and self-pity, are ably discussed by Norman in his article "The Shelley Myth", (30) and less ably by Jack in his "Shakespeare

and Milton". (31) Jack also propounded the importance of the concrete image in art in an article on the poetry of Shelley. (32)

That most of the above ideas had received more able expression in Creative Effort is abundantly demonstrated by Jack Lindsay's articles. In "Australian Poetry and Nationalism", Jack expounds on the idea of the mental image of desire as keeping alive the action of desire. After asserting that "Mind is not merely a recording instrument", he continues:

the profounder mind which concentrates on emotion will turn more to the essence of that data [of experience] and remould it to a more passionate structure - poetry, in short . . . . Shakespeare was able to write as he did because of the experiences Life gave him . . . . But if Life gave Shakespeare the bodies of these women, it was Shakespeare who gave to Life Cleopatra and Cressida. Life has any amount of Dark Ladies, and Shakespeare would have found one wherever on the surface of the earth he had been placed; but there could be only one Cleopatra, for she is the defined image of the desire that Shakespeare brought to Life, not that he was given by Life. Because he desired a Cleopatra he kissed a Dark Lady, and because she was not and could not possibly be what he desired, he wrote the play. So Life forces us into the action of living that we may return to the mental action of Life. There is no academic escape from this. We cannot realise emotion in living; all the more reason to go through the experience of life. We will never realise emotion by standing aside. Life sets the stimulus of desire in motion, but cannot satisfy it once desire ceases to be a simple physical and unconscious function and seeks the mental image of itself. (33)

The forewords to *Vision* show a similar lack of logic and poor argument. For example, that to the first issue read:

The object of this Quarterly is primarily to provide an outlet for good poetry, or for any prose that liberates the imagination by gaiety and fantasy. Unless gaiety is added to realism, the pestilence of Zola or the locomotor ataxia of Flaubert must finally attack the mind. We would vindicate the youthfulness of Australia, not by being modern, but by being alive. Physical tiredness, jaded nerves and a complete superficiality are the stigmata of Modernism. We prefer to find youth by responding to the image of beauty, and to vitality of emotion.

Considering the depths of devitalization that the world touched in the war, it is clear that unless consciousness soon takes an upward turn, vitality will sink too low ever to recover.

It is the sense of Vision that is lacking in all Modernism . . . Vision must always have its roots deep in life and sensation; it is the undying and ever youthful body of Imagination.

Vision is the power of mental sight that defines the concrete image, and has nothing to do with "visions". For what imagination creates by its power of defining imagery really exists, and the ability to see beyond the actual thing to its imaginative analogy in a higher condition of sense, is what we understand by Vision.

This foreword truncatedly expresses Lindsay's conviction of the necessity for spirit and imagination, and also his rejection of "Modernism" and its "jaded nerves". (34)

But the explanation of this rejection, in the reference to the

34. Writing in *The Roaring Twenties* of the genesis of Vision and of the attraction which Norman's ideas held for him, Jack places responsibility for his rejection of "the spirit of Modernism", as both he and Norman conceived it, on Norman's shoulders. "In Vision," writes Jack, "we had condemned the Sitwells as well as Van Gogh, anything that N.L. had labelled disintegration or primitivism on the scantiest of investigations." (*The Roaring Twenties*, 126).
war's effect of "devitalising consciousness", and the proposal that, for the recovery of vitality in art, man must again depend on a sense of vision or imagination which has "its roots deep in life and sensation", does not really make clear how vision may revitalise consciousness. Nor did the journal's articles clarify this idea. In what sense it is held that that which "imagination creates by its power of defining imagery" may be said to "really exist", is not explained, and the reference to "the ability to see beyond the actual thing to its imaginative analogy in a higher condition of sense", which derives from Lindsay's idea of the intellectual insight that man can approach by means of the imagination, is too cryptic to be readily understood. This idea was alluded to but no further clarified in the foreword to the next issue. (35)

Jack's forewords condense Norman's ideas to the point of unintelligibility. That to Vision IV reads:

Man is such a feeble creature, that an infinitesimal number of vitalised minds can stabilise consciousness. The proof of this is that they have done so. A handful of poets, artists and musicians - these have been sufficient to define Life on earth, deepen all sensibility, construct the imagery of emotion, without which no

35. Jack wrote:
The Shelleys and Raphaels are considered "spiritual" because they deal with a vague condition of sense. The difference between Rubens and Raphael, Keats and Shelley, is not that the one is sensual and the other spiritual. Rubens has formed in his mind the material of sense concretely and powerfully, and therefore represents Spirit: Raphael has only a feeble grasp on sense and so lacks Spirit.

It is assumed that Raphael has the choice of being Raphael or Rubens and chooses to be Raphael. Nothing could be further from the truth. These summary conclusions will be analysed more fully later. (Foreword to Vision II, 4).
emotion exists, and set a myriad vibrations of Spirit in action. For we know that no thought or feeling can come into being without its expression; and till the creative image of emotion is liberated, emotion must be amorphous. In Form lies the mystery of all Life. What forces strive and awake in your experience of emotion, have been given to Life in the past by those who gave Form to Life.

By offering assertion as proof of assertion ("The proof of this is that they have done so"); by leaving unsubstantiated the claim that the few "vitalised minds" can "stabilise consciousness", and unexplained the manner in which thought or feeling can be held only to come into being by its expression, Jack reduces the intelligibility and hence the impact of the ideas in Creative Effort.

Some attempt was made in the critical articles in Vision, the majority of which were written by Jack and Norman, to argue certain of the assumptions of the forewords, but the articles cover limited ground only. Jack does not seem to have been able at this stage to develop lucidly or make original application of Norman's ideas. He uses the same touchstones as does Norman (Botticelli as opposed to Rubens, Rabelais as opposed to Flaubert and Zola; Plato, Nietzsche and "the Greek"; Shakespeare as opposed to Milton), and rather lamely repeats Norman's views in his articles on French art (36) and on Shelley's poetry. (37) The three articles which Norman himself wrote for Vision (38)

36. "France, the Abyss", Vision II.
37. "Two Dimensional Poetry", Vision III.
"The Shelley Myth", Vision III.
"Our Real Debt to Einstein", Vision IV.
Norman is possibly also the author of the anonymous article, "The Madhouse", Vision II.
sarcely allowed him sufficient space to convey in any depth the scope and flexibility of his aesthetic.

The lyrics Jack published in the first issue of Vision ("Frayer", "Pastoral" and "Aphrodite") celebrate woman's loveliness and effect on man with somewhat more grace than do his prose fictions on this theme. In the two short prose sketches titled "Ideals" and "The Black Sun", Jack briefly asserted that "Venus is a star in the blood" (39) and that "an image of beauty is eternal, a definite and real form". (40) One of his more extensive fictional attempts to portray an instance of man's response "to the image of beauty", (41) a short story titled "The Adventure of Art", (42) fell little short of disaster.

"The Adventure of Art" relates the tale of a man who, in the course of his exploration of a castle, comes across a beautiful woman in her chamber. The woman's husband unexpectedly bursts into the chamber and believes the man to be his wife's lover, for whom he has been preparing a trap. The man is obliged to kill the husband and then, as the husband's aides can be heard approaching, conceal himself, along with the corpse, behind some secret panelling in the chamber wall. He first finds time however to achieve physical consummation with the woman. Once inside the panelling he discovers himself entombed, for there are no exits and the panelling cannot be opened from the inside.

41. Foreword to Vision I.
His reflections while awaiting certain death in the company of a corpse (which is being devoured by rats) point the "moral" of the tale:

I am condemned to darkness . . . and the memory of one whose body is the all of desire, yet fires desire unrealisable, whose long, slant eyes are starry with passion, whose kisses unthrone the gods . . . I am content. (43)

Unhappily, there is neither imaginative force nor narrative vigour to rescue this tale from sheer triviality. Although it attempts to point the theoretical importance to man of woman and passion, the manner of its expression scarcely arouses in the reader any conviction about the idea. The problem which presents itself here is the same as presents itself over some of Norman Lindsay's works: the manner of expressing certain concepts tends to trivialise them. Norman Lindsay's graphic "celebrations of life" are occasionally lamed, as concepts, by his means of expressing them. To suggest, as does Lindsay in his drawings, a love of life and passion, and a gay and bold spirit in confronting these, by the persistent depiction of scenes of bacchic festivity, pirates revelling and exotic eastern women and animals, (44) or, as in Vision, to suggest these by recourse to the repeated depiction of satyrs and the

44. See for example, in Norman Lindsay, Selected Pen Drawings, Sydney 1968, "Fort of Heaven" (Pl.12), "Merchandise" (Pl.16), "Laughter" (Pl.25) and "Challenge to Adultery" (Pl.33). Yet other of these drawings are far better, e.g., "Old Paris" (Pl.1), "The Duke Gives a Party" (Pl.14), and "Madam Life's Succession" (Pl.18). The superior competence of these last named accounts for their not seeming jejune.
presentation of rather boyish concepts of adventure ("A Castle of the Scaligers", "The Adventure of Art", "At the Sign of the Golden Basket"), suggests either a perception that has not progressed far beyond adolescent imaginings, or rather limited imaginative resources for presenting those concepts. Ian Turner has referred to:

the Romance (of satyrs and fauns, buccaneers and bawds, and the lusty giants of pre-Christian mythology) with which the poets and artists of Vision . . . sought to subvert the laconic realism of most Australian writing . . . . The appeal of Vision was to the minority who could escape the constraints of social and moral obligation, and find their fulfilment in a riot of the senses.

Although these comments betray considerable lack of understanding of Vision, it is not difficult to understand how they arose. Vision appealed to Slessor and FitzGerald particularly in its encouragement of the use of concrete imagery in art, and its repudiation of the idea that art had to be "national" or "regional" in reference. "Nationalism" in art was denounced because it was identified with a "parochialism that we correctly felt the need to fight". This issue was discussed most fully in Vision in Jack Lindsay's "Australian Poetry and Nationalism", where nationalist art was rejected as a "betrayal of the great tradition" of world art. Jack attempted to point the means whereby he

46. Life Rarely Tels, 208.
47. Defined as "the Grand Tradition of concrete realistic and beautiful imagery". Ibid.
believed Australia could take her place in this tradition:

How then is the Greek to come to life in Australia? Not of course by merely writing hymns to the Olympians . . . but by a profound response to life, by the expression of lyric gaiety, by a passionate sensuality, by the endless search for the image of beauty, the immortal body of desire that is Aphrodite.

While not necessarily agreeing with the details of Jack's argument, R.D. FitzGerald firmly agreed with the repudiation of the necessity for local reference in poetry. He has written at some length of the revolution he considers Vision to have wrought, both in rejecting the demand for "that grim thing, local colour, which we spoke of as 'gum-tree'", and in stressing the necessity for concrete imagery in art:

I am very proud of having participated in that revolution - which was an unusually effective one - for I believe it did something more worth while than just shooting down, as it did, a few harmless kookaburras. The theory we held - and I am talking about legitimate theory, which relates to method - I still consider we rightly held. It was that nothing must be said vaguely or thought vaguely. That was our real contribution to our period. Poetry must not be expressed in nebulous terms; and if it should choose to concern itself with abstract ideas, well, that was allowable, though we did not really like it; but those ideas must be conveyed in quite solid outline by concrete images. Precision was an ideal. The abstract noun must be avoided, the adjective distrusted; and indeed the concrete image became in large measure the test for poetry itself.

Although Slessor disagreed with many of Vision's

50. Ibid, 17.
tenets, he has affirmed that:

I did agree on one point of dogma. I agreed very earnestly. That was our insistence on the concrete image in art, and our hatred of the abstract image. That has been my attitude to poetry, at least, ever since. (51)

In order to understand the importance that this notion of the concrete image held for Slessor and FitzGerald, a familiarity with some of the prevailing characteristics of Australian poetry of the late 1910's and early 1920's is necessary.

The work of the older poets in these years, the work of those contemporary with Norman rather than with Jack Lindsay, falls outside the relevant limits of consideration here, because it is not to their work that the reader turns in order to find the typical of work of the period. Poets such as William Baylebridge, Bernard O'Dowd, Furnley Maurice and Mary Gilmore were all active through these years, but all had achieved their distinctive modes of expression before the vogue for "Rossetti-Georgian" (52) verse made its


It is to the notion of precise form, of concrete imagery in art, that Jack Lindsay refers when he writes: It is hard to find any European or American analogy for our Vision positions. Emotionally we were close to Dadaism and early Surrealism in our violent rejection of the society that had begotten the 1914-18 war; but aesthetically we took the opposite viewpoint (The Roaring Twenties, 98).

Jack and Norman opposed to what they considered the formlessness of the Dadaists and Surrealists, a conviction of the necessity for certain formalistic standards in art and especially for concrete, or clearly defined and presented imagery.

52. This is not an entirely satisfactory term, but it is difficult to find one which describes precisely the nature of the verse which predominated in Australian journals during these years. The term "Rossetti-Georgian" has been adopted here because Mr. FitzGerald himself suggested it as a description of the verse of the period (In conversation with the writer, August 1970).
appearance in Australia in the 1900's. Australian poetry
came increasingly to exhibit a tendency for this sort of
verse, which was characterised by certain recurrent themes
depicted with considerable vagueness of imagery and
expression, and in a tone both languid and "haunted by
despair".

FitzGerald has described much of the Australian
poetry of the late teens and early twenties as "ineffable". In
discussing the reaction in the early twenties to the
"somewhat fluffy and vaporous style which took hold after
the decline of the ballad period", (53) he firmly states
that the views of those who led the reaction were "centred
... upon the genius and affirmations of that great artist,
Norman Lindsay": (54)

I am glad to say I have not heard for years
that horrible word 'ineffable', which seemed
intended to express so much in the early
twenties. That is what a great deal of
alleged poetry here was like prior to
Norman Lindsay's indirect influence:
ineffable. You can have it, and welcome! (55)

Hilary Lofting rather wearily noted a distinct
similarity of strain in much current verse when, writing in
the Bulletin early in 1920, he grouped together the works
of "David McKee Wright, Roderic Quinn, Frank Morton, Zora
Cross - dozens of them, who write in the aggregate much
more than 75 per cent of modern Australian verse." (56) A

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53. The Elements of Poetry, 19.
54. Ibid, 18.
55. Ibid, 19.
56. Hilary Lofting, in reply to Slessor's article "Dialect";
survey of various journals current at the time shows this statement to be justified.

The Bulletin was the most popular journal of the day in terms of circulation; its companion monthly, the Lone Hand, was somewhat less popular but printed much the same sort of verse as did the Bulletin in the decade 1915-1925. Both these journals yield excellent examples of the type of poetry prevalent during this period, as does the least widely read and probably most critically discriminating journal of the period, A.G. Stephens' Bookfellow.

Because the verse which appeared in the Bulletin was on the whole similar to that which appeared in, and was often written by the same poets as contributed to the Lone Hand, it will avoid unnecessary duplication of material to consider poems from the Lone Hand only. The volume Australian University Verse 1920-22 has also been included for consideration as showing not only the extent of the vogue for "Rossetti-Georgian" verse, but as also showing indications of a verse more buoyant in spirit. This buoyancy is most evident in Jack Lindsay's work, which, though it shares some of the current poetic preoccupations of phrase and tone, also exhibits a tendency to a more assertive and defiant spirit. (57)

The work of Zora Cross appeared frequently in both the Bulletin and the Lone Hand, and her verse, so often "haunted by despair" and characterised by rhetorical

57. Discussed more fully below, 160-161.
exaggeration, well represents that of the period under discussion. The references in her poem "The Choice" to "fleshless skull", "down-drooped eyes" and "soul's voice moaned", are all characteristic of the verse of the period:

The Choice.

Powdering her cheeks, more precious fair than flowers,
With down-drooped eyes like Love-lids screening night,
She smiled, all conscious of her ripened powers,
Into the mirror's light.

Half-dreamily she searched the beauty there -
Grey eyes and mouth and little ringlets black -
When suddenly she cried in quick despair
As two strange selves looked back.

Swiftly she drew a breath of sharp distress
To see a fleshless skull with jawbones bare
Grinning the triumph of its nakedness
At all she thought so fair.

And close beside, a warm, soft infant face,
Round with the cherried rosiness of Youth,
Laughed up to her full-lipped with that young grace
Love's sweetness lends to Truth.

Powdering her cheeks she paused, and looked in fear
At that which was and that which well might be.
Slowly her soul's voice moaned upon her ear:
"Choose one and set me free."

Frank Morton regularly contributed verse in the following strain:

Of Zora Cross' blank verse, Slessor said in an early article published in the Bulletin: "[She] is such a disciplined disciple of 'form' that her blank verse may be read backwards or forwards without any evident difference in either its beat or its blankness". Slessor, "Verse, Ours and Others", Bulletin, December 18th, 1919, 2.
The sad wind moans,
Laden and surfeited with tears and sighs
Of pale drowned men,
Whose souls, a sodden host
Innumerable,
Stretch pallid arms of woe
To the deaf God of tempests and despair. (59)

Another poem which appeared in the Lone Hand on the
same page as the foregoing, indicates in its title, "Passion
and Sin", (60) the prevailing vogue of associating passion
with sin and death, or with sickness and sorrow. (61) Myra
Morris, a frequent contributor of verse in the sentimental,
melodramatic and rather "breathless" strain, managed to
include in a single short poem the following words: storm,
gloom, enchantment, tremulous, feverish fret, shrieking,
ghostly secrets, lurk, mould-infested. (62)

During these years poems of a more cheerful nature
appeared side by side with, but not in nearly the same
quantity as, the "ineffable" verse. (63) Alongside Zora
Cross' "Sonnet", with its "dear lips drooping as in a
reverie", appeared Frank Salt's "The Wind of June", the third
stanza of which reads:

(February 1920), 18.
60. By "J.G.".
61. See for instance "Youthful Ambition" by "S", Lone Hand,
n.s. X, 8 (August 1920), 18.
62. Myra Morris, "Ti-Tree on the Cliff", Lone Hand, n.s. X,
3 (March 1920), 16. See also her "Wandering", Lone Hand,
n.s. X, 12 (December 1920), 36.
63. See for instance "The Elf" by "Syd. C.", Lone Hand, n.s.
X, 12 (December 1920), 36, and also ballads in the style
of "Banjo" Paterson, such as "When the Shearing's
Finished" by "J.S.N.", Lone Hand, n.s. X, 9 (September
1920), 40.
Blow up, blow up, grey winds of June!
Laugh loud the winter's cold desire!
There's heartsome kindness in the tune
When heard beside a good log fire.  (64)

Such poems as depicted a more sturdy, optimistic view
of life did so mainly by means of statement (as in the above),
rather than by means of images. "The Soul of Man" by "J.W." reads:

Give me the man who is cheerful
When Fortune's black frowns fall
In big clouds, thick and fearful,
Like a mantle over all.

My heart is warm for the joker
Who bears with his fate alone;
For the parson, priest or stoker,
Who fight for the lives they own.  (65)

This sort of verse tended on the whole to be rather
earnestly moralising. (66) The vigour evident in the poems
of Slessor and FitzGerald, and in the verse published in
Vision, is very different, in its celebration of life
through rich imagery, to the somewhat earnest and
platitudinous cast of mind of the above poets.

Not as popular as either the Lone Hand or Bulletin,
but still something of a force in the period under
discussion, was the Bookfellow. Much of the verse which
appeared in its pages is well represented by the following
two poems, with their use of apostrophe and archaism, and
their association of love with pain and death:

64. Lone Hand, n.s. IX, 6 (June 1919), 36.
65. Lone Hand, n.s. X, 2 (February 1920), 18.
66. Such as "Compensation", by Edward Thomson. See
Appendix, viii.
To the Moon.

Thou haply seest not those who gaze on thee
As thou dost coldly through thy heaven glide
O white Enchantress! to what melody
We know not who on this dumb earth abide.
Beyond us thou art in the starry air,
Like an immortal in a finer sphere
Aye moving night by night so unaware
Of all the changes and the chances here.

O Moon! so move the dead maybe, bestarred
In other airs fantastically still,
Whose destiny time shall no more retard
Now they life's higher dictates may fulfil,
As haply they each did before they knew
The pain of earth and its enchantment too.

(67)

Love Unreturned.

I shall have loved you though I lose you;
take
Pity upon me, then, who die for you -
Pity upon me, for my fond love's sake,
Which, though it was untimely, is so true.
Think of me now as dead, though my lips speak;
Think of me now as dead, though my eye burns;
Think of me now as dead, though my heart break
Before it ceases and to dust returns.
And if, when I am dead, you do recall
My love, my foolish love, remember this:
That even in my pain your beauty's thrall
To me was like a dream of heavenly bliss.
Ah! though I lose you, you will know that I
Did only live for you, for you did die.

(68)

The work of Shaw Neilson also appeared in the pages of Bookfellow, and though Neilson's poetry is on the whole sprightlier than that of several of the other contributors, (69) he too inclines toward the sombre or pathetic phrase. In

67. Anon., Bookfellow, VI, 8 (September 15th, 1921), 143.
68. Ibid.
69. See for instance Neilson's "April Weather", Bookfellow, V, 10 (April 15th, 1920), 96 (see Appendix, ix).
"The Parting Hour" he refers to "the pitiless meal of Death", (70) and in the ballad "Dolly's Offering", after depicting at length a gracious woman, closes with the punch line, "But Dolly is lame and blind". (71)

The Bookfellow indirectly passed its own comment on much of the verse of the period in an article on Housman which expressed extreme weariness with Housman's "affection to the grave". The article began:

Montaigne in his essays remarks: "Notre grand et glorieux chef-d'oeuvre c'est vivre a propos" - which is to say that humanity's great and glorious job is living up to the job. Alfred Housman in his verses is obsessed with the fear of lying down. Death does bother him so. Half his poetry paraphrases John Wesley's hymn:

Hark! from the tombs a doleful sound!
Mine ears have heard the cry -
Ye living men, come view the ground
Where ye must shortly lie.

There is no philosophical objection to a visitor's view; but it is not wise to brood over burial-grounds. This is to absorb mental poisons paralysing life. And the motive of life is living.

Housman lingers over death like an angel on a tombstone. Much of his work may be called a hearse of verse . . . .

A writer in the Triad in 1925 observed that "We produce more sentimental rhymsters to the acre than any other country, but, with the exception of Hugh McCrae, have we produced a poet?", (73) and the Bulletin reviewer of a

70. See Appendix, x.
73. "Max Maxwell" in the Triad, X, 6 (April 1st, 1925), 11.
more specialized collection of verse, *Australian University Verse 1920-22*, indicated the similarity in theme, tone and outlook of much of the verse of the period when he observed of the contributors to the volume that "Every writer covers well-trodden ground, and the reader might possibly prefer a little more crudity with a little more freshness". (74)

Ian Maxwell's poems in the volume make use of the familiar phrases, "kisses weary", "dim paths", "aching splendour", "ghastly moon", and "gold dust that drifts like incense to the pallid sky". (75) The *Bulletin* reviewer understandably commented that Maxwell's "note can hardly be said to be distinctive". Despite the fact that the themes of the poems which Jack Lindsay contributed to the volume "had already worked hard in the service of several poets", (76) such as the idea in "Dismissal" of the poet seeking in every place for his lady, yet even in that poem with its well-tried phrases ("all the clinging joy and sorrow of you", "Your eyes will haunt me still ... Your sorrow murmur in the low wind's cry"), it is noticeable that there is less the usual tendency to dwell on love's sorrow than on its delight. The poet in "Dismissal" remembers and celebrates more the "joy" than the "sorrow" associated with his lady. (77)

What is immediately noticeable in the poetry Jack published in *Australian University Verse* is its vigour and

74. Anon. review in the *Bulletin*, December 14th, 1922, 2.
75. For Maxwell's poems, and for others in similar vein, such as Catherine McLaurin's "The Waxen Image", see Appendix B.
76. Anon. review in the *Bulletin*, December 14th, 1922, 2.
77. See Appendix, xviii.
enthusiasm. He is bolder in expression than are the other contributors ("We'll bury in hatred deep each flaming lust"), and his distinctive tone of a lust for life and passionate activity is seen in the poem "Of Old", with its strong affirmation of the passionate adventurer:

O brothers of time past away
You set the whole wide world aflame
In your divine exultant day
Just for one soft-breathed name.

And stormed great cities in the night
And slew the people sleeping there,
To find a gem in her delight
To put into her hair . . .

Yet shall I join your great host too,
And coin my life in gleaming gold
And bring it to some queen, as you,
And die ere I grow old.  (79)

At least some poets in the early twenties tended away from the prevailing themes and modes of the time. (80) The above theme of passion, and of adventure through passion, was to be a distinctive note of the poems published in Vision.

* * * * * * *

III.

Slessor and FitzGerald regarded Vision primarily as a publishing outlet, although they did endorse certain

78. "Sonnet". See Appendix, xix.
79. See Appendix, xx.
of its ideas, especially those concerning concrete imagery and the irrelevance to art of local reference.

Vision can hardly be said to have "influenced" the work of these poets on these matters because the pre-Vision work of both writers shows no particular tendency either to local reference or abstract imagery.

Vision's emphasis on the importance of the female image in art does however seem to have had some effect on their work. With FitzGerald, there is evident an attempt at the time of Vision to incorporate in his work a female image, and with Slessor there is some evidence of an increasing organisational power, centring itself on the notion of love.

As the work of both poets since Vision shows analogies with other of Lindsay's insistences, such as the insistence on effort, on self-reliance, self-fulfilment and individual responsibility, and as these are emphases little high-lighted by Vision, the implication is that the relationship of the ideas in their work to those of Norman Lindsay stems in the long run from a larger association with Lindsay's ideas than from Vision.

In order that a clear distinction may be made between the relationship of the ideas of Vision and of Norman Lindsay to the work of Slessor and FitzGerald, it is pertinent to consider the pre-Vision and Vision work of these poets. Such a study shows that both poets were already writing in a distinctive mode before the appearance of Vision, and that their experiences with Vision produced little discernible change in their work.
It has been suggested that "the few poems Slessor has preserved from the Vision era" show "a Lindsayan lustiness and decorative excess where image jostles image and texture is crusted with over-richness". (81) Leaving aside the question of "over-richness" and "decorative excess", it would be more correct to say that a rich, lush imagery (82) was a characteristic of Slessor's poetry prior to his association with either Vision or Norman Lindsay. The following is an extract from a poem by Slessor which appeared in the Bulletin in 1920:

"Haroun Alraschid" - words of potent thrall:
Singing of Eastern moonshine, and the spark
Of rosy lanterns on the Sultan's wall,
Where looms the purple palace, shadowed stark
Against the spinning stars and silver-grey
Of lustrous minarets, where moon-fires play
About each tapered ball. (83)

Nor was this "lushness" peculiar to Slessor. Poems in the Australian University Verse collection also show frequent use of imagery appealing strongly to the senses. For instance, Raymond McGrath's "Dreams of the Orient" begins:

A little wizened room, grown dim and brown,
The musty smell of old floretted walls,
Gray velvet moths asleep on dusty shelves,
A green-gold flame that starts as pained, and falls.

(84)

81. Judith Wright, Preoccupations in Australian Poetry, 145.
82. In the sense of a concern with precious fabrics and substances, warm and brilliant colouring, and a sense of the exotic. See poem below.
84. See Appendix, xliv.
Esther Levy's "The Antique Shop" reads:

On crimson robe, gold-finned, forever sprawls
The dragon of Cathay. In ivory
And gauze, all finely wrought as filigree,
A fan lies couched upon flower-powdered shawls. (85)

Early poems of Slessor's which begin with lush, rich
description may conclude with a vigorous flourish that
expresses good-humoured defiance:

All emerald writhes the uncharted Pacific;
where, under the moon,
Beachward it beats to the furze on the dune,
Bursting to foam crust and breaking in spin-drift rain ...

There's never an island uncharted, whose loveliness
mariners seek,
But the seagull can reach in a week;
For Nature built shrines ere she fashioned your
jellyfish sire,
And always the sun shall rise splendidly over your
funeral pyre! (86)

Slessor's familiar theme of adventure in foreign and
exotic lands (such as in "Marco Polo" or "To the Poetry of
Hugh McCrae"), was very early expressed in his poem "The
Buccaneers", which is characterised by optimism and vitality
(and which also shows that even at this early stage Slessor is most
confident, as protagonist or poet, when a poet of the seas):

The sun swam down, and the darkness fell,
All olive it dripped in the skies:
And the ferry-light fires in the glinting swell
Were like deep-sea fishes' eyes.
But Sim cried: "Ho, for the Spanish Main!
I smell red gold on galleons twain -
Ho, ho for the pirates' prize!" (87)

85. See Appendix, xlvi.
86. "The Uncharted", Bulletin, August 7th, 1919, 3. See
Appendix, xxxix.
See Appendix, xxx.
Slessor's poems of this period show little inclination towards the "Rossetti-Georgian" mode, and the following poem may well be his comment on much of the verse of the time:

**SOME NEW POETS.**

Of sex they prate, these quaint homunculi,  
And mope on coffin-worms, or sweat amain  
Much curious jargon - as a madman's brain  
Festers with images, he knows not why -  
On reechy love. They like to horrify.  
The carefree folk of earth, and sometimes design  
To fright small babes with maggots from the drain,  
Call God a cretin and the world a sty.

On with the danse macabre! The giant dead  
Shine hugely through these vapourings, and soon  
All glamour of corruption shall have fled,  
As men remember mountains, and the moon,  
Lovers in gardens, children quiet in bed,  
And stars burnt stainless in a black lagoon.  

Slessor has always been more inclined than has FitzGerald to celebrate female beauty by depicting specific images of it, by sketching in verse the image of a young girl or woman. The difference discernible in this respect in Slessor's early poems from the work of his contemporaries, is apparent in much the same way as it was in the work of Jack Lindsay. Slessor is not languid but spirited in tone and light of touch:

Simone in the doorway, as calm and unstirred  
As the lustre that burns on the silk of her hose,  
Close-hatted, snug-coated, all muffled and furred  
To the little pink tip of a velvet nose.

Vision was responsible neither for Slessor's "lush" imagery nor for that zest for life which found its early poetic expression in a gay love of adventure. Further, the publication of "Nuremberg" fifteen months prior to the appearance of Vision shows that Slessor was concerned with ideas on the function of art and of the artist prior to his involvement with Vision. What Slessor's experience with Vision seems particularly to have given him is a means of organising his poems around a central image, the image of beauty. The discernible characteristic of the poems Slessor published in Vision is an emphasis on beauty, passion or love. In "The Mask" (originally dedicated to Jack Lindsay), it is the passion of friendship, rather than that of man for woman, which leads to an intense communication, achieved in surroundings of ecstatic revelry. The achievement of such communication provides the basis for the protagonist's full-hearted affirmation:

But suddenly out of the clang and tumult
I saw thy mask descend,
And knew thy face revealed for a moment,
And knew thy speech, my friend!

90. In Art in Australia, February 1st, 1922, 14.
91. See Appendix C for texts of such Vision poems as are not readily available in Poems.
92. For instance, "New Magic" (Vision II) celebrates the magic of women's eyes; "Good-night!" (Vision III) and "Thieves' Kitchen" (Vision II) both suggest amorous wenches; "January 18, 1922" and "Thief of the Moon" (Vision I) express a desire for a beauty and delight in a more general way. "Rubens' Innocents" (Vision I) is discussed over.
93. See dedication in Thief of the Moon; the dedication was dropped in later printings of the poem. The poem appeared in Vision III. See Appendix, xli.
And words we cried that were not mortal,
Whilst burning in eyes that were not eyes,
There shone the star that shines not ever
In earth's dark skies —

O traveller, greeting! O merry meeting!
O strange disguise!

Perhaps the most interesting of the poems Slessor published in Vision is "The Embarkation for Cythera". Its presentation of garden, lake and a sweeping rush of amorously active figures, strongly recalls Norman Lindsay's etchings. The poem not only pictorially but thematically resembles the etchings; its thematic centre is passion, concerning man's ascent from the garden of dalliance into the vessel of love. This poem also suggests the organising power which Slessor was afforded by the concept of passion as central to life, for the poem is not simply an accumulation of images, riches on riches, as had previously been Slessor's tendency; rather do its images all work toward the depiction of the central theme:

"O, mount thee, Lady, mount!" In the warm lake
There foam a thousand water-girls, blown deep
With rings of silver and bubbles like racing moons —
"O, mount!" — their mouths they hoop, their limbs they shake,
The powdered Marquis on the poop leans out,
Misty with lace, and showers dark rubies down . . .

94. Vision IV, 10.
95. The poem is similar in this to "Realities"; see below. In his survey "Australian Literature 1944", H.M. Green remarked on the omission from Slessor's One Hundred Poems of "The Embarkation for Cythera", and queried, "was it because he [Slessor] thought this poem read too like a translation of a Norman Lindsay picture?" (H.M. Green, "Australian Literature 1944", Southerly, VI, 1 (1945), 21).
96. See for instance "New Magic" and "Good-night!"
Now the Infanta's maidens take the night
With cloaks and lanterns - now to a buried flute
Great lemas dance, and that little dark-lashed jade
With Cardinals' kisses on her mouth, takes flight
By lawns and bending orange-boughs, to climb
Warm-tousled on board - "O, mount thee, Lady, mount!" . . .

"O, mount thee, mount thee!" - Ladies and Gallants haste,
Fans clap and sword-knots dance, the Court sweeps down,
The Countess hurries with grass in her powdered hair,
The Duchess with a King's arm round her waist -
And, ah! thou little serving-wench, embark -
Thy mouth is red - 'tis passage enough to Cythera!

In "The Man of Sentiment", which is in part a
dramatisation of a need for passionate love and where once
again Lindsay's graphic art springs to mind in Slessor's
depiction of a garden: (97)

Lawrence: "Nay, 'tis no Devil's walk.
It leads to what? Some leaden Child with lips
Blown open, spouting fountain-dew on birds
That drowsily dive the pool-some secret lawn
Tight locked away in mazes, and trod by none
Save one old crazy Gardener - ",

the persistent theme is again of an aspiration centred on
love, passion or beauty. Thus far do Slessor's poems
accord with the Vision ideas, which urged:

a profound response to life . . . the expression
of lyric gaiety . . . a passionate sensuality . . .
the endless search for the image of beauty, the
immortal body of desire that is Aphrodite. (98)

97. Published in Vision I and II.
John Tregenza, in his Australian Little Magazines, 16,
also noted the Lindsay-type garden of this poem.
Tregenza suggests that the artist's tendency to find
subject matter in past ages which appeal to the
imagination, is prompted by both the fantasy element and
a disbelief in the value of local reference in art. He
points as illustration to "The Man of Sentiment", also
to McCrae's Du Poissey Anecdotes (15).
The poems that Slessor published immediately prior to, or at the same time as Vision, show that Vision may have confirmed in him, rather than developed, certain tendencies. "Nuremberg" and "Pan at Lane Cove" both appeared in Art in Australia, in February and May 1922 respectively; (99) "Incongruity" and "Taoist" in the same journal in February 1923. These poems demonstrate that certain of the ideas in which Slessor shows a relationship to Norman Lindsay were his prior to his association with Vision.

Slessor has himself made clear the distinction between Norman Lindsay and Vision. He has pointed out that Vision published work of a kind that he was already writing and continued to write, (100) and that Vision was to him principally a means of publication:

The truth is that, whatever Vision's philosophic, polemic or didactic aims were (what Jack Lindsay would call "the Vision trend"), they were bestowed by Jack Lindsay and Norman Lindsay, but mostly by Jack himself... myself and others simply contributed work which we would just as readily have contributed to any other periodical of discrimination which was prepared to publish them. (101)

Norman Lindsay's view accords with this:

Vision, of course, did not influence or develop Ken Slessor's poetry. It merely gave him an opportunity to have it printed in a fairly dignified format. Its later development into the burgeoning of such unique poems as "Five Bells" and "Captain Dobbin" was the effect

99. Discussed below.
100. "Spectacles for the Fifties", 216.
of a matured outlook on life and an assured command over poetic idiom and imagery. No doubt he got a good deal of stimulus out of the incessant discussions with Jack on the whole aesthetic of poetry, if I am to trust my memory of such reunions in my Springwood studio.

Slessor has also made clear that Vision's main conceptual appeal to him was in its "insistence on the concrete image in art", and that he never agreed with a lot of its "thundering pronouncements". He repudiates the notion of a "Vision school", as also the notion that either he or FitzGerald "were sucked generally into the strong undertow" of what Jack Lindsay calls "the Vision trend". But to the stimulus of Norman Lindsay's ideas he has paid ample tribute.

As Slessor did not read Creative Effort until the late 1930's, Norman Lindsay's stimulus must have reached him by other means, such as by personal

102. "Reflections on Vision", 268. See also The Roaring Twenties, where Jack Lindsay concedes of Slessor that: "Though he did not at any time share our fanatical universe, in his own way he drew a certain sustenance from our ideas and enthusiasms", 84.
104. In conversation with the writer, June 1970. See also "Spectacles for the Fifties".
106. Especially in his address "Australian Poetry and Norman Lindsay"; see over, 175-176.
acquaintance, (108) and familiarity with other of Lindsay's works. (109) The poems Slessor has dedicated both directly and indirectly to Lindsay's etchings and paintings (110) suggest that these may have been his principal stimuli. (111) The relationship of Slessor's ideas to those of Norman Lindsay is discussed in the following chapter.

The most striking feature of the two poems which FitzGerald published in Vision is their attempt to convey an image of woman. FitzGerald's Vision poems are two of the very few instances, in relation to his total poetic output to date, in which he has attempted any specific description of women.

Although FitzGerald has published a few lyrics (mainly before 1930) celebrating human love, such as "Song", "The Cup", "Blown Smoke" and "Tradition", he rarely attempts in his poetry to actually describe a woman, being more concerned with the power of women or with speculation on the nature of love than with descriptions of specific women. Although in "Release" the theme is of

108. Slessor was introduced to Norman Lindsay by Jack Lindsay in the early twenties. In a letter to the writer, n.d. but March 17th, 1971, Jack wrote, "I introduced Ken to Norman . . . . Slessor's acquaintance with NL and his ideas was through me and my taking him up to Springwood."

109. For instance, the epigraph to Slessor's poem, "Burying Friends", is taken from Lindsay's short story "The Succubus".

110. "Realities", "Nuremberg", "Earth-Visitors".

111. Slessor has pointed out that the reverse was also the case; that the ideas for some of Lindsay's graphic works came from his (Slessor's) poems. "Thieves' Kitchen" and "Cuckooz Contrey" were cited as examples. (In conversation with the writer, June 1970).
the power exerted over the protagonist by the portrait of
a woman, the portrait itself is not described. In
"Economy" and "Her Hands" the woman is depicted only by
an action, by reference to "her fingers at my heart" (112)
and "she deigns to give ... a careless kiss". (113) The
conviction that that which endures is the image of female
beauty is expressed in the abstract in "Side Street", and
beauty and passion are likewise celebrated in "Rewards",
in which it is stated to be best to "ride out with some
frenzied Lancelot"

upon an exploit perilous as vain,
and in deep woods do battle with the dark
of passion's madness,

and in which the poet proposes:

But better surely that a note should stir
the pulse of consciousness, the action of breath,
rather than beauty have no life, no death -
a mote in a moonbeam, only quieter! (114)

On the whole, FitzGerald simply does not describe
women in his poems. Even in "The Hidden Bole", the
central image of Pavlova is in the nature of an abstraction,
is of Pavlova's feet "dazzling death". In the Vision poem
"The Dark Rose" (115) there is also a dancer who, although
described with the utmost brevity, is nonetheless not
described in the abstract: "Philanion, who danced before

112. R.D. FitzGerald, "Her Hands" in Forty Years' Poems,
Sydney 1966, 25. All references are to this edition.
the king". FitzGerald's other non-abstract depiction, in Vision, of a woman ("And lo, the sunlight on your breast agleam!"), (116) suggests his wisdom in not persevering with specific images of women's beauty.

That FitzGerald has tended always to be more concerned with the nature of beauty than with its visual representation is evident from poems he published prior to Vision. "Beauty" is an instance:

Beauty - like a leaf
   Perfect, airy, fine,
   Sweet beyond belief
   And as mad as wine -

Beauty on a day
   Held her cup to me,
   Then she danced away -
   Vanished utterly.

"Whither have you flown?"
   Cries my thirsty grief:
"Whither are you blown
"Fairy fallen leaf?"

"Swift hours race and chime;
"Life is turned to haste;
"Has old hurrying Time
"Torn and laid you waste?"

Further, FitzGerald's celebration of energy and aspiration, which Vision so stressed, was also a characteristic of his earliest work, that written prior to Vision. In "Adventure", (118) "Inland" (119) and "Courage" (120) he writes of the zest for adventure and

118. Hermes, XXVI, 3 (November 1920), 231.
of aspiration and courage; he expresses confidence in a benevolent order of affairs and in the worth of human life and endeavour in "Sudden Death", (121) as well as proposing man's life as constituting part of a continuously developing energy in "Sudden Death", "Rain" (122) and "When You Are Sitting". (123) The stress on vigour and effort was apparent in his earliest work, (124) and has remained central to it. In this he has been supported by Norman Lindsay, as shall be discussed.

FitzGerald's association with Vision was most important in that it led him to close acquaintance with the ideas of Norman Lindsay, whom he has particularly acknowledged for "his attitude to art as a conscious exercise of effort. The emphasis is on the word 'conscious'

. . . . The necessity for the artist to consciously produce his work". (125) In 1955 FitzGerald penned the following tribute to Lindsay:

I own the whole attitude to the task derived - thence anything won through effort. (126)

The relationship of the ideas of Norman Lindsay to the work of both Slessor and FitzGerald embraces concepts which go beyond, although they are partially contained in, Vision.

121. Bulletin, November 2nd, 1922, 47.
123. Hermes, XXVIII, 2 (August 122), 100.
124. See Appendix D for texts of the poems cited in footnotes 118-123.
CHAPTER FIVE.

KENNETH SLESSOR.
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Kenneth Slessor has readily acknowledged indebtedness to Norman Lindsay. In an address delivered in 1954 he stated:

It is a paradox, indeed, but none the less a fact that Norman Lindsay has exercised more influence and produced more effect on numbers of this country's poets than any other single individual in Australia's history. . . . My own debt to Norman Lindsay's perpetual powerhouse of stimulation and suggestion is obvious.

Slessor indicates quite clearly the areas of his allegiance to Lindsay. He refers the reader to Creative Effort as the most comprehensive source for Lindsay's ideas: "Lindsay's doctrine of art, and especially his doctrine of poetry . . . will be found particularly, set forth with gnomic energy and precision, in Creative Effort", and endorses several of the ideas expressed.

1. Kenneth Slessor, "Australian Poetry and Norman Lindsay", Southerly, XX, 1 (1959), 10. This is a revised and condensed form of a Commonwealth Literary Fund lecture delivered in 1954 and first published in Southerly, XVI, 2 (1955), 62-72. The major differences between the two texts are the omission in the 1959 text of two pages of biographical matter on Norman Lindsay, and of two pages of discussion relating to excerpts from Creative Effort and Vision in illustration of the idea of the necessity for concrete imagery in art (see 1955 text, 70-71).

therein. (3) But his principal stress lies on the nature and function of art as essentially a celebration of life:

For all that count are the recognition, expression and celebration of the beauty and passion of living, and these are so tremendously important for the salvation of Man's soul (4) (not to be confused with Man's earthly mechanism) that practically every other form of human activity is, by comparison, negligible or secondary. You may agree with this dogma or you may disagree, but it would be mere shameful prejudice or ignorance or both not to acknowledge that Norman Lindsay has never wavered, in anything he has drawn or said or written, from the integrity of his belief in it.

The full scope and nature of Slessor's celebration of life in his work has been little acknowledged. The relationship of ideas in Slessor's work to those of Norman Lindsay has been variously considered as manifesting

3. It should be noted that Slessor's concern with poetic theory was stimulated by, but did not originate with, his association with either Norman Lindsay or Vision. Slessor's early articles in the Bulletin show that poetry was for him always of particular importance.

See Kenneth Slessor, "Verse, Ours and Others", Bulletin, December 18th, 1919, 2. This is a general defence of the English "Georgian Poetry" school, written in response to an earlier article by Francis Brien, Bulletin, November 27th, 1919, 2.

See also Slessor's "Dialect", Bulletin, January 8th, 1920, 2, on the propriety and success of "conversation and talk" in poetry, and, apropos the correspondence aroused by this article, a further untitled article in which Slessor draws a distinction between poetry and verse: Bulletin, February 19th, 1920, 28.

Slessor also wrote on Arthur Waley and Chinese poetry in the Triad: see "A Dwarf Rubaiyat", Triad, V, 1 (October 1919), 8-9.

4. This is to be understood in the light of an earlier statement by Slessor: "Yet surely . . . the artist's function is not to save men's souls but to make them worth saving". "Spectacles for the Fifties", 219.

5. "Australian Poetry and Norman Lindsay", 1959 text, 16.
itself in verse that is frantically gay, romantic, feverish, desperate and unintellectual. Lindsay's "influence" is, almost without exception, considered as malign, and as operative chiefly in Slessor's earlier works.

Judith Wright writes that "the ripples of Vision's influence, or rather of the influence of the ideas of Norman Lindsay, continue far beyond the death of the journal itself", and goes on to characterise this influence as:

An emphasis on action rather than intellect, on the physical rather than the emotional, a rejection of subtleties either of thought or feeling, a tendency towards statement rather than suggestion, a certain lushness of imagery and perception. (6)

Charles Higham, rather patronisingly remarking that "In other poems, there is a striving to mirror Norman Lindsay's pneumatic nude paintings, and even to risk the prophetic utterance", (7) considerably extends the above catalogue, then goes on to detect a change of emphasis at about the time of "Music" ("a kind of package of sweets and fancies to be jostled, to drown out fear"): (8)

Then, just when it seemed that its own impetus would exhaust this poetry, Slessor found an image which made him turn from Lindsay delicacies, from Darlinghurst nights and the dryads. He became obsessed with the sea. (9)

The "Lindsay delicacies", extensively discussed by Higham, are in essence seen as exhibiting themselves in Slessor's work as "an aloof and dilettanteish preoccupation with

6. Wright, Preoccupations in Australian Poetry, 144.
8. Ibid.
pretty nothings in an art bloodless but spry". (10) "The rich and luscious illustrative vein of the early poems, which seems immediately translatable into Lindsayan paintings," states Judith Wright, "was no longer capable of expressing what he had to say. About 1927, he turned his attention from decoration to technical experiment and accomplishment". (11)

Slessor's relationship to Lindsay is nowhere near fully or properly represented in these accounts. Lindsay's "influence" on Slessor's work is not detrimental, either wholly or in part, nor is it evident only in the early works. It is neither adequate nor just to point to Slessor's early works as exhibiting, pace Norman Lindsay, "romantic grotesquerie" (12) and an "air of frenzy". (13) These estimations rest on a superficial and careless reading of Slessor's work, and on a failure to appreciate the true nature of the allegiance Slessor's ideas bear to those of Norman Lindsay.

The least acknowledged and possibly most important aspect in which Slessor's ideas bear a relationship to those

11. Wright, Preoccupations in Australian Poetry, 147. See also Tom Inglis Moore: "The Earth-Visitors stage ... is the period dominated by Norman Lindsay and Hugh McCrae, the heyday of that brief journal Vision" ("Kenneth Slessor" in A.K. Thomson (ed.), Critical Essays on Kenneth Slessor, 117); and H.M. Green, who suggests that the influence of Lindsay and McCrae on Slessor's work is evident until 1926, and that Slessor's poetry from 1927-1932 is influenced by T.S.Eliot and the moderns (A History of Australian Literature, II, 857).
of Lindsay is in matters of spirit. His work has been said to manifest an emptiness that underlies [its] feverish sensuosities, a lack of inner solidity, a perception of the abyss that increases gradually into terror. (14)

His poems are consistently considered "pessimistic", "inhuman" and "godless", and his philosophy that of "negation, of transience and futility". (15) These convictions both overlook and obscure those very considerable themes in Slessor's work which were also themes stressed by Norman Lindsay: a concern with man's destiny and the quality of his life, the adoption of a fundamentally positive view of his activity, and a conviction of the need for courage and persistent effort in life and work.

A concern with man's destiny, exhibiting itself as an awareness of the brevity of life and an insistence that he live life to the full, is expressed in Slessor's much-criticised "Thieves' Kitchen", (16) which is not merely a "jaunty evocation of an orgy", (17) nor simply a

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16. This poem directly inspired Lindsay's painting of the same name (conveyed to the writer in conversation with Kenneth Slessor, June 1970), although it has been held to be "a poem which describes directly a picture of the same name painted by Norman Lindsay" (A.K. Thomson [ed.], Critical Essays on Kenneth Slessor, 11).
celebration "of the physical without reference to either mind or heart", (18) but a fundamentally serious poem conveying an awareness of the pressure of time. It has been criticised for its "romantic grotesqueness", (19) yet the closing image of the carrion crows flapping around Tyburn is perfectly apt, is very much part of the romantic spirit which is half in love with death, conscious of images of the charnel house:

yea, feast and sport
Ye Cyprian maids - lie with great, drunken rogues,
Jump by the fire - soon, soon your flesh must crawl
And Tyburn flap with birds, long-necked and swart!  
(20)

The poem has been considered a performance of "desperate inconsequence", (21) yet the desperate note is likewise wholly appropriate, for Tyburn is outside and the gaiety must in consequence be forced; "flesh, which decays, must be indulged while it, and time, are ripe". (22) Man's desire is to make the most of the time given him, to live life to the full, and this is a central preoccupation in the works of both Lindsay and Slessor. In "To the Poetry of Hugh McCrae", Slessor refers to "We, pale Crusoes in the moment's tomb", with the stress less on moment than on tomb, less on being creatures of time than on failing to make much of time, to fill it to fulness. "Out of

18. Wright, Preoccupations in Australian Poetry, 147.
20. Poems, Sydney 1957, 29. All references and citations are from this edition.
Time" also conveys the desire to be with the flood and achieve full realisation of each moment: "The moment's world, it was; and I was part", while in "Lesbia's Daughter" Slessor wrote:

Look for no lovers on that later scene,
Let it avail you Are, who shall have Been,
Burnt utterly the stick you had to burn,
Lived once, loved well, gave thanks, and won't return.

"Thieves' Kitchen" is not the only poem of Slessor's to have been considered lacking in intellectual purpose. "There is his [Slessor's] constant emphasis - magnified in his longer poems - upon emotion as opposed to intellectuality", writes Clement Semmler. (23) The "paraphrasable content is trivial and banal", writes Chris Wallace-Crabbe of "Realities", (24) while referring generally to "that sense of intellectual purpose which we miss altogether in the young Slessor, who wants no more than to evoke the glamour for its own sake". (25)

A lack of intellectual purpose, a leaning toward glamour for its own sake: these are but two of the reiterated criticisms of Slessor's work, for which shortcomings Norman Lindsay is generally held responsible. Writing of Slessor and FitzGerald, Vincent Buckley says:

Yet there was a serpent in the garden of these men's literary beginnings; it was the serpent of vitalism as that creed was preached by the Lindsay group. Hugh

25. Ibid, 344.
McCrae and the Lindsays influenced their view of what romance and adventure are ... they kept importing pans and satyrs, images of Diana and impossibly-breasted women, to enliven an Australian landscape which became transmuted by the unfamiliar contact. (26)

Vitalism, which submits man "to the process of a sensuous romanticizing",

may be defined, very crudely, as the view which considers the primitive forces of life, amoral and irresistible, more important than the pattern of moral and aesthetic discrimination by which the adult human being lives. More than that; vitalism is anti-tragic, anti-spiritual, and ultimately anti-human. (27)

To this dire influence Slessor is consistently considered to have succumbed in his earlier work:

'Pan at Lane Cove', 'Marco Polo', 'Heine in Paris', 'Thieves' Kitchen': ... the treatment is generally in keeping with the hint of romantic grotesquerie given in the titles. His friends probably have had something to do with all this; and, indeed, much of Slessor's early poetry, in its attempt to bring together words and the world, seems to be a marriage by proxy, with Hugh McCrae obligingly standing-in for the aspiring young poet, and Norman Lindsay mock-heroically officiating. 'Thieves' Kitchen' is a very good example .... (28)

The "grotesque" elements in Slessor's work are particularly seen as deriving from Lindsay's paintings.

Writing of "Pan at Lane Cove", (29) Chris Wallace-Crabbe states:

27. Ibid, 15.
28. Ibid, 111.
29. In Earth-Visitors, London 1926, 50, the first line of "Pan at Lane Cove" reads "In phosphor-green and gules of flame".
Slessor is not interested in the respective values involved in the worlds of Pan and of Lane Cove; he is interested in the picturesque possibilities which their juxtaposition raises. For comparison with these poems, one goes not to poetry but to painting: to Norman Lindsay, of course, as the immediate influence, and further back to Rubens and Watteau.

The reference to Lindsay is to the point, but not so the suggestion that for either Lindsay or Slessor, the appeal of the world of Pan lies simply in its "picturesque possibilities". Slessor's poem makes evident, as do Lindsay's works, that it is the values of the world of Pan, and the relevance of these values to the modern world, that are of importance. The pipes of Pan, signifying art, the art-form of music, are proposed in Slessor's poem as effecting a return to earth of vigorous sensual activity:

Blow, blow your flute, you stone boy, blow!

And Chiron, pipe your centaurs out ...
Now earth is ripe for Pan again,
Barbaric ways and Paynim rout,
And revels of old Samian men.
O Chiron, pipe your centaurs out.

The "remarkably intensified details" of the poem are intensified for a purpose beyond the picturesque. The allusion to Hellas, "Your Gods, and Hellas, too, have passed", refers principally to the spirit of the civilisation, contained in the legend of the woman who bears its name: Hellas was killed by her lover in a fit of passion. Chiron too, generally envisaged as tutor, is

31. Ibid, 343.
more particularly the centaur renowned for his skill not only in medicine but in music, the healing art, while his arrows signify the pursuit of passion. Slessor's invoking of mythological figures is precise and purposeful, and not simply haphazard or "picturesque" accumulation. In "Pan at Lane Cove" he builds towards an impression of the vital and still pertinent elements of Pan's world, its passion and love, its good spirit and concern for the arts as teachers and healers (Chiron). The poem's implication is that man needs a return to earth of figures such as these. The intellectual purpose is thoroughly and consistently serious (though, as in most of Slessor's work, rarely solemn), and to dismiss this and other poems with sneers such as the following:

With the guidance of his confreres the Lindsays, he [Slessor] published verses about the coupling of fauns and dryads . . . . He upheld, with his fellows, the fleshpots of Rubens . . .

and:

[vitalism] may be a reliance on the supreme importance of the moment, on joyful self-expression, on impulse and sensation, with an overture played by an orchestra of resuscitated Pagan deities,

is to betray scant understanding of, and render considerable injustice to the achievements of both Slessor and Lindsay.

The importance to man of good spirit and amorous activity is a fundamental theme of Slessor's work, as it is

of Lindsay's. Rubens' innocents, in the poem of that name, are the "shining-thighed/Fat Ganymedes of God", and constitute the proper cup-bearers of the god of the poem who is a laughing god, and whom Slessor opposes to the god of the "dark-faced clergy's doleful creed". The gaiety and light-spiritedness of Rubens' god is reinforced by the allusion to "gold ichor", to the old idea that an ethereal fluid supplied the place of blood in the veins of the gods. Slessor in this poem proposes a means of redemption other than the Christian, for the pointing to the ichor of a laughing god brings to mind and suggests a contrast with the blood of Christ and its traditionally redemptive power. The suggestion is that man's real redemption may lie in his ability to love (suggested by Ganymedes) and celebrate life, in his capacity for that spirit of cheerful acceptance which makes the most of the given, rather than in his adherence to the "doleful creed" which forever proposes action with an eye to a possibly retributive future.

"Rubens' Hell" (34) is similarly life-celebrating and is also concerned with the imagination's ability to create a life for him who imagines, and with art's effect on the imaginations and lives of others. Rubens created for himself a world characterised by:

Warm flesh of gods, by light embayed,
And drifting daemon-bones within
That sweep like music up and down
To pouts and cups of ivory skin,

34. The poem's opening image is of Rubens' "The Toilet of Venus", held in the Liechtenstein Gallery, Vienna.
Firm-valleyed croup, and swagging arm
In whose embankment bracelets drown.

In Christian terms, Rubens' world of ample women
and of "Venus with rosy-cloven rump" might be considered
as assuring him of a place in hell, but the poem
proposes a world of passion and aspiration such as was
Rubens' ("Who dream of nought to nothing go"), as
constituting a truer heaven than any the pious, the
"donkeys" or "flunkeys", will achieve:

This castle-keep of joys conceived
But never sucked, is Rubens' hell,
Is Rubens' limbo, cut and won
From darkness. Here he comes to dwell.
Man's heaven is the place he builds
By thoughts imagined and things done.

The power of Rubens' imagination has moreover endured in
that his paintings have survived:

Do you remain, you strokes of paint,
With Venus mocked and Rubens dead,

and in that they continue to stimulate the imagination
and lives of others, Slessor and Lindsay to name but two.

As so often in Slessor's work, it is Rubens'
spirit and vigour, and the specifically sensual activity,
that are admired; it is likewise in the much-maligned
"Earth-Visitors", where the "strange riders" are revealed
as artists of love, of a happy love with laughing girls.
Their artistry stirs both desire and imagination; they
leave "a confusion of sharp dreams to vex a farm-girl",
dreams "mixing up miracle and desire". Slessor held
that it was the duty of the artist to "add beauty and
passion to human life", (35) and what is operative in
"Earth-Visitors" is the idea of the artist of love
stimulating passion and desire, in the immediate sense by
his activity and in a more lasting sense by stirring the
imagination. The poem itself reinforces this concept by
being a celebration of passion to the end of stimulating
the reader's imagination to a keener awareness of its
effects. Slessor's method is closely akin to that of
Norman Lindsay in so many of his works. It is entirely
fitting that it is to Norman Lindsay, who has perhaps
worked harder than has any artist in Australia to stress
the pertinence of Venus to man's life, that "Earth-Visitors"
should be dedicated. Slessor's particular compliment to
Lindsay is to portray the goddess herself as calling at
Lindsay's studio.

Slessor is as much concerned with presenting a
conception of Venus and her relevance to the modern world,
a conception as argued by Norman Lindsay, as he is with
attempting any detailed depiction of a particular, passionate
encounter, and what he particularly stresses in "Earth-
Visitors" is that "the men who sleep with the inn-girls" -
men who are in fact gods - principally leave behind not
objects but images:

And leaving only a confusion of sharp dreams
To vex a farm-girl - that, and perhaps a feather,
Some thread of the Cloth of Gold, a scale of metal
Caught in her hair.

Yet the poem has been criticised for not being sufficiently sensual:

When the men who sleep with the inn-girls leave, they relinquish threads of gold, metal scales, a feather, as their mementoes. These curiously feminine relics symbolize fastidiousness and aestheticism rather than abandon; the effect, because of the concentration on objects, on gimcrackeries, is antiseptic rather than sensual...,

whereas it is the image of desire (constantly renewed by the specific mementoes), and its attribute of perpetual stimulation, that is stressed. Vincent Buckley refers in Slessor's work to "a joy and physicality that are always being talked about but seldom realised in really compelling work". (37) More to the point is the comment on "Earth-Visitors" that it is a tribute to Norman Lindsay both... as artist and as a theorist about art; and in its a-physicality an entirely appropriate tribute eschewing a lot of hardy misconceptions about Lindsay's art and theories of art. (38)

In neither Slessor's work nor Lindsay's is there any rigid prescription of human passion as the necessary matter of art. Any truly creative artist, whether or not he choose human passion as his theme, is considered as made timeless by his work. The long-held notion of the artist as being "beyond time", as having overcome the dictates of clock time by the creative art which "immortalises" him, is one which

Lindsay argues in *Creative Effort* and which Slessor's work stresses. Slessor's most cogent early expression of this notion is in "Nuremberg":

So quiet it was in that high, sun-steeped room,  
So warm and still, that sometimes with the light  
Through the great windows, bright with bottle-panes,  
There'd float a chime from clock-jacks out of sight,  
Clapping iron mallets on green copper gongs.

But only in blown music from the town's  
Quaint horologe could Time intrude . . . you'd say  
Clocks had been bolted out, the flux of years  
Defied, and that high chamber sealed away  
From earthly change by some old alchemist.

This poem, one of several about art and artists, is pointedly concerned with a single outstanding artist. It presents Durer as the type of artist, happily above and isolated from the rest of the town in a "high, sun-steeped room". Time can only intrude as an "art form", "in blown music"; the horologe itself is out of sight. The creative artist is beyond the reach of clock time, has achieved eternity, because his imagination and creative effort so place him. The material of everyday life is "transmuted" into art products by means of his imagination. As Lindsay said in *Creative Effort* and as Slessor later cited:

The material of expression ... is common stock .... Things seen and heard - out of these we must create. To the artist, it throws a mass of colour and form, crude or beautiful as it is affected by light and
atmosphere, or as its shapes fall into
garmony of line or mass, tone or colour ...
this material is not in itself creative; it
is a thing already created. (39)

Clock time, a "thing created" by man, is transmuted by the
artistic imagination into the art form of music, a "harmony
of tone". Hence is the artist above the townspeople
because he is beyond the reach of clock time, living the
timeless life of the mind and in this sense not prey, as
are the townspeople, to the mutable flux of years.

Slessor points an immediate similarity between
Durer and Norman Lindsay by the concentration on Durer's
engravings, in which craft Lindsay has also been much
admired. (40) But the suggestion that Lindsay is the
Durer of our time is most clearly made by the arrangement
of poems in Poems, where "Nuremberg" follows "Earth-Visitors".
This arrangement is not fortuitous. In the earlier volume,
Earths-Visitors, (41) the poems appeared in a different order
but were also so arranged as to prompt a similar suggestion
about Lindsay and Durer, and to make clear the nature of
part of Slessor's tribute to Norman Lindsay.

In Earth-Visitors, "Nuremberg" is followed by
"Realities", "The Ghost" and "Earth-Visitors". In "The
Ghost", Slessor depicts a ghost pressing his face to a "dark

40. P.R. Stephensen considered Lindsay's "final claim to
recognition as a great artist" to rest on his "beautiful,
technically amazing series of etchings" (Kookaburras and
Satyrs, 10), and Slessor dedicated "Realities" to
Lindsay's etchings.
41. London 1926.
pane" in order to watch the sensuous activity of persons in a room from which he is debarred entry:

"Now let your lovers dive
Deep to that hurricane ....
O, to be there alive,
Breathing again!"

So the ghost cried, and pressed to the dark pane,
Like a white leaf, his face ... in vain ... in vain ...

The concluding lines of "Earth-Visitors" also present a room within and a person without:

There is one yet comes knocking in the night,
The drums of sweet conspiracy on the pane,
When darkness has arched his hands over the bush
And Springwood steams with dew, and the stars look down
On that one lonely chamber . . . .

The "room within" is the studio of Norman Lindsay at Springwood, and the "person without" is Venus, whose knocking immediately gains her entry to the room. The juxtaposition of these two poems in Earth-Visitors encourages a carrying over of "The Ghost"'s image of the room and its riches, particularly its amorous riches, to the Springwood studio of "Earth-Visitors". By individual effort ("one lonely chamber"), Norman Lindsay conveys in his art a rich life comparable to that which the people in "The Ghost" are experiencing. The nature of the life which Lindsay's art depicts is proposed in "Realities", one of the poems in which Slessor explicitly suggests the allegiance of his ideas on the nature and function of art to those of Norman Lindsay.

Slessor dedicated "Realities" to the etchings of Norman Lindsay, and the poem presents the statues in those etchings (statues which resemble those in Lindsay's garden at Springwood) as being "awakened" and animated, by music, to
a spirited celebration of life. Art (music) is once again, and immediately, associated with life. As the statues become increasingly animated,

the old Gardener, (42) who has grown old with raking,
Bends by his flickering candle, and hears the noise,
And is nodding his head at a music of copper shaking,
And Mercury whispering to some little graven Boys.

The Gardener's "flickering candle" and his limited activity of nodding contrast strongly with the suggestion of his livelier former activity (he has "grown old with raking"), and with the lively activity of the other figures whose life is at the full:

there is laughter like bells in air,
A rushing wind of music, torches, dancers everywhere,
And lovers no farther.

Life is associated with light, music and love, most especially with love. The dancers are lovers, there is the figure of "Mercury whispering to some little graven Boys" and the picture of the two Venuses gossiping about "great lies of Jove". (43) The Venuses represent the characteristic depiction, in Lindsay's etchings, of embracing or paired females. The work of both Lindsay and Slessor closely

42. The figure of the old gardener, who appears also in "The Man of Sentiment", is not meant to represent any particular figure or person. Slessor sees him simply as the sort of figure appropriate to, or representative of, Lindsay's etchings. Conveyed to the writer in conversation, June 1970.

43. A mythological commonplace. Slessor intended no particular reference here; nor could he recall having intended anything specific by his reference to the brass tower (conversation with the writer, June 1970).

He may perhaps have had in mind the myth of Danae, which is appropriate to the poem. Danae was confined by her father in a brazen tower, and Jupiter, who was enamoured of her, introduced himself to her bed by changing himself into a golden shower.
associates life with spirited love.

Man's heavy physicality is here overcome ("faces, like small gold panes, / Are bodied with a mist of limbs"); so too are the restrictions and pressures of clock time, which has ceased its activity and become stagnant, a "crusty pond" ("It is not night nor day"). In the context of timelessness, music and love, a new order of being and a new notion of reality come into the ascendant:

that old Mirror, Life,
Has broken, and the ghosts of flesh are stirred
With a new blood, the fluid of eternity,
And mouths that have never spoken, ears that have never heard,
Eyes that have never seen, speak now, and hear, and see.

Imagination and creative art are the means whereby this new reality may be apprehended. The poet has made an imaginative effort to climb into the garden, to enter into the artist's imaginative universe. Here he has found a substantial reality:

And I, who have climbed in these unrooted boughs
Behind the world, find substance there and flesh,
Thoughts more infrangible than windy vows,
Love that's more bodily, and kisses longer,
And Cythera love-lion, and the girls of moonlight stronger
Than all earth's ladies, webbed in their bony mesh.

Slessor works toward the expression of the Lindsay conviction that art is reality and life but a mirror-image of reality. The lines cited above propose that there is another reality to be had besides the tangible reality which can be reflected in a mirror, and which we call life. That this other reality is more physically real than that which life offers, is reinforced by the reference to the "ghosts of flesh". Once there is a shattering of the notion that life and reality consist only in what the
mirror can reflect, man is able to enter a new "plane of reality" in which his perceptions are heightened and his physical being enriched to the extent that he may, by its means, partake of eternity.

The "ghosts of flesh" in the third stanza are attributed to life's mode; all that life offers are "ghosts" of flesh, compared with the "love that's more bodily" which is found in the mode of life "behind the world". The "aery textures" of the world are incorporated in and surpassed by the apprehension of absolute Beauty:

And golden bodies tread the paths - O, happy shapes,  
O shining ones! Could I for ever keep  
Within your radiance, made absolute at last,  
No more among earth's phantoms to be cast,  
No more in the shadowy race of the world exist,  
But, born into reality, remember Life  
As men see ghosts at midnight - so with me  
Might all those aery textures, the world's mist,  
Melt into Beauty's actuality!

These lines allude to Lindsay's idea of absolute time, of that time lived in the imagination, out of clock time, as in "Out of Time":

The moment's world, it was; and I was part,  
Fleshless and ageless, changeless and made free ....

Beauty, frequently conceived as an unattainable ideal, is in "Realities" proposed as attainable, as an actuality which can be apprehended by imaginative effort. The idea of Norman Lindsay's which has particular bearing on this and other of Slessor's poems is that which

44. Conveyed to the writer in conversation, June 1970.
is stated in Creative Effort as: "the eternal paradox of that effort to conquer the problem of intellect by the senses which obstruct the effort, but without which the effort cannot be made."(45) In "Realities" it is by the use of the imaginative intellect that a greater sensuality is attained. In "Rubens' Hell" it was likewise that Rubens created for himself a world of intellectual and sensual satisfaction.

"Realities" is a poem about the effect on the imagination of the beauty which the artist creates. Although it pays generous tribute to Lindsay's etchings and to his theory of art, Slessor sees in this theory a direction or goal other than that which Lindsay proposes in Creative Effort. Whereas Creative Effort constantly suggests the celebration of the physical as a means to an abstract goal, "Realities" proposes the attainment, through art, of a more completely physical knowledge than is otherwise attainable. Whereas Slessor is concerned with the specifically sensuous, Lindsay (and FitzGerald also) is more concerned with the sensuous in the abstract. Lindsay in his works tends to abstract, ultimately, from the physical; he regards the physical as a bait, as it were, to something else, to an abstract idea, to the apprehension of an abstract concept of beauty or perfection. In his works he is not so much concerned with depicting specific women as with presenting an abstract idea of woman. The compelling, slanted eyes of the women

45. Creative Effort, 132.
in his paintings are for instance part of his concept of woman, and are no more "realistic" than are the very heavy bodies with which he endowed his female figures, in an attempt to convey with impact an image of woman and a notion of fecundity.

Slessor however in his art works toward the depiction and expression of the ever more perfectly achieved physical union. His implicit conviction is that man's salvation lies in perfect physical contact. In "To the Poetry of Hugh McCrae" it is McCrae's sensuousness that is seen as redemptive, "We breathe in this, your quick and borrowed body". Frequently, however, it is the evasiveness of the fullest sensuous experience that is presented. Several of Slessor's poems treat of the failure to achieve that full physical contact with others, so strongly desired but time and again found to be elusive.

"The Man of Sentiment" is one case in point, and even the first-person protagonist of "Realities" is to some extent an outsider; all things that life offers in that poem are for him airy and insubstantial. The ghost in the poem of that title yearns to make full physical contact with the life going on in the room from which he is debarred entry; the activity of the room's inhabitants is explicitly suggested as sexual. So too does the robber in "Undine" fail in a purpose more sensuous than mercenary:

... flank

Pressed in strange fear to Undine's bed,
The robber stared long, and bent his head
To that soft wave ... then hand on silk,
Plumbed the warm valley where nightly sank
Undine the water-maid, caved in milk.
The life-giving sensuous is further central to "Music", which follows "Realities" in Poems. (46) The theme is consistently of passionate activity in its various manifestations, and of music, the dance and love. The Khan in the sixth sequence, for instance, suddenly abandons the spinning dancers who are performing on his behalf in order to gratify "his whim":

Soon there was silent darkness over all.
One of the dancers was sent after him.

Music itself signifies a kind of spiritual or "beyond-life" reality, (47) which surpasses the rigid limitations of the physical. In the presence of Music, iron and stone "Melt to enchanted flesh", and

Life and all its lies of stone
Shall crack to fumes and disappear. (48)

The reality which Music signifies can be approached through love. The necessity of complete physical union to

46. "Music" was also published in the London Aphrodite I, August 1928. The Aphrodite version contains some very slight grammatical alterations to the version in Poems, which is a reprint of the original version which first appeared in Earth-Visitors, 13 et seq.

More importantly, in the Aphrodite version sequences 4, 5 and 7 of the poem do not appear; 4 and 5 not at all, while 7 appears as a separate poem under the title of its first line. It would seem that the Aphrodite editors altered the sequence of the poem in accordance with their need for space.


48. As in "Realities", where "the dark terraces tremble, melt in a shower of petals", and "The world's tissue has utterly crumbled away".
the attainment of the state of physical and mental exaltation which is signified (cumulatively, in the poem's twelve sections) by Music, is pointed in the third sequence where the lovers have "with kissing drowned the bells" (my italics). Even after much physical dalliance (kissing) they remain temporarily outside the sphere of music, temporarily "sunk in a drift of tumbled laces", encumbered by the materially tangible, until by means of complete physical union there is a breakthrough into a realm which is beyond the senses but which includes them and has only been made possible by them, as the phallicism of Music breathing "his enormous flute" over the lovers makes further explicit.

The poem's concluding lines feelingly reiterate the association of love with music, life with art:

Look up! Thou hast a shining Guest
Whose body in the dews hath lain,
His face like a strange wafer pressed
Secret and starry, at thy pane;
And he shall sing with human tongue
Old music men have never sung
Since Orpheus on earth was young,
And shall not sing again.

But life and all its lies of stone
Shall crack to fumes and disappear...
And thou shalt wake behind the Glass,
In stone dissolved, and phantom brass -
O, deaf! The bells of Music pass,
Not can, but darest, thou hear!

As in "Nuremberg", the window image presents the distinction between the outer and inner worlds, between the mutable flux of years to which physical existence is prey and the time­less life of the mind which achieves eternity through creative and procreative art.
In a later poem, "The Old Play", Slessor pursues the necessity for and implications of perfect physical contact, still very much in keeping with the spirit of Norman Lindsay, whose conviction was that the satisfaction and development to man of all his enterprises, great and small, depended on a celebration of the physical. The poet here presents himself as one of the actors on the stage of life, and one of the performances enacted thereon concerns the aspiration of men for perfect friendship.

"Shang Ya! I want to be your friend", (49) utter the youthful aspirants, but theirs is an essentially "bloodless decalogue", (50) the limitations of which are suggested by the fact that such oaths are taken "in the gas-lit cellules of virtuous young men". (51) The "virtuous", non-physical inclination of the aspirants (emphasised by "cellules" with their monastic associations), suggests the

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49. In a note originally printed in Cuckooz Contrey, Sydney 1932, 76, Slessor explained that this utterance has its literary source in an ancient Chinese poem, titled "Oaths of Friendship", in Arthur Waley's translations from the Chinese, 170 Chinese Poems (1918).

50. Slessor writes:

Though in Yueh it is usual
To behead a cock and dog,
Such was not considered binding
In our bloodless decalogue.

A head note to "Oaths of Friendship" in Waley's translation explains:

"In the country of Yueh when a man made friends with another they set up an altar of earth and sacrificed upon it a dog or cock, reciting this oath (Shang Ya! ...) as they did so". Arthur Waley, Chinese Poems, London 1946, 55.

51. Jack Lindsay says this refers to the Sydney cafe, Mockbells, which Slessor frequented in his youth, and whose inhabitants were at that time virtuous. The Roaring Twenties, 94.
nature of the limitations which will prevent the oath from being fully realised and which will finally, perhaps inevitably, issue in a parting:

Ours was the Life-Parting
Which made the poets so elegantly tragic.

Despite the initial fiery spirits of the oath takers, they lack that total and passionate commitment which can be achieved and sustained only through the physical. Consequently,

The tail-piece to the chapter
We so fierily began
Resembled an old song-book
From the golden days of Han.

It is the bloodlessness of the undertaking, its lack of physicality, that proves its damaging and limiting factor. The gods themselves, spectators of the old play of life, demand at least physical stimulation:

Is there nothing new in this old theatre, nothing new?
Are there no bristles left to prick
With monstrous tunes the music-box of flesh?

Some retain traces of sensuality ("Marduk ... wets his red transparent lips"), while others have given it up altogether:

Camazotz and Anubis
Go no more to the coulisses.

Those were the days of serenades.
Prima donnas and appointments.
Now they think longer of pomades,
Less of the heart and more of ointments.

The gods' former sensual energies are now predominantly directed towards mocking "our little, minion ardours/Our darling hatreds and adulteries". Although the latter
constitute an old, an interminably repeated performance, the protagonist yet demands the right to "jump it out". Further, he demands more, that man at least turn his face "to buffet and explore", that he make at least some effort in life. The protagonist has himself been given "palfreys in the place of stallions" because he has not aspired high enough, been sufficiently daring: the responsibility for failure remains his. Other sections of "The Old Play" also point to a responsibility for failure in man himself, such as the imprisonment by one's own appetitive weaknesses:

How should we guess
The slow Capuan poison, the soft strings
Of death with leather jaws come tasting men?

The aptness of "slow Capuan poison", proverbially, that luxury and self-indulgence that may ruin any man, (52) is as striking in its contextual aptness as are the host of gods of love and rebellion who observe the players' efforts. Far from falling "in a heap, a disastrous mess of pasticcio and confectionery", (53) this is a most carefully structured poem, in which the several images and references have their place in an overall pattern designed to stress the primacy of love and the responsibility of man for his own actions.

The theme common to all the spectacles which the

53. Chris Wallace-Crabbe, "Kenneth Slessor and the Powers of Language", 348. Judith Wright's account is also unenthusiastic; she considers the poem "unreal, contrived", and lacking impact. Preoccupations in Australian Poetry, 152.
gods witness is the decay of passion, physical or intellectual. The poet however accepts this, just as he accepts the inevitable reduction of youth's aspirations. Death may be "the humblest of affairs" but despite this realisation the poet refuses to accept an abandonment of effort. Despite the persistent tone of wry self-mockery, which culminates in section VIII:

This is really a Complete Life and Works,  
The memorial of a great man  
Who was born with Excalibur in his fist  
And finished by asking questions ....

So he began to use Excalibur in the kitchen,  
Or on occasion as a hay-rake,  
it is qualified by the more positive stress on the necessity for each man to play out his part to the best of his abilities. Despite the fact that life is "an old piece that has been done to death",

Do you deny us the honour of emotion  
Because another has danced this, our dance?  
Let us jump it out.

But man wishes also to prove that "there's more in life than Suck and Jump", (54) his attempt is always to get beyond that which remains the prey of the Time which "gnaws" all "with quicklime". In section VIII, the protagonist is seen as having yielded the fight, both physical and spiritual. Time has fogged things, and he is now comfortably settled "in a substantial villa, Having saved enough to purchase an annuity". This villa leads

54. Slessor, "Mephistopheles Perverted".
into the coffin of the next stanza; it is physical and mental comfort, and the yielding of effort, that leads to the death-like state from which, in section IX, the protagonist must break free.

The complete unacceptability of the image of the "tolerable life ... in a substantial villa" is enforced by the immediately preceding image of the use as a hay-rake of Excalibur, traditionally the symbol of physical, intellectual and spiritual quest. The poem proposes that the cause of man's despair is the sacrilegious perversion of potential, the negation of effort, in particular sensuous effort and potential.

It is the physical that is proposed as affording the possibility of partial salvation, for in IX the significance of the coffin is that it contains the body that has been buried away from view. The song of the bird arouses the coffin-like body; music (art) is once again envisaged as an animating force. The poet invokes the bird:

But you, with music clear and brave,
Have shamed the buried thing;
It rises dripping from the grave
And tries in vain to sing.

O, could the bleeding mouth reply,
The broken flesh but moan,
The tongues of skeletons would cry,
And Death push back his stone!

The coffined body, the human denial of the physical, is strongly rejected, and the necessity to go on acting and celebrating one's physical potential and hence affirming life, both in its sensual-enjoyment and procreative aspects, strongly affirmed. Since God exists only in man's
imagination, "Made out of nothing/By men's minds", man cannot abrogate responsibility for his own actions. It is up to man himself not to fail in the effort of life, but to keep faith in his own physical and intellectual powers in the face of the bleakest odds:

Fail us not,
You that we made,
When the stars go out
And the suns fade.

Slessor in his work shows much the same concern for man and the quality of his life and much the same energy and courage in facing life and work, as did Lindsay, and he also shares much of Lindsay's optimism. This has not been at all widely acknowledged because critical commentary on Slessor's work has tended to encourage the view that he is pessimistic, not to say nihilistic. Ronald McCuaig considered that Slessor sympathised with the gods' boredom in "The Old Play":

he finds life fairly flat and dull. Firstly, because it is Australian life; next, because it is contemporary life; and last, because it is human life. (55)

Clement Semmler writes that there is in Slessor's "later poems especially an exploitation of disillusionment and despair as opposed to faith", (56) and Tom Inglis Moore declared:

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56. Clement Semmler, Kenneth Slessor, 37.
he emerges as a grim nihilist ... he is essentially a tragic poet, beset by doom ... he finds no comforting defiance or immortality in his night of disillusionment and despair; there is only the tortured bitterness of a realistic, clear-eyed acceptance of the annihilating dooms wrought on man by time and death.

These convictions of pessimism in Slessor's poems deny his spirit of courageous positivism, in which he is very close to Norman Lindsay. Preconceptions of Slessor's pessimism also yield some curious readings of his poems. "Captain Dobbin", for instance, is a thoroughly affirmative poem, both in its endorsing of Captain Dobbin himself and of the life lived through the imagination. Yet it has been considered that, "As a symbol of what Slessor believes humanity is, the poem could not be more mournful and chilling ...." (58)

Vincent Buckley writes of Slessor:

the words and images are not used ... to fix a character in his individual fullness in his particular milieu, but rather to give the surroundings, to provide an occasion for Slessor to talk about life, or to establish a note of adventure in whatever situation has been vaguely delineated. The person concerned, one feels, is not intended to occupy the centre of stage, but to stand in the wings while, with repeated reference to his presence, the author strews his belongings behind the footlights. So we are less interested in Captain Dobbin than in Captain Dobbin's room, packed with the junk of past adventures .... (59)

But in what way is Captain Dobbin fixed in "his individual

fullness in his particular milieu" if not by the precise
denotation of the significance the objects in his room have
for him, by means of which he fully lives a life of the
imagination? Dobbin's is truly a life of the mind, a life
lived through the imagination. The poem is also about the
importance of the artist/recorder: more recorder than
artist in this case, but one drawing from his own life on
the charts, the lithographs and journals of other men and
continuing moreover the same sort of activity in his own
preservation of sea-relics and in the precise recording in
his gazette of nautical and meteorological information, "For
some mysterious and awful purpose/Never divulged".

"Marco Polo" is also on this theme. Slessor does
not "characteristically" dismiss Marco Polo "as a man,
emphasizing rather the trappings of Kublai Khan's court"; (60)
these trappings are emphasised (61) because they constitute
part of the splendours of a past life to which man is
enabled access through the efforts and achievements of an
outstanding artist/recorder. That life is lived not only
in the senses but in the mind, and that the life of both
depends on art, is again explicitly proposed in "Stars",
once again a poem charged with expressing nihilism, "the
whole horror of a universe from which godhead has been
drained away, and in which man is reduced to meaninglessness."(62)

61. Douglas Stewart, "Kenneth Slessor's Poetry", 153, considers
the poem a "relapse" "into an excessive romanticism".
62. Wright, Preoccupations in Australian Poetry, 147.
Yet it is precisely in "Stars" when the poet is "gazing, not rhyming" (my italics), and consequently not celebrating the associated physical (the connection of art with love) with which the first three stanzas of the poem are concerned, that "the bottomless black cups of space" and the "cracks in the Spinning Cross" become evident. Art and love are quite clearly proposed as constituting a means of salvation from "those tunnels of nothingness", as Norman Lindsay insisted time and again.

The view of Slessor as fatalistic has been particularly brought to bear on "Five Bells" and "Five Visions of Captain Cook": "'Five Visions' is as harsh a statement of fatalism - hedonism's inevitable aftermath when the pleasures of youth and health are gone - as we are likely to get in poetry."(63) Yet both poems display distinct courage and faith in positive effort in the face of the bleakest odds life can offer.

Cook's creative effort in "Five Visions" not only keeps alive the minds of other men (Alexander Home and, in a different context, Captain Dobbin), but changes the course of history. He is at the outset presented as a visionary and man of magical powers. (64) Captains of old "were more like warlocks than a humble man" and "Cook was a captain of the sailing days/When sea-captains were kings like this", not, that is, like men who are inspired by notions of

profit and navigate by laws but men who navigate by a skill and artistry that seems inspired. Such men "steered their crews by mysteries" and "read fair alphabets in stars/ Where humbler men found but a mess of sparks".

But beyond this, Cook has made an imaginative and highly courageous choice about his ship's route, and as a result of his vision or imaginative choice, "Men write poems in Australia". The captain's artistry and power, which is a combination of skill and imagination, has laid a path for nature to follow. Cook's vision has altered the map: nature (or man) has followed art. This is in keeping with Lindsay's insistence that it is not events that make or influence mind, but mind that makes events. Even in his light-hearted essay, "Hyperborea", Lindsay had the physical landscape fit itself around his daring and imaginative Hyperboreans. (65)

The marvellous (literally, arousing wonder) consequences of Cook's vision are given in more detail in the description of the reef in the second section, and Cook's courage is again stressed:

Cook sailed at night,
Let there be reefs a fathom from the keel
And empty charts.

The effect of this courage on the seamen is marked by their calmness in the face of possible shipwreck: "Men who ride broomsticks with a mesmerist/Mock the typhoon".

The fourth section of the poem deals with the

imaginatively stimulating rather than mesmeric effects of Cook. He produces in his men an indifference to the weather and to notions of safety ("Let rum-tanned mariners prefer/To hug the weather-side of yards"), yet more than an indifference, for under Cook's influence the mariners come to welcome and embrace all weathers, all risks of wind and storm. This fourth section, which is usually glossed over in commentaries of the poem, suggests that the man of vision stimulates other men to an awareness of their potential. Cook stimulates his crew to an awareness of marvellous phenomena, such as their discovery of the Reef, and to a perception that the limitations placed on one by one's immediate environment can with the aid of the imagination be overcome. The mariners' small "jolly-boat" suddenly becomes as the stage for much increased action and opportunity:

Here, in this jolly-boat they graced,
Were food and freedom, wind and storm.

The use of "graced" sustains the impression of the deity-like hold Cook has over his men. Since in Slessor's work the sea often symbolises timelessness, there may in the allusion to the storm be a suggestion that timelessness can be man's, despite apparently limiting circumstances (the jolly-boat), if man only use his imagination and daring. The poem's final section presents the fifth vision of Cook, that held by one of Cook's old seamen, Alexander Home. Home's "useless cutlass-wounds and tales of Cook" are of no practical use, but the poem proposes that Home is much less limited than his brisk wife, Elizabeth, "Who
lived in a present full of kitchen-fumes/And had no past".

By means of his imagination and memories of Cook, Home lives on in the present:

It was not blindness picked his flesh away,
Nor want of sight made penny-blank the eyes
Of Captain Home, but that he lived like this
In one place, and gazed elsewhere. His body moved
In Scotland, but his eyes were dazzle-full
Of skies and water farther round the world.

Home's present life has its limitations, limitations which are imposed by existence (physical decay) and which are pointed by the allusion to Greenwich Hospital, (66) but his is nonetheless a much less limited life than his wife's, much less limited than it would be had he not known and been influenced by the man of vision, the artist Cook.

"It is like Slessor," writes Judith Wright, "to end the poem with the Vision seen of the Captain by his old shipmate, blind and derelict, pensioned on half-a-crown a day". (67) But the final section, besides providing a satisfactory structural conclusion to the sequence (which commenced with Home talking to empty chairs), strengthens the poem's affirmation. The conditioning of creative effort by time and existence, the reduction of man's powers with approaching age, or their cutting off by fate, is encountered in the poem and the value of creative effort

66. Greenwich Hospital was the site of an administrative post offered Cook by the Admiralty "at a time when his proposals for further voyages were becoming a nuisance to the lethargic sea lords. For Cook, then aged 47, it was a dreadful vision of stagnation and he was reluctant to accept the offer". Kenneth Slessor, "Five Visions", Sydney Daily Telegraph, July 24th, 1967, 16.

67. Wright, Preoccupations in Australian Poetry, 150.
thereby strengthened rather than denied. The poem's conclusion is an affirmation of the powers of the artist: of the life that he affords man, and of the life that Cook afforded Home - and of the only life he still affords him. "The trumpery springs of fate - a stone,/ A musket-shot, a round of gunpowder" are not ultimately triumphant; to read them as so, and the poem as pessimistic in import, is to ignore its celebration of the positive achievements of Cook. Men do write poems in Australia as a result of his vision, and Home's eyes are "marooned" by Cook's death simply because Home is not the Cook he lives by. Home can only get partially beyond the limitations of physical reality (emphasised by the chairs) because he is not the Cook he lives by; the vision of men like Cook is transferable to other men only in proportion to their capacity to grasp its substance. (69)

"Heine in Paris" is similar in import; Heine lives on in old age through the enduring ability of his imagination, of his memories and dreams, and he has only ever lived through them. His most intense life has been achieved through his imaginative aspirations. The importance of aspiration is stressed time and again in Slessor's work, even in brief poems such as "Trade Circular":

68. "The half-farcical, half-ironical note [in the vision of Cook's death] makes us recall Slessor's own disillusion and his denial of the city of humanity". Judith Wright, Preoccupations in Australian Poetry, 150.
Ask for a cage of comets,
Poets will give you this -
But if you should ask them for nothing,
They'll see how dead girls kiss.

In "Heine in Paris", the aged Heine's present mental image of the women he has known is itself the memory of an image, an image of "bright, mad girls", "all of them forged in a night,/Conspired of dreams" and of "flight after flight/Of musings". The various images of several girls are also realised to be, fundamentally, some several aspects of

only one thought,
One stone of Venus, cut with a hundred sides,
One girl revealed ten thousand times.

It is the ideal of woman and of beauty, again represented by the reference to Venus, that has given Heine life in the past and which continues to do so in his old age. Heine is only given life by his dreams and visions of the past, even though such images now function at two removes in that the dreams themselves have "taken mange", as have their subjects: Heine's imaged girls have become "paunched in marriage".

Far from rejecting humankind ("a bitter rejection of the whole of human kind is put into the mind of Slessor's Heine"), (70) Slessor stresses the futility of contempt and bitterness. He stresses not so much Heine's contempt for his contemporaries (71) as its uselessness:

70. Wright, Preoccupations in Australian Poetry, 146: "It seems significant that Slessor, then a comparatively young man, should have chosen for his subject the embittered and paralysed old age of Heine, rather than his gayer and more productive youth."
71. Meyerbeer, Borne and Klopstock: composer, journalist and poet respectively.
Men crumbled, man lived on. In that animal's face,  
'Twas but a squirt aimed at the moon, to fling contempt. 
Meyerbeer, Borne, and Klopstock vanished, but in their place  
New Klopstocks, Meyerbeers blown again, and Bornes undreamt, 
Sprang up like fungi, and there remained no trace  
Of lashings past. Men, men he could flog for ever, 
But man was still exempt.

That did not change - always the world remained, 
Breathing and sleeping; loving and taking in love; 
Fighting and coupling ...

The paper he'd filled, 
Deep to the lips in bitter salt, with fury and tears, 
No man remembered.

What does remain to man, what does not change, is the "loving and taking in love;/Fighting and coupling", and there is a relation between physical passion and the poem's concluding affirmation, which sees sanity and life as consisting in "climbing to heavens of the brain,/Unknown, unanswering, above". The unknown heavens of the brain can only be reached by imaginative effort: Heine's previous "heavens" have been reached by his images of women, his highest intellectual peaks through the physical passion aroused by his images of the female.

The concluding image of Heine as Icarus precisely conveys the courage, daring and exultant aspiration by means of which he has gained the complete self-knowledge, the ultimate self-control of the man who can choose to die:

Not treading those floods could save him - not striking stone,  
Not damning the world could serve - only to fly, 
Careless of men and their shouting - untouched - alone - 
Snatched by his own gods from a falling sky, 
And singing his own way - clutching his own, his own, 
Blind to the world - yes, that was the road of Heine - 
Up to the sun, solitary, a speck in the ether -

"Ha, now, Christ Jesus and Jehovah, I choose to die!"
The "eternal, changeless flux of humanity" must be accepted for what it is, and man must take his spiritual or intellectual direction elsewhere. Slessor's similarity to Lindsay in this, and in the insistence on one's own gods, one's own effort in seeking a direction for the soul amid the changeless flux of humanity, needs no emphasising.

On "Five Bells" more than on any other single poem of Slessor's rests the charge of pessimism. It has been seen as the final despairing cry of a poet who has worked himself into the dead end of a hopeless and godless universe: "For all his occasional joy, there runs throughout his poetry a faint ground-bass of disgust with life. In 'Five Bells', this has been brought forward as an open protest against life." (72)

The solemnity of "Five Bells" and the acuteness of certain of its images ("I felt the wet push its black thumb-balls in, /The night you died"), would seem to have eclipsed other aspects of the poem which mitigate strongly against a final interpretation of hopelessness or bleakness.

To the query,

If I could find an answer, could only find
Your meaning, or could say why you were here
Who now are gone, what purpose gave you breath
Or seized it back,

Slessor advances no "answer", although his central concern in "Five Bells" is with the quest and destiny of the

72. Buckley, **Essays in Poetry**, 121.
As in "Five Visions", he encounters the limitations of existence, and concludes with an affirmation of the individual spirit that is too great to be dissolved in death.

The sea is the agent of eternity as well as mutability, and Joe Lynch's death by drowning has in this sense made him immortal. But there is anguish at the restrictions of physical existence, at the inability to break through the pane of glass that (as in "The Ghost", "Nuremberg") blocks the protagonist's entry into Joe's world:

Are you shouting at me, dead man, squeezing your face
In agonies of speech on speechless panes?
Cry louder, beat the windows, bawl your name!

But I hear nothing, nothing ... only bells,
Five bells, the bumpkin calculus of Time.

Despite his inability to enter Joe's world, the protagonist persists in his attempt to comprehend life's meaning, to understand the destiny of the individual spirit. Although this destiny cannot be perceived, the protagonist can affirm that Joe is part of something larger, "part of an Idea":

Where have you gone? The tide is over you,
The turn of midnight water's over you,
As Time is over you, and mystery,
And memory, the flood that does not flow.
You have no suburb, like those easier dead
In private berths of dissolution laid -
The tide goes over, the waves ride over you

74. See the account of the death of Joe Lynch in Jack Lindsay, The Roaring Twenties, 194-195.
And let your shadows down like shining hair,
But they are Water; and the sea-pinks bend
Like lillies in your teeth, but they are Weed;
And you are only part of an Idea.

There has been a diminution of personality, of
the individual, by death, and this is regretted - "And
you are only part" (my italics) - nor does the knowledge
that the individual has become absorbed in a much larger
life-movement offer much comfort. So the protagonist
persists with his quest, his tone wistful and reflective
rather than pessimistic:

If I could find an answer, could only find
Your meaning, or could say why you were here
Who now are gone, what purpose gave you breath
Or seized it back, might I not hear your voice?

One of the distinctions of "Five Bells" is its
tightly controlled yet poignant emotion, an emotion all
the more poignant for the control. The poem ends with a
painful question, but this does not negate its previous
concerns; rather does the acknowledgment and confrontation
of the fact that there is no answer, no solution to man's
questions and speculations, strengthen these concerns.
The poet accepts reality's qualification of man's ideals:

The tide goes over, the waves ride over you
And let their shadows down like shining hair,
But they are Water; and the sea-pinks bend
Like lillies in your teeth, but they are Weed.

The imagination transmutes the actual - water and weed -
into elements more lovely, more ideally beautiful, yet
water and weed remain. It is man himself who aspires
beyond the given, but who yet acknowledges the limitations
that reality places upon his efforts to perceive beyond it.
The loveliness of the above images is immediately followed by the stark lines:

I felt the wet push its black thumb-balls in,
The night you died, I felt your eardrums crack,
And the short agony, the longer dream,
The Nothing that was neither long nor short;
But I was bound, and could not go that way,
But I was blind, and could not feel your hand.

But the poem's final import is not pessimistic:

... his lesson, the futility of it all. As
with the bold Tartars and Mongols of his
first phase, adventure and high courage end
in decay and dust. (75)

There is no "lesson" in "Five Bells" and no "acceptance
of annihilation", (76) rather a persistent concern with the
destiny of the spirit and an affirmation of Joe as the
protagonist knew him.

The imagery of the first three stanzas sets the
tone for the whole. Slessor presents the paradox of the
ultimately profitless meditation which must nonetheless
be made, on the dead man who is not dead, whose spirit is
too great to be dissolved in death:

I have lived many lives, and this one life
Of Joe, long dead, who lives between five bells.

Yet the life so relived, of the dead who is not dead, is
not relived fully, for the poet cannot penetrate to any
ultimate destination of the spirit, the secret of which

75. Semmler, Kenneth Slessor, 32. See also Higham, "The
Poetry of Kenneth Slessor", 87.
76. Wright, Preoccupations in Australian Poetry, 151:
"'Gulliver' seems to point forward to Slessor's last
long poem, 'Five Bells', with its quieter acceptance
of annihilation".
must remain Joe's. The quest to so penetrate must be made although it is acknowledged "profitless" from the start:

Why do I think of you, dead man, why thieve
These profitless lodgings from the flukes of thought
Anchored in Time?

In his blending of the elements of song and death Slessor is himself like Joe's father,

the old man gone blind,
With fingers always round a fiddle's neck,
That graveyard mason.

Like the poet, Joe's father is captive to mortality yet he still makes an effort to sing (his fiddle), just as the protagonist's effort is his questioning, and the poet's, his poem.

Communication with the dead is not possible, but it was restricted even with the living:

But all I heard was words that didn't join
So Milton became melons, melons girls.

There were however occasional flashes of insight and communication, "the naphtha-flash of lightning" which knifes the dark with "deathly photographs". Lindsay in Creative Effort uses a similar image: "We believe that mind itself exists in the darkness that you call life, and that its revelation comes only at intervals, like a statue seen by lightning on a dark night." (77) Despite the difficulty of communication and the rareness of the

77. Creative Effort, 222.
revelation of human minds, it is for such communication
and revelation that man strives, and for which Lindsay
and Slessor both strove consistently in the numerous
creative efforts they themselves offered man.

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Ideas and convictions allied to those of Norman
Lindsay are to be found throughout the whole range of
Slessor's work, in which there is discernible no single
"period of Lindsay influence", and from which the poems
discussed in this chapter have been selected. Slessor's
tribute of indebtedness to Lindsay may be found in his
several prose articles and in his devotion of an issue of
Southerly, (78) while its editor, to Lindsay's work, but,
most importantly, it is both implicit and explicit in the
numerous poems in which his concern is the connection
between art and life and his theme the positive affirmation
of both.

CHAPTER SIX.

R. D. FITZGERALD.
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R. D. FITZGERALD.

In his very earliest work, that written prior to and during the Vision period, FitzGerald's tendency was, as has been discussed, (1) to stress vigour and effort, to celebrate "beauty and energy and aspiration". (2) In this he accords with Norman Lindsay, but not only in this. His persistent concern for continuity and meaning in life and his extended enquiries into the nature of such actions as make life valuable to man, which characterise the whole range of FitzGerald's poetry, as does his praise of energy and aspiration, suggest that he has been stimulated and sustained by the general tenor of Lindsay's convictions throughout his writing life. The influence of Norman Lindsay on the work of R. D. FitzGerald is evident in his consistent and habitual direction of reference (3) towards the spirit and substance of Lindsay's outlook on both life and art.

In FitzGerald's first really sustained poem, "The Greater Apollo" (1927), he strongly recalls Norman Lindsay in his acceptance and celebration of the given, and in his concern for that which endures beyond the life of the individual. The relationship to Lindsay lies moreover in the manner of organisation as well as in that which is

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3. M.H.Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, New York, 1958, 100: "An orientation in aesthetic theory is not an idea, or even a premise, but a habitual direction of reference".
organised for the debate or dialectical form of the poem recalls Creative Effort.

Throughout "The Greater Apollo" there is an emphasis on a ready acceptance of the pleasures which the natural world offers. The poet is "consciously collecting" scents and sounds:

> Colours and shapes I glean, and light and shade, movements of birds, quick stirrings of the grass, the savour of sea air, the blurred sounds made by leaves that whisper and by wings that pass. (4)

The material world is also emphasised in the lines:

> I look no more for gods among the lace-like ferns and twisted boughs . . .

> I seek no longer to divide being from that which gives it place, matter from spirit.

The reference to "gods among the lace-like ferns" is not so much a rejection of "the Lindsayan Renaissance", as has been claimed, (5) as a rejection of metaphysical formulations such as notions of pantheism and dualism ("I seek no longer to divide . . ./matter from spirit"), which attempt to explain the universe. FitzGerald, like Lindsay, rejects any separation of matter and spirit, senses and intellect.

FitzGerald initially proposes in "The Greater Apollo" that the material world of finite human actuality offers the only reality apart from the reality of the

4. "The Greater Apollo", R.D.FitzGerald, Forty Years' Poems, Sydney 1966, 9. All references and citations are from this edition. See Appendix A for textual variations between the first edition (1927) and Forty Years' Poems version of the poem.
knowing ("I know that I know") involved in "what is revealed
to me and known":

What is revealed to me and known
beyond material things alone?
It is enough that trees are trees,
that earth is earth and stone is stone.

But no single utterance in the poem can be taken as final or
unqualified. In the poem's fifth section FitzGerald extends
his declaration of faith in the existing world, to an
energetic declaration of faith in the world's endurance:

Time is a fool if he thinks to have ended
one single splendid thing that has been.
Though much has changed, what is expended
of all that the youthful earth has seen?
Tomorrow and yesterday are cheated
while, undefeated, one cliff still stands;
for the one could speak for all cliffs long vanished
till Time himself were destroyed or banished
from the uncompleted work of his hands.

This statement of confidence is supported by the reference
to swallows nesting in cliffs that bred "their dim
ancestral brothers" and also by the later image of the bud
bursting on the bough, both of which suggest the continuity
of life even though individual lives (birds and blossoms)
may perish.

Further support for a faith in the continuity of
life is adduced in the final section by the idea that it is
possible for man to be moved, after his physical demise, by
the sensations of the living:

But I look out and watch a bud
burst in renewal on the bough -
0 sweating slaves, 0 men of blood,
this too was yours; what have you now?
I think in your unanswering tombs
you feel through me today's known bliss
because you, living, saw such blooms
in coloured springtimes far from this.

The motive idea of these lines is that we are all one mind,
of which every other universe and every other mind
constitutes a part. There is as it were a composite mind,
into and out of which flow individual minds. (6) Each
individual becomes part of the composite mind on his death:
hence may present beauties be felt by those who have lived
in the past ("in your unanswering tombs/you feel through me
today's known bliss"), just as the individual's present
faculties of sense perception will contribute to those of
future individuals ("But looking already through the eyes/
of men not come to birth/I see new twigs against the skies").

By qualifying and putting in perspective the earlier
statements of confidence in the material world, this final
section, which usually receives but brief mention in
critical accounts of the poem, (7) demonstrates that the
poem's centre is not simply an unqualified statement of
faith in material reality. It reinforces the poem's
principal theme, a concern with both continuity and meaning
in life, which was to be a central preoccupation in
subsequent poems both major and minor.

6. Conveyed to the writer in conversation with Mr. FitzGerald,
November 1969. For fuller discussion of this idea see my
article, K.M.Cantrell, "Some Elusive Passages in R.D.
FitzGerald's 'Essay on Memory'", Southerly, XXX, 1 (1970),
44-52.

7. See, for instance, Leonie Kramer, "R.D.FitzGerald -
Philosopher or Poet?", Overland, 33 (December 1965), 16;
H.J.Oliver, "The Achievement of R.D.FitzGerald" in Johnston,
Grahame (ed.), Australian Literary Criticism, 69; Vincent
Buckley, Essays in Poetry, 124.
The poems published prior to "The Hidden Bole" span the years 1922-1936 and are those collected together in Forty Years' Poems under the titles "Salvage", "Copernicus" and "Moonlight Acre". The concern with meaning in life is put succinctly in "Chaos":

what can we hope to gain with our best toil? with life itself? what wring from this bleak place?

while chaos itself is seen, in Lindsayan terms, as the prime mover (life is "the mutual slaughter of met forces"), with FitzGerald's protagonist characteristically desiring to be part of that struggle. The very first poem ("Pursuit") in Forty Years' Poems expresses this desire and the theme is recalled shortly afterwards in "The Old Cities" where the "man seeking peace from quarrelling hopes and fears" finds only "a grey peace of death". Life is held, as Lindsay tirelessly maintained, to consist in struggle and effort.

In his earlier work FitzGerald often adopts the stance of the hardy adventurer. In "Well-Wishers" he poses as an outsider:

I, the deserter beating at your city gate
with the ragamuffin army, the knaves and the pitiless.

The later poem "The Toss" renders a similar atmosphere with its flourish of "Life, toss up your florin", strongly reminiscent, as are the taverns and pistols of "At Arica", of Slessor's "good roaring pistol-boys", (8) as also, more importantly, of the spirit of Lindsay's several pirate

8. "Thieves' Kitchen".
drawings and paintings. In the several poems in which the quest of the spirit is the theme, the searcher is more than once depicted as a Lancelot, specifically on a quest in his knightly armour. In "Rewards", for instance, man is urged

to ride out with some frenzied Lancelot

upon an exploit perilous as vain,
and in deep woods do battle with the dark
of passion's madness, to know fear and cark,
desire and bitterness, life's loss and gain;

and in "Long Since", the poet's desire is to be "ever upon quest/of new desires of the spirit". In both "Rewards" and "Tradition", passion and effort of the spirit are seen as the highest good:

Is it not better ... to have loved
fiercely and hopelessly the high remotest flame, than never to have worshipped anything,

while effort and desire are again the themes in "Accomplishment". FitzGerald's poems tend persistently to a rejection of the known and a love of fresh roads, fresh sights and of the infinite (the moon and the sea are favourite metaphors). The last poems in the section titled "Moonlight Acre" exemplify this, as does "At Least", the final poem in "Copernicus", with its characteristic stress on the importance to man of living each moment to the full:

If I should die tonight - ... at least I have seen the moon.

Thus grown aware, intent,
who probes this hour shall find every supreme event,

9. "Tradition".
for the flux of enduring things,
all that life takes or brings
or mind mirrors on mind.

For there lives no instant else
than that, barbaric, which breaks
into the citadels
of being, and issues thence
stabbing each stagnant sense
till the whole city wakes.

FitzGerald's poetry constantly endorses Lindsay's
convictions as to the necessity of stress and persistent
effort of the spirit to the end of realising one's
potential in a life in which each "stagnant sense" is
fully alive.

FitzGerald also frequently alludes to the
characteristically Lindsayan idea of that mental vision
which goes beyond but is dependent on both senses and
intellect. "Return" alludes to modes of experience that
are "beyond thought's reckoning" while the preceding poem,
"Rewards", moves "towards what truths or half-known
images/flash beyond thought". (10) This is the idea of
imaginative vision which, although it is at times
postulated in FitzGerald's work as being inspired by or
towards the specifically sensual, (11) is as often inspired

10. Art's necessity to life as a means of apprehending a type of
reality, and the nature of the imaginative, intuitive truth
that poetry offers, is the subject of the chapter titled
"Poetry's Approach to Reality" in FitzGerald's The Elements
of Poetry, Brisbane 1963. In both this publication and the
earlier address, "An Attitude to Modern Poetry", FitzGerald
discusses notions of the interdependence of mind and matter,
of the necessity of "the passionate and sincere in art" and
of concrete imagery, and art's necessity to life as a means
of perception and evaluation. He acknowledges Norman Lindsay
as the impetus for his poetic theories in the twenties and
affirms that "in so far as I subscribe to theories at all, I
hold those theories still" (The Elements of Poetry, 18).

11. See for instance the group of poems about women in "Salvage",
18-27, also "Return" with its specifically sensual "doomed
lovers".
by intellectual aspiration. FitzGerald's "stars of desire" (12) are not usually amorous. Desire in his poetry is a more widely-embracing concept which incorporates any positive, life-enhancing impulse, or which expresses itself in a more theoretical manner such as in the desire for a perfect concept of beauty, as in "Rewards":

But better surely that a note should stir the pulse of consciousness, the action of breath, rather than beauty have no life, no death - a mote in a moonbeam, only quieter!

In his celebration of imaginative vision, desire and positive effort, FitzGerald is neither more nor less "factual . . . incarnational, than his master Norman Lindsay". (13) In the works of both men, life is consistently and explicitly proposed as fruitful in these terms. The spirit of Lindsay's ideas further remains a very important informing principle in FitzGerald's subsequent explorations of the nature of beauty and action. Whereas his earlier poems had tended more to simple assertion than to exploration of ideas, a shift in emphasis to a more reflective and exploratory mode was clearly marked in 1934 with the publication of "The Hidden Bole".

The bud image of eternally renewing beauty with which "The Greater Apollo" concluded reappeared seven years later in "The Hidden Bole", readily suggesting a

12. "Return".
continuity of concern between the two poems, and although "The Hidden Bole" amplifies, it does not essentially alter the earlier poem's proposals about the continuity of life. In both poems it is particularly the beauty of the material world that is seen as life's permanent and enduring element. The death of Pavlova serves in "The Hidden Bole" as the occasion for an extended enquiry into the nature of beauty and of the continuation of effort from one generation to another. (14) Lindsay held that "the impulse of all high thought, high effort, is ... to add its vision of beauty, and its clarity of mind to the dignity of a clean and orderly existence", (15) and FitzGerald's poem is the effect of such an impulse in its specific celebration of the beauty Pavlova added to life by her art. Although Pavlova herself is lost to man, "nowhere will you find/her feet that dazzled death and now are stilled", her effort to express beauty still survives and is transmitted down the generations. FitzGerald likens this beauty to "cast shells of radiance drifting out and on", and ponders the means of its transmission:

how shall new morning seize from yesterday the flowers it traced in fugitive designs?

This leads into an investigation of both the nature and

14. In the same way, the death of Joe Lynch in Slessor's "Five Bells" is itself not so much the centre of the poem as the occasion of a speculation on the nature and destiny of the human spirit.
15. Creative Effort, 6. Mr. FitzGerald read Creative Effort when it was first published in 1920. Conveyed to the writer in conversation, November 1969.
effects of beauty. One of its effects is considered to be that it provides the stimulus and goal of that vision whereby man is taken beyond the confines of the tangible world:

   Beauty, are you some shadow on this dream
   which dreams the world, this vision whereunto
   our lives grow out, absorbing, beyond view?

The phrase "beyond view" stresses the imaginative or intellectual nature of the development that beauty fosters. (16)

These lines recall an earlier poem, "Return", in which a similar idea of mental vision was expressed:

   Now the eyes imaging one face
   lead life beyond its living-place
   through this fair shadow-screen
   of touched and seen.

The "shadow-screen" recurs in "Essay on Memory" where there is a "screen called living", upon which are "sounds and shadows thrown by hollow powers, obscure immensities", and which represent only a partial reality, only such reality as "thought possesses". Whereas "Essay on Memory" proposes that thought alone yields man only a partial reality, in "Return" the opposite obtains with the senses ("masonry caging in the mind - impervious and dense/ashlar of sense") offering only an insubstantial ("flowerlike and frail") and partial reality. But if man complements the insubstantial offerings of the senses by imaginative effort he may attain

16. See Mr. FitzGerald's endorsement of Lindsay's convictions as to the importance of beauty "as the highest symbol of vitality of mind", and of the moral importance of the image of beauty in art, in R.D.FitzGerald, "Views of Norman Lindsay", Overland, 58 (Winter 1974), 62-64.
to an intuitive and imaginative timelessness of experience. In "Return" the imaginative effort and its effect are specifically sensual ("there's a soft mouth that meets my own"), yet more than sensual. Both senses and intellect working together yield an experience of which the poet says in conclusion:

So I pass outward, and beyond thought's reckoning, where time's a pond unrippled by any stone knowledge has thrown.

This is in essence Norman Lindsay's idea of the mental image that can lead man to the apprehension of a reality that is both timeless and greater than any offered by earth or the procedure of existence. Both Lindsay and FitzGerald regard the world of "touched and seen" as an insubstantial shadow-screen on which are projected images of a reality which lies beyond. (17) The creative effort of man expresses a "perception of a Perfection that goes quite beyond the primitive stimulus of the senses", wrote Lindsay, (18) "a perception of Perfection in Passion, Beauty, Form and Sensation, which goes beyond any evidence of these elements on earth". (19) Man can attain to such perception by creative, imaginative effort which itself depends on the use of both senses and intellect. As FitzGerald wrote in "Tide's Will":

17. See Creative Effort, 21, 275 and passim, and Chapter Three above.
It is but vision that can teach
clay to be hands and hands to reach
past sense and aught that sense may hold,
striving and seeking. So these arms enfold
not just the moonrest girl but the whole moonlight gold.

In "The Hidden Bole" man's perception of an image of
perfect beauty is seen both as the means whereby he may
transcend the limited reality which earth and the senses
offer, and as an Ultimate which provides a direction and
goal for life. Beauty is "the full all-that-is, the
blinding Must":

We are as fingers for its sense, or eyes
or focal-centres of its broader beam -
changing, dissolving aspects whose summed whole
spells out the shape, the goal,
not making it some essence from the skies,
ethereal, whose presence clings, pervades,
but granites (fire and law and flesh and dust),
not Cause that topples, Reason that half persuades,
but the full all-that-is, the blinding Must.

Beauty is both potent and tangible ("fire and flesh"),
needing mind and senses alike for its apprehension:

Certain I may not name you nature's child:
nature shall call you and that cry reflect
against your home, the cliffs of intellect,
and echo down gorges greenly sensual . . .

Beauty is not simply "nature's child", is not simply to be
found in the natural world, but is instead a man-made
thing. Although man may "distil" a concept of beauty's
essence from nature (nature is said to be beauty's "alembic"),
beauty itself must be created by the mind: its "home" is "the
cliffs of intellect". Moreover, that concept of beauty which
the mind creates is expressed by the body in sensual activity:
the name of beauty shall "echo", shall physically move, "down
gorges greenly sensual".
Intellect and imagination are necessary to a perception even of such beauty as the natural world possesses. When FitzGerald wrote of beauty:

Savages know you not. You have small being in the out-world - none, should no mind impress upon the cell-brought sight its wider seeing; you woo waked arteries with a trained caress ..., he was referring specifically to the natives of Fiji whom he found to have no sense of the immense natural beauty of their islands, (20) while also generally expressing the necessity of intellect to the apprehension of natural beauty. The imagery of the lover (concepts of wooing and caressing) again suggests the sensual effects of the intellect's creation of beauty and emphasises the inter­dependence of mind and matter.

The observation in the poem's final stanza that "only one age could reach" Pavlova again involves the idea that a certain amount of mental development is necessary before it is possible to perceive beauty such as Pavlova expressed. Lindsay expressed much the same idea in Creative Effort:

... the savage has your senses, your opportunity to exercise them. Then why does he remain a savage? Because he has no tradition of mind by which he may arrive from savagery. And the tradition of Mind is maintained by Art. (21)

Beauty is not simply an adornment to life but rather its

energising and directing force. The poem's whole import
is to confirm that beauty is "the fertile force within
this mud,/not just the plant that springs there". Beauty
is a motive force that causes the autophagous flux of
life to move, and yet is apart from it; (22) man's effort
to express his concept of beauty in art (that of the dance,
of love, of a poem) is the chief energising and directing
force of life.

In the permanently self-renewing nature of beauty
lies, moreover, man's best assurance of the continuity of
life:

We ask no more than let our joy be frail,
since its whole wisdom is its passing hence;
nor would we stamp on you the permanence
which, only, is death. Ay, roots of a new growth
strangle the column in the woods, impale
crevices of old carvings, lion-headed,
which are the moss-embedded
dreams of dead chiseling hands; and out of both -
from the dead hands and that they sought to freeze
static in stone - the contending jungle twines.

The "contending jungle" of the present is deeply indebted
to the creative efforts, the "old carvings" and "moss-
embedded dreams" of the past. The poet's present effort
in preserving Pavlova's effort, in "rhyming" her "into
fact", is itself dependent on the past creative efforts
of both the dancer and of previous poets.

"The Hidden Bole"'s assurance of the transmission
and continuation of beauty did not offer any satisfaction
about the preservation of other of man's creative efforts.

22. Discussed by Mr. FitzGerald in conversation with the
writer, November 1969.
In his persistent and characteristically Lindsayan concern for meaning and continuity in life, FitzGerald went on in "Essay on Memory" (23) to ponder this question in terms of the nature of memory, which latter he proposes as constituting "the past itself", the whole of the past that continues to exert an influence on the present. Man is necessarily dependent on the past, but this need not be a dependence which cripples present enterprise. On the contrary, the achievement and stimulus of the past are perpetually available to man through his ancestral memory and through the deathless flame of consciousness ("strange miracle of self"). Lindsay also held that Mind was the "inherited receptacle of previous high effort" (24) and that, though men and nations may disappear:

we have still the tradition of their Art and thought, and more than that, we have the actual tradition of their blood . . . .

Behind every human being alive today there is an unbroken chain going back to the dawn of man on earth. Blood is not remade each generation. It is a current that has never ceased running. (25)

Further,

Intellect grows by maturity of effort, handed down the centuries. It comes to light in whatever channel its blood flows. (26)

23. "Essay on Memory", as the winning poem in the Australian Sesquicentenary Poetry Competition, was first printed in the Sydney Morning Herald, April 9th, 1938, 7. The poem's final stanza was on this occasion omitted by Mr. FitzGerald as the printers wished to fit the poem into an allotted space which would not accommodate the final stanza. Conveyed to the writer in conversation with Mr. FitzGerald, November 1969. For textual variations between the Sydney Morning Herald and Forty Years' Poems version of the poem, see Appendix A.


25. Ibid, 121.

26. Ibid, 120.
The convictions of both Lindsay and FitzGerald on this matter are the same. FitzGerald's idea of "composite mind" involves the conviction of man's blood links with the past, the conviction that all men spring from the same stock and contain in their own blood the blood of countless ancestors. In this way can the traditions and achievements of the past be said to be "inherited". (27)

"Essay on Memory" proposes that we are all one mind, and that we are also the propagators of ancestral memory. There is however a danger in this view, in that its extension may encourage man to see himself as merely the product of memory, as an undifferentiated molecule in the life-stream continuum. But FitzGerald cannot, no more than could Lindsay, allow any reduction of the importance of the individual existence, so he strives for an appropriate balance between these two views. (28)

He argues that at the present time, existence only appears to us as "sheer action", the "bird's flight as the bird":

Now only appear
re-shuffling motion and the turn of the year:
all is become sheer action which perceives
bright leaves themselves as rustling of the leaves,
the bird's flight as the bird.

But this view, which tends to reduce the reality of existence by considering reality to inhere only in active physical forms, is at best only a half-truth commanding neither

27. Discussed by Mr. FitzGerald in conversation with the writer, November 1969.
28. For fuller discussion of these ideas see K.M. Cantrell, "Some Elusive Passages in R.D. FitzGerald's 'Essay on Memory'".
emotional nor intellectual support:

    This, heart denies
eternally; and Memory, too, replies -
links up the many flights upon one thread
of keen-eyed bird too busy to be dead
between flights done; for Memory stays the hour
and behind flower-growth is even the flower.

Memory reminds us that each form is meaningless in itself,
and that we have to link up all forms to find meaning, life
and energy. The bird is itself, but is also a particular
form of the eternal flight-urge, and it is memory that
links up these many flights to see the bird as keeping the
species going by its activity. The bird is also, however,
an individual which exists even when physically inactive.
A balanced view of existence must incorporate a recognition
of both the individual and its function in a larger move­
ment; flight of the bird implies a bird to fly. By
extension, we ourselves are not simply functions of memory,
but are ourselves, and our individuality is among the
conditions for the very survival of the dead and of memory,
since it is only by individual activity that the past is
brought forward:

    Indeed, we are the substance of their thought
which starves in air, can balance on no mystic
knife-edge of abstract being, twixt nought and nought,
so kneads itself in this inert, this plastic
material of our lives.

Mind itself cannot do anything at all, cannot be effective,
until it takes solid shape; thought, which has

    only sounds and shadows thrown
by hollow powers, obscure immensities,
upon the screen called living...
cannot exist in a sphere of independence of its own making; intellect is inextricably bound up with the earth, the physical. FitzGerald is like Lindsay not only in this insistence but in his confident affirmation of the worth of action and endeavour: "we must/build upward though we guess not to what skies". FitzGerald strongly recalls Lindsay in his honouring, by cheerfulness and effort, of the efforts of our forebears who, by

violence of mind, violence of action . . . served their kind with that straight growth of will which bears for seed zea[t to create; which, grasping at blind air, graves flowers from veriest nothing and makes fair all that we have.

The penultimate stanza of "Essay on Memory" is optimistic and affirmative in the face of the acknowledged possibility that man's efforts may return to dust. Man must act despite this possibility, else he betrays his inner vision and his life blood,

the lamp behind our eyes, the quickening in our veins, both held in trust since long before the scumming of the germ upon first seas.

What is being insisted on in "Essay on Memory" is a notion of the life-stream continuum which also takes into full account and allows recognition of the importance of the individual. Even within the context of his more metaphysical speculations, FitzGerald shows a persistent concern, as did Lindsay throughout his life, with the nature of present life and of the individual's place and importance in that life.

The energy which is a characteristic of both the matter and manner of FitzGerald's poems has often been
noted. Life is seen as effort, energy, activity and it is
not surprising that FitzGerald should particularly endorse
in his prose works Lindsay's advocacy of "conscious and
persistent effort". (29) The positive activity celebrated
in "Essay on Memory" ("Wherefore all good is effort, and
all truth/encounter and overcoming"), as also in the
earlier poems (as discussed), continued a dominant theme in
FitzGerald's work. The poems in the selection titled "This
Night's Orbit" (1939-1952) in Forty Years' Poems show
FitzGerald as always retaining an energetic confidence and
openness to experience ("But always I have met,/and shall
meet, the fresh hour"), (30) and gladly asserting "pride/
from the day's task met and the morrow still defied". (31)
Man's persistent need is for enterprise and new horizons,
confidently sought: "the unmet horizons ... taunt you
yet", (32) and

It is proud asking that will thrust
where the few footprints fill with dust. (33)

Always FitzGerald stresses "the old urge towards living", (34)
always the

out-thrust
of renewal from within - process of growth -
which aching and recovery both
are signs of . . . .

(35)

All these are expressive, in their different ways, of the

29. The Elements of Poetry, 71.
30. "This Night's Orbit"; see also "Wonder", "Duped Though
   We Were".
31. "1918-1941".
32. "Roly-Poly".
33. Ibid.
34. "Week-end Miracle".
35. Ibid.
energy which promotes life, and so too is FitzGerald’s most
enigmatic poem, "The Face of the Waters" (1944), which
probes the nature of the archetypal energy (the creation of
the universe), but which may also be seen as alluding to
the creation of the self by energy or effort.

In "The Face of the Waters" FitzGerald’s
supposition is that if life is pursued right back to its
ultimate source, not God (as is consistent with FitzGerald’s
conviction, in his other works, of the sufficiency of life
without any supernatural agency), but a "placeless dot" is
found: there is nothing but energy. The "pre-time pinpoint
of impossible beginning" is dynamic, and cannot even be seen
as nothing, because something is always on the point of
emerging.

The idea of nothing becoming something is also
suggested in the "scurry of feet", the "tentative migration"
of "a universe on the edge of being born". These "tentative
migrations" are arrested by "the twang like a harpstring or
the spring of a trap" and, if the "eternal instant" of
creation is seen as applying also to self-creation, and
artistic creation, the "twang like a harpstring" may signify
the collapse of the effort towards artistic (musical)
expression, and the "spring of a trap", man as trapped by
the collapse of his own enterprise and energy. The juxta-
position of the two images suggests the collapse of artistic
effort as synonymous with the collapse of the self; self-
creation as synonymous with artistic creation. The self, as
well as the world, is in a constant state of becoming, and
there are
ever-being erected, ever-growing
ideas unphysically alternative
to nothing, which is the quick.

Even though, of man's intellectual efforts, there can be no
floor to the bottomless;
except in so far as conjecture must arrive,
lungs cracking, at the depth of its dive;

conjecture, enquiry and effort remain always necessary, for
the "eternal instant" of creation, be it cosmic, or self-
creation through artistic creation, is forever "the pin-
point bursting into reality", bursting into that life which
is itself effort and action, "the struggle to magpie-morning
and all life's clamour and lust".

From this, his most theoretically speculative poem,
FitzGerald turned, in "Fifth Day" and "Between Two Tides",
to a less abstract presentation of energy in specific
dramatisations and evaluations of the efforts and actions of
man. The exploration in "Between Two Tides" of the effects
and ends of action is both complement and extension of the
suggestion in "Essay on Memory" that man should act in
order to bring forward the past:

Then knot this hour's activity as a rope
in strength of climbing hands . . .
... all good is effort, and all truth
encounter and overcoming.

In "Essay on Memory" FitzGerald had urged that "we must/build
upward though we guess not to what skies" else we betray our
blood inheritance of the direction and effort pointed by our
ancestors. The purposes that man's actions may serve are
considered in detail in "Between Two Tides" which probes how
action affects the individual and his realisation of
integrity:

how any man's work, 
hatreds, virtues, ambitions, shape or destroy 
not nations but his fellows, you or himself.

FitzGerald had briefly considered the matter of action in 
"Fifth Day", where, although it was conceded that

Action in the end

goes down the stream as motion, merges as such
with the whole of life and time,

the importance of the individual in that stream ("islands
stand") was, as in "Essay on Memory", again stressed. In
"Fifth Day", what is held to matter is attitude and bearing,
"dignity and distinctness that attach/to the inmost being of
us each". "Results mean little", FitzGerald had declared, (36)
and "Between Two Tides" makes clear precisely what was meant
by this. The habitual direction of reference to Lindsay is
apparent in the concern with the worth of life, with those
actions that make life valuable to man. In "Between Two
Tides", as in "The Wind at Your Door", FitzGerald offers a
moral imperative and not simply a historical one. It is
simply not true to say of him either that "the praise of
energy and action without very much regard for what kind
of action is seen all through his work", (37) or that

A historical imperative may not seem a wholly
satisfactory substitute for a moral
imperative . . . but it seems, in the end, to
be all FitzGerald has to offer us, as a
philosophy. (38)

36. "Fifth Day".
37. F.H. Mares, "The Poetry of Robert FitzGerald", Southerly,
XXVI, 1 (1966), 4.
38. Wright, Preoccupations in Australian Poetry, 176.
The dominant concern of "Between Two Tides" is with man's growth to integrity amid the decisions and actions which life thrusts upon him, "the inward struggle in the soul of man, reflected in the outward struggles of dynasties". (39) The historical basis of the poem is the story of Will Mariner, who sailed from England in 1805 to Tonga, where his ship's crew was slaughtered, Will alone surviving because his bearing impressed the Tongans with the belief that he was of high-ranking lineage. Will became the adopted son ("Toki") of the chieftain Finau, and for several years lived through the Tongan civil wars to return at length to England and publish his account, written for him by the aged Dr. Martin of part five of the poem, of the Tongan islanders.

That this narrative is to serve as a vehicle for enquiry into the worth of man's actions and experiences is emphasised by the fact that the poem starts with Will's death. The narrative itself is not as important as the fact that it serves, as did Pavlova's death in "The Hidden Bole", and Joe's in Slessor's "Five Bells", as the occasion for a dramatised discourse on the value to man's spirit of action and effort. (40)

39. FitzGerald states this to be the theme of the epic genre in The Elements of Poetry, 10.
40. FitzGerald considers that, although the intention of "killing" Mariner at the poem's outset was to focus attention on the poem's more philosophical aspects, this "killing" has nonetheless contributed strongly to what FitzGerald considers to be the poem's narrative or dramatic failure. Conveyed to the writer in conversation, November 1969.
In the opening stanzas of section two, FitzGerald marks out the perspective his narrative is to follow:

Nations are not men that compose them or even masses of men but hungry jelly having no mind save hunger. Persons are better than that . . . . . . . there were words and benefits and achievements that are more than creeping hunger.

In drawing a distinction between man in the mass and man as an individual, between historical events or movements and those who move them, he draws attention both to the selective nature of his own interest in action and its effects, and to his own valuing of discriminated efforts.

Lindsay had in view much the same end and adopted much the same procedure when he distinguished between and evaluated the spheres of Existence and Life in Creative Effort.

In his attempt to distinguish the effects and the avenues of operation of social effort, FitzGerald points to one of the functions of art:

...to judge truly how any man's work, hatreds, virtues, ambitions, shape or destroy not nations but his fellows, you or himself, one does not look at Caesar, but at a puppet murdered upon the stage.

It is art that elucidates and evaluates for man the achievements of men such as Caesar, Napoleon or Finau, the "words and benefits and achievements/that are more than creeping hunger". Art is proposed in "Between Two Tides" as one of the principal means by which the efforts of men are transmitted and evaluated down the generations.

FitzGerald has written that "the cultural function of narrative poetry [is] in making historical events memorable..."
and in deepening their significance for us"; (41) and Lindsay likewise stressed the major importance of art in its setting in perspective and evaluation of the efforts of man. "Between Two Tides" exemplifies its theory by putting in perspective and suggesting the relevance and value to contemporary man of the efforts and achievements of Will Mariner, the Englishman who by a freak of circumstance became for many years the adopted son of the nineteenth century Tongan chieftain, Finau.

At the beginning of the poem's second section, FitzGerald points, as in earlier works and particularly in "Essay on Memory", to the merging of the individual in the larger units of the species and of the flood of time:

movements move of themselves; one forgets the men and women moving them, or moved with them; even the heroes are but names. It is hard to find one heel-mark after the passing of a marching army; and if you find such a mark - on the sand between two tides - there is little to say whether perhaps it was Caesar's or Napoleon's.

To speculate on the point of the footprint is to receive a partial assurance in much the same terms as were offered in "The Greater Apollo" and "Essay on Memory". In these poems, the assurance that the past and its tradition of effort was in man's blood, involved the inference that man's present effort would be in the blood of future generations. The individual life, the individual effort, is seen as part of something larger; so too in "Between Two Tides" is there the conviction of

the completion
of life each moment within some greater fullness
which too held living and was both present and past.

Within the terms of this conviction, the poem offers a
number of suggestions as to the point of the footprint, and
employs again the dialectical method, similar to that of
Creative Effort, which FitzGerald first used in "The Greater
Apollo". No single suggestion as to the point of the foot­
print is sufficient in itself; the poem builds to a many­sided consideration of its import.

Mariner is shown as at first tending to place his
faith in the value of mere action. It is not until after
he returns to England that he realises that what matters is
not so much action itself as its effect on the integrity of
the individual. He is too deeply involved in affairs and
too inclined to "give up" ethical questions while actually
in Tonga to be able to see this clearly. Perhaps the most
important ethical decision which Mariner fails to decide in
terms which do not compromise his personal integrity
involves the choice of allegiance as to chieftains which he
is obliged to make during the course of the islanders'
 extensive civil warrings. Tubou Niua, ruler of Vavau and
loyal half-brother to Finau, ruler of the Hapai group of
islands, is eventually murdered at Finau's command in the
cause of the latter's aspiration for total sovereignty over
all the Tongan islands. Tubou Niua was "too powerful and
too beloved, one chief too many/for policy to pass over,
therefore a victim", and his death involves Mariner in the
necessity of making a fresh choice of allegiance as to
chieftains, as Finau is not the only contender for total
sovereignty. But Finau, who is an efficient leader and to whom as his adopted son Mariner owes a debt of gratitude, is nonetheless implicated in several acts of an ethically dubious nature, as the murder of Tubou Niua makes especially clear to Mariner, and as a consequence of which he is forced to think back over other of the means which Finau has employed to gain his political ends:

More than appearance was against the king . . . . Always his way had been to play reluctant, unwilling, and escape hatred while others did his job for him . . . .

The condemnation of Finau's evasive and underhand murder of Tubou Niua is the more explicit when compared with the courage displayed by Tubou Niua in his earlier killing of the Tuku, the king who was "brutal beyond ordinary viciousness":

This moment was something Tubou Niua was born for, with pity in his heart for Tonga, strength in his heart to be fearless among enemies all about him, and bitter contempt for politics. The house was in darkness . . . .

Wake, Tuku, there's a dazzle of light before you and a voice in your ears: "It is I, Tubou Niua; it is I who strike!" So dies a tyranny with the birth of a greater tyranny of fear.

The stress on Tubou Niua's patriotism and selflessness ("So simple a plot/. . . . had nothing in it of the more devious brain"), contrasts, even at this early stage, very strongly with the mode of action of Finau, who supported Tubou Niua in his plot on the Tuku "from ambition,/for his own ends, and played a secondary part/from complex motives".

Mariner further comes to reflect on Finau's use of men as tools (such as Vason), in the furtherance of his own
ends. Mariner is himself used in this way to entice a man to show him the bindings on an old spear, outside in the light, so that Finau can seize him in a defenceless position. When prisoners are bound to the mangroves and "left to the tide, to drown or starve", Mariner's affirmation of this action ("a wise move, doubtless!") is qualified even as it is uttered.

In choosing to follow Finau after the murder of Tubou Niua ("How close that trickery came to being treachery; but not as Toki need see it!"), Mariner shelves the problem of conscience which is raised by a consideration of Finau's involvement in that murder, and settles for a policy of expediency, which he calls duty. Although he does raise the "hard question" as to the reason for action:

As for reason -
why, if he did this thing, was this thing done? -
that was a hard question . . .

he gives it up ("What mattered more/were results and happenings themselves"), and acts in accordance with the spirit of this assertion ("Toki's choice was made/already. It lay with Finau"). The problem of conscience is put aside:

Assume his [Finau's] guilt and rightness of policy marred by wrongness of act; yet few opposing him had not blood on their hands of indiscriminate killings. The chief to follow was the effective leader not the most innocent - something that didn't exist. And one's own road - through Tonga as through that stranger land one's life -

must be determined among rights and wrongs by one's own conscience, not someone else's guilt whatever the act and consequence. Duty, maybe, was simply save your skin for better occasion. Yet the place kept and fed you; and friendly people shared light and laughter with you; and there was gratitude
owed to Finau. Duties were complex problems, contradictory, interacting, and mounting up, like rollers curling weightily in cross-currents. Then take the nearest bow-on: something to be done needing attention now.

By glossing over Finau's guilt and "wrongness of act" in a justification for "the effective leader not the most innocent", Mariner deceives himself, and in the scene immediately following this is made clear by Laifotu, the island girl who loves Mariner. Mariner justifies his decision to follow Finau after Tubou Niua's murder by claiming that "It is right I should follow my chief", to which Laifotu replies, "It is right enough/spoken in Tongan, not in your proper fashion". This recalls Mariner's earlier pondering of ethical questions:

There was a time before one was Toki at all: one was a lad on a ship in another world, and called oneself Will Mariner.

Although the treacheries Finau employs to gain his political ends "make/Will Mariner uneasy", "Tongan practice" condones them, and Mariner reflects:

there was no meeting
for lines of thought of two races in one skin
at the same time: one could be Will or Toki.
At present it must be Toki . . . .

But Laifotu reminds him that

there is a forgetting
in which you drown, not I - who remember so much
the great chief lying on the path, whom also I loved.

Laifotu cannot, like Mariner, put out of mind the image of the murdered Tubou Niua, nor, in choosing to follow Finau
after this murder, accept an action which violates the integrity of one's own conscience.

Mariner however only comes to realise this much later on, when he perceives that what matters is the decision

in any man's life
of being true to himself, casting aside any pretence of being other than he is in his own sight, knowing where he stands at last among tugging loyalties and desires.

This perception is, he believes, the key to the riddle which had been posed years earlier by a Spanish Don, who had said:

what I would say is that one lives as one chooses to live, even though choice is blind — ... Every hour holds its choice. We do the choosing; but events present the straws. The ends are hidden; who knows the short from the long? (42)

Mariner sees the Don's meaning to be that the straws are themselves events, outcomes, actions, and that these matter not so much in themselves, being to a considerable degree beyond the realm of personal control, as in the way that one's coping with them affects the spirit:

Not a choice of straws; this action or that, this task or that, this ethic — the old Don's meaning a life ago in Tola, misunderstood before, was clear enough now. "We do the choosing; events present the straws" — mere straws after all whatever might be presented, whatever chosen. You could not command events concerning, affecting, concerned and affected by, all men, all life; and anything you might choose, as events allowed, was trifling in its result upon the spirit, the self ...

42. In conversation with the writer, November 1969, Mr. Fitzgerald stated that this was the poem's philosophical centre.
This was what weighed:
"One lives as one chooses to live" - being true to oneself among acts and outcomes.

Mariner comes to realise that what the Don spoke of was less a praise of action than a praise of the integrity of being, to which action ought to be subservient. Events are in fact straws; outcomes are not important. Emphasis is on the man of integrity, the man who accepts or denies effort. Lindsay is more optimistic, in his conviction that mind makes events, than is FitzGerald for whom events are amoeba that are likely to swallow the man:

You could not command events concerning, affecting, concerned and affected by, all men, all life; and anything you might choose, as events allowed, was trifling in its result upon the spirit, the self.

The poem's emphasis is on man as distinct from affairs. To live is to be implicated in continual acts of choice, and the choice reveals and is determined by the intrinsic merit of the chooser. Events and outcomes are not within the province of the chooser to determine (being the results of more than his choice), and are of consequence to man's spirit principally in that man is fully responsible for the quality and nature of what he does, and is, in making his act of choice. The most important consequence to Finau of the murder of his half-brother, Tubou Niua, is his own subsequent decline. Although he may have been driven to this act by forceful external pressures (the necessity to Tonga of unified rule), it remains for all its political expediency an act which is untrue to the self:
The tragedy of this thing
was not a death on the pathway of many deaths
in wars breaking out afresh, but in the downfall
of great designs and beginnings and perhaps a man.

The story of "Between Two Tides" is Finau's, as Dr. Martin
observes:

That tale was Finau's—
except as, mystically, it was man's, the spirit
captured in old struggles of right with wrong for
mastery —

but the poem's thematic centre rests on Mariner, who is more
than simply "the eyes of the tale", as Dr. Martin describes
him. It is principally through Mariner, and not through
Finau, that FitzGerald dramatises the value to man of effort
and action. It is insufficient realisation of this, and of
the thoroughly Lindsayan nature of FitzGerald's theme, that
has led to "Between Two Tides" being criticised on the
grounds that

the 'philosophy' which ought to emanate from
the narrative is only superimposed on it. The
'moral' seen by FitzGerald in the story of Finau
is not borne out by that story at all .... (42)

But the poem's suggestions as to the nature of man's actions and
their value to the self are fully borne out by Mariner's story,
and also, although to a lesser extent, by the other protagonists.
Action is by no means indiscriminately affirmed in "Between Two
Tides"; FitzGerald's concern, as was Lindsay's, is with
extensive and scrupulous consideration of the value of action
as it affects the development of the self.

42. H.J. Oliver, "The Achievement of R.D. FitzGerald", 77. See
also Wright, Preoccupations in Australian Poetry, 166;
Douglas Stewart, "Robert D. FitzGerald, A Background to
his Poetry", in Dutton, Geoffrey (ed.), The Literature of
Australia, Ringwood 1964, 338.
FitzGerald also probes matters other than outward action. He values the "inward resolution" and wisdom of the Don in Tola, as also the clear-sighted vision of his daughter Micaela, a seer rather than actor ("she was still caught up in the adventure of sight"). Dr. Martin is also condoned in the terms of the poem, not so much in his activity of writing Mariner's chronicle, important though this is in dramatically illustrating the observation on the place of the arts with which section two of the poem began, as in his intellectual enquiry: his "thirst for truth/was adventure of the spirit". In this respect Dr. Martin's effort goes beyond that of Joseph Gurney, the shorthand recorder of "Fifth Day". Dr. Martin's observation that man only achieves self-development, "moulds" himself by both inward and outward action:

Only by acts
of resolution does any man mould himself
to something he'd know tomorrow,

itself accords with Lindsayan doctrine.

FitzGerald in "Between Two Tides" insists on the importance of individual personal integrity, and proposes a notion of the independence of the self from material circumstances. Mariner does achieve an integrity in the course of the poem. The influence on the boy Mariner of Captain Duck, which influence mitigated against a proper understanding of the Don's words when Mariner heard them first in Duck's company - even the Don noted that

Earth is for these [Duck]
who walk through words of a tale of their own telling;
and life is for this boy who has not found it,
who as yet is but the shadow of his captain -

is superseded by the influence of Finau. As Finau's politics of apparent expediency kill not only himself but the integral man, Tubou Niua, so does Mariner's imitation of that choice
(his own expedient decision to follow Finau), effectively destroy his chance of personal integrity in a love relationship with Laifotu.

It is only after Finau's death that Mariner fully realises the means of being true to himself, by returning to England. Finau's death severs Mariner's only real, yet vital link with Tonga, although:

as in Tonga so too in England there would be something missing never to be attained. All aims, all effort, seek to fill somehow emptiness of hands reaching to what the heart would have which still desires (beyond man's little capacity) something not known.

Mariner has learned to live with this desire, and in terms of an achieved individuality. He has passed from under the successive shadows of his former Captains Duck and Brown, and of Finau, to a personal individuality and integrity, a separate identity. But, as Dr. Martin observes, Mariner carried with him something that was not shadow out of his earlier years: it jutted shoulders through shirt and coat; and they were naked shoulders.

Mariner, returned to London and become a respectable stockbroker, remains unable to wholly reconcile his Tongan experiences with his London life, remains unable to fully assess the value of his Tongan acts to himself. He reflects:

As for uncommon experiences long since, they were nothing that should be lived with - just a good tale if anyone chose to listen; the aspirations of living, the reaching out towards love and joy and creation and the unattained had found long ago a different symbol, one allowing for the achieved: job, friends, wife, children;
and yet comprising hunger under the heart
that man must live by if he will grow, not soften.
There was no hint of loss, but there was quest
still . . . .

There is "no hint of loss", but there is dissatisfaction in
"the thing unfinished", in the sense that a part of oneself
belongs always to the past and that a reconciliation between
the two, the ability to see oneself as an integrated being
moulded by the influences of both past and present, is
difficult to achieve:

the past walked with you in unfulfillment
and ... still required you, could touch your arm
demanding: "The thing unfinished, where did you put it?
That part of your very fibre which I built up,
I have my claim upon it. Go forward as you will,
you cannot escape the emptiness you left with me;
it is ahead of you somewhere." What then was needed
to reconcile - make whole - both present and past?

Will's death by drowning occurs immediately after he has
posed this speculation; his physical dropping into the
tide is in symbolic relation to Dr. Martin's concluding
observation:

Lives were so linked,
one man's to the next, going forward to futurity, ...
that dropped in the tide by ones they were still together ....

From the comment he offers on Will's death, "here
there might be that answer", and from the evidence of his
other poems, this would seem to be the affirmative

FitzGerald proposes to Mariner's question. The physical
death of the individual marks his entry into the flood of
time which is past, present and future, and this future
itself is envisaged in terms of voyage, of adventure and
discovery (the image of the ship).

Will has already "died" once, at his departure from
Tonga. As the brig on which he is returning to England sails further from the islands, the narrator comments that "Will Mariner ... was dead where he stood - with all his life before him". Will's death by drowning is similarly to be regarded as the start of another "life". This is not to confer on FitzGerald any view of the survival of the soul after death, but to note that the poem's concluding image is an optimistic one, and very like Lindsay in its suggestion of the continuance and significance of life. Lindsay thought of the hereafter as an "adventure", and it is interesting that FitzGerald uses Lindsay's own term, "futurity". Lindsay himself was enthusiastic about "Between Two Tides" and he wrote of it to FitzGerald, "I need not add that my pleasure in the poem as a work of art was enhanced by confirming your concept of life and art, because it has long been my own." (43)

"Between Two Tides" is FitzGerald's most sustained exploration to date of the value to man of action and effort, but his concern with this and other characteristically Lindsayan preoccupations has continued apparent in his later poems, which time and again offer optimistic and spirited affirmations of life and effort. "The Tempered Chill" denies any "burring" of the "edge-tool" of sense with increasing age, and stresses the value of an understanding born of "years of stress", while "Grace Before Meat" succinctly puts a theme recurrent in several poems:

43. Unpubl. letter from Norman Lindsay to R.D. FitzGerald, 3 pp., (n.d. but 1950).
All the world's goodness is theirs who most live; strong hands taking it are warm hands to give.

In "The Waterfall" FitzGerald speaks of "the gay leap to justify being" and in "Tocsin" the poet bids

live hands and brain grasp all in reach
and eyes not shut their lids
on anything of earth's that's found
intenser for threat's tone
shrilling.

In the poem which follows ("Protest") FitzGerald urges that it is not necessarily in facts that satisfy the mind that importance lies, but in what speaks to the heart, "reveille/in the blood blaring again". "The Dunce's Cap" reminds us that man does not need the "foreheads of the wise" to "touch . . . sky-windows": he simply needs gaiety, passion and a heart responsive to the pull of the infinite:

praise laughter and romance
and the low lilt of tongues

which bid the unlettered heart
climb and gaze out where strain
peaked seas that none shall chart
on the grey globe of the brain.

FitzGerald's emphasis lies constantly on the voyage of the mind. Only the mind can build "above arm-reaching height", can take man beyond the confines of the senses (laughter, romance and tongues), which themselves urge exploration of the intellect. (44) In "Southmost Twelve" FitzGerald asserts "The powerlessness of will, I still deny", and in "Strata" he repeats his conviction that it is pure

---

44. "Insight: Six Versions", II, "The Dunce's Cap".
pulse of will that brought  
savagery of the breeds  
up raw crags to thought.

Without thought man is only too prone  
to rot and stay content  
with a synthetic stuff,  
a sapless nutriment.

In the immediately following poem value is attached both  
to the "drive of some determining thought" in itself and  
to the fervour implicit in the drive ("Macquarie Place").

The persisting power of mental vision is a  
recurrent theme, either straightforwardly presented as  
scenes recalled from one's past ("Vision") or more  
abstractly as in "Edge", where the mind creates "the  
formed shape/that sense fills where shape vanishes":

the new image, the freed thought,  
are carved from that inert bulk  
where the known ends and the unknown  
is cut down before it - at the mind's edge,  
the knife-edge at the throat of darkness.

As in "Essay on Memory", not only is the particular  
important (the alive particular, the aware life; (45)  
FitzGerald is disturbed by the anonymity of a crowd), (46)  
but so too is the continuing whole important. In "The  
Waterfall" he declares:

I would not dispute the mind's vision as truth  
or deny its vast permanence; but there is more  
to take into account than preserved moments.

For water breaks from the cliff always ....

45. "Eleven Compositions: Roadside", IV.  
46. Ibid, V.
The continuance of life remains his theme. He writes of "new lives, like some re-shuffle/of old forms" ("What Coin Soever"), and in the sixth poem of "Eleven Compositions: Roadside", describes a returning tide or current as being not only new in itself:

whole and single from that vast,  
the self-renewed, be it God or sea

but as also dependent on past waters, "pressed and jostled from behind". "Life", the poem concludes, is

not what bubbles and goes past  
but flows itself, through time, through me.

The continuity of life is indeed the predominant concern of the "Southmost Twelve" volume:

And when you think of it this links my life of not yet sixty years with what seems faint in legendary lore and wholly lost ...

... what's-to-come no longer looms a place separate from all being but, joining here the world we have walked thus far, is even our own.

(47)

In "This Between Us" the poet writes:

Yet there is this between us:  
that your world which is gone, and my world going,  
are your darkness - the passing of what was - and mine blotting tomorrow's windowpane - the passing of what is ...

and, in "Relic at Strength-Fled":

... tomorrows themselves must have their morrow,  
and the world changes and all is caught in change,  
which is ever a widening of some old narrow, ever an immersion of the known thing in the strange ... .
The process of change is readily welcomed as continually bringing forward the past and ushering in the future: it is acknowledged good that "things - good, evil -/grow, change, merge, dug-over by the years", (48) while "The Wind at Your Door", the penultimate poem in the volume Forty Years' Poems, again dramatises life's continuity, the effect of the past on the present. In that poem FitzGerald courageously acknowledges the bond and influence of his own past kin, whose actions were brutal in the extreme:

Perhaps my life replies to his too much through veiling generations dropped between. My weakness here, resentments there, may touch old motives and explain them, till I lean to the forgiveness I must hope may clean my own shortcomings; since no man can live in his own sight if it will not forgive.

FitzGerald extends this claim of kinship in "Beginnings", the final poem in the volume, to embrace all men of the past (Caesar, Cook, Hargrave), ending with a firm affirmation of present life:

But more than to look back we choose this day's concern with everything in the track.

Thus the volume comes full circle. It had begun with claims for the undiminished vigour and increased understanding of age ("The Tempered Chill"), and with a "Greater Apollo"-like celebration of the worth of life as well vouched for in the pleasures of the natural world ("What Coin Soever"). The habitual direction of reference towards Norman Lindsay remains as marked in the later as in the earlier poems. In a letter to FitzGerald in 1963, possibly in reference to

48. "Relic at Strength-Fled".
Southmost Twelve, which first appeared in 1962, Lindsay wrote:

I always find myself in accordance with your thought which conveys the sense of the timelessness of life and its trivial passage in the actuality of the present moment. (49)

The influence of Norman Lindsay on the work of R. D. FitzGerald is evident not only in his concern with the timelessness of life but, most importantly, in his continual and optimistic considerations of the quality and nature of life, and of the value to self-development of effort and action.

Lindsay's influence on the poetry of FitzGerald has usually been postulated, as also in the case of Kenneth Slessor, as pertaining to the early poetry only:

[FitzGerald] is too active a poet to have remained permanently under the spell of a Romantic vitalism, with all its emotionalism and aberration. We cannot fail to see in his later work (what is obscured in his earlier) a concern for the value of human life . . . . (50)

But it is inadequate, inaccurate and misleading to so postulate, and further, to reduce the scope and flexibility of Norman Lindsay's ideas to terms of "Romantic vitalism":

Vitalism may be defined, very crudely, as the view which considers the primitive forces of life, amoral and irresistible, more important than the pattern of moral and aesthetic discrimination by which the adult human being lives. More than that; vitalism is anti-tragic, anti-spiritual, and ultimately anti-human . . . . It is an important strain in our modern poetry; it dominates in a direct way the first books of both Slessor and FitzGerald.... Norman Lindsay is really its spiritual father . . . . (51)

49. Unpubl. letter from Norman Lindsay to R.D. FitzGerald, 3 pp., 28th August, 1963.
50. Buckley, Essays in Poetry, 141.
51. Ibid, 15-16.
or to terms of "Dionysian gaiety" or "Nietzscheanism":

In a sense, FitzGerald remains an exponent of Nietzscheanism; but his emphasis is significantly different from that of Norman Lindsay . . . . (52)
The virtues he extols are those of courage, endurance, and moral stoicism, rather than the Dionysian gaiety recommended by the Lindsayans. (53)

"Courage, endurance and moral stoicism", in the sense of conscious and persistent effort toward the development of the individual and hence of mankind, are among the most important but sadly neglected and misunderstood principles which Lindsay's life and works both exemplify, and in relation to which, as well as in relation to more specific areas of moral and aesthetic theory (such as the necessity of imaginative vision and its dependence on the interaction of both senses and intellect; the importance to man of art and of beauty, and of persistent energy and aspiration to both), the works of Slessor and FitzGerald consistently show the influence of Norman Lindsay.

Claims such as that the "Lindsay ethos" is characterised by "shallowness and bluster" (54) and, in its influence on Australian poetry, by "its anti-intellectualism, and, alas, its retreat from any kind of involvement in larger questions either of principle or action", (55) simply cannot be substantiated by any close consideration of either the work of Norman Lindsay, or of the nature of the connection of his ideas in the work of Slessor and FitzGerald.

Lindsay's influence on both poets has been abiding and

52. Wright, Preoccupations in Australian Poetry, 144.
53. Ibid, 161.
54. Ibid, 140.
55. Ibid.
fruitful, neither confined to their early works nor consisting at all in an adolescent romanticism. A practical, as well as theoretical insistence on the moral importance of art to the development of man, and a thoroughgoing concern with and endorsement of vitality and effort, both sensual and intellectual, as the means towards and basis of individual self-development: these are the major manifestations in the work of Kenneth Slessor and R. D. FitzGerald of the influence of Norman Lindsay.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO NORMAN LINDSAY.

Thin solvency is proud, eats weeds.
I, being borrower yet
whom the sun warms and turned soil feeds,
claim there is honour in debt.

Much I acknowledge owed: the sight
of the mind quickened and stirred
to vast realities - tremblings of light
become a shape or a word.

I own the whole attitude to the task
derived - thence anything won
through effort. For we take, we ask,
we do not repay the sun.

(56)

APPENDICES.
Appendix A.

Textual Variants in R. D. FitzGerald's
"The Greater Apollo"
and
"Essay on Memory"
The text of "The Greater Apollo" in *Forty Years' Poems*, Sydney 1966, differs in several instances from that in *The Greater Apollo: Seven Metaphysical Songs*, Sydney 1927. In the latter version, FitzGerald has retained capital letters at the beginning of each line, and the sections of the poem are not numbered, each section beginning on a new page. The following are the textual variants:

**Forty Years' Poems**

**The Greater Apollo: Seven Metaphysical Songs**

**Section 2.**

Stanza 1, last three lines:

"the death-bound multitude 
fends back the threatening 
silences 
with straws of livelihood -"

Stanza 2:

"branches, heavy and vast, 
... much,"

Stanza 3, 2:

"call."

Stanza 4, 4:

"trees, ... girth,"

**Section 3.**

Stanza 1, 3:

"known realities"

Stanza 1, 4:

"substance"

Stanza 2, 2:

"heart."
Forty Years' Poems.

Stanza 2, 4:
"which I have locked in secrecy apart."

Stanza 3, 1:
"glean"

Stanza 3, 3-4:
"the savour of sea air, the blurred sounds made by leaves that whisper and by wings that pass."

Stanza 4, 1-3:
"... surfaces, I steal; with heavy weights to lift fill up my store, and all things ... "

Stanza 4, 4:
"more."

Stanza 5, last line:
"after that hour when"

Section 4.

Stanza 1, 5:
"long dream"

Stanza 2, last line:
"as oneness"

Stanza 3, 6:
"the Greater Apollo"

Stanza 3, 7:
"years,"

Stanza 3, 8:
"creeds,"

The Greater Apollo: Seven Metaphysical Songs.

"Which I have hidden and locked up apart!"

"steal"

"The savour of sea air, the low sounds made By winds that whisper secrets as they pass."

"... surfaces to feel And heavy weights to lift - I fill my store With all things ..."

"more,"

"At the long last when"

"dim dream"

"as unity"

"The greater Apollo"

"years"

"creeds"
Forty Years' Poems.

Stanza 4, 4:
"pool."

Stanza 4, 5:
"far insistent calls"

Section 5.
Stanza 1, 1:
"sea-cliff"

Stanza 1, 3:
"deep-worn"

Stanza 2, 2:
"and, where"

Stanza 3, 2:
"been."

Stanza 3, 3:
"changed,"

Stanza 3, 6:
"while, undefeated,... stands;"

Section 6.
7: "long-discarded"
11: "not."
15: "one."

Section 7.
Caesar and Catiline are dead, and magistrates and slaves of Rome so long ago that winds can shed no dust of them about my home. By scattering winds on this my home;

For all they were and all they did, their bodies and their hopes and fears.

The Greater Apollo: Seven Metaphysical Songs.

Stanza 4, 4:
"pool:"

Stanza 4, 5:
"loud insistent calls,"

Section 5.
Stanza 1, 1:
"sea cliff"

Stanza 1, 3:
"deep worn"

Stanza 2, 2:
"and where"

Stanza 3, 2:
"been:"

Stanza 3, 3:
"changed"

Stanza 3, 6:
"While undefeated ... stands,"

7: "long forgotten"
11: "not:" 
15: "one ... "

Caesar and Cataline are dead, Yea, and the humblest slave in Rome: No atom of their dust is shed By scattering winds on this my home:

For all they were and all they did, Their bodies, and their hopes and fears
Forty Years' Poems.

are long since put to rest and hid under the trash of trodden years.

But I look out and watch a bud burst in renewal on the bough - 0 sweating slaves, 0 men of blood, this too was yours; what have you now?

I think in your unanswering tombs you feel through me today's known bliss because you, living, saw such blooms in coloured springtimes far from this.


31-32: "nor is it composite mind whose cells are men and whose dour genius grafts great stone on stone"

32: "flare-

33: "tall topwork"


63: "benches.

66-69: "... glinting lights, fell, each, before some fumbling hour, their slayer. Now is the spread stain of their deaths long vanished and the wine"

"Essay on Memory".

The Greater Apollo: Seven Metaphysical Songs.

are long since covered up and hid beneath the trash of later years.

But I look out and see a bud Bursting in colour on the bough - 0 humble slaves, 0 men of blood, Where are ye now? Where are ye now?

I think in your forgotten tombs Faintly you feel to-day's warm bliss, Because you once saw other blooms In springtimes far removed from this.

"dire beginnings"

"it is not even the composite mind of men whose great genius is in grafting stone on stone"

"flare,"

"great topwork"

"... wenches, leaving their world a tree stripped of its branches? Not, surely,"

"benches! "

"... glinting lights - each knew its foeman-hour and met the slayer, Now the spread sunsets of their deaths are vanished and the wine"
"Essay on Memory".

Forty Years' Poems.

Version published in the Sydney Morning Herald, April 9th, 1938.

71: "so it might seem the"
72: "loot of"
99: "far."

152-154: "but though among men's assets he bides long always his ears are tuned on that same song of rain outside; for that's the force he knew"

176: "good, solid"
246: "still must ... at least"
268: "glum ingratitude"
335: "strip the valley bare."

This line ends the version of the poem in the Sydney Morning Herald, i.e., the final stanza was omitted for reasons of space. The poem as it appears occupies exactly two whole printed columns.
Appendix B.

Verse showing certain characteristics of
Australian verse of the period c. 1915-1925.
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Compensation.

With curling lips and scornful stare,
   Their eyes with venom glow;
Their bitter tongues pollute the air,
   Their words of hatred flow;
Their scorning fingers point at those
   Who drink at love's young spring,
Where passions their results impose,
   Without a wedding ring.
The paltry pricks of pious prudes
   May sting and hurt the mind,
But no regret or pain excludes
   The joy your loss will find
In feeling little fingers cling
   And through your heart-cords wind.

Edward Thomson,

Lone Hand, n.s. X, 6

(June 1920), 3.
April Weather.

How long - but nay, it is not long
since we too chirped together,
And oh! we spoke unwittingly
and it was April weather.

The sun did seem as one well past
all jealousy and fretting
And as an old man lonesome smiles
remembering and forgetting.

The cool wind waited patiently
for all the sun's delaying
And as a fallen player spoke
the bitterness of playing.

Tears were upon us and the pain
of all the poor misplanted,
Of Famine old and merciless
and children disenchanted.

The sky came up with chronicles
beyond the blue air blowing:
The bitterness of Love lived on
and Love himself was going.

How long - but nay, it is not long
since we two chirped together . . .
And oh! we spoke unwittingly
and it was April weather.

Shaw Neilson,
Bookfellow, V, 10 (April 15th, 1920), 96.
The Parting Hour.

How shall we fight the pain
Now it is time to part?
Let us of Love again
Eat the impatient heart.

Alas! the gulf behind
Dull voice and fallen lip -
The blue smoke of the mind,
The gray light on the ship.

Parting is of the cold
That stills the loving breath,
Dimly we taste the old
The pitiless meal of Death.

Shaw Neilson,
Bookfellow, V, 1
(February 15th, 1916), 10.
On the "Mask of Mary"
by Michelagnolo. (sic)
(In the Melbourne National Gallery)

O lovely face: thou dream of love's desire!
Just instinct with warm life's voluptuous spring!
Droop'st thou those perfect lids to hide the fire
Within thy languorous eyes slow-ripening?
What half-born fancy pouts upon those lips? --
Lips, ah! than sweetest fruit more sweet to crush.
How tenderly the chin's full roundness dips
Into the round slim neck! -- She moves! ... O hush!

Awake her not, rash mortal! -- not for thee
The soul-face passions into ecstasy:
She dreameth yet of that all-wondrous hour
When slain by love's immitigable power
The God grew faint within her wild embrace,
And she immortal with celestial grace!

G. W. Marshall Hall,
Bookfellow, VII, 8
(May 15th, 1923), 73.
Autumn Sunset.

Zealandia.

When the soft shades the forest hides
Are gathering on the hill,
And the white streams and green cliff-sides
Seem sunk, subdued, and still:
When straying clouds fade to the west,
Beyond the day's last beam:
A spirit rises to my breast
And bids my spirit dream.

Now in the darkled, silent air
I roam a world of rest:
Strange stars and other waters there
Stir in the night's warm breast:
Wild starlit slope, and glen concealed,
I in my vision pass:
Dream-led thro' many a mountain field,
Knee-deep in magic grass.

A fairy sings me a sweet song:
Winds guide my careless feet:
And autumn lingers for me long
Beside the seeding wheat,
Alone in that soft old-time night
Where I regret no death:
- Then the dead touch of earth's delight
Comes like a wakening breath.

A chill wind blows from hidden snows:
The haunted clovers quake;
Stars, hills, and streams seem sunken dreams:
The night-winds faint and break:
The joys of old, grown mute and cold,
Like spectres fill my breast;
And o'er my soul dark torrents roll
Seeking unconquered rest.

Wallace A. Elliott,

Bookfellow, VII, 9

(June 15th, 1923), 84.
See also Wallace Elliott's predominantly mournful presentation of the protagonist's feelings in the bush at evening, in his long poem "New Zealand Evening", from which the following stanzas are taken:

Evening hath come with silent sleep once more
To peace-filled valleys, and to murmuring streams -
Whose myriad-mingled turns and loiterings wore
In long late hours, bereft of Day's bright beams,
Sadness of fretting winds: like broken smiles
Flickering on lips kissed in forbidden dreams . . .

And though the brine
Of Youth's convulsive storms, whose lone wild sound
Long muted my lashed soul, have aged and dimmed
Its pure soft meadows; its sweet waters bound
In lightless caverns; left its bare hills rimmed
With weary ghosts who wail when night-winds cold
Come up thro' stilly eve from the seas limned

Afar below by sunset growing old
And falling like grey ashes from the skies
Slowly: There still are deeper ways that hold
Untravelled haunts . . .

Bookfellow, V, 1
(February 15th, 1916), 10.
The Wood Folk Call.

What have they shown to her dreaming sight,
This child of mine!
She has grown strange, and a rapt delight
Holds her apart when the forest shows
Flaming at sunset - she pales and glows
Rose and white; and her young heart throbs
Unease, and under her laughter sobs
Trouble her throat and her bosom fine.

I know the unhallowed folk come down
At the gold moonrise,
When the wind has died, and the leaves lie brown
Staining the earth, I have heard a sweet
Eddying fluting, the fall of feet
Past the barred door; and O Christ be kind!
Shield from their magic, the spell unbind
Twisting her soul; she has haunted eyes.

Still she sits when the Spring night falls
Odorous, cold,
By the fire side; but beyond four walls
Trembles her soul in a moon-filled glade
Secret and still. I have grown afraid,
O child grown strange! for with parted lips
Listening she leans and her loosed hair slips
Over her knees in a flood of gold.

Lover's kiss and a babe's lips dear
Warm on her own
They have received from her dreams that were maiden clear;
And her songs are stilled, and a coldness lies
Alien, strange in her leaf-brown eyes;
For under the stars and the golden moon
Will the thin call drift at the night's deep noon
And her sweet girl's flesh grown chill as stone.

I am afraid that a gold Spring night
From the blue dead day
Will rise and steal on us twain, and white
And slim she will step down the winding stair,
Rapt as a dreamer, with falling hair,
Throw wide the door - and look back no more
But tread the green way They have gone before . . .
Leaving me lone in a world grown grey.

A. Smith,
Bockfellow, VII, 10
(July 15th, 1923), 104.
Moon-Kisses.

Sleep my beloved: the still night slips down:
Sleep with the aching splendour of slow dreams;
While on your wearied eye-lids, like a crown,
Lies the forsaken pageant of moon-beams.

All day in the dim paths of men you wear
A crown of dusk the sun hath withered,
And in the tangled shadows of your hair
I see the cold moon-kisses of the dead.

So, when men's kisses weary, and the earth
Gathers again your beauty, like a breath;
When all your spring has sought a newer birth,
And on your heart lies the cold hand of death,

There shall remain, like some old haunting tune,
Those half-forgotten kisses of the moon.

I. R. Maxwell,

Australian University Verse 1920-22,

48.
Undertone.

The sun is dead, and ghastly is the moon:
And where the city dreams I see go by
Gold dust that crowns the golden afternoon
And drifts like incense to the pallid sky.

Only the west is red with dying flowers
That lie deep-sunken in the opiate wells;
On the dim city with her silent towers
Droops the enchantment of the sunset-spells.

... ... ...

In the dark streets the moan of myriad feet
Stifles the muttering of the branded Cain:
Under the lights, as in a winding-sheet,
Lies hectic pleasure, festering into pain.

And in the starry darkness, all alone,
I hear you sob your piteous undertone.
The Waxen Image.

They roamed together through the Autumn woods;
    I saw him, as he stroked her flaxen hair,
And fondly kissed, and swore he loved her true,
    For I was crouching there.

Who would have thought man was so base a thing:
    Could I have dreamt he would be false to me?
A waxen image melts before the fire;
    Sweet my revenge will be!

I made the image; and so like it was,
So well I knew the face that once I loved -
    That when I set it by the blazing fire,
     I almost thought it moved.

Now but a little time is left to love;
    Print your last kiss upon her warm, red lips,
Take your last leave of her; for on the hearth,
    See how my image drips!

The bright wax trickles to a little pool,
    As red as blood - and in an hour he dies.
I pray that death may strike him as he looks
    Fondly into her eyes!

Then the endearing words that flow will cease,
    Then as he takes her hand his grasp will fail,
And she will shriek to see the lips she pressed
    How cold, how ghastly pale!

Catherine McLaurin,
Australian University Verse 1920-22.
You tell me that I must forget your face,
And all the clinging joy and sorrow of you;
Leave you and go: but this I cannot do.
I know well I will find in every place
Where you have been, the invisible strange trace
And fragrance of your body. I must be true.
Your eyes will haunt me still in all things blue,
And in all lovely things will be your grace.
Dawn will be red as your red lips: the sea
In sunshine, like your careless laugh will be,
Your mystery will dim the evening sky,
The silence of the woods be music - filled
As was your mouth, hushed with a kiss and stilled,
Your sorrow murmur in the low wind's cry.

Jack Lindsay,
Australian University Verse 1920-22,
37.
Sonnet.

If once the love that fills me blazed in you,
   And all my passion and its swift desire
Broke through your young soul's peace, and if you knew
   As I, the hungry leaping of red fire,
And so we met, and felt the awful longing
   That ran through both our souls into our eyes
And were aware of the tumultuous thronging
   Of fiery feet across deep infinite skies,
Would we embrace, and be the happy lovers
   Who in the constancy of final bliss
Bide ever while untransient passion covers
   The slow Eternity of each long kiss:
Or would we pause, and with a swift disgust
Bury in hatred deep each flaming lust?

Jack Lindsay,

Australian University Verse 1920-22,

38.
Of Old.

O brothers of time past away
You set the whole wide world aflame
In your divine exultant day
Just for one soft-breathed name.

And stormed great cities in the night
And slew the people sleeping there,
To find a gem in her delight
To put into her hair.

And then did men go mad to see
The unbared breasts of some fair queen,
And knelt before her passionately
Where she sat throned serene.

And so went out to burn and slay
And sail strange seas to where waves meet
The bending skies, and come and lay
Their booty at her feet.

It was a little thing for men
To fall and die upon the spears
Or drown in seas unventured then
Down long heroic years.

The great wind falls: glory departs.
Men are grown wise and cold and sane.
No ecstasy beats through their hearts
Like a loud gong again.

Yet shall I join your great host too,
And coin my life in gleaming gold
And bring it to some queen, as you,
And die ere I grow old.

Jack Lindsay,

Australian University Verse 1920-22,

39.
The Chase.

She steps into the lime-light: the gold round
    Of the stage moon stares blankly. Wicked-gay
Her dark eyes gleam; and the soft-silken sound
    Spreads from the violins about her way.

A flower that is a flame is she,
Her eyes grow wide with ecstasy.
    The music like a panting lover
Chases and follows, leaping after,
    Mad her lost beauty to recover;
Casting soft chains of tangled laughter
    About her feet, and many a snare
Of curving joy around her there.

She, though already won, desires
To flee until at length she tires,
    Loving the exquisite quick fear
Of clutching fingers come so near . . .
At last the music madly presses,
    Catches her up in its embrace,
Folds every limb in warm caresses,
    And lights to joy her swooning face.

The violins sink softly, strokingly,
    Like thrilling fingers that ecstatic go
Seeking . . . . Abandoned to her lover, she,
    Touched by invisible hands, leans backwards slow.

Jack Lindsay,

Australian University Verse 1920-22.

36.
Appendix C.

Kenneth Slessor.

Pre-Vision and Vision Verse.
Principle of Selection.

The principle of selection for this appendix has been to list in the Index all the poems which Slessor published prior to and in Vision and to give the texts of such of these poems as are not included in Poems.

The same method has been followed in arranging the appendix of FitzGerald's pre-Vision and Vision poems, the texts of those not available in his Forty Years' Poems being cited.
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2. **Poetry in Australia 1923** included fourteen poems by Slessor. Of these, eight appeared in **Vision** (Thief of the Moon, Rubens' Innocents, The Man of Sentiment, Thieves' Kitchen, Adventure Bay, The Mask, Good-night!, The Embarkation for Cythera), three had appeared elsewhere (Nuremberg, Pan at Lane Cove and Incongruity), and are included in **Poems**, as are the three previously unpublished poems cited in the Index.

3. This volume presented thirty four poems by Slessor, fourteen of which received their first printing (or possibly twelve, depending when in 1924 Thief of the Moon appeared. "Quite Modern" and "Secret Pastures" both appeared in **Art in Australia**, December 1st, 1924). Only about half the poems in this volume are included in **Poems**.
Goin'.

Ain't I got no hope, Nurse? Garn, tell a feller straight!
I'd jest as soon be goin' now I 'aven't got me mate.

The doctor bloke, I bet 'e knows,
'Nd if 'e says I goes, I goes . . . .
The others went at Anzac, 'nd I kinder guess I'm late.

But, tell us honest, Miss, ain't y' never some time been
'Round Sydney, down Australia way - what! ain't y' never seen
The buildings, harbor, steamers, all
The places where the ferries call -
Manly! Mosman! Middle 'Arbor! Them's the ones I mean.

Manly! Gawd, it fairly makes me funny in the throat -
The kiddies! 'Nd bananas! 'Nd the music on the boat!
The ferries flitting all about -
They cock-a-doodledoed us out . . . .
Fort Denison! It seemed to smile that day we went afloat.

Old Sydney never was so good as on that sunny day -
Aw .... I'm gettin' sentimental . . . . an' the light
is goin' grey . . . .

That's the surf at Manly drummin' . . . .
Hold on, cobber, I am comin' . . . .
Well, so long, nurse . . . . I must be a-gettin' . . . .
on . . . . my way.

POETIC LICENSE.

(For the Bulletin)

WHEREAS apprenticeship to Verse
   Is at its best a ticklish venture,
I'll take a tolerant Muse to nurse,
   As herein witness the Indenture:--

INDENTURE.

I, KENNETH SLESSOR, of uncertain mind,
   And hereinafter named as the CONTRACTOR,
Having this moment duly sealed and signed
   High bond with my Parnassian benefactor,
Do vow to keep (for some convenient time)
   All Items of the MUSE'S stipulation,
PROVIDED ALWAYS that to wrench a rhyme
   I may employ my own interpretation.

The MUSE in turn (as will by this transpire)
   Doth vow by all the Gods and Little Fishes
To help the said CONTRACTOR twang the Lyre,
   PROVIDED he respects her stated wishes.

IN PROOF WHEREOF these presents do appear,
   (Signed) KENNETH SLESSOR and (by proxy)
THALIA,
This 1st of April, goodness knows the year,
   At Kirribilli, New South Wales, Australia.


ITEM.-

The said CONTRACTOR shall, on no excuse,
Write anything without he introduce
Upon a most precarious verbal stilt
The word "Lilt."
As, for example, the following sample:

"The loving lilt of laughing life
   And the laughing lilt of living love,
All with alliteration rife,
   I could permute as the above,
And lilt them round about again,
To the lilting last of factorial n."
The said CONTRACTOR shall at every chance
Delight in such Poetic Elegance,
Such Nice embodiment of the Genteel,
And such reel
Extravaganza, as in the stanza:

"Oh, the balmy wet dewdrops bespangled the sward,
And an odorous zephyr breathed over the dale,
And the reeds of the meads danced about in the ford,
To the prance of the prawns (circumstantially stale)
And the smells of bluebells in the sweet balmy dells
Were wafted like onions and tripe in the gale.
(Though exactly what 'dales,' 'meads,' and so on may be
I have no more idea than a petrified flea.)"

The said CONTRACTOR shall in every case
Pen bilious lyrics to the Populace,
And preach the (Copyright) Doctrine of the Smile
On each dial,
As you may see in the following pæan:

"Keep a smiling face, lad, whatever be the sky.
Sme-ile about the place, lad, and never murmur Die,
Whatever be the weather, let us all sme-ile together,
Let us all sme-ile together, with a (Copyright) Smile,
In the callow, hollow, Ella Wheeler Wilcox style."

The Uncharted.

"Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

All emerald writhes the uncharted Pacific,
where, under the moon,
Beachward it beats to the furze on the dune,
Bursting to foam-crust and breaking in spin-drift rain
That chequers the sea-paths mosaic, green cobble
and ivory vein.

Unkempt is the couche on the dunes, and the
white of the sand is untrod,
So was it ever since Nature began.
So may it be even after the Kingdom of Man!
Can nought possess Beauty unless he be present
to patronise God?

There's never an island uncharted, whose
loveliness mariners seek,
But the seagull can reach in a week;
For Nature built shrines ere she fashioned
your jellyfish sire,
And always the sun shall rise splendidly
over your funeral pyre!

**Bulletin**, August 7th, 1919, 3.
The Buccaneers.

When Doris and I, and Peggy and Sim,
Went by water to Watson's Bay,
The night shone blue on the harbor-rim,
And the hills ran gold, with liquid day;
For this was the hour of interlude,
When the sunlight thins, and the shadows brood,
And the sea-mist smokes away.

"We'll steer by the stars," I cried, for the stars
   Beat milkily over the yacht,
And the moon lay netted among the spars
   Like the slice of an apricot;
"We'll steer by the Cross to Caribee,
   One thousand leagues from Circular Quay,
   And east-nor'-south, I wot!"

Doris danced round, and she made a mouth,
   And she wrinkled her nose in scorn:
"O silly, to talk of your east-nor'-south!
   And is Caribee near Cremorne?"
"Cremorne, do you say? Indeed, and indeed,
   I'll swear that this yacht is a dolphin steed
   In a faery land forlorn!"

The sun swam down, and the darkness fell,
   All olive it dripped in the skies;
And the ferry-light fires in the glinting swell
   Were like deep-sea fishes' eyes.
But Sim cried: "Ho, for the Spanish Main!
   I smell red gold on galleons twain -
   Ho, ho for the pirates' prize!"

O you who gape from the ferry-decks
   At the lunatic yacht below,
Do you ken, as you sluggishly loll your necks,
   You were slaughtered an age ago?
Plundered and put to the plank and the sharks,
   You factory-hands and insurance clerks,
   In a stolidly staring row?

Bulletin, September 18th, 1919, 3.
Simone.

Simone in the doorway, as calm and unstirred
   As the lustre that burns on the silk of her hose,
Close-hatted, snug-coated, all muffled and furred
   To the little pink tip of a velvet nose.

So straight in the doorway she stands, so slim
    and so clear,
So surprisingly young, so incredibly dear!

Why should I wonder at seeing her there?
   Save that I thought, and remember it yet,
That sometime, and somehow, somewhere,
   She had stood so, and looked so, and smiled in
    a life I forget.

Bulletin, October 23rd, 1919, 3.
An Old Harp.

The harp is built of cassia and cord;
    And in its strings lie ancient melodies,
Forgotten tunes of wistful emptiness,
    Thin, quavering sonatas, that afford
    Small savour in their piping minor keys
To men of newer ways and stranger dress.

The jade upon the stops is dead, and dust
    Lies mistily upon the sorrel strings;
The soul of it has rotted with the years.
    And yet, in spite of verdigris and rust,
    About the cords a cold, clear music clings.
Play it or not; you'd surely stop your ears.
You ask me why its melodies must pass?
Hark to the blatant jazzing of the brass!

Bulletin, October 30th, 1919, 3.
In Tyrrell's Book Shop.

(For the Triad)

Here are the clocks all conjur'd lunatic:
Here do their cogs dawdle, and their pinions rust;
Here dozes Father Time, his hour-glass thick
With fallen dust.

Here is no dial to mark the minutes' flight -
Save that the motey sun-shaft further falls,
In one great gilt diagonal of light,
Across the walls.

Here are old ivory chessmen, beaten brass,
Great platters from Japan, bespotted shells,
Cups cleft from onyx, bowls of frosted glass,
And temple bells,

Breastplates and rapiers of Damascene,
Boule cabinets, and copper-pannelled chairs,
Buddhas in jade, old bronzes tawny-green,
And Dresden wares.

Here, too, are stowed in shambling stack and tier
The myriad million thoughts of buried men,
Whose bodies rot; but they are risen here,
And speak again.

Their voices whisper querulous along
The sombre aisles; they mumble in the gloom
From shelf to shelf; the muffled voices throng
The darkling room.

Broadsheets there are, of horrid hangman's tales;
Yellow-stained maps from some forgotten book;
Journals of convict years in New South Wales,
And Captain Cook.

Mottled monastic tomes of Cicero;
Ballads of murder, testaments of thieves;
Shakespeares in brindled duodecimo,
With rusty leaves.

Long forgot relics of a dead decade:
All that is old, and nothing that is new -
Here, in the shadows, half an earth has made
Last rendez-vous.

Triad, V, 4

(January 10th, 1920), 43.
A Chaplet.

I treasure the faery phrases that unchain
The ivory-fretted doors of fantasy -
Words to be strung upon a silver skein,
As carven beads upon a rosary;
And there, as beads upon the silk are told,
With sound-approving relish to be rolled
In sonorous refrain.

And mostly I adventure on the sea
That sings about a Caribbean bay;
For "Caribbean" is the Devil's key
To Treasure Island, and the roaring way
Down pirate paths; and many a pig-tailed horde,
Most swart disciples of the bloody sword,
I hear in "Caribbee".

"Haroun Alraschid" - words of potent thrall:
Singing of Eastern moonshine, and the spark
Of rosy lanterns on the Sultan's wall,
Where looms the purple palace, shadowed stark
Against the spinning stars and silver-grey
Of lustrous minarets, where moon-fires play
About each tapered ball.

And "Pompadour" is lit with memories -
Blue evenings at Versailles; the olive-box;
Green-bronze of Tritons, through the cone-cut trees,
And slender swords a-tilt to scented frocks;
The stone canal, with sleepy carp a-swim,
And patch and powder by the fountain rim -
Forgotten ghosts of these.

The ghostly gallants of the 'Forty-four
That linger in the sound of "Holyrood";
And "Araby," and "Bath," and many more,
Brave cobwebs of a wistful minor mood -
Oh, these are Devil's cabala to me,
And every letter is a magic key,
And every word a door.

Songs from the Chinese.

From poets who died before the Danes took England.

I.

COCKROW SONG.

An Old Poem of the 1st Cent. B.C.

Now that it's morning, the stars flicker pale in the east,

The cock of the dawning at Ju-nan has crowed and awoke,

The clocks have run dry, and the singers have sung at the feast,

Till the moon blurs the sky, and the stars gutter dim,

and the morning has broke.

II.

TS'AO SUNG'S PROTEST.

9th Cent. A.D.

O you who made your battlefields upon

The pleasant country of the lowland plains -

How shall the peasant that you trampled on

Keep the thin-blood a-circle in his veins?

Let me not hear you mouth your soapy jests:

Prate not of booty, ranks and spoil again -

The reputation of a Marshal rests

Upon the corpses of a million men!
III.

CIVILIZATION.

Yuan Chieh, 8th Cent. A.D.

South-east a thousand leagues, and more
Where the Yuan and Hsiang roar
To seethe in a giant lake as one,
Sheer passes twist above the shore,
Where only the wild men run;

Wild men of very simple mind,
Who bask on tree-tops in the sun,
And prehistoric pleasures find
Where the silent mountain-valleys wind:

Restrained by neither law nor man,
Content with the primeval plan.

Preening upon our cultured age,
The Nine Lands sneer and scoff:
And yet, for all this talk of Saint and Sage,
Are we much better off?

Triad, V, 6

(March 10th, 1920), 11.
For Noela.

Like tides of some old sea brimmed years ago
But climbing always, bells are blown to-day
From over the hills and far, oh far away,
And nothing but Noel's in the tune they blow -

Now long ago, I gave you Noel gifts -
Grave seignors bowed in jewelled lace with spoils
From Spanish towns to please you, golden coils
Of rope-stuck stones, and silk in ivory drifts . . .

Ah, Noela, no potency's in rhyme
To conjure those old fairings from the dead,
For poets are tombed below the dust of time
Despite their music. This I bring instead,
The sweet half-gravity of your laughing eyes
Distilled in timeless words whilst beauty dies.

December 25, 1921.

Thief of the Moon, Sydney 1924, 25.
January 18th, 1922.

Let you remember this January day,
 O child of moonlight, shouting your breathless rhymes -
 All you who shrine in music the Milky Way,
 Or the old, sad loveliness of girls in ivory times -
 O lovers of earth, and the moon's cold, guttering dew,
 Darkness on starless dunes, and mulberry-birds in leaves,
 And the young, marching stars - by these I conjure you,
 Remember, remember this January day!

For the days descend and vanish, and soon are over,
 Steeping with night the earth in forgetfulness,
 And twilight findeth no tears of a broken lover
 To cover the graves of dusk, or dawn's pale eyes to bless;
 But the Lady Helen is wept, and the staves are trolled
 By timeless poets, of beauty in fields or fair, dead maids -
 And still the grave, beautiful daylight flows as it did of old,
 Though the days descend and vanish, and soon are over.

But this dear day, this dear, amazing night,
 I swear to store for ever in men's minds,
 Rescued from time to breathe of past delight
 And matchless always, till some miser of moonlight finds
 More beauty in far midsummers to adore,
 More loveliness to quaff, more charms to cry -
 Till then, O lovers of earth, remember for evermore,
 Remember, remember this January night!

From Heine.

Well, the bottles are finished, the meal's a delight,
The damsels are gay as the deuce -
They have drunk just a drop more Chablis than is right,
And their camisoles hang rather loose.

That their shoulders and breasts are both rosy and white
I observe, with a desperate eye,
As they curl themselves up on the couch out of sight,
And the counterpane shakes where they lie.

They have drawn the curtain - what happens beyond
Is a secret concealed from my view;
For I stand like an idiot, foolish and fond,
And I'm damned if I know what I do!

Signed "L.C." in Vision I, May 1923, 44,
but signed "Kenneth Slessor" in
London Aphrodite II, October 1928, 125.
New Magic.

At last I know - it's on old ivory jars,
Glassed with old miniatures and garnered once with musk,
I've seen those eyes like smouldering April stars
As carp might see them behind their bubbled skies
In pale green fishponds - they're as green, your eyes,
As lakes themselves, changed to green stone at dusk.

At last I know - it's paned in a crystal hoop
On powder-boxes from some dead Italian girl
I've seen such eyes grow suddenly dark, and droop
Their small, pure lids, as if I'd pried too far
In finding you snared there on that ivory jar
By crusted motes of rose and smoky-pearl.

Oh, well I know what delicate, dark-haired brush,
Cargoed with dragon's-blood and drops of Antwerp blue,
Hath kissed old ivory, and taken that tiptoe flush
Below your lashes, to bind it down with paint
On perfume-jars, or miniatures worked in paint
Half-lights of chrome and lilac, and all of you.

All this I know which yet my mind recalls
From times when beauty was walled within enamelled skies,
But know not what new magic it is enthralls
My heart to-day, nor whence, beloved, there came
Those gardens of drowsy verdigris and flame
That shake to forests when I touch your eyes!

Vision II, August 1923, 9.
The Mask.

The rout stamps by - now beards of copper
Dance in dark breasts - now music smites
With horns and bells to the candelabra,
Shaking their waxen lights.

Plumes rock - the masquers plunge and riot -
Heat in a steam has drowned the floor -
Dumb with old fears, I lurch bewildered,
Beating upon the door.

How came we two to this hot Chamber?
What painted Marionettes dance here?
It is vain thy dreams to remember,
It is in vain to fear . . .

But suddenly out of the clang and tumult
I saw thy mask descend,
And knew thy face revealed for a moment,
And knew thy speech, my friend!

And words we cried that were not mortal,
Whilst burning in eyes that were not eyes,
There shone the star that shines not ever
In earth's dark skies -

O traveller, greeting! O merry meeting!
O strange disguise!
Good-night!

"Good-night, good-night" . . . sweet maidens all
Bend golden arms above
And all their plaits in candlelight
Swing pricked to gilt, while faintly fall
Those little cries of love -
"Good-night, good-night!"

Now from the stairways winding out,
Lanterns in darkness drown -
Wenches, like fire-birds blown to flight,
Climb the stone galleries, hover and pout
Warm gales of kissing down -
Good-night, good-night!

But thou, my friend, brood silent there -
And smile - and gape - and try,
With one slow finger, smooth and white,
Thy pistol-wheels - then creep to stare
At coaches pitching by -
Good-night, good-night!

Good-night, good-night, brave turnpike-boy,
Rare, starry toil is ours -
I to my lady's dark delight
And thou to the moonlit road, employ
By Venus and Mars, these waking-hours -
Good lad, good-night, good-night!

Vision III, November 1923, 12.
"O mount thee, Lady, mount!" In the warm lake
There foam a thousand water-girls, blown deep
With rings of silver and bubbles like racing moons -
"O, mount!" - their mouths they hoop, their limbs they shake,
The powdered Marquis on the poop leans out,
   Misty with lace, and showers dark rubies down.

The sweet postillions paid by Venus are these,
With breasts that shake like drops of ivory,
Close-welling to the flesh - their frolicks beat
The waves to milk, and crust with gold the seas
And dolphins wet their hips, when mad for salt,
   They ride on fish-back to the Spanish Main.

Spars net the moon. The moth-blue, pastel air
Swims with a cluster of young cherubim,
Puffing the topsails - undines laugh below
Like bells in water, whilst up that gilded stair
From garden to prow, an arch of petticoats
   Pouts in the breeze - "O, mount thee, Lady, mount!"

Now the Infanta's maidens take the night
With cloaks and lanterns - now to a buried flute
Great lemans dance, and that little dark-lashed jade
With Cardinals' kisses on her mouth, takes flight
By lawns and bending orange-boughs, to climb
Wearm-tousled on board - "O, mount thee, Lady, mount!"

Maleine is running in a hundred skirts,
Tumbled with laughter - Alix and Isabelle
Down lanes of statues dawdle - and all those laides
In patch and paint, and all those ringlet-flirts,
Invade the bulwarks, crying for Cythera -
   O, mount thee, ladies: where lies that port of love?

'Tis by the Cyprian's bed - there lovers twine
Darkly with naked thighs - there plumes and diamonds
Vanish by witchery, jewels and laces drop,
Hoops burst asunder, ribbons their task decline,
Satin comes down in pools, and all are conscript,
   Sworn alike to Cythera, peers in love.

"O, mount thee, mount thee!" - Ladies and Gallants haste,
Fans clap and sword-knots dance, the Court sweeps down,
The Countess hurries with grass in her powdered hair,
The Duchess with a King's arm round her waist -
And, ah! thou little serving-wench, embark -
   Thy mouth is red - 'tis passage enough to Cythera!
A little wizened room, grown dim and brown,
The musty smell of old floretted walls,
Gray velvet moths asleep on dusty shelves,
A green-gold flame that starts as pained, and falls.
Strange shadow-gold shapes that flit like little elves
Round gothic jars and sallow tomes awry:
Fierce glass-eyed beasts the placid years have tamed
Poor cobwebbed birds that never sing or fly.

What faded store indeed, but wealth of kings,
The dust-cold treasures opaline with dreams;
A tinsell'd "Devil Dancer" from Ceylon,
A Chinese idol, carved of jade that gleams.
A songless Mina from some Indian shrine,
Kaolin jars with brede of pink and gray,
Azalia flowers and soft chrysanthemums,
Braided with gold on rainbow Cloisonne.

My eyes are closed and rain is in the street,
But holding this jade idol in my hand,
I sail the weird Pearl River by Canton,
And feel the mystery of its nightmare land.
See lumber'd junks and sampans crowding by,
Two million souls that tread in sunless lanes,
Lanes foetid with four million slimy feet,
And charnel stench from festering mud that stains.

Gently I take this little Buddhist charm;
On dreaming wings, a sensuous perfume fills
My drowsy brain - white Frangipanni flowers,
And musky palms against the damask hills.
I pore, in fancy, on the coral reef,
The screaming seagulls and the slim canoe,
Ceylon itself, the jewel of all the East,
Its treasure-beaches girt with Gobelin blue.

The cobwebbed singer's heart has warmed anew,
On avian wings, I cleave blue Indian skies,
And pause by strange Benares' Sacred Stairs,
Sad peaceful city, fraught with cares and sighs,
The Well of Knowledge with its trampled flowers,
The priestly Ganges with its ashen dead,
The Temple Golden at the Mecca, there,
The moon's white arctic pallor overhead.

Shrill wind without, the room grows dark within,
Out of its dust I wing the fretful sea,
And pause to hear the babble of the clogs
In Tokyo, beneath a cherry tree.
To hear the sobbing bell of Chion-in,
To watch the golden carp in Nara's pool,
Wild geese alighting, and the Autumn moon
   From Yokohama - night of quiet and cool.

A little wizened room, grown dim and brown,
   A queer, mean shop of dusty curios;
(Outside the rain is sobbing in the street,
   The rattle of the tramcar comes and goes).
And I, its Dryad, dream in distant lands,
   Round dumb companions weaving flight romance;
When passing years my treasures bear away,
   Then I shall soar on faery wings - perchance!

Raymond H. McGrath,

Australian University Verse 1920-22, 50-51.
THE ANTIQUE SHOP.

On crimson robe, gold-finned, forever sprawls
The dragon of Cathay. In ivory
And gauze, all finely wrought as filigree,
A fan lies couched upon flower-powdered shawls;
And as the light from street-lamp glancing falls,
Thereon wakes Columbine, 'neath pictured tree,
With kiss for Harlequin - the world-old comedy -
Dim, storied broderies watch them from the walls.

Then in the ghostly hush before day's birth
From carven god and tapestry are fled
All shape and hue. A pall falls over earth,
In city street the sob of hollow mirth
Startles the waking bird. Some nameless dread,
The end of Carnival, and Columbine is dead.

Esther M. Levy,

Australian University Verse 1920-22, 35.
Appendix D.

R. D. FitzGerald.

Pre-Vision and Vision Verse.
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1. A revised version appears in Forty Years' Poems.
2. Three poems by Fitzgerald appeared in the Australian University Verse 1920-22, (1922) collection - the two cited, and "The Savage".
Mountain Trees, *Forum*, January 3rd, 1923 ... ... lxxiii.
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3. This volume includes five poems by Fitzgerald; the two cited, and "Inland", "Courage" and "Witchcraft".
ADVENTURE.

I.

Yea, even here where never is complete
That settled task and ordered round, which drains
Youth's spirit, where through dreary city lanes
The young god Life trudges on wearied feet,
Adventure may be begging in the street,
And calling on that blood, which in the veins
Of Vikings tall gale-lashed o'er maddened mains
Would flush brave cheeks, and joyous war songs beat.

Chance is a goddess with voice musical,
Not just a memory of the years of yore,
Like relics and arms that rust upon the wall;
Not knowing what each new day has in store,
Fed by what ventures Fortune's hand lets fall,
Men seek her yet - bewitched by siren lore.

II.

Through many roads and byways I have sought
The deeds adventurous, all eagerly:
Among the wild cliffs of a storm vexed sea,
Where like grey beasts the gloomy breakers fought;
By the dark waters, stirring fear-distraught,
Which sang a wild unholy chant to me;
Down hidden tracks through fairy greenery;
Through narrow tunnels of dim perilous thought.

I have said "Should there come to me a sign
To point my path out like an arrow-head,
Reckless will I pursue where Chance has fled."
But such a guide has never yet been mine,
For Chance will come by chance - Woo how I may
The elusive goddess ne'er has passed my way.

III.

Adventure has caught me - snared me like a bird,
Behold the net of spells about me drawn!
This fair enchantress on the peaceful lawn
Did cast a shadow very faint and blurred
Enticing me to seek her. When I stirred
Even her shadow was lost and she was gone,
And though her magic ever calls me on
She shows herself not and she speaks no word.

But someday of Adventure's fiery wine,
   I know I shall drink deep; and this hope spurs
My thirsty spirit onward, searching still;
For all the deeds of all adventurers
   Echo about me, setting me athrill
As the free winds will sway a rooted vine.

_Hermes, XXVI, 3_

_(November 1920), 231._
THE SAVAGE.

Out of the gloom of the forest I came in the ancient days;
Now, leaving behind in the night the glare of cities ablaze,
Naked and empty handed, with shouting heart I go
Back to the ways of the forest - the leaf-soft paths I know.

Shout out a song triumphant, a chant of the flint and the bone;
Sing a paean full-throated of knives and the hammer of stone;
Hi, for the arrow and spear and the beasts so fierce and fleet!
Hi, for the blood on my hands and the prey that lies at my feet!

Out of the forest I came, discarding the flint and bone,
And long, long years have I wrought to build a world of my own;
But back I go, rejoicing to hear behind in my flight
The crash of the falling columns of towns that burn in the night.

The hairy ape was my mother - but I left the protecting trees;
Upright I strove with my foes, battered the beasts to their knees;
Weapons I made with my hands and struck the fire from the stone,
Then out of the forest I came to build a world of my own.

Aye, and witness I built it for what it may have been worth,
And I harnessed the air and the water and conquered the forces of earth;
The fire was ever beside me as painfully upward I fought . . .
But I smelt the woods in the gloom, and wrecked the thing I had wrought.

For there may have been much of beauty in the thousand things I made,
But the streets grew dirty and dark and I in my heart was afraid,
Then God spoke straight to my heart - and I care no whit for the doom
Of that which my rage destroyed when the forest called in the gloom.
And now as of old I shall find a shelter for me in the trees; 
With naked hands I shall batter my ancient foes to their knees; 
Then when my soul is purer shall seek in the cold, clean air, 
And find God again in the mountains awaiting his servant there.

Perhaps new light will be shown me, and yet again I will go 
Out of the heart of the forests, leaving the paths I know, 
Discarding the flint-tipped arrows and cumbersome axe of stone, 
And, with eyes that can see truth better, will build a world of my own.

Shout out a song triumphant, a chant of the flint and the bone; 
Sing a paean full-throated of knives and the hammer of stone; 
Hi, for the arrow and spear and the beasts so fierce and fleet! 
Hi, for the blood on my hands and the prey that lies at my feet!

Phantasy.

A fair swift fancy
On light wings free,
Anon and ever
Will come to me.

If they weave a net
These words I am tracing,
I may trap it yet
In rhymes interlacing;
For when I was treading the road
Where the moonlight lies,
The fairies lifted and showed
One glimpse to my eyes;
And then went on with their revel,
And played in the shine
Where the moon on the road's hard level
Was nectar divine -
A silver essence of gladness
From carven flagon or vase,
A measure of night's own madness
Flung down from the riot of stars.

Yes, and the secret trees,
Were drunk with the night;
Softly stirred by a breeze
That whispered delight
Patches they wrought of shade ...

My fancy was closely hid
Where mischievous fairies played
The shadows amid:
There's nought can match it,
Delicate, free,
Would I could catch it
In poesie.

Hermes, XXVII, 1 (May 1921), 21.
Idealism Banished.

New things there are to desire in this great night
Which now is folded round me like a shroud;
There are new things to seek, now that the light
Which led me hides forever 'neath a cloud
Blacker than all dark horses of a dream
Drawing the chariot of thought afar
To where the land of Wonder lies agleam,
Lit by its splendour, not by sun or star.

I have been wandering through darkened places
Where there are weeping eyes but no gay faces,
Where madness hears the sound of grinding teeth,
Where God is not; and in that sphere beneath
Night has beheld me passing to and fro
Down ways, which seemed like ways that I did know
Ere from the lofty palace of my thought
I cast the pictures and the tapestries,
Whose dazzling joy of colour I had wrought
While beauty's son was high. I thought all these
Would make me blind to men and Earth's grey stones
I thought the melodies and rippling tones
From fairy harp and laughing fairy bell
Would deafen me to those great songs that call
Along the crowded streets; and so farewell
I bade them all.
I banished swaying music and bright lights
(Elfin pipe, fairy torch)
With all the lyric hush of summer nights
When winds come silently from Heaven's porch.

But oh! a spectre in its cold caress
Bound me, and strangely ruled my spirit then;
It came between me and the world of men
And from my own high palace shut me out
Into that hell of dark and fear and doubt
Whereof I told: and this was Loneliness.
Still now a sign has come that day shall rout
The icy one and take his place again:
For lo! my heart grows merry and does shout,
Making a prophecy that its red fire
Shall find a new goal for its own desire
As bright as all the falling tears which grieve
For Song that dies or Spring that takes his leave.

Hermes, XXVII, 3 (November 1921), 169.
China Plate.

Some artist of the summer days
Of olden China - through the haze
Of sleepy noon when birds sat still
Where long green boughs were gently swaying -
Watched the merry sunlight playing
In and out the bamboo leaves,
And dipping in pigment brush or quill
Caught it, chasing to and fro
Purple shadows. Chinese art -
An Eastern magic - swiftly weaves
Round my sense and round my heart
Its drowsy spell .... till I grow part
Of that forgotten long-ago,
And standing here to gaze on these
Blue treasures borne from far-off seas
And sharer of its mysteries:
Again among the bamboo leaves
Briskly the lights drive to and fro,
And where their chequered gleams are playing
Birds twitter sleepily in the trees.

Hermes, XXVII, 3 (November 1921), 196.
Ballade:

A Lecture on the Differential Calculus.

At the board for long I've stared
Where the marks in chalk are made;
D²y and dx²
Daze me still. My wits, out-played,
Tend to doze; and I'm afraid
Soon I'll slumber most ecstatically
For my eyes with sleep are weighed -
Bored and wearied mathematically.

Integrals have got me scared;
Though I've wept, yea, though I've prayed
Unto partial functions bared
Is my flesh and I am flayed.
Applications now: the grade
Of expansion adiabatically!
Oh, I'm overwrought, dismayed,
Bored and wearied mathematically.

Badly, badly have I fared
At this scientific trade;
As exam. results are reared
Hope grows still more disarrayed;
Chemistry I somehow slayed
Twisting symbols up erratically.
Would that life might pale and fade
Bored and wearied mathematically.

On my grave would be displayed
(I'd demand it most emphatically)
Prince, he died, who here is laid,
Bored and wearied mathematically.

Hermes, XXVII, 3 (November 1921), 200.
Rain.

That swelling lyric is mine which the raindrops sing on the street,
For there echoes within my heart the music of driven rain;
Mine is the song on the window ever more strong and sweet,
And mine are the swirling rhythms and mine is the wild refrain.

Aye, as the fierce gusts catch it, toss and hurl it along,
The world that is lost in the rain is the world inviting me;
And I must go out where it waits to join it in rising song,
While walking with quickened steps and a brain grown clear and free.

I shall look in at the windows where the lights are dimmed and blurred;
And then at the half-drowned lamps ashine on the pavement way,
Shedding their fire in the pools where only the sound is heard
Of drops that splash on the wet, like gnomes that laugh in their play.

I shall pass swiftly along and return ere the flood be done,
Part of the savage weather, of Earth's own spirit a part;
I shall let the great gusts carry me, knowing I am their son,
And shall let the rain beat in at the open door of my heart.

Bulletin, December 22nd, 1921, 3.
Inland.

When I turn to these hills they are silent straightway,
Elf and fairy depart;
I have never a pass for the guarded gateway
Unto their magic heart.

By cliff and harbour, by sea and river,
My heart has sung its song.
Where tides flow and ripples quiver
I have lived my whole life long.

My world is the world of waves beating
On cliffs shod in foam,
Where every wind sends spray as greeting,
And there have I found my home.

But here I am far from the great sea steamers,
The tide that falls and fills,
And the port which seems a haven for dreamers
Between steep, wooded hills.

These plains and flats of struggling grasses:
I know there's a song they sing.
They shout it to every wind that passes
On a shadowy wing.

But they trust not me and from me 'tis hidden,
Never a note revealed;
For a stranger's ear 'tis a strain forbidden,
So every lip is sealed.

The great gaunt ringbarked trees hiss: "Danger!
Here's a new face to scan."
Wherever I go I am a stranger
Under the Stranger's ban.

Bulletin, June 29th, 1922, 2.
Courage.

I have not seen your shadows on the pages
Of history and legend to gain thence
Naught of the spirit that moved you to immense
And mad endeavours in forgotten ages:

O Brave Men, of all times, my every sense
Worships your visions and heroic rages;
Your strength has given me strength, and it
assuages

My anger at my own poor impotence.

Then be beside me always, you who heard
The call of a moment when the deed was all
And life was but a little pleasant thing,
Which, for a dream's sake or a sacred word,
A man might take in his strong hand and fling
Joyously into darkness over the wall.

When You Are Sitting.

When you are sitting in that cushioned chair
   Drawn close up by the comfort of the flame,
   The while old Winter at his boisterous game
Hurls rain adown the arches of the air,
   Suddenly there will be a challenge blown
By the resounding wind, a trumpet blare
To rouse your ease-fed heart and make you think how bare
   This life of yours has grown;
And you will see before you, prosperous and tame,
The solemn years advancing - with every day the same
And every night the book and the gaslight's yellow glare.
Oh, dreams, dreams! Then you will wake and stare
   At the red glow of the coals on polished woodwork
glistening -
To find you have been waiting there
   While the fire slowly died,
Only listening
   To the rain outside
Singing of things you now can never hope to share:
   Glamour and sweet adventure a world wide.

Hermes, XXVIII, 2 (August 1922), 100.
I Too ....

I too have sat amongst you and joined your cheer,
Caring little for minutes that swiftly fled
Over the vanquished grief where he lay dead,
His body thrust from the doorway by laughter ringing clear;

But because our mirth would release, our joy unpen,
Something hard and sinister fraught with care -
A glitter caught from the false electric glare -
I was always driven out and under the stars again.

And yet from shadows where Night was wild and wise,
Creeping along through the dark with stealthy pace
Lest you should see my anguish or read my face,
I have turned and looked at your laughter with hungry,
envious eyes.

_Hermes, XXVIII, 2 (August 1922), 130._
Despondency.

The devils of despair, the demon forces,
They break me, ah! They break my courage down;
The blessed rivers of laughter at their sources
Are dried, and all my world turns scorched
and brown:
A place of torment where, in mourning gown,
I wander and I wander. Grey Despair,
This is your hour. Fallen - a ruined town -
Is my poor heart that you may plunder there.

New Outlook, II, 2
(October 18th, 1922), 27.
The Trip on Foot.

All along the sleepy roads in the gentle sun,
Through the land of green-growing pleasantly we travelled;
Till upon the fourth day was our journey done,
Hearts beating free again, all cares unravelled.

Summer kept her best for us, every joy entrancing;
Clean winds, birds singing, laughter in the trees,
Where the boughs were making sport and gay leaves were dancing -
How could song restrain his voice in the midst of these?

All things end, and fair it ended .... From a green lawn,
Where we lay in quietness, I watched the ripples shaking;
Then the willow-tops turned silver, and the clear dawn
Was wakened by a boy's voice into song breaking.

New Outlook, II, 2 (October 18th, 1922), 27.
SUDDEN DEATH.

I cannot but believe that some great will
Worked through all time until the call came shrill
   For youth, who was so splendidly alive
One hour, and in the next slept very still;
   That not by chance the moment could arrive
Which robbed life's breath and made our hearts to grieve:
Rather I must believe
That some dread Power who strives for some great end
   Beyond all knowledge, had ordained it so:
That when the time was ripe Death stooped to rend
   As was designed and ordered long ago.

If I should move my finger (who can tell?)
Empires may fall as Rome and Carthage fell,
   Their cities crashing in flames. On some far day
Red troops may storm a frowning citadel
   And my dead action throw their lives away.
All things are so upon the one wheel bound
That as the hub turns round
They all must move together, each small spoke
   Pushing his brother, turning the great rim:
Thus when youth fell at Death's most sudden stroke
   Great purposes were born because of him.

Not only all the smallest deeds are strands
In the Creation's web of seas and lands,
   Building God's kingdom; they themselves are built -
The smallest grain among the desert sands
   Rounded because a Caesar's blood was spilt.
Therein I find my comfort, being assured
That all the griefs endured,
And that those trysts youth kept with foe unseen
    Must be rewarded greatly, since they were
The fruit of all the ages that have been,
    And since such mighty force they caused
to stir.

But I can see the onward-moving years;
And ah! pale sorrow will not hide her tears
    Behind such veils of reason; nor will she
Be yet persuaded that a dawn appears.
    What care I for a world that is to be,
Here in this present when the clouds float by
O'er the unheeding sky,
And all the air with memories is rife
    Of other sunlit skies which we have seen? . . . .
And who can give us back the splendid life
    Or the tall sons who some day should
have been?

Consider all the beauty Earth has known,
Perished, destroyed, neglected, vanished, flown,
    Men's hearts forever make it live and be;
Naught of its splendor can be overthrown
    For the sign it is of Immortality;
Only the ugly things at last must fall -
    These perish one and all!
He, too, in mind and in his body's grace,
    Was beautiful: I saw him stand one day
Naked and poised to hurl a stone through space,
    Like a tense statue, a Greek god at play!

When thus I ponder on the strength that died
(Power that has vanished swiftly from our side)
How can my heart believe it thrown to waste?
'Tis but departed like a fallen tide!
Think you the great Creator would in haste
Destroy a perfect force at His command -
A tool made for His hand?
Think you that He would temper it in flame,
Sharpen its edge, prepare it, when complete,
Use it but once - then for a childish game
Break it and mar it in His forge's heat?

Bulletin, November 2nd, 1922, 47.
Evil.

I am that Evil men must own as king
And serve as slaves in chains if they should fall
Betrayed by promise of my whispering
When to their hearts I pay a stealthy call;

And so they paint me with eyes burning red,
And shaking fingers clutching at the hilt
Of a long hidden dagger, which can shed
Earth's happiest blood or poison it with guilt.

They picture me as creeping on my mark,
Rejoicing in a victim to be slain,
With Cruelty beside me in the dark,
And loathly Filth, and grinning shapes of Pain.

But ah! God knows I bow before His will:
(All things toward His goal, His purpose, trend.)
God knows I am His faithful servant still,
Doing His bidding, working for His end.

The foolish sages who have drawn a line
'Twixt good and ill - the small, the grey-bearded Wise,
How think they of the Meaning to divine?
How can they read the Reason with bleared eyes?

All things are strands in God's own warp and weft -
Yea, even I who walk dark skies beneath,
Sin in my right hand, sorrow in my left,
Murder, and ugliness between my teeth!

Triad, VIII, 2 (November 10th, 1922), 28.
Interlude.

When their star seemed faint and far-gleaming

Thus cried the priests of Art and Song:

"We build this world with our mad dreaming;

But, children of cities, the task is long.

"Our thoughts from the world of quiet are driven,

For the spirit which moves us knows no rest;

Our hearts are a rabble of hopes that are riven,

And after all your way is the best:

"There is peace for you, and a homecoming,

Laughter at eve, and little of pain;

For us there is only the restless drumming

Of the mind's song and the blinding rain."

Oisin.

I sing a lay of a tall prince
   In a land that men forget,
Though they say the glens and the springy turf
   Are green there yet.

Yesternight in a dream he came,
   With gold upon his wrist,
And over his shoulder a bright cloth
   Of amethyst.

"O you that walk beside Loch Lein
   Yet are not of my kin,
Can ye tell me where the Feni ride
   With my sire the Finn?"

I had been reading song and tale
   Of the vanished elder years
Ere Erin drowned her harp's tone
   With the sound of tears;

And printed page and pictured story
   Had done their work as well
As coral-shell and columbine
   Of a witch's spell.

New Outlook, II, 7
(December 27th, 1922), 109.
Cophetua Continued.

The Queen speaks -

I let the robes you gave me fall
About me like a funeral pall,
And out into the streets I went
Half-blind with new-born discontent;
Was this a queen or beggar-maid
For whom the peoples well afraid
Gave room to pass, as it were wise,
But gazed at with unloving eyes?

She kneels -

Lo, yesterday among them all
The meanest self you held in thrall
Bowing my head I went my way -
But then - O, that was yesterday!

Then you were king, but had not seen
The beggar you have made your queen
Because like gems in some nymph's hair
Her eyes shone and her face was fair.
Above them all you made me queen
But not because you loved, I ween;
You never loved, No, not an hour!
Those eyes of yours so cold in power
Saw only beauty; and mere pride
Must have that beauty at your side.

She rises again -

But all the crowds who knows a slave
Of old, and knew the gift you gave,
They hate me, as they mutter low
When through the streets in state I go;
Bowing, their eyes blaze scornfully;
O Sire, such stares burn into me.
They of the gutters whence I came
Know all my glories are my shame;
Let me return to brave their ire,
For with your gift you slay me, sire . . .
I let the robes you gave me fall
About me like a funeral pall.

Australian University Verse 1920-22, 22-23.
THE PHOTOGRAPH.

I saw a photo in a drawing room

And in that room were all the things that one

Expects in drawing-rooms correctly run

And such as always drown me in deep gloom:

Ornaments, pictures of large flowers in bloom,

And landscape-paintings very badly done,

Portraits of all the tribe from sire to son

And old Aunt Maud who ripens for the tomb;

But from this likeness with youth's wondering eyes

A boy looked whom the world has crucified

Because he grew to live for Truth alone;

And I gazed on him, then 'neath night's fair skies

Went out in silence . . . while good folk inside

Listened to ragtime on a gramaphone.

Australian University Verse 1920-22, 24.
Mountain Trees.

Down in the gullies there are great tall trees
That reach up for the sunlight, till it burns
Like silver in their leaves: bird-melodies
Ring all about them; and my eye discerns
How fairies' feet dance on the green tree-ferns
Whose fronds are jewelled bridges o'er the creek -
But always from this place my thought returns
Unto the ridges hard by cliff and peak.
There grow the stunted trees which only seek
To struggle for their foothold on some ledge -
And yet that scrub hears all the great world speak
When the winds fight it at the mountain's edge.
It battles with the winds exultantly
To rob them of their tales from land and sea.

Forum, I, 17
(January 3rd, 1923), 21.
In the Mine.

At first each side is the same,
    Blackness the only wall.
The naked wavering flame
Whose smoke wells up to the roof
Appears remote and aloof,
Apart even from this
Wide silent abyss;
    It shows me nothing at all:

Then leaps the sight to its task
    Suddenly to reveal
Intangible and unreal
    The timbered road through the coal -
It's [sic] distance stretching away
    With never a chink or a ray,
Idle for eyes to ask
    Unto what infinite goal!

Forum, II, 2
(June 6th, 1923), 13.
Hate.

Upon a sudden surely I was dead!

In one black hour

A fearful Hatred grasped me - and I fled

Leaving my dead self in his hideous power.

Triad, VIII, 10

(July 10th, 1923), 34.
O Wonderful Trees.

O wonderful trees, the splendour that you lift
Through the purple heat of day has broken my mind
And set it wandering, broken down and blind,
Among your branches.
Because too much I have been
Staring into this marvel I am now
Lost within it and dazzled and left to drift
From shadow unto shadow, from bough to bough;
And am driven here and there at the will of a leaf
Seeking this phantom that has broken my mind -
Always crazily chasing through the green
Beauty that now is but a passionate grief
Having grown too great for sight to capture and bind.

Triad, VIII, 11
(August 10th, 1923), 28.
Witchcraft.

Ah! Sorceress, and was it not enough
That all night long across the dark there flocked
Unbidden shapes that taunted me and mocked,
And tempted with their presence and called my name?

Poor sleep was driven by the riot therof
To stand apart watching his kingdom's rue,
As near my side a thousand times they came,
Each separate wantan a wild thought of you.

So fled the unquiet hours across the void,
Yet still a white confusion crowded in
About my heart, and still I strove to win
One shadowy kiss from clutched-at emptiness.

Truly it were enough had day destroyed
These conjurings, or proved you for a dream;
But I was awake when dawn came, Sorceress,
And lo, the sunlight on your breast agleam!

Vision III, November 1923, 8.
Morning.

Drowsily on my bed I heard,
   Somewhere outside the window calling,
A splendid-throated butcher-bird:
His notes leapt out and floated free
   Upon the sunlight-breathing air,
   Which round about me everywhere,
Drifted like a languid sea;
   Then they dizzily came falling
Down and down . . .

As I stretched there,
Mocked by fancies of half-sleep,
   Above my sight it seemed there towered,
Morning's own fair castle-keep.
   Thence I thought this music showered,
Tumbling in a quick cascade
   O'er the rough stone of the wall,
As a herald's bugle played
   Its rapturous and rousing call.

Poetry in Australia 1923, 47.
I Have No More Desire.

I have no more desire for this broad sphere
Of vex'd comings and goings; so let there be
No longer any looking wistfully
At great deeds in the noonlight shining clear.

Nor any envy now because men rear
Their banner of achievement: not for me
To battle likewise in this turgent sea,
The world that busily eddies round me here.

Though these truly have woven in their looms
The greatness of earth, denied such wonder-feats,
I go to meet the sun with singing lips:
I leave them talking of their engine rooms;
I leave the market-places and the streets,
And even the quay-side thronged with magic ships.

Poetry in Australia 1923, 48.
Philanion, who danced before the King - 
(Heart, have you then forgotten these broad days,
The breathing Present and the present Earth,
That once again you must go wandering
Among old ages with a gift of praise
To lay before her feet of little worth?)
Of all past beauty of remembered Spring
She is the most lost, the most utterly gone:
The little dust that was Philanion
Out, out of mind an hour after her fall . . .

Pale kings who watched her dancing, this was all;
What dream could hold her longer? Crowns and swords
Cover the broken years with litter and rust;
Only remain tumults and angry words,
Clanging deserts and clamour of distrust.
Princes, the brown feet that were running fire,
The naked body that was flame in the heart -
These could not keep you long from the great mart
Of triumphing power which was your fixed desire.

She who was wonderful beyond all this
Is but the dark rose of the blood's unrest
No thought of whom can live from kiss to kiss
In any lover's memory . . . Their path
Follows the wind upon a troublous quest;
But the rose is shattered by that wind's wrath
And blown out in the cold, blackening west.

Vision IV, February 1924, 7.
Appendix E.

A Checklist of textual variants between the first and second editions of Creative Effort.
NOTE.

As space precludes full quotation of all the passages in question, a number of representative alterations are given in full and all others are identified in brief.

The text of the 1924 edition of *Creative Effort* differs at several points from that of the 1920 edition, although in most cases the alterations are stylistic only and do not in any important way affect the matter of the test. The textual variants contained in "The Hidden Symbol" are more numerous than those in "Creative Effort".

Remarking on the textual variants between the two editions, Chaplin says that for the 1924 edition, "Chapter 6 was greatly revised, and Chapter 7 almost completely re-written". (1) This is a misleading comment, for what has in fact happened is that the one long section titled "Good and Evil" in the 1920 edition (and which corresponds to a sixth chapter, there being no list of section headings in the 1920 edition), has in the 1924 edition been expanded into two sections, sections 6 and 7 and titled respectively "The Surface Problem of Evil" and "The Real Attack of Evil". Chapter 7 in the 1924 edition, "The Real Attack of Evil", is simply a much expanded form of the discussion contained in the final three pages of the section titled "Good and Evil" in the 1920 edition. The section which is titled "Death" in the 1920 edition and which corresponds to a seventh chapter, appears almost unaltered as Chapter 8 in the 1924 edition.

Variants in section headings:

1920 ed.                                   1924 ed.

(1) "The Creative Effort"                 "The Essential Struggle"
(2) "The Creative Stimulus"               "The Creative Stimulus (1)"
(3) "The Aristocratic Affirmation"        "The Creative Stimulus (2)"
(4) "Good and Evil"                       "The Surface Problem of Evil"
                                            "The Real Attack of Evil"
                                            (see previous page)

(5) 1920 ed. latter part of sub-section titled "Pepys-Boswell", has been issued as a separate section titled "Scepticism's Value" in 1924 ed.

(i) Textual Variants in "Creative Effort".

(6) 1920 ed. 24:

They are a beginning, no more.
To sum up:
To be great, a thing must endure, and be a stimulus to fresh effort, higher development.
There can be no real greatness of race, no greatness of state, no greatness even of a group, for all groups run to collective action, which is negation of action.
There can be greatness only in the individual effort:
For states, groups, nations, races, move by the ephemeral pressure of present necessity. Their condition as a life element is as unstable as water. If a nation rises to political power, it can leave no more behind it as a mark of eminence than the creative effort of a few individual men.

1924 ed. 20:

They are a beginning, no more.
The struggle of an Earth existence affords material for a moral valuation, but in itself, no moral value can be evolved from it.
For the people, doubtless, it is a serious matter. Whatever power of consciousness they possess can only be stirred into action by the immediate pressure of passion and events. They eternally need the whip.
But for us, who seek a definite imagery in self-projection, this muddle of Earth affairs can never be of other significance than the material for Art, for Art alone can extract that formative imagery from it which can become a formative substance of mind.
Therefore, for us, there can be no seriousness in labels dealing with greatness of Race, greatness of State, greatness of Nationality.
There can be greatness only in the utterance of an Individual Mind. For this alone can keep alive moral action of self knowledge in the eternally static condition of an Earth existence. It alone can evolve an indestructible substance in Being from the shadow show of actuality. All the pompous pageant by which states, groups, nations, races, make their passage through the illusion of Absolute Time is a process as ephemeral as a pattern formed in smoke. These, as they rise and fall, move hither and thither among Earth localities, can leave nothing stable behind to record their passage save the works of a few individual Minds.

(7) 1920 ed. 36: "man's" and "base mind",
1924 ed. 32: "Mind's" and "baseness".

(8) 1920 ed. Chapter 4 has been extended for a further two pages in 1924 ed. (33 ff.).

(9) 1920 ed. 38-41 has been considerably expanded in 1924 ed. 36-42.

(10) 1920 ed. 43:

One must use this phrase. There is no other direction towards the higher effort than across the grave, not in it. But this direction leads from the problem of evil.

This is expanded to one and a half pages in 1924 ed. 43-45:

Of course there exists somewhere in space a refuse tip for valueless humanity; a sort of slum department for the special exercise of humanitarian virtues. To doubt this is to doubt that such an area exists on Earth, though its evidence takes up possibly three-parts of the Earth's surface. There is no need for sin obsessed creatures to turn the pages of a demented local preacher like Dante for a conception of Hell. The spectacle is under their noses on Earth, defined in the blood spattered record of its "History", stage managed by its potentates and politicians, with all the properties for a special performance stored in its arsenals and factories for the construction of ingenious instruments of destruction.
It is certainly wearisome to glance at these disgusting evidences of the Kaffir Krail [sic], but Man is too dangerous an animal to be released from an ever present threat of danger to himself, from himself.

Apparently by some such equally irresponsible effort to find a system of becoming responsible, the people go on damning themselves, and saving themselves, for interminable periods here and elsewhere. Earth can give us all analogies for the peoples' Hells and Heavens, with their penitentiaries for the damned, and their Trade Hall executives for the saved, and their special Saviours surrounded by committees of the elect, still as busy as ever with their job on earth. Serious enough as all this may be to the people, for us it can be only a spectacle between humour and depression. Out of it possibly some material of value is eventually produced; but once and for all, the high Morality of Mind can have nothing to do with it.

Hell of some sort is essential to Man, for he must, in the process of his evolution, which is solely bent on the effort to humanize himself, damn himself periodically as a spur to keep on trying to save himself. Hell, or whatever he may choose to label that condition in space which temporarily completes the episode of an Earth memory for him, must be chiefly some form of self-inflicted torture whereby he strives to register afresh on memory a renewed effort at restraint in the re-experience of an earth existence.

All that psycho-analysis discloses of the factor of Repression in the people is no more than primitive man's effort to bleed white the brute within him. Therefore his whole morality must be based on an effort to repress memory, since that subconscious storehouse is burdened with all its lusts and obscure cravings for an outlet in hatred and revenge. Thus good conscience in him will become the conscious definition of something he is not. Love, Purity, Self-Righteousness, Generosity of Emotion, - all these catchwords of good conscience in the peoples' Morality merely disclose to us the savage in his straight jacket [sic] of self-imposed restraint.

(11) 1920 ed. 45, the sentence "But an effort to understand Degeneracy can wait", is omitted in 1924 ed. 47.

(12) 1920 ed., last three pages of section titled "Good and Evil" have been expanded into a separate ten page
section titled "The Real Attack of Evil" in 1924 ed.

(13) 1920 ed. 54:

But at such a point supposition must cease. The world has suffered too much already from the spleen of that Good God, who in Nietzsche's phrase "built up his Hell for the delight of those he loved best."

Death, whatever else it may lead to, is the great automatic adjustment of human values.

If Creative effort is the expression of ascending Life - the Destructive impulse Evil, is the expression of something that descends.

More than that one has no right to say.

This has been re-written in 1924 ed. 63-64:

We have already repudiated any complicity in Man's morality of repression, which in reality is no more than a frenzied effort to impress on Memory the effort to restrain savage lusts.

Death, for him, can never be other than an exchange of Earth for Earth; a laborious repetition in re-experience till he has registered on memory some power of response (conscience) and has developed within himself some faculty in utility.

For this purpose he will always need stimulus of some concept of Fear, - some Good God, who, in Nietzsche's phrase "built up his Hell for the delight of those he loved best."

But even in these exchanges between Earth here, and an Earth there, Death, which is the mechanism of exchange, must lead to a great automatic adjustment in human values.

If self-development is the expression of ascending Life, self-ignorance - negation, mental flaccidity, is something that descends ....

Let us leave the matter there.

(14) 1924 ed. 75, the single sentence "An axiom for the People's Morality." does not appear in 1920 ed. 65.

(15) 1920 ed. section titled "Decadence" has been expanded at its conclusion for a further three quarters of a page in 1924 ed. 77, as follows:

Let us displace here one constant obsession of the historian; that of the assumed decadence of nations.
The decadence of a locality has nothing to do with the decadence of its minds. Once a principle of Mind has appeared on earth, its re-appearance need have nothing to do with the locality of its genesis.

The principle of Statesmanship, Law-giving, and social order, projected by the Greek, was first definitely put in practice by a group of minds we call Roman. That they were able to do this, allies them with the Greek.

If we wish to find where the inherited powers of those minds are in action at any given period of history, we have only to locate the action of the principle first defined by them.

Today, the one locality where a definite principle of Statesmanship exists is in England. Therefore the English, are, by direct blood inheritance, the existing Romans of to-day.

The Roman law-giving minds did not fall into decadence. They merely transferred their energy from their original locality, and for that reason, the locality fell into "decadence".

(16) 1920 ed. 78: "If Mr. Wells had not ...
1924 ed. 88: "If, for instance, a novelist had not ...

This concludes the textual variants in "Creative Effort".

* * * * * * * *

(ii) Textual variants in "The Hidden Symbol".

(17) 1920 ed. 130 paras. 3-7 have been expanded and altered in 1924 ed. 136-137.

(18) 1920 ed. 133 paras. 1-4 have been slightly condensed in 1924 ed. 140 paras. 1-3.

(19) 1920 ed. 144-145 differs from 1924 ed. 150-151.

(20) 1920 section titled "Our Morality" has been expanded at its conclusion in 1924 ed. 172.

(22) 1920 ed. 187: "the highest of its order";
    1924 ed. 189: "of a high Order".

(23) 1920 ed. 187 para. 6 has been expanded in 1924 ed.
    190 paras. 1-3.

(24) 1920 ed. section titled "Beethoven" 201-203 has been
    expanded in 1924 ed. 202-208.

(25) 1924 ed. section titled "Turner" did not appear in
    1920 ed.

(26) 1924 ed. section titled "Rubens and Michael Angelo" 209:
    the first four paras. of this section did not appear in
    1920 ed.

(27) 1920 ed. 205 has been expanded in 1924 ed. 211.

(28) 1920 ed. section titled "Milton and Dante" 206 has been
    expanded in 1924 ed. 212-213.

(29) 1920 ed. 208 has been expanded in 1924 ed. 214-215.

(30) 1920 ed. 226-227 have been slightly condensed in 1924
    ed. 231.

(31) 1920 ed. 231 has been expanded in 1924 ed. 235.

(32) 1920 ed. has been altered in 1924 ed. 239.

(33) 1920 ed. sub-section titled "Swinburne and Tennyson" 237
    has been re-written and titled "Swinburne" in 1924 ed.
    241 ff.

(34) 1924 ed. 251 paras. 9-10 did not appear in 1920 ed. 248.

(35) 1920 ed. 250: "Berlioz, even in spite of his exquisite
    sense of beauty, in Chopin";
    1924 ed. 253: "Berlioz and Chopin".

(36) 1920 ed. 252 para. 3 omitted in 1924 ed. This is
    possibly a printing error.
(37) 1924 ed. 261 paras. 1-4 did not appear in 1920 ed.
(38) 1920 ed. 259 para. 3 has been omitted in 1924 ed. 263.
(39) 1920 ed. 263 para. 5 to chapter end appears as a separate section under the title "Scepticism's Value" in 1924 ed. 266 ff.
(40) 1920 ed. final section titled "A Last Word": running title incorrectly given as "The Last Word". This is rectified in 1924 ed.

This concludes the textual variants in "The Hidden Symbol".
Appendix F.

Major textual variants between the first edition and Norman Lindsay's MS of *Creative Effort*.
NOTE.

The MS of Creative Effort held in the Mitchell Library, Sydney, with a letter of appreciation from Hugh McCrae inserted, was deposited by Rose Lindsay. The text of the manuscript is in Norman Lindsay's hand and contains evidence of revision. Nevertheless there are a number of points at which the MS text varies from that of the 1920 edition, these variations being predominantly stylistic rather than material. The most consistent alteration in the 1920 edition is the substitution in "The Hidden Symbol" of the term "Mind" for the MS's "Intellect". It is not possible to determine whether or not this text was the copy text for Creative Effort.

This Appendix omits such minor variations as the substitution of "for fresh effort" (1920 ed. 25) for "of fresh effort" (MS 23).

It should be noted that the two essays contained in the MS are paginated separately.

(i) "Creative Effort".

(1) MS 22:

Is the materialist answered? Even he, too, is ashamed, and prefers to confuse man's destiny with the ant, lest the dignity of his intellect should be accused of idle dreams.

Why, even the materialist insists, that man's life is a striving, an effort to accomplish some better condition on earth. And the history of man turns upon him in derision.

1920 ed. 23-24 expands the above to fifteen lines: "To such a statement materialism sends up its troubled cry . . ."
there is no end to reach".

(2) MS 24-25:

But first we must remove from the conception of creative Art all Aesthetic valuations. The Aesthetic sense is an implement, not an end. It serves only to guide, to select. Those who find the achievement of art merely Decorative, are merely people with constricted minds, bound by the four walls of a room. The higher impulse of life has nothing to do with the necessity that drives man under cover to protect himself from the weather, to which he adds the impulse to adorn his covering, in order to make it a more habitable place.

The confusion of aesthetic claims to precedence has arisen because it is the Aesthete who commonly practises all forms of art. It is this power to appreciate that drives him to imitate. For that reason he will always find attainment in Art where it seems to offer attainment for himself. It is he who formulates rules, precedents, and technical traditions, for all such formula are props for the uncertain: - crutches to enable the lame to walk. Without them, they could not walk at all.

Therefore the Aesthete announces himself the high priest of Art, because, like his dirty Brother in Religion, it is he who invents the creed.

But all that is commonly implied by the word "Art" has very little to do with the Creative Effort.

By Art one understands an educational stimulus, something immensely valuable to the process of Existence, because it tends to refine those who follow it, to give them a higher perception of beauty, and to force upon the recognition of all dull minds some vague sense of the importance and dignity of Creative Effort.

This is re-written in 1920 ed. 26-27, "And this effect is brought about by the stimulus of mind on mind".

(3) MS 26:

"they give a conviction of life beyond earth".

1920 ed. 28:

"They are a connection with life beyond earth".
But the materialist who takes a higher plane than mere utility still insists that the achievement of Creative effort is sufficiently justified by its stimulus to earthly life. What? Then earthly life must be already perfection?

Why, the effort of every good materialist is devoted to utterly destroying such a supposition; since who but he is so active in striving to make the best of its imperfections. I say that to the struggle for Existence on Earth there is joined an eternal struggle to mitigate its dangers, soften its hardness, and alleviate its pain, and that it is so imperfect in its construction that man himself would devise a better plan, if he had power to execute it.

And this eternal imperfection is its essential. It gives just a minimum of material whereby man may achieve the Conquest of the Intellect.

For what does it give?

Five senses, and the function of sex. No, more, No less!

This is re-written in 1920 ed. 29-30, "of a mud fish . . .

five senses, and the function of sex".

(5) MS 31: "humanity".

1920 ed. 36: "humility".

(6) MS 37: "divine".

1920 ed. 42: "define".

(ii) "The Hidden Symbol".

(7) Examples where the MS term "Intellect" has become "Mind" in the 1920 ed.:

MS 1 (1920 ed. 125), and MS 4 (1920 ed. 127).

(8) MS 37:

"If one may believe this, the responsibility of man is narrowed and simplified, but the responsibility is doubled".

1920 ed. 163:

"If one may believe this, the responsibility is doubled".
Surely, if we hesitate for a direction in life, we may find it here, and find spirit in this spirit that does not crave narcotics to forget life, but exerts its highest achievement to exult in living. Life has never had a grander pageant than this, where all forms are noble, all textures rich and splendid, and where only the elect dwell.

This paragraph does not appear in 1920 ed. It has been replaced by the material to be found on 208.

"This is perhaps the most difficult of all revaluations".

"Is this a failure of perception in us, or a failure of revelation in the poet?"

"for by effort we advance towards it".

"This is perhaps the most difficult of all revelations".

"Is this a failure of perception in us, of a failure of revelation in the poet?"

"for by that knowledge we advance towards it".
Note on Bibliography.

This Bibliography contains details of all works cited in this thesis.

The sections relating to Kenneth Slessor and R.D. FitzGerald are arranged in chronological order and are designed as checklists of their poetic output up to and including the period of the publication of *Vision*. These sections also contain such later works by these writers as are cited in the body of the thesis.

The section under Norman Lindsay contains such MS material as is cited in the thesis. The section relating to his printed work is arranged in chronological order and is designed as a checklist of his literary work.

In addition to Norman Lindsay's literary works, the Bibliography includes those volumes which are wholly devoted to his artistic output (such as *The Pen Drawings of Norman Lindsay*, Sydney 1918), and those works illustrated by Lindsay which are cited in the body of the thesis.

Prefaces, forewords and essays by Norman Lindsay, in publications other than journals and other than volumes devoted to his work, are arranged in chronological order under Norman Lindsay and alphabetically under the name of the author in whose work the preface or foreword appears.

The Bibliography attempts to provide a comprehensive list of the more important articles and reviews of Lindsay's work, both graphic and literary.
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VI.

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13. This account of Lindsay's meeting with Miles Franklin is similar to that which later appeared in *Bohemians of the Bulletin*, Sydney 1965.

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