USE OF THESES

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MARTIN BOYD: THE AESTHETIC TEMPERAMENT,
A CRITICAL STUDY

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I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis contains no material which is not the product of my own original study and research, except when acknowledgement is made in the text, notes or bibliography.
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For the help they have given me in understanding Martin Boyd's background, I am indebted to members of the Beckett Boyd family, in particular Guy Boyd, his wife Phyllis, and Helen Beckett Read, who spared their time to show me paintings by the novelist's parents, Emma Minnie and Arthur Merric Boyd. Mrs Read, the novelist's sister, has in her possession a sketchbook of her mother's and other interesting pictorial keepsakes which contribute to one's picture; her detailed reply to specific queries about Martin Boyd's childhood environment assisted me considerably. My thanks are extended to Guy Boyd for his answers to questions relating to the novelist's brother Merric, to Arthur Boyd for his letter in response to my enquiries about his association with Martin Boyd while he was fulfilling his uncle's commission to paint murals at The Grange, the Beckett family home at Harkaway, and to the painter's wife, Yvonne, who on Arthur Boyd's behalf corresponded with me on subjects relating to my investigation of the family's interest in the Aesthetic Movement. I am indebted further to Phyllis Boyd, whose correspondence on behalf of Guy Boyd was helpful in a similar way.

I am especially grateful to Grahame Johnston who was still reading chapters of this thesis a few weeks before his death and to Martin Boyd himself for some unexpected and valued friendships he has made for me at the Australian National University. Thanks are also due to the staffs of the Chifley, Menzies, National, Mitchell, La Trobe, Fryer, Indiana University (Bloomington, U.S.) and Royal Academy of Arts (London) libraries.
ABSTRACT

The claim of this thesis is that Martin Boyd is a writer of aesthetic inclination whose fundamental concerns and values, while they emerge in a highly individual manner and with the complicating orientation of a religious view of the world, have clear affinities with the fin de siècle celebration of beauty and pleasure as the goal of life.

Section I concentrates on the milieu into which the novelist was born, its aim being to investigate the presence of late Victorian ideas in this environment. Attention is given to the role of the Beckett-Boyd family as a shaping force in the novelist's formative background, with particular emphasis on the cultural interests of Boyd's own parents, painters associated with the flowering in Australia of an art that has been labelled 'Impressionist.' Both the European and Australian nineties are considered for their alternative and, at times, complementary contributions to the general cultural atmosphere affecting the novelist's upbringing. The part played by Boyd's schooling is also considered.

Section II examines Boyd's theoretical notions as these are developed in a discursive work of the writer's mature years, Much Else in Italy, A Subjective Travel Book. The idea of the primacy of beauty, a central concept in nineteenth-century aestheticism, is revealed as vital to Boyd's exploration of the marriage of Classicism and Christianity in Western civilization. In this way his vision is linked with the Hellenizing impulse of the late Victorian imagination.

Section III, comprising chapters three to seven, sets out to show that the aesthetic view of life, expressing itself as a vision of pleasure, dominated the novelist's imagination from the outset and continued as a major preoccupation of his fiction. Chapter three discusses the lesser fiction, where a theme of pleasure is often mechanically presented. Chapters four, five and six analyse its more sophisticated treatment in the better fiction: The Montforts, Lucinda Brayford and the Langton novels. In the case of the Langton books, my concern is with The Cardboard Crown and Outbreak of Love as the two novels in the series most preoccupied with evoking those aspects of life which reveal themselves as 'the face of pleasure.' In these novels Boyd concentrates on what he terms 'the Greek story' in his portrayal of a number of searching individuals who are afforded at least a partial experience of a life of beauty and enjoyment. Chapter seven is a transitional chapter discussing the system of values underlying Boyd's division of his characters into the categories of aesthetes and puritans. The idea of a spiritual contest focuses Boyd's need to reconcile his vision of a life of pleasure with his awareness of
moral evil and initiates a discussion of his approach to the graver issues of life.

Section IV, comprising chapters eight to ten, discusses the treatment of the suffering hero in four novels, Lucinda Brayford, Such Pleasure, A Difficult Young Man and When Blackbirds Sing, in which Boyd seeks to portray a transcending of the aesthetic vision and to offer a view of life able to give a positive interpretation to the fact of pain and sorrow. A variety of approaches is revealed: the rather abstract provision of the framework of Christian myth in the story of Stephen Brayford, the discursive argument of Such Pleasure, the entirely aesthetic evocation of 'the face of sorrow' in A Difficult Young Man, and, finally, the presentation in When Blackbirds Sing of a double world, the symbol of a personality divided against itself. In each case, we witness the novelist's search for a resolution to the apparent conflict between the pleasure-loving personality's desire for fulfilment and his knowledge of evil. Significantly, the values important to Boyd's aesthete characters are not rejected but are gathered up in the appreciation of a higher kind of moral beauty, that of sacrificial love.

Section V discusses Boyd's aesthetic impulse from the point of view of a technique of Impressionism he shares with a number of other writers and which, in his case, owes something to his background of a family of painters. The early novels are examined for elements which anticipate major developments in the mature fiction. The implications of an Impressionist approach for the form of the novel — its handling of narrative, plot and character — are considered in detail.

An Appendix is included with the aim of highlighting both fin de siècle and Impressionist developments in Australian art at the turn of the century.
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<td>DI</td>
<td>Dearest Idol, Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill</td>
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<td>'Preoccupations and Intentions.' Southerly, XXVIII (1968), 83-90.</td>
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INTRODUCTION

In response to a suggestion that he should write about the 'preoccupations and intentions' of his books, Martin Boyd defined his concept of his role as a novelist in a 1968 article for *Southerly*: 'The function of art is to enhance the quality of our lives, and to give us intensity of vision' (PI 89). Elsewhere, he wrote that 'the artist's function is to reveal the true and the beautiful, and to increase man's understanding, which, as Blake says, admits him to Heaven' (DD 209). Statements like these, emphasizing experience in its qualitative aspects, suggest the aesthetic orientation of Boyd's mind. His belief was that art can teach man to discriminate between experiences and to build life itself on the foundations of a vision of beauty and harmony in the world. This special emphasis on the refinement of one's sensibility for a fuller, more satisfying existence came to Boyd from the cultural milieu of the late nineteenth century in which he was nurtured and was reinforced by the fact that he belonged to a family of artists. It is the aim of this thesis to examine the aesthetic impulse of Boyd's imagination in some of its ramifications for his art of the novel.

In approaching Martin Boyd's fiction as a whole, the present study stresses the links which exist between individual novels. Although necessary weight is given to the work of maturity, novels of small consequence are considered because they demonstrate a continuity of artistic purpose, disclose the anticipatory elaborations of themes later developed in novels of worth, and suggest an interesting counterpoint to stances taken in the mature fiction with greater reflectiveness and a sharper sense of alternatives. There can be no doubt that Boyd succumbed too early to the lure of print, publishing first a book of poems and following this with a spate of novels - more accurately novelettes - a story for children and an autobiography, until the publication of his first real success in fiction, *Lucinda Brayford*, in 1946. A notable exception amongst Boyd's early work is *The Montforts* (1928), which experiments with the family chronicle, a genre to be developed with startling originality in future novels. With some lapses - an unwieldy amalgamation of his first two novels in 1949, a rather eccentric travelogue in 1958, and an entertainment in 1969, the novelist's output after the Second World War is of distinctive quality. A group of novels of impelling imagination is the Langton tetralogy (1952-1962). This sequence has as its core the story of a family whose world resembles in many ways, cultural and historical,
that of the novelist's own forebears and relatives. Among Boyd's post-
Second World War successes is a further autobiography which offers a not
uninteresting retrospective of seven decades, beginning with the 1890s
in Australia and concentrating with some vehemence on a personal view of
events of European history in the twentieth century.

In examining the temper and bearings of Boyd's aestheticism this thesis
aims at clarifying the developing thematic interests of the fiction and the
congruent evolution of a technique which gives the novelist the means of
investing his work with an increased richness and density of significance.
Two preoccupations emerge as central to Boyd's view of the world and these
encompass his more particular concerns with socio-historical issues. The
first, which engaged the novelist from his childhood, is a vision of life
as an arena for pleasure. The second, which encroached on his imagination
and sensibility through his experience in the trenches of World War I, is
a recognition of the fact of pain and the existence in the world of moral
evil. As a consequence, I have made a division in my treatment of the
fiction between two major aspects of the novelist's vision: his pre-
occupation with the face of pleasure and its complement, the face of sorrow.
Together the two faces, like the dots of blue and yellow paint in Boyd's
Impressionist analogy for the distinctive fictional technique developed
in parts of the Langton sequence, form his conception of a developed
humanity.

Despite his appreciation of the fact of pain and of the generosity of
individuals in their passive acceptance of it, Boyd's emphasis throughout
his life was on stemming the tide of suffering. His dominant concern in
all his fiction is with the possibility of perfecting an ethic of pleasure,
a preoccupation which results in a cluster of themes related to the issue
of pleasure as it presented itself to the novelist in his formative years.
This occurred through the Aesthetic Movement, its beliefs and attitudes,
and the manner in which such influences appeared in Boyd's novels is given
close scrutiny in the following pages.

A final insight which flows from my analysis of the novelist's
affinities with the aesthetes of the late nineteenth century is the
relationship of his vision with that of the Impressionist painters. The
naturalness of this development is apparent when Boyd's position in a
family of painters is taken into account, and I have attempted in my
chapter on the technique of the novels to reveal what seems to me an
essentially visual imagination at work in fiction. More importantly, the
concluding section sets out to relate Boyd's spontaneous Impressionism with
a stream of writing of comparable orientation. An Appendix on Australian
culture at the turn of the century has been included to expand the picture of the way in which aestheticism and Impressionism were received by the Australian imagination.

A word about editions is necessary, since in some instances Martin Boyd revised his novels. Throughout this thesis quotations are made from the 1963 revised edition of *The Montforts*, first published by Rigby and reprinted by Lansdowne in 1975, unless indication is given to the contrary. In the case of the Langton books I have chosen the uniform Lansdowne edition because this includes the revised texts of *The Cardboard Crown* (reprinted from the 1964 Penguin edition) and of *A Difficult Young Man* (especially prepared for the Lansdowne publication). A list of texts to which I frequently refer is included at the beginning of this thesis, together with a system of abbreviated reference.
I

A LATE VICTORIAN BACKGROUND
CHAPTER ONE

THE AESTHETIC IMPERATIVE

The world was beginning to realize that work and duty were not everything, and that life was meant as much for play.

Richard Le Gallienne, The Romantic '90s.

Here we were experiencing rather a naissance than a renaissance; we had no decadents to combat (or to fondle), but only the upward rush of youthful emotion, youth trying out in all manner of awkward ways the wings it had just begun to sprout.

A.W. Jose, The Romantic Nineties.

As late as 1926, after the publication of Boyd's first two novels, Love Gods (1925) and Brangane, A Memoir (1926), 'a Bloomsbury young man' (SF 205) lunching with the novelist at Cassis kept exclaiming, 'Why, you're just like the 'nineties' (DD 148). Although the observation is recalled by Boyd in the autobiographies in the spirit of self-deprecation the young man's insight is a genuine one. However anachronistic it makes him appear, the drawing of a link with the fin de siècle recognizes an important truth about the novelist's tendencies and affiliations: Martin Boyd is an aesthete whose cast of mind resembles that of the writers and artists of the period in which he grew up, the period from the early nineties to the outbreak of the First World War.

It is the aim of this study to examine the extent to which the subject matter of the novels, the values they express and the techniques they employ owe something to a historical milieu and are directed by an aesthetic quality of personality in the writer - that temperament for whom beauty signifies perfection of life. The notion of the supremacy of beauty which was entertained by the fin de siècle is expressed as clearly by Christopher Brennan as anyone in his series of lectures on 'Symbolism in Nineteenth Century Literature' (1904): 'Beauty is the only possible symbol of perfection. Absorbs truth and good which are not ultimates.' 1 From theoretical statements scattered in occasional articles and in the autobiographies and given extended treatment in Much Else in Italy, A Subjective Travel Book (1958), it is apparent that Boyd would not have wanted to deprive 'truth' and 'goodness' of at least competing status. However, as both his theory and practice as a writer show, he did share the tenets of late nineteenth-century aestheticism to the extent of
exalting an awareness of beauty as an integral and indispensable component of developed perception.

Throughout his fiction, Boyd's preoccupation is with a vision of life perfected in beauty through glimpses of which his characters are inwardly changed in a clarification and strengthening of their essential natures. Such moments are intended high points: Lucinda absorbing the brilliancy of the seascape at the Tarpeian Rock; Edward (in Love Gods) meeting his alter ego in a beautiful youth - 'Christopher stood in a shaft of gold, a nimbus round his yellow head, flecks of gold dancing in his pale eyes' (LG 20); Dominic watching young men diving for coins at Teneriffe and overcome by an emotion as ancient as that recorded on the wall of the Tomb of the Diver at Paestum or in the Etruscan frescoes of Hunting and Fishing at Tarquinia:

The bodies of the young men were a golden brown, and as they fell like arrows into the sea, and moved about in marvellous patterns deep down in the opal clarity, Dominic's eyes glowed and darkened, as always when he saw something supremely beautiful, above all when it showed the freedom of men in the natural world.

WBS 11.

Most of all, Boyd is adept at suggesting a spirit of place - the setting which his seeking imagination has selected as congenial for the simultaneous fulfilment of man's sensual and spiritual capabilities.

Without the sense of fading possibility which sobered Australia's aesthete of the bushland, the poet Henry Kendall, Boyd appreciates the formal goal in literature of

a cunning harmony
Of words and music caught from glen and height,
And lucid colours born of woodland light,
And shining places where the sea-streams lie.  

It is equally true that his highly imagistic prose can take its inspiration from the creations of man - from beautiful houses or a university college, cultivated gardens, piazzas, churches or Greek temples - and that he is able to describe a richly aesthetic interior with something of the finesse of a fin de siècle reviewer of the decorative arts.

For all its adherence to a vision of loveliness, and this is certainly the most noticeable characteristic of Boyd's imagination, the
aesthetic tendency does not preclude acknowledgement of the presence of sorrow and a profound sense of the world's ills. Indeed, Boyd's fictional universe is shot through with pain, at its most pathetic, perhaps, in the figure of the child Dominic Langton riding his horse Tamburlaine to death. Despite a dominant Romanticism in the depiction of a personality driven to 'ride as never man has ridden,' there is also a practical, social reformist aspect to the novelist's treatment of the wrongs the human spirit has to suffer. When the total range of his work is considered, his aesthetic values can be seen to arise out of a context of social criticism as the novelist interprets the impieties and pharisaism of a particular culture and offers a remedy. In his autobiographies, especially, Boyd emerges as an outspoken analyst of society, politics and the historical events of his lifetime. Social concerns are also present in the works of fiction, forming part of their thematic and emotional patterning.

At one level the novels are social parables for the post-industrial world. Boyd's skill is in evoking the moral atmosphere of a historically-conditioned milieu, rather than in reconstructing its material contingencies, and to this end he invents a gallery of figures illustrative of those undesirable social values he sees blighting the modern world. The great Whore of Babylon - as A.D. Hope names the spirit of the age - who has destroyed the aristocratic values of an older civilization only to replace them with a vulgarizing and brutalizing commercialism, has her most loathsome portrait in the Australian newspaperman, Straker, whose ruthless empire-building overtakes the crumbling aristocratic world of Lucinda Brayford. Perhaps no less fiercely and reprehensibly her lineaments are also visible in the parvenu snobbery of Baba in the Langton novels. Speaking generally, the false values identified and condemned for their tyranny over the minds and behaviour of men are materialism, bourgeois comfort and security (when this is masked by hypocritical displays of self-denial), puritanism, the profit-motive, militarism and (when pursued for their own sakes) even the seeming inviolables of modern times, science, knowledge and power. In their stead are to be reverentially elevated the qualities of the aesthetic personality cultivated towards an ideal of wholeness in spiritual and bodily life.

The foregoing comments rehearse aspects of an argument which is only completed in the final pages of this thesis. The purpose of the present chapter is to pursue, without anticipating conclusions about the full artistic statement of Boyd's work, the shaping forces of a late
Victorian environment which predisposed the novelist towards a special view of the world and practice in literature. My aim is to investigate the background, in its family and wider cultural aspects, of Boyd's formative years when as a child, adolescent and young man in Australia in the 1890s and first decade of the twentieth century, he had the opportunity to draw ideas and values from the Victorian age, an age reluctantly passing away in its Antipodean setting. It was an upbringing which worked to inculcate in the future writer distinctly old-fashioned values: those abiding principles of 'the True, the Good and the Beautiful' (WWO 20) which can be seen to dominate Boyd's work until the end of his life in the third quarter of the present century. Significantly, as my later analysis of individual works will show, these values are not merely the detached concerns of a historically-oriented imagination - as Boyd in his most serious and best fiction reconstructs the Victorian past both as he has experienced it and as he has learned about it from elder members of his family - but an intrinsic part of this novelist's way of looking at the world.

THE A BECKETT-BOYD ALLIANCE

Martin à Beckett Boyd was born in Lucerne, 10 June 1893, when his parents, who had been living for several years at the family home, Penleigh in Wiltshire, were travelling on the continent. Financial difficulties, the result of the Melbourne banks failing - an event the novelist uses as an element of plot in The Montforts and the Langton books - dictated a return to Australia where Boyd spent his early life in localities around Melbourne until 1915 when he joined an English regiment which took him to the front. Boyd's mother belonged to an eminent legal family, the à Becketts, who originated from Wiltshire, tracing their forebears from the twelfth century. The Boyds, Irish landowners of Scottish extraction and also a line with a long-recorded history, began their Australian life in 1860 when Captain John Boyd (1825 - 91) migrated from Ireland as Military Secretary to the Governor of Victoria. The novelist's painter father, Arthur Merric Boyd (1862 - 1940), born in Dunedin, New Zealand, was one of the numerous offspring of Captain Boyd's marriage with Lucy Charlotte Martin.

The patriarch of the Australian à Becketts was Sir William à Beckett (1806 - 69), the first Chief Justice of Victoria (in 1852) and the brother of Gilbert Abbott, the celebrated comic writer and co-founder of
Punch. Writing about fictional Australian families in his novels, Boyd often represents an ancestry in the legal profession whose habits of thought contribute to his characters' sense of justice and concern for the truth. Such hereditary influences from his own family are acknowledged in his personal account of his background in _A Single Flame_ (1939) and _Day of My Delight, An Anglo-Australian Memoir_ (1965). Neither is the Beckett sense of humour overlooked: it ripples through all the novels and leads Boyd to remark in the autobiographical context:

Although we were only cousins and on the other side of the world, the Punch tradition affected us strongly. We had to cherish the absurd when we saw it in order to scarify it with ridicule, like breeding pheasants to shoot them.

DD 12.

Sir William, who was the novelist's great-grandfather and the model for Sir William in _The Cardboard Crown_ (1952), had literary interests which involved him in various works of compilation, editing and actual authorship. Boyd mentions with approval his 'Gothic poems and a travel book' (DD 12) - a reference to _The Siege of Dunbarton Castle: and other poems_ (1824) and a book about a journey through Italy (taken by Sir William with other members of his family while on leave) entitled _Out of Harness_ (1854). A later book of verses, _The Earl's Choice and Other Poems_ (1863), contains (besides the long title poem which amounts to an essay on class morality) a number of pieces on personal and political subjects.

Although his progeny settled in Australia, Sir William himself returned to England shortly after resigning for health reasons in 1857. A brother, Thomas Turner à Beckett (1808 - 92), who also became prominent in public life in Victoria, chose Melbourne as his home. He had originally come to the country in 1850 to visit William and another brother who had emigrated to New South Wales, Arthur Martin à Beckett. In a very short time, Thomas Turner became involved in the political life of the colony, being elected to the Victorian Legislative Council in 1858 - a position he held for two decades. He was also a member of the University Council, a Trustee of the Public Library and official Registrar of the Church of England. 'Garry Owen,' in _Melbourne's self-congratulatory The Chronicles of Early Melbourne_ (1888), describes him with considerable enthusiasm as 'gifted with literary attainments of no mean order' -
'a brilliant lecturer when he likes and a clever pamphleteer.' Painting and Painters (1871) was one of his lectures popular enough to warrant publication.

Sir William's eldest son, William Arthur Callander à Beckett (1833 - 1901), who followed his father in the legal profession and later entered parliament, was the novelist's grandfather and the model for Austin in the Langton novels. W.A.C. à Beckett married a Melbourne heiress, Emma Mills (1838 - 1906), and brought up his six children at The Grange, a country house at Berwick near Melbourne (it appears as Bemerton in The Montforts and Westhill in the Langton novels) which he himself had built and whose walls Martin Boyd as a later owner commissioned his nephew Arthur Boyd to decorate. The novelist's mother, Emma Minnie (1858 - 1936), the second child of this marriage, was brought up at The Grange. A charming record of this period of her life survives in a watercolour, 'Interior with figures, The Grange 1875.'

TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY MELBOURNE

Melbourne at the time of Martin Boyd's birth was a society with a sense of identity, apart from its colonial Englishness, shaped largely by the upheaval of the gold rush period which enriched the city beyond its expectations and made its inhabitants drunk with grandiose dreams. The city was regarded locally as 'by far the most important city in the Southern Hemisphere.' Of Melbourne's ascendancy over Sydney, Richard Twopeny, writing for an English audience, commented in 1883:

Although Sydney is the older town, Melbourne is entitled to be considered the metropolis of the Southern Hemisphere. The natural beauties of Sydney are worth coming all the way to Australia to see; while the situation of Melbourne is commonplace if not actually ugly; but it is in the Victorian city that the trade and capital, the business and pleasure of Australia chiefly centre.

To Francis Adams, writing in his Australian Essays (1886), Melbourne was emphatically on the move, it possessed the 'metropolitan tone' and its inhabitants, the 'metropolitan look.' Indeed expansion reached a peak in the 1880s: in the period following the discovery of gold, Melbourne acquired its civic face, chiefly characterized by an ornate Classical style which satisfied the Victorian sense of the massive as a symbol of worth and permanence. The romanticism of the Gothic revival
was present in church architecture with an occasional note of the Victorian sentiment of 'onwards and upwards.' In the revised edition (1880) of his record of Australian impressions, Under the Southern Cross, Henry Cornish described a city which was nothing if not solid in its appearance of progress and prosperity. Having noted Bourke, Collins, Elizabeth and Queen Streets with their shops, banks and offices, Flinders Street and Flinders Lane beside the Yarra - the location of warehouses - Cornish surveys the public architecture:

On the high ground on the other side of the river, the Governor's palatial residence stands out a conspicuous and attractive object in the scenery about Toorak. Close by are the Observatory and Botanical Gardens, the latter a most enjoyable and picturesque retreat for idlers and holiday-makers. On the high ground, at the top of Bourke and Collins Streets, are the new Public Offices, a handsome and substantial block of buildings, only just occupied; the Houses of Parliament, not yet more than half finished; the Roman Catholic Cathedral, ditto ditto; and the site for Bishop Moorhouse's Protestant Cathedral, when he can raise sufficient money for building it. Close by are the Carlton Gardens, in which the building is to be raised which is to contain the International (not inter-Colonial, mind you) Exhibition of 1880.

Other signs of progress were the Public Library, Hospital and new Law Courts in the process of construction. By 1888, Australia's centenary year (marked by Melbournians by a second great Exhibition), the price of land in Collins Street reached its highest ever. As it had been since the 1840s, Toorak remained the most coveted of fashionable suburbs as a home for the rich and here, as well as in Hawthorn, Kew and Brighton, the frenzied building of florid Italianate mansions, the ultimate symbols of Melbourne's display culture of the boom years, reached its histrionic crest of exhibitionism.

By 1893, the year of Martin Boyd's birth, the overextension of Melbourne's economy had brought disastrous results. 1893 saw the closure of the banks. Quite dramatically, the spurious prosperity which had been the outcome of crazed land speculation failed as the society of the nineties began to experience the triple shock of monetary collapse, drought and industrial militancy. In Day of My Delight Boyd writes of his family at this time that, returning to Australia after a prolonged stay at Penleigh, they faced 'comparative ruin' (DD 1), and in The Cardboard...
Crown he mentions circumstantial details of the money crisis, using his grandmother's diaries as his source and in the process fictionalizing Emma (Mills) à Beckett as Alice (Verso) Langton. Boyd's narrator-persona Guy relates:

Throughout the whole summer Alice was writing business letters to Uncle Bert, and conducting negotiations with her banks. 'Paid £900 into the Commercial Bank,' she writes, and then, a few days later: 'Commercial Bank has ceased payment. Have £700 in the bank at Frome. Draft of £500 yesterday from Melbourne.' One must remember that the purchasing power of the pound was then four or five times what it is today. I was always told that I was born in the midst of ruin.

CC 142.

In Town and Bush, Stray Notes on Australia (1896), a documentary survey of Australian life during this period, Nat Gould comments on the change which took place:

In 1889 Melbourne was a far different place to what it was in 1894. Year after year it seemed to get worse, and the tightness of money became more marked. The crisis in the money-market affected Melbourne more than any other city. That it will recover is certain. No Australian city can possibly be long doomed to universal depression; and Melbourne will make a rapid and surprising recovery before long.

This prediction proved right for by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century belief in a prosperous future seemed well founded on the basis of an unprecedented growth in primary industry due to several good seasons for cattle, sheep and crops, but the tone of optimism in Gould's commentary might have found a basis other than that of the general economic health of the country.

Paradoxically, the strife and hardship of the nineties acted as a catalyst to a mood of euphoria in a society suddenly politicized through its motivation to secure material well-being by all the democratic means at its disposal - unionism, protective legislation and the foundation of a party to represent labour - and through its expectation of a coming of age in the realization of nationhood. An eye-witness, A.W. Jose, recalling his experience in The Romantic Nineties, paints a Whitmanesque picture of a popular upsurge: 'They were a hey day, these years, of intellectual excitement .... A good deal of my time just then was spent...
up-country, and I found everywhere men's - especially young men's - minds working as if some super-baker had permeated them with spiritual yeast.' The forward-looking movement had its political fulfilment in the Federation of the Australian States in 1901. In his retrospective assessment of the first decade of the Commonwealth, published in 1911, Henry Gyles Turner asserted that at Federation 'the vast majority' of people were 'confident that they were entering upon the responsibilities of nationhood, under conditions of happy augury and roseate promise.' Chauvinism and provinciality often governed the way the search for a national identity was conducted in these years but, with popular newspapers like the Bulletin putting enthusiasm before circumspection, the dream of maturity found no shortage of prophets or disciples and the pervasive climate of the first decade of the nation was one of celebration and self-congratulation. The literary editor of the Bulletin, A.G. Stephens, displaying that cultivated journalistic cheek which was the spring of the creative confidence he inspired and a great part of his success as a literary entrepreneur, could ask, for example: 'Even already, how few Australians would exchange for England's glowing sunset - or if you will her splendid noon - our own intimate and fragrant dawn?'

NOSTALGIC WITHDRAWAL

In spite of the large ramifications of these events for Australia's society as a whole, the environment into which Martin Boyd was born, while it felt the effects of enforced economies through investment losses and participated in the general optimism generated by the nationalistic temper of the 1890s, remained an enclave aloof from the rest of society and one confirmed in a sense of family and class tradition and purpose. The fact that Martin Boyd's relatives were members of a ruling class provided security from outside forces and the dependency of childhood reinforced this protective situation. To the child the buoyancy of the family mattered above everything else and, in the private world it created, the contingencies of colonial banking, the rain graph and the struggles of a working class he never saw were of little importance.

Because of their position as founding members of the colony, Martin Boyd's à Beckett relatives tended to look back to a time earlier than the gold rush period when the ascendancy of their class was as yet unchallenged by the movement of the newly rich into positions of sway in Melbourne
society. Sir William Beckett was vocal about the social consequences of the discovery of gold in a pamphlet on the subject, *Does the discovery of gold in Victoria, viewed in relation to its moral and social effects, as hitherto developed, deserve to be considered a national blessing, or a national curse?* (1852). This pamphlet and a poem entitled 'The First Gold Rush at Melbourne,' from *The Earl's Choice* collection, condemn the idolatrous effect of the 'monarch underground' with the same vehement indignation which was to be encountered over eighty years later in a descendant's paintings — Arthur Boyd's 'The Mining Town' (subtitled 'Casting the Money Lenders out of the Temple') and similar work from the 1940s.

In the case of Martin Boyd's parents and grandparents, a certain remoteness from the full stream of Australian life was heightened by the existence of an English home. Fictionalizing Penleigh as Waterpark (the same house appears in *The Montforts* as Farleigh — Scudamore), Boyd has Guy comment on this state of affairs in *The Cardboard Crown*:

> Waterpark was the magnet which drew my family back at intervals across the world, whisking them away just as they might have been thrusting their roots into Australian soil. This distraction went on for generations. With Julian at last the umbilical cord is cut.22

CC 44.

For the pioneering generation the situation was intensified by a repugnance for the often stultifying tasks of colonial management. This is clear in Sir William's poem 'England — 1860,' which expresses his relief on retiring from public life in the colony:

> It is accomplished; the mind-wearing toil  
> Which duty claimed, is ended, and  
> My habitation is on English soil.23

Sir William's attitude becomes part of the portrait of his namesake in *The Cardboard Crown*. When questioned by his son about the reason for an Australian being sent to Cambridge, the fictional Sir William is astounded. What is an Australian? he asks; 'A convict — a gold-digger. You were born in England. It is your home and we shall go there when I retire' (CC 25). Of Sir William's generation, Boyd's character Simon in
The Montforts is also described as possessing an unconscious 'contempt for his children as Australians' (M 71).

AN ETHIC OF PLEASURE

If on the one hand family attitudes encouraged nostalgia for a distant country regarded as another and more important home, the actual world of Martin Boyd's childhood was vivid in its enjoyment for the senses and empowered to imprint its images with the indelible strength of first experience. At Sandringham on Port Phillip Bay and later on a farm by the river at Yarra Glen, the Boyd children, of whom there were four - Merric (b. 1888), Penleigh (b. 1890), Martin (b. 1893) and Helen (b. 1903) - enjoyed an arcadian existence swimming, horseriding, hunting and fishing and glutting themselves on orchard fruit. Sandringham was a sheltered and idyllic world, remote from the allegro con brio of Melbourne's commercial bustle, captured in Tom Roberts' painting of Bourke Street (c. 1886). The Boyd parents' appreciation of nature and tranquil surroundings is seen in a number of their paintings presently to be discussed. Martin Boyd speaks of his family living 'a picnic kind of life' (DD 24) but shows at the same time that excursions into the comparatively opulent environment of his grandparents' more established houses, his grandmother Boyd's home Glenfern in East St. Kilda, whose paintings and eighteenth century furniture expressed an 'old-world dignity' (DD 5), and his Beckett grandparents' two houses, Wilton at Middle Brighton (the Beaumanoir of the Langton books) and The Grange at Berwick, kept the example of civilization before his eyes.

The farm at Yarra Glen (which can be identified as Crosspatrick in The Montforts) was originally bought for Merric, who at that time was attending Dookie agricultural college. The family took over the property when it became apparent that Merric's interests lay elsewhere. A rather difficult young man, Merric decided that he preferred drawing to farming and began instruction under Bernard Hall and Frederick McCubbin at the Melbourne National Gallery School. Penleigh was also at the Gallery School and Martin, several years younger, at Trinity Grammar School, Kew. The three boys joined their parents and young sister Helen in the holidays. Helen, who survives her brothers, recalls that there were many visitors and guests at the house, some of whom, like William McInnes, shared the Boyds' painting interest. Boyd himself describes the activities
of these years in *A Single Flame*: 'My father, my mother, my brother, and myself and any visitor would all sketch, and afterwards appraise each other's work. Sketching for us was as normal an activity as breathing' (SF 45). Small wonder that the landscape of Yarra Glen remained luminous in his memory:

I remember it as a place of perpetual sunlight - sunlight on the distant hills, sunlight filtering through the vines and nectarine trees that enclosed the veranda, and through the wattle branches on the river bank ....

SF 57, DD 43.

He adds that 'there were other days,' notable for the torment of flies or the smoky haze of bushfires, but clearly his chief recollection is of a plenitude of sensuous delight. From this period of his life he recalls the luxurious pleasure of 'thrusting [his] face into the thick golden down of a wattle tree in a Yarra Glen garden '(SF 36), unconsciously likening himself to Wilde's voluptuary Dorian Gray, 'burying his face in the great cool lilac-blossoms, feverishly drinking in their perfume as if it had been wine,' or Pater's little hedonist Florian, ravished by the perfume and flaming colour of a hawthorn. In *The Montforts*, his first novel set in Australia, Boyd recalls, through the responses of his character Raoul, the strong impression the Yarra Glen landscape had made on his youthful sensibility. Judging from his celebrated paintings of wattles in bloom, Whistlerian in their fresh sense of light, the same aesthetic enjoyment of the natural scene affected the novelist's brother, Penleigh.

To the growth of a natural and spontaneous aesthetic sensibility and the pervasive influence of the Beckett heritage was added a moral ideal of life as an arena for pleasure encouraged by the novelist's parents, both talented artists whose work is valued by collectors to the present day. An extract from the 'Jottings' of Fanny H. Barbour provides a thumbnail sketch of Arthur Merric and Emma Minnie Boyd's style of life. The date is the late 1880s and the domestic atmosphere described one of social conviviality and sedate enjoyment in a setting profuse with the conventional bric à brac of a Victorian home. An air of informality, introduced by the Boyds' personal artistic flair, colours the scene. Although Fanny Barbour's observation is trivial in part and
her command of written speech wanting, something of the quality of
Emma Minnie's gifted, artistic and discerningly moral nature is captured
and contributes to the biographical picture:

Last night we were at the Boyd's I went with Ern. Minnie
wrote to Ern to ask him and Frank & me. There were more people
there than I expected to see. Captain Mayne & Miss Mayne the Miss
Jennings en masse; Miss Wade & Captain something or other & Colonel
something else. old Indian officers Mr & Mrs Goodmans. Arthur
& Minnie Boyd. Miss Boyd and old Captain and Mrs. Boyd. We were
out in the verandah first and went inside to have some tea. The
Miss Goodmans sang & played; one of them plays very well. Miss
Boyd recited two little short pieces rather well. She is a mas-
v­sive handsome girl with a quantity of golden hair. All the Boyds
are massive. Their room is laden with things but all the things
are interesting because they all seem to have a little story of
their own. When you first go in the effect strikes you as being
heavy & cumbersome, something like the family themselves, but
after awhile you feel as if you could wander about & study the
different things with an interest. The walls are covered with
pictures plaques & all sorts of curios. Minnie showed me some
of Arthur Boyds sketches. I like his style.

It is so clear & bold & clear much like Mather's style. If
there is anyone I admire much it is Minnie I dont know much of
her. But I always feel such an admiration for her. She is my
idea of what a woman should be, so sharp, original, & witty yet
something about her that makes one feel they wished they were
better.

You feel as if she can see all through ones little shams &
makeshifts she has such large clear brown eyes. I always feel
the better & higher for her companionship and I don't think I
am given to hero-worship. 26

From the point of view of Martin Boyd's upbringing, a significant fact
revealed here is the impression made on a social acquaintance by the
depth of Emma Minnie Boyd's personality. Of this aspect of her mother's
character, the novelist's sister, Helen à Beckett Read, writes:

My mother was intensely religious and she derived great comfort
from her religion but she had a keen sense of humour and great
sensibility. I learned in later life that all kinds of people
both young and old would go to her with their problems. 27

The unusual intensity of Emma Minnie's religious earnestness points
to the source of Fanny Barbour's admiring respect. In his autobiogra-
phies Martin Boyd stresses the importance of the ethical influence in his early life, of the encompassing moral strength of his grandmother - fictionalized in the portrait of 'the onion woman' of *The Cardboard Crown* - and of his mother, in whom he sees the dual nature which he suggests is so intimately woven with his own: 'She always had this preoccupation with religion, but ... it was accompanied by a normal love of pleasure ' (DD 19). Aspects of Emma Minnie's personality colour the portraits of Sophie Blair in *The Montforts*, Laura Langton in *A Difficult Young Man* (1955) and Diana Von Flugel in *Outbreak of Love* (1957).

Arthur Merric Boyd's generosity towards people in need and sense of responsibility to his family strongly contributed towards the 'benevolent enlightenment' (DD 22) the novelist felt permeated his upbringing to the point where, as he states, 'it was reasonable that I should believe that the voice of authority was the voice of the Good' (DD 22). As a figure of authority, Boyd's father did not represent duty to the detriment of pleasure. An artist by choice and temperament rather than by profession, although at the same time competent and respected, Arthur Merric lived the life of a man of leisure 'responsible to no one for his time or effort' (SF 23, DD 21).

In summing up the influence of this moral upbringing, Boyd writes affectionately of his parents: 'They made me believe that reason had only to be stated to find a hearing, that God was the witness of my smallest act, and also that there was no incompatibility between a life of absolute virtue and absolute pleasure ... ' (SF 23, DD 21). Unlike that of Boyd's character Sophie Blair who is tormented by fanatical guilt and inhibited by puritanism, Emma Minnie's religion, balanced by a sense of justice inherited from her legal forebears, imparted to her son a vision of the redemptive powers of belief to the exclusion of a sense of sin and retribution. The whole bias of Boyd's early religion was towards those aspects of Christianity which encourage faith in the perfectibility of man's life in this world. In 'Preoccupations and Intentions' Boyd describes this early inclination to concentrate on what religion seemed to promise for the here-and-now:

> From the cradle I had the firm conviction that life was meant to be enjoyed, and my chief preoccupation was how to enjoy it. I also expected it to have the quality of drama and poetry. I was
soaked in the Christian religion, which is full of drama and
poetry, and seemed to me a clear guide to a life of pleasure.
The first miracle was the turning of water into very good wine.
We were to consider the lilies and take no thought for the
morrow, to enjoy ourselves on the Sabbath which was made for man,
and altogether to have life more abundantly. The harlot was
lightly forgiven, and the Kingdom of Heaven was full of happy
children. The death-cult superimposed on all this by S. Paul
did not penetrate my mind, I hated Good Friday.

PI 83.

ARTIST PARENTS

As artists, Martin Boyd's parents were peripherally associated -
chiefly through their membership of the Victorian Artists' Society -
with the group of painters who first experimented with Impressionist
techniques in their approaches to the Australian landscape. From this
group of painters (popularly called the 'Heidelberg' school after
camps set up by Tom Roberts, Frederick McCubbin, Arthur Streeton,
Charles Conder, Walter Withers and others on the outskirts of Melbourne)
the Boyds numbered Frederick McCubbin, Walter Withers and Charles
Conder amongst their close friends. In the years preceding Conder's
departure for Europe, Arthur Merric and the painter who was to become
a noted doyen of the English nineties were sketching partners. Despite
their connections with what was an avant garde group of painters on
the Australian scene in the late 1880s and 1890s, connections to be
discussed later in this chapter, the Boyds were themselves conventional
painters open only to mild influence on their styles. Something they
had in common with the Heidelberg painters, however, was an affection
for the Australian landscape, revealed in the titles of their works
shown in the early exhibitions of the Victorian Artists' Society.

Emma Minnie Boyd had painted from childhood, taking her first les-
sions in the drawing and painting classes of Madame Pfund's school,
where she was a pupil. 28 The catalogues for the Victorian Artists'
Society and paintings now owned by the Beckett Boyd family 29 show
that, like her husband, Emma Minnie enjoyed painting domestic subjects
and landscapes and seascapes at localities around Port Phillip Bay.
Daniel Thomas, in Outlines of Australian Art: The Joseph Brown Collection,
makes a pertinent comparison between an early watercolour 'Interior
with figures, The Grange, 1875,' painted when she was twenty years old,
and a painting by Chester Earles, 'Interior with figures' (1872), suggesting that Earles' work reveals the principles of draftsmanship underlying Emma Minnie Boyd's composition. If Emma Minnie had not seen the picture in question - and she could well have done - it is certain that she was familiar with the style of painting it represents. However, there is an important difference between the two pictures. The President of Melbourne's first society of artists (the Victorian Academy of Arts) shortly after its foundation in 1872, Earles had a fondness for Victorian subjects. He illustrated Tennyson's 'Idylls of the King,' for example, in 'Elaine,' shown at an Academy exhibition of 1875, and his anecdotal 'Interior with figures,' representing a mournful group of two women and a man, their gazes locked in mutual questioning, is, as Daniel Thomas perceptively argues, 'doubly Victorian':

The landscape glimpsed through the windows could conceivably be Australian although possibly it is not, but the confrontation of the man with two women could not possibly be taking place in 1872. The dress, the hair-styles and the furniture all belong to the 1840s. Is the picture worked up from an idea conceived in England during the artist's student years, or is it perhaps an illustration to a popular novel of the earlier date?

It is in its Victorianainess that this work distinguishes itself from 'Interior with figures, The Grange, 1875.' Emma Minnie's painting of two figures in an untidy indoor scene whose windows, shaded by galvanized iron, overlook bright flowers in the foreground of tangled Australian bush, although a deliberate composition, has the spontaneity of fresh observation. What is more, the airiness and lightness of the scene amounts to a playful contradiction of the mood of Earles' stiff and solemn group. Both paintings tell a story but Emma Minnie's is more strongly articulated. Passing from Earles' high Victorian piece to Emma Minnie's watercolour, stalidity metamorphoses into grace and earnestness into amusement in the use made of symbolic detail. In the latter painting, the studiedly nonchalant pose of a young man adoring his composed female companion - who is seated and sewing - from the vantage point of the window-ledge, is counterpointed by the activities of two young cats in the corner of the composition whose spatial relationship imitates that of the man and the woman. In the case of the kittens, the lovers' attitudes are reversed, as the obvious stand-in
for the woman makes a provocative gesture from her disadvantaged position while the Tom-kitten looks down on her in complete control. The final irony comes in the disarray of the woman's workbasket whose contents are scattered across the floor. Rather tellingly, the comparison of Earles with Emma Minnie à Beckett illustrates an implicit and light-hearted late Victorian mockery of high Victorian sobriety and earnestness.

Helen Read recalls, but without complete certainty, that her mother later studied under Louis Buvelot, a painter of settled landscapes who derived his en plein air methods from the Barbizon school and may be regarded as a forerunner of the Heidelberg painters. Two of her parents' very close friends, John Mather and Walter Withers, were followers of Buvelot and there is a kinship between their work and that of Arthur Merric and Emma Minnie Boyd. The style and subject matter of Withers' painting is especially relevant and may be compared to work by the Boyds that (for biographical reasons) has warranted reproduction in recent books: Emma Minnie's 'Open Country' or Arthur Merric's 'The dairy Farm, Yarra Glen' and 'The Pottery, Murrumbeena'. The Victorian Artists' Society catalogue of an 1898 exhibition at the Melbourne National Gallery reproduces, side by side, two photographs of closely related paintings by Walter Withers and Arthur Merric Boyd. Respectively, they are 'The Last of Summer' (now known as 'The Coming Storm') and 'Deserted Cottage at Sandringham.' Both are paintings of country cottages situated in a rather haunted landscape of sparse gums. Boyd's is a tamer, less striking treatment and bespeaks the conventionality of style which prevents his work from being linked completely with the most successful painting produced by his generation, including the work of Walter Withers. The novelist's own assertion that his parents' paintings were dominated by a love of light (SF 11-12) describes them accurately, although, to the extent that it suggests a comparison with more daring painters of light like the French Impressionists, it needs strong qualification. As Franz Philipp comments about Arthur Merric Boyd, he was 'a painter of gentle observant landscapes, impressionist only in the widest and vaguest sense of the word. Despite the up-to-dateness (in the 1890s Australian context) of a painting like 'Deserted Cottage at Sandringham,' it appears unadventurous, even prosaic, beside Withers' poetic landscape and when a suggestion of the dramatic enters into his treatment of landscape, as in a large painting of Mt. Wellington, 1906 (which now hangs in the Geelong Art Gallery), the style
is more reminiscent of the romanticism of older painters like Chevalier or Piguenit.

THE EUROPEAN NINETIES

Local and frequently domestic in its subject matter, the work of both Boyds - despite its frequent sophistication of concept and feeling - speaks on the whole inadequately of the breadth of their culture. For several generations, the Becketts and their family extensions had been back and forth between Australia and Europe. Arthur Merric and Emma Minnie Boyd were widely travelled themselves, familiar with the great galleries of Europe and alive to contemporary movements in the artistic world. Shortly before Martin Boyd's birth, the Boyds spent some time in France where, as Australian artists had done increasingly in the 1880s, they familiarized themselves with current trends. This was the very early nineties and an opportune moment to witness a developed phase of the Impressionist movement. In the context of discussing the expatriate Australian painter John Russell, Ann Galbally comments on the fashion of the moment:

By the late eighties, academic art, the art of Bouguereau and Cabanel, was no longer reckoned with as a serious force by the critics. The situation in Paris was tending to polarize between the followers and popularizers of Impressionism, and those who rejected the Impressionists altogether in favour of a new movement extolling the inner world of sensation rather than the external world of vision.33

About the latter Symbolist stream, the Boyds were probably not curious since its concern to delve into a mode of occult apprehension was remote from their en plein air preoccupations. However, Whistler, whose work had been on display in a large exhibition in 1886 - 87 and who remained in vogue in Paris because of his Impressionist and Symbolist affinities, no doubt interested them as the Impressionists would have done.

The aims of Whistler and the Impressionists were probably known to the Boyds in Australia, prior to their departure in the late eighties, through their connection with the Heidelberg group and, in particular, through their friendship with Charles Conder. In 1883, while on a walking tour of Spain with Russell, Tom Roberts met two artists who shared with him what they had (somewhat indirectly) learned of the aims
of the Impressionists. On his return to Australia, Roberts communicated his interest in the new French methods to a number of artists—among them Conder—who in later years visited Paris to make their own acquaintance with artistic fashion.

Although the high tide of Impressionist fame and acceptance had already been reached by the mid eighties, the impact of the movement initiated by Monet and his followers continued to be felt for at least two decades afterwards. The last of a series of 'Impressionist Exhibitions' begun in 1874 by the key painters surrounding Monet—Degas, Pissarro, Renoir, Sisley (and later Seurat and Signac)—was held in 1886. All the same, important work was still in progress in the 1890s and the period of the Boyds' stay in Europe saw major exhibitions: among these a retrospective of Monet and Rodin in 1889, two important exhibitions of Renoir in 1890 and 1892, Monet's 'Haystacks' in 1891 and a Pissarro retrospective in 1892. Monet's 'Haystacks,' a series of paintings revealing the transient effects of light at different hours (and a prelude to the similarly aimed series depicting poplars, the façade of Rouen Cathedral, views of London, waterlilies and scenes of Venice) led to the artist being criticized for carrying Impressionism to the point of absurdity. There is no available record of the number of occasions the Boyds visited Paris (nor of the precise times when they did so) before leaving Europe for Australia in 1893. It is quite possible that they saw none of the exhibitions mentioned and missed the controversy surrounding Monet's innovation. However, with so much publicity still being given to the Impressionists during the relevant period, it is difficult not to think that something of the flavour of the movement was imparted to them, even if superficially. When Martin Boyd remarks in *A Single Flame* that his parents 'had a love of light and expressed it in their work,' he is commenting on portfolios of sketches they made on the continent 'of a hundred places between Seville and Venice' (SF 11-12), a fact which prompts the question: was this preoccupation accidental, the product perhaps of the bright light of the European south, or did it owe something directly to their contact with Impressionist painting? The question is interesting to readers of Boyd because of the literary Impressionism he develops as part of his art of fiction—a matter which will be discussed in the course of this study.

Martin Boyd mentions only one name in connection with his parents'
stay in Paris and that is Charles Conder, presumably because, of the people he knew them to have befriended, Conder stood out as an artist of significant reputation. By the end of the decade, Conder's name had become identified with the art of the English nineties represented by Aubrey Beardsley, William Rothenstein, Oscar Wilde and The Yellow Book. Indeed Holbrook Jackson claims that, together with the work of Beardsley, Conder's art epitomizes 'the peculiar artificial mood of the 'nineties.' For a time Conder inhabited that unreal world - described by George Moore in Confessions of a Young Man (1888) - which imitated the exaltations and passions of Gautier, Baudelaire and Huysmans. His associates were the kind of artists who nourished their imaginations at the source of Symbolist poetry, the delicate and sensitive music of Verlaine, Rimbaud and Mallarmé. If the meeting which took place between Boyd's father and Conder was anything more than a brief one (Conder was at that time living on a diet of black coffee and in need of a loan [SF 6]) it may have led to Arthur Merric Boyd's introduction to some very colourful personalities from the demi-monde of artistic circles.

In 1891 both Boyds exhibited at the home of conservative taste, the Royal Academy presided over by Frederick Leighton. The prevailing fashion in Academy circles, a fashion to which the Boyds did not aspire but which they were obliged to notice, was a nostalgic Classicism - described by William Gaunt in Victorian Olympus as bourgeois Victorianism in harmony with itself. Men like Leighton, Watts, Poynter, Alma-Tadema and Albert Moore gained wide approval and patronage, painting sumptuous pictures which were escapist in their romanticizing of bygone ages and erotic in their obsession with the female form. Leighton's 'The Garden of Hesperides' (1892), in which the daughters of Hesperus - one entwined in the embrace of a serpent - recline in sculptural attitudes beneath a fruit-laden tree, typifies the academic use of a Classical theme. Quentin Bell remarks on the appeal of such a painting to middle-class Victorian patrons: 'no Atlas, but rather some beauty-loving businessman in search of a hellenized, unbuttoned, uncorseted Atlantis, will cull these orange pippins.' Clearly, there were such lovers of beauty with ready cash in Australia, as a work by Leighton of similar subject and treatment, 'Cymon and Iphigenia' (1884), came to the Art Gallery of New South Wales. In the 1920s, when paintings like these
had become unfashionable, Martin Boyd made one of his characters comment adversely on Leighton's famous 'Bath of Psyche' (1890), but this may well reflect the Boyds' attitude thirty years earlier to the uneasy marriage of sensuousness and prudishness in life painting which had resulted from academic art's pandering to bourgeois taste.43

Elsewhere, enamoured with the possibilities of hugely designed and detailed canvases, academic painters vulgarized a genuinely searching aspect of Victorian culture in its archaeological approach to the past by employing the paraphernalia of historicism as stage costumery for fantasies of imperial and civic glory. Excellent examples are Poynter's 'The Visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon' (1890) and Alma-Tadema's 'Vintage Festival' (1871), which were contemporary purchases of the Art Gallery of New South Wales and the National Gallery of Victoria.44 Both illustrate the academic habit of propagandizing a message of pomp and circumstance. Remarking upon the 1869 painting of which the Melbourne work is a later copy by the artist, William Gaunt describes 'Vintage Festival' as 'a new kind of history picture, minute as a Meissonier, and full of sentiment':

The wreathed columns, the carved pedestals, the tripods fuming with incense, the cone-tipped staff of Bacchus, the white-robed maidens and vine-crowned men, the musicians with double flutes and clashing cymbals, made this glimpse into the social life and ceremony of the ancient world vivid and apparently truthful.

But the real point of such a picture, as Gaunt observes, was that here 'were just such people as one might know.'45 Largely because of this fashionable content thinly disguised as historical illustration, the work of academic painters found a natural home in the collections of newly-established regional and state galleries in Australia, all eager to acquire symbols of prosperity and status. In Melbourne, 'Vintage Festival' would have been seen as an appropriate complement to the Classicism of the city's public architecture and a signal of civic pride. Through the attitude of one of his heroines, Lucinda Brayford, in a novel which spans the period under discussion, Martin Boyd expresses a dissatisfaction with the shallowness of Melbourne's reception of Classicism. Despite an unavoidable exposure to the display atmosphere of the public city, the novelist's own family clearly lived by other, less vulgar
ideals - as Arthur Merric's and Emma Minnie's paintings, which are quite free of the spurious Classicism of the Academy, adequately witness.

Of more compelling interest than academic painting, the Aesthetic Movement, widely publicized in the seventies and eighties through popular satire of its extravagances in W.H. Mallock's novel The New Republic (1877), W.S. Gilbert's and Arthur Sullivan's operetta Patience (1881) and George Du Maurier's drawings in Punch, was, at the moment of the Boyds' visit to England, gathering momentum and about to enter a new phase. Building the palace of art on the foundations laid by Pater, Swinburne, Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites, artists and writers like Whistler and Wilde took heed of the implicit message of The Renaissance (1873), to treat life in the spirit of art and to regard moral goodness as a special attribute of beauty. By the mid 1880s, contrary to the intentions of conservative parodists, a popular image of the aesthete type had been created which reduced the sense of moral outrage communicated by worriers like Ruskin. The catalytic event in arousing public interest had been Ruskin's savagely hostile review of Whistler's 'Nocturne in Black and Gold: The Falling Rocket' in Fors Clavigera (1878), which resulted in the critic being brought to trial for libel. As far as Ruskin was concerned the painting, in its want of likeness to nature and disregard of the conventions of representation, had broken the most sacred of rules which he upheld with the force of a commandment, that 'nothing can atone for the want of truth.' Carried to the extreme of indignant righteousness and, in the polemical context of his review, expressed in abusive terms - Whistler was accused of 'wilful imposture' - the sentiments of Modern Painters (1843 - 60) recommending truth to nature - 'All falsehood must be a blot as well as a sin, an injury as well as a deception' - became laughable. When Ruskin lost the verdict he lost some of his credibility with it and thereafter began to wane as a figure of unchallengeable authority in the sphere of art criticism. The Victorian public was growing tired of 'thou shalt nots' and refused to be shocked by Whistler's continued delinquencies in the pursuit of his version of a l'art pour l'art aesthetic.

With the moderation of public opinion, the stage was set for Wilde to emerge as the audacious and successful counterfeiter of other people's ideas and conversation, particularly of Swinburne's and Whistler's. Wilde's lectures in America on the fashions of the Aesthetic Movement,
which were greeted enthusiastically throughout the country with the refrains of *Patience*, increased his notoriety at home. Once set to music, the aesthete no longer appeared a threat to accepted norms of behaviour and gained immediate popularity as a latest fad and pattern of modishness for susceptible and pretentious young men-about-town 'anxious for to shine in the high aesthetic line':

Though the Philistines may jostle, you will rank as an apostle in the high aesthetic band,
If you walk down Piccadilly with a poppy or a lily in your mediaeval hand.

The comic figure of Bunthorne is a caricature of Wilde as self-appointed 'Professor of Aesthetics.' However, the lampooning misfired, for just as Du Maurier invented a wardrobe for the aesthete in his *Punch* drawings - elements of which (as William Gaunt points out) Wilde himself adopted along with the lily and the sunflower borrowed from Pre-Raphaelite painting - so W.S. Gilbert, in parodying Wilde, established his reputation.

The eighties were also an important decade in England for the strengthening of aesthetic preoccupation and styles in literature. These were especially fruitful years for Pater whose *Marius the Epicurean*, *His Sensations and Ideas*, an exposition in narrative form of ideas originally aired in *The Renaissance* (1873), came out in 1885, followed by *Imaginary Portraits* in 1887 and *Appreciations* in 1889. *Marius the Epicurean* was greatly influential on Wilde's work in the nineties (especially on *The Picture of Dorian Gray* which appeared in 1891) and on George Moore's *Confessions of a Young Man* (1888). In their different ways, both Marius and Dorian take to heart the message of *The Renaissance* that to 'be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest energy .... is success in life.' Beginning with a lament that 'the tradition of Boucher, Fragonard and Watteau' has been forgotten at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Moore's *Confessions* narrates the history of the author's awakening to aesthetic values from his first fascinated encounters with decadence in Gautier's licentious novel *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835), in the poetry of Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud, Mallarmé and those 'wonderful lyrical versions of "Mlle. de Maupin" - Swinburne's 'Hymn to Proserpine' and 'Dolores' - to an appreciation of
Zola and the Realists, Whistler and the Impressionists to, finally, an infatuation with Marius the Epicurean and 'that prodigious book, that beautiful mosaic,' Huysmans' A Rebours (1884). Moore coined the word 'aestheticized' to describe the delicious rapture he claimed to feel when his senses were exposed to beautiful ideas and objects.  

So highly coloured in tone and extravagant in its postures, aesthetic culture as it was developing towards the end of the 1880s could not have failed to touch any artist of even moderate curiosity, however diluted his interest. When the Boyds exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1891, the Ruskin-Whistler debate of representation versus art for art's sake was still an issue. It is easy to imagine them debating the issues of the day and especially the (for English artists) key controversy surrounding Whistler's antagonism of Ruskin: how imperative was it to paint with definiteness the precise contours of nature? Whistler's '10 O'Clock Lecture' of 1885, a playful resumé of the history of art criticism up to the arrival of art for art's sake delivered to a receptive audience which included Oscar Wilde, was a persuasive event in the breaking down of inhibitions in the public consciousness. Published in 1890, the year in which Whistler also chose to revive the rancour of the Ruskin trial and the grievances of his relationship with Wilde in the spiteful and witty The Gentle Art of Making Enemies, it was guaranteed a sympathetic hearing. In this twin publishing event, Whistler assumed the role of tease, a mask the public could enjoy, and became the advocate of a new kind of aestheticism about to break over the nineties: the phenomenon of fin de siècle culture, confident, overtly pleasure-seeking and entertainingly perverse in its exaggerated claims for the superiority of Art over Nature.

With the publication of the 'Ten O'Clock Lecture,' the fin de siècle began with a laugh at the expense of the stern principles enunciated by Ruskin whose didactic influence on such earnest followers as the Pre-Raphaelites and William Morris was held up for ridicule:

Humanity takes the place of Art, and God's creations are excused by their usefulness. Beauty is confounded with virtue, and, before a work of Art, it is asked: 'What good shall it do?'  

Art requires no explanation but itself, Whistler argued in the 'Ten O'Clock,' and its function is not — as Ruskin would have it — to offer a mirror to nature, but to improvise, to create something new.
Ruskin had proclaimed in *Modern Painters* 'nature is so immeasurably superior to all that the human mind can conceive, that every departure from her is a fall beneath her.' Whistler now mocked his rhetoric and inverted his message:

Nature contains the elements, in colour and form, of all pictures, as the keyboard contains the notes of all music.

But the artist is born to pick, and choose, and group with science, these elements, that the result may be beautiful - as the musician gathers his notes, and forms his chords, until he brings forth from chaos glorious harmony.

To say to the painter, that Nature is to be taken as she is, is to say to the player, that he may sit on the piano.

Clearly the time had arrived when, as Richard Le Gallienne explains (recollecting his youth in the nineties and summing up the period's confident rejection of sober philosophies), 'the world was beginning to realize that work and duty were not everything, and that life was meant as much for play.' Echoing the content and title of Pater's chapter in *Marius the Epicurean*, 'New Cyrenaicism,' and taking imaginative flight from Huysmans' fantastical portrayal of the exquisite pleasures to be tasted on the road to aesthetic satiety in *A Rebours*, Wilde proclaimed a 'new Hedonism' in *Dorian Gray* and in so doing set the tone of the decade:

Its aim ... was to be experience itself, and not the fruits of experience, sweet or bitter as they might be. Of the asceticism that deadens the senses, as of the vulgar profligacy that dulls them, it was to know nothing.

In the spirit of *A Rebours*, Arthur Symons, writing for *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, November 1893, treated the 'Decadent Movement in Literature' as if it were a beautiful malady and, on a different note, Grant Allen in *The Fortnightly Review*, March 1894, used the topic of 'The New Hedonism' as an excuse for a socialist tract on self-development. The hedonist message was reiterated throughout the decade, giving it its peculiar flavour of intense excitement shading into hysteria and, in some unfortunate instances, disease and delirium. Ernest Dowson called for 'madder music and for stronger wine.' Robert Hichens, taking the place
of Mallock, Gilbert and Du Maurier as the new satirist of decadence, put phrases into his characters' mouths which were, as Holbrook Jackson points out, more descriptive of the age's actual affectations than parodies: Esme Amarinth in The Green Carnation (1894), for example, is 'going to sit up all night ... saying mad scarlet things such as George Meredith loves, and waking the night with silver silences.'

Intensity carried to such conscious heights had no outlet other than artificiality. Thus illusion, lèger de main, make-believe and masquerade became desired modes of expression, making possible the Fêtes Galantes fantasies of Conder's art and the incredible imagery of Beardsley's prose and graphic work. Beardsley's extraordinary 'The Story of Venus and Tannhäuser or Under the Hill,' first published in expurgated form in The Savoy magazine (April 1896) epitomizes the magic-lantern world of imagination that the key artistic figures of the period chose as their habitual dwelling place. Tannhäuser contemplates his surroundings:

The place where he stood waved drowsily with strange flowers, heavy with perfume, dripping with odours. Gloomy and nameless weeds not to be found in Mentzelius. Huge moths so richly winged they must have banqueted upon tapestries and royal stuffs, slept on the pillars that flanked either side of the gateway, and the eyes of all the moths remained open, and were burning and bursting with a mesh of veins.

'The first duty in life is to be as artificial as possible,' Wilde urged in an epigram and, in 'The Decay of Lying' (1891), he expatiated on the Whistlerian theme of the governing role of art in relation to nature. The claim is threefold: 'that Life imitates Art more than Art imitates life,' 'that external Nature also imitates art,' and 'that Lying, the telling of Beautiful untrue things is the proper aim of Art.' It was the nineties, of course, which saw the rise of Wilde as a playwright. He delighted audiences with his insolence and scintillating wit, rising to his highest achievement in the mid decade with The Importance of Being Earnest (1895). The tinsel beauty which an ideal of artificiality encouraged was not more on show in the 1890s than in the world of Wilde's plays, unless it was in the mesmeric visions of Beardsley or in the Watteau-esque suggestions of light and subtle pleasures captured in Conder's watercolours on silk, wall decorations and fans.
Perhaps the most distinctive contribution to the culture of the nineties was made in periodical publications. Of outstanding merit, The Yellow Book, The Savoy and The Studio magazines transformed journalism. All reflected the bias of the period towards collaboration of the various arts with the purpose of achieving a total sense of environmental beauty. Such publications, like the books which issued from Morris' Kelmscott Press, were in themselves artefacts designed and illustrated with great flair and taste. They were also the chief forum for an exchange of ideas, opinions and witticisms and a number of new artists and writers, including Beardsley, Sickert, Housman, Rothenstein, Kenneth Grahame and Lionel Johnson, found their first publicity there. Holbrook Jackson comments on the emergence of The Yellow Book (1894), whose art editor was the then relatively unknown Beardsley:

The first number was in the nature of a bombshell thrown into the world of letters. It had not occurred to a publisher to give a periodical the dignity of book form .... Nothing like The Yellow Book had been seen before. It was newness in excelsis: novelty naked and unashamed. People were puzzled and shocked and delighted, and yellow became the colour of the hour, the symbol of the time-spirit. It was associated with all that was bizarre and queer in art and life, with all that was outrageously modern.63

Likewise The Savoy (1896), under the editorship of Arthur Symons, made a marked impact despite its short life of one year. The Yellow Book published Le Gallienne, Max Beerbohm, Symons and Moore, together with respectable talents like Henry James, Edmund Gosse and Frederick Leighton. Conder was a minor contributor. More of a l'art pour l'art publication, The Savoy, with its translations of Verlaine and Verhaeren, illustrations by Beardsley (his best, those on Pope's 'Rape of the Lock'), Conder, Rothenstein and Beerbohm and literary contributions from Shaw, Havelock Ellis, Gosse and Conrad, was the intellectual focus of the inner circle of fin de siècle creators of taste.

Although Martin Boyd's parents did not possess a sizeable library and (despite the older à Becketts' literary inclinations) were not avid readers, volumes of Ruskin, Pater and Swinburne and a collection of articles on Beardsley, in whom they had a special interest, were on their shelves,64 suggesting a familiarity with the progression of aesthetic ideas which began with Ruskin's gospel of beauty preached to the machine age and culminated in the decadence of the nineties with
its flaunted doctrine of \( \text{l'art pour l'art} \). The chief source of intellectual and artistic stimulus for the whole family seems to have been The Studio magazine to which, like their fictional counterparts, the Blairs in The Montforts, Arthur Merric and Emma Minnie Boyd regularly subscribed after their return to Australia in 1893. It was probably in the pages of The Studio that the family made its acquaintance with Beardsley, who was introduced to the public in the magazine's first number, April 1893, in an article by Joseph Pennell. The publisher John Lane was impressed by Beardsley's design for the cover and by several drawings, including one of Salome: '\( \text{J'ai Baisé Ta Bouche Jokanaan} \). As a consequence Beardsley was given a commission to illustrate Wilde's play (it appeared the following year) and was appointed art editor of The Yellow Book. In recounting Beardsley's and The Yellow Book's fame in The Cardboard Crown, Martin Boyd is caught out in a slight anachronism. He writes of the conversation in the von Flugel household at Westhill in late 1891 as being 'about Aubrey Beardsley and the Yellow Book' (CC 130). In fact the first number of The Yellow Book did not appear until 1894. The Studio would not have suited his scheme either, since it began in 1893. The inaccuracy probably reflects Boyd's memory, as an adult, of hazy knowledge gained in childhood.

Despite this reference to The Yellow Book in the novelist's fictional recreation of the 1890s period, it is important to a proper understanding of the way in which his sensibility developed to know that it was The Studio magazine with its Arts and Crafts bias and not the more hectic and flamboyant literary journals like The Yellow Book and The Savoy that interested the Boyds. The purpose of The Studio, whose journalism was comparatively sedate, was to review interpretations of aesthetic theory relating to the Arts and Crafts movement and to inform its readers about their applications in contemporary design. The progenitor of the movement was William Morris whose workshops and business begun in the early 1860s (Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Company, Fine Art Workmen in Painting, Carving, Furniture and the Metals) set the practical example of how a revival of genuine handicrafts might be achieved in the face of an ever-increasing flow of poorly-designed objects of machine manufacture. Industry, as Morris saw it, destroyed the quality of life of both the makers and the users of its products. It formed in him 'a hatred of modern civilization' for its 'contempt of simple pleasures which everyone could enjoy' if it were not for the
hidousness which the machine multiplied everywhere. As an undergraduate at Oxford Morris found an expression of his aesthetic discontent in Ruskin's ideas. In the chapter entitled 'The Nature of Gothic' in *The Stones of Venice* (1851 - 53) Ruskin set out his principles for ensuring the maintenance of civilized standards:

1. Never encourage the manufacture of any article not absolutely necessary, in the production of which invention has no share.

2. Never demand an exact finish for its own sake, but only for some practical or noble end.

3. Never encourage imitation or copying of any kind, except for the sake of preserving records of great works.68

As Graham Hough points out, this chapter remained Morris' bible for several decades and an edition in 1892 with an adulatory introduction was one of the first books issued by Kelmscott Press.69

Theories comparable to those of Ruskin and Morris preoccupied many artists towards the end of the century and the ideas of the Arts and Crafts movement gained support in many European countries. Experiments in design initiated in France, Germany, Belgium and Austria were reported and discussed in *The Studio* which was an influential source-book for a number of European artists and by no means solely given up to a British point of view. Through its pages the young Boydes could encounter an international spectrum of reviews covering architecture, furniture, painting and the decorative arts - including pottery, jewellery, textiles, wall papers and stained glass.

THE AUSTRALIAN NINETIES

If *The Studio* provided a window on European fashion, how much of what could be encountered only at a second remove was actually reflected in local Australian taste? With notable exceptions, aesthetic culture in Australia was not strong and where it existed its spirit was markedly different from that of its model. As O.H.K. Spate observes, taking into account the birth of political consciousness which took place in the nineties in Australia, conditions were 'anything but fin de siecle.'70 Likewise, A.W. Jose, writing from a position of firsthand knowledge of
the Australian scene, claims with reference to W.G. Blaikie Murdoch's theory of a 'renaissance of the nineties' that 'here we were experienc-
cing rather a naissance than a renaissance.' To the eye-witness,comparing the disposition of artists here with those in London and New York, it seemed that

our Australian Nineties ... were a phenomenon of quite a different character. Far from being fin-de-siècle, they were a beginning of a new age, full of widespread excited pleasure in all its environment and eager at all costs to express it. Their whole spirit was healthily boyish, not adolescently revolutionary or boredly middle-aged.72

The tenets of decadence are hardly appropriate to a culture still in its infancy. Insofar as Australian society was an extension of European civilization, an impetus existed for an aesthetic based on a challenge to the status quo - the habit of nineties aestheticism of inverting Victorian values and assumptions. However, Australian artists at the end of the nineteenth century were faced with the opportunity not simply of revivifying an aging culture but of founding a new one. A spirit of discovery and recognition of newness is evident in the visual arts and literature alike, working to modify in a profound way even those talents most obviously affecting a fin de siècle style.73

In the sphere of painting, there were individuals like the Englishmen Blamire Young and Bernard Hall who cultivated l'art pour l'art qualities in their work but, in so doing, tended to remain aloof from the local scene. Young's development of an aesthetic style is completely esoteric. In contrast, Hall's aestheticism is often that of the Academy - studied in its exploitation of the sensuous aspects of a subject - although, in those paintings in which a Symbolist style prevails, it is willing to encounter the bizarre and heady moods of fin de siècle decadence. In either case, however, it is remote from local fashion. The distinctive contribution made by these artists is only beginning to attract interest from students of the period anxious to do justice to a complex situation of interacting factors governing the state of Australian painting at the turn of the century. However, the usual thesis of a genesis in art linked with an awakening to the Australian environment remains valid for a group of artists who occupied the front stage of Australian developments
(namely the Heidelberg painters) as it does for an artist like Sydney Long, despite the influence on his work of the European style of art nouveau. Long stresses the importance of the process of coming to terms with place in an article for *Art and Architecture* (1905):

> It is ... difference of environment that will make our Art distinctive. The brilliancy and dryness of the summers and the comparative mildness of the winter give to our landscape a range of hot, warm colour peculiar to ourselves.\(^75\)

Bernard Smith sees this conviction confirmed in the achievement of the Heidelberg group:

> The great contribution the Heidelberg School [made] to the history of vision in Australian art was to produce, for the first time, a naturalistic interpretation of the Australian sunlit landscape. They analysed with skill, enthusiasm and sensitivity the appearance of eucalypt and *melaleuca* - and such dominant forest types - in the full blaze of sunlight. They depicted the colour and luminosity of the pale shadows of midsummer - blue, turquoise, pink and rose-violet; the atmospheric effects of dust, heat-haze and afterglow. But they loved most the warm coloured stillness of summer evenings.\(^76\)

This ability to convey the appearance of the Australian landscape and the quality of its light was in certain measure indebted to the example set by French Impressionist painting, with its unique sensitivity to form and colour. The Impressionist vision loosed the imagination from convention, making it receptive to what was actually new in the Australian landscape.\(^77\)

> The chief catalyst in the advent of a new style was Tom Roberts, whose ability to arouse interest in Impressionism as a revolutionary concept in the approach to landscape painting contributed a great deal to releasing the talents of such men as Conder, Streeton and McCubbin. Paintings like 'Bourke Street, Melbourne,' 'Coming South' and 'The Splitters,' all painted in 1886, are pioneering works in the new technique and show the way in which Roberts was able to infuse a narrative style of painting (a legacy from the Royal Academy)\(^78\) with a lightness of touch characteristic of the Impressionist manner. Roberts' first action in creating something like a birth of Australian painting was to strengthen the interest of local artists in painting out of doors.
His 'Artists' Camp' (1886) commemorates the first camp at Housten's farm, at Box Hill, set up by himself, McCubbin and Louis Abrahams in 1885. An intimate study of a bush setting, the painting reveals what the artist had learned from the Impressionists and Whistler and illustrates the adaptation of the style to local needs. By founding the Australian Artists' Association in 1886, Roberts and his friends broke away from the Victorian Academy of Arts, whose outlook was dominated by the Ruskinian views of a founder member, the influential critic James Smith. Smith was quick to recognize the threat to his aesthetic values which Roberts' approach represented and his reaction was not unlike Ruskin's to Whistler. Thus it was in conscious protest against officialdom and the status quo, as well as through a desire to study the landscape, that Roberts organized, in 1885, excursions to Heidelberg for a group of artists including Streeton, Withers, Mather and Phillips Fox, and set up the Box Hill camp which attracted many visitors and in particular Streeton, who joined the party in 1886. Other camps followed, notably at Eaglemont in 1888, where Roberts, Streeton and Conder formed a productive liaison, and at Charterisville in 1890, where Withers presided until 1893. The centre for all these activities was of course Melbourne - a significant fact in a consideration of Martin Boyd's background, given the artistic interests of the family.

In 1888 there was a gain in solidarity for the movement when the Australian Artists' Association rejoined the Academy under the new name of the Victorian Artists Society. A number of important paintings mark this phase, described by the art historian William Moore as 'the champagne period when the land boom was in full swing' - such works as McCubbin's bush genre paintings 'Down on his Luck' (1889) and 'Bush Burial' (1890), Roberts' historicizing celebrations of typical activities of outback life in 'Shearing the Rams' (1890) and 'The Breakaway' (1890 - 1) and Streeton's evocative landscapes 'Still Glides the Stream' (1890) and 'Golden Summer' (1890). Major impetus was given to the movement by the controversial 9 x 5 Impressions Exhibition at Buxton's Galleries in Swanston Street, Melbourne, in 1889, at which Roberts, Streeton, Conder and McCubbin exhibited. It was a radical gesture on the part of the group of young provincial artists to declare their modernity. The catalogue to the exhibition, charmingly decorated
by Conder, proclaimed the Impressionist aesthetic in a brief manifesto on its title page. Hostile reviews merely increased the artists' notoriety and helped to publicize their aims.

Towards the end of the nineties the movement had gathered enough strength to suggest the timeliness of an overseas exhibition. Streeton's one-man shows in Melbourne of 1896 and 1898 aroused much local enthusiasm which resulted in the organization of the 'Exhibition of Australian Art in London,' held at the Grafton galleries in 1898. Arthur Merric's and Emma Minnie Boyd's work was included in this, among works of such note as Roberts' 'Breakaway' and 'The Golden Fleece' (1894), Streeton's 'Purple Noon's Transparent Might' (1896), Long's 'Spirit of the Plains' (1897), Withers' 'Tranquil Winter' (1894) and McCubbin's 'On the Wallaby Track' (1896). The exhibition received cool reviews. One critic, with evident reluctance, conceded that 'the show contains pictures that would certainly make their mark at the Academy.' The Times reviewer was backhanded in his observation that the exhibition did not support the general belief 'that colonial art cannot be very good,' while the Saturday Review castigated 'these dowdy, shallow, glaring pictures' which 'merely prove the poverty of the land.'

The Studio, which had been taking notice of Australian painting since it published an article on the foundation of the Victorian Artists' Society in its March 1896 number, was also restrained in its praise in a review included in the section entitled 'Studio-Talk':

So much has been said during the past winter about the artistic possibilities of the exhibition of Australian art at the Grafton Gallery that the show itself may have come to many people somewhat as a disappointment. Yet it has revealed what everyone who had studied the progress of the art movement in Australia knew already, that the native school is, like all others, made up of men of moderate capacity and good intentions, with some half-dozen leaders who stand head and shoulders above their fellows.

Streeton, Roberts, Longstaff, Phillips Fox, Ashton and Long were singled out for applause, while 'The Golden Fleece' and 'Spirit of the Plains' were excellently reproduced as black-and-white photographs.

In the present context 'Studio-Talk' is useful in an incidental way, as the Australian entries, of the nature of artists' chit-chat,
provide a limited record of the Boyds' involvement in the local art scene. Often originating from Melbourne correspondents, the Australian notes provide an informal commentary on exhibitions and other activities relating to artists' pursuits. In the October issue for 1896, reference is made to some 'charming water-colours by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Boyd' in the company of work by other members of the Victorian Artists' Society. Appearing in the same company in the May issue for 1900 — where the V.A.S. Summer Exhibition is reviewed — Arthur Boyd is mentioned along with John Mather for a commendable handling of landscape. Other names listed on this occasion include Phillips Fox and Walter Withers. In September of the same year Geelong, in its 'first important exhibition,' is reported as showing works of the two Boyds among pictures by McCubbin, Withers, Phillips Fox, Hugh Ramsay, Mather and others. 'Studio Talk' for February 1901 mentions a children's book entitled 'Childhood in Bud and Blossom,' compiled and edited by Mr. Joshua Lake for the Melbourne Children's Hospital which was to receive the proceeds. It remarks that Donald MacDonald 'contributes a charming little story called "At the End of the Moonpath," suggestively illustrated by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Boyd,' while 'Mary Gaunt's tale, "The Light on Goat Island," is very fully illustrated by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Boyd, Mr. Douglas Richardson, and Mr Walter Withers. (The Boyds became illustrators on more than one occasion, contributing to the National Geographic Magazine at a time when photography had not made graphic art irrelevant as a means of documentation.) In January 1907, Arthur Merric Boyd's painting 'Mount Wellington' is praised for its 'fine colour and effect.'

Since the young Martin Boyd was introduced to artistic culture through the activities of his painter parents, the role of painting in nourishing and shaping his developing sensibility must be regarded as significant. In his mature years, after almost half a century spent abroad, Boyd continued to value the cultural experiences of his Australian youth. Prompted in 1964 to assert that in Melbourne, prior to World War I, 'culture was thick in the air' (DC 8), he used as his example — along with the vocal art of Nellie Melba — painting of the Heidelberg school, mentioning by name Tom Roberts, Conder and Streeton. His parents' paintings, exhibited with the Victorian Artists' Society, regularly appeared in the company of work by Roberts, Streeton, McCubbin,
Withers and Mather as well as that by the very different Hall and Young. Withers is frequently beside one of the Boyds in the V.A.S. catalogues and in the March 1890 catalogue, made famous by Conder's (proto-) *art nouveau* cover design, Arthur Merric appears auspiciously between McCubbin and Roberts.

Through their parents' activities the young Boyds were given a unique opportunity to assimilate the vision of the new, so-called 'Impressionist' movement of the Heidelberg School at close range. As a child, the novelist must often have visited the houses and studios of artists and attended significant exhibitions. In any case, the V.A.S. catalogues, illustrated with occasional drawings and photographs, could in themselves have provided knowledge of this vital phase of Australian painting and, moreover, presented it in a totally familiar context. To illustrate their potentially educative role, it may be noted that early catalogues reproduced McCubbin's 'Bush Burial' by means of a photograph and gave impressions of Streeton's 'Fire's on!' and Roberts' 'The Breakaway' in the form of outline sketches. Surprisingly, the National Gallery of Victoria missed opportunities of acquiring paintings by the Heidelberg group, although a work of such note as Streeton's 'The Purple Noon's Transparent Might' was purchased from the artist's 1896 exhibition. On the other hand, many paintings entered private collections or went to regional and other state galleries.

Most importantly for the young writer growing up to see the localities of Sandringham and Yarra Glen through the lens it provided, painting of the Heidelberg stamp spoke in decisive tones of a world of familiar sense experience. Through its success in depicting the Australian scene, it could offer a criterion by which the future novelist might test his particular understanding of his day-to-day environment. His ordinary surroundings, captured in the work of his parents in paintings like 'The Nursery Fire' (E.M.B.), 'Old Farm Yard' (E.M.B.), 'Low Tide Brighton' (A.M.B.), 'Foggy Morning' (E.M.B.), 'The Home Slip Rail' (E.M.B.) and 'An Old Almond Tree' (A.M.B.) not only won respect through artistic portrayal but assumed importance as material for the myth of a coming civilization. The simple dignity of Arthur Merric's painting 'To a New Home,' reproduced in the May 1888 V.A.S. catalogue, is in keeping with the spirit of the times which enabled McCubbin in genre
pieces like 'On the Wallaby Track' (1896) and 'The Pioneer' (1904), to see a heroic dimension in the daily lives of the settlers.

The Boyds' friendship with a number of V.A.S. members during the vital years of the society's development may have led to their participation in some of the group's more peripheral social activities, its 'smoke nights' and balls, for example, recalled by William Moore in The Story of Australian Art as having a slightly bohemian flavour.89 Bohemia proper, in so far as it existed in Melbourne, was located at Fasoli's restaurant, a favourite meeting place for artists, poets, musicians and the more unconventional among Melbourne's professional men. Frequenters of Fasoli's included such diverse and interesting personalities as James MacDonald (a later director of the National Gallery of Victoria), the cartoonists Will Dyson and David Low, Percy and Ruby Lindsay, Frederick McCubbin and his wife, and the poets C.J. Dennis and Bernard O'Dowd.90 One may reasonably assume that the Boyds' connection with this world approximated that of the Blairs in The Montforts, who are mildly curious about its existence but personally unadventurous. Boyd writes: 'Kenneth had been half amused and half attracted by artistic Bohemianism, but he too closely resembled his father to be anything more than a spectator of unconventional life' (M 171 - 72).

Of a selfconscious fin de siècle element in Australian culture of the period it is necessary to stress that, although encouraged by artists' clubs and the denizens of would-be bohemia, it never took flight. Australia could boast no Beardsley, Whistler or Wilde, and Conder was lost to the European scene in 1890. Norman Lindsay, despite the similarity of his preoccupations with those of Beardsley, was remote from a genuine l'art pour l'art inspiration even though he fed his developing talent at the rich aesthetic sources of Gautier, Swinburne and the Pre-Raphaelites.91 While Beardsley wrote about and drew a world of eroticism real at least in the intensity of its passions, Lindsay merely daydreamed a naïve sexual utopia.

The situation for writers at the turn of the century paralleled that of the painters. A world-weary decadence was manifestly out of key with the mood of a country which, on attaining nationhood, was newly embarked on a course of independent development and discovery. A body of literary work stands out by virtue of a concern shared by its authors to depict what they best knew, with the aim of achieving,
like the painters of the Heidelberg group, truth to locality and truth to time. Convinced that, in spite of its short history and lack of tradition, Australia was not deficient in subject matter, writers in prose and verse - Henry Lawson, A.B. Paterson, Joseph Furphy, Miles Franklin, Barbara Baynton, 'Steele Rudd' and Edward Dyson - concentrated on the local and present, setting out to place before their readers the facts of life as they perceived them. They confronted life face to face, often, as it were, taking their subjects out of doors with the result that an en plein air mood is a dominant feature of their writing as it is of contemporary painting. As with the visual arts, there were of course exceptions, the most notable being the poet of arcane experience, Christopher Brennan, whose fine contribution to the literature of the period was not fully appreciated by other writers or by that creator of local taste, the Red Page Rhadamanthus, A.C. Stephens.  

It is with Brennan that the case for the presence of a strong fin de siècle element in the literature of the period chiefly rests. The associations of Brennan's poetry are almost entirely European. His answer to the dilemma of finding himself between two traditions, one entering a phase of decadence, the other in the process of self-discovery, was influenced by that strain in nineteenth-century art which encouraged the poet to believe in his spiritual authority over his society and cultural milieu. As a literary artist and intellectual, Brennan was an eclectic, drawing diffuse inspiration from Romantic and Victorian poets like Blake, Keats, Arnold, Tennyson, the Pre-Raphaelites, Rossetti and the late Victorian Catholic poets, Francis Thompson and Coventry Patmore. Pointing to extant evidence of the poet's reading which indicates a wide acquaintance with French and English aestheticism, G.A. Wilkes has argued that Brennan sought a mirror of his own desires in writers like Swinburne, Pater, Whistler, Wilde, Gautier, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Huysmans and Verhaeren to the extent that 'all the literature of the decadence seemed to [him] to be governed by a single impulse': a wish to experience the absolute. However, it was the French Symbolist movement and Mallarmé in particular which supplied him with his key aesthetic concept. The Symbolist tenet which Mallarmé put into practice and which seemed to Brennan immensely persuasive, was the necessary mediation of the image in the perception of spiritual truth - an image
potent with promise for an even greater realization at a mythical time when man's deepest origins, at present alienated from him, would be restored to him. Beauty therefore became for Brennan the medium of reality and the proper aim of poetry.

This governing idea of Brennan's poetic — in Baudelaire's words, that 'les choses de la terre n'existent que bien peu, et que la vraie réalité n'est que dans les rêves' — is one which ran counter to the artistic intentions of writers of the period who concerned themselves with the social and environmental details of local life. It nevertheless found some favour with poets of lesser achievement than Brennan whose diluted aestheticism appealed to Stephens, winning his editorial support on The Red Page of the Bulletin. Stephens' own tastes, despite his approval and patronage of writers like Lawson, Furphy and Miles Franklin, whose foremost preoccupations were decidedly with events taking place in the empirical world, ran quite strongly in this direction and, as 'the Blender of the pure/Australian Brand of Literature,' the Red Page editor gave considerable encouragement to the dreamier talents of poets like Victor Daley (whom he much admired), Roderic Quinn and James Hebblethwaite. Daley's affection for Henry Kendall's poetry, whose Swinburnian cadences and sensuous aesthetic reverie had been noted appreciatively by an earlier generation, was given poetic form in his elegiac "Love — Laurel" (In Memory of Henry Kendall) which celebrates the poet as a 'Dreamer of dreams.' This notion of poet as dreamer is strikingly adhered to in the work of a number of Daley's contemporaries, including Quinn and Hebblethwaite, both of whom had volumes republished in the Bulletin's anthology, A Southern Garland (1904). Indeed, much of the verse of the period (despite, in some cases, a conscious modelling of styles on Swinburne and Poe in the eighties, Wilde and Verlaine in the nineties) is characterized by a languid sensuousness — nostalgic, elegiac, neither symbolically nor referentially focused. It is, in short, poetry of escape. Occasionally, however, the genuine note of keen pleasure, of spontaneity, by which the spirit of the European fin de siècle is recognized, is captured in a phrase, line or sometimes a whole poem — as in some of the verses written by the expatriate New Zealander, Arthur Adams.

That the nascent culture of the turn-of-the-century and pre-war years in Australia did not provide a rich enough environment for the
cultivation of the subtler and more delicate flowers of fin de siècle aestheticism is abundantly clear. In *Satyrs and Sunlight* (1909) — zestfully illustrated by Norman Lindsay — Hugh McCrae creates a fanciful world, peopled, like that of Sydney Long's paintings, with satyrs and dryads but embodying the spirit of boisterous frolic and laughter. For all that McCrae's poetry has a mood of playfulness and message of anti-puritanism in common with the European fin de siècle, careless jollity was never the tone of a Conder or Wilde, nor of the followers of Verlaine and Verhaeren who contributed to the Yellow Press. The promise of earlier poets like Henry Kendall and Adam Lindsay Gordon, who introduced a note of Swinburnian sensuousness into Australian poetry, did not come to fruition and Australia produced no poet who could, like Wilde, take the Swinburnian manner to further extremes of passionate indolence. The finest lyrical talent of the period, that of John Shaw Neilson, although exhibiting some affinities with nineteenth-century aesthetic styles, is highly individual in tone and breathes the open air atmosphere of the Australian countryside.

While Australian readers at the turn of the century could have gathered a great deal of information about European aestheticism from the local press — particularly from the *Bulletin*'s Red Page and from Stephens' magazine the *Bookfellow* (in its first and second series) — it is unlikely that members of Martin Boyd's circle were at all dependent on this source. As far as Australian writers are concerned, it is clear from the autobiographies that the novelist's early reading took nothing from the local context, despite the country's vigorous and well-publicized upsurge of literary activity. At this point, one confronts an area of conservatism in Boyd's upbringing, explained partly by the fact that the upper middle class of the time looked to Europe for cultural stimulus and partly perhaps by the tastes of Melbourne literati themselves. A.W. Jose, describing literary fashion in Melbourne in the 1890s, insists: 'I am convinced that the Melbourne of the Nineties was not romantic. Its literary circles were obsessed with respectability, the respectability which they believed fervently to be the ruling English type ....' However, if it was at all possible to live in Australia at the turn of the century and remain ignorant of such popular voices as Lawson's and Paterson's, the likelihood of escaping altogether the *milieu* that encouraged their existence was extremely small. As the facts of the novelist's family background reveal, the
-door on local culture was open through his parents' involvement with
the artistic scene and, whether the Boyds recognized it or not, the
movement in Australian painting of which they were a part was not an
isolated phenomenon but one manifestation of a culture florescence
which can only be fully appreciated in the period's various and abun-
dant literary achievement.

Just what the literary tastes of Martin Boyd's parents were is
not clear, although it is interesting to note from Helen à Beckett Read's
reminiscences that the popular acclaim of Adam Lindsay Gordon - who,
according to Francis Adams, had retained the attraction of a cult figure
twenty years after his death - was something in which they participated.
Possibly the only Australian volume in a well-stocked bookcase at Yarra
Glen was 'a book of Adam Lindsay Gordon poems given to my mother by my
father in 1883 bound in blue and gold leather with her initials on the
front' from which Emma Minnie Boyd sometimes recited. Apart from
this one may suppose that the family found little inspiration in local
voices. It appears, for example, that they regarded the Bulletin, with
its forthright nationalism and brash egalitarianism, as offensive.
Helen à Beckett Read comments on the Bulletin's absence from the house-
hold: 'I cannot remember seeing a copy ... but I can clearly remember
my mother's disgust at its "vulgarity."'

A VICTORIAN SIR GALAHAD

A certain detachment from local matters was, as has been remarked,
characteristic of the Boyds' social background. For the young Martin
Boyd this attitude had its strongest reinforcement through his schooling,
which was modelled on the English public school pattern and distinctly
marked by elements of a high Victorian outlook. From 1906 to 1911,
after the family's move to Yarra Glen, Boyd attended Trinity Grammar
School, Kew (founded in 1903 in connection with Holy Trinity Church),
where his education included the usual academic subjects of history,
Latin, Greek and English literature as well as religious instruction
and practice involving choir singing on a voluntary basis and scripture
readings by the Headmaster. As he reveals in the autobiographies
and, at a second remove, in the early edition of The Montforts, Boyd
received an enlightened education and one which offered him the ideals of individual liberty, patriotic duty and Christian virtue. The school's Headmaster was an earnest young cleric, Canon George Merrick Long, who later became a Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne, and Bishop of Bathurst. Long was a noted champion of liberty and kept his school free from the excesses of public school discipline. Through his belief that 'our boys' religion should be that of the knight' (SF 29, DD 29), he introduced his charges to that chivalric religion Boyd was later to portray in A Difficult Young Man. Cast in the mould of an essentially Victorian young man with a large sense of the responsibilities of the educated class, Boyd adopted a serious moral attitude to the task of forwarding civilization. While it is unlikely that he would have shared fully Judge William à Beckett's austere sentiments of 1863 -

To love and to be loved is not the whole
Of life's great purpose; duty, self-control,
Demand diviner yearnings of the soul!104

- as co-editor of his school's magazine Mitre in 1910, he could nevertheless write approvingly in its editorial of an ideal of stern yet merciful authority which is the possession of the informed and wise man: "An Iron hand in a velvet glove" and "the lion and the lamb lying down together" symbolize our ideal.' The editorial goes on to elaborate this concept as the aim of the public school:

This ideal of the gentle giant is the guiding star of the public schools which endeavour by a liberal education to give refinement and strength, a trained mind and a kind heart in a healthy body, while they also strive to weed out the bully, the baby and boor.105

Under the high-minded Canon Long - of whom the schoolboy Boyd wrote in Mitre that 'he was a priest before a schoolmaster'106 - it was easy to accept that the spread of enlightened ideas was at one with the advance of Empire. Boyd reveals in the autobiographies:

[Long] caused us to believe that mankind, led by the Christian English-speaking peoples, was within sight of the final goal of its progress, and that with the nineteenth century, encouraged by the noble voices of Wordsworth, Arnold and Tennyson, we had
come round the last bend.

SF 29, DD 29.

The view that 'the British Empire was the most beneficent institution the world had yet seen' (SF 26, DD 27) was taught as an unchallengeable truth, although Boyd stresses that this attitude, as entertained by his Headmaster, represented not a crude patriotism but an altruistic desire to further the progress of liberal culture. To this end 'history was taught as the gradual evolution of the English people towards the state of individual liberty' (SF 26, DD 27).

Within the walls of the schoolroom, the young Boyd effectively forgot his connections with a new society and culture in a country which had just declared itself a nation. Surrounded as he was by photographs of English cathedrals and scenes of Stratford-on-Avon and with Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth and Tennyson his daily contemplation, it is not surprising that 'all the images awakened by [his] education were English and European' (SF 29, DD 29). Even the classical heroes were abrogated to the political and social cause as types of the strength of 'present-day England' (SF 27, DD 28) - won in a noble conquest over 'corruption, tyranny and misrule' (SF 27, DD 27). As a result of this, a sense of the reality and purpose of life in Australia seemed to derive solely from the achievements of the mother culture: 'Our function was to build up the brave new world in our new country which was free of those dead evils' (SF 27, DD 27). Leaving aside nostalgia for the old world and the insistence on the worth of Empire, the elements which remain - a high moral tone, the notion of perfectibility, duty towards a common cause and an optimistic belief that individual freedom is at one with collective freedom - form the basis of what was essentially a nineteenth-century education.

Importantly for Martin Boyd's life-long preoccupation as a writer, the lofty ideal of the Christian knight had implications for the adolescent's imaginative and emotional development, for in the manichean shadow of Victorian puritanism, it prompted him to explore bypaths of exaggerated religiosity. Like his narrator Guy Langton in A Difficult Young Man, Boyd in his school years lived in a medieval dream. This state of mind could not have been entirely uninterrupted since there
was nothing to reinforce it in his life at Yarra Glen apart from the family's inherited attitudes and traditional associations with their English home in Wiltshire which, with the crash of the nineties, had come to an end. Nevertheless, at times perhaps when the impact of the Australian countryside was least felt, Boyd's imagination was decidedly backward-looking, dominated by a vision of 'Gothic loveliness' (SF 37, DD 33 - 34) which summed up his early ideas of England. He writes that 'the novels of Scott and the poetry of Tennyson encouraged this Gothic frame of mind' and that he 'dreamed of Sir Galahad pursuing the Holy Grail' (SF 36, DD 33).

A 'Gothic frame of mind' was one aspect of a high Victorian outlook. It represented the important ideals of honour, rectitude, purity and service, attractively cloaked in the rich and dignifying imagery of chivalry. Graham Hough, in The Last Romantics, comments on its psychological motivation:

To the Victorians the Grail stood for all those values which need no utilitarian justification.

Victorian culture with its strong ethical and social bias was beginning to produce within itself its own antithesis . . . .

This antithesis was, of course, aesthetic culture - emerging in its first phase in the medievalism of a restrained lover of beauty like John Ruskin. Characteristically (in a Victorian context), Boyd's attraction towards the rites of Anglo-Catholicism, to which he was introduced by a schoolfellow, was coloured by a feeling of forbidden pleasure. Apart from feeding what in Boyd's case appears to have been a desire for genuine religious experience, an interest in liturgies and church art gave scope for the indulgence of the senses without actual licence. Like the medievalism of many of the Victorians - Ruskin, the Pre-Raphaelites, Morris and Tennyson - Boyd's Gothic phase, besides being the expression of high, otherworldly ideals, was also manifestly the expression of an inhibited love of sensuous beauty - that quality of mind which obtained a bold and polemical expression in the art of the fin de siècle.
AN AESTHETIC COCOON

There is evidence that Boyd experienced the historical transformation within his own personality, that, in the years of late adolescence and early manhood, a more modern, free-thinking young man imprisoned in the Victorian Sir Galahad was given at least partial release from the meshes of moralism and prudery. From Boyd's accounts in the autobiographies, it seems that this was achieved through the agency of a relative of advanced years whose 'culture was that of the nineties' (SF 65, DD 48) and who 'revealed to [him] the Beardsley-Swinburne motifs' (SF 66, DD 49). This friendship with his cousin Edward à Beckett of Middle Brighton (Victoria) - 'a kind of universal uncle' (SF 65, DD 47) known even to many who were not his relatives as 'Uncle Ted' - began in the years after Boyd had left Trinity Grammar to enter St. John's Theological College in East St. Kilda. The novelist describes the college as 'a kind of cooling-off chamber from Trinity, with no positive influence of its own' (DD 42), apart from its failure to realize the medieval dream. The development of Boyd's personality was ready for a change in direction for which the example of nineties aestheticism seems to have pointed the way. Boyd visited the home of Edward à Beckett every Sunday afternoon, seeking the company of his vivacious à Beckett Weigall cousins (who kept him entertained with their witty repartee, which seemed to descend on them through their family connection with Punch) and the amusement and intellectual stimulus offered by his host. The novelist appears to draw extensively from the facts of his friendship with 'Uncle Ted' in his presentation of the Arthur-Raoul relationship in The Montforts. Boyd's fictional counterpart in age and background, Raoul Montfort Blair is drawn, on the eve of the 1914-18 War, into the orbit of Arthur Montfort who lives in artificial surroundings designed to provide a reflection of his fastidious love of beauty. We are told that Arthur 'was particularly nice to Raoul, and taught him to draw and paint, and all the time kept up a running fire of inverted Wildean remarks which kept him in fits of laughter' (M 174). That this is a portrait of Edward à Beckett is acknowledged in the autobiographies. Lightly contemptuous of the gaps in his young relative's education, Uncle Ted spread before him the delights of fin de siècle culture. Boyd points out, however, that despite his mentor's fascination for the daring in such artists as
Swinburne and Beardsley,

he was too naturally right-thinking to be decadent ... His hobbies were his garden and his house, which was full of gadgets for convenience and precious arrangements for beauty. In his drawingroom was a stained glass window of a white peacock, symbol of eternity. ... He was always buying new curtains and carpets in his search for soft effects of colour ....

SF 65.

This suggests a species of aestheticism which has more in common with William Morris and the Red House than with the unrestrained luxury of the belle époque.

For a very short period before the outbreak of war, Martin Boyd was articled to an architectural firm in Melbourne, with the intention of pursuing architecture as a career. In and out of work hours he was preoccupied with ambitious designs for houses, giving free rein to his love of beauty and to his wish that this should find an answering image in the outside world. Furthermore, the impulse was given intellectual and moral reinforcement by the appealing vision of romantic socialism. The stimulus Boyd received in the pre-war years from such sources as Shaw, Wells, Olive Schreiner's Woman and Labour (1911), William Morris' News from Nowhere (1890) and Norman Angell's Great Illusion (1910) opened out rose-tinted visions of social optimism.

So much was he convinced of the imminence of social justice, the perfecting of the living environment and the opportunity for men at large to enjoy leisure and the riches of aesthetic enjoyment that in 1915, en route to England with the purpose of joining the British fighting forces, he spent his time reading Max Beerbohm's Zuleika Dobson while his companions on the ship occupied themselves with Infantry Training.

Quite decisively, at the outbreak of the 1914 - 18 war Boyd was enclosed in an aesthetic cocoon - an admission he makes at the end of Part I, covering the early, formative period of his life, of A Single Flame:

In 1913 and 1914 the colours of the world were vivid to me, but they were always just beyond my reach. I felt like the Lady of Shalott, seeing the crimson and gold only in a mirror .... The ancient glories and the present excitements of Europe were in this glass. My mind was flooded with conflicting aesthetic
reflections. There were soaring visions induced by a Wagner season in Melbourne. The echo of Sieglinde's love-song gave a moonlit pear tree at Yarra Glen a heart-breaking loveliness, and there were easily Rhine maidens at the bend of the river. Debussy played by my cousins, the startling fun of post-impressionist pictures, all the new colour and the new rhythm, made me feel that everywhere the world was breaking into a second renaissance.

In summing up his early development in this passage, what Boyd overwhelmingly reveals is the emergence of an aesthetic personality. Although a sense of remoteness from life enters in the Tennysonian image and the disclosure that all his psychic energies were concentrated on Europe, the tone is emphatically one of immediate delight in the excitement of artistic discovery and in the beauty of the natural world. In view of the foregoing discussion of the European and Australian fin de siècle it comes as no surprise that an intellectual awareness of his aesthetic tendencies was at this point framed in Boyd's mind entirely in European terms. Aestheticism seemed and was a largely European phenomenon.

The key tenet of aesthetic doctrine is perhaps the one identified by Brennan in the context of a review of Huysmans' A Rebours: 'Aestheticism is, essentially, playing with life.' If, however, we were to take this as a complete summary of Martin Boyd's emerging personality it would do insufficient justice to the complexity of his formative background. Cultural exclusiveness appears to be just what the novelist's upbringing avoided. Through the various influences of family, schooling and social milieu, Boyd's early years were coloured by a number of well-defined contrasts which could not easily have been negated as persistent shaping forces in his character and outlook.

In fact, the formative period of his life tended to contrariety in many respects: geographically, since his family had traditionally divided their time between two hemispheres; historically, because his schooling was strictly Victorian while in his family environment he was exposed to fin de siècle influences; culturally, as he was encouraged to believe that he had inherited an assured position in two societies, English and Australian; spiritually, in that his temperament was at once pleasure-loving and seriously religious; economically, because the Boyds, although well-established in Melbourne, found themselves in reduced circumstances when the boom burst in the 1890s and were subsequently content to live the slightly bohemian life of amateur painters with
no real compulsion to earn a living in the bourgeois sense. Whatever the complex interplay of environmental determinants, one factor stands out as being of overriding importance: Martin Boyd came from a family whose life was chiefly shaped by the demands of art. It was from this source that he derived his fundamental attitude of receptivity towards beauty.
CHAPTER TWO

MUCH ELSE IN ITALY: THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY

This is the right way of approaching or being initiated into the mysteries of love, to begin with examples of beauty in this world, and using them as steps to ascend continually with absolute beauty as one's aim ....

The Symposium.

So God sent that part of himself which was Beauty, to show mankind how they might live again under the law of innocence, and their redemption began.

Much Else in Italy.

The claim of Boyd's narrator-persona at the outset of Much Else in Italy, A Subjective Travel Book (1958) that 'those of us whose school days were over by 1914 know our stories' (MEI 6), while intended to direct the reader's imagination toward the chief matter of the book - namely a personal enquiry into the Classical and Christian elements of the Western tradition - serves also to place the writer's chosen subject historically as belonging to the cultural atmosphere of the late nineteenth century. Much Else in Italy sets out to show that, in order to rejuvenate his civilization, Western man need look no further than 'the Greek story and the Christian story' (MEI 5). The book's appearance in the same decade as landmarks of drama like Waiting for Godot (1954) and Look Back in Anger (1956) - plays which gave voice to the metaphysical and social panic of a civilization under stress - contributes to the impression it gives of an anachronistic vision of culture. Strongly traditionalist in its approach, the choice for modern civilization it outlines has more in common with the dilemma confronted by Victorian cultural theorists like Matthew Arnold and Walter Pater than with postwar angst. In stressing the need for an appreciation of what it sees as an essentially dual tradition of interacting pagan and Christian components, Boyd's thinking recalls especially the model of Western civilization presented in Culture and Anarchy (1868), Arnold's most developed discussion of the relative merits of Hellenic and Hebraic culture.

Surveying his age's alternatives of Christian puritanism and scientific rationalism in the celebrated formulation which affected stances taken by a number of writers and artists in the late Victorian period, Arnold expressed his dissatisfaction by arguing for a balance of Hebraic and Hellenic values:
Hebraism and Hellenism, - between these two points of influence moves our world. At one time it feels more powerfully the attraction of one of them, at another time of the other; and it ought to be, though it never is, evenly and happily balanced between them.3

That Boyd found this distinction useful in structuring his ideas is indicated in the autobiographies and suggests a legacy from his Victorian education: 'Fundamentally I accepted Matthew Arnold's distinction between Hebraic "Fire and Strength"and Hellenic "Sweetness and Light." I was all for sweetness and light...' (SF 205, DD 147) - a preference which reflects Arnold's own conviction about the need to correct an imbalance in Victorian society. Arnold elaborates:

And all that we have been saying, and indeed any glance at the world around us, shows that with us, with the most respectable and strongest parts of us, the ruling force is now, and has long been, a Puritan force, - the care for fire and strength, strictness of conscience, Hebraism, rather than the care for sweetness and light, spontaneity of consciousness, Hellenism.4

Notions that in Arnold have their roots in a serious study of eighteenth and nineteenth century German Hellenism from Winckelmann to Heine, are in Boyd merely the reflections of an incorrigibly amateur student of Western cultural history, dabbling by the way in philosophy and theology but chiefly concerned to establish his intellectual and moral priorities within the framework of ideas and values which might be thought to be the possession of an ordinary person of a reasonable standard of education. As a defence against the charge of amateurism in his quest for the Greek heritage, a heritage which he accepts as forming 'to a great extent the soul of the Western world' (MEI 9), Boyd has his narrator comment that the searcher 'does not need to be a classical scholar to do this, any more than one needs to be a theologian to be a Christian' (MEI 10). In spite of this acknowledged lack of concern for scholarly matters, Boyd is able to present his cultural explorations with interest and some vitality in the limited form of a 'subjective travel book.' Whatever its merits, as a theoretic statement of personally-held views, the book has importance in the study of Boyd, providing useful documentation of ideas of life and art held outside the fiction.

Spontaneity is the keynote of a work whose original inspiration may well owe more to Sir William a Beckett's anecdotal 'Italian Journey,' Out of Harness, than to a well-known example of the travel genre like D.H. Lawrence's Etruscan Places (1932), which is
mentioned in the text. As a close friend from the novelist's most
creatively productive years has testified, Martin Boyd was 'an
avid controversialist': 'There must have been isolated incidents of
letters to the paper, national and indeed local, but his usual method
was to write to the person direct, especially Bishops!' As one of
the much stated motives of Much Else in Italy is to discover the
human, cultural dimension of Christianity over and above a narrowly
dogmatic view, the "much else" which the Anglican Church officially
declares as relative to the needs of the state, and seems reluctant
to mention' (MEI 168), it is clear that the book is conceived in
part in this controversialist spirit of writing to Bishops. The open,
uninhibited statement of reasoned opinion is very deliberately part
of Boyd's notion of social responsibility and controls the spirit and
tone of his published non-fictional work. As Brenda Niall has pointed
out, A Single Flame, addressed to 'Cousin Fanny,' unfolds as an
extended conversation with a representative of a group to whom the
writer feels he has something of importance to communicate, namely
the upper middle class of which he is a discontented member.
Apart from the occasional gibe at institutions or representative
people in Much Else in Italy, however, the question of a special
audience is conveniently and intelligently side-stepped. This is
achieved through imitation of the method of Platonic dialogue in the
invention of a companion in conversation to the narrator of the
book who conducts his protégé on a tour through Italy in search of
'the Creative Nōos' (MEI 7) - the full mystery governing man's
temporal and spiritual being. In this way Boyd allows for the maximum
of tentativeness in the points of view expressed without their
contribution to truth being undermined.

The narrator's companion on his journey is a young Irish boy
'who has just come to believe that the spiritual world exists' MEI 6)
and who is anxious to discover the forms of a civilized existence. In
the suggestion that the Irish boy embodies 'part of our own mind'
(MEI 9) Boyd seems to have arrived at the same sense of the usefulness
of the dialectical approach to truth defined by Pater in his
commentary on Plato's 'Dialectic' in Plato and Platonism (1893): 'The
essence of that method, of "dialectic" in all its forms, as its very
name denotes, is dialogue, the habit of seeking truth by means of
question and answer, primarily with one's self. Just there, lies the validity of the method - in a dialogue, an endless dialogue, with one's self. As 'a Southern Irish Protestant ... with a Catholic sense of poetry ... but also with an inherited prejudice against Catholicism' (MEI 6), Boyd's character represents an aspect of the personality and cultural inheritance of the writer himself whose forebears lived in County Mayo. More generally he stands for the aspirations of an entire section of humanity, modern Western man poised at the crossroads and in need of a saving ideal. For Pater the appeal of the dialectical method is that it presents thought as a process, 'co-extensive with life itself - a part of the continuous company we keep with ourselves through life.' In Much Else in Italy the attractiveness of this idea for Boyd is communicated effectively by the pervasive image of the journey. The book is a relative, if by comparison a poor one, of Pater's own huge attempt at depicting the growth of experimental knowledge in Marius the Epicurean. It is perhaps the inherent neoPlatonism of an ascent through lower to higher experiences in each case which suggests the similarity, as, beginning 'with examples of beauty in this world,' the protagonists 'ascend continually' with the highest kind of beauty as their goal. In both writers the emphasis is on the phenomenal reality of experience: Boyd in his insistence that 'the noumena,' or presence of spiritual forces in the world, 'must use material processes to create phenomena' (MEI 8), Pater in his preoccupation with philosophies of pleasure, heralding in Marius his 'aesthetic' interpretation of Plato in Plato and Platonism: 'The sensuous lover becomes a lover of the invisible, but still a lover, after his earlier pattern, carrying into the world of intellectual vision, of ἑπιστήμη, all the associations of the actual world of sight.'

As an informal exegesis of many ideas absorbing Boyd's interest in his mature years - it was written at the same time as the third novel in the Langton series, Outbreak of Love (1957) - Much Else in Italy provides an illuminating entry-point into the mental world of the novelist. Whatever reservations one might have about the literary worth of the book, objecting to the intrusion of polemicism at some points or to the paleness and thinness of descriptive passages whose subject matter - the beauty of a temple, statue or religious rite -
demands the kind of vivid, immediate evocation offered by Pater in his
Greek Studies (1895) or Lawrence in Etruscan Places, one cannot overlook
its significance as Boyd's only extended statement of his ideas
outside the autobiographies. It assumes importance over the
autobiographies for the reason that these, although largely composed
of anecdote chosen to illustrate a theory or belief, do not provide
so much in the way of philosophical thinking-aloud and are consequently
less rich in evidence of the writer's native patterns of thought.
This does not mean that Much Else in Italy ought to be regarded as
a theoretic blue-print for Boyd's novels, merely that, as a speculative
document, it deserves to be considered in detail for its independent
discussion of notions, tendencies and preoccupations likely to have
coloured the imaginative processes of the writer of fiction.

THE MEDIATION OF MYTH

The argument of Much Else in Italy is that a fascination with
appearance - the 'phenomenon' as Boyd calls it - is, in truth, a
search for the mysterious power behind it: the 'noumenon,' defined
as 'an idea or spirit that expresses itself in matter' (MEI 3). The 'noumena' recall Plato's Ideas or Forms, but at the same time Boyd
stresses the reality of the tangible world. At the beginning of
their travels in Italy the narrator - our guide - and his protégé -
the young Irish boy in search of the truth - contemplate the statue
of Zeus in the museum at Paestum. The image of the god who presides
over the daylight world serves as a reminder that the world is man's
essential medium:

This Zeus, with what is left of his face, looks on the natural
world with complete approval. The belief that, though imperfect,
it is essentially good, is one that the Irish boy holds and will
never give up. He accepts both the view of this Zeus and the
first condition of the Christian story, that the Creative Νόος
looked on the world and 'saw that it was good.'

MEI 11.

This concept of the dual structure of reality allows Boyd to move
easily from the idea of experimental to intuitive knowledge, without
abrogating the role of matter and material processes in the communication
of a mode of being beyond material existence. Importantly, the
'noumena' are not fixed ('God, if alive, cannot be static' [MEI 16])
nor are they susceptible to intellectual definition. Their action is mysterious: '...the noumena are vague. They blow where they list...'

Echoing the opening section of Plato's *Phaedrus* from which Boyd takes one of the mottoes to his book (*Phaedrus*' enquiry of Socrates concerning his acceptance of a local story about Boreas and Oreithuia: 'Tell me honestly, Socrates, do you believe this tale of mythology to be true?'), the first chapter of *Much Else in Italy* attempts to dispel the inhibiting atmosphere of modern scepticism. For Plato an irresponsible scepticism was associated with the rhetoricians who disregarded truth while pursuing 'what is likely to be thought just by the body of men who are to give judgement.'

In answer to *Phaedrus'* questioning about the truth of the Boreas myth, Socrates replies: 'I should be quite in the fashion if I disbelieved it, as the men of science do! I might proceed to give a scientific account' - adding forcefully that such an approach to mythological figures is mere sophistry, wanting in humility:

> If our sceptic, with his somewhat crude science, means to reduce every one of them to the standard of probability, he'll need a deal of time for it. I myself have certainly no time for the business: and I'll tell you why, my friend: I can't as yet 'know myself' ....

Comparably, at the outset of *Much Else in Italy*, the narrator condemns two kinds of people for their lack of humility: one is the 'puritan fundamentalist' (MEI 4) who overlooks the breadth of the phenomenal world and hence the complexity of its message; the other is the 'materialistic scientist' (MEI 4) who restricts himself to a limited knowledge of fact: 'The scientist has only discovered the processes and does not want to be bothered with the meaning. It reduces his cleverness, for he can only discover fact' (MEI 8). The conclusion is that, despite their apparent differences, there is little to distinguish the two:

> They both suffer from the same vanity, the insistence that they can explain everything; one by the arbitrary and literal meaning of the words of the Bible, the other by his discovery of the mechanics of nature. They both ignore the vast, mysterious, and unpredictable movement of the noumena.

MEI 4.
Having begun with a plea for humility in the face of a reality too large for human understanding, Much Else in Italy offers as its premise the value of myth as a vehicle for truth. The man who leaves himself open to real knowledge will grasp truth intuitively. Every civilization has its myths and deities which enshrine an apprehension of a hidden spiritual power in nature. The 'noumena' are mediated through these apprehensions which in the traditions of the Western world are to be found in the iconography of the Greek and Christian stories which to Boyd's mind 'have left some of their richest evidence in Italy' (MEI 5). Man discovers the noumena and names them. To illustrate this process, the narrator enumerates instances of the rich symbolic meanings attached to the pagan gods. Hermes, for example, 'is the noumenon behind all that swift movement, both of body and mind, which is most evident in youths, so it is to him that the boys offer their sprigs of marjoram, and when their boyhood is past, their relinquished toys, their tops, and boxwood rattles' (MEI 9).

In inviting his readers to accompany him on a pilgrimage to the shrines of the Classical and Christian deities in Italy, Boyd suggests that 'the instruments of our search' will be 'the heart and the eye' and that consequently we will not be able to draw with any certainty 'the exact borderline between the truth and the symbol' (MEI 10). Boyd would have us make with the Irish boy the prayer of Socrates at the conclusion of Phaedrus through which Plato recapitulates his purpose to urge, against the superficial rhetoric of the sophists, the claims of experiential knowledge in the philosphic pursuit of truth: 'O Blessed Pan and all spirits dwelling in this place, grant that I may be beautiful in the inner man, and that what I have of outer things may accord with those that are within' (MEI 10).

THE GREEK STORY AND CHRISTIAN PARALLELS

Seeking the foundations of civilization in Italy, the travellers make their first place of pilgrimage the most noteworthy site of Magna Graecia with its architectural views dating from the seventh century B.C. Here, at Paestum on the Gulf of Salerno, in what remains of a Greek city later inhabited by the Romans, the Irish boy and his guide find images of the unity of an eternal mystery and the here-and-now in the harmonious Doric of the temples:
The temple of Ceres, the loveliest of the group, dedicated to 'the spirit which causes the earth to produce corn and fruit and flowers' (MEI 8), evokes with pleasing suggestiveness the Christian concept of 'God the Father' (MEI 8), the provider and cause of all growth. But for the moment, despite the spontaneous correspondences which arise in comparing Greek and Christian myths, the travellers are living in 'the Greek story'. Like Goethe in Assisi when he ignored the legend of St. Francis to concentrate on the temple of Minerva, the narrator and his companion are alive to intimations of 'Homer's world' (MEI 2). In contemplation of the pagan temples, the travellers feel they are in the presence of something superior to the spirit of Gothic architecture. At this early stage, the discussion is conducted in the terms of opposed Classical and medieval Christian values. This analytic and evaluative scheme is not an unfamiliar one to scholars of the Victorian and late Victorian period. It is encountered in many guises in the course of a cultural debate which begins with Ruskin's whole-hearted espousal of Gothic, achieves antinomial expression in the pagan enthusiasm of Swinburne's poetry, fluctuates in the thought of Arnold, Morris and Pater and ends in Wilde's selfconscious parodying of the fashionable pursuit of Hellenic culture in the story of 'Dorian' Gray.

Given the Victorian basis of Boyd's education, it is likely that the opposition of Classical and medieval came to the writer of Much Else in Italy from one or more of these sources, together with the tendency (notably present in Morris and Pater) to connect its polarized ideals with the morality and culture of the European north and south. A more fundamental preoccupation of Much Else in Italy, however, is the larger dualism, at the centre of the Victorian debate, of Classical and Christian (as opposed to medieval Christian) culture - broadly the Hellenism and Hebraism of Culture and Anarchy but in Boyd's case free from the secularizing impulse of Arnold's humanism. It is in the spirit of confronting the common prejudice of identifying Christianity with medievalism, a prejudice likely to influence the Irish boy in his search
for values, that the narrator makes his opening comparison of
gothic architecture. Later, when the travellers come
face to face with the 'innocent' Christianity of the early church -
evident in the Classical borrowing of the oldest churches in Rome -
the notion of an opposition between pagan and Christian civilization
will be less easily entertained. The narrator knows this of course
and makes us aware of it, at the same time indicating that he is
content to allow his protégé - emerging like Pater's Winckelmann
from a gloomier world into the 'intellectual light' of Hellenism17 -
the intense pleasure of a newly-discovered affinity.

Answering a fundamental need of his nature for pleasure, the
Irish boy's experience at Paestum is an antidote to a debilitating
puritanism, a 'cowardice in the face of beauty' (MEI 13) singled
out by the narrator in his reflections as one of the chief failures
of modern civilization. Through the vision of strength, beauty and
joy in nature evoked by contact with the Greek world, one facet of the
truth is grasped, a wisdom which will not be lost as the Irish boy moves
into 'the Christian story' since Christianity in its most pure and
potent form (as the narrator believes it exists in Italy) has absorbed
the pagan 'noumena' by involving their worship in its own:

Where the Christian religion spreads over the world it has to
redeem the gods of the different countries, and the degree of
their civilization depends on the nature of these local gods.
In Italy they are those of classical times, those we love most,
the nearest to the gates of Paradise. Christianity superimposed
on these gives a religion of unbounded richness, Catholic
and pagan. In contrast, Calvinism superimposed on some brutish
northern gods produces a barren hell.

MEI 14.

Despite these assertions, Christian Italy proves not untouched by the
'bleak lines of puritanism' (MEI 25) and, having left the territory
inhabited by the purely Greek noumena, the travellers react with
intensity to the first signs of the Church's disfigurement of its
Classical inheritance. Reminiscent of Arnold's attack on Calvinism
and puritan culture, chapter two initiates a series of denunciations -
carried on throughout the book - of Christianity's part in fostering
a sense of guilt, a denial of physical enjoyment and a fearful withdrawal
from life. Commenting on Classical culture in his book Goethe and the
Greeks, Humphrey Trevelyan remarks: 'Of the fundamental Trinity -
Goodness, Truth, Beauty - they [the Greeks] had had a unique revelation
of Beauty.' Goethe, he goes on to say, set out to acquaint himself with this special kind of aesthetic knowledge in Greek sculpture's presentation of the 'ideal of the beautiful youth' through which a moral value - acquiring the status of an absolute - could be apprehended. In the search for the inspiration behind Classical art in Much Else in Italy, Boyd acknowledges the same primacy of beauty in the moral order of the Greeks. Not satisfied to leave the aesthetic in the custody of the pagan noumena, however, he transfers the supreme role of beauty to the Christian context so that the Greek ideal - expressed as the beautiful youth or beauty incarnate as Boyd sees it epitomized in the figure of Apollo - becomes, without essential alteration, the redeemer of the Christian story.

This pattern of thought is first introduced in chapter one when Boyd, through his narrator-persona, offers for our consideration the vision of a threefold correspondence in the worship of 'beauty, truth and goodness' in the form of 'Apollo, Pallas-Athene, and Zeus' in the Greek, and 'Son, the Holy Ghost, and the Father' in the Christian religions (MEI 9). Without ambiguity, this equation renders the Incarnate God of Christianity as Apollo, divine comeliness, the god of beauty, thus revealing Boyd's fundamental impulse towards the Hellenic in interpreting the Christian tradition. The identification of Christ with supreme beauty is again made in chapter two when, for the instruction of the Irish boy who is lacking in 'a very clear idea of the basic design of Western religion' (MEI 4), the narrator relates his version - partially pruned of Christian historical reference - of the creation and redemption myths. Wanting to demonstrate that Christianity is anticipated in pagan myth he sets out to illustrate how readily the idea of beauty can express Christ in the story of man's salvation: 'So God sent that part of himself which was Beauty, to show mankind how they might live again under the law of innocence, and their redemption began' (MEI 14).

Everything which is lovely in nature and art suggests to Boyd the promise of the story of Christ's resurrection, man's physical life with its vivid capacity for sensation restored to grace. Its fulfilment is sought by the way of aesthetic discovery - employing 'the heart and the eye,' feeling and vision - through which is disclosed the reality of the divine presence in matter. To the enlightened, man's natural life is also sacramentality, a participation in the divine life.
In the language of myth:

The Son of God returned to his Father, who was also himself, but he sent to mankind that other part of himself which was Truth, so that men might know of their redemption, and to comfort them he said that when they ate and drank their eternal natural food of corn and wine, they would receive himself. In this his incarnation is repeated, and the process of redemption continued, for it depends on the descent of spirit into matter, on the illumination of the substance of this world, so that the corn of Ceres becomes the body of Christ.

MEI 15. My italics.

The message of prime import for the pilgrims of Much Else in Italy is not the comfort of the Christian Mass conceived by some as an exclusive source of grace but the whole spiritual process the ritual signifies: 'the illumination of the substance of this world,' that beauty which to the puritan, 'filled with the rage of Caliban, not seeing his own face in the glass' (MEI 14-15), is anathema.

ANTI-GOTHICISM AND THE RETURN TO THE APOLLOS OF VEII AND TEVERE

In Naples the life-denying spirit is recognized in the 'gloom of pointed arches and dried blood' (MEI 32) of the Gothic cathedral of St. Januarius, famous for its miracle of the liquefaction of the saint's blood. The travellers' rejection of these sombre images of an otherworldly religion recalls Swinburne's desire to escape the withering breath of the conquering pale Galilean in the 'Hymn of Proserpine':

O ghastly glories of saints, dead limbs of gibbeted Gods!
Though all men abase them before you in spirit, and all knees bend,
I kneel not neither adore you ....

In contrast to the negations of Gothic, the group of the 'Tyrannicides' in the museum, a Graeco-Roman sculpture portraying Harmodius and Aristogeiton delivering Athens, greets the pilgrims 'like a shout' (MEI 32), evoking for the reader that sense of an 'exhilaration almost physical' described by Pater as Winckelmann's response to the spirit of the Roman world.
The exorcizing of the ascetical spirit is a necessary preparation for the completion of the first phase of the Irish boy's instruction, reached on his discovery, in the Etruscan museum in Rome, of a potent image of the goodness of the physical world in the Apollo of Veii. Apollo is the god of harmony - in music and society - and of bodily health. Of special importance to Boyd, the Veii sculpture, fashioned on a Greek model, expresses with direct appeal the vigour of sound bodily life:

It is the face of the religion of the Paestum temples, and there is something in our nature which responds to it with delight. It is pure animal well-being. It has not been driven from Paradise and so does not ask for redemption. MEI 35.

At this point the Irish boy is convinced that he has found what he was seeking and he is tempted to do what his mentor has earlier criticized D.H. Lawrence for doing, namely to look 'no further than the Apollo of Veii' (MEI 18). The narrator admits partial approval of Lawrence, however, and this serves to illuminate his meaning. The simplicity and directness of Etruscan culture, described by Lawrence in *Etruscan Places* as vivified by 'a profound belief in life,' is exactly what attracts the Irish boy in the image of the Apollo. Lawrence writes:

To the Etruscan all was alive; the whole universe lived, and the business of man was himself to live amid it all. He had to draw life into himself, out of the wandering huge vitalities of the world. The cosmos was alive, like a vast creature. The whole thing breathed and stirred.

Boyd's narrator, who similarly appreciates the Etruscan record of the experience of living in tune with the natural world, values the Apollo of Veii for its exaltation of assured and carefree bodily energy:

It is in the spiritual condition in which, in our times of perfect health, we are satisficed to be. It has the rounded chin of someone who is loved, yet it gives the impression of great strength. Its braided hair, like a crown over its forehead, falls in ropes on its splendid shoulders, and it shows carelessly the beauty of its breast.

MEI 35.
At the same time he raises the question which leaves Lawrence unperturbed in *Etruscan Places* - 'Isn't it "too savage"' (MEI 35) a god for unconditional acceptance and might it not mean 'death' to the 'subtler faculties' (MEI 36)?

A nearer 'image of his own nature made perfect' (MEI 42), adding to the handsomeness of the Apollo of Veii the attributes of selfconscious control, sweetness and subtle beauty, is presented to the Irish boy in the Apollo of Tevere, a Roman copy of a Greek sculpture exhibited in the appropriate setting of what remains of a great Roman bathing establishment, the Diocletian baths. Boyd writes in praise of the surviving architectural structures: '... part of them turned by Michelangelo into a Christian church, are the loveliest fragments of Greek sculpture to be found in Italy' (MEI 38). Strolling through the various halls, gardens and added Christian cloister, the travellers are delighted by many sights which serve to strengthen their appreciation of Classical civilization: a sculpture of Aphrodite rising from the sea, fine mosaics and bas-reliefs and 'whole rooms painted, like those at Naples, almost in the style of the early French impressionists' (MEI 39). The comparison with French Impressionist painting is not incidental to Boyd's narrative of an ascent towards spiritual understanding. Sensitivity to a distinctive treatment of light in art forms an important element in the searchers' habitual sense of aesthetic values, as the narrator's comments on the Ephebe of Subiaco reveal:

... we feel the living body, which it has made immortal, knew the sun and sea-winds. It was drawn not by night, but in the clear morning light, which seems all-pervading in the evidence of the Greek story, and which the Irish boy demands shall surround his god.


This appreciation is in harmony with Boyd's major symbol, that of the Apollo, god of light. In a cumulative way, the force of visual communication begins to stand out as more powerful and efficacious than that of other forms. Verbal communication, it is argued, is of limited value: 'Words can be used for an exact statement of material fact, not of spiritual truth, which is best conveyed by other symbols' (MEI 40). Through visual shapes, the noumena are grasped instantaneously in their phenomenal aspect as
living truth. This idea of a truth beyond mere intellectual apprehension is suggested by Boyd in his stress on a knowledge intuitively available to the whole human personality through its capacity to discriminate experiences on aesthetic grounds. For Boyd, beauty is not only a key to truth but ultimately to goodness as well. Thus, when the Irish boy contemplates the face of the Apollo of Tevere, its particular beauty effects, in a quasi-sacramental way, a decisive growth of his personality. With this moral transformation, he is now able to see the attractions of a state where 'the body is in harmony with the serene mind' (MEI 43):

... when the Irish boy came to the Apollo of Tevere he stopped as if he had found something that had led him a stage onwards. A young man's god is his ideal of himself, himself in Perfect Drawing, and at this stage of his search he believed that the face of this statue satisfied his ideal. It is as much of the morning as the Apollo of Veii, but the light is less harsh. The eyes are reflective and the mouth is more gentle. It is not the Apollo who flayed Marsyas, but it might be the shepherd of Admetus. The forehead is wide and the thick hair covers his head like a cap. His strength and vitality are assured. It is not an intellectual head, but something far better, that of a man whose spirit is one with the flesh.

MEI 40-41.

'It is not an intellectual head,' the narrator insists, anxious to avoid a misunderstanding about the new stress on mind.

A CRITIQUE OF PURITANISM

At this judicious point, in order to reinforce the idea of organic knowledge involving man's affective and volitional nature, Boyd introduces into his narrative a representative of the class of sceptics: the man with the New Statesman in his pocket whom the travellers first meet in the Capitoline museum. A 'coward in the face of beauty,' this man, confronted with the Eros and Psyche, is embarrassed by its display of generous and tender emotion. His unprepossessing demeanour - he is middle-aged 'with a bleak, sad intellectual face, steel-rimmed glasses, thin hair, and in spite of these things a boyish appearance' (MEI 44) - recalls Lawrence's
portrait in *Etruscan Places* of the German archeological student 'who looks as if he'd had vinegar for breakfast' and whose favourite phrase is: 'doesn't amount to anything.'²⁵ Boyd's rancour has the same cause as Lawrence's, namely an intense dislike for the spiritually complacent. Lawrence judges the young scholar:

> 'What is the meaning of this lion with the second head and neck?' I asked the German. He shrugged his shoulders, and said: 'Nothing!' It meant nothing to him. He is a scientist, and when he doesn't want a thing to have a meaning it is, *ipso facto*, meaningless.²⁶

Boyd's intellectual is guilty of a comparable reduction:

> We discovered ... that he attributed all the motions of the noumena as due simply to the functioning of glands .... Being of puritan stock, though an atheist, he could not rid himself of the desire for salvation, and, like a vast number of people today, thought it could be found in 'culture,' though he also believed that the only function of art was to provoke physical sensations, the tingling in the finger-tips. To allow it a meaning would be superstitious.²⁷

Having condemned secular puritanism, Boyd's searchers go on to reject, with equal vehemence, the religious puritanism - evident in the multiplication of fig-leaves in the Vatican museum - which, through its inhibition of the message of unashamed flesh, serves to 'deny to doctrine of the Incarnation' (MEI 47).

The dismissal of puritan values holds a central place in Boyd's search for an ideal of life in 'the Christian story.' The attack is twofold, castigating Christianity's preoccupation with its inheritance of the Old Testament religion of law to the detriment of the New Testament religion of love and exposing the strong manichean element in the spirituality of the medieval church with its cult of suffering and emphasis on the way of asceticism. The figures of Moses and St. Paul, as the pilgrims encounter them within the ambience of ecclesiastical Rome, sum up the first objection to an influence from pre-Christian, Hebraic religion. To begin with, Michelangelo's 'Moses,' in S. Pietro in Vincoli, causes the narrator some discomfort as he is prompted to reflect on Christianity's adoption - chiefly through Protestantism's use of the Bible - of the Old Testament concept of a vengeful god. A reformist tone,
reminiscent of Matthew Arnold outlining the 'over-Hebraising'

puritanism of Calvinist and Arminian Protestantism in St. Paul and

Protestantism, (1870), 28 colours criticisms levelled at the worship of
'the tribal deity of the Hebrews' in the 'low churches' and the
Calvinist Church of Scotland (MEI 68). The disadvantage of
Protestantism, which in the narrator's eyes may have a latent
prejudicial effect on the Irish boy, is that no attention is given to
the story of Christ's Incarnation and the divine care for the world
it implies. Catholicism he considers preferable in this matter:
that, while it 'probably contains most of the doctrines, or the germ
of them that we dislike in Protestantism' (MEI 69), it places the Old
Testament firmly in perspective as being superseded by the New.

When the pilgrims visit the Basilica of S. Paolo Fuori le Mura
the problem of the Irish boy's identification of Christianity with
puritanism comes to a head. The church has an unalleviated 'hall of
justice' look (MEI 84), which reminds the Irish boy of the supposedly
Pauline religion of his childhood. The narrator's advancement of
the cliché 'S. Paul is "the Protestant Saint"' (MEI 84) is vigorously
taken up by the Irish boy who, playing the role of devil's advocate
but sincere in his critical intention, outrightly condemns St. Paul
as a prophetic figure, calling him 'a bigot, a self-important bully'
and, because of his part in the killing of Stephen, 'even a murderer'
(MEI 86). In Paul's notions of obedience to the law and the state,
the spirit of the Old Testament reappears. The Irish boy dislikes the
harsh prescriptiveness of his teaching. The sweetness of Christ's
personality escapes him: '... he had not seen God in the flesh, and
his Old Testament imagination was steeped in the idea of blood
sacrifice' (MEI 89); as a consequence he 'preaches Christ crucified,'
ignoring 'Christ alive on this earth, in all the splendour of his
innocent humanity' (MEI 88). Returning to Rome by a circuitous route,
the travellers reach the spot on the Appian Way where as legend has it
Christ shamed St. Peter into accepting a violent death. In providing
'the first picture of Christ as a kind of blackmailing governess,
with ... horrible, soft, self-pitying, reproachful eyes' (MEI 92),
the incident strikes the narrator as being in keeping with the Pauline
figure of vengeance - blotting out the true Christian message of
redemption.

The sanctity and inviolability of human life is again the issue
when, in a later context, the narrator criticizes St. Paul's in London


for accommodating 'the War story' (MEI 162) in a building which should be dedicated to peace and Christian passivity. The reputation of St. Paul suffers once more through guilt by association. Free of some of the extremes of Protestantism, the Anglican church allows the life-denying spirit of puritanism into its very sanctuary by aligning itself with the civil cause: 'It has developed a new story .... On the scarves of its army chaplains is a cross, and above the cross is a crown, but not the Crown of Thorns, or a crown of glory, but the crown of England' (MEI 161). In this coincidence of the interests of Church and State is seen an apotheosis of the Law, encouraging ministers of religion to condone the ungodly activities of killing and maiming. But, as Boyd's narrator points out with moving rhetoric, the Law is not the summation of wisdom: '... the death of Socrates, the Crucifixion, the throwing of Christians to the lions were all legal' (MEI 164). A religion which can establish an 'identity between Christianity and war' (MEI 162) is a religion of vengeance, that of the Old Testament, and not the religion of Christ, the rescuer and consoler.

The social dimensions of the argument about religious puritanism are fully acknowledged in the fact that the weight of the case against Pauline Christianity rests partly on a discussion of class values. Emerging for the Irish boy as a complete representative of the middle class who 'boasts that he earns his living' and whose thinking is dominated by the 'bourgeois rule of fair returns' (MEI 89), St. Paul-the-puritan is indicted for making God in his own image of self-satisfied, recriminative, 'Philistine' virtue. Like that of the good bourgeois, or of the anonymous disciple of the New Statesman, Paul's mentality is materialistic, interpreting spiritual gain as reward for effort in something approaching 'sheer commercial calculation' (MEI 89). In sharp contradiction, the Christ of the gospels has inexhaustible riches to squander and unfolds a vision of abundant life to be enjoyed as a gift. Recalling Boyd's personal descriptions of the bright, pleasure-giving religion of his family, the Irish boy outlines in spirited tones a religion whose natural imagery evokes the thought of princely majesty unlocking a treasure-house of dazzling beauty and joy in the world:

... Pauline Christianity was not that of the gospels. One did not need to be a literary critic to see the difference. Christ is the
Second Adam who came to our rescue. He does not want to destroy our pleasures but to restore them to innocence. His first miracle was to turn water, not merely into wine but into very good wine. He hardly makes one exact theological statement. He teaches people how to feel, not how to think .... He says: 'Consider the lilies.' All his images are taken from the natural world. He loves children .... He says nothing about the obligation of earning one's living, knowing that the idle may love God, and there is no suggestion that he did a day's work in his life. He allowed a woman to pour expensive scent on his feet, and he wore a seamless garment. He had no respect for ecclesiastical authority - in fact, a violent contempt. He did not bother to answer God's high priest .... He is not only the Prince of Heaven, but in his humanity also a prince, debonair, courteous, contemptuous only of the pompous and the cruel, and compassionate for the truly poor, the afflicted and distressed.29

MEI 86-87.

The passage reads like a key statement and has not gone unnoticed in Boyd criticism. Anthony Bradley, in an article entitled 'The Structure of Ideas Underlying Martin Boyd's Fiction,' has pointed to 'an idea which constantly impinges on readers of Boyd - 'that of the "gentleman" or the "aristocrat" .... verging in meaning towards that other term he is so fond of using, "the civilized man"' - and observed its central place in Much Else in Italy in the book's interpretation of the personality of Christ as a 'natural aristocrat, inevitably misunderstood by the bourgeois Paul.'30 Indeed, as Much Else in Italy presents the case, Christ is the paradigm of all social behaviour whose single message is not his death, as Paul would have it, but his radiant, pleasure-loving life.

Appropriately, an important element in the argumentative structure of Much Else in Italy is the questioning of the raiment of suffering in which the Christian church tends to clothe its god. The Irish boy is offended by the artistic emphasis on the mood of the Passion and in his search for the 'face of Christ' (MEI 74) refuses to allow any diminishment of the lesson of beauty taken from the Etruscan and Greek Apollos. His mentor agrees:

The challenge is from heavenly beauty, not from disease and death, and our courage shows in how we respond to the magnificence of the Supreme Êôos and his glorious Son in human flesh, in how we try to distinguish his beauty and save it from the injuries it has suffered, not to gloat over the injuries, the blood, the wounds, and the nails.

MEI 75.
While exposing the theological contradiction of a shamed and defeated god, however, the narrator is careful to point out the compassionate aspect of a religion of sorrow, a fact brought home to the pilgrims by a deaf and dumb child who, in visiting the chapel of the True Cross where relics of the Passion are venerated, derives obvious solace from the communal recognition of his sadness these images express. On similar grounds, the self-flagellating St. Catherine of Siena - described by the Irish boy as 'a victim of S. Paul' (MEI 104) - is excused in spite of her penitential excesses. Hers was, after all, an age of suffering. Boyd's position is not unlike that of Matthew Arnold in 'Pagan and Medieval Religious Sentiment' (1864) when he offers a rationale for the sorrowful religion of the Middle Ages in terms of its powers to console the 'heart and imagination':

It is natural that man should take pleasure in his senses. But it is natural, also, that he should take refuge in his heart and imagination from his misery. And when one thinks what human life is for the vast majority of mankind, how little of a feast for their senses it can possibly be, one understands the charm for them of a refuge offered in the heart and imagination. Above all, when one thinks what human life was in the Middle Ages, one understands the charm of such a refuge.31

However, more than Arnold perhaps, Boyd is unwilling to elevate this need for comfort into a religious principle justifying the worship of sorrow. Pater comes to mind in this regard with his criticism of the 'exaggerated inwardness' of the Middle Ages as a poor replacement for the 'victorious fairness' of Greek art where 'the spiritual motive,32 not 'struggling to express thoughts beyond itself'33 rather 'saturates and is identical with' its own 'sensuous form.',34 Arnold himself, having argued the virtues of a religion of sorrow, does not cease his applause for the Greek 'religion of pleasure'35 and ends in praise of the balanced religious and intellectual imagination of the age which produced Oedipus Rex. Boyd's argument uses the same Arnoldian and Paterian terms of an antagonism between Classical and medieval art.

Designedly, the Gothic church of S. Maria Sopra Minerva where the tomb of St. Catherine is found, seems to Boyd's cultural pilgrims
to stifle the Greek spirit: 'The temple of Pallas-Athene, of Hellenic wisdom, is crushed below its foundations' (MEI 102).

This causes the narrator to reflect at length on the rival religions, medieval and pagan, which have for him the added significance of belonging to the European north and south. The northern religion is medieval and extreme, epitomized by 'the pointed arch, the piercing spires reaching away from this earth in aspirations which distort our natural lives' (MEI 103). The southern religion is pagan and moderate: 'The round arches of the south enclose and protect our human lives, and keep us in scale with our surroundings' (MEI 103).

Even the superlative loveliness of the Gothic style of Sainte-Chapelle in Paris reminds us that it 'was built to house a relic of Christ's torture.' It is a denial of Boyd's religion of life:

The beauty of its pointed arches pierces the heart, and it is a place where men might want to go to die in an ecstasy of anguish, to press thorns into their own breasts, rather than to live happily praising God in his natural creation, illuminated by the innocence of his Son.

MEI 103.

The preservation of Classical elements in the architecture of the primitive church speaks of an entirely different religious spirit, at peace with itself and the world.

CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION IN THE CLASSICAL MOULD

In discovering the 'innocent churches,' where 'the early Christian light does not seem ... to dispel the Greek sunlight but to include it as the pagan columns are included in S. Giorgio' (MEI 63) and where hymns to the light were sung, 36 the Irish boy is relieved that Christianity does not demand the relinquishment of the Classical vision:

In these early centuries the Irish boy found the Christian story easy to accept, for, after all, it was only light that he was seeking; and the serene light in which those people lived, like that described in Marius during the minor peace of the Church, seemed to him to have retained something of the light which shone from the head of the Apollo of Tevere. The innocent confidence of those early hymns, their freedom from strained emotion, is in itself evidence that they were written by people in whom the
Similarly appreciative of the 'moderation' of the Christian church during its early triumph, Pater writes in *Marius the Epicurean*:

... the church of the 'Minor Peace' had adopted many of the graces of pagan feeling and pagan custom; as being indeed a living creature, taking up, transforming, accommodating still more closely to the human heart what of right belonged to it ...[^37]

Reflecting his stress in *The Renaissance* on 'Hellenism' as a shaping impulse, 'a conscious tradition',[^38] of Western culture, Pater adds: 'As if in anticipation of the sixteenth century, the church was becoming "humanistic," in an earlier and unimpeachable Renaissance.'[^39]

Like Pater, Boyd makes the logical link between an appreciation of Greek civilization, the retentive Classicism of the early Christian church and Renaissance art, introducing the topic as a preparation for the discovery of the third face in the christ of Michelangelo's *Pieta*.

In the chapter entitled 'Three Pictures,' describing a visit to the Borghese Gallery, the narrator and his companion admire paintings by Renaissance artists - Correggio, Bassano and Caravaggio - for their praise of the flesh and suggestion of evil defeated. Boyd's representative sceptic and modern cultural delinquent is also there, confused in his attempt to measure Caravaggio by 'the jigsaw puzzles of Picasso' (MEI 77). Boyd's dislike of the distortive forms of contemporary art[^40] leads him to suggest a link between Gothicism and modernism. The followers of Picasso (the narrator argues), who present a misshapen image of the human face, 'are so completely sterile that when they want to shock they have to copy the degenerate nightmares of Bosch and Grünwald painted at a time when the evil in the Gothic world had turned the flame of its aspiration into foul smoke, and Apollo had not yet risen again from the Tiber' (MEI 79). Boyd's essentially pre-modern outlook produces an argument against modernism whose terms are those of the Victorian Olympus. Basically it evokes Pater's vision, its imagery unchanged, of a possible revivification of Western cultural life through a return to the Classicism of the Renaissance. Pater writes for the Victorians:

*Filled as our culture is with the classical spirit, we can hardly imagine how deeply the human mind was moved, when, at the*
Renaissance, in the midst of a frozen world, the buried fire of ancient art rose up from under the soil.... On a sudden the imagination feels itself free. How facile and direct, it seems to say, is the life of the senses and the understanding, when once we have apprehended it! Here, surely, is that more liberal mode of life we have been seeking so long, so near to us all the while. How mistaken and roundabout have been our efforts to reach it by mystic passion, and monastic reverie; how they have deflowered the flesh; how little have they really emancipated us!41

To the Victorians, immersed in the atmosphere of corroding belief yet puritanical in their mores, the need to have recourse to the concept of a liberating Renaissance was a real one. What is surprising is Boyd's appeal to nineteenth-century ideas, the closeness of attitude that exists between the cultural views of Pater and the argumentative thrust of Much Else in Italy.

Moreover, there is an even more radical rejection of the twentieth century evident in Boyd's return to a view of society and the individual which is essentially Romantic, ahistorical and dependent on an Idealist notion of a transcendent, eternal spirit governing natural processes. Shelley, in his fragmentary essay 'On Love,' describes the essence of man as the 'ideal prototype,' 'a mirror whose surface reflects only the forms of purity and brightness' and to which 'we eagerly refer all sensations, thirsting that they should resemble or correspond with it.'42 Likewise Boyd in Much Else in Italy outlines a pilgrimage whose goal is the 'Perfect Drawing' (MEI 6)—an image 'of everything excellent or lovely that we are capable of conceiving as belonging to the nature of man.'43 Flaunting his disdain for the view expressed by his au fait character, the man with the New Statesman, that 'you must reflect the spirit of your age' (MEI 101), he very deliberately presses the case for a sub specie aeternitatis standpoint in cultural and artistic evaluation, a position which he identifies as his own in Day of My Delight:

In the art of every civilization - Chinese, Greek, medieval, Renascence, down to the French Impressionists - there is a common element of beauty, which is denied by the majority of modern painters. To them it is 'tiresome romanticism' as it is to the teachers and writers. They refuse to be present in all ages and are marooned on an infinitesimal island of time.

DD. 287.

In a somewhat reactionary rejection of the post-Hegelian acceptance of the processes of history, Boyd holds that true judgement is unconditional, taking its standard from an unchanging absolute. Thus
the narrator of Much Else in Italy comments: 'As for the spirit of our age, every age is doomed. Here in Rome nothing is more evident. What we have to reflect is the Perfect Drawing of ourselves, conceived in the heart of the Supreme Nous' (MEI 101).

ETERNAL VALUES AND THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE

On approaching the flower of the medieval church, St. Francis - given equal treatment with St. Paul as a representative of Christianity - Boyd concocts a debate which hinges on this issue of eternal values. The narrator's role in this debate is to show how an individual may take what belongs to his age and transform it through conformity to 'the Perfect Drawing,' the divine design for man. On this occasion, the narrator's antagonist is the Irish boy who has to struggle to see past austere elements of medievalism woven into the story of St. Francis. Both agree that, through his innocence, simplicity and gladness of heart, St. Francis corresponded closely to the example of Christ. Unlike St. Paul, he breathed naturally the atmosphere of aristocratic culture, borrowing from the 'ideas of chivalry' (MEI 151) to create a code of princely behaviour in which money and public opinion count for nothing. Above all, he drew from the divine source a sense of harmony with created things. However, the Irish boy is not altogether content with this interpretation, unconvinced that the ascetic in St. Francis allowed the lover of this world complete freedom of expression. St. Francis naked in the public square may bring to mind Blake's visual and poetic celebration of natural man, but St. Francis encouraging his friars in absurd penitential gestures manifests the excesses of puritanism.

The case for has to concede that St. Francis appeared 'to agree with S. Paul, rather than Blake, that: "We are made as the filth of the world, and are the off-scouring of all things"' (MEI 147-48). Blake's vision of the divine as tangible presence united to the body of man is suited to the message of the Incarnation and outshines the contradictory parable offered by St. Francis' fulfilment of the monastic ideal. Explaining the adverse impact the St. Francis legend makes on the Irish boy who had expected a great deal, having heard that the saint 'had a great love of nature, composing hymns to the sun and to all creation, and in this combined the Greek and the Christian stories' (MEI 140), the narrator elaborates a suggestively symbolic detail of their visit to Assisi:
... we were taken into a sacristy to see some relics of St. Francis, among them his habit, like a piece of old sacking - a patched, poor, and dreadful garment for a human body, which, according to Blake, is the phenomenon of love:

For Mercy has a human heart,
Pity, a human face;
And Love, the human form divine,
And Peace, the human dress.

The Irish boy stared at it for a while, and then said: 'But Christ had a seamless garment, too beautiful to be divided.'

MEI 143.

Against an outburst of revulsion on the part of the young acolyte, stunned by the evidence of manicheanism in the life of 'the man who most nearly reflected the Perfect Drawing' (MEI 144), the Irish boy's guide and mentor is compelled to enunciate the meaning of the cross.

As the narrator argues the case, the real significance of the cross is love - even in the Blakean terms which the Irish boy seeks - not sorrow or punishment or penance. The penitential excesses of the saint were due to the fact that he lived in an even worse period than that of St. Catherine, 'in a world so used to extremes of brutality, greed and lust that only extremes of renunciation could be noticed' (MEI 150). In this context, he had no choice but to use the crucifix, the violent symbol of evil overcome in non-violent surrender, to express his belief in the law of innocence, the law which proclaims that conformity of flesh to the spirit has the nature of divinity and cannot be obscured. This is the full Christian message: 'As Christ showed us how to live in innocence - to which we have most regard - he also showed us how to die in innocence, like the ermine refusing to plunge into the mud' (MEI 153). Anticipating the revelation of the third face, Boyd's picture of a noble and proud spirit, confident to the point of choosing suffering, seeks to show that the triumph of perfection is in the enduring of evil:

The greatest theological lie, the one that more than any other is likely to send the Irish boy back to Paestum, is that evil, misfortune, and cruelty can proceed from God, who is the sum of all good, revealed in his Son, who on this earth did nothing but good, shedding pleasure and kindness
and healing wherever he went ....

MEI 145.

St. Francis was able to penetrate this truth, so that ultimately his ascetical abandonment of self was not contempt for the natural world but imitation of a divine tenderness towards creation.

The meaning of the cross is given more pointed illustration in the image of the third face, that of the Christ of Michelangelo's Pietà, presented as the culmination of the Irish boy's search for an ideal of humanity:

The Apollo of Veii showed him animal well-being, which is the necessary foundation of life. The Apollo of Tevere showed him serenity of mind; but until now he had been unable to find the Face of incarnate innocence, of redeeming love, which superimposed on the others completes the Perfect Drawing.

MEI 125-26.

Advisedly, accommodating the stress away from a religion of pain, the image Boyd chooses to illustrate the completion of the spiritual ascent is not the popular symbol of the crucifix but that of the Pietà: the suffering redeemer released from the cross. By this change of emphasis in the traditional presentation of the act of redemption, Boyd puts the idea of sacrifice into perspective as a logical outcome of love. In the Pietà the image of death and sorrow, still present, is mitigated by signs of restored beauty and serenity. The narrator comments that the Christ Michelangelo portrays 'might easily be asleep':

It is not a face that we pity as that of a little, weak, ugly, tortured man, but worship as that of the unconquered Prince of Heaven .... It is the face which stupid and perverted men, lost to the devils of the Third Temptation and cowards in the face of beauty, have tried to show as their own, the hideous victim, the blackmailing governess, but which has here escaped. It is the face of the ermine, slightly disdainful, which would not jump into the mud and so has been slain. Yet it is infinitely kind. It is the kingly head of Gerhardt's hymn:

Can death thy bloom deflower?
O countenance whose splendour
The hosts of heaven adore.

Here is the Perfect Drawing, the beauty long desired ....

MEI 127.
Once again, Boyd associates the aristocratic and the divine. Confidently possessed of authority, Christ is 'the unconquered Prince of Heaven' whose benevolence led him to change 'water into good wine; who with tolerant indulgence forgave the harlot; who told wise ironic parables; who did not think God's high priest worth answering; but blessed the putti, and told the thief he would be that night in Paradise' (MEI 127) and who ultimately proved that death had no power over him.

**THE HELLENIC CHRIST**

With the vision of quiet triumph Boyd finds expressed in Michelangelo's sculpture, the argument returns to the idea introduced at the beginning of the book of a correspondence between the redeemer of Christian myth and the Greek Apollo. Like the statue of Christ in S. Maria Sopra Minerva, in which the Renaissance artist 'tried to combine the two stories' (MEI 102), the beauty of Christ's countenance in the *Pieta* rivals that of an Apollo, returning to the mood of 'early pictures of Christ' which 'were of his youthful beauty, Apollo redeemed contained within himself, the rays shining from his head, so that he was praised as the Light ...' (MEI 126). Boyd's commentator points out that authorities on Christ's appearance are divided. The scholars Irenaeus, Justinian and Tertullian say that the historical Jesus 'was weak and ugly' (MEI 126). The saints, Jerome and Basil say that 'he was beautiful' (MEI 126). The narrator himself sees an aesthetic imperative in the countenance of the redeemer. Christ must be beautiful: 'If it were not so the Incarnation would have no meaning' (MEI 126). This argument reveals unambiguously the ultimately aesthetic temper of the Christianity offered by Boyd in Much Else in Italy. In Boyd's experimental theology, the Incarnation fulfils the promise of beauty in the world. Incarnate God is beauty, ideal beauty manifest in human flesh. He is self-expressive light, candid to the intuitive eye, 'more clearly apprehended by the artist and the saint than the theologian,' who interprets the bible at the level of 'limited intellect' (MEI 129).

In his presentation of a spiritual search marked by experiences of sculpture and culminating in the revelation of the face of beauty, Boyd is close to the neoPlatonism of Pater's pilgrim, Marius, whose
apprehension of Christian values is in the realm of an exquisitely developed aesthetic response. Affirming the continuity between Marius' apprehension of the surpassing beauty of Christian life in the house of Cecilia and his earlier insight into Platonic thought in the house of a literary friend, Pater comments: 'It was still, indeed, according to the unchangeable law of his temperament, to the eye, to the visual faculty of mind, that those experiences appealed.'

Meditating on the work of Apuleius, Marius arrives at an interpretation of Platonism which views the phenomenal world as alive and transparent to the world of spirit. Just as Michelangelo's _Pieta_ represents for Boyd's seekers a twofold reality of noumena and phenomena, so material things appear to Pater's character as vehicles of a spiritual presence:

Certainly, the contemplative philosophy of Plato, with its figurative imagery and apologue, its manifold aesthetic colouring, its measured eloquence, its music for the outward ear, had been, like Plato's old master himself, a two-sided or two-coloured thing. Apuleius was a Platonist: only, for him, the Ideas of Plato were no creatures of logical abstraction, but in very truth informing souls, in every type and variety of sensible things.

For Boyd, as for Pater, the emphasis on visual apprehension appears to have its origin in Plato. The motto from _Phaedrus_ employed at the outset of _Much Else in Italy_ as an appeal for intellectual humility heralds a greater theme of spiritual insight, a matter also treated by Plato in this work. Socrates speaks of the stirrings of aesthetic pleasure in the beauty of this world, when, following in the train of one god or another, the soul apprehends the spiritual world by means of aesthetic vision:

For sight is the keenest mode of perception vouchsafed us through the body; wisdom, indeed, we cannot see thereby--how passionate had been our desire for her, if she had granted us so clear an image of herself to gaze upon - nor yet any other of those beloved objects, save only beauty; for beauty alone this has been ordained, to be most manifest to sense and most lovely of them all.

A more pointed summary of the values expressed in _Much Else in Italy_ is not to be found and, if Boyd did not take his authority for the
idea of the primacy of perceived beauty directly from this passage, as the motto from Phaedrus suggests, he could have taken it indirectly from Marius the Epicurean which was also in his mind during the composition of the book.\textsuperscript{48} (Socrates' elaboration of the ideas of the above passage is referred to by Pater when he mentions that Marius finds the theoretical basis of a young priest's dissertation on the 'diligent promotion of the capacity of the eye' in Plato's Phaedrus.)\textsuperscript{49} Whatever the case, these parallelisms are indicative of a fundamental similarity of mind.

THE PRIMACY OF BEAUTY AS A HISTORICAL IDEA

Boyd's likeness to Pater, in his adoption of Plato's evaluation of the role of beauty in the development of man's spiritual awareness, is a mark of his more general affinity with nineteenth-century aestheticism. Searching for the origins of nineteenth century aesthetic theory in the opening chapter of The Aesthetic Adventure, William Gaunt has observed: 'The source of aesthetic theory is in certain dialogues of the greatest of philosophers, Plato. Plato, in brilliant phrases, with the most profound depth of suggestion, had outlined the independent existence of beauty, independent, that is to say, of truth, edification or usefulness.'\textsuperscript{50} In the light of assessments like these, the search for the face of beauty in Much Else in Italy acquires historical overtones. Indeed a number of elements involved in Boyd's approach to experience show a remarkable similarity to the concerns of aestheticism.

For example, Boyd's thought on the subject of puritanism, presented within the framework of a dichotomy of pagan and Christian values and relying on such specific contrasts as that of a spiritual division between a European north and south has clear affinities with the nineteenth century. However, the essential meeting point between Boyd and the Aesthetic Movement exists in the attention paid to the sensational aspect of experience. Much Else in Italy ends with a glorification of phenomena in the pilgrims' delighted appreciation of the feast of the Assumption - a feast which expresses the Christian belief in the complete redemption of human flesh - as it is celebrated at Santa Margherita-Ligure. Here, the 'two stories' (MEI 180) appear to coalesce in a seamless fabric of spiritual and natural beauty so that what is clear to the outward eye needs no further commentary or explanation. The natural scene itself has the quality of candid
statement: 'Santa Margherita-Ligure was like a painting by Dufy. Everything was blue and fun' (MEI 180). Participating in the richly sensuous life of the fashionable Mediterranean pleasure resort - bathing daily, dining out of doors and walking in what impresses them as an 'Odyssean' (MEI 182) countryside, 'each with his own vine and fig tree' (MEI 181) - the pilgrims believe they have found the conditions of 'the paradise we really long for' (MEI 182). Superlatively (although the slackness of Boyd's writing does not meet his artistic intention), on the evening of the feast the harbour is a spectacle of astonishing beauty:

Almost as far as we could see, beyond the point of Rapallo and away from the mole on our right, the water was shimmering with the soft golden light of thousands of candles, floating in cardboard holders. Men in boats were rowing about lighting more candles and setting them on the water. The effect was indescribably lovely, the most beautiful form of illumination we have ever known.

MEI 183.

The pain the Irish boy feels at the sight of candles submerging in the wake of a yacht carrying the man with the New Statesman in his pocket, is expressive of the idea of a unity of phenomena and noumena Boyd sets out to convey at the conclusion of his narrative. In this perspective, the chief consequence of moral evil appears to be the interruption of sensations of pleasure. However, given the seriousness of tone in the moral debate leading up to the discovery of the face of beauty and to this coda, it is clear that Boyd did not intend to trivialize the question of moral evil but to elevate the role of the senses in man's approach to happiness.

This was precisely the emphasis of nineteenth-century aestheticism, from Ruskin's elaborate attention to 'the visual appearance of things' - cogently argued by Graham Hough in The Last Romantics - wherein the prophet of the industrial age gave 'the pleasures of the eye a metaphysical status they had never enjoyed in England before' through his successful effort - influential for a generation of artists and writers who followed - to 'connect the senses with the moral life,' to the wave of continental influences which stimulated the more extreme forms of sensualism and sensationalism appearing in the work of later aesthetes espousing the cause of l'art pour l'art. For Ruskin, in whose writings - as Raymond Williams has pointed out - beauty is 'virtually interchangeable with Truth,' the attributes and manifold
workings of the Divine Creator were revealed through the perceptions of sense: '... thousands can think for one who can see. To see clearly is poetry, prophecy and religion all in one.' If Ruskin, so conscious of the morality of art and his own didactic mission, could state the case for the cultivation of aesthetic taste so forthrightly, it is not surprising that a younger generation, inclined to look upon Ruskin as a teacher, followed the light of beauty without restraint.

Under the sway of Ruskin's general influence on the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood but individual in his use of Dante and Blake as spiritual and aesthetic mentors, Rossetti made an independent consecration of art to beauty. Pursuing the aesthetic image as his goal in a Dantesque ascent towards an ever intensifying experience of the 'Soul's Beauty' -

By flying hair and fluttering hem, - the beat
Following her daily of thy heart and feet.54

- he fashioned his Beatrice as a desirable woman, a figure of stirring and tangible presence:

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift,
For service meetly worn;
Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

...  ...

Surely she leaned o'er me - her hair
Fell all about my face ....
Nothing: the autumn fall of leaves.
The whole year sets apace.55

Through his meticulous word-painting -

Deep in the sun-searched growths the dragon-fly
Hangs like a blue thread loosened from the sky.56

- Rossetti brought to literary art that infusion of bright imagery characteristic of the Pre-Raphaelite vision. Close to painting in its inspiration, the Pre-Raphaelite poetic gave the word a special task to perform in the communication of particularized sensation.
Pater put into words the germ of the emergent aesthetic when in The Renaissance he insisted that qualities of form are to be discovered by a process of induction from particular experiences rather than by deduction from preconceived standards:

Beauty, like all other qualities presented to human experience, is relative; and the definition of it becomes unmeaning and useless in proportion to its abstractness. To define beauty, not in the most abstract but in the most concrete terms possible, to find not its universal formula, but the formula which expresses most adequately this or that special manifestation of it, is the aim of the true student of aesthetics.57

This bias towards the concrete in the discernment of beauty is also evident in Marius the Epicurean. In the spirit of relativism - so natural to the age of science and of empiricist and positivist philosophies for whom Pater wrote - Marius, who has 'a strong apprehension ... of the beauty of the visible things around him,' is impelled by an 'almost exclusive pre-occupation with the aspect of things.' Unmindful of any form of knowledge outside the discrimination of qualities in momentary experiences, the aesthetic hero is 'wholly bent on living in that full stream of refined sensation.'58 In this manner, his religious conversion is the fruit of a perfected sensibility rather than the consequence of moral insight or of the discovery of metaphysical truth.

Still, it is worth noting that in Pater's work (as in Rossetti's) the idea of religion has a natural place59 and is not forced to compete with the cult of sensation, as in later phases of the Aesthetic Movement. And yet Pater himself was a herald of the future, in whose work the invitation to interpret beauty in the most sensuous terms possible was irresistibly voiced, despite its chastened expression after the shocked reception of the first Conclusion to The Renaissance. Early in his career, reviewing Morris' Defence of Guenevere : and Other Poems in luxurious language, Pater lingered fascinatedly over its evocation of strange and exotic experiences:

He has diffused through King Arthur's Tomb the maddening white glare of the sun, and tyranny of the moon, not tender and far-off, but close down - the sorcerer's moon, large and feverish. The colouring is intricate and delirious, as of 'scarlet lilies.' The influence of summer is like a poison in one's blood, with a sudden bewildered sickening of life and all
things. In Galahad: a Mystery, the frost of Christmas night on the chapel stones acts as a strong narcotic: a sudden shrill ringing pierces through the numbness: a voice proclaims that the Grail has gone forth through the great forest. It is in the Blue Closet that this delirium reaches its height with a singular beauty, reserved perhaps for the enjoyment of the few.

A passion of which the outlets are sealed, begets a tension of nerve, in which the sensible world comes to one with a reinforced brilliancy and relief — all redness is turned into blood, all waters into tears.

In his study of Pater, Arthur Symons quotes this passage to compare it with Baudelaire's description of heightened perception under the influence of hashish in 'Les Paradis Artificiels.' The comparison leads him to comment on the obsessive interest in experiential detail common to both writers:

In both, one finds much the same effects given in a different way almost as if a new order of phenomena had absorbed their attention, which became more and more externalised, more exclusively concerned with morbid sensations and with the curiosities of the mind and the senses.

For less patiently philosophic minds than Pater's, in whose open judgement the possibility of reconciling apparent contradictions always remained, acceptance of the reality and autonomy of the phenomenal world entailed a rejection of belief in an otherworldly religion. George Moore, reading Gautier, was captivated by his 'great exaltation of the visible above the invisible':

This plain scorn of a world exemplified in lacerated saints and a crucified Redeemer opened up a prospect of new beliefs and new joys in things and new revolts against all that had come to form part and parcel of the commonality of mankind.

A similar mood of revolt - again owing much to Gautier - dictated Swinburne's nostalgic return to the pagan world for images of a life of the senses more vital than that offered by Christianity. In the Hymn to Proserpine After the Proclamation in Rome of the Christian Faith which, like Marius, recreates a world at a turning point of civilization, Swinburne chose as his poetic persona a pagan on the threshold of the Christian era who regrets the passing of the old order which has caused Christ's virgin mother to take the place of the wonderfully provocative and prodigal Aphrodite:
Not as thine, not as thine was our mother, a blossom of flowering seas,  
Clothed round with the world's desire as with raiment, and fair as the foam.  
And fleeter than kindled fire, and a goddess, and mother of Rome. 
For thine came pale and a maiden, and sister to sorrow; but ours,  
Her deep hair heavily laden with odour and colour of flowers,  
White rose of the rose-white water, a silver splendour, a flame,  
Bent down unto us that besought her, and earth grew sweet with her name. 

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil

- and to see Christ 'play[ing] in ten thousand places':

Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his  
To the Father through the features of men's faces.

Swinburne's 'Apollo with hair, and harpstring of gold' was recast as the lord of Christians -

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume here  
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion  
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

- and Aphrodite gave up her raiment of 'the world's desire' to Mary:

Wild air, world-mothering air,  
Nestling me everywhere ....

I say that we are wound  
With mercy round and round  
As if with air: the same  
Is Mary, more by name.
She, wild web, wondrous robe
Mantles the guilty globe.68

Here the idea of divine grace immanent in nature, communicated
as it is with a sense of immediate and keen appreciation of the
beauty of natural phenomena, is not very distant from Boyd's vision
of Santa Margherita-Ligure on the feast of the Assumption. The
relevance of the Christian response to aestheticism, which Hopkins'
poetry exemplifies, to the approach of Much Else in Italy emerges
with some force when one recognizes how much of the cult of sensation
was capable of being absorbed into a framework of belief in a
transcendent power of spirit in nature.

What happens when the aesthetic temperament is turned towards
religion in a cultural environment which celebrates beauty above
other values is not more clearly demonstrated than in the case of
Wilde. Lord Henry's advice to Dorian Gray, out of which the novel's
theme of hedonistic experience is built ('Live! Live the wonderful
life that is in you! Let nothing be lost upon you. Be always
searching for new sensations'),69 borrowed, as Richard Ellmann
suggests,70 from the Conclusion to The Renaissance, undergoes only
a change of emphasis to become the aesthetic religion of De Profundis.
As the advocate of the 'new Hedonism'71 designed to counter the
masochistic sobriety and self-restraint of the age, Lord Henry
puts forward the simplified Paterian concept of a 'return to the
Hellenic ideal' beyond 'the maladies of medievalism.'72 The story
of Dorian's adventures as he heeds the message 'to give form to
every feeling, expression to every thought, reality to every dream,'73
while remaining until his death immune from the ravages of time and
immoral conduct, explores — with irony and the desire to shock — the
Paterian charge 'to burn always with this hard, gemlike flame'74
in all its implications as a practical guide to life. The retribution
for excess which comes at the end is only a partial recantation of
Wilde's obvious enjoyment in the creation of his character, a Greek
god in late Victorian attire, exempt from the laws which govern
the fates of ordinary mortals.

Dorian Gray is an experiment in sensualism which, like Wilde's
own life, did not prove the hypothesis of 'a new Hedonism' workable.
Another ingredient was needed to effect a perfect result and in
De Profundis Wilde claimed that he had found it in mystical communion
with the soul of matter. Not forgetting his love of physical beauty, he wrote of a new dimension opened out to him by his religious conversion:

Like Gautier I have always been one of those pour qui le monde visible existe. Still, I am conscious now that behind all this Beauty, satisfying though it be, there is some Spirit hidden of which the painted forms and shapes are but modes of manifestation, and it is with this Spirit that I desire to become in harmony.75

In the sphere of art it was still the plastic ideal of totally expressive bodily form - explored without heed to restraint in Dorian Gray - that supplied the model for his imaginative apprehension of an artistic integrity which might arise through harmony with the spiritual principle in things:

Truth in Art is the unity of a thing with itself: the outward rendered expressive of the inward: the soul made incarnate: the body instinct with spirit.76

At this point, unnecessarily perhaps - when one considers the syncretism aimed at by serious minds like Arnold and Pater - Wilde rejects his Hellenism in a passage which is a direct, and rather petulant, contradiction of the view of the Renaissance advanced by Pater in 'Winckelmann': 'Christ's own renaissance,' having produced the wonders of Gothic art, 'was interrupted and spoiled by the dreary classical Renaissance.'77 Wilde attempts a full circle back to Ruskin without, however, forfeiting the idea actually expressed by Pater, that the perfection of art is accomplished through a saturation of sensuous form with spiritual motive.78 Contrarily at this instant, Wilde chooses to find this achievement exclusively in medieval art. The point that needs underlining, however, is that Wilde's approach to religious truth (like Pater's through Marius) retains the aesthetic basis of the original pursuit of sensation: the claims of beauty simply emerge on a different plane.

The idea, present in both writers, of a conformity of inward spirit with outward expression in art and nature alike bears direct resemblance to the notion of noumenon and phenomenon on which Boyd builds his system of values in Much Else in Italy. In each case
there is a desire to reconcile the elements of an apparent dualism in the substance of reality, and this finds its clearest expression in Marius' neoPlatonic insight into the life of the senses as an envelope for transcendent presence:

And was not this the true significance of the Platonic doctrine? - a hierarchy of divine beings, associating themselves with particular things and places, for the purpose of mediating between God and man - man, who does but need due attention on his part to become aware of his celestial company, feeling the air about him, thick as motes in the sunbeam, for the glance of sympathetic intelligence he casts through it. 79

In Pater and Wilde, and in Martin Boyd as well, the appeal to the idea of a noumenal reality sustaining phenomenal appearances is the ultimate apologia for the pursuit of sensible beauty as the primary goal of life. This correspondence with aesthetic philosophy at the heart of Much Else in Italy points to a more central affinity with the Aesthetic Movement than is suggested by, for example, the thematic links with the Victorian cultural debate about Hebraic and Hellenic values. It reveals Boyd as a man out of his time whose theory of life and art is overwhelmingly shaped by nineteenth-century ideals - something which would be a matter for surprise if it were not for the suggestive evidence of Boyd's early formative background. Boyd might have said with Brennan: 'Beauty is the occasion, object and symbol of a thoroughly satisfying total experience, a harmonious mood of our real self, a mood which is a figure of the final harmony and perfection.' 80 It remains to discover the manner in which the aestheticism of Boyd at its most theoretical is reflected in the vision and technique of the novels themselves.

CRITICAL BEARINGS

The claim of the present thesis to a degree of novelty in its approach to Boyd should not obscure the fact that critical opinion has been ready to acknowledge and define many of the values in Boyd's work which are most clearly those of an aesthetic temperament and philosophy. The importance of pleasure and, to a lesser extent, beauty in the scheme of Boyd's fictional universe has been a constant theme and critics, penetrating to the heart of the novelist's
political and social vision, have been quick to point out the special evaluation given to the mores of a disappearing genteel class. The fact that Boyd's autobiographies stress the personal and family influences in the formation of his beliefs may explain why critics have not been led to comment on the historical mould into which an idiosyncratic vision was fittingly accommodated, namely that of late Victorian aestheticism with its own dramatic evaluation of the place of beauty and pleasure in life.

A critic most eager to stress the historical and social background of Boyd's choice of a theme of 'aspiration and its fulfilment' is G.A. Wilkes who makes the perceptive observation that the early Anglo-Australian novel, The Montforts, is significant for Boyd, in his development as a writer of fiction, because he discovers here the social class and the historical period with which his most distinctive novels are to deal. The social group is that vanishing aristocracy for whom the means of subsistence are automatically provided, whose living is therefore exclusively social and intellectual, and whose assumption is that life is to be enjoyed.

The novel covers the period from the pre-gold rush years to the years after the First World War but Wilkes justly pinpoints the key phase to receive 'the most generous treatment' as 'the period of the 1890s in Melbourne, extending to the eve of the First World War .... the period that Boyd's later novels will recall so vividly.' However, Wilkes does not examine the period closely to see what the novelist took from it and his conclusion is simply that Boyd 'invested the family saga with the artistry of the novel of manners,' arguing a likeness to Jane Austen in the way the Langton novels 'recapture their period with such an alertness to social nuance.'

One implication of the discussion of the present thesis is that Boyd's preoccupation with the turn of the century reflects a deeper purpose than that of recreating a historical atmosphere. In highlighting this period in his explorations of the past, Boyd consciously highlights specific values he finds enshrined in its way of life. Where criticism has investigated Boyd's social and political themes it has invariably arrived at an appreciation of the significance Boyd invests in the aristocracy above the middle class as a social vehicle for the ethic of pleasure. While critics have reflected on the stylishness and wit of Boyd in pursuing an 'aristocratic form of
no one has remarked on the sympathy Boyd shows, in the creation of a number of aesthetic young men in his novels, with the fin de siècle attitude exemplified by Wilde in his aphoristic quipping at the Victorian bourgeois: 'There is something tragic about the enormous number of young men there are in England at the present moment who start life with perfect profiles, and end by adopting some useful profession.' Nor has a comment been made on the more serious relationship between Boyd's criticism of the bourgeoisie and Matthew Arnold's attack on puritan culture, a frame of mind which provides the substance of Wilde's witticisms, if not their brittle texture, and may have fed the flame of Boyd's own talent for humorous invective through the same process of historical influence. The charm of Boyd is that he is able to expose the spuriousness and inadequacy of certain elements in society with the serious purpose of an analyst of cultural conditions like the Arnoldian Francis Adams and yet to perform the task with a sense of sport. As Geoffrey Dutton remarks of his treatment in The Cardboard Crown of civilization in the colonial setting:

Boyd is one of the few writers able to show that civilization has something worse than ignorance to fight, it has to repel the smirking advances of provincial gentility. 'Walter's girls had that provincial refinement which considers le monde qui s'amuse vulgar, like University people and New Zealanders.' Would that Australian literature contained more such waspish comments!

One issue which has at times dominated discussion of Boyd's work has been the question of his handling of a division of scenes in his novels between Europe and Australia. Critics have asked whether the writer's consciousness of having inherited a double tradition, European and Australian, has been a handicap or a source of enrichment to his fiction. Argument has been heated on occasion and while most critics have accepted Boyd's own interpretation of his 'complex fate' as an advantage to the writer in his need to draw on a store of impressions and experiences, uncertainty still surrounds the issue of the way in which Boyd actually manages to exploit his rich resources in his writing. My own suggestion in this thesis is that the Europe-Australia pattern in the novels is a fascinating version of the Victorian use of the theme of Gothic and Classic - sometimes attached to a geographical image of North and South.
to express complementary, or at times opposed, cultural ideals. As Boyd himself remarked: 'My inner division, if I have one, is the age-long one of the European, between the Mediterranean and the north, the Classic and Gothic worlds' (DD 239).

Critics on the whole agree that Boyd's fictional work is shaped by a discernible philosophy, although the system of beliefs and values underlying particular novels has not been thoroughly examined and placed in historical perspective. G.A. Wilkes, commenting on Love Gods, Boyd's first published novel, links it with "the "novel of ideas" as written by the early Huxley." The same propensity for injecting conceptual argument into the presentation of character and event has been noted by critics as a tendency of Boyd's throughout his writing career - sometimes successfully managed, at other times detrimental to the illusion of reality on which art depends. It is perhaps surprising then, in the case of a novelist fired by intellectual argument, that the most striking contribution to an understanding of his work has been made by critics who have chosen to investigate his special craft of fiction, to concentrate on technique before thematic content. Brian Elliott has suggested a quality of Paterian 'style' in Boyd's writing. Chris Wallace-Crabbe has argued for a Proustian richness in Boyd's evocation of the past. Leonie Kramer, in an article which appraised the complex narrative design of the later novels, pointed to the impressionistic quality of Boyd's treatment of 'character seen in a certain kind of perspective,' and gave further attention to the special technique of the novels in her article for the Martin Boyd special number of Southerly, where the 'exactness' of Boyd's appeal to the analogy of impressionist painting was pressed - a judgement reaffirmed by F. Wallace, when he claimed that 'Boyd's literary style is similar to that of the painting style of the French Impressionists.' W.S. Ramson illuminated the cast of Boyd's imagination in the context of revealing the poetic texture of Lucinda Brayford - a texture in which social analysis is absorbed into aesthetic preoccupations - and a useful avenue of comparative study has been recently opened out by Warwick Gould examining the structure of The Cardboard Crown and A Difficult Young Man alongside that of the 'highly wrought' form of Ford Madox Ford's Good Soldier. The awareness such approaches display of the basic aestheticism of Boyd's art has not yet been brought out into the open for proper acknowledgement, however. It is the aim
of the present study to focus specifically on the issue of Boyd's aesthetic vision and finally to examine in some detail a related matter, Boyd's 'impressionist' technique.

The discussion of Boyd's fictional work in subsequent chapters will begin with a description of the aesthetic preoccupations which dominate the early writing. It will proceed to consider Boyd's mature novels in the same light, before turning to the question of his treatment of suffering. Chapters concerned with Boyd's presentation of an ethic of pleasure will examine such fundamental themes as the conflict between puritanical and pleasure-loving characters, the dualism of North and South, 'Gothic' and 'Classic' conditions of culture and the search for fulfilment at different phases of spiritual growth. Those concerned with the problem of evil and pain will scrutinize the way in which a vision of enjoyment is tempered by the recognition of the darker forces of life. Boyd's characteristic traits as a novelist will be analysed to offer evidence of an aesthetic temperament at work in fiction whose occasional lapses into a didactic manner spell the failure of his art. The final chapter will outline the features of Boyd's distinctive technique of fiction where these are most vividly and suggestively revealed.
III

THE FACE OF PLEASURE
CHAPTER THREE

THE MINOR NOVELS AND A THEME OF PLEASURE

A Fragonard or a Boucher is the most unnatural thing in the world and the loveliest. And Heaven must be like a Watteau.

Love Gods.

Our culture without either the classical or the Christian ingredient would be poor in texture. We are the heirs of both worlds.

Nuns in Jeopardy.

AN AFFAIR OF THE SENSES

Since the preoccupations of Much Else in Italy are those of an intellect and personality responding to ideas and assumptions clearly inherited from a nineteenth-century cultural milieu, it is not surprising to discover that equivalent concerns are also present in Boyd's earliest fiction, which represents an embryonic phase in the novelist's evaluation of received notions about the goodness of the natural world, the importance of beauty and the viability of an ethic of pleasure. These notions managed to survive Boyd's experience as a frontline soldier. Throughout the war, as two books of verse (largely the product of the war years) and the autobiographies disclose, Boyd clung to them for his mental survival. While some soldier-poets, like Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, felt compelled to acknowledge the horror of war, Boyd experienced an opposite desire to affirm the possibility of enjoying a life of health, ease and grace in harmony with the forces of nature. His poems about friends lost in battle are nostalgically idealistic in tone, glorifying the life-in-death of the soldier in the sensuous, Keatsian manner of Rupert Brooke. Reminiscing about her cousin in Time Without Clocks, Joan Lindsay (a younger sister of the Weigall girls whose company Boyd sought in pre-war Melbourne) reveals: 'During the war he had embellished his dugout in France with a large statue of his favourite Dancing Faun, dragging it from one filthy hole to another until forced to abandon it forever in the oozing mud. 1
His final novel in the Langton sequence, *When Blackbirds Sing* (1962), written almost half a century later, presents this attitude in the light of a spiritual heroism through the characterization of the adult Dominic, who rejects his war experience outright as a sin against the Holy Ghost. In the early novels, which tend to pass quickly over the issue of the war - among several set in the war or immediate post-war years, *Dearest Idol* (1929) is a minor exception to this rule - an implicit appeal is made to *fin de siècle* tenets in the priority given by the protagonists to the values of beauty and pleasure. Without the benefit of the very serious frame of reference offered by *When Blackbirds Sing*, the reader of novels like *Love Gods* (1925) or *Brangane, a Memoir* (1926) might be excused for interpreting the concept of a life of pleasure they explore as frivolous, blasé and unrelated to real moral issues. However, in approaching the early fiction, it is only fair to remember that at this stage Boyd is still testing his ideas and his as yet undeveloped capacity as a novelist. The following pages which concern a theme of pleasure in the minor fiction, will examine the prentice novels of the twenties and thirties, together with *Such Pleasure* (1949), a pastiche of *Love Gods* and *Brangane*, and, briefly, *The Tea-Time of Love, The Clarification of Miss Stilby* (1969), Boyd's last-published book, satirical in a slight way of pulp romances and in a class with the light achievement of his early output.

After returning to civilian life in 1919, Boyd was affected by the general loss of human hope which followed the war. The 1920s saw itself as a decade of disillusionment, more unnerving to the generation who survived the war than the war itself. Retrospective studies of the period's literature have tended to confirm the age's self-diagnosis. Reviewing the decade at its close, A.C. Ward commented:

Ward found sociological evidence - acrimonious class conflict, a decay of outward authority and inward discipline, economic defeat,
disaffection with religious orthodoxy, an appetite for speed and change brought about by a revolution in communications, the weakening of marriage and the family and a (hypocritically censored) exploitation of sex in the English and American press - to support Richard Aldington's grieved identification in 'The Eaten Heart' (1929) of the twenties generation as 'the children of despair':

I like the men and women of my age,
I like their hardness,
For though we are a battered and rather bitter set
Still we have faced the facts, we have been pretty honest.
But sitting here brooding over the hard faces,
I wonder if we have not rejected too much,
Making it impossible to break out of our self-prisons ....

Those poems in Boyd's 1920 collection, *Retrospect*, which deal with the post-war experience, illustrate this embittered state of mind. Having left the torture chamber of the trenches, the soldier in the title poem finds himself in an 'asylum,' discontented with his new lot:

For now we walk on asphalt paths again
Down the politely mad suburban street.

R 39.

In 'Temperament,' a figure from the past, like Eliot's Stetson in 'The Burial of the Dead' - 'a man, whom I last year had seen/
Fighting most bloodily and gloriously' - appears in the surreally ordinary setting of a bank. He is between two clerks 'putting half-crowns in a little pile' (R 28). 'Regulars' is similarly disenchanted with a victory won for 'little men who cheat on office stools' (R 21), while 'Dinner Time' expresses the returned soldier's desire to disturb the complacency of a mundane and forgetful peace (R 24).

In his first novels, however, despite their reflection of the brittle, iconoclastic culture of the post-war generation, Boyd dissociates himself from those who, it might be said, 'rejected too much.' The 'disillusion after disillusion',6 mentality of Aldous Huxley's characters, for example, is something Boyd's protagonists may comprehend and at times display but, without exception, the thrust of their lives is towards purpose and meaning. Embarrassing as *Love Gods* was to the novelist in later years -
A Single Flame describes it as 'a frightful book, of which I think now with a shrinking skin .... It was a mixture of 'ninetyish epigrams and eroticism, with a few shameful passages of muddled religious earnestness from which I had not yet entirely cleared my system' (SF 200) - it reflects very clearly the orientation of Boyd's interests, manifest, even at this early stage, in the desire to give a religious blessing to an ethic of pleasure. In fact, its preoccupations look forward to those of Much Else in Italy, although, in character with the heady mood of the twenties themselves, the link with aestheticism is through its most flippant aspects. Fin de siècle in tone because of its dependence on provocative and witty inversions of established values, the novel equally reflects the popular twenties Art Deco movement which owed a great deal to art nouveau but was distinctive in its own rather more showy way.

With its flapper heroines reclining sinuously on daybeds or otherwise cruelly displaying their cold sensuality, Love Gods is period kitsch, like Aleister Crowley's licentious The Diary of a Drug Friend (1922), in which depravati, scarlet ladies and debauched men, are put on the path of a reluctant cure from their vices. Boyd's subjects avoid the shocking. Nevertheless, there is a tendency towards the titillating and erotic, evident for example in the brilliant display, worthy of a Léon Bakst stage setting, of the tableaux which mark the culmination of the hero's pursuit of sensuous experience. In one of these a femme fatale, the protagonist's ex-girlfriend, is arrayed for a 'Birth of Venus,' while in the final arrangement a Russian sculptor's model appears almost naked and surrounded by lavishly costumed figures. Not surprisingly, a seduction follows this scene. This is the ultimate in Boyd decadence in a novel which goes to extremes in depicting extravagant behaviour both in the sphere of hedonistic enjoyment and religious penitence.

The narrative of Love Gods concerns the adventures of Edward Browne, an ex-soldier who in the post-war situation finds that he is still imbued with the carpe diem philosophy which was the result of a life of constant danger:

'To-morrow we die,' and not necessarily tomorrow, but possibly tonight or this afternoon. Who then could be blamed for the eager gratifying of every curiosity, the seeking of every experience, whether of man, or of woman, or of God?
In an early rehearsal of his ideas about the ascetic and the pleasurable, expressed in Much Else in Italy in terms of the Gothic-Classic dichotomy, Boyd shifts the scene rapidly between aesthetically satisfying church services, dingy monasteries, bright outdoor settings - the French Riviera, for example, as 'light-hearted and delicately sentimental as a Conder panel' (LG 276) - and sumptuous, private interiors, where the conversation is smart and people amuse themselves playing 'sardines,' listening to gramophone music or indulging in other frivolous pastimes. The hero, who confesses that 'ever since the war he has been thoroughly dissatisfied' (LG 53), fluctuates between opposing ideals in his search for fulfilment. Looking forward to his treatment of a religious and aesthetic search in Much Else in Italy, Boyd has one factor remain constant for Edward: his desire not to forgo beauty or love. Thus, in what W.S. Gilbert would have called a 'fine Florentine frenzy,' the hero imagines a Benozzo Gozzoli heaven with the Virgin and saints 'wearing rich pre-Raphaelite haloes' (LG 5).

The central idea of Love Gods is the problematical dichotomy of Eros and Agape. Edward's reaction to these alternatives is to try to combine them and the amalgam is personified in his friend, Morag Beaton, who has the glamour and sophisticated persona of a twenties flapper but is, at the same time, a genuinely searching intellectual with the luminous quality of a Pre-Raphaelite heroine. When she is first introduced in the Art Deco setting of her sitting room where cushions are multiplied 'like scattered autumn flowers of every colour, scarlet, jade, orange, mauve' (LG 18), her essential character emerges in a framed verse of Pre-Raphaelite and Swinburnian inspiration she has chosen as a wall ornament:

Mary, vermillion mouth and silver feet,  
Walking alone, alone in the withered wood,  
Cover your breast, draw your delphinium hood!  
Turn from the shadowed hollow. Fly, my sweet!  
Turn the eyes, poor maid, and close the ear!  
There's music quivering, quick to madden the blood.  
Mother of God, do you hear?  
Pan's near?  

LG 18.

The reference to Pan indicates Boyd's desire that divine love should find its proper expression as natural and sensual love.
Edward's views on morality, in particular his sexual ethic, lead him to accept an Incarnationalist rather than an otherworldly religion. To begin with, his interest in religion is 'entirely an affair of the senses' (LG 6), from which he derives aesthetic satisfaction through the ornate rites of Anglo-Catholicism. More serious experimentation with monastic religion through contact with a community whose way of life is based on renunciation and service only helps to confirm Edward's commitment to seeking enjoyment from life, a choice which is given witty justification in a Wildean aphorism: 'Protestantism is aesthetically impossible' (LG 44). An unattractive alternative to religious aestheticism is introduced into the novel through the character Christopher Beaton who, until he experiences a change of heart at the end, is a novice to the religious life. Christopher embodies narrowness of vision; he avoids physical contact for the sake of preserving the purity of his own soul and in general illustrates the perversion of genuine values to which Christianity has arrived. Edward and Morag, who are both infatuated by his youth and god-like beauty, ultimately come to regard him as smugly inhuman. As a 'plaster Saint' (LG 303), he provides an example of extreme puritanism by which a freer morality can be favourably judged.

If, however, Boyd has Edward reject the sterility of religious angelism, he is equally at pains to show his hero surfeiting from a sterile sensuality. At the outset of the novel, Edward emerges as a mediocre and conscience-stricken Dorian Gray, Des Esseintes or d'Albert: the man of sensation 'determined to live with every cell of his brain, every nerve of his body' (LG 6). When he is not prostrate in acts of self-abasement and penance, his pursuit of sensual gratification is concentrated on the Art Deco beauty Priscilla. Boyd's sketch of Priscilla recalls a female type which has its origins in such seminal material as Swinburne's 'Dolores.' At least, Priscilla is a more washed-out Dolores, without the tough Blakean overtones of Swinburne's lady: 'Priscilla drooped on a sofa near the window. Everything about her was soft and drooping, her mouth, her slight figure, her clothes, but in the expression of her wide grey eyes there was a trace of hardness' (LG 9). Again: 'Her mouth was a flaming rose near his face, her eyes hard and level' (LG 10).

Priscilla represents a fashionable archetype of the period, seized on by writers affected by a mood of callous hedonism. There is the siren of F. Scott Fitzgerald's fiction, for example, seen in Muriel Kane in The Beautiful and Damned (1922)-
Her finger-nails were too long and ornate, polished to a pink and unnatural fever. Her clothes were too tight, too stylish, too vivid, her eyes too roguish, her smile too coy. She was almost pitifully over-emphasized from head to foot.

- or Aleister Crowley's (unintended) caricature of the twenties species of magnetic lady, soiled by her sexual opportunism. Here is Haidée Lamoureux:

She was heavily and clumsily painted. She wore a loose and rather daring evening dress of blue with silver sequins, and a yellow sash spotted with black. Over this she had thrown a cloak of black lace garnished with vermillion tassels. Her hands were deathly thin. There was something obscene in the crookedness of her fingers, which were covered with enormous rings of sapphires and diamonds.

Despite a similar suggestion of coquettish cruelty in Boyd's depiction of the femme fatale, Priscilla emerges as a character whose influence on Edward is by no means entirely destructive. The relationship fulfils an early prognostication when, to cure his passionate obsession with Priscilla, Edward seeks to 'paint this summer night a hectic vermilion' (LG 13) with a casual pick-up. Edward has read Dorian Gray and is seeking in both instances 'the cure of the soul by means of the senses' (LG 14), following advice given to the protagonist of Wilde's novel by Lord Henry: 'To cure the soul by means of the senses, and the senses by means of the soul.'

In a novel which perseveres in a tone of fin de siècle light-heartedness to the end, the dualism implicit in the contrast of characters and in Edward's search, oscillating between religion and sex, resolves itself with the emergence of a relationship which permits the participants liberation of the senses in conjunction with an attitude of (relative) moral seriousness. The novel ends with Edward's discovery that Priscilla and Christopher have played the role of abstract ideals - 'love gods,' in fact. The concluding dialogue of the novel spells out the full message of Love Gods:

God is love, yet love is human, concrete, not ideal. Edward to Morag:

'Priscilla and Christopher, they were just lustful little cupids, you are the real thing.'
'What real thing?'
'Love.'
'What is love?'
'God,' he said and took her hand.
Unlike his contrasting 'love gods,' Priscilla and Christopher, Edward's final partner represents a balance of opposites. Early in the novel, Morag embarks on her own quest for values which, like the protagonist's, brings her into contact with the ideals of ascetic Christianity, although she soon discovers that she is entirely out of her element in the monastic environment of a religious house serving the poor at Bermondsey. While she is intent on carrying out the idea of service preached to her by Edward, Morag cannot help a natural antagonism towards puritanism. Her first appearance among the clergy at Bermondsey in a décolleté dress establishes her role as a disciple of pleasure undermining the assumptions of ascetic religion.

Introducing ideas which, despite their frivolous expression, look forward to the debate of *Much Else in Italy*, Morag chatters at the dinner table to a bemused Vicar:

> I think that people should have two religions, a warm inside church one for the winter, and an out-of-doors pagan one for the summer. One would play in the sun with goat herds on grassy uplands, while white Doric temples and blue sea gleamed down below. It would be fun to be thoroughly natural for a bit, don't you think so?

LG 64.

In an inversion of conventional expectations, it is Morag who turns out to be the successful missionary at Bermondsey through her inadvertent influence on Boggs, a clergyman who, having fallen hopelessly in love with her, urges that she forget good works and remain in the world where she belongs - 'a world where everything is beautiful' (LG 73) - in order to cultivate the loveliness man lacks and needs. Through her lightness of spirit and physical beauty, Morag is the necessary foil to Priscilla in Boyd's presentation of a theme of pleasure.

Justifying G.A. Wilkes' claim that *Love Gods* is a Huxleyan novel of ideas, Boyd employs three distinctly different types of clergymen as mouthpieces for points of view which bear on the novel's discussion of religious values: these are the 'Hellenic,' the puritan and the liberal. Father Grant preaches to some undergraduates at Oxford in terms which are precisely those of *Much Else in Italy*:
You come here from your games, and your adventures of the mind, with something of the grace of Hellenism. The mystery of our supreme Sacrifice has its prototype in the rites of Greece. There was much that was beautiful and true in that ancient paganism, and this we have retained. You come in the clear youthful health of mind and body to offer, with loveliness of sight and sound and smell, sacrifice to God. The accidents of that sacrifice are bread made from the wheat of the fields, and wine from the vineyards. This alone would be the fitting motif for a pure Hellenic frieze.

LG 114.

While Grant preaches an attractive Christianity, he fails in charity and so calls into question his motive in appealing to the Hellenic ideal. Expressing an extreme puritan outlook, Father Canter preaches at a mission retreat on the sins of the flesh and the necessity for suffering, putting a Calvinist stress on the insignificance of good works, while Sabine Beaton, during the same retreat, speaks humanely about the religious conceptions of ordinary people. Against formalism, dogmatism and limits set to truth, this last sermon appeals to the authority of Blake in lines from 'A Vision of the Last Judgment' which repudiate the elevation of asceticism as a value: 'Men are admitted to Heaven, not because they have curbed their passions or have no passions, but because they have cultivated their understanding' (LG 307).11

The Blakean perspective, stressing tolerance and the concept of a perfectible humanity, is the one which throws most light on Edward's, Morag's and ultimately Christopher's decisions to eschew self-renunciation and to enjoy life in a harmonious realization of human potentiality. In this spirit, Love Gods refuses to condemn Edward's early hedonism.

To sum up Boyd's vision in his first novel: the cult of sensation fed by beauty leads eventually to a more refined ethic of pleasure. What is pleasurable to man is his good - however incomplete the experience - and asceticism has, logically, only a temporary role to play on the path to human happiness. Consequently some of the more lively dialogue in Love Gods is that which owes something to fin de siècle aestheticism. There is Morag's flirtation with the extreme views of art for art's sake -

'What is the point of being natural?' asked Edward.
'To experience a new sensation,' said Morag.
'But it wouldn't be nice. It's much better to be
unnatural. A Fragonard or a Boucher is the most unnatural thing in the world and the loveliest. And Heaven must be like a Watteau'

LG 65.

- or Edward's attempt to convince a friend of the primacy of art over nature:

You have been to a beautiful church and have come back Popish. Morag and I have been to a hideous one and have come back Agnostic. I believe that you could convert the world to anything by creating an attractive atmosphere ....

LG 282.

Comments of this kind remain the real stuff of the novel, however modified the aesthetic point of view at the end. Without actually mentioning it, Love Gods offers a light and witty gloss on the Magdalenian text: 'But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.'

The preoccupation with beauty and pleasure reappears in Boyd's second novel, Brangane, A Memoir, published in 1926 - a year after Love Gods. Entitled The Aristocrat, A Memoir for American publication, Brangane explores the possibilities for fulfilment existing with the privileges of wealth and rank. The protagonist is a déclassée woman who moves upwards, socially and economically, on the wheel of fortune. Having gained material security, if not impeccable social respectability, Brangane attempts to live her conception of an aristocratic way of life but finds that the substance of it eludes her. Ironically, it is her possession in the poor circumstances of her childhood, when her aesthetic appreciation of such beauty as she can create in her surroundings is intense. As a child, Brangane has the capacity to derive spontaneous pleasure from transient aesthetic effects: 'The little girl dumped her bundle and unrolled it. The sunlight caught and played with a rich square of yellow brocade, and the soft white lace and muslin of a frock' (B6). A genuine aesthete, she makes up for the absence of beauty in her life by the invention of a rite which can supply the ingredients of a pleasurable experience:

On a worm-eaten deal table she had stretched a square of green silk. It held a book, a bottle of cheap violet scent, and a cracked, but clean, glass vase of
She loved marigolds with their stiff stalks, their pungent smell, and their faces like small suns.

Boyd's treatment of Brangane as a child is mildly reminiscent of George Eliot's portrait, in the opening chapters of The Mill on the Floss, of Maggie Tulliver, a little girl of strong imagination but also a victim of limiting circumstances. George Eliot's solution for Maggie is the sober and puritanical Victorian one of self-renunciation. Boyd's answer for Brangane in similar circumstances is that of the aesthetes: to cultivate an attitude to life based on self-indulgence. Maggie draws inspiration from her sense of identity with natural processes and her reading of a Kempis. Brangane has an instinct for Bokhara and Chippendale. Her visions feed on allusion and nuance, encouraged by her bower-bird habits of drawing into her vicinity everything that glitters. She has in her possession a copy of Baudelaire's poems from which she derives an almost decadent thrill in spite of the fact that she cannot read French. Turning to religious ritual to satisfy her sense of dignity and appetite for beauty - 'She loved the clean surplices, the chants, the slight pomp. Here was the ceremony which was lacking in her home' (B 18) - she attracts the attention of the vicar's son who imagines her as 'the lovely daughter of King Cophetua and the beggar maid' (B 19). This is a triumph for Brangane, the artist in life on a miniature scale. We could say of her at this moment what is said of Dorian Gray by Henry Wotton: 'Life has been your art. You have set yourself to music. Your days are sonnets.'

The aesthete in Brangane suffers a temporary setback when she marries a rustic, Adam Bede character, Alfred Parsons the baker, but Alfred's death gives her the opportunity to enter a new path which becomes 'the child's game of the hayloft at a more advanced stage' (B 53). At this point she meets the antithesis of Alfred Parsons in Sir Matthew Swaine of whom 'one felt that his bath would be mixed as carefully as a cocktail' (B 64). Swaine, whose conversation is of art and beauty and who might be a possible soul-mate for Brangane, is a disappointment, however, and the heroine suffers a feeling of diminishment when she discovers the extent of his unscrupulousness both in business and personal relations. Through Swaine, whose philosophy is Wildean - 'Beauty is never useful. It is always enjoyable' (B 69) - Boyd illustrates the inadequacy of an untempered hedonism.
In a less pronounced way than Love Gods, Brangane makes use of contrasting characters to suggest possible avenues of development for its protagonist. Boyd's tendency to categorize experience in terms of the Gothic-Classic dualism comes to the fore once again but here it is manifest as a symbolic shorthand applied in the names of minor characters, the heroine's children, Bernard and Diana, and her friends, Angela and Daphne. Diana and Daphne represent the pleasure ethic untainted by snobbery, while Bernard and Angela stand for the possibility of vicarious suffering, one in the secular context of war, the other in the personal sphere of religious piety. Unlike Love Gods which fails to address the issue of the war, Brangane introduces a quick portrait, a sepia snapshot, of a soldier-poet in the characterization of Bernard 'Sussex' (reminiscent of Rupert Brooke, or, because of the protest letters he writes home, the more radical Wilfred Owen), who dies of wounds, leaving behind 'a host of spiritual descendants and worshippers, which included ninety percent of English-speaking aesthetes between the ages of seventeen and twenty-two' (B 193). Bernard functions in the novel to deepen our sense of the seriousness of the heroine's search for integrity. At the same time, too much depends on a slightly sketched contrast of attitudes shown in the bitterness of the protesting soldier and the hysterical patriotism of Lady Daphne who, while remaining a vehicle for the theme of a vigorous and uninhibited enjoyment of life, also illustrates the inadequacy of the aristocracy when its values are untried. A sounder, more carefully articulated contrast of moral stances is achieved in Boyd's presentation of a similar set of relationships (Lucinda-Stephen - Paul) in Lucinda Brayford.

After the death of her son, Brangane regains the aristocratic position she believes is her right by marrying a Lord Pulborough. Through this action she acquires a country house and a dubious social passport - the setting for a more abundant life without its substance. The marriage is laughable and Brangane's social pretensions lead her to farcical extremes. It is in these circumstances that she begins to become selfconscious about what it is she really desires and profits from a relationship with Basil, a youth who reintroduces her to innocent enjoyment of life. In his presence she
is conscious of a new emotion inspired by the young man's responsiveness to beauty:

Nothing pleased her more than to have herself or her belongings admired. Of late she had been wont to regard them simply as proof of her wealth and position. But Basil's enjoyment stirred her old feeling for form and for colour. She became conscious of the charm of the scene, of his natural grace, his attractive youthful face eager with admiration of the beauty in his hands, and the stately room behind him. She felt the pleasure of aesthetic perception.

B 196.

Boyd handles the Brangane-Basil episode awkwardly, however, by suddenly shifting the focus of attention to Basil, who is after all a minor character in the novel, despite his significance for Brangane. He presents Basil in his relationship with Mr Blair, the boy's tutor, who is brought into the story at this stage to advance the progress neither of action nor of character but merely to act as spokesman for a point of view which the author finds necessary to offer on the situation. The technique is clumsy. Nevertheless, to a certain extent, it achieves Boyd's aim of providing an intellectual framework for the process that is taking place in Brangane. Blair's advice to Basil is a mixture of Ruskinian and Paterian themes. Its basic message is the avoidance of 'sterile sins' (B 185). Blair compares the 'potential fecundity' (B 185) of Botticelli's 'Primavera' with Leighton's coy painting of the 'Bath of Psyche.' In his appreciation of the spirit of 'Classic and Renascent art' (B 185), he appears to be on the side of Pater and of later aesthetes reacting against Victorian puritanism and prudery. A moment later he is making the stodgy Victorian complaint that in modern art 'ethical taste is generally divorced from aesthetic taste' (B 186), and the voice of Ruskin can be detected in his disapproval of the merely decorative.

The oblique commentary Blair's ideas make on the Brangane-Basil relationship is also rather uncertain. Morally speaking, Boyd would like a synthesis of aesthetic and puritan values - the aesthetes' free spirit and love of beauty informed by a sense of moral responsibility. This appears as Blair's notion of wholeness, 'of synchronizing spiritual, intellectual, and physical development' (B 201). Boyd is in this novel trying to convey a rather complex moral attitude and it is not surprising that he fails. What he hopes to suggest in the Brangane-Basil episode
is that the relationship is legitimate in terms of what both parties are able to extract from it, but imperfect in its moral dimensions. The pattern is that of Love Gods, where the hero passes from a phase of pleasure-seeking to an appreciation of moral values without actually rejecting his original stand. Thus with a moral caution Basil is dismissed -

He suffered a riot of unbalanced development. His soul ... blossomed at a rate that was injurious to his intellect. His sense of beauty and his sense of his own importance, a bright flower and a weed, flourished luxuriantly intertwined in the hot-house of Brangane's boudoir

- and conveniently removed from the scene while we are left to follow Brangane on her pilgrim's journey towards moral catharsis in the arms of Janet Kewel, a loyal friend from her humble past. On her sick-bed at the end of the novel Brangane dreams a dream. Again a child at the farm, she becomes muddied and her beautiful clothes are ruined. Afterwards, she wakes to a vision of dead marigolds. This is her nightmare of spoilt pleasure. Redemption lies in the rediscovery of her childhood self, a rebirth of innocence in the cradle of experience. The novel, then, describes a progress towards self-knowledge. More thoroughly than Love Gods, which is already moving in this direction, Brangane emphasizes the value of all experience, recommending what amounts to an aesthetic stoicism. The heroine's lesson through suffering is to make the best use of each moment as it passes. Moreover, there is a deliberate open-endedness in the presentation of her situation at the end such that the novel's final message seems to approximate that of Pater in The Renaissance: 'While all melts under our feet, we may well catch at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems, by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange colours, and curious odours, or the work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend.'

In spite of suggestive parallels with the sources of aesthetic inspiration, however, Love Gods and Brangane are very inauspicious beginnings for a novelist who eventually achieved some repute. Too many characters, a muddle of incident and commentary, repetitiveness in plot and dialogue, make them scarcely worth the effort of reading.
The important thing, in a critical and scholarly context, is to sift from the chaff that grain of genuine insight which in the course of time brought increase.

HELENIZING THE GOTHIC

Among the remaining minor novels, all variations on an identical theme of pleasure, Nuns in Jeopardy (1940) - where possibilities for a life of rich sensation are conveyed in gaudy technicolour through many pages of baroque description - invites scrutiny for its underlying theoretic content despite its (deserved) reputation as Boyd's 'most unconvincing book'\(^{15}\). As an allegorical representation of the counter claims of 'Gothic' and 'Hellenic' civilization, it reveals the novelist at his most didactic about pleasure. Without the provisional framework of Much Else in Italy, its symbols proclaim themselves with the forthrightness of a medieval Morality play, incidentally suggesting perspectives on other, more allusive novels where the expository element is less conspicuous and comparable image patterns do their work in a naturalistic context.

Like William Golding in Lord of the Flies (1954),\(^{16}\) Boyd exploits the convention of a Coral Island situation, one which provides a set of test conditions for the study of spontaneous human behaviour. The novel is an experiment in pleasure, placing its characters, through the stock event of a shipwreck, in surroundings of unusual beauty which challenge their original values. Everything that happens to the survivors in their Gauguin paradise (which, with crude irony, turns out to be named 'Hell Island'), contributes to a process of self-knowledge tidily summed up by the leading character at the end of the book when she declares: 'What I have learnt on the island, and what I hope I shall remember, is that it is as easy to be corrupted by one's virtues as by one's vices, and that it is more tragic, because then one turns a little of the good in the world into evil' (NJ 211).

The castaways (some sailors, a child, a group of Anglo-Catholic nuns and a mysterious Mr Smith), fail their idyllic environment, succumbing in some instances to irrational urges, like Golding's schoolboys. But compared with Golding's picture of the human psyche
in fragile balance - according to the model of Freud - Boyd's concept of human nature is optimistic, adding allegorical perspectives to the psychological theme through the dimension of Christian eschatological myth. The novel sets out to pose the following question: does humanity, in its present state of civilization, desire a more satisfying life? With this excuse, it attempts to turn the vision of an exotic Eden into fiction, a rather bold aim and one beyond the range of Boyd's powers in this novel, despite his painter's eye.

Typically, Boyd presents his characters failing the challenge of pleasure in two contrasting ways, through inhibition and through excess. While respecting the inward restraints of a civilized existence - the nun Agatha, for example, one of Boyd's earnest seekers, is protected from an engrossing sensualism by the 'polished stone' of reason, a 'centre of resistance built up through years of discipline .... on which a thousand gossamer webs were caught. It pulled backwards and upwards, drawing all the soft filaments of her desire away from their goal, until she was free ...' (NJ 64) - the novel on the whole suggests the usefulness of the Road of Excess in leading to the Palace of Wisdom. As hinted in the title, Nuns in Jeopardy is a parable about the effect of ideals Boyd habitually includes under the heading of 'Gothic.' Like Much Else in Italy, it dramatizes a Hellenizing of Gothic principles and in the process sets out to represent, in symbolic fashion, nothing less than the history of civilization viewed sub specie aeternitatis. In the imagination of Mr Smith who emerges as a Prospero figure by virtue of the fact that his presence is linked with significant events in a way that seems strangely causal, the Sailor Joe, a representative of ordinary mankind, is endowed with an Orlando-like past in many periods of history: as a Theban slave, a Boeotian peasant, a companion of Jason, a pupil of Socrates, a Roman soldier and a subject of Pepin and Henri Quatre (NJ 135-37).

Because he encourages them to satisfy their most secret and, sometimes, shameful desires, Smith is feared by a number of the castaways. At the same time, he is the most urbane and cultured of the survivors, capable of keeping the child, Marinella, innocently amused and of fulfilling the role of intellectual mentor to the principal nun, Agatha, whose inward development is the chief subject of the novel. At the centre of Boyd's allegory, Smith is neither saviour nor satanic tempter, although at times he may be regarded as
both Christ figure and devil in this earthly paradise. There is a suggestion that he is less a real person than a hallucination of over-excited minds thrust into a new awareness of their individual places in the universal scheme. As his name suggests, Smith is Everyman, or rather the essence of man's nature, man in history seen from the point of view of eternity. The nun's superior, Agatha, remarks: 'He's like a mirror - it's extraordinary' (NJ 168). Next to Smith, Agatha is the most important character in the novel and the one who learns most from him. He confides in her his Prospero-like mission:

It's my fate, my mission in life, my horrible duty to interfere, to trip you up, to injure you, to defile you, to destroy you, so that something that is in you here, which you will not release of your own free will, may finally spread its wings and ascend to God.

NJ 127.

Through the catastrophe which destroys their ship and their subsequent exposure to the peculiar influences of the island, the protagonists undergo a spiritual transformation. From the standpoint of an omniscient witness, the narrative voice comments on the band of survivors in their frail boat:

If an observer could have been poised in the air ... he might have imagined that a flock of souls, half-pagan, half-Christian, was journeying to a paradise in the Islands of the Blest. There was something infinitely lonely about the tiny boat which seemed to express all the pathetic faith of the human soul, journeying uncertainly towards the light through a wide and dangerous world.

NJ 48.

An eschatological interpretation of the suffering of the castaways is underlined by the fact that their early experiences take place near Easter. Two catastrophes figure in the novel: first the shipwreck and later - an event of more apocalyptic dimensions - an earthquake and tidal wave. At the symbolic level, both happenings suggest the intervention of providence in the moral affairs of men, judgement and the need for spiritual rescue. Not surprisingly, in view of the preoccupations of Boyd's work so far discussed, purification comes to the characters of Nuns in Jeopardy through the challenge of
beauty and the possibility of a more complete life.

In this context the chief impediment to progress is a rigid formalism, expressing itself through adherence to the rules and customs of secular and religious society. Boyd sees only deprivation flowing from a law which imposes itself dogmatically from without instead of freely engaging men's hearts. By means of a subplot, concerning a young man's feelings for his fiancée and his different, but equally strong attachment to a male friend, the novel examines the claims of the spirit and the law in relation to marriage. Mr Smith puts the matter in perspective for the self-effacing friend who is afraid of intruding on the socially approved lovers' relationship:

You have the prevalent Western idea that the chief end of man is to get married, and that then they both live happily ever after. Let us play this fairy tale with Dick and Winifred. You give up your claim on him for fear it should interfere with this sacred business of marriage. Assume we are rescued. If we are not rescued their future will be too fantastic for the rules of the civilized game to apply to it. Every day we remain here those rules weaken and give way to a more enduring law.

NJ 138.

The lesson of freedom and 'a more enduring law' is one which applies as much in the religious as the secular context. Towards the end of the novel, Boyd has Smith comment on the limits of orthodoxy, evoking those spiritual forces described in Much Else in Italy as the unpredictable noumena:

'Look at all that water,' he said, 'full of darting phosphorescent light. The spirit has been compared to fire, but I think that it has been compared to water too. The Church now seems to me like someone guarding an antiquated and crumbling aqueduct, through which a little stagnant fluid trickles, while the great bulk of water rushes wildly about the land, eroding mountains, flooding villages, altering the face of the earth. But the guardian of the aqueduct still affirms that he possesses the only existing water supply, and he won't change his opinion, even if the flood washes away his aqueduct.

NJ 213.

The idea of a large spiritual reality beyond the narrow bounds of the conventional religious imagination is behind Boyd's description at the
opening of the novel of Agatha's insecurity at sea: 'Anything as loose and fluid as the sea must bring looseness and fluidity to those associated with it' (NJ 9). One of Agatha's first trials at the hands of Neptune to whose influence Mr Smith attributes her anxiety - 'His higher vibrations produce the great mystics, his lower the extreme of human depravity .... But in all his works is a strange beauty' (NJ 14) - is to know that an island native has seen her in a state of undress, in an incident which presages her future disorientation and that of her fellow religious once they are exposed to the atmosphere of the island.

Led by Sister Agatha, the little band of nuns, who, through their religious profession, invite others to believe they are closest to human perfection, are shown to be in no state to respond to their Edenic surroundings, since their whole mode of life is based on asceticism and renunciation. One of their number, Hilda, an ill-tempered gargoyle on the Gothic façade of their piety, clings to her religious rule as to a false god, confusing a free conscience with evil desire. The nuns are unprepared for the possibilities of an Edenic life because they have not learned freedom or accepted the implications of the Christian promise concerning the restoration of the body. Like Much Else in Italy, Nuns in Jeopardy appeals directly to the Christian myths of the Incarnation and Resurrection in its attempt to convey a sacramentalist view of the physical world. Boyd, who is himself playing Prospero in this novel, wants to make the idea of redeemed and glorified flesh appear more possible, real and immediate by precipitating his characters, unexceptional mundane Christians, into an Eden world overflowing with delight for the senses. Agatha, who is prone to dreams, has a vision of her nuns opening out to new potentialities:

As the flowers and fruit in the garden had achieved their greatest possible size and most vivid colour with an easy splendour of growth that could never occur in the suburban gardens at home, so it seemed that every nerve and gland of these women, every atrophied tract of their brains, was stirring to life to achieve the same fulfilment, the same utter completeness of expression as the huge glossy fruits and the flamboyant hibiscus in the garden.

NJ 102.

With the exception of Smith, who always retains his privileged position vis-à-vis events, and the islander Harry, an innocent child of nature, all the characters in the novel are contradicted in their
sense of priorities and convictions about the ultimate nature of goodness and truth. Two of the sailors, who have only one idea of a woman, are bewildered by the sexual coolness of the nuns. Dick, who accepts the notion that human relationships should not be exclusive, also has to learn that they only flourish in an atmosphere of selflessness. Through his courting of a novice to the religious life he gains some insight into the motive of charity which informs the renunciations of the nun's profession. In these ways the novel acknowledges the value of self-control, but the major issue is the need to recognize man's true nature and to appreciate what form its future fulfilment might take. For this the action centres on the nuns for whom an acknowledgement of affection and sexual feeling in a variety of relationships is a prerequisite of progress.

Thus the novice falls in love and decides to give up the religious life and, with the exception of Agatha, the professed nuns join in an orgy with Mr Smith and the sailors. Hilda, as one might expect, is the most shocked and humiliated afterwards. But the real Hilda, as Agatha observes, 'had never been a virgin at heart. She had only been a fussy, over-conscientious, bossy little woman, and she could not betray the self she had never been' (NJ 185). Ursula, who discovers the existence of a strong maternal instinct through her attachment to Marinella, actually destroys the island's beacon to prevent the party's rescue. Suddenly she is very clear about her motive: 'She was tearing down the barriers that had denied her love and freedom. She was destroying the law' (NJ 116).

Nor does Boyd exempt Agatha from the cramps and pinches meted out to Caliban. She cannot bear the natural beauty of the island, including Harry's magnificent body, because it forces her to recognize a host of unfamiliar sensations which conflict with her habitual repression or forgetfulness of the physical. To reform his puritanical character, Boyd interrupts a sermon she preaches to her nuns on the ideal of contemplation with the appearance of Harry, almost naked and bearing a gift of fish. Like the pilgrims of Much Else in Italy renouncing the gloom of medievalism before the Apollos of Veii and Tevere, Agatha confronts an image of the divine whose power could free her imagination from the inhibitions of the cloister. Having previously watched Harry diving naked from a boat, she has been moved to praise with the thought that she has 'somehow seen the Incarnation of God' (NJ 53). The religious import of this experience is further underlined
by Harry's association in her mind with 'a Christ in a pieta' (NJ 54,57), although her dismay at his appearance during her sermon to the nuns reveals her unpreparedness for the illumination of extreme physical beauty: 'She had felt a hard pleasure in calling the nuns to order, and in that very moment of spiritual pride Harry had appeared and toppled over her pride so that she had become angry and wanted to shout' (NJ 87).

Not surprisingly, given the suggestion of omniscience which surrounds his interference with the events of the island, Smith is the ultimate spokesman on the matter of morals in Nuns in Jeopardy and, as is usually the case with Boyd's theorists, his ethics flow from his aesthetics. Hilda's notion of the way in which the construction of a chapel might serve to focus the energies of the community suffers modification when he takes over its planning and decoration. The nun's concept of the building is Gothic, while Smith's inspiration is Greek, consistent with his belief that 'our culture without either the classical or the Christian ingredient would be poor in texture. We are heirs of both worlds' (NJ 15). Especially scandalous is his altar-piece, a painting of the Transfiguration in which the attendant prophets are nude portraits of two of the surviving sailors. Smith justifies himself: 'People in glory are always young ... and they are as God made them, not ashamed of the beauty He created' (NJ 118). During the ceremony of consecration presided over by the pagan islander Harry, whom Smith has argued is 'the most innocent' (NJ 120) amongst them, Agatha feels that they possess 'already the material conditions of paradise' (NJ 122). As in Much Else in Italy, Boyd's aim is to demonstrate that the appropriate expression of a truly confident Christianity is Classical rather than Gothic and that virtue is wanting if it fails the test of beauty.

This emphasis on moral attainment through an appreciation of beauty explains why, in the face of the volcanic eruption which threatens to destroy the community, Smith's advice to his companions is nonchalant, with an unlikely ring of Pater in his Conclusion to The Renaissance: '... to take a vivid interest in life while it lasts, and to get as much pleasure as we can from these strange phenomena' (NJ 183). In Boyd's mind, as in Pater's, all experience has significance from the aesthetic point of view. In answer to Agatha's accusation that he merely plays with moral ideas - 'You like to arrange them in patterns, as an artist arranges colours on a palette' (NJ 212) - Smith, the voice of civilization, proceeds to affirm the value of a richly varied life:
'I have been many things. An architect, a painter, a flautist. In fact, I've dabbled in all the arts and sciences. I love knowledge and the admission of truth. But most of all I love life. I love it wherever it breaks out into beauty or free movement' (NJ 213). This statement summarizes Smith's position and the aesthetic approach of the novel as a whole: the supreme value is life, in its freedom which stands above the law, its dynamism and spontaneity.

For all that Nuns in Jeopardy is Boyd's extravaganza of fantasy and fun, in which evil is as innocuous as a nun's vow of chastity and good as delectable, and as inconsequential, as psychedelic flowers, it has a ponderousness of moral exhortation - albeit to light-heartedness and pleasure - which, more often than not, tends to cancel out its message. Somehow Boyd fails to communicate his belief that 'extremes meet' (NJ 140). In view of the book's intended affirmation of the claims of aesthetic enjoyment, Smith himself, as a kind of demythologized Pope rather in the tradition of Comte's Religion of Humanity (he has a great love of liturgies and ecclesiastical matters but judges all religious forms for their specific existential value), is a poor summary of man's evolution towards wisdom and fulfilment. Civilization, on these terms, might amount to a 'line of festal lights in Christ Church Hall, and good wine, or tea on the lawn of a country house' (NJ 41). One suspects that this is precisely Boyd's view.

CONFLICTING TYPES

On rereading one of his early novels, The Montforts (to be considered in a following chapter), Boyd noted that the experience was rather like 'trying to eat a dry blanket' (DD 151). This is probably less true of The Montforts than it is of all Boyd's other novels prior to Lucinda Brayford (1946), chiefly because of their mechanical reproduction of a particular dialectical scheme. Invariably small-scale romans à thèse, the prentice novels labour at their artistic message and, as a result, are only mildly successful in making an ostensible interest in beauty, spontaneity and pleasure apparent in the texture of the writing itself.

The opponents of pleasure in Nuns in Jeopardy have to be weaned from their 'Gothic' and medieval ideal of self-renunciation. A similar contest between the forces of repression and creativity is built into all of the minor novels with the frequent substitution of the secular puritan for the religious puritan as the enemy of life. In Scandal of Spring (1934), this figure emerges in the portrait of Mr Vazetti, the
sterile 'product of nineteenth-century materialism' (SS 34), who displays a 'utilitarian indifference to grace and beauty' (SS 85). He is cast as the father of the novel's chief character, John, a rebellious young aesthete who rejects Vazetti's 'whole point of view, his scientific reduction of every emotion to a chemical process' (SS 85). The father stubbornly persists in his scepticism, however, strengthening his outlook by reading a book which purports to prove the 'sexual origins' of 'all religious symbolism' (SS 88). His library consists of 'the works of Huxley, Darwin, Henry George, Bernard Shaw, Rousseau, and Renan's Vie de Jésus' (SS 12), supposedly indicating the resistance of his mind to all experience which cannot be rationalized: 'For him "aesthetic" and "decadent" were synonymous, also "religion" and "superstition"' (SS 84). The man's failure with his son is seen as part of a general failure of society to encourage the young in their pursuit of fulfilment, and when John is arrested for eloping with a young girl he faces the problem as it exists in the world at large:

It was horrible and terrifying, the hostility without anger, the cold hostility of duty. He saw unveiled the force he feared from the beginning - the impartial world crushing him from some obscure principle. His first inkling of its existence had come with his father's grey indifference to the blossoming of life. The full realization was now, when one of the policemen put a hand on his shoulder.

SS 210.

Boyd contemplates a world where beauty and youth are offensive to narrow minds: the sad fact of the 'scandal of spring.'

After Scandal of Spring Boyd's most concerted attack on the secular puritan and one which looks forward to his critical portraits of Baba and Sylvia in the Langton novels comes in The Picnic (1937), in the characterization of Aelred Rounsefell, an intellectual who lacks reverence for life. This character is seen in his relationship with the novel's protagonist, Wilfred Westlake, an innocent young aesthete whose company he cultivates but whom he does not really like. Wilfred too much resembles a former self Aelred has rejected in favour of the smart culture affected by his worldly wife:

He [Wilfred] was a reminder of his own misguided youth when he had been enthusiastic about all the wrong things: the poetry of Swinburne, the prose of Wilde, the painting of Rossetti and Burne-Jones, the Wardour Street of the aesthetic
world, from which Sylvia had led him, up the Charing Cross Road with its advertisements of contraceptives, into the pure air of Bloomsbury.

P 104-05.

Significantly for Boyd's critique of the secular puritan, Wilfred, while listening to a nightingale, is embarrassed by the selfconscious presence of the Bloomsbury intellectual: 'He thought that Aelred and Sylvia must have come here with the intention of looking like a Victorian picture' (P 141). Because he affects a déjà vu attitude, believing that there is nothing beyond his capacity to anticipate and explain, Aelred inevitably fails to enjoy himself. When Wilfred shows him some Australian paintings by Streeton, Heysen, McInnes and Penleigh Boyd, about which he is ignorant and 'which he had not expected to be half so good' (P 124), his response is one of anger, revealing a dubious motive behind his posturing as a man of cultivated taste. In the unconscious puritanism of his au fait mask, Aelred, like Mr Vazetti in Scandal of Spring, resembles the man with the New Statesman in his pocket who plagues Boyd's cultural pilgrims on their journey through Italy. The essence of pleasure, as Boyd sees it, is its gratuitousness. Pleasure is always a bonus or surprise, but people like Aelred leave no room for the unpredictable. In this regard the poseur resembles the culturally deprived Matty, Wilfred's mother, whose youth was spent in Melbourne before the First World War. Matty works too hard at enjoying herself, believing, like the bourgeois Paul in Much Else in Italy, that 'pleasure should be the reward of effort' (P 39).

The enemies of pleasure in The Lemon Farm (1935) and Night of the Party (1938) are, like the Australian Matty, comfortable and stupid products of the bourgeoisie. In The Lemon Farm the repressive figure in the background of a struggle for liberation on the part of Davina Chelgrove, the novel's heroine, is Nigel, a middle-class, stuffily Victorian husband. Davina, with whom the novel associates imagery of the sea in a manner suggesting the figure of a modern Aphrodite, prefers Michael Kaye, an irresponsible young communist and son of a provincial clergyman. In his impetuous love for Davina, Michael plays Ares to Nigel's Hephaestus in the Classical story of the goddess' adultery. The Classical allusion surrounding the heroine's pursuit of sensuous enjoyment bears the familiar stamp of Boyd's appeal to Greek values and, in comparing Michael to her husband, Davina uses a metaphor which recalls the North-South, Gothic-Classic distinction of other novels. She tells Michael: 'I like
your low, Mediterranean face. Nigel is large and blond and Nordic, like a Tennysonian knight who has made a fortune in cocoa' (LF 86). Contrasting houses reflect the heroine's alternatives. There is Nigel's house, 'Maylands,' which appears to her a 'a monument to late-Victorian commercial success' (LF 38), and 'Seawinds,' a house of modernist design by the sea, to which Davina escapes for 'air' (LF 39) and the embrace of her young lover with whom she tries to achieve her dream of self-fulfilment. With the bourgeois knight, the spiritually tight-fisted Nigel, pleasure was impossible, as she explains to Michael:

He tried to make me part of the things I instinctively loathe. I loathe judging people by their material circumstances. He does that all the time. He quoted a sentence from a book he was reading to illustrate upper-middle-class life: 'the maximum of physical comfort with the minimum of worldly display.' He pretended to be ironically amused by it, but really it expressed his ideal. Whenever I wanted to introduce some colour or gaiety into our lives, he trotted out this vile phrase. Can you imagine anything more squalid? Guzzling without grace.

LF 87.

In Night of the Party Boyd portrays the puritan in Ella, the constrained wife of an artist of unfulfilled promise, Gavin Leigh. Ella creates a domestic atmosphere which kills the pleasure on which art feeds. Her chief offence is that she lives a lie regarding her relationship with Gavin. Having trapped him into marriage through her ability to offer financial security, she sets out on a path of emotional blackmail. To give more substance to her fictions about the idyllic time of their courtship, she embroiders a scene in bright sharp colours, in the style of Arts and Crafts, 1910, intimidating her family and friends into accepting her interpretation of the past. She yokes virtue to art in a violent way, unaware that her so-called morality is merely emotional possessiveness intensified by sexual inhibition. Sex has no place in her world although she has in fact seduced Gavin. She hates 'Freud ... and D.H. Lawrence, and surrealism, and all the silliness of your modern suicide club' (NP 97), as she tells her son, whose morals Boyd describes as 'ancient Greek' (NP 67). In reality, Ella is anti-life and anti-art because she will not accept the impermanence of pleasure, wanting to circumscribe something which
of its very nature is spontaneous and free.

Over and against his puritans Boyd sets a class of pleasure-seekers invested with a clear moral superiority: John Vazetti, Wilfred Westlake, Maurice Bellamy, Gavin Leigh and Lucinda Dobson, Davina Chelgrove and Michael Kaye.

In Scandal of Spring, John Vazetti turns to religious aestheticism to satisfy his adolescent craving for a fuller, more significant life. Almost simultaneously, he becomes involved with Madge Harding, a young girl with whom he later elopes. The truth of the matter, as Boyd presents it, is that 'the two processes stimulated one another' (SS 35). John overcomes a potential division of his nature by recognizing the limitations of his religious mentor, Thurlow, the local vicar. To the young aesthete, there is no conflict of allegiance in matters of the spirit and the body. He can, without guilt, participate in a Mass despite his intention to infringe religious and social taboos: in so doing, he is making an affirmation for wholeness of life.

Boyd felt the chief attribute of Scandal of Spring to be its "vernal" quality (DD 170), a claim which must rest on the content of the early chapters where the novel attempts some arcadian love scenes in low key. However, the necessary lyrical touch is lacking and the final effect of these episodes is of cloying emotionalism and a narcissistic sexuality. When the orgasmic moment finally arrives, we are told in euphemistic terms coyly justifying the title of the book that for the hero 'the world was flowering - flowering' (SS 205). This is one instance among many in the minor novels when Boyd falls inadvertently into self-parody. What is more devastating, the plot itself goes on to reinforce this impression. Without a touch of irony, the pattern of events whose purpose is to illustrate a theme of the rival nostalgias of Gothic and Classic culture, fulfils Wilde's masterly axiom ridiculing the Victorian medieval-versus-pagan debate: 'To be really medieval one should have no body. To be really modern one should have no soul. To be really Greek one should have no clothes.' In the argument for physical enjoyment, the most pointed statement is made when, to escape the burden of looking after Madge, John visits a bathing place. The pleasure of removing his clothes and of bathing brings about a mental harmony in which the youth's remembered experience of religious aestheticism seems to expand into his present delight. With a deadpan seriousness totally out of key with his subject, Boyd interprets the boy's discovery of nudity in the light of a breakthrough in civilized values:

In the chancel of Belham Church, carrying the lighted taper, he had had the sensation of stepping into a different
world, on a different plane, poetical and mysterious. Something of those sensations returned to him now, of a release and enlargement of life, but he did not feel that he was entering a romantic twilight, but more as if he had returned to the beginning of the world, to a clear golden age. He stood with his lips slightly parted, his body smiling in wonder.

SS 201.

The same lack of humour is again conspicuous when, more concerned with promoting his prescriptions for human fulfilment than with artistic effect, Boyd superimposes on the narrative a rather odd motif for the purpose of accentuating the novel's thematic debate about puritanism and pleasure. John, who is of Italian and Anglo-Saxon origin, has unmatched eyes: one blue and one brown to reflect the Gothic-Classic dichotomy of his nature. For a large part of the narrative his brown eye is bandaged, but when he goes bathing it is pointedly uncovered in an act symbolizing the resurgence of his Mediterranean soul. Boyd displays here a curious lack of tact for someone whose description of his intention for Scandal of Spring is that 'every word was to have quality and meaning' (SF 207, DD 161) and we are left questioning the judgement of a writer who needs such out-of-the-way devices to impose meaning on his material.

A similar character to John Vazetti is Maurice Bellamy of Such Pleasure (1949). The genesis of Maurice's spiritual growth is marked by his response to a Gothic atmosphere. We are told that 'particularly since the beginning of his adolescence, he had felt drawn towards anything that recalled the middle ages' (SP 223), and that 'in certain gothic buildings and in any monastic ruin, he felt his spirit was at peace' (SP 224). Later Maurice develops an attraction to the Renaissance and Italy. A journey to the Italian south brings into play two distinct sides of his nature, the spiritual and the sensual, in the familiar pattern of Much Else in Italy:

All that winter he stayed in Italy, slowly journeying southwards until in January he was at Palermo. Half the time he was in a kind of dream, living in the past. The visual evidence of sculpture and buildings and paintings stimulated his imagination so powerfully that he could easily feel, more than know intellectually, the lives of those who had created those things. Part of this dream in which he lived was religious, but other parts were sensual.

SP 292.
Maurice's dilemma resembles Edward Browne's in *Love Gods*, but this time Boyd gives the problem a 'Hebraic' rather than 'Hellenic' conclusion: where Edward renounces the religious life, Maurice seeks his fulfilment as a monk. *Such Pleasure* was published after Boyd had radically reconsidered his early experiences and attitudes in the first autobiography, *A Single Flame*, written on the eve of World War II, and in the novel *Lucinda Brayford*, which occupied him in the war years. The mood is darker than in *Love Gods* and *Brangane* (the material from which it was composed), and the debate about pleasure is resolved more on the side of the hereafter than of the here-and-now. The significance of this shift will become clearer when we consider the writer's treatment of suffering in his mature work.

In *The Picnic* the vehicle of Boyd's theme of a quest for fulfilment is Wilfred Westlake, a traditionalist and aesthete who has an equal love for the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Wilfred has read Pater's *Imaginary Portraits* and feels that he understands Duke Carl's longing for sensations beyond the scope of his provincial life. Furthermore, his 'startled, sensuous perusal of *The Renaissance*' has filled him with hope for fulfilment 'through some cultural experience' (P 180): 'Wilfred's attitude towards life was founded on the firm conviction that the world was an orange or pomegranate, full of scented colours and juicy pips for his delight' (P 180). In contrast to his brother Christopher who is pagan and amoral - sometimes with unfortunate consequences - Wilfred is thoughtful about his inclinations. Boyd describes his personality: 'He appeared to combine the logic of the judge with the gaiety of the cavalier and the romantic ardour of the poet. If the god Hermes had taken advantage of a curate's wife, the result might have been something like Wilfred' (P 43). Like John Vazetti and Maurice Bellamy, Wilfred needs to harmonize dual aspects of his nature.

Anticipating *Nuns in Jeopardy*, *The Lemon Farm* and *Night of the Party* represent a vision of pleasure in terms of Post-Impressionist and Fauve images of bright seascapes, coloured boats and shameless, naked human flesh. In doing so, they translate the aestheticism which takes an Art Deco form in the twenties novels into something more in key with Boyd's artistic talent which, as it matures, seems to reside increasingly in a strong visual sense of colour, shape and texture.

The young lovers of *The Lemon Farm*, Davina Chelgrove and Michael Kaye, dream of a paradise where they might be better able to live innocently and in harmony with their essential natures. Their personal
symbol for this hope is the lemon farm, a fiction into which they project their desire for a place 'where love would be secure' (LF 187). In the meantime they achieve a measure of happiness in their shared activities of sailing, swimming and camping out on Silver Island, their island of Cythera. Secretly Davina knows that the best part of love for them is the present. As she tells Michael: '... this our heaven. It is now in little bits of perfect days like this' (LF 97). The apotheosis of sensuous and sensual enjoyment in this novel is naked bathing, which Boyd describes with relish, trying to reproduce in prose the bold colours of a Dufy:

They swam naked up the channel, through the clear and sparkling water. Towards the horizon it was shimmering blue, while northwards the downs were hazy gold, with pale purple shadows. Davina kicked her feet to see the spray, dazzling white against the sun. The oil floated off Michael's body and left a wide path of smooth water behind him.

LF 142.

In this connection, it is interesting to recall Boyd's religious interpretation of what he terms 'phenomena' in Much Else in Italy, where the final symbol for a divine presence in nature is the 'shimmering ... golden light' (MEI 183) of the illuminated sea at Santa Margherita-Ligure. In Night of the Party the Post-Impressionist reference is made specific, since the novel's protagonist, Gavin Leigh, is presented as a Gauguin or Van Gogh manqué. Gavin uses the naked human body to epitomize his vision of ideal beauty. In 1913, as a young man on holiday in Cornwall, he is delighted by the spectacle of 'naked wriggling bodies' (NP 184) of boys swimming from a boat, and he commits them vigorously to paint. In later life he makes a portrait of Verona - the daughter of Lucinda Dobson whom he had desired as a young man in the setting of Cornwall's sun and sea - wanting to recapture the happiness of that time. His inspiration is recognizably Gauguin, although Lucinda thinks of Botticelli's 'Birth of Venus,' in keeping with Boyd's portrait of Gavin as a natural Classicist:

It was Verona's face given a calm impersonality, made noble with the integrity of a wild animal, made eternally beautiful. The whole picture had a beauty something like that of Botticelli's Venus, the beauty of the human form unveiled against the background of the sea, made in some inexpressible way more sensuous and haunting by the presence of flowers. There were
naked boys, shameless and gay, yet somehow sad in their innocence; the virginal, waiting face of the woman, her body so much of the earth and so lovely .... and the colours - that queer cobalt green of the water, and the zinnia pink of the woman's lips - they made one start like the taste of some unknown delicious wine.

NP 298-99.

The loveliness and poise of the painting exonerates Gavin in Lucinda's eyes for his plan to elope with her daughter. Lucinda is being put through the test of her own values. Even in middle life she retains her youthful, exuberant appetite for pleasure, in contrast to Gavin's wife, who is fussily moralistic and repressive. She and Ella argue about Verlaine's faded colours and St. Paul's expression, 'the lust of the eyes' (NP 51-52), in a way which anticipates Boyd's discussion of Classicist, anti-puritan values in Much Else in Italy. Ella accuses Lucinda of possessing 'the outlook and morals of an ancient Greek' (NP 49). And indeed, Lucinda's liberal views prevent her from passing judgement on Gavin when he is discovered as Verona's lover. Challenging her to live up to her belief that passion should express itself, Gavin reminds her that in abducting her daughter he would only be taking the advice she has given him 'a dozen times' (NP 292) since the very first occasion when she tried to dissuade him from marrying Ella. With the enthusiasm for bohemia of a George Moore, she said then:

You ought to be cheating in low pubs - to be mixed in Montmartre brawls. You ought to be like Verlaine, making scandalous associations in the back streets of Paris, or like Ernest Dowson, living with barmaids in Dieppe. Your life ought to be gay, disreputable, brightly coloured - perhaps with dark, contrasting shadows.

NP 225.

In fact Gavin does not run away with Verona, although he is resolute in his decision to leave his wife. By escaping the blighting influence of puritanism he is perhaps on the road to fulfilling his Verlaine destiny and the novel ends on this note of hope.

A third category of characters in the minor novels is to be found in a group of hedonists who neither oppose pleasure nor actively pursue their personal fulfilment. While the genuine seekers after a more abundant life distinguish qualities in their experience, the hedonists are self-absorbed. Their precept is not 'Be perfect in regard to what is here and now' but the more primitive 'Let us eat and drink, for
tomorrow we die!' Fixed at an early phase of growth, they are entirely unreflective about their motives, failing to recognize alternatives to their spontaneous desires. Two such characters are Brangane, whose unhappy pursuit of self-gratification has been discussed, and her counterpart in Such Pleasure, Bridget Malwyn. In both these cases, hedonism is something of a felix culpa, as it eventually sets its followers on the path of wisdom, just as, in The Lemon Farm, Boyd makes it clear that the 'self-destroying' virtues of 'generosity and carelessness of her own material advantage' displayed by Davina's mother are paradoxically more life-giving than Nigel's 'self-regarding' virtues of 'caution and thrift' (LF 88). This tolerance surrounds all Boyd's portraits of the hedonist type although not all his hedonists develop beyond a primitive stage.

In Scandal of Spring and The Picnic, for example, there is the contrast of the consciously chosen aestheticism of John Vazetti and Wilfred Westlake and the blind self-centredness of Thurlow and Christopher Westlake. Thurlow, a clergyman in whom the aesthete is dominant over the priest, sets out to recreate a medieval atmosphere in his church. To this end he bribes village boys to participate in his liturgical ceremonies, approaching his protégé John Vazetti with a box of crystallized fruit. In front of the altar his reverie focuses on Verlaine as he luxuriates in the splendour of his carefully-contrived aesthetic effects. Ultimately he faces himself as 'the unsuccessful seducer' (SS 239) of John, recognizing a sensual motive in his interest in the boy. Against Thurlow, John appears a more balanced, honest and fulfilled person. In The Picnic Boyd juxtaposes the brothers Wilfred and Christopher Westlake. Externally, Christopher seems a god of beauty as Sylvia Rounsefull muses (in one of those passages in Boyd which have the unfortunate ring of self-parody):

There was something classic and Greek about his brow and hair, and something of refined negroid about his nose. An embrace from him, she felt, would have tremendous significance. It would combine an innocent but extreme African sensuality with a strange spiritual return to classic sunlight.

P 103.

Christopher's girlfriend Ursula expresses similar feelings: 'She had never seen any one so resplendent, so bursting with life' (P 64). At the climax of the novel the boy's real nature
is revealed, however, when he destroys the tranquillity of a picnic by attacking his brother. Quite innocently, Wilfred provokes Christopher by engaging Ursula in intellectual conversation. Misinterpreting his brother's chivalrous gesture of kissing the girl's hand, Christopher succumbs to irrational, jealous rage and beats Wilfred insensible. Apart from its revelation of Christopher's character this incident reflects on the picnic itself: does it represent a civilized enjoyment of nature or a dangerous return to the primitive? Boyd loosely relates this idea to an Australian theme. As the picnic is an Australian affair - there is nostalgia for 'lovely picnics to Heidelberg (Victoria) and Fern Tree Gully' (P 240) - the question of the stability and quality of Australian civilization is also raised. But this subject is explored more thoroughly in later novels.

Boyd's recently discovered novel, Dearest Idol, concerns four variations of the self-indulgent type. These are a middle-class aesthete, Tony Weston-Dawson (an example of the emerging anti-hero of post-First-World-War fiction); his hedonist friend, the Russian Boris; Tony's Aunt Matilda, a contradictory personality, both aesthete and puritan, whose High Church culture amounts to surrogate romance; and the protagonist's wife, 'the golden expressionless girl' (DI 103) Maisie, young, petulant and superficial. Although for a large part of the narrative these characters - who are not seekers after the model of Edward Browne, Sister Agatha, Davina Chelgrove or John Vazetti - inhabit a pre-moral world where they are locked in a conflict of egos, they do grow in understanding through a process of spiritual refinement in which life itself is the irresistible educator. There are several major conflicts depicted in the novel: that between the cultural aspirations and bourgeois snobbery of Tony and the philistinism of the new-rich Maisie, between Matilda's ambivalent puritanism and Tony's youthful need for an emotional relationship with a friend - either man or woman - of his own age, and between Boris' unreflective gratification of his instincts and his own jealous love for Tony.

Throughout the novel there is a sense of pleasure inhibited or perverted, of passion channelled into the wrong direction, largely suggested by the music of Wagner, which Boyd uses as a motif to express a romantic, unfulfilled longing. Tony instructs Maisie in the story of Das Rheingold:
It's absolutely lovely, the motif of the Rhinemaidens. Didn't you notice it at the end, last night, when they were pleading with Wotan to give them back the lost gold, when their voices came up from the valley, and the motifs of the river, and the Rhinemaidens, and the gold, were all woven together in a lovely pattern? I think it is the most beautiful, pathetic music I know, the cry of the Rhinemaidens for the lost gold.

DI 152-53.

His delight in the beauty of the score is soured by Maisie's boredom, in an incident which brings home the inadequacy of their marriage as a means of realizing the dream of fulfilment. The same sense of illusion surrounds those scenes in the 'fairy-story' (DI 82) world of the Black Forest where Tony is seen in his relationship with Boris. The illusion is exposed when, on their next holiday in Switzerland, Tony thoughtlessly deserts Boris for the company of Maisie.

One of the unexpected twists of the novel is the effect the war has on Tony. Instead of jolting him into a new sense of reality, it encourages his basic egoism by providing an artificial context in which he can feel superior. At this point Maisie is revealed in a better light as she argues against the unnecessary bloodshed of the war. After the war, Tony faces his desk at the bank and experiences a 'drab dissatisfaction' (DI 232) which mystifies his wife: 'He could not make her see how tedious was this life after his entourage of obsequious junior officers, servants and orderlies, after his power almost of life and death' (DI 229). Boyd's portrait of the self-interested soldier who has a stake in promoting a Julian Grenfell and Rupert Brooke romanticism about the glory of daring everything in battle, is his first explicit probe into the meaning and causes of war. At this stage, however, his major interests lie elsewhere.

In observing the preoccupation with conflicting types in the minor novels, it is necessary to stress that, however extreme the figure of either the 'self-regarding' puritan or 'self-destroying' hedonist personality may appear in Boyd's fiction (Much Else in Italy argues that 'all activity is extreme' [MEI 150]), there is always an underlying movement towards a synthesis or an amalgam of values or points of view. Hence the prominence given to the figure of the seeker. In the interest of open-mindedness and tolerance, Boyd is even willing to seem contradictory, an attitude he justifies in religious terms in
We cannot always be consistent. Sometimes two good things appear to us irreconcilable - the serenity of the Apollo of Tevere and the serene faith of the saints of the catacombs. We shall not give up either, believing that all things comely are reconciled in the mind of the Supreme Nous.

MEI 55.

In The Picnic the idea of a possible reconciliation of opposites is expressed symbolically in a poem composed by a minor character in the story, whose imagination is stirred by the confrontation of Wilfred and Christopher. The poem concludes:

In Heaven
Their song's heard
The blue and
The grey bird.

P 303.

In terms of a latent symbolism in the novel Christopher calls to mind the first stage of the progression towards vision outlined in Much Else in Italy, Wilfred, the second, but the drawing together of the two suggests a more tentative pattern of resolution than that offered in the later context. Even less conclusively than in The Picnic, and with even more contrivance on the part of the author, Scandal of Spring resolves its moral difficulties with a very odd ploy: John Vazetti's unmatched eyes suddenly appear the same colour.

In presenting Gavin Leigh's vision of synthesis in Night of the Party Boyd has recourse to his favourite Gothic-Classical theme:

I love the sun on hot stones, and brilliant seas and baroque architecture. I like melons and zinnias and figs, and blue Portuguese boats painted in patterns, and old yellow sails, and half-naked people the colour of peaches. I don't like damp grey buildings full of dead souls. Chesterton, whose mind is aesthetically disgusting, said that the Gothic spirit is expressed by light through, and the classic by light on. Well, I like light on. But I like light on romanticized, not scientific. That is why I like baroque - classicism romanticized, but still light on. D'you see what I mean?

NP 200.

The distinction is to be found in Chesterton's G.F. Watts ('I think a broad distinction between the finest pagan and the finest Christian
point of view may be found in such an approximate phrase as this, that paganism deals always with a light shining on things, Christianity with a light shining through them’), and it crops up again in *Much Else in Italy*. Thus in the chapter on the 'Innocent Churches' the narrator comments on the Irish boy's appreciation of the Classical atmosphere of S. Agnese Fuori le Mura: 'Somewhere he had read that classical art was characterized by "light on" and Christian by "light through"' (MEI 54). Needless to say, Boyd's characters have difficulty in achieving the ideal of 'light on romanticized' or, more accurately in the context of the novels, of Hellenized Gothic, light on and light through combined. Matilda in *Dearest Idol* faces the inadequacy of her nature before this vision:

The light through the blue and pale rose cast window caught the silver angels on the altar posts, and splashed colors on the tapestry, curiously changing its composition. The vaulted roof was lost in misty shadows.

Matilda's spirit expanded in these surroundings. She was transported to a realm of absolute beauty, to a definite golden age, half medieval, half Hellenic, which she imagined would return to England with the triumph of Anglo-Catholicism. In this Jerusalem, the happy home of her spirit, it was always summer.

'Thy gardens and thy gallant walks
Continually are green.'

These gardens were peopled by kindly jeweled and decorative saints, and sometimes the exquisite, half-naked youthful figure of a David or a Sebastian flitted through the green, and one of these youthful saints was very like Tony.

Into this home of her soul nothing evil might come, neither material nor spiritual. But this morning, having fled to it in her bewilderment and distress, she was conscious of having brought with her some spiritual deformity.

DI 262-63.

That deformity is the idol in her heart which limits her appreciation of beauty and goodness in the world. At the end of *Night of the Party*, the final synthesis still eludes Gavin, but he hopes that 'in the end all things comely would be reconciled. The beauty which was his function to capture would be reconciled with the moral law, to which, at the
moment, he would not attend without destroying his sole reason for existence' (NP 319). The Lemon Farm is more pessimistic: Davina, caught in the impossibility of having both Nigel and Michael, is drowned, and Michael - another cliché - joins the Foreign Legion. In Boyd's last published novel, The Tea-Time of Love, earlier efforts towards a fusion of values are made explicit in the depiction of Daphne Andromeda Hilda Stilby's need to perfect the sphere of her 'tripartite nature' (TL 208): 'Daphne was her mind, Andromeda her emotional nature, and Hilda her essential self, which tried to live in peace with the other two, and restrain their more extreme vagaries' (TL 1). The tone of the book is one of light irony in its deliberate parody of the efforts of popular romancers (among whom Boyd might have counted himself in the twenties and thirties) to pander to the subterranean passions of staid, middle-class spinsters. Miss Stilby herself appears as self-satire on the part of the novelist:

Andromeda felt herself cheated and trapped. She was desperate to break through into some world of beauty and passion, to smell the jasmine in the moonlight, to hear the nightingale in the oleanders, while a living Praxiteles bronze dripping with Adriatic spray (even a fisherman would do if it could not be a prince) climbed up to her balcony and her bed. Like Winckelmann, she was forty and she longed for the south.

TL 17.

In the end her attempt to reconcile different aspects of her personality is somewhat lost sight of in Boyd's concentration on the principle of pleasure represented by Andromeda. It is this element in herself which the heroine most needs to express. Consequently The Tea-Time of Love is largely preoccupied with Miss Stilby's Winckelmann-like search, a search whose outcome is, as it happens, rather ludicrous.

Whether in a light-hearted or serious context, the central characters of Boyd's minor fiction are, like the Irish boy and his mentor in Much Else in Italy, spiritual pilgrims journeying towards a richer life. The link with the travel book is closer still, since in the minor novels a conflict between the forces of repression and man's urge to express all the potentialities of his nature usually finds its resolution in a revelation of the beauty and
goodness of the concrete world. As in Much Else in Italy, Boyd constantly appeals to the notion of a Gothic-Classical duality and, from time to time, underlines his theme by employing a geographical image in which places in the sun stand for the claims of the body. All the novels presuppose an idea of civilization which allows for a religious motive in man's pursuit of this-worldly goals and the testimony of a divinity at the heart of matter is identical with the presence of beauty Boyd sets out to disclose through his discussion of noumena and phenomena in Much Else in Italy. Finally, the appreciation of beauty is expressed in language which constantly suggests its indebtedness to the nineteenth century.
CHAPTER FOUR

CULTURE IN HOT CLIMATES: THE PURSUIT OF CLASSICAL VALUES

IN THE MONTFORTS

In Australia Raoul had associated all true civilization with the cool green countries of the north, where only hitherto he had found it. A hot climate had for him inevitably meant newness and crudity. Yet here, in a climate not unlike that of the districts round Melbourne, had flowered an art and a culture, the greatest since that of Greece in the fifth century B.C. This similarity of climate seemed to give Australia a greater value in his eyes, finer potentialities.

The Montforts.

Two cultural myths, the Hellenic and the Gothic, dominate Boyd's imagination. They are the 'stories' (MEI 5), the imagined events predetermining the pattern in which Western lives - shaped as they must be by the past and a living cultural tradition - will unfold. In The Montforts (1928), Boyd's first novel about his original home, we see the novelist testing the Classical myth against the possibility of its being actualized in Australia, a country geographically not unlike Italy and Greece, the cradle of Western civilization. It is evident that Boyd is fascinated by the geographical image as a means of underscoring thematic interests connected with his obsession with pleasure. We see this in Night of the Party, where Cornwall provides an Eden setting for the youthful pursuit of physical enjoyment and the nostalgic dream of fulfilment in middle life; in The Lemon Farm, where Silver Island is the background for the flowering of adulterous love and the lemon farm -somewhere on the Mediterranean - the idle fancy of a life of pleasure made secure and permanent; or in Nuns in Jeopardy, where a tropical island images paradise regained. In the novels so far considered the broad geographical division is between North and South. Northern climates encourage the 'Gothic' ideal and are associated with otherworldly values. Southern climates are suited to the pursuit of the 'Classical' ideal because they are conducive to the pleasures of the body. In The Montforts - where Australia (with such places as Spain and Italy providing appropriate reinforcement) is the potent image of man's bodily health and of his possibilities for sensuous and sensual gratification - this is
no less obtrusively the case. If anything, the geographical contrast is here more sharply and forcefully delineated, so that even though there is little explicit reference to the notions of Gothicism and Classicism, Boyd's bias towards a civilization approximating to the Classical ideal informs his presentation of his characters' lives.

Because of its geographical location, Australia has obvious potential for the exploration of a theme of the Classical South, a potential which the novelist's own experience of the country confirmed since his life there was pre-eminently the period of his youth when the beauty of the natural world was vivid to him. Although after arriving home in 1919 with the thought of growing 'apples or lemons' (SF 160, DD 111), he found the world outside his family unencouraging and soon 'longed to return to England' (SF 163, DD 113), this in no way damaged the vision he cherished that life in Australia had something of essential value to offer. Whatever limitations he found in the Australian cultural environment, Boyd 'loved the hot dry smell of the gum trees and the still golden days, the fruit, the flowers, and the brilliant sea' (SF 161) and the image of an idyllic countryside remained as a nostalgic memory, feeding his imaginative ideal of a geographical setting which might fulfil the necessary preconditions for the growth of Classical civilization.

To Boyd's imagination in The Montforts, Australia is innocently pagan, as it has been for others: for Sydney Long (witness especially the gentle, celebratory lyricism of the well-known 'The Spirit of the Plains' of 1897 and the art nouveau 'Pan' of the following year), for Norman Lindsay, whose garden statuary at Springwood still gives visible form to the gods and goddesses who peopled his imagination, and, in poetry, for Hugh McCrae and the early Slessor, who found Bacchus on Macarthur Road and Pan at Lane Cove. However, it is the approach to depicting a bucolic setting of the Australian painters we loosely call Impressionist which comes closest to Boyd's vision of Australia.

In comparison with his practice in other early novels, Boyd pays more attention in The Montforts to sheer naturalistic detail with something of the Heidelberg painters' eye for sensuous effects. Predictably, however, a description of Boys bathing - pleasantly reminiscent of such paintings as Conder's 'The Yarra, Heidelberg, Boys Bathing' and 'Rickett's Point, near Sandringham,' or Nerli's 'Beach at Sandringham,'
or Roberts' "The Sunny South" or Streeton's "Boys Bathing, Heidelberg" - can also become the occasion for a sermon on the subject of Classical values. To begin with the message is implicit in the contrast of attitudes of Raoul Blair and his Riley cousins who 'made a virtue or business of every pleasure':

They were at their worst in the bathing place. This was a deep green pool overhung by wattle trees. Raoul's delight in bathing was purely aesthetic. He loved to swim for the sake of the easy movement, or to sit idly, lower down the river, where the clear water rippled over the clean stones, and splashed round his shoulders. He loved the light on his bare skin. But bathing for them was merely a means of keeping cool, and of learning to swim in case of shipwreck.

M 180.

Not content to leave the statement of conflicting values here, Boyd points up the hatred Fred Riley feels - for what appears to him as a lack of manliness in Raoul - in terms of the debate about Classical values, insistently commenting:

Fred Riley's manliness was not the antithesis of effeminacy but of boyishness. The Greeks who in battle, would spare the life of a beautiful youth, he would have regarded not as humane nor civilized, but as weak and unpatriotic.

M 180.

Fundamentally, however, commentary has a less vital role to play in this passage than aesthetic experience of the scene, concretely presented. What is important is that an en plein air feeling emerges as a quality of vision of the character himself - in this case Raoul - so that it becomes an appropriate means of expressing the message of Classicism in more than argumentative terms.

The felt pleasure which is communicated in many of the descriptive touches of Australian life makes Boyd's first novel about Australia a convincing vehicle for his recurring theme. Like other countries of similar climate, Australia is a place for bathing, enjoyment of colour, removing one's clothes, love-making. However, in Boyd's eyes the stimulus of the sun to life not only produces an animal vitality but is at the root of culture itself. Just as European civilization had its birthplace in the Classical world, so it is to achieve a new and vital growth
in the new world which reproduces the original conditions of its flowering. Raoul in The Montforts mentally connects Australia and Italy and the association redeems Australia for him by revealing its possibilities:

In Australia Raoul had associated all true civilization with the cool green countries of the north, where only hitherto he had found it. A hot climate had for him inevitably meant newness and crudity. Yet here, in a climate not unlike that of the districts round Melbourne, had flowered an art and a culture, the greatest since that of Greece in the fifth century B.C. This similarity of climate seemed to give Australia a greater value in his eyes, finer potentialities.

One is reminded of Boyd's great-great-uncle Thomas Turner à Beckett who concluded a lecture on the history of painting, delivered to a Melbourne audience in 1871, with a prophecy about the development of Australian art: 'I believe that in future years Australia will resemble Italy in its art characteristics as closely as it now resembles it in its climate.' In the novel, the necessity for Australians to shake off traditional expectations and attitudes unsuited to the Edenic possibilities of the new country is put to Raoul by his intellectual cousin Mabel: 'Those who feel the virgin appeal of this hot gleaming country should destroy every trace of European religion and tradition and remain to build a new and vital state' (M 217). Mabel herself is a product of the pristine Australia — conducive to pleasure and resistant to an imported Victorian wowsers — as is Raoul with his aesthetic tendencies, and, eventually, his capacity for sexual satisfaction with Madeleine, a voluptuous and exotic flower of Australian growth transplanted to Italy.

Book I of The Montforts uses the point of view of a newcomer to pre-gold rush Melbourne to search out the favourable attributes of the country as a home for Europeans. Through Letitia, wife of Henry Montfort, Boyd explores the impact of Australia on a reserved Englishwoman of refined manners and tastes. In contrast to Henry, for whom the change of skies is a challenge he is eager to face, Letitia is bound by the habits of her former life, her social ties and the niceties of existence in Bedford Square. The more timid and vulnerable of the two, the woman is a more delicate and sensitive instrument for registering the effects of the uprooting of the family and its reestablishment in a country where the
absence of tradition means that an imported set of values will be subject to test and reconsideration. On arrival, Letitia's feelings are externalized in the reactions of her children. Australia has two aspects: a clean and bold beauty which impresses the dreamy child Arthur (who is to become a nineties aesthete) -

"Yellow sand, blue sea, swoopy white birds," he said softly. He repeated it, as if pleased both with the scenery and his own observation: 'Yellow sand, blue sea, swoopy white birds.'

- and a blatant deficiency in amenities which rivets the attention of the importunate Amy who embarrassingly reiterates what everyone else is thinking: 'Where's Melbourne, mama?' (M 20). The recognition of the contrast of Melbourne to anything Letitia has formerly known is reinforced as she contemplates a landscape which is more the natural habitat of ants than of human beings. She loses the sense of a defined self:

Robbed of the background which she had so carefully built, she felt as if in some way there were less of herself as a definite human entity. This thought hardly was shaped in words in her mind, but it was the sensation she experienced.

She reawoke to her surroundings. At her feet were twigs, fallen from the trees, and among them crawled ants, larger than any she had seen before. The air was full of hot dry scent of the eucalyptus trees.

M 25.

Despite its starkness, Melbourne does not turn out to be barren, however. What is more, the unsettling of a stable personality is a positive thing, for Letitia experiences a resurgence of life in the new environment, not unlike that of southern Europe, which opens the buds of the senses with its heat and bright sunshine. The novelty, strangeness and simplicity of things has the effect of releasing the personality for new growth. This eventuates with rather dramatic swiftness with Letitia's discovery, shortly after arrival, of a genius loci in Gomez de Moya, a Carlist nobleman who has migrated to Australia. Gomez emerges as part of the essential Australia, an expression of its character and possibilities.
The Montfort family itself has migrated because of the remote influence of a scandalous ancestor, Madeleine du Rémyle des Baux. The suggestion is that it is the pull of southern Europe (working through the factor of Madeleine des Baux in the Montfort background and more directly in the case of the Conde de Moya) which has brought these people to Australia where they will find a reinforcement of the southern influence. In Boyd's thinking, of course, this implies a fulfilment of the pleasure ethic.

The meeting takes place at a party, one of Boyd's favourite fictional occasions. It is spring and Letitia and Gomez exchange their views about life in the new country in the lovely surroundings of a moonlit garden sweet with the scent of buddleia and syringa and made the more enchanting by the couple's titillation at having carried on a public flirtation by complimenting one another in deliberately chosen songs - Letitia's 'Juanita,' 'for its Spanish reference' (M 26), Gomez's 'Celeste Aída.' Gomez thinks that Australia is not unlike Spain but 'new' (M 28), a beginning. One must resist nostalgia, he argues, for 'it is not good in the morning to regret the splendour of yesterday's sunset' (M 28). Thus he becomes the spokesman for Boyd's theme of Australia's possibilities and is made to ask, with pointed meaning for the direction of the novel: '... who knows what may not come to it in the future?' (M 28).

Disappointingly as the novel progresses, it becomes apparent that Boyd does not know, at this early stage of his career, exactly what to do with the theme of a rebirth of culture in the new world. He tries to strike a prophetic note in his presentation of his characters' quest for a utopian civilization but, apart from hints and prescriptions, fails to provide a fully realized picture of what the new civilization might be like. The novel becomes a too complex jigsaw as it attempts to suggest that hope of fulfilling the utopian dream is carried forward in new generations of Montforts who repeat the desires and actions of their forebears. In the end Boyd relies too heavily on a symbolic pattern as the Montfort progeny make their extended search, oscillating between Australia and the European countries from which their cultural inheritance springs. Throughout the novel the characters proliferate as readily as they do in the Old Testament and with the same sense of a
spiritual destiny working itself out through generations of people of the same family and culture. One has only to think of Arthur Boyd's paintings of Old Testament subjects to realize how native this vision is to the Boyd family as a whole. Through Letitia, whose name of course means 'joy,' and from whom one line of Australian Montfort progeny derives, the author introduces a theme of freedom and the law. The child born to her out of spiritual freedom is the vessel of promise. Boyd might well have taken as his own the biblical text: 'For it is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise.' It should be stressed, however, that while the characters of The Montforts appear as Old Testament archetypes, the import is not specifically religious although in the process a depth of allusion is given to the novel's theme of pleasure pursued in freedom of conscience.

The figure of Madeleine du Rémy des Baux sums up Boyd's theme in symbolic fashion (the novel was entitled The Madeleine Heritage for American publication) and the importance of this lady's hovering influence over the Montfort family is sketched in the Prologue to the novel where the past is recounted to bring the reader up to date with events. Madeleine's folly was to allow herself to be seduced by the Rev. Simon Montfort and to conceive a son, Raoul, out of wedlock. The couple were married but Simon eventually found himself deserted by the ever-wayward lady and thereafter brought up his son severely and moralistically, so that Raoul became sensitive about the circumstances of his birth:

Raoul felt that he might as well be illegitimate, and after that his soul was engaged in a quivering warfare with all that part of the human race which stood for justice rather than mercy, and for order rather than individual happiness.

The spiritual legacy of this is passed on to Henry, Raoul's younger son, whose decision to follow his brother Simon to Australia is motivated by a feeling that he holds 'an anomalous position in the world':

The satisfaction of being a Montfort was undermined by his father's activities and semi-scandalous origin. The story of his grandmother did not appeal to him as romantic. He had the respect of his mother's legal family for sedate and timely matrimony.
It is in this context of an inherited spiritual warfare between the ideals and practices of 'justice' and 'mercy,' 'order' and individual happiness, that the story of the Australian Montforts unfolds.

Boyd unequivocally takes the side of 'mercy' and individual happiness and, broadly stated, his concern in The Montforts is to challenge conventional justice and morality by examining the relationship between the spirit and the letter of the law. From the moment Letitia is liberated for pleasure she is the 'free woman' whose fruitfulness will multiply. It is interesting to note that it is Letitia's fourth child, Ada - born out of her mother's mood of pleasure stimulated by the company of Gomez - whose offspring we follow to the end and climax of the novel. Aroused by her evening walk with the charming Spaniard, Letitia responds to her husband's embraces 'less passively than usual' (M 29) and conceives Ada, whom she would have preferred to call Aída in memory of Gomez's flirtatious rendering of 'Celeste Aída.' Significantly, as the novel progresses through several generations of Montforts, the children's names suggest that the potential of that romantic evening is ever closer to being realized. Ada begets Alda who begets Madeleine, whose libertine behaviour is in keeping with her name and who brings family history a full circle back to Madeleine du Remy des Baux. Ada actually marries Gomez's son, Florez de Moya, so satisfying Letitia's secret desires:

... she [Letitia] felt that because of circumstances in connection with her birth, which Letitia was too delicate-minded fully to acknowledge even to herself, it was exceptionally suitable that she should marry Florez de Moya.

M 79.

While Boyd approves of the spontaneous and natural manifestation of sexual vitality, in the instance of Ada's relationship with Florez he complicates his theme by revealing a threatening and destructive potential in the pursuit of self-gratification. There is a faint Blakean resonance in the contrast between the gentleness of Ada and the crushing sensuality of Florez. At any rate in the countenance of this strong-willed and sexually urgent young man we see the fearful symmetry of animal energy. Ada eventually dies in strange circumstances and there
is a suggestion that Florez has driven her to suicide by the excessive strength of his passionate nature. We know that as a boy he rode a horse to death and draw the inference that he has pursued a violent course in adult life by abusing his wife, perhaps sexually. In the familiar terms of *Much Else in Italy* Florez is the 'too savage God.'

A different and more interesting contrast— not simply of personality but of varieties of ethical freedom—is exhibited in the behaviour of Henry and Letitia. Both in their different ways are adulterers: Letitia in spirit, Henry in fact. Thus they reflect the character of the original adulteress, Madeleine des Baux. Henry's behaviour is less morally justifiable because of its covert nature. Henry hypocritically conceals his misdemeanour from the eyes of society at the same time as he is actively employed, as a judge, in the business of enforcing society's laws and condemning those who break them. Letitia is more the archetypal Magdalen figure, beautiful and luminous, forgiven for loving much. When she is discovered by her husband in her activities of encouraging the elopement of Gomez's daughter, Caroline, with Captain Blair—an attempt at vicariously fulfilling her personal desires—Henry is troubled in his mind: 'He felt as if some of the curse of Madeleine des Baux, the blight of frivolity on his family, had followed him to Melbourne' (M 48). The hypocrisy of this position begins to dawn on him towards the end of his life when he reconsiders his role as a judge. Boyd's description of Henry wandering through the bush, preoccupied with his conscience, brings to mind David Boyd's mask-like portraits of judges in 'The Trial' series, paintings which attempt to expose the smallness of man's justice within the wider metaphysical scheme of things. Here is the perplexed figure of The Montforts:

In his hand he held a frond of bracken, with which he swished automatically at the cloud of flies which swarmed about him, and settled in a black patch upon his back. There was no other human being in sight. Henry uncovered his head, which had the massive-ness of outline and expression that Simon had thought of as 'leonine.' Actually, his face had more of the sad nobility of a tired bloodhound. Henry was very tired. He looked at the beauty of the country about him, and thought how pleasant it would be to remain here, away from the terrible anxiety which must beset a conscientious judge. His sense of responsibility was great. He knew scientifically of the solar system, but he was not aware of it, of infinite spaces stretching beyond the ultimate stars. His mind, as he looked up at the evening sky, travelled no farther than the
pink and yellow clouds, which filled him with a sense of awe for the majesty of God, the God who he had vaguely considered since childhood as dwelling somewhere in the glories of that sunset. Henry's world was finite, and in that finite world his own position loomed large, and it was the sense of its largeness, of his burden of responsibility, that gave him his air of bloodhound nobility. Some day, some day soon, a day probably far nearer than that of his arrival in Melbourne twenty-five years ago, he would have to answer to that God in the sunset for all his deeds, for his private conduct, for the men he had sent to prison, for the men he had sent to the gallows. His face was very grave and weary.

The picture of Henry as a rather sad and clownish figure is reinforced by the episode which describes his receiving a posy of vegetables - deceptive in its prettiness - as a departure gift from the high-spirited children of his nephew, Sim. Again, one thinks of the pathos of David Boyd's satiric and at the same time compassionate pictures of bewigged judges dancing, copulating, nose-picking, strumming a serenade, stranded forlornly in a boat without oars or high in a tree in the midst of flood. Particularly suggestive is the painting 'Nosegay' (1963), which could well represent Judge Henry Montfort oddly caught out in a pathetic contradiction of his values. Witness Henry's reaction to the absurd bouquet:

Henry, in the train, looked with rueful amusement at his bouquet. It was not altogether ugly. The sprigs of parsley and the onion flower were delicately arranged. Somehow, it typified the Sim Montforts. It was perverse and facetious, and yet not without a kind of queer merit. At first sight it appeared to be the arrangement of an expensive florist, but on looking into it one found vegetables. The Sim Montforts, to a casual observer, would appear as reasonable members of the ruling class. They had behind them tradition and wealth. But on closer inspection one found an irresponsibility, an exaggerated sympathy with the underdog, and a certain homeliness which, while it was not unattractive, was scarcely what was expected of gentlefolk. These things, he supposed, were the result of life in Australia.

What Henry sees in the Sim Montforts is precisely that melting of inner constraint which he himself is in need of and shortly before his death he becomes obsessed with the 'twitching face' (M 94) of a criminal he has condemned to death, experiencing a catharsis of spirit when he is
at last able to identify with what is judged, by the limited vision of society, to be irredeemably evil:

Henry sat down and took off his collar. Still he saw the weak face of the murderer. His distinction of himself as one of the rulers of his finite world had become less clear to his exhausted brain. He had an awkward sense of relationship to this vile felon. The wretched man was the victim of his own uncontrolled impulses, impulses which in some degree were common to the whole human race. In the exercise of his duty he had become familiar with the spectacle of sin, but he had regarded it more as acquired than original. But to-day, the thought of the evil with which the nature of man was tainted from his birth obsessed him. His self-esteem was undermined. He found it difficult to regard himself as of a superior order of creation. He shared his human nature with the lowest criminal.

M 94.

In Henry's change of heart we see a fulfilment of the novel's early suggestion that the voyage across a 'heaving sea, to a country where there was no grey peace, no ancient dignity of architecture' (M 12) has a spiritual dimension, taking the uncritical inheritor of the externals of civilization - Henry sees his family as 'adventurous colonists, truly English, the successors of Raleigh and Drake and Captain Cook' (M 8) - beyond the veneer he too readily accepts as definitive reality. In this way The Montforts looks forward to the allegory of Nuns in Jeopardy.

The strong ethical tone of Boyd's treatment of the older generation, in particular of Henry and Letitia, has only a pale reflection in the subsequent playing off of characters and the elaboration of their unions and disunions. The repeating pattern of pairs of lovers employs a series of characters as mere counters in a symbolic scheme for which the analysis provided in the earlier contexts is meant to fulfil an allusive and suggestive function. The result is something worse than the running down of energy in the depiction of a new generation of characters in Wuthering Heights. It is redeemed slightly by a more vigorous effort at drawing real personalities in the final book of the novel, which deals with young Raoul, a great-grandson of Henry's brother, Simon. The figurative quality of Boyd's vision is still in evidence, however, as Raoul completes the book's symbolic search for the integrity of the original pleasure-loving Madeleine by marrying an offspring of Henry in the third generation: another Madeleine.
The circumstances of this Madeleine's birth are important, introducing the idea of a bar sinister with which the novel tentatively began by concentrating on sexual indiscretion. The sexual search reaches a peak in the adultery between Ada's and Florez's daughter, Aïda, and a distant cousin, Richard Montfort, who is a member of Sim's line. Aïda's and Richard's destinies are linked from the outset, since the couple are born on the same day. As children they share birthday parties presided over by an aged Letitia who looks on them as a little husband and wife. The suggestion is that something has been distilled from the Montfort blood, a mysterious essence, a family similitude, which draws Aïda and Richard together in natural communion. Richard comments on the attraction:

They talk of the attraction of opposites. It is nothing to the attraction of those who are alike. I think one's soul is always putting out feelers, as it were, to meet another soul with which it is completely in accord, or which is its counterpart. If it meets that soul it expands more, becomes greater and finer.

Richard and Aïda are young and unmarried when they consummulate their mutual passion in the environs of Florez's fourteenth-century Spanish castle where the atmosphere recalls the heat and dazzling light of their Australian home. Thus the novel comes full circle to Letitia and Gomez and their conversation about the relative qualities of Spain and Australia. In the meeting of the young lovers there is a deliberate echo of the circumstances of the earlier relationship:

This week of enchantment passed even more quickly than that at Biarritz, and another last evening came. After dinner they evaded the remainder of the party and stole out into the garden. Richard climbed up into the loophole and pulled Aïda up after him. The sun had set, but there was a glow over the sky and a half-light in the garden. They sank naturally into each other's arms. Now and then he murmured her name.

'Aïda, celeste Aïda, heavenly Aïda.'

The lovers are parted and do not meet again until after Aïda's marriage - through Richard's default in never following up the affair - to a Matthew Druce. The setting is once again Australia and the two renew
their passionate feelings for each other. This time, however, they are not lucky and their assignation in the bush surroundings of Sim's country house is overlooked by the vindictively judgemental Amy. The scene is one which recurs in the paintings of Arthur Boyd, that of the voyeur spying upon a pair of innocent lovers:

'Adulterers!' she gasped, and then, at a loss for further words, turned and beat her way back through the wood.

Richard relaxed his embrace. Dazed they looked after her. They were not yet able to grasp the significance of the situation. They only thought that it was like Amy to track down two lovers in a wood, and fling at them a word reeking of the law courts and the Old Testament.

M 163.

Despite the thwarting of the actual, if not spiritual act of adultery, a child is born to A'ida within a period which provokes Amy to hold a family council on the question of paternity. Although appearances suggest otherwise, the reality of the situation is quite without scandal from the point of view of the letter of the law. The child is in fact Druce's, but to the mind of A'ida it is illegitimate since 'for her, Matthew had been her infidelity' (M 158). The irony of the circumstance repeats in a more radical fashion the mating of Letitia and Henry in the flush of Letitia's flirtation with Gomez de Moya and points up the theme of freedom and convention. Conscious that she and Richard have failed the challenge of their love in the face of social pressure, A'ida dies of shame and grief shortly after giving birth but not before she has defiantly named the child Madeleine after the infamous ancestor who presides over the fate of the family. Richard derives some consolation from this: 'His literary sense and the Montfort in him was pleased .... It seemed rather a triumphant piece of jesting on the guillotine' (M 169).

The flower of pleasure blooms more triumphantly in Madeleine's generation, the search for an ideal of life reaching its climactic moment when Madeleine and Raoul Montfort Blair (a nephew of Richard's) become lovers. Appropriately, this takes place in Italy, the place of all places to satisfy Boyd's sense of rightness in regard to the pursuit of fulfillment for the mind and heart. In his cultural explorationsRaoul tries
to discover the mean between a dream of a possible life and its actuality as he finds and shapes it. In reinforcing this development of theme, Boyd has recourse to some rather mechanical and unnecessary details of plot. With strong symbolic overtones he has Sophie Blair, a woman of evangelical faith and puritanical temperament who yet finds that a repressed sensuality is stimulated in Latin countries, give birth to Raoul in Italy. This rather crude and simplifying algebra of the soul is pursued in the presentation of the polarity of Raoul's nature: ethical and pleasure-loving and in need of a transcending principle of synthesis.

The components of Raoul's search for a harmony of mind and body are epitomized by two female cousins, the intellectual Mabel and the 'intriguing young animal' (M 188) Madeleine, who is preoccupied 'only with the enjoyment of the moment' (M 195). At the same time, Boyd returns to his preoccupation with places and countries as providing through their geography and culture an imagery for the soul. As a child, Raoul is aware of a duality in his attitude to his immediate surroundings. While he enjoys his existence in a 'very pleasant world of ponies, rivers, sunflowers, fruit, and heat,' this is merely the 'foreground of life' (M 172). Beyond is a world, talked about by his elders, which is mysterious to his imagination, alluringly suggestive of an ideal:

... in the background was a marvellous romantic world of which he became aware by listening to the conversation of Kenneth and Sophie. They spoke often and regretfully of a lovely place called England, where the wild flowers were like garden flowers, and where, apparently there were the most beautiful houses .... Everything was covered with white stuff called snow. Snow was another fascinating, half-magical attribute of this country.

Wild flowers like garden flowers and snow - they were all part of the fairy stories he read. England was a kind of fairy-land. From Sophie he had intense religious instruction, which convinced him of the necessity of getting to Heaven. From his own observation he was convinced of the necessity of getting to England. England and Heaven were the two ultimate destinations of reasonable man.

M 172-73.

The desire for a richer experience, which finds etherealized expression in the dream of a distant, romantic land, is given a real and immediate outlet
through his conversations with Mabel, his reading of Shaw's plays, Schreiner's Woman and Labour and Morris' News from Nowhere - through which he is 'fired with enthusiasm for a state where work was merely a kind of social recreation, and the dustmen wore gold embroideries' (M 183) - his enjoyment of sea-bathing, his attendance at a Melbourne Club ball ('England itself could scarcely improve on this' [M 184]) and, importantly for the determination of his future values, his friendship with an elderly cousin, the matured Arthur of the beginning the novel who had immediately recognized beauty in the Melbourne landscape. Modelled on the novelist's 'Uncle Ted' à Beckett whose 'culture was that of the 'nineties,' Arthur is a witty purveyor of the fin de siècle message of anti-puritanism at a time when Raoul is in a position to benefit from it. Boyd describes the tutoring of the youth's unformed sensibility in Arthur's library:

Arthur laughed at his own pre-Raphaeliteism, and solemnly warned Raoul against his aesthetic tendencies. His bookshelves were full of the literature of the 'nineties, its precursors and its satirists. Raoul browsed among these, and found fresh sources of exhilaration. He did not know which he enjoyed more, the decadent poseurs or their ribald censors.

He was thrilled by phrases of Swinburne:

'... Death, the relentless,  
With a pinch in his fingers of scentless  
And delicate dust.'

But he also hugely enjoyed the mockery of:

'Thy small, straight hip, and weak delicious knee,  
So an though be.'6

M 184-85.

It is an education which contradicts Raoul's more moralistic and Victorian schooling:

And once, when his former headmaster was preaching in the cathedral he went to hear him, for old times' sake. The sermon was an appeal for the elevation of taste, for the blending of aesthetics with ethics. The preacher denounced those with 'the voice of an angel and the heart of a beast.' Beardsley, he mentioned, and Wilde, 'Yes, and our Norman Lindsays, too.' A thrill went through the congregation. All this was so exciting, thought Raoul, this clashing
of minds, of art with religion, of new intelligence with tradition.

Raoul is unaware at this point of the extent to which the aesthetic aspect of his personality has been unleashed and will demand future fulfilment.

After a journey in the real England, where evidence of war oppresses his spirit, puncturing the dream of 'fairy-land' (M 200), and, following this, his discovery of political and military cynicism and hypocrisy, Raoul transfers his hopes to Italy, which still has the magic of the unknown and which represents to him the possibility of a richly satisfying life. At this point in the original narrative, Boyd includes a poem Raoul writes to conjure up his tantalizing vision of a land of sunshine and delight for the senses. There does not seem much point to its removal in the revised edition (except for the fact that Boyd was, in his later years, embarrassed about his early efforts in verse) since it serves to underline the novel's search for the actuality of the Classical myth, the expression of Hellenic values:

And where beneath the high Italian sun,
Come singing peasants down the orchard slopes,
Vine-wreathed in the drowsy afternoon,
We shall forget past griefs and future hopes,
Not care what gods be false, nor what be true,
While summer smells rise from the grass
and impregnate the blue.

Ah, by the sapphire of Hellenic seas,
Stand naked in the sun, and let the wind
That wafted on his journey Herakles,
Blow weary wonderings from the modern mind,
And see the water blue, the wide sand gold,
And dive into the deep as the clean swimmers
dived of old.

Boyd puts the boy's mythologizing imagination into perspective, commenting: 'Raoul did not really know if the Greeks were good divers, nor whether orchard slopes were a feature of Italy, but he thought they sounded well'. While he suggests the vagueness of Raoul's imaginative groping towards an ideal, he depicts his hero as suddenly awakening to an intellectual awareness of his aspirations through the agency of his cousin Mabel.
When he returns to Australia after the war, Raoul feels more English than Australian in his sympathies. Mabel, to whom he communicates his changed attitude, suggests that he is aware that he has returned to an inferior culture. Australian society is misdirected, neither exploiting the real possibilities of the natural environment nor preserving what is of genuine worth in its English inheritance. Mabel is sickened by the 'second-rateness' (M 217) promoted by Australians and expresses her views in a manner which recalls Francis Adams' criticisms of the display motive of Melbourne taste in his chapter on 'Culture' in *Australian Essays* (1886):

They don't make their houses beautiful for beauty's sake. They make them beautiful to be in the fashion. Australians should either go to England or forget that they came from there as quickly as possible. Those who are so charmed by the Old World that they try to make imitation English manor-houses in Toorak, should go back again to the real thing. There's no place for them here.

M 217.

Mabel's special grievance is the prevalent wowserism which prevents people from enjoying themselves when they have the opportunity:

The South Melbourne Council insists on neck-to-knee bathing costumes, when the young men and maidens of this new world should be dancing naked in the sun. Melbourne on Sunday is like a Quaker meeting without the Holy Ghost. The importation of copies of Boccaccio is banned by the customs. And Norman Lindsay, with inverted Puritan fervour, but imagining himself endowed with the Greek spirit, as a protest draws voluptuous bovine females, with or without ballet skirts. It is all our wretched grandparents' fault. They came out here to found colonies for Queen Victoria, and to raise children to Jehovah.

M 217-18.

The need to moralize on the subject of pleasure reflects the extent to which puritanism was entrenched in Australian society of the period and is perhaps surprising when one considers that Oscar Wilde died in 1900 and that Mabel is speaking of Melbourne immediately after the First World War. But the facts of colonial history have to be taken into account in considering that city's persistent Victorianism. Robin Boyd, nephew of Martin, is emphatic that 'probably no other city in the world was ever so exclusively and enthusiastically Victorian as the capital of the State of Victoria':
The State of Victoria lived its youth in time and in turn with the queen who gave it her name. It was born, it thrived and subsided gracefully with her reign, growing from an explorer's mud hut to a highly civilized community in the half-century that was Victoria's — in the spirit, the letter, and in the image of Victorian taste and Victorian endeavour.10

Having begun in this fashion, Melbourne, like the rest of Australia, was slow to change. Describing the city just prior to World War I, the novelist comments in The Picnic that 'the dominions are always about twenty years behind the mother country in intellectual fashion' (P 86).

In connection with Mabel's outburst on the subject of neck-to-knee bathing costumes, it is interesting to note that, in the year preceding the publication of The Montforts, Boyd wrote a letter to The British Australian and New Zealander expressing his indignation at a group of Australian women who had been protesting about the 'indecencies of unseemly people' at the beach. In the same letter he remonstrates with the Melbourne municipal authorities:

Such people and such indecencies, if there are any, should certainly be suppressed, but one wonders a little wherein this unseemliness lies. Is it in the bathing costumes, which anyone who studies pictures of Australian surf bathing, showing thousands of men and maidens reclining on the beaches after their swim, will see, are as modest as any in the world. Yet they do not satisfy some of the ultra-prudes of Melbourne, where the authorities are said to have issued a ukase that 'Anyone bathing must be clothed from neck to knee.' Perhaps the fascination of alliteration, and, possibly, the jealous envy of fat old men, of slim young limbs glistening with health and beauty, has led to this order, which I trust will be laughed out of court. In the meantime, an artist in the Daily Express has satirised it neatly in a pleasing picture of Mrs. Grundy, of the Melbourne Beach, petticoated, patterned, and sandalled in a way to make the mermaids weep, should they ever come to join in the gambols of mortals in the blue waters of Port Phillip.11

Boyd's upbringing among painters may have contributed something to his apostolic zeal on such matters. The first life class at the National Gallery School was begun in the late 1880s in the face of public disapproval. Commenting on Tom Roberts' picture of boys bathing entitled 'The Sunny South,' Bernard Smith emphasizes the liberating and revolutionary aspects of such 'studies of the nude in a plein-air setting':
It is difficult, perhaps, to appreciate fully today the moral issues of the time. Surf-bathing in the open sea was proscribed by law, for example, and rigidly policed until 1902. Among writers and artists, however, the growing opposition to Victorian values expressed itself in an almost neo-pagan interest in nudity, sex and sun-cults, international in scope and significance. It was, of course, precisely this wowser atmosphere which gave rise to the protests of Norman Lindsay, who blazoned the nude in his work with magnified opulence and passionate gusto at every opportunity, gaining for himself the reputation of the enfant terrible of Australian art. Although his serious nature prevented Boyd from indulging in the kind of extravagant wowser-baiting characteristic of Lindsay, the blighting spirit of puritanism is something he never forgot and criticisms of it appear in many different guises, general and particular, throughout the novels.

In The Montforts, it appears as the enemy of the one real thing of value Australia has to offer: in Mabel's terms, the opportunity for a healthy, natural life in a good climate and in aesthetic surroundings.

Stepping back into Australian society after the war, Raoul is temporarily blind to the country's possibilities and in need of a cultural re-orientation which his conversations with Mabel help to supply. Raoul himself, Mabel points out, is like Australia, 'full of conflicting beliefs and emotions, half of which [he] should sort out and discard' (M 218), and his attempts at improving his cultural environment are misguided in their concentration on the outward signs rather than the reality of civilization:

... you have a Tennysonian impulse toward higher things, the same impulse which makes your mother storm the Kingdom of Heaven, and Geraldine storm Government House. You find in England a higher level of the things which interest you here, manners and furniture, and you come back again and try to produce in Melbourne a mere-tricious effect of English gentility.

M 218.

Mabel's preaching helps Raoul to reject a simplistic either/or attitude to England and Australia and to reconsider his pre-war Australian life as something of positive value. Pointedly, the occasion of this tête à tête is a Melbourne ball which is almost identical with a pre-war ball which thrilled the young Raoul with its fairy-tale beauty. Raoul is prompted
to remember his former innocent enjoyment with sympathetic affection and wonders if in the meantime he has not lost a valuable key to life:

To-night he could not get away from the memory of the two years before the war. He saw himself as he had been then, absurd, probably irritating, but at least alive, something from which a man might have been developed.

M 221.

Mabel is the catalyst in this process of growing self-awareness. Yet Raoul is not disposed to follow in her rather stringently intellectual path and is eager to find another way of expressing the radiance he has rediscovered in the world. Meditating on his conversation with Mabel he wanders along the beach in his evening clothes. Suddenly a St. Francis communing with nature, he forgets his inhibitions, removes his clothes - 'smelling of cigarettes and face powder' (M 222) - and plunges into the sea. This action is a pledge of commitment to his new search for a meaning in life.

Before she leaves Australia to make her own pilgrimage to Europe, Mabel is further able to assist Raoul's mental growth by articulating the need for a delicate balance of attitudes: 'It is so difficult to find the point between barbarism and decadence where one is intelligent without being sterile, and healthy without being crude' (M 222-23). Mabel's equanimity, her desire to search out the golden mean, is the example Raoul needs to solve his internal dilemma of divided loyalties. For the confirmation it seems to give to both aspects of his need - a longing for a shaping culture and tradition and a desire to live a life of instinctive enjoyment in harmony with nature - Italy replaces the warring symbols of England and Australia in Raoul's mind, offering a transcending synthesis of values. Raoul finds the country beautiful and satisfying to his hunger for rich sensation. As well, he enjoys there the society of enlightened people who live for pleasure: Mary who lives luxuriously and who professes 'no nationality' (M 231), Broom with his philosophy of 'perfected animism' (M 244) and, more than these, Madeleine, who has found her natural habitat in Italy and who is able to induce in him 'a kind of cheerfulness, a "liberation of the spirit"' (M 232). The process of liberation which is unfolding within him ultimately has its issue - in a rejection of de-
cadence and worldliness (manifest in one aspect of European life), a final condemnation of puritanism (as he detects it in Broom), and an adoration of beauty and mental vitality (summed up in the person of Madeleine).

In his relationship with Madeleine Raoul believes that he has brought about a synthesis of the claims of mind and body. After he has made love to her the world is dramatically changed: '... every material object had some degree of soul until one came to where it was most significant, most lambent, in the face and form of one's lover' (M 249). The totality of his reactions in fact suggests the first and second stages of the ascent outlined in Much Else in Italy, where the Apollo of Veii shows the pilgrim 'pure animal well-being' (MEI 35) and the Apollo of Tevere 'serenity of mind' (MEI 125). Boyd describes Raoul's state:

On the night on the beach at Brighton, when he had shed his formal clothes, and plunged into the cold sea, he had been moved by a desire, once more to reach beyond ideas, to penetrate into, and be part of, the forces of life and of nature.

And now at last he felt that he had succeeded. Once again he had that complete sense of liberation, that clarity of soul to soul, and with it had come a marvellous physical contentment. He thought kindly of Mabel and of Broom. They had done much to bring him to this state, though they were both, in spite of their protests, enemies of the human race. Raoul had never felt more amiably disposed towards humanity, had never felt less of the disdain of the intelligentsia. Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto. To-night he could love mankind with the warts on its face. Mabel had urged him to go to Europe to save his soul. He felt that it had been saved, and this soft radiant clarifying had been brought about by Madeleine.

M 250.

Boyd's depiction of Raoul's relationship with Madeleine completes the picture of the Montfort family as spiritual inheritors of the sexual indiscretion of the Rev. Simon Montfort and Madeleine des Baux. Raoul's liberation through pleasure is the novel's final affirmation of freedom triumphing over the law. That Raoul and Madeleine are meant to stand for the original pair of lovers is made clear (in a rather heavy-handed way) early in the narrative by the fact that as adolescents they spontaneously choose to play the parts of Madeleine and Simon in a game of
charades. This implied prophecy is fulfilled when Raoul seduces Madeleine in Italy under the portrait of 'Great Great-Grandmother Madeleine' (M 246). Thus the process which has been unfolding over a long period of time in generations of Montforts has its completion in the union of minds and bodies of the young lovers.

Rather belatedly in the final pages of the novel Boyd returns to his theme of an Australian civilization. The suggestion is that its creators might well be the liberated Raoul and his lovely young wife, although this is undermined slightly by the ironic patronage of the older generation as it emerges in the reactions of Arthur and Sophie. Raoul and Madeleine decide to settle in Australia and it is anticipated that they will bring with them the seeds of genuine culture which, in new soil, will flourish as in former times, carrying humanity to an unexpected future. Raoul has a vision of ancient Greek civilization transplanted to the Antipodes, as Sophie inadequately tries to explain to Arthur on the telephone:

'They talk of coming to Australia,' she said. 'Raoul wants to go on the land. He has written a lot about a farmer's life being the only sane existence for a healthy man. There are some quotations from Virgil that I can't understand. Kenneth thinks we may be able to give them Crosspatrick, if we can afford it.'

'Well, I'm very, very glad they're coming back,' said Arthur. 'I suppose Raoul will plough and feed the pigs in an embroidered tunic, and wearing a garland.'

M 254.

Thus The Montforts ends where it began, on an affirmation of Classical values, the natural product of Mediterranean climates. In fact its dialectic of Australia and England, of the experience and the dream of pleasure - a dialectic which is resolved in Italy - is repeated with varied resonances in Lucinda Brayford and the Langton novels.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE GOLDEN AGE: A MYTH OF AUSTRALIA IN LUCINDA BRAYFORD

Her present physical sensations were so like those of ten years earlier that she was taken more powerfully back in time. Yet, she thought in a brief reflective moment in which she seemed almost to grasp an elusive formula which could explain the pattern of her life, it was not so much as if she had travelled backwards but as if the past had moved into the present. She sometimes had dreams in which the landscape of her childhood appeared, but bathed in supernatural radiance, and the face of some half-forgotten playmate who was with her in the dream had acquired the beauty and tenderness of a seraph. Her present condition resembled one of these dreams. Perhaps the dreams revealed what life could and should become.

Lucinda Brayford.

Recollecting Australia prior to the First World War in 'Dubious Cartography,' Boyd wrote nostalgically: 'Melbourne then was a hive of painters, poets and musicians, not all of the highest achievement, but deeply concerned with aesthetic values. The public bought their paintings and listened to their songs' (DC 8). Just as the art of the period evokes a privileged moment in his own life, so the mood of the generation which shared this experience - its innocence, hope and appreciation of a first flowering in the country's cultural life - informs the novelist's creation of a myth of Australia in Lucinda Brayford (1946). Throughout the novel - which begins in the mid nineteenth century but soon moves into the turn-of-the-century period with its narrative of Fred Vane, a prosperous sheep farmer who embraces the display culture of Melbourne's nouveaux riches - there is a looking back to pre-war Australia as a legendary time filled with bright images. Lucinda Brayford, one of Boyd's seekers, is, like Raoul Montfort Blair, a representative of the generation which experienced its youth in the confident years before the war. As the backdrop to his heroine's early life, Boyd paints a lively cultural milieu - represented by the boom in Australian architecture (both in its crudely exhibitionist and more aesthetic aspects), the contribution of the Heidelberg painters and the songs of Nellie Melba - whose spontaneous vigour reinforces the heroine's appreciation of an atmosphere rich in nourishment for the senses. Above all,
Lucinda responds to the arcadian freshness of the Australian scene, by some alchemy of the natural environment remaining unspoilt by the vulgarity and pretentiousness of her parents. Despite wide differences in orientation between his imagination and that of the utopian socialist, Bernard O'Dowd, Boyd, in his portrait of Lucinda, creates something like the enthusiasm of the poet who thought it appropriate in 1910 to invite

... the fit of all the world to share
The peeping glory of our opening page,
To love as we her gum-tree-scented air,
And build the dramas of the Golden Age.

From the point of view of narrative structure Lucinda Brayford resembles The Montforts in depicting the children of successive generations as they move closer to the fulfilment of a spiritual search. It begins with the story of the heroine's mother, Julie Vane. Like the pleasure-seeking of other heroines in Boyd's fiction - notably Brangane's - Julie's tends towards the hedonistic. In the next generation, Lucinda is able to refine an ethic of pleasure to the point where she can recognize the value of self-sacrifice in the cause of increasing the amount of happiness in the world. Finally, the search for fulfilment is discovered to have a religious goal and this is summed up in Lucinda's son, Stephen, who bears a message of moral wisdom to his mother. In the story of Stephen (to be examined in a later chapter) we witness Boyd fictionalizing his concept of 'the Christian story,' one of the two 'stories,' the Greek and the Christian, which, as argued in Much Else in Italy, 'have coloured our souls' in the Western world (MEI 5). Thus the novel moves beyond the tentative syntheses of a Gothic-Classic duality in the minor fiction and the dominantly Classical temper of The Montforts.

For the purpose of clarifying the basis of Boyd's vision in Lucinda Brayford, I am concerned in the present chapter to concentrate on the Classical rather than the Christian story, that is, on the pursuit in Boyd's work of an ideal in which human satisfaction has precedence over sorrow and sacrifice.

The picture of Australia offered in Part I of the novel is notable for its feeling of burgeoning life, communicated as much in details of imagery as in the broad narrative of events. Boyd writes of the character
'Watteau,' for example, that 'the tendrils of her affections began to sprout with new life, preparing to twine themselves round Julie, her baby and the station homestead' (LB 19). The description of 'Watteau' at her toilette, highlighting her magnificent hair as a plant-like growth, evokes in terms of the pictorial and statuesque an especially characteristic art nouveau motif and one that is reproduced frequently in the work of many of the Boyds - that of the intertwining of foliage and the human form. 'Watteau' reveals what is in Boyd's eyes a paradox about Australia: the fact that, harsh as the country is, it can give rise to a lush aestheticism, something resembling even the delicate vision of the eighteenth-century painter. Imagistically, Boyd enriches his picture of Australia with many bright touches and splashes of colour. There are Julie's innocent daisies, Fred's 'green spectacles' (LB 25), Bill's and Blake IX's turbans decorated with oranges in place of jewels, the orange boughs Lucinda and Tony pick for the cloisonné vases at Tourella, the cool appearance of the Vane girls in their 'white muslin dresses ... embroidered with different coloured flowers' (LB 50), the panes of glowing fire-red glass at Cape Furze, baroque displays of abundant and lavish food which include an inappropriately rich Christmas dinner of 'roast turkey and a brandy-soaked plum pudding' (LB 50), a buffet 'laden with jellies and coloured sugared cakes, and oyster patties and bowls of claret cup' (LB 44) and a luncheon extravaganza looking like 'an illustration from an early edition of Mrs Beeton' (LB 64). With regard to the theme of pleasure, the first book of the novel describes an outburst of fruitfulness after the breaking of the drought at Noorilla. The spectacular multiplication of Fred's sheep and the conception of Lucinda initiate a movement towards prosperity which culminates in the purchase and showy display of the Vane's Italianate mansion at Toorak and the successful courting of Lucinda by Hugo Brayford, an English A.D.C. Against this background there are three significant and dramatic burgeonings of life, three conceptions of children which constitute high points of the early narrative. The arrival of Lucinda herself, the real heroine of the novel, symbolizes material and spiritual hope to the emotionally starved Julie who, when the rain comes to fructify their barren property, consents to be made love to by a jubilant Fred in a revival of previously deadened feelings:
... he [Fred] looked so beautiful and so happy that Julie suddenly felt something break inside her. She too melted with the coming of the rain. She forgave him everything and she burst into tears. He leapt into the bed and took her in his arms, at first hugging her in wild delight, then kissing her tenderly. From this reconciliation was born the second of Julie's daughters, who was christened Lucinda.

LB 28.

Consistently with his habit of connecting hot climates with the pursuit of sensual gratification and because Australia is not quite the place to encourage the most luxurious kinds of pleasure, Boyd turns to Colombo for the setting of Julie's illicit affair with Maitland, an Oxford anthropologist who removes 'her usual protective shell of convention' (LB 36) by his insinuating talk of the sexual rites of primitive cultures: 'All the things he had told her seemed to be part of his lovemaking, and she in turn seemed to become part of the whole natural world, of the cinnamon-scented forest, the smooth rocks and the brilliant sea' (LB 37). Julie conceives Bill in a tropical forest, sowing the seeds of dissension - a fact which emerges later in the novel - through her action of disrupting the settled order of social relationships. When Bill meets and wants to marry his half-sister, Anne Maitland, misfortune ensues. Boyd does not judge Julie but he shows the consequences of thoughtless action, consequences which are beyond the capacity of the agent to harmonize with the established pattern of life. There is a weakness in Julie's position which later defines itself as a failure of mental and spiritual control over her life and the adult Lucinda, herself embroiled in an illicit relationship, sees the unhappy outcome of her mother's adultery as a mirror of the feebleness of her own grasp of self. Thus Boyd exposes the potential for dissipation in the pursuit of pleasure, concentrating on personalities unenlightened by a concept of the human being as a physical, social and spiritual entity.

The third union to bear special fruit on the family vine is that of Hugo Brayford and Lucinda. Part I concludes with Lucinda's marriage to Hugo and the couple's honeymoon in the countryside. Something of the freshness of the innocent, amoral, untouched Australia - a land at once 'terribly ancient, wistful and yet harsh' (LB 141) - influences and redeems even the opportunistic Hugo who has married Lucinda for her money. Together the two make a final pilgrimage to the Christmas Hills
to absorb the atmosphere of the country of Lucinda's childhood. Below them spreads a panoramic landscape bathed in colour and rich with the smell of gum trees. The scene is reminiscent of Streeton's vision of the majesty of the Australian landscape, just as the little cottage in the bush where the couple eat grapes and passion fruit could well be the subject of a Walter Withers painting. When Hugo makes love to Lucinda it is as if she were being penetrated by a sun god:

They sat down to rest after the climb. Lucinda lay back and closed her eyes against the sun, white and blinding in the mid-heaven. Hugo began to make love to her. At first she tried to restrain him, because of the time and place. But then the time and place, the high and piercing sun, the stark earth, seemed to fuse in her body in a wild desire. A kind of ferocity seized them, a joy passed beyond endurance to pain. She felt that she was consumed by the sun itself, by some first principle of life that immolated her body in an act of new creation.

Stephen, who in adolescence resembles a pipe-playing Pan (only to become in young manhood the Man of Sorrows whose beauty is obscured) is conceived out of this surprise of the sun, the gratuitous rapport between husband and wife which is never again experienced in their lives.

From the point of view of the Classical theme in the novel, the name Lucinda suggests a richly significant allusion to Virgil's Fourth Eclogue, which celebrates a return to the Golden Age and heralds the birth of Apollo under the auspices of the goddess of childbirth, Lucina:

We have reached the last era in Sibylline song. Time has conceived and the great Sequence of the Ages starts afresh. Justice, the Virgin, comes back to dwell with us, and the rule of Saturn is restored. The Firstborn of the New Age is already on his way from high heaven down to earth.

With him, the Iron Race shall end and Golden Man inherit all the world. Smile on the Baby's birth, immaculate Lucina; your own Apollo is enthroned at last.

Virgil's poem is especially relevant to Boyd's characterization of Lucinda because of its traditional, if speculative, interpretation as
a prophecy of Christ's birth. The setting for the heroine's surrender to the pagan force of the sun is, after all, the Christmas Hills. But these resonances in part look forward to Boyd's treatment of 'the Christian story' later in the novel. In the present context it is enough to observe the symbolic framework Boyd erects in the early book to suggest the advent of a special child.

Such is the potency of the new country in stimulating an impulse towards life. The feeling of great energy and creativity is reinforced by the narrative of the Vanes' (the 'vains'') progress towards their Italianate mansion in Toorak, a nouveau riche monument to prosperity and success. Although we are indeed in Vanity Fair - Tourella stands for everything Boyd dislikes about the new society which sprang up in the boom years - this does not interfere with the suggestion of movement and power in the description of Fred's empire-building. Tony Duff sums up the author's dislike of ostentatious displays of wealth in the thought that 'it was amazing how little of the real spirit of the Renaissance the architect had managed to put into the house' (LB 95). However, its large-scale vulgarity adds to the picture of a society growing easily and rapidly in material success, a picture rather reminiscent of Francis Adams' judgement of Melbourne civiliztion as showing a 'general sense of movement, of progress, of conscious power,' promise in the spheres of 'intellect and knowledge,' but a glaring deficiency in 'beauty and manners.' At any rate Boyd highlights the dynamic element in Australian society, even when it is perverted to unhappy ends. Thus, as W.S. Ramson hints, even the aggressively self-seeking Australian newspaperman, Straker, is accommodated into the novel's vision of energy:

The vitality of the Australian society is perhaps emphasised by its proliferation of children, the barrenness of the English by Marian's sterility, Paul's homosexuality, and Hugo's relationship with Mrs Fabian Parker. It is thus ... pertinent that Straker's crude, undisciplined energies should chop so disruptively into the settled ways of the English establishment.

Loathsome as Straker is, he is powerful and thrusting and it may be that behind the immediate shudder we harbour a little amazement at this commercial prodigy. Like Francis Adams' newspaperman, he 'will have to be reckoned with':
For he sums up the outward and visible shape, if not the inward and spiritual grace, of the Australian civilisation in its most striking and dominant aspects, more nearly than any single person can.

Of all the types I have taken, he is far away the most typical—the tall, coarse, strong-jawed, greedy, pushing, talented man, with his secularised religion and his commercialised democracy.

That is the 'civilised Australian.'

Boyd and Adams are alike in their portrait of an unscrupulous type which threatens civilization by putting it on a commercial basis. In Boyd's view, however, the threat is more sinister than Adams allows and quite beyond humour. As an extreme example of the secular puritan, Straker is a frightening figure whose assertiveness bears no comparison with the unredeemed, but dazzling animal energy of the primitive type, represented in _The Montforts_ by the self-centred, passionate and violent Florez de Moya.

Both in _The Montforts_ and _Lucinda Brayford_ there are two distinct aspects to the spirit of the new country. One is innocent beauty, the other crude, sometimes destructive energy. These are expressed in _Lucinda Brayford_ by the opposition of the characters of Lucinda and Straker and in the fact that Lucinda's idyllic childhood is set against the background of the family's progress towards Tourella. Straker's role in Lucinda's life properly belongs to 'the Christian story' and illustrates an ideal of beauty and enjoyment of life crucified by the forces of darkness: dishonest wealth and treacherous power. This aspect of the novel will be considered in a later chapter. The progress towards Tourella belongs to the Classical story and illustrates the approximation of colonial society to an ideal which, in _Much Else in Italy_, Boyd represents as the Apollo of Veii. While in his own way Fred Vane is comparable to Straker, his greed does not have the same malignant effects, nor does he exhibit the latter's evident hatred of the good. Moreover, in a general way his energy and creativity appear attractive insofar as they may be translated into a dream of Australian prosperity, particularly when this is evoked against the backdrop of a decaying Europe. Indeed, the novel is emphatic in its juxtaposition
of societies. While Australian society is moving forward, European society is entering a phase of decline. The cultural difference is summed up in the contrast between Australian and English houses and families. Tourella has its flower, Lucinda, whose name suggests scintillating light. Crittenden has its wreath: the martyred Stephen.

An alternative to the hedonism of Julie and the empire-building of Fred is depicted in Lucinda's girlhood relationship with Tony Duff. Despite its limitations, this innocent friendship reflects the best that the Australian environment has to offer for a life of happiness. Although she lives among people with dubious values, the child and adolescent Lucinda remains unspoilt. She is the typical pilgrim in Boyd's fiction whose starting-point is an ideal of pleasure. Witness her defence of the aesthetic Tony to a sceptical Julie and Fred who are discussing the possibility of Fred's finding the 'poodle-fakir' (LB 127) a job:

'I like people who live for pleasure.'

They all looked at her in astonishment, as they all believed that Fred's relentless acquisition of money, and Julie's resolute social activities, her dinners, her balls, her bridge, her expensive and careful dressing, had almost nothing to do with pleasure, but served some deep if obscure moral purpose, that they were almost a reflection of the Divine Will.

'I hope, my dear,' said Fred pompously, 'that you have some more serious aim in life than the pursuit of pleasure.'

'I don't really know,' said Lucinda and laughed again.

LB 128.

Lucinda herself is a budding aesthete and Tony is her mentor and companion in the discovery of a richness of feeling and sensation. The dazzling sun and sea of the Tarpeian Rock, the beauty of Mrs Talbot's house at Cape Furze and the luxury of Tourella itself, contribute something to the phases of development in a growing relationship.

At the Tarpeian Rock, Lucinda experiences an awakening of sensuality. Watching the enjoyment of her young brother and his friend, she becomes conscious of 'an impulse of sensuality' manifested in their romping tomfoolery and transfers the insight to her sense of Tony's close presence:
The sun, which had struck so deep into the rock that long after dark its surface would return warm breaths of air, had also possessed those who lay on it. Blake turned over and Bill rubbed coconut oil on his back to stop it from blistering. He fooled about as he did it, and then a darker mood troubled his spirit and he hugged his friend so violently that he gasped: 'Look out, you're breaking my ribs!' The oil bottle fell over, and Bill, inconsequently forgetting the mood of a moment earlier, dashed to save it.

Lucinda looked at Tony. She recognised that behind Bill's ragging there had been an impulse of sensuality, and again that seemed to her a thing to be accepted naturally, and less consciously she felt it to be an enrichment of life, and to contain some dim promise of a deeper relationship between Tony and herself. As she looked at him her eyes were full of candid and innocent acceptance.

The passage recalls the description of a similar subject in The Montforts, with its Heidelberg appreciation of light and transient aesthetic effects. As in The Montforts, Boyd embraces the point of view of his protagonist, but in the narrative of Lucinda the en plein air vision of natural beauty is put to more purposeful use. A key component in the total structure and meaning of the novel, the scene at the Tarpeian Rock marks the genesis of the heroine's personal myth of happiness:

... she looked ... at the scene before her, and although she made no deliberate attempt to remember it, in that moment it was printed vividly on her mind and remained there for many years - the sea with its dazzling white horses, the hot expanse of the Tarpeian Rock, and the two sprawling sunburnt boys with their oranges - and she remembered always the feel of the cool wind as it caressed her arms and lifted her hair.

Lucinda's relationship with Tony reaches a climax of intensity on a day's outing to Cape Furze House, which is described by Boyd in terms recalling his habitual oppositions of North and South, Gothic and Classic, restraint and pleasure. The house is a symbol of harmony and perfect enjoyment. In its weathered contours the northern mould of civilization has been Australianized, which is as much as to say Hellenized, since Australia resembles the European south and is still in its Golden Age:
Set amidst those parched, distorted paddocks on the edge of an arid coast, protected only by a few pines, almond trees and eucalyptus, it had no resemblance to an English country house. Its white stone gables and twin gothic towers had shed all association with the north. They had been bleached of its influence by the salt and the gum trees. They shone chalkily above the sombre pines. The only bright green was the harsh splash of some sea shrub down the cliff to the right of the house which blazed against the expanse of the sea itself, today wine-dark and vivid.

LB 63.

At the same time, the Gothic aspect of the house spiritualizes the atmosphere surrounding the couple. In particular, Boyd's description of different kinds of light recalls references elsewhere in his fiction to Chesterton's distinction between the 'light through' of Gothic art and the 'light on' of Classic. Of the former Chesterton writes: 'The Gothic artists ... would have liked men's bodies to become like burning glass (as the figures in their windows do), that the light might pass through them.' Such an interpretation would seem to give the following detail in Boyd's description added resonance:

Mrs Talbot led Tony and Lucinda down a long stone passage and let them out by a door in which there were panes of red glass, which made the outside world, already sufficiently hot, appear as if it were on fire.

LB 65.

Boyd is expressing the search for a synthesis of values in a spontaneous allegory which makes use of visual contrasts implicit in the scene. As a prelude to Lucinda's and Tony's mutual declaration of love, the novel describes their movement through the Gothic passageway, then out into the open, a place of 'light on' without 'any evidence of the work of man' (LB 67). It is in this daylight world, in which they confront the natural rhythm of the breaking sea, that they feel 'that they [have] shed all misunderstanding, and that a truth [has] been shown to them' (LB 67).

The final setting for the positive phase of the Lucinda-Tony relationship is Tourella. Involved in the decorations for an extravagant garden party planned by Julie, the couple enjoy an afternoon's idling in Fred's orchard, picking orange branches to fill the enormous cloisonné
vases which stand in the hall. The golden fruit seems an emblem of the fullness and maturity of their relationship before its decline. Ironically, the garden party marks the beginning of Tony's alienation from the family as Fred Vane is annoyed by the destruction to his orange trees and Julie uses this as an excuse to separate the lovers. Moreover it has an air of decadence about it, although it is a pretty occasion and graced by the presence of Nellie Melba, who delights her audience, or nearly all of it, since there are one or two in the company who are sceptical of the Vanes' pretentiousness and the unreality of the mood of the gathering:

Melba sang two or three songs, Down in the Forest, Musetta's song from Bohème, and finally Home, Sweet Home. As the notes of this last song dropped like so many pure and perfect jewels into the afternoon air, everybody was moved except the Misses Lanfranc, who cast their eyes about the ostentatious room and smiled ironically.

LB 96.

The irony is justified, for within a few years war has broken out, dispelling forever the illusion of a Golden Age.

However, Boyd does not intend to undermine the value of the myth, in spite of its fragility, and a refinement of it is seen in Tony Duff's dream of fulfilment, epitomized in The White House he plans as a tribute to Lucinda:

He gave infinite care to every detail of the plan, trying to create a house which would be a fitting dwelling place for her. He spent a whole day on working out the proper width for three steps which were to lead up from the hall to the ballroom, and as he did so he imagined her standing at the top of them. He spent a week designing the delicate plaster work for the ceiling with its pattern of lilies which was a play upon her name.

LB 80.

As a work of art The White House has grace and beauty, contrasting strongly with the vulgarity of Tourella: 'It may have been a trifle
art nouveau, but even that gave it a youthful freshness after the pompous Italianate mansions of the boom, and the glaring so-called "Queen Anne" houses which followed them' (LB 80). Passed over by Fred in favour of Tourella, it never becomes the setting for the happiness Tony has imagined for, sadly, it is at a house-warming ball at The White House - eventually built for the Radcliffes - that Lucinda meets the fortune-hunting Hugo Brayford to whom Fred's wealth, together with Lucinda, represents a desirable spoil. On the same occasion Tony proposes marriage and is refused. Thirteen years her senior, he is not really a suitable match for the immature girl, but in parting from him Lucinda is separated from the innocent and pleasurable Eden world of her childhood. This marks a turning point in Tony's life also as the disappointed suitor leaves the Radcliffes' ball to face another grief, the death of his mother. Because of the old lady's mismanagement of money during the boom, it is necessary for Tony to turn his home into flats. A shrine to the Golden Age remains, however, in the portion of the house he keeps for himself. His flat is lovingly decorated with paintings preserved from the years of hope, paintings redolent of a dreamed-of contentment: 'Streeton's "Purple Noon" and Walter Withers' "Sunlit River"' (LB 124).

Boyd makes a noteworthy observation about the structural design of Lucinda Brayford in 'Dubious Cartography':

The first part, the bright undercoat, is set in Australia. Then the scene moves to England. The undercoat is covered with layers of new experience, darkening the canvas. Through these layers the former brightness glows and fades, enriching the texture, and there is always a feeling of Australia in the air, remembered glimpses that recur like motifs in music.

Dorothy Green, who captures the memorable atmosphere of the Australian scenes in Lucinda Brayford, identifies Boyd's use of the motif: 'It is important to notice that it is her life in Australia, particularly the warmth, beauty and innocence of the seaside existence at Flinders which becomes the touchstone of Lucinda's happiness in a crumbling world.' Indeed Boyd elevates the heroine's Australian experience to the level of
a mythic apprehension of a transcendent good, something which escapes Lucinda in her ordinary life. Through a constant striving to live in the Australian 'story,' the myth of utopian happiness, she rescues her life from its bleak and sometimes sordid contingencies.

It seems to Lucinda that the essence of her Australian life resides at Crittenden, the English family home of the Brayfords. The experience of traditional European culture which life at Crittenden offers is richer than anything the heroine has formerly known and she finds that it gives a new significance to her knowledge of European civilization, absorbed unconsciously and at a second remove in Australia. Predictably, she responds most keenly to the signs of a Classical inheritance in her new surroundings. Classicism reflects her innate ethic of pleasure, derived from the delights of her childhood in a warm, sensuous country. A clarity of understanding comes to her in her new environment:

Till now she had always thought that only the gothic past had interest and poetic appeal, partly because she had assimilated this Victorian idea with her education, and partly because the classical motives were repeated with mechanical hardness in Tourella and the Melbourne Town Hall.

LB 153.

In the Classical doorway of Crittenden, 'formal and yet sensitive, with its delicate carving softened by two and a half centuries of sun and frost' (LB 153-54), Lucinda detects 'a different attitude towards life from that she had known hitherto' (LB 154). Finding herself in the mainstream of culture for the first time, she experiences a liberation of her imagination and a deepening of her insight into the possibilities of life. As in other novels, Boyd introduces his protagonist to a cultural mentor, whose role is that of a catalyst. In this case it is Paul Brayford, who stimulates Lucinda to thoughts about the nature of civilization through his own wide culture and through his fin de siècle views concerning the authority of the artist. However, Paul's aestheticism and the limitations of his values are best examined in subsequent chapters.

At times, contemplating the evidence of a deeply rooted tradition, Lucinda seems to enter a new dimension of spiritual awareness. Boyd
defines her new perceptiveness as she listens to Paul Brayford playing Renaissance and Baroque music on the organ in the Crittenden chapel:

She felt that she was subject to some power beyond herself and beyond the temporary advantages of men. In Melbourne she had not felt that at all - she had not felt that there was any power beyond Fred's cheque book. On that first afternoon when she had arrived at Crittenden she had had a hint of this feeling, but nothing to the extent to which it came upon her in the chapel while she listened to Paul. It seemed to her that only when one's life was linked to the beauties and tragedies of the past, as in this music and in this house, did it have any richness of texture, that only when one had accepted a background of pessimism did one's pleasures become civilised.

LB 171-72.

The inclination to view her life from the standpoint of ultimate values comes to Lucinda on other occasions, giving her a feeling of inward repose. Because it builds on the foundations of the heroine's Australian experience of beauty and pleasure, to which is added the sweetness and light of intellectual comprehension, this movement in Lucinda's life suggests the attainment of the Apollo of Tevere phase of development outlined in Much Else in Italy, a phase in which the body is 'in harmony with the serene mind.' Walking with her child in the park, Lucinda feels for a moment that she belongs to an eternal world:

... she felt that Wordsworth's ode was true, and that walking beneath the trees and across the sunlit grass of the park they were enclosed in some space where their spirits moved freely together in light. Long afterwards she remembered this afternoon as itself a space of light in a long stretch of shadow, like one of those pools of light which they traversed as they walked beneath the trees.

LB 208.

For all that it strengthens her personality, however, the illuminative aspect of Lucinda's European experience, an experience of a world brought to life through the intimations of the architect, musician and poet, is far removed from everyday problems and is especially absent from her marriage. Hugo is unfaithful from the beginning, so that side by side with the heroine's expansion of consciousness through contact
with a living culture there is an equally impingent feeling of diminishment. Lucinda tries to repress this feeling in her relationship with Pat Lanfranc. Unfortunately, the discovery awaits her that Pat is 'exactly the same type as Hugo' (LB 362). To begin with she has doubts about the ethics of adultery, largely as a result of her discovery of Julie's subterfuge which prompts her to recognize a tawdry element in her own pleasure-seeking. In this mood her surroundings suddenly appear distastefully decadent: '... she contemplated the grey and yellow room. Its French elegance, its engravings of Lancret and Fragonard, struck her as over-sophisticated, almost immoral ...' (LB 226). Disillusionment and confusion serve to heighten the importance of her Australian experience, for it is in this context that memories return to the surface of her mind to reaffirm her belief in the free expression of sensuality — in spite of the danger to moral harmony:

She thought of her childhood and youth at The Pines and at Flinders, so decent, so secure, so intensely respectable, and all the time this rotten thing had been built into its foundations, to bring about, years afterwards, this collapse, and to make it impossible to look back tranquilly on that happy past. But even as she thought of this to the accompaniment of the even rhythm of the train, she evoked memories of that past, of a hot morning at Flinders, when Bill and Blake IX made turbans of their towels and put oranges on them, and she and Tony sat in the shade of the Tarpeian Rock.

LB 233.

What Australia stands for in Lucinda's mind — the possibility of a life of innocent pleasure — remains uncontaminated by her repugnance for Julie's betrayal of Fred, her suffering through Hugo's relationship with Stella Fabian Parker and her moral equivocation about her own relationship with Pat. Because of this, the affair with Pat is temporarily redeemed by the alluring call of a guiltless, happy past when satisfaction of one's sensual nature presented no practical or moral difficulties.

Significantly, Lucinda draws life from the same inner source to sustain Hugo through his crisis when he almost dies of his war injuries. On the steamer crossing the channel she converses with an Australian subaltern who is familiar with the countryside of her childhood and, in particular, with the Tarpeian Rock. These recollections have a profound effect on the heroine, restoring her emotional equilibrium:
By the time they reached Boulogne, his slight drawl and his unsuspicuous friendliness, both marked Australian traits, as well as the subject of their talk, had awakened vividly in her mind that earlier part of her life, and had somehow given her a sense of balance.

LB 245.

In the ensuing scenes depicting Hugo's crisis a powerful contrast between the new-world spirit of hope and the despair of a dying civilization emerges in the restorative role given to Lucinda as she fights for Hugo's life. To begin with her 'memories of Melbourne' (LB 246), revived by the subaltern, increase her wife's sense of injustice, especially since the delirious Hugo mistakes her for his mistress:

It was against that background that she saw the present scene, which made it seem more unjust to her. Hugo, she told herself bitterly, had taken her out of that happy life, and even now he did not want to see her but the woman for whom he had neglected her.

LB 246.

At the same time Lucinda is able to draw upon her profound emotional resources to help Hugo when he seems to be on the brink of death. It is as if some of the intense vitality of their early relationship were returning through the power of touch as she wills to restore his waning life, trying 'with all her being to pour her life into him through her hand.' And when there is 'a faint pulse of response,' she is 'filled with an extraordinary happiness, of a kind she had not known before' (LB 249). Hugo himself, his 'iron grip' (LB 251) on her hand, and the hospital, a converted casino, are images of a civilization nearing its end. In her half-asleep reveries Lucinda watches at Hugo's bedside - in what was once a baccarat room and where now a chandelier hangs 'ghostly' (LB 249) - dreaming that the room has 'become the saloon at Crittenden, vulgarised and distorted, and Hugo's hand like a vice ... holding her there against her will' (LB 249). When she awakes Australian and English scenes pass through her mind. The comment on the two cultures could not be plainer. In contrast to Part I of the novel, which dealt with Lucinda's Australian experience and which ended with love-making in the sunlit bush, Part II ends with an image of extinguished light. Hugo, through Lucinda's emotional support, begins to recover
but the suggestion of sterility and death remains. The heroine is subject to 'confused dreams' (LB 251), in which her imagination returns to the casino where her hand is once again in the vice of Hugo's grip and her gaze is fixed on the 'dead chandelier' (LB 251). Thus Part II closes in a sepulchral mood which recapitulates the most negative aspect of Lucinda's European experience.

In Part III, entitled 'The Leaves on the Fallen Tree,' Boyd refines his use of Australia as an image of pleasure. This is achieved by the dissociation of the myth of a Golden Age from the actual historical Australia which clearly shares in the spiritual ailment of the rest of Western civilization. In both England and Australia the mood is now autumnal, providing a sombre opening to the third movement with the Australian motif appearing in a new key. The country we return to with the newly married Bill and Muriel is less vital than that of Bill's and Lucinda's youth. Tony's decorations for the ball given by Fred Vane in honour of the young couple elaborate the autumnal image and the Tarpeian Rock, which Bill and his old friend Blake IX drink to, is a place which has entered the mythic past. The bright sensual existence of those days cannot be recaptured although the memory is still vivid, contrasting strongly with Bill's immediate feelings about the England he has escaped, an England which is associated in his mind with the tragedy of his engagement to Anne Maitland, his half-sister. Bill's anglophobia is extreme: 'England's a hell of a country' and the English are 'like washing that's hung out on a line and gets frozen stiff' (LB 265). But then there is no suggestion that Australia can offer any real compensation for the failings of the old world and there is the added irony that the problem of Bill's illegitimacy is as much the responsibility of the Australian Julie as of the English Maitland.

Chapter two returns to Lucinda's point of view with a long meditation on the relative appeal of the contrasting landscapes of England and Australia. Lucinda values the English countryside because of its traditional associations:

Australia was supposed to be geologically the most ancient country in the world, and in certain moods its hot, savage, wistful landscape of arid earth and stark trees suggested primeval time, but humanly it was new, so that even its most pleasing prospects, like the view from the Christmas Hills, did not drench one in the past
as did the English scene spread below her. A man of the eighteenth century or even earlier standing here would have seen it little different.

LB 273-74.

Yet there is a claustrophobic atmosphere surrounding the English scene through its very connection with the past. Lucinda muses: 'The Australian artist was free to paint the scene as it appeared fresh to his eyes. Here if one did not see everything through the eyes of the eighteenth century, the result was thought to be in bad taste' (LB 274). As a consequence, she feels 'an urgent need to save herself ... from the things that had died' (LB 275) and, in order to escape 'this oppressiveness of the past' (LB 274), resolves not to send Stephen to Eton where he would learn to conform to the traditional mould and become an 'anachronistic replica' (LB 275) of his ancestors. At the same time she seeks personal liberation in a renewal of her relationship with Pat.

Lucinda comes closest to realizing the dream of pleasure as it is enshrined in the myth of Australia in her holidays in Provence, where Paul has a villa. Here she feels that she has returned to the bright world of her childhood which she now shares with her young son. In his first view of southern France Stephen exclaims joyfully: 'Look, Mummy! It's all light, it's all light!' (LB 300). Lucinda herself is reminded nostalgically of the Australian countryside as she is filled with sensations which repeat her past experience of a similar climate - the scent of eucalyptus and pine, the sight of dry twigs, luscious grapes and a colourful expanse of sea. In a small way her total recall of childhood sensations is reminiscent of Proustian involuntary memory, suggesting the permanence of the past within her. Thus the experience points to an immortal self awaiting its moment of resurrection:

Her present physical sensations were so like those of ten years earlier that she was taken more powerfully back in time. Yet, she thought, in a brief reflective moment in which she seemed almost to grasp an elusive formula which could explain the pattern of her life, it was not so much as if she had travelled backwards but as if the past had moved to the present.

LB 303-04.

While the prevailing autumnal imagery of Part III colours the picture we have of English life, in Provence Lucinda and Paul escape into a
glittering world of full summer. Paul articulates the sense of a return (shared by Lucinda in her conviction that in this environment she has recovered her essential being) to the origins, the Golden Age, of European civilization:

I'm not a leaf on an oak, fallen in an English park, but a leaf on the eternal olive, the sacred tree of Athena, the ever-green tree of humanity and civilization. The olive gives oil for our health and its flavour improves our cookery, whereas with the acorn we can only feed pigs.

LB 302.

Boyd is careful to point out the idealized nature of such emotions by preserving a framework of stringently fair cultural and social criticism. Lest we forget that Australia is not a land of the gods, Lydia, frowsy and down-to-earth, arrives in England to remind Lucinda of the concrete limitations of life in the Antipodes and the dream of the past suddenly seems less important than the pleasures Lucinda manages to snatch from her present life. Her old snapshots of the Pines are less effective in evoking 'the reality of the past' than 'the smell of the hot fig tree at St. Saturnin, or of Boronia in a London florist's' (LB 325).

With an urgent sense that life is passing her by, Lucinda makes a last effort to realize the dream when she persuades Pat to holiday with her in Italy. Pat proves to be insensitive to the country's liberating atmosphere, however, and the anticipated fulfilment fails to materialize. Again, the old motif returns when Lucinda, visiting compatriot friends, is soothed by the sight of some Australian landscapes. Looking at a painting of Cape Furze she remarks wistfully, 'I spent one of the happiest days of my life there' (LB 345) - mentally comparing the spontaneous pleasure of her youthful romance with Tony to her present chilling affair with Pat. To distinguish the reverie of the past from present actuality, though, Boyd ends Part III with the episode of Lucinda's renewed encounter with her girlhood beau.

At first the promise of meeting Tony once more arouses Lucinda's long-cherished hope of regaining the emotional satisfaction of her youth: 'Faintly, but enough to make her heart beat more quickly, she recaptured the emotions of the day at Cape Furze and the mornings on the Tarpeian
But the situation is irreversibly altered and the mental censor - usually selective where Lucinda's memory of Australia is concerned - suddenly relaxes and begins to take stock of the real facts. Boyd effectively captures the heroine's mood as she travels by train to the wharf. Lucinda is offended by an odour of dead rabbits rising from a corner of her compartment and her thoughts and emotions acquire an almost preternatural intensity as the vision of a blighted landscape overtakes her memory of the pleasant aspects of her early life:

... she found this smell unbearable. Also it tinged with a different colour, much as Lydia's conversation had done, her golden visions of her Australian childhood. She remembered the rabbit skins at Noorilla nailed out to dry in the sun, the clouds of black flies, and the bare brown honeycomb of the paddocks on the way to Cape Furze.

LB 366.

At the quay there is no reprieve from this feeling of disgust: 'Everywhere there was a faint sour smell, almost as trying as that of the rabbits' (LB 366). The final shock of coming face to face with the ageing and weather-worn Tony, whose actual presence erases the imaginary figure of her dream of pleasure, precipitates Lucinda towards a less romanticized view of life's opportunities for self-realization:

In that moment it was revealed to her that she had hitherto expected life to be something that it was not. She had a tremendous sense of relief, as if she had taken off a pair of green spectacles which she had insisted were rose-coloured.


More than ever in Part IV, the final section of the novel, Boyd is careful to distinguish the dream of pleasure - in which Australian images continue to play a dominant part - from the heroine's scope for realizing the dream in a real situation, whether at Crittenden, St. Saturnin or Melbourne. The 'dream' is seen as a significant element in a moral process in which Lucinda moves towards a perfecting of her ideals and goals. As she grows in thoughtfulness, the heroine becomes more critical of her former self, particularly as she sees it mirrored
in the arrivisme of her niece, Heather, another Australian whose values are shamefully exposed in her opportunistic search for a smart and wealthy English husband. At first Heather is happy in the delightful atmosphere of Crittenden, enjoying the company of Stephen, but her simplicity and guilelessness soon disappear when she is faced with the worldly temptations which confront her in the form of a seducer, Maurice Ablett. Lucinda sees in Heather's betrayal of Stephen a betrayal of innocence comparable to her own desertion of Tony for Hugo and resents the girl's snobbish contempt for the simple life of careless pleasure Paul leads at St. Saturnin. Herself expelled from Eden, Lucinda values all the more any signs of its possible existence, but in the later years of her visits the atmosphere of St. Saturnin is spoiled by an invasion of the wrong kind of people: a satirical, smart set. Even so the place retains its power to restore her spirit and she is encouraged that 'a memory, like the original writing on a palimpsest,' survives the debasing influence of false values: 'It was of Bill and Blake IX splashing and fooling below the Tarpeian Rock' (LB 445). There is, however, a sadness in her realization that this vision constitutes the dream rather than the reality of her personal fulfilment: 'It seemed to her that it was her fate to sit apart, watching men who were less interested in her than in themselves and their own preoccupations' (LB 446).

The persistence of the dream of pleasure is underlined when Europe is overwhelmed by war for a second time. As the shadows of strife encroach on Crittenden, Lucinda, listening one evening to the radio, is transported back to that sunlit period of her childhood which has been her encouragement in her bleakest moments:

To-night's subject was Melba, and it ended with a record of her singing Home, Sweet Home. Lucinda was suddenly carried back with almost unbearable vividness to her life in Melbourne, to the ballroom at Tourella on the day of Julie's first big party. That vivid memory extended its focus to include others, the night of the Radcliffe's ball, her first dance with Hugo, the drive out to Cape Furze through the paddocks like brown honeycomb, and sitting with Tony on the Tarpeian Rock, while Bill and Blake IX fooled about with oranges. The record was only a background to the announcer's voice. She bent close to the wireless to hear the pure and limpid notes which were gradually fading away, and she felt as if she were trying to separate and secure all that was happy in her early life from this insistent voice, the voice in whose urbane tones she had heard announced increasing misfortune and horror, behind which all happiness was as fading and elusive as this song.

LB 532.
At this point in the narrative the image of a golden, sunlit world begins to detach itself from the promise of earthly happiness and to suggest an otherworldly reality which, in the final book of the novel, is presented as the genuine goal of man's search for meaning and fulfilment. For a full appreciation of the last phase of the heroine's development, however, it is necessary to consider Boyd's treatment of 'the Christian story.' This aspect of Lucinda Brayford will be investigated in a later chapter.
CHAPTER SIX

THE EXPERIENCE AND DREAM OF PLEASURE IN THE CARDBOARD CROWN

AND OUTBREAK OF LOVE

... I had no conception of what beautiful places there were in the world until I came to Italy. I have read of them and seen pictures but they did not convey the reality. There is very striking scenery in Australia, and the view even from Westhill is magnificent, but it has not the same connexion with humanity.

The Cardboard Crown.

... in Italy you find all the things that have made us what we are - classicism the basis and catholicism fused into one and the effect is tremendous. We find our place in history. That is why we can only live happily elsewhere, when we regard ourselves as a province of Rome.

Outbreak of Love.

Just as the heroine's search in Lucinda Brayford divides between 'the Greek story' and 'the Christian story,' so the spiritual destinies of a whole family - in Boyd's novel sequence about the Langtons - are shaped by 'a standard of values' (CC 7) which has both a Classical and a Christian source. Departing from his simple aim in the prentice novels - which is to defend the satisfactions of the present moment against the denials of puritanism - Boyd in his mature fiction is concerned with a paradox of beauty and suffering as experienced by the determined searcher in an imperfect world. The effect of this dialectic can be seen in the broad division which exists between the novels concerned with the histories of Alice and her daughter Diana - The Cardboard Crown (1952) and Outbreak of Love (1957) - and those concerned with Dominic - A Difficult Young Man (1958) and When Blackbirds Sing (1962). In the former, Boyd contemplates the face of pleasure; in the latter, the face of sorrow. This is not to suggest an exclusiveness of interest in each case. Within an overall framework of contrasts, each novel establishes its separate pattern. The moods are alternatively sombre and light-hearted, both on a small and large scale. For the aesthetic temperament, there is no experience that cannot be discriminated into shades and Boyd makes this his artistic principle in the Langton sequence. Covering the last decades of the nineteenth century, The Cardboard Crown - its own complete rainbow - is separated into two strands of light and dark colour in the novels which
cover the 1900s and pre-war years, A Difficult Young Man and Outbreak of Love. While Dominic in A Difficult Young Man, through a spiritual link with his sorrowing grandmother in her declining years, is the inheritor of grief, his contemporary Josie in Outbreak of Love, as a younger version of Diana - Alice's favoured daughter and the child of her reunion with her recalcitrant husband - is the inheritor of joy. These two characters are never brought together but the contrast is implicit and adds a complexity and subtlety to the total structure of the sequence. The fourth novel, When Blackbirds Sing, which concerns Dominic's experiences as an enlisted man during World War I, is darker in its general mood than all the preceding books. It presents the spiritual crisis of a pleasure-loving person when the circumstances of war compel him to kill his fellow man. Boyd planned a fifth in the series. It never materialized but one can speculate on its content. Judging by clues scattered throughout the sequence - especially the allusion to Dominic's mental decline and obsession with the tortures of Christ in the opening chapter of The Cardboard Crown - it would have carried the gloom of When Blackbirds Sing to its logical conclusion: a crucifixion.

As in the previous discussion of Lucinda Brayford, which elaborates one aspect of the novel's presentation of values, the present chapter will concentrate on Boyd's search for the face of pleasure in the two novels of the Langton sequence most preoccupied with the brighter colours of the emotional spectrum.

THE CARDBOARD CROWN

Complicating the idea of a spiritual pilgrimage as this is encountered in Boyd's fiction prior to the Langton sequence, The Cardboard Crown initiates a new approach to the presentation of values by its use of a narrator-persona, Guy Langton, who in introducing himself and his subject in chapter one of the novel makes it clear that his choice to make a work of fiction out of the record of his family has the significance of a quest for truth. This truth, which only partially and inadequately reveals itself through the material relics of an older generation of Langtons Guy finds in the family home of Westhill, concerns both the shaping past and the shaped present. Guy's opening reference to Proust focuses the fact of a search within a search, or the presence of 'the past within us' (Boyd's proposed title for the sequence as a whole)¹: 'When we have passed
a certain age, the soul of the child that we were, and the souls of the
dead from whom we spring, come and bestow upon us in handfuls their
treasures and their calamities' (CC 7).

The situation of Guy at Westhill resembles that of the novelist
himself when, after returning to Australia in 1949 to take up residence
at The Grange, he conceived the idea of writing the Langton sequence:

... it was there that I found the impetus and material
for my future novels. The first chapter of *The Cardboard
Crown*, in which I discover my grandmother's diaries for
most of her married life, is as much fact as fiction.²

*DD 237.*

Boyd adds: 'I was perfectly at home at the Grange, and what duality I
had was satisfied by the old world interior of the house, and the external
Australian landscape, so beautiful in those parts' (DD 239). Just as
The Grange appeared to him an image of civilization in the Australian bush,
so Westhill suggests to Guy the continuity and permanence of a tradition
he himself wants to perpetuate. Guy's search, as he discusses the matter with
his young cousin the painter Julian Byngham, is for a living cultural and
spiritual inheritance whose reality may only be approached through the
myth-making powers of the imagination as it attempts to construct a whole
from the scattered and broken evidence of the past. In this context, art
becomes supremely important as a mediator between the world of phenomena
and that of mysterious inwardness where truth and meaning reside.

For Guy, as for the pilgrims of *Much Else in Italy*, there is a sense
in which the phenomena - family portraits, the diaries of his grandmother,
Westhill itself - are everything and nothing. Commenting on his nephew's
down-to-earth view of the older generation, Guy remarks facetiously, yet
significantly:

*My grandfather Langton died when I was about six. For fifty
years his image had remained immense in my mind, but fading,
like those gods of whom Aldous Huxley writes, who have actual
existence, but who die when men no longer worship them.*

*CC 9.*

In direct response to Julian's attitude, Guy, while losing none of his
reverence for the dead, begins to look at the actuality rather than the
mystique of the spiritual legacy of his forebears. Exposed to the candour
of the younger man, he becomes aware of an untold story behind the faces
in the portraits of his grandparents - faces which, to the discerning eye,
already communicate some of their secrets of passion and intrigue. With his painter's belief in the revelatory function of an art based on fact, Julian plays the role of midwife to Guy's book, helping the reluctant novelist to believe that something of that story may yet be recovered. The act of reconstruction will require moral bravery, but Guy is prepared for the task. As he confides to Julian, he always longed to possess 'the literary freedom of the outcast,'

to be like Verlaine or somebody who did not have to worry when he sat down to write, whether he would offend Aunt Maysie, or whether it would lose him an invitation from Mrs Vane. It would be a profound satisfaction not to bother about this any more, but to write what one believed to be true about the things one knew best. I suppose that is what I know best, all the events and influences of the last eighty years which have made us what we are and which culminated in this house in Dominic's final rack of mental anguish.

CC 13.

In his search for 'the events and influences ... which have made us what we are,' Guy will contemplate various expressions of the family spirit in a movement which can be compared to the three stages elaborated in Much Else in Italy. The Apollos of Veii and Tevere and the Pietà have a parallel in the Langton novels in Guy's appreciation of different kinds of energy and sensibility manifested by members of his family at certain phases of their lives. It is as if the family itself were set on a path of spiritual discovery which reaches further with each generation and culminates in the suffering of Dominic. As the following discussion of The Cardboard Crown and Outbreak of Love sets out to show, the lives of two generations of Langtons behind Dominic are seen by Guy as penetrating to a point of wisdom at which there is at least a glimpse of a promised land where pleasure and beauty may be sought and found.

As the first novel of the tetralogy unfolds, Guy, looking back on the past with the help of his grandmother's diaries and his own recollections of disclosures made to him by his relative, Arthur Langton, three decades earlier, tries to adjust his vision of his forebears to the revelation that the truth of their relationships was concealed in their lifetimes. Much of a covert nature happened which the narrator resolves to bring into the light of day. He does not claim to give the complete story, but offers hints and tentative evidence as they are presented to him. There are two important centres of interest in the lives of his grandparents which compel Guy's attention in his effort to arrive at the
truth. These are Austin's adultery with Hetty and Alice's flirtation with Aubrey. Husband and wife, Austin and Alice, pursue self-fulfilment at different levels of awareness and with different degrees of feeling. In this way the novel offers us the characteristic Boyd pilgrimage divided between two characters. Each character's search represents a quest for balance: Austin is divided between the ethereal Alice and the tigress, Hetty; Alice between the down-to-earth Austin and the refined aesthete and intellectual, Aubrey.

Consistently with the development of his sensibility as this is later outlined in *A Difficult Young Man*, a novel which is in part his own autobiography, Guy appreciates Austin's relationship with Hetty for its affirmation of pure sensuality. Despite the drawbacks of her nature, clearly painted by Guy, Hetty seems to epitomize Blake's axiom, 'Energy is Eternal Delight.' Although Guy hardly celebrates the excesses of his character, his suspension of judgement allows Hetty dignity as a force to be reckoned with. Like Christopher Westlake in *The Picnic*, she is primitive energy, an emanation of the untameable side of nature, like a snake or a fierce magpie. As Blake would see it, she belongs to 'the roaring of lions, the howling of wolves' and 'the raging of the stormy sea' portion of eternity.³ Guy imagines her 'as somehow black against the bright landscape' (CC 30), giving credence to Arthur's description of her predatory ways:

> She never minded how she looked. If she could bring her prey to bed, she wouldn't have cared if she had mutton fat in her hair and a smut on her nose. That's why she always got what she wanted. She went straight for it, regardless of manners or appearances.

CC 32.

Hetty denied, Guy sees vividly as 'a raging wounded tigress' (CC 37). Although Austin's relationship with Hetty is a transgression in the eyes of the law, Boyd questions the justice of the law when viewed sub specie aeternitatis. Guy's privileged position vis à vis the past gives him the detachment necessary for fair judgement, and his careful juxtaposition of contradictory images seems to make an implicit moral statement. As a child Hetty took the cardboard crown it was Alice's turn to wear. As an adult she takes Austin and bears him a brood of sons. The suggestion is that she commits no real offence since the crown is valueless in itself, a cardboard toy. What is of value is the authenticity of the relationship, rather than its social acceptance. The cardboard crown thus becomes an
emblem of the formal bond as opposed to the free bond of committed individuals and the novel appears to question conventional ideas and morality respecting marriage. Austin's angry reaction to Hetty's bearing of a child by her husband - 'He saw her as an adulteress not because of her relations with himself, but with her husband' (CC 78) - reinforces this interpretation.

Furthermore, since knowledge of her husband's infidelity comes as a liberation for Alice, Austin's adultery appears in the light of a felix culpa. Throughout the novel Guy is struck by the thought that there exists a 'close connection between evil and fortunate happenings' (CC 14), and Alice regards apparent evil as a mystery beyond her fathoming, writing in her diary: 'If one could take hold of the ends of the threads of evil and misfortune which are woven into the good to make our lives, and draw them out, would the rest fall to pieces?' (CC 132). To both Langtons, Good and Evil are inadequate concepts. The narrator's consistent refusal to take sides or condemn - the same openmindedness he appreciates in Alice - acquires the status of wisdom and becomes one of the central issues of the novel as it progresses. As Guy tells the story, moral tolerance is the chief lesson of Alice's life and its effects are far-reaching, both for the concrete destinies of her offspring and for their spiritual inheritance. In his own juxtaposition of Hetty and Alice as figures of wilful determination and serene intelligence, Guy achieves a Blakean resonance in a vision of contraries existing side by side, contraries without which is no progression. Thus it is the heroine's discovery of the truth about Austin which brings about her awakening to a personal desire for fulfilment outside what has formerly been her lot. This is the event which sets her on the path of self-discovery when, to escape her numbing pain, she begins a journey through Europe. In a characteristic development of the Boyd plot, a glimmer of understanding and spiritual relief comes to her in Italy where she makes her first acquaintance with the Renaissance - indicative, as usual in Boyd's mythology, of the full flowering of human potential.

Not unexpectedly, the theme of Italy as Western man's natural spiritual home is placed within a context of a Europe-Australia opposition, much as happens with Italy in The Montforts (or with Provence in Lucinda Brayford). The world of the Langton novels is again divided between North and South, the journeys of the family taking them from one hemisphere to another, from the English Waterpark to the Australian Westhill. Guy comments at the end of The Cardboard Crown: 'There was always ... in our
ever dépayisée family, the nostalgia for the other home, ten thousand miles away. In the Northern or the Southern Hemisphere there was no abiding city' (CC 165). When Alice, who has been 'happiest in Australia' (CC 66) which she likes 'very much, for my friends there, and the climate and the scenery' (CC 150), talks to Aubrey Tunstall about her Antipodean home, he remarks that 'it must be disintegrating to be drawn in two across the globe,' and that she should 'integrate [herself] in Rome' (CC 150). As far as Alice is concerned her experience of Rome suggests the city as a symbol of wholeness, a place where extremes meet and contraries may be reconciled.

A myth of Australia functions in The Cardboard Crown in much the same way as it does in Lucinda Brayford with the important difference that it has less to do with the heroine Alice than with the narrator, in his conscious search for values and effort to impose meaning on the past. As Guy sees it, a very satisfactory part of his grandparents' lives has been spent at Westhill, where Alice has lived peacefully and in ignorance of Austin's infidelity. Here the countryside suggests that Golden Age Guy recognizes when he looks back on the past with the eyes of innocence through which he first encountered it: 'It is said that all mankind looks back to the golden age of Saturn; to most of us the golden age is not so remote. It is more likely to be our own childhood' (CC 22). The appeal to the point of view of childhood is an appeal to unlimited possibility. Life once seemed bathed in the radiance of eternity; perhaps these intimations brought one close to the truth:

I think ... that the golden age for me must have been ... the earliest days of the country in which I then lived, Australia, the only place I had known since I left the cradle. There is no country where it is easier to imagine some lost pattern of life, a mythology of vanished gods, than in this, the most ancient of all lands, where the skeletons of trees extend their bleached arms in the sun, and giant lizards cling to their trunks. But my imagination only went back as far as the first European settlers in Victoria. They provided my mythology and I was as closely connected with them as the heroes of Homer with the gods from whom they claimed descent. The gods, too, were my grand­parents. I saw them as living always in one of those Australian mornings of the early spring, the mornings of the golden age. Then the leaves of the gum-trees hang in the air, so still and pure and fresh that their beauty is completely revealed, without any veil of atmosphere or confusion of movement. In this crystal air the shouts and laughter of the children are as liquid as the falling notes of the magpies in the field. The still morning absorbs all the sounds and turns them into music. The sun is not scorching but sparkles softly on the bridles of the ponies. The mountain ranges are of a blue so peaceful and mysterious that they are an invitation to adventure, and against this sunlit land one would not be surprised to see a frieze of naked Spartans.

CC 22.
In evoking his personal vision of beauty and innocence in the Australian scene, Guy lays the groundwork for his narrative of 'the gods,' in which the exploits of Austin, the subterfuges of Hetty and the forbearance of Alice acquire a quasi-mythological status. At the same time, the vision retains its quality of a detached hypothesis about reality. As Guy puts it when he jokes about his habit of inventing parables: '... one must talk a great deal of nonsense to arrive at a little truth. If you go mining, you must dig up a great deal of quartz to find a little gold. If you only dig as much quartz as you want gold, you will have hardly any gold at all' (CC 14).

To the mature imagination of Boyd's author-persona, as to the mind of the narrator in Lucinda Brayford, there are two Australias: one mild and paradisal in its beauty, the other ebullient and aggressive. Both are accommodated in Guy's Classical myth and together they evoke the qualities of the Apollo of Veii, whose more primitive aspect may be said to find expression in the figure of Hetty. On the one hand Guy points to Australia as a place of simple arcadian contentment:

A house in Australia, the first of its kind built only a hundred years ago, may suggest the antique more than a sophisticated palace built centuries earlier. There are in the country outside Melbourne little cottages built of bark and tin, whitewashed, with vines along their walls, and the fowls pecking at the hard earth under the fig tree, where one feels the disguised Ulysses might have asked for shelter and a bowl of goat's milk, while one cannot possibly imagine him calling at Waterpark, with its far greater antiquity. But this may be partly due to that feeling one has in the Australian countryside, that it has known the morning of the world. This cottage, where Austin asked for water, had the appearance of belonging to all time.

CC 56.

On the other he qualifies his vision of an Australian 'Golden Age': '... in this scene the first human being I visualize is not a Spartan boy, but the small black figure of Cousin Hetty' (CC 23). In fact Australia represents only a partial fulfilment of man's capacity for happiness. Guy informs us that Alice 'was content with the Australian country "way of life,"' but adds tellingly, 'even Cousin Sarah's version of it' (CC 66). A peculiarly Australian affliction, Sarah manifests the inability of the country to realize the dream of perfection. She suggests a spiteful embodiment of Australia's harshness, something civilization can well do without, as Guy implies when he asks Julian to paint the
Assumption of the Virgin in the chapel at Westhill, confessing that his motive is to banish Sarah's influence. Westhill itself, with its echoes of a pastoral arcadia, suggests to Guy all the limitations of the ideal of energy represented by the Apollo of Veii. This explains why he prefers the English Waterpark:

... I was probably happier there than at Westhill, where I felt the countryside to be large and frightening with so much dead timber, with snakes and scorpions, with magpies which snapped their beaks like a pistol shot close to one's ear when they were hatching their young. Sometimes in the summer to go out of doors was like entering a vast scorching oven, and I felt my head would burst.

CC 43.

The dissatisfaction with certain aspects of Australian life has its counterpart in the larger movement of the novel as a whole from a tolerance of animal energy and the desires of the flesh to an acceptance of a principle of mental control, that principle imaged in Much Else in Italy by the Apollo of Tevere. As always, Boyd's ideal is one of synthesis, in which what is valuable in an initial phase is retained in the next. Austin's succumbing to Hetty's passion sets the process in motion. Outside the gates of Edenic innocence with the original sinners, Alice carries the search forward into the sphere of enlightened liberty in her realization that her happiness is something she herself can bring about. In facing the fact of Austin's relationship with Hetty, she faces a truth about human nature, whose potentialities she sees mirrored first in Mrs Dane's exotic and grandiose villa and subsequently in the Rome revealed to her by Aubrey. Alice's diary records 'a liberation of the spirit brought about by her first glimpse of the Renaissance' (CC 82) and a feeling that Rome has given her 'a wider and more generous outlook - perhaps even a more worldly view' (CC 90). At this stage in the narrative Guy quotes and paraphrases extracts from Alice's diary to illustrate the way in which Italy has entered her private mythology to enhance her dream of fulfilment. There is the civilized opulence of Mrs Dane's Florentine villa -

Mrs Dane's villa had none of the associations of that word in Alice's mind, which were purely suburban. It was a villa in the Vergilian or Renaissance sense of the word. She had been in some fine country houses near Waterpark but never in anything comparable with the magnificence of this. She was led down a colonnade which made her think of a Fra Angelico Annunciation, into a very large drawing-room. On the yellow brocade walls were paintings which appeared to be by those masters whose work she had seen yesterday in the
Uffizi, and on the domed ceiling were painted gods and amorini revelling in sunset splendour

CC 85.

- and the settled Italian landscape with its age-old associations:

In this rich autumnal season, I am seeing Italy at its best. The vines are hung with ripening grapes. In places I have seen them trailing over the olive trees making a beautiful combination of colours, and it is like a dream to stand on Monte Pincio and look over the domes of this noble city. I said to Mr Tunstall that I had no conception of what beautiful places there were in the world until I came to Italy. I have read of them and seen pictures but they did not convey the reality. There is very striking scenery in Australia, and the view even from Westhill is magnificent, but it has not the same connexion with humanity. If on a fine day, I can see a tiny ship in the far distance moving down the bay, and know that it is setting out for Europe, that association in some way enriches the scene. Mr Tunstall said: 'You love Italy because Italy is humanity. It provides the pattern of life for the whole Western world.'

CC 91.

Like Lucinda Brayford, to whom it is a revelation to find an echo of her inmost feelings and desires in surroundings at Crittenden, Alice is awakened intellectually by her experience of Italy, becoming more aware of what is valuable in her life.

With his knowledge and culture, politely attentive manner and great love of beauty, Aubrey is the catalyst in this process, which is completed in Alice when she is able to view it retrospectively as an elderly woman meeting Aubrey again in the same environment. Alice is strongly tempted to give up her husband and her Australian life for Aubrey, of whom she writes at the height of her emotional involvement:

I do not think that I have the power to refuse him. I cannot turn away from a region which, the moment I entered it, I knew was the home of my spirit. This opening to a new world has come at a moment when my old world has utterly failed me, when I found that it had never been mine.

CC 96.

However, like Rome itself, whose grandeur Alice finds overwhelming, Aubrey is part of Alice's dream of fulfilment rather than of its actuality. He himself seems only too aware of the power of the dream over his own imagination and of its ultimate unreality. He cautions Alice: 'Rome, my Rome ... would be a drug to you .... Do not stay in Rome, but come
back to it' (CC 96). Moreover, although Alice and Aubrey, with like tastes and sensibilities, are fitting soul-mates, there is a strong suggestion that Aubrey tends towards the homosexual. Thus there is a limitation implicit in the relationship from the very beginning. Perhaps this is why Aubrey informs Austin of Alice's whereabouts - if in fact he does so, as Guy speculates. When she is reunited with Austin, Alice is amazed at her own change of heart:

We left the same day for London, and all the way back I felt as if I were awakening from an extraordinary dream. I could not understand myself - I can not yet - how I could turn round in a few hours from a desperate longing for A.T. to feeling all my old love for Austin as strong as ever. I wonder if there is a looseness in my character which can only be controlled if I cling firmly to my husband, whatever he does. If any other woman had behaved as I have, I should certainly have condemned her. I have not forgotten the dream. How could I? There was an unusual affinity between myself and A.T. We should have recognized it anywhere, but Rome produced the perfect conditions for its acknowledgement, just as a plant will grow in any part of the garden, but there is one particular corner, beneath a sunlit wall, where it will blossom on every branch.

CC 97-98.

Her vision of human possibilities dramatically enriched, Alice is able to return to Austin and her Australian life and to accept these anew in the light of experience and wisdom. For the first time, she chooses this life for the value she sees in it: its simplicity and stability, the naturalness of its environment.

Out of her commitment to moral harmony, another child is born to her and Austin, the fruit of the couple's stabilized marriage and Alice's new contentment. Guy reports that at this stage of life Alice is more fulfilled in her relationship with her husband: '... there appears to have been greater confidence between them after her return ... and a general atmosphere of greater happiness in their lives' (CC 103-04). In the birth of the child, who is called 'Diana,' we witness a further development of Boyd's Classical theme. Guy comments on the choice of a name:

This name was a departure from the Emmas and Hettys of Victorian tradition, and was considered by the relatives to be both pagan and affected. There can be no doubt that when Alice chose it she had in mind Damaris, Aubrey and Ariadne.

CC 104.
Diana resembles other children of promise in Boyd's fiction - Ada Montfort, Lucinda Vane, Stephen Brayford - all of whom are born in special circumstances.

As we might expect from this, Diana, who grows into an attractive young woman, spontaneous in her enjoyment of life, becomes the vehicle for Guy's development of the theme of human fulfilment. Because of her dream of happiness, which endures after her return to Australia, Alice has special hopes for her daughter's future. Her other children she is happy to imagine settled into respectable middle-class lives in Melbourne but 'for Diana she had different dreams, unconnected with Australia' (CC 116).

However, through circumstances which cause her to take her socially unpromising daughter to Europe while Diana remains in Australia, these 'dreams which she half recognized as fantastic, of launching her in the drawing-rooms of London and the palaces of Rome' (CC 119) are disappointed. At the very moment of mature womanhood so romantically anticipated by her mother, Diana chooses an Australian future with a poor musician, Wolfie von Flugel. Alice, who has extreme misgivings about the union, is won over when Wolfie unwittingly stimulates her most precious memories by playing Chopin's Prelude in G, a piece rich in nostalgic associations of Aubrey and Rome. The motif of beauty which seemed threatened is reasserted in a new key in which the desires of Alice's quest are satisfied at a second remove in her daughter's rather bohemian life. This partakes of the uninhibited, pleasure-loving spirit of the fin de siècle and is directed by an improvising and impulsive creativity:

Expecting some awful grey scene of disintegration she was delighted by their well-being and their cheerfulness. Then she noticed the drawing-room. Most of the heavy furniture had been removed, and there seemed to be a lot of blue plates, bamboo and peacocks' feathers. The room was rather untidy, with sheets of music manuscript everywhere but it was not dingy. Diana had brought the aesthetic movement to Westhill.

... The conversation when it was not about Wolfie's symphony was about Aubrey Beardsley and the Yellow Book.4 CC 129-30.

To help the couple flower into a fuller, more tradition-conscious style of living, Alice takes them to Europe, her motive being at the same time a selfish one - to flaunt her lovely daughter.

From this point on, the narrative foreshadows Boyd's preoccupation
in the 'darker' novels - *A Difficult Young Man* and *When Blackbirds Sing* - with the question of suffering and its relationship to an ethic of pleasure. Alice's European holiday is spoiled by arthritis. She is disappointed that Diana is seldom with her. The boom bursts, bringing financial insecurity to the family as a whole and heartbreak to her son George, whose relationship with Dolly Potts is thwarted by a father requiring a solid marriage settlement. Despite a very pleasant encounter with Aubrey in Rome, there is even a suggestion that Aubrey has been interested in her money and, when Alice returns to Australia, there is the further grief of losing a favourite grandson and a husband.

Throughout these unhappy occurrences two things sustain the heroine: a belief in the value of the present moment and the liberating dream in which the incompatibilities of life are reconciled and evil is redeemed. The two are conjoined in the heroine's mind when, meeting Aubrey again in Rome as an old woman, she recaptures the mood of their earlier relationship in an experience comparable to Lucinda Brayford's when Lucinda's recollection of former happiness makes her feel 'not so much as if she had travelled backwards but as if the past had moved into the present.' At this point the novel almost suggests a Proustian theme: that human memory itself holds the key to paradise. At any rate this is the implication of Aubrey's little poem, despite its rather mechanical imagery:

Alice, your beauty is to me
As those strange Russian wooden toys
Which come in half, and then we see
A smaller size of painted boys.

For with my mind I can discern,
Beneath your stately woman's guise,
That other who my heart made burn
With light you kindled from your eyes.

And so I have two friends in one,
First love within the friend I see.
And no one knows, but I alone
How doubly dear you are to me.

CC 150.

Significantly, Alice buys one of these toys for Diana's little girl, underlining further the theme of 'the past within us.' Aubrey's personal philosophy, articulated on the occasion of their second meeting, sharpens Alice's vision of the good and gives her an intellectual perspective on the closing pattern of her life. On the whole
Guy allows the diaries to do his work, reporting Alice's interpretation of Aubrey's comments. The triple theme of Aubrey's conversations on the meaning of life is pleasure, beauty and freedom. The first principle in seeking enrichment through the achievements of art and culture, is to look for emotional reward rather than the satisfaction of a sense of duty:

... I never feel that A. is deliberately instructing me. It is simply that I feel the atmosphere of the place more when I am in his company. I said that he made sight-seeing a pure pleasure. He said: 'But what is it for if it is not for pleasure? It's not a duty. You don't feed the poor by looking at a picture. Not long ago a woman asked me what she ought to admire. There's no 'ought' about it. One goes to look at Praxiteles's faun, because there one sees the springtime of the world, all the unconscious careless impudence of the young male expressed in a single beautiful body. It makes one laugh with pleasure. One goes to see Michelangelo's Pietà to weep. If you don't laugh or weep at these things there's no virtue in going to see them. But if you are filled with laughter and pleasure when you see the Praxiteles faun, you have increased your understanding, and that, as Blake says, brings you to Heaven.'

CC 146.

The second is to revere the beautiful for its witness to an abiding life of the human spirit. Alice writes: 'We talked about the effect of all this classical art on one's mind, and he quoted a little poem about Greece and Rome, which began:

"Helen thy beauty is to me
As those Nicean barks of yore ...."

CC 150.

The third is to pursue one's fulfilment in freedom of conscience, respecting the spirit rather than the letter where human relations are concerned:

We were sitting in the Medici gardens at the end of one of those long box alleys. He was talking about limitation and freedom in love and friendship. He said first of all that love should not be labelled. He said it was right that we should love our husbands, parents, children, etc., but that modern society had laid down too exact rules as to the degree to which we should love them. It said that we should love most those most closely related to us. It might work like that, but it might not. If one's love of a friend enhanced the quality of one's life, that was enough justification. There was no need to label it.

CC 151.

Aubrey's ideas about love comment on the morality of his relationship
with Alice and sum up the meaning Guy has invested in the image of the cardboard crown: whoever possesses the crown, that is to say, the symbol or, in Aubrey's words, the label, does not necessarily possess its reality. In allowing this notion to reassert itself at the close of his narrative, Guy is underscoring the validity of Austin's and Alice's original elopement. That, after all, represented the essential element in human relationships: a freedom of spirit transcending formal bonds.

In this way, a complex pattern of images, reflecting Guy's preoccupation with the nature and quality of his grandparents' experience of life as pilgrims in two societies, European and Australian, is brought to a simple resolution in the discovery of a movement towards unity in the values and ideals of the novel's chief protagonist, Alice. The Anglo-Australian tension, a conflict between the attractions of culture and an arcadian life which forms part of Guy's interpretation of his family's destiny, is given positive meaning for the questing Alice when she is offered a vision of wholeness in Italy. At the end of her life, Alice has fully entered that phase of the Boyd ascent which involves acknowledgement of both the body and the soul of love. Her Italian dream of fulfilment, representing the spiritual content of her quest, lends a special meaning to her Australian experience of an innocent Golden Age and she learns not to despise the relationship of Austin and Hetty. In the course of her life Alice gains a spiritual poise and insight which sets her apart from the other Langtons. It is for this reason that Guy, in assessing her influence from the vantage point of a later generation, pictures her as a version of Baron Corvo's onion woman, an ascending saint with the weight of the family on her skirts. Having laid the groundwork for his analysis of the Langton inheritance in The Cardboard Crown, it remains for Guy to explore the way in which Alice's wisdom is transmitted to future generations.

OUTBREAK OF LOVE

Outbreak of Love, the lightest novel in the Langton tetralogy, aims at achieving a high point in the series' unfolding vision of pleasure and beauty. It portrays a further development in the movement towards self-fulfilment - the pattern Guy discerns in Alice's life - and, as in The Cardboard Crown, is important to the narrator in his own search for values. He gives a clue to his state of mind in the opening image of the novel:
Our minds are like those maps at the entrance to the Metro stations in Paris. They are full of unilluminated directions. But when we know where we want to go and press the right button, the route is illuminated before us in electric clarity.

The 'right button,' which Guy feels he has pressed for the journey he will take in his new novel, is a particular illumination which came to him in a Rome museum, as he looked at a statue of a faun embracing a headless nymph:

It was even more candid that I had imagined and the paganism, the innocent animalism that is in all of us awoke with joy. The nymph had pressed the right button, and the resulting incandescence in my mind, although it faded, was never entirely extinguished but would often glimmer, and from time to time shine with intoxicating radiance.

Such an illumination is behind the perspective offered throughout the novel on the series of love relationships which develop in the course of the narrative. Love seems a contagion of the Melbourne air, affecting Wolfie and his mistress, Mrs Montaubyn, Diana and Russell Lockwood, the von Flugels' daughter, Josie, and John Wyckham, as well as Guy himself. Significantly Guy believes that in their different ways the lovers undergo an experience of pleasure in the natural world and in their sensual being akin to his delight in the headless nymph. As in The Cardboard Crown, the theme is further complicated by the Proustian thought that such experiences are never lost but stored in the memory. Hence Guy's reference at the beginning of his story to the Radcliffes' party at which Wolfie plays his Preludes recalling Mrs Montaubyn and the German countryside of his youth. At this party, several of the protagonists experience a renewal of their youthful passion and sensuality which causes Guy to compare his illumination with theirs. There is a difference, though, as he explains: 'For them it was not pure joy, but almost painful, the searing light along the unused wires' (OL 6).

The Classical theme pursued in The Cardboard Crown has its continuance in Outbreak of Love in the story of Diana, whose friendship with the Italianate Australian, Russell Lockwood, parallels Alice's relationship with Aubrey Tunstall. Characteristically, the relationship develops in the context of a debate between Diana and Russell about the comparative merits of Europe and Australia. Diana is conscious that 'this European-Australian business seemed to form a sort of pattern to
which they were fitting their relationship' (OL 80-81). From the
beginning, she notices that there is 'always the Australian-European
argument cropping up, so that it seemed to have almost the character of
a flirtation' (OL 82). Russell's effect on Diana is similar to Aubrey's
on Alice. It does not seem to matter that Russell (like Aubrey) is
really inadequate as a lover, a somewhat restrained and timid personality.
Rather it is enough that a partial development of the relationship should
take place and that there should be a dream or vision of complete
fulfilment. Like his counterpart in The Cardboard Crown, Russell is
something of a Platonist to whom Italy suggests the form of a superlative
existence, timeless and eternal. As Guy does not neglect to point out,
Russell is in fact the inheritor of Aubrey's ideas through Alice. In
Russell's words:

She [Alice] was a wonderful woman. I owe a great deal to her. She was really responsible for my love of Italy.
She loved it herself. I remember sitting with her in the
garden on an autumn day while she described autumn in the Campagna, and the wonderful golden sense of timeless antiquity one has when looking from the Capitoline hill across the city on a late summer evening. She told me about the stone-pines and the fountains and the colour of the Alban Hills. So as soon as I was free I went there.

OL 10.

Similar conclusions emerge from Diana's reflections on Russell's eccentricity as a child when he visited the Langtons:

They all liked him, but they all thought him rather an odd boy, especially when he would come to tea alone with Mama.
It was only now, twenty-three years later, that she learned what they had been talking about - the fountains of Rome.

OL 11.

Later in his life Russell's love of Italy helps him to appreciate Australia, in which he believes exist the prerequisites for civilization to take root and flourish.

Diana herself - innocent, unaffected, full of natural grace but as yet uncertain about the shape of her future - resembles Australia. As a character, she conforms to the pattern of such unconscious aesthetes as Lucinda and Alice before exposure to European culture awakens their appreciation of the intuitive values engendered in them by the Australian environment. The natural setting for a life of pleasure, rich in enjoyment
for the senses, Australia requires only a clear vision of its potential for it to become an Antipodean Greece or Italy. In his role as Diana's mentor, comparable to Paul's with Lucinda and Aubrey's with Alice, Russell stresses the importance of tradition in formulating and preserving an ideal of life. Tradition is the selfconsciousness of humanity, providing harmonious structures for the expression of innate desires. This does not mean that one needs to be aware of one's pleasure in an excessively intellectual way, since spontaneity itself is a value. Witness a conversational exchange which takes place during the meal Russell and Diana share at Diana's home. When Russell declares, 'I live for pleasure,' he is making a statement rather different from Diana's 'oh dear, I'm enjoying myself' which prompts him to caution, 'You mustn't turn the light on your pleasure' (OL 99). Of course the temptation is something of which the novelist is keenly aware: it is the hated selfconsciousness of Aelred in The Picnic, the disease of modernity as Boyd sees it.

For Russell, as for Aubrey, Italy is at the centre of the Western world, providing a prototype for civilization. It is possible, even advantageous - he argues to Diana - to live physically in one country and mentally in another: 'All civilized Englishmen lived in Italy in their minds. Shakespeare did, but his heart was in England' (OL 79). It is Russell's extreme way of saying that he wants to civilize Australia by applying to it European wisdom. In practical terms this might be something as easily realizable as a French chef in the Fitzroy Gardens: 'Australia should have been colonized by French or Italians or some people who know how to live in this climate .... It ought to be the thing to come here - like dining in the Bois' (OL 78). Like Raoul in The Montforts, Russell sees in Italy an image of Melbourne's possibilities. At the same time Diana's slightly critical tone when she sums up his attitudes -

But your mind is in Europe, you like Australia now because you are thinking of all the European things that could be done to it. There will never be a French chef in the Fitzroy Gardens. When you realize that, will you want to stay?

OL 78.

- suggests a not altogether controlled ambivalence in the novel's presentation of Russell. As the self-appointed purveyor of civilized values Russell is to some extent an inverted puritan. His moralizing implies precisely the kind of selfconsciousness he himself deplores in others.
Nevertheless, this does not prevent him from emerging as a spokesman for a theory of the good life, despite clear suggestions of his own inadequacy.

At any rate, the narrative highlights the reasonableness of Russell's opinions by juxtaposing them with less tenable points of view, for example Jack Radcliffe's expression of the crude values of the Australian squatter class. In reply to an observation of Russell's that all civilization reflects man's harmony with the natural world, Jack reveals his prejudice against any kind of cultured comment by retorting bluntly: 'Then Australian literature will have to have the imagery of the sheep station' (OL 63). Diana, who dislikes Jack's chauvinism, sides with Russell, arguing that the only civilization Australians have is European and that this is preferable to the vacuum Jack desires: 'According to Jack we can't produce any culture, and we musn't import it. Australia's just to be squatters going to the races' (OL 65). Another character to espouse Russell's ideas is Lady Pringle, sympathetically presented in the episode of the party at which she introduces Wolfie's Preludes. There is a touch of irony here, however, as Guy reproduces her vocal inflections in the context of describing her sycophancy towards Russell, suggesting perhaps the emptiness of a culture which has become mere affectation.

For all Boyd's provisos, Russell remains the novel's vehicle for an overt statement of its key conceptual message when, in his discussions with Diana, he returns obsessively to Italy as the symbol of man's hope for perfection:

... in Italy you find all the things that have made us what we are - classicism the basis and Catholicism fused into one and the effect is tremendous. We find our place in history. That is why we can only live happily elsewhere, when we regard ourselves as a province of Rome.

OL 102.

The characteristic duality of North and South and the contrast between Gothic and Classic makes its appearance in Russell's comparison of England with Italy, again illustrating Boyd's habitual preference for an environment which is vivid to the senses. England appears as a pale shadow of the real centre of civilization, 'a far outpost where the inhabitants of that damp northern island had tried to echo the religion and the splendours of their true home, which for every civilized man is the Mediterranean' (OL 102). The value of Italy in Boyd's eyes is that it confirms the possibility of a civilization based on the ethic of pleasure, on a belief in the goodness of the natural world. Inevitably,
the South and Classicism stand for gratification of the natural man, the North and the Gothic for privation. Yet Russell himself does not seem to believe wholeheartedly in the reality of the idea he expresses to Diana: that 'our religion was not intended to create a new heaven and earth, but to redeem what was already there' (OL 102). Like Aubrey Tunstall, he is a dreamer and it is left to Diana to show how his theory might be put into practice. Although Diana is captivated by the picture he paints of their future in Italy, it appears remote to her, as if she were being offered a pledge of a superior life which she can in fact never reach. Moreover, it irks her that Russell will not completely enjoy the present moment in their relationship, obsessed as he is with something beyond it. Inspired by his ideas, she ultimately chooses an actual, if imperfect, life by forgoing the elusive dream of becoming Russell's lover and forgiving the fallible but lovable Wolfie. The parallel with Alice's position in The Cardboard Crown is obvious. Russell himself, despite his role of mentor, is Diana's debtor in the search for a richer existence because with her he has enjoyed the 'elemental things' (OL 97) he values - good conversation, simple food, fine wines and pleasant surroundings. More than that was not to be expected, as Diana realizes: 'It is curious to think that we imagined that our meetings were only a foretaste of pleasures to come, when they were the whole substance of these pleasures. But I always expected too much of life' (OL 252).

An interesting thread linking Diana's thoughts during her period of vacillation between Russell and Wolfie, Italy and Australia, is her continuing meditation on the significance of an Australian landscape painting, 'Winter Sunlight,' by Walter Withers. 5 Recurring references to the painting function as a motif which stresses the value of the heroine's Australian experience. It is first mentioned when Diana and Russell meet in the National Gallery where they begin to discuss their possible future in relation to what they feel to be their 'spiritual homes' (OL 151). Withers' picture lights up the Australia for which they share an affection:

Opposite where they were sitting was a painting called 'Winter Sunlight' by Walter Withers. It was of a little white wooden farmhouse on a grassy hill.

'That is the Australia I love,' he said.

'So do I, but why?'

'I think because it's pure Australia. It's not anything else. It's innocent. If there is to be an
Australian civilization it must begin with that - not with importations.'

'Is that our place in history?'

He laughed and said: 'It might be.'

OL 151-52.

From this time onwards the painting becomes part of Diana's private symbolism and Guy refers to it whenever he needs to provide a cue for our understanding of what is taking place in the heroine's mind. Comparable to his own invention of a myth of an Australian Golden Age in The Cardboard Crown, it celebrates an innocent and contented existence in harmony with nature. Unlike Guy's Classical myth, however, which is directed towards the past, Diana's delight in the Heidelberg vision is centred on its appreciation of the here-and-now. Thinking of it, as she periodically does, implies a return to her Australian self and the life that she knows and loves, a return from the dream to the real world. Significantly, on the occasion of Josie's wedding - an event which has a beneficial influence on Diana and Wolfie, contributing to the repair of their marriage - the day is fine and 'full of the winter sunlight of Walter Withers' picture' (OL 218). Again, during the last afternoon with Russell at Mornington, Diana makes an oblique reference to the painting, gently chiding Russell for his absorption in a chimeric future when they will find themselves 'not having black tea under a tin veranda, but lunching under the vines at Frascati, and looking down across the Campagna to Rome' (OL 237). Diana reminds him quietly: 'But it's nice here too ... in the winter sunlight' (OL 237). The 'Heidelberg' motif returns at the end of the novel to complete the movement of a return to reality when Diana writes to Russell that she has indeed found herself in a setting which corresponds to Walter Withers' painting:

Our little house is on a cleared hill-top, and on a fine day we can see far into Gippsland. It is something like the farmhouse in the picture 'Winter Sunlight,' which you said one day might be my spiritual home. I think you were right.

OL 254.

It is important to notice that Diana's peace at the end of the novel is undisturbed by the outbreak of war, one of those unfortunate but at the same time fortuitous events which recur in Boyd's novels and are seen to be significant determining factors in his characters' lives. Mrs Montaubyn's public cruelty to Wolfie for his being German strengthens Diana's feelings
towards her husband and brings her to the realization that to some extent she has been living in an illusory world. The war as a challenging contradiction to the general ethos of pleasure results in unwarranted ambiguities in the novel, but in the present context it suffices to elucidate the basic dualism on which Boyd attempts to build his narrative structure. In the context of _Outbreak of Love_ this is not a contrast between pleasure and pain, goodness and moral evil (as it is in the final section of _Lucinda Brayford_, for example, or in the Dominic novels) but rather between the actuality of pleasure and the transcending dream of fulfilment whose reality is ideal rather than experiential.

I have discussed the "dream" as it exists in Russell's vision of Italy as a terrestrial paradise. It remains to examine the "experience" of pleasure as Boyd depicts it in this novel. The pleasures of the here-and-now, to which Wolfie's and Diana's restored relationship forms a coda, are celebrated in the series of episodes elaborating the "outbreak of love" theme, those rhapsodic episodes describing Wolfie's affair with Mrs Montaubyn, Diana's assignations with Russell, John's courtship of Josie and Guy's adolescent flirtation with the twins.

The import of Boyd's portrayal of Wolfie's relationship with Mrs Montaubyn is clear. Like Austin's adultery with Hetty, the affair is an exaltation of animal energy, something ultimately to be transcended but acceptable in its own terms as an expression of basic human nature. Thus neither Austin or Wolfie are presented as being morally at fault in any serious way but rather as having reached a limited phase of growth. Boyd is explicit about Mrs Montaubyn's charms: they are crudely sensual, having at the same time a dignity in their relation to an inner world of memory where Mrs Montaubyn and Wolfie share a common heritage through their Germanic origins. When Wolfie makes love to his mistress he is, in an obscure way, seeking to find himself once again in the place of his birth, where he was at one with his world. So we have the comic picture of a middle-aged man pursuing the pleasures of love (ludicrously, in his socks) given pathetic resonance by the allusion to an enactment of a perennial love-rite:

> Wolfie undid her hair, and the tumbling masses of hyacinthine gold, or perhaps brass, spread over the pillow and enveloped her shoulders. He buried his face in it for some moments. Then, lifting his shining eyes, he said: 'You are my dear German childhood. You smell of the hedge-roses.' He believed that the strong scent she used had this delicate fragrance, as the only fastidious thing
about Wolfie was his ears. He lifted her hair in handfuls and let it fall again, and while he did so he sang to her softly, a song of his own composition. When he had finished, Mrs Montaubyn, touched by an only dim understanding of his charm, his childlike love of play, which, freed from his normal pomposity, he carried up to the most intimate moments of lovemaking said: 'You are a scream, Dingo,' and she pulled his head down on to her bosom.

The ritual continued. He unveiled the splendid mysteries which to him were the vineyards of the Rhine and the apple orchards of Bavaria. They awoke in his intimations of a greater antique glory, the breasts of Ceres and the tumbling grapes in a Sicilian winepress, all the fruitfulness of the earth.

Guy has the tolerance to take a god's-eye-view of the lovers and his plea is for sympathy:

If an observer could have been freed alike from sensual stimulus and the repugnances of the flesh, Wolfie and Mrs Montaubyn might have been beautiful to watch, like two large roses, blown into gentle contact by the afternoon breeze, for the spirit which moved them was, after all, that from which springs most of the beauty that we know. Even those who were unable to view them sub specie aeternitatis, would have found in them the composition of a magnificent Rubens, with perhaps a hint of Fragonard in the way the light gleamed, against a background of rosy shadows, on the voluptuous centre of the bed.

In this section of Outbreak of Love, the writing attains a lyrical fulness and it is tempting to speculate that, in his conception of Wolfie, Boyd was indebted to Pater's prose portrait of a provincial aesthete in Duke Carl of Imaginary Portraits. Returning from Italy across the Alps to the southern German towns, where 'the overflow of Italian genius was traceable,' Duke Carl has a vision of 'the new Hellas, to be realized now as the outcome of home-born German genius' and not 'by way of the geographical Italy or Greece.' Haunted by a girl, whom he imagines playing beggar-maid to his King Cophetua, he contemplates those rustic charms which seem to reflect the bounty and majesty of nature:

And his goodwill sunned her wild-grown beauty into majesty, into a kind of queenly richness. There was natural majesty in the heavy waves of golden hair folded closely above the neck, built a little massively; and she looked kind, beseeching also, capable of sorrow. She was like clear sunny weather, with bluebells and the green leaves, between rainy days, and seemed to embody Die Ruh auf dem Gipfel - all the restful hours he had
spent in the wood-sides and on the hilltops. One June day, on which she seemed to have withdrawn into herself all the tokens of summer, brought decision to our lover of artificial roses, who had cared so little hitherto for the like of her. Grand-duke perforce, he would make her his wife.... 'Go straight to life!' said his new poetic code; and here was the opportunity....?

The same romantic expectation of uncovering the eternal in temporal experience is suggested in Wolfie's extravagant and sentimental outbreak of love.

It is not surprising that his Preludes, redolent of Mrs Montaubyn, light up unused tracts in the minds of his audience at the Radcliffes' to renew forgotten sensitivities and appetites. Without knowing what they are doing, Diana and Russell, Miss Rockingham, Guy and the twins and even the repressed Mildy bask vicariously in Wolfie's passion for his mistress. In exposing the truth of the situation, Guy recaptures his own adolescent excitement on this occasion:

He [Wolfie] continued to reveal to his highly respectable audience the whole process of his lovemaking, the disclosure of the breasts of Ceres, the visions they awakened of the vineyards of Moselle. The splendid chords which declared the unveiling of the thighs sent a shudder through Miss Rockingham, who flung back her head and closed her eyes. To exclude the presence of Mildy and Miss Bath, and to lose myself amongst the pink cheeks and the purple damsons, I did the same. Wolfie thundered out his mounting joy in the whole natural world, the tension of his desire, the soaring ecstatic climax of his passion, and then at the end returned to the few limpid notes with which he had begun, fallen into a minor key.

In contrast to Wolfie's affair, whose character of unredeemed energy is only too apparent when Mrs Montaubyn disgraces herself and insults Diana at the Government House ball, Diana's friendship with Russell has a discretion which presupposes carefully considered values. Once again we are reminded of the transition from Veii to Tevere outlined in Much Else in Italy. At the second stage, mind and body are in harmony, providing a protective shield against confusion and injury. While the relationship lasts, therefore, it is beneficial to the protagonists and harmful to noone. However, Boyd's depiction of a series of clandestine meetings during which the couple chat, drink tea or do nothing more exciting than enjoy a home-made omelette or admire scattered flowers in a pond, is pallid even by comparison with his treatment of Wolfie and Mrs
Montaubyn, deficient in the passion required to make this relationship appear as something more than thoughtless adultery. Even so, it seems evident that the author wanted to suggest the superiority of the Diana-Russell relationship and recognition of this is important if the basic meaning of the novel is to be grasped.

Although the same weight of thematic import is not given to Josie's relationship with John Wyckham, Boyd's handling of this is one of the more appealing aspects of Outbreak of Love and successful in communicating a sense of fulfilment. The young lovers are used more as a metaphor for the 'outbreak of love' theme, as a delightful symbol of fruition, than as a genuine means of advancing the argument of the novel and the episode describing John's proposal among the saplings at Warrandyte has something of the lyrical charm of a Heidelberg painting; certainly the description of Brian's painting of Josie and John recalls Tom Roberts' 'Reconciliation.'

Guy's flirtation with the twins bears more centrally on the meaning of the novel because it provides hints about the narrator's own myth-making tendencies. Looking back on himself as a youth, the mature Guy is amused at his adolescent adoration of the headless nymph, a replica of which he hopes to find — to his great disappointment with Anthea when she fails to respond to his suggestive story about the girl without a head — in one of the young ladies about him. In retrospect he sees the twins as blending civilized qualities with instinctive passion and grace. This dual vision of culture and instinct informs his presentation of all the relationships in the novel and links him to the protagonists of his own story, in particular to Alice and Diana.

In addition to these relationships there is another love-affair budding throughout the novel and that is Russell's with Miss Rockingham. But the book is very uncommunicative on this subject and its connection with the rest of the story does not emerge clearly. Is Miss Rockingham Boyd's ideal of a cultured lady and the reward of Russell's search? Or does the marriage which follows so closely on Diana's retreat from her planned elopement with Russell imply authorial criticism of Russell and Miss Rockingham? Whatever the case, the ambiguity about Russell's character relates to a wider failure and one which will be considered in the following chapter.

Essentially, Outbreak of Love continues the exploration of types of love in The Cardboard Crown. There are many parallels between the two novels, the most significant of which are Guy's own projected search for meaning, the movement towards wisdom in the lives of the heroines and the suggestion of phases of human development in the repeating pattern of concupiscent and idealistic love. Where The Cardboard Crown presents the
experience and dream of pleasure coming together in Alice's maturity, Outbreak of Love reproduces the same pattern in Diana's life, but with a new and vital emphasis on the reality and delight of the present moment.
AESTHETES AND PURITANS: BOYD'S HABITUAL TYPOLOGY

I am supposed to be extremely snobbish, even in Melbourne, the most snobbish place on earth. The reason is that my snobbery is of a different kind. It is not concerned with the horizontal divisions of society, but with the vertical, which is down the middle, 'per pale' as the Heralds say on that document in the harness room. At the top on the Right is the duke, and at the top on the Left is the international financier. At the bottom on the Right is the peasant - on the Left is the factory worker. On the Right between the duke and the peasant are all kinds of landowners and farmers, all artists and craftsmen, soldiers, sailors, clergymen and musicians. On the Left side are business men, stock-brokers, bankers, exporters, all men whose sole reason for working is to make money, and also mechanics and aviators. We on the Right cannot make money. When we have it, it has only come to us as an accident following on our work, or from luck.

_The Cardboard Crown._

This delightfully perverse distinction between Left and Right made in the opening chapter of _The Cardboard Crown_ (CC 13) by the narrator conversing with his nephew, blurs conventional political and social categories in order to reestablish the idea of human worth on a totally different basis. Having dispensed with class as a measure of value (it may remain as an expression of function), Guy retains a simpler, dual vision of society, a society divided between members who have some legitimate connection with the land, and who are united in husbanding and protecting it, and others whose sole motive is gain. On the one hand, there are those who love the world for its own sake; they may be aristocrats or peasants or artists or craftsmen or soldiers: these are the elect. Then there are men whose idols are money, power, or, in the case of the scientist, knowledge: these are the reprobate, the enemies of life. The idea of two opposed groups on which Guy builds his social model is an extension of the typology which Boyd himself constantly employs in his fiction when he attempts to evaluate the quality of his characters' lives.

In the minor fiction, there are personalities open to experience like those of Edward, Morag, Brangane, John Vazetti, Davina, Wilfred, Gavin Leigh and Lucinda Dobson, who, because of a generous response to the pleasures of the present moment, would be justified in claiming
with Mr Smith of Nuns in Jeopardy: '... most of all I love life. I love it wherever it breaks out into beauty or free movement.' Standing in opposition to life, other characters are set on robbing it of its beauty, either by their exploitative conduct - epitomized by the 'guzzling without grace' of Nigel in The Lemon Farm - or by their intellectual arrogance (that of Aelred in The Picnic, for example) or, as in the case of the religious ascetics of Love Gods or Nuns in Jeopardy, by a direct denial of the spontaneous gifts of nature. Since Boyd's preoccupation with pleasure and beauty is unchanged in his mature work, it is not surprising that this pattern of conflicting types, which is a feature of the lesser fiction, should persist in more substantial novels like The Montforts, Lucinda Brayford and the two Langton books so far discussed. Indeed analysis shows that the world of these novels also divides 'per pale' into two classes of characters: those who are responsive to and those who are cowards in the face of beauty. There are degrees within each category and characters whose classification varies. Nevertheless, a distinct typology emerges in Boyd's attempt to suggest a contest between the principles of puritanism and pleasure.

Moreover, while, as we have seen, the Boyd pilgrim invariably arrives at an aesthetic stage in his progress towards self-fulfilment, in the novels presently under consideration, all set at least partially in the late Victorian period, an interesting reinforcement of the theme of pleasure is introduced in the figure of the aesthete understood in the truly cult sense of the fin de siècle.

From the point of view of Boyd's tendency towards categorization, The Montforts exhibits a revealing pattern: Arthur is a nineties aesthete, his sister Amy a killjoy; both strive to influence the younger generation. Raoul, Arthur's protégé in pursuit of a richly textured life within the narrow boundaries of his cultural milieu, is identified with the figure of Duke Carl in Pater's Imaginary Portraits and provides a sharply delineated contrast to his brother, the moralistic, severe and self-destructive Jackie. Jackie's inheritance of puritanism comes through his mother Sophie Jane whose gentle, light-hearted nature is perverted to solemn earnestness in childhood by the 'hell-cat' (M 101) Amy, a physical embodiment of unpleasantness with 'a tongue like a viper, a mind like a beetle and a face like a green lemon' (M 91). Jackie himself is 'like measles, and snakes, and bull-dog ants, one of the unaccountable miseries of existence' (M 172). Raoul sees in him a 'Sophie
twisted to cruelty and resentment' (M 201). With such portraiture, although it is not simply one of heroes and villains, an inevitability is built into the action of the novel, and it is one of its limitations that with the issuing of type-casting masks - colourful as they are - plot is rendered static and uninteresting. One can well believe Boyd's comment when, expressing his dissatisfaction with The Montforts, he recalls 'trying to work out the construction of this book in a mathematical design on the floor' (PI 85). Characterization in Lucinda Brayford and the Langton sequence is less crudely typological. All the same, the 'per pale' division holds. Lucinda Brayford's search for values is given an outward structure in images of the good impressed on the heroine by the different examples of Marian, apostle of work and duty, and Paul, apostle of art and play. The novel sets out to evaluate Marian's middle class puritanism against Paul's aristocratic pleasure ethic. There is no such clearly delineated pattern of opposed characters in the Langton novels, but significant conflicts occur which underline the informing debate. In The Cardboard Crown, the religious manichee Sarah, who has a mischievous influence on two generations of Langton children, represents to the pleasure-loving members of the class the horrible abiding possibility that, with the ascendancy of her kind, they might be made to 'drink their champagne out of kitchen cups' (CC 120). In Guy's mind, Sarah stands in opposition to Alice: 'As a child I saw her, this black alpaca spinster, as a kind of dam holding back all she could from the stream of good things our grandmother delighted to pour on us'(CC 59). Sarah's spiritual offspring, the repressed spinster Mildy, is a grey shadow across the vision of the youthful Guy in Outbreak of Love. By inhibiting her nephew's personal pleasure, she inadvertently highlights in his impressionable mind the spectacle of real delight in the lives of others around him from which his later values are derived.

Within the framework of a choice for pleasure, made vividly concrete for the Boyd protagonist by the possibility of alternative values, a pivotal reference point is the figure of the selfconscious aesthete, generally a centre of radiance in his world. Raoul in The Montforts has his first lessons in the importance of beauty and pleasure from an elderly aesthete, his relative Arthur, whose enthusiasms at the turn of the century extend from the Pre-Raphaelites to Beardsley and Wilde. For Raoul's contemporary in the Langton series, Guy, there is another Arthur, whose aesthetic view of life permeates the texture of the novels
themselves through his influence on the narrator's sensibility. In Lucinda Brayford, Paul, who still lives a Des Esseintes life on the eve of World War II, plays the role of cultural mentor to the heroine, dazzling her with his ability to create an environment rich in its stimulus to the senses. More restrained portraits of this type are Aubrey Tunstall in The Cardboard Crown and Russell Lockwood in Outbreak of Love, as well as the character Broom in The Montforts (fit for Bellamy's utopia of the year 2000) who, although he resembles the aesthete in his priorities for attaining the good life, proves a false light and one which distracts Raoul from his true goal, beauty.

With the current trend in Australian literary studies of re-examining accepted images of society at the turn of the century, a period traditionally regarded as dominated by writers whose contribution to a sense of Australian identity has been a vision of men and women engaged in the physically challenging activities of frontier life, it is enriching to one's sense of the cultural past to find that Boyd has recreated an engaging personality from the period of his youth - his 'Cousin' or 'Uncle' Ted à Beckett whose influence on the novelist has been mentioned in chapter one of this thesis - as a specimen of the Australian aesthete. Admittedly, in late middle age, the fictional Arthurs are rather sedate for the title of man of sensation, which could better apply to Arthur Montfort's protégé Raoul who, like Edward Browne in Love Gods, moves through successive phases of liberation of mind and body.

Bearing, in his role of mentor, some resemblance to Wilde's Lord Henry Wotton (thought to be modelled on Pater), ² Arthur Montfort is midwife to the soul of the young aesthete, Raoul. Of course, as previous discussion of his role makes clear, he is no perverter of innocence. Humorously conscious of himself as a poseur, he provides the youth with the opportunity of reading the satirists of the aesthetic movement as well as its exponents. Nevertheless, surrounded by the rich atmosphere of aesthetic culture he does set out to make his home a haven for luxurious sensibilities. At a time when the fashion in Australian gardens was for novelty borders, patterned effects of foliage and contrived colour schemes, ³ Arthur indulges his taste for Pre-Raphaelitism, creating a garden setting which looks like the backdrop to a painting by Charles Collins or Burne-Jones: 'He [Arthur] placed pieces of statuary at the ends of vistas. He had a border containing
only flowers and shrubs with names like Lad's love, Love-lies-bleeding, and Love-in-the-mist.' The interior of the house is William Morris:

The drawing-room at Scudamore had been redecorated and arranged by Arthur in the same spirit as the garden. The curtains of jade green silk had an applique design of water lilies. The carpet was a flat green and on the tapestry covers of the chairs damsels on white palfreys rode through a flower-starred wood. The crystal chandeliers had been replaced by beaten-copper gas-jets. In 1902, when these decorations had been carried out, Arthur had been sixty years old. This room had crowned his artistic reputation and was generally acknowledged to be the most charming in Melbourne.

Despite the popularity of a Queen Anne style in domestic architecture of the 1900s, a style which in its Australian manifestation bore elements of art nouveau decoration, Arthur's experiments in interior furnishing appear rather unusual. In the 1880s painters like Blamire Young and Charles Conder had created studios which rivalled their European models in sumptuous effects. Bernard Smith describes Young's transplantation of aesthetic taste into the Australian bush in a studio built in the grounds of Katoomba College in 1887:

This, in imitation of Whistler, he decorated with Mirzapore rugs, a Persian Wilton carpet, and a blue-tiled fire-place. Wrought-iron lamp frames, painted scarlet, hung from the ceiling, and the windows were curtained at one end with silk madras muslin and at the other with floral chintz.

Likewise, Conder's Melbourne studio reflected a Whistlerian interior, 'fitted with soft drapes of liberty silks, madras muslin and other light fabrics.' But such departures from bourgeois taste were rare in Melbourne society, whose materialistic, non-aesthetic values are adequately demonstrated in an illustrated book of the period, Victoria's Representative Men at Home, which shows a prevailing taste for cumbersome and ostentatious bric à brac.

Boyd's portrait of Arthur stretches back to his childhood in the 1840s when, on first arrival in Melbourne, he shows signs of the future aesthete in his delighted response to the landscape. He is overheard crooning rather effeteely to his young sister —
Sky of moons, moony sky,
A butterfly, a butterfly

—in lines reminiscent of Wilde's

Against these turbid turquoise skies
The light and luminous balloons
Dip and drift like satin moons,
Drift like silken butterflies ....

As a young man, this embryonic poet of Fantaisies Décoratives has to submit to 'a little quiet chaff about his aestheticism' (M 73), provoked by his liking for chinoiserie and baroque madonnas. His pleasure in middle life is to entertain his friends in the artificial setting of Scudamore, where he especially enjoys the company of the young on whom he foists his opinions about modern manners and his nostalgic reveries about the matchlessly lovely past which he remembers through a delicate Degas-like haze.

Among the seekers of Boyd's novels, Raoul, as Arthur's protégé, is the most affected by aestheticism in its specifically late Victorian and fin de siècle manifestation. It is interesting to note that the historical portrait of a young man absorbing aesthetic culture in his youth and coming to maturity in the hedonistic post-World War I years has a counterpart in the characterization of Amory Blaine in F. Scott Fitzgerald's This Side of Paradise, published in 1920. Covering the same period as the history of Raoul Montfort Blair, This Side of Paradise heralds the arrival of a permissive generation and presents an American equivalent of the revolt against Victorian ethics and the cultivation of fin de siècle attitudes. The resemblance in subject matter shows that Boyd's ideas in the 1920s - The Montforts was published in 1928 - were topical and central, rather than quaint and eccentric, as the novelist is apt to suggest in his autobiographies.

Both novels represent a modern attempt to make the adventures of the heroes of aesthetic literature - of Gautier, Pater or Wilde - seem plausible by placing them in a mundane context. Although the exploits of Raoul and Amory Blaine are tame by comparison with those of d'Albert or Dorian Gray, the former accept the authority of beauty, having listened to the voices of Swinburne, Wilde and Rupert Brooke. In their aesthetic development the eroticism of adolescent sex and its consummation figure obtrusively. Ultimately, both characters reject mere licence,
and, as with Pater's Marius, the refinement of their sensibilities leads them to appreciate the value of moral harmony, Boyd's character finding all he desires in a relationship with a young woman, Fitzgerald's resolving 'to use to the utmost himself and his heritage from the personalities he had passed ....' 7

There are important dissimilarities, however. Fitzgerald's tone throughout is a complex irony which reveals at each stage the relativity of a stance or pose, while Boyd is entirely earnest about the importance of aesthetic liberation. Furthermore, unlike the American variety in This Side of Paradise, which is close to the European phenomenon, cloying and decadent, Australian aestheticism is adapted to the outdoors and lacks a hot-house atmosphere. Such a background to the growth of an aesthetic temperament as that provided by the Blairs (whose concessions to decadence consist of some Beardsley prints, The Studio magazine, grey-green draperies and the sunflowers and zinnias in Sophie's garden) contrasts profoundly with that created by Amory's mother, who gives her child Verlaine's Fêtes Galantes to read in the bath and dreams 'wonderful visions':

I saw bronze rivers lapping marble shores, and great birds that soared through the air, parti-coloured birds with iridescent plumage. I heard strange music and the flare of barbaric trumpets .... 8

By comparison, aesthetic culture as Kenneth and Sophie pursue it is merely a timid flirtation.

A spirit opposed to that of Arthur and Raoul in The Montforts emanates from Arthur's sister Amy, whose inability to see beauty in the world was manifest as a child: where Arthur saw poetry in the Melbourne landscape, Amy saw only vacuity and drabness. Two incidents of far-reaching consequences reveal the blight in the woman's soul - a Victorian obsession with propriety in behaviour which amounts to obscenity. Raoul's mother, Sophie Jane, is Amy's first victim, when, as a high-spirited young girl, she disguises herself in male clothing for a practical joke and in so doing invokes the puritan's wrath. Confused and abashed by the 'slightly lecherous' (M 100) sermon she receives in the insinuating privacy of Amy's bedroom, Sophie undergoes a transformation of character, henceforth to suffer from the puritan's disease: 'Clearly, things were often more harmful than they appeared. She was
overwhelmed with a sudden sense of the truth of the Bible, and the necessity of putting God before amusement’ (M 101). A second victim is Aïda, whose reputation Amy ruins when, as described in chapter four of this thesis, she discovers the young girl and her lover in a moment of infidelity. Aïda dies from the wound inflicted on her sensibility.

Through the passion for righteousness which overtakes Sophie in her life, tending to eclipse but not altogether extinguish her sunny nature, another generation is made to suffer. Sophie's character has a dual aspect, manifest in the conflicting personalities of two of her sons: the pleasure-loving Raoul and the puritan Jackie. Jackie takes Sophie's literalness in applying Old Testament justice to absurd and often embarrassing extremes, as his conduct as a schoolboy on the train from Melbourne illustrates. The local passengers are used to alighting on the line from the wrong side of the carriage. Jackie insists to an astonished lady that she obey the rules and take the 'long and legitimate route' (M 177). His very extremism has a redeeming quality, as it issues from a genuinely searching, even generous spirit, whose chief motive is to put truth to the test. Nevertheless, in his pursuit of the absolute letter rather than the spirit of the Bible, especially apparent in his later pacifism and obsession with the crucifixion, he becomes a figure of loathing to Raoul: 'He [Raoul] could almost feel him breathing hate of all those things, of that very cultivation which so appealed to himself. Jackie was entirely without that feeling for quality, in people or things' (M 201). By contrast, the aesthete's instinct is to celebrate life, even in the face of war, and to defend the things he loves.

Boyd's use of Arthur to conclude The Montforts - the Epilogue consists of Arthur's reverie about the passage of generations, bringing the narrative to rest in contemplation - returns us unambiguously to the figure of the aesthete and is telling for later technical developments in the novels. Arthur's consciousness gives shape and significance to an otherwise neutral chain of events in the succession of generations. The aesthete's response is the organizing point of reality, without which, Boyd implies, life remains an unintelligible cipher of movements and gestures. The Langton novels take a radical step forward in this direction in the use of Guy Langton as narrator. Guy, who is not unlike Raoul in character, although a little less forthright in his claims on life (he makes no boast of himself as a libertine), relies on an elderly relative, also called Arthur, for much of the material he uses in his
narrative of past happenings. Arthur is by no means an exclusive source. The narrator prides himself on his objectivity, making generous use of Alice's diaries and recording, wherever possible, alternative points of view. At one level, as Guy seems to suggest through his scrupulous honesty in presenting the mixture of fact and opinion which is the result of his efforts to uncover the past, truth is relative. It depends on imperfect records: Arthur's memories, Alice's diaries and ce qu'on dit. Yet, in this ostensibly objective fictional method, the very power of one point of view to modify another and, in the process, to reveal the quality of a particular truth rather than mere facts, is acknowledged. Thus we have a world whose enduring existence depends on the regard of people especially sensitive to the texture of life, the type of the aesthete.

Consideration of Guy's function as narrator properly belongs to a discussion of Boyd's technique. However, it is relevant to mention in this context Guy's sense of indebtedness to Arthur and his sympathy for Arthur's point of view despite his equal appreciation of the other's proneness to 'embroider' (CC 33) his stories. Although, like his counterpart in The Montforts, Arthur Langton inclines to the 'sylphides' (CC 77) view of his generation, Guy finds him an invaluable source because he avoids the involuntary censorship which clouds the reminiscences of the more puritanical members of the family - notably those of the prudish Mildy, sometimes the only alternative to Arthur's accounts. Without the disclosures of this 'reckless old gossip' (CC 101), 'the repository of all our scandals' (DYM 55), as Guy describes him, much of the drama and interest of the narrative would be missing. Of key importance, he is Guy's source for the story of Austin's infidelity to Alice in The Carboard Crown. It is Arthur's amorality, his openness to all experience, that makes him a superior witness. The more unusual and exotic the behaviour of people, the more fascination it holds for the connoisseur of life. Guy writes of Arthur's divulgence of Austin's relationship with Hetty in terms which reveal the old aesthete's surviving pleasure in the drama of the situation:

When he first spoke to me of this subject, he pretended that various fictions were true, that Percy Dell for example, was the father of Hetty's sons. Bit by bit he had revealed a little more, like an Oriental dancer discarding her numerous veils, until this evening I was to see the truth uncovered.

CC 77.
This dependence on the aesthete's point of view continues in *A Difficult Young Man*. Again, it is Arthur who tantalizes Guy with the scandal of Dominic's alleged seduction of the maids. Arthur appreciates life wherever it breaks out into colour and movement and, without his point of view, Guy would not only have a greatly impoverished story to tell, but perhaps no story at all.

The division of aesthetes and puritans, which gives an almost mathematical symmetry to the play of characters in *The Montforts*, applies in *The Cardboard Crown* and *Outbreak of Love*, but in a less rigid fashion and one which does not reduce the sense of a vital contest taking place between human beings of opposed temperaments and values.

Just as *The Montforts* presents Amy as a malevolent *mater spiritualium*, so the Langton novels concentrate on a similarly destructive figure in Cousin Sarah. In *The Cardboard Crown* the puritan spirit is embodied in the Mayhews, described by Guy as 'a disintegrating family possessed by a sort of dreary meekness, a mildew of the spirit' (CC 58). 'The Jinx,' as Austin calls Sarah, is this family's main representative, destined, as a paid servant, to dog the heels of the Langtons for many years. Guy describes the effect of her presence in the household:

Long after she was an unavoidable necessity she remained, spreading a grey blight over all the opulence of their lives. If in later years, Alice was just setting out for some function, at the last minute Sarah would scramble into the landau with a dipper full of eggs, or something wrapped in newspaper which she was taking to a sale of work. She always had the wrong wines brought up for a dinner party, not from stupidity but with the intentional malice of a teetotaller. She could not order the most elaborate meal without giving it somehow the atmosphere of a schoolroom tea. Her words were always gentle and righteous and her deeds always full of spite.

CC 59.

As in the case of Amy, Sarah has a damaging influence on a younger person, in this case Mildred, whom she regards as her special charge and whose name she shortens to 'Mildy' (CC 100), inadvertently suggesting the spread of the Mayhew infection. Guy remarks that his generation called Mildred 'Aunt Mildew' (CC 110) behind her back, ignorant of the unhappy circumstances which disfigured her character. At the impressionable time of adolescence, Mildy is exposed to the ambivalent puritanism of Sarah, who, aroused to jealousy by signs of affection between the
girl and a Dell cousin - in reality a half-brother - assaults the child's conscience by revealing the facts of Austin's infidelity:

... Mildy did not, walking back to the house, take one handle of Sarah's basket, but dawdled behind with Tom.

Sarah, savage with jealousy, at once sniffed the most vile immorality, a boy with his half-sister. But with her anger was a gleam of triumph. She now had every right to disclose her secret. Mildy must know, to save her from sin. There was no one to whom she would have greater delight in revealing it. Before bedtime she called her into her room, that horrid little room which I myself remember, with its smell of vinegar and cough drops, and its little black religious books, from which Cousin Sarah tried to teach us a religion which bore no resemblance to Christianity. There was no mention of considering the lilies, of turning water into wine, of breaking boxes of spikenard, of forgiving harlots, of beautiful seamless garments and dining with the publicans, but only of Jezebel flung down for the dogs to lick up the blood.

It is a shock too great for innocence to endure, and one whose consequence for Mildy's later development is a knowing, sardonic sexual repression and a scepticism about the possibility of real pleasure. Thus, at the end of Outbreak of Love, when war is declared, Mildy seems to come into her element as an unconscious enemy of life. Guy portrays her at this point as a confused personality, motivated by possessiveness and envy, and, in contrasting her to Arthur, reveals the depth of his youthful resentment of her puritanical influence.

A further variation of Boyd's habitual typology emerges in Lucinda Brayford, where the aesthetic personality assumes the same authority over the mind of the Boyd seeker as in the novels already discussed. Sometimes, as in the characterization of the two Arthurs, a touch of the European nineties is included in Boyd's evocation of the Australian scene. Not unexpectedly, though, the most hot-house varieties of aestheticism find their natural habitat in a European setting, the best and most obvious example being Lucinda's mentor, her brother-in-law Paul Brayford, who in the 1920s is remarkable for his perpetuation of a nineties life-style. A young man comments: 'He lives with a plough-boy and paints like Conder. He's too ninetyish for words' (LB 334).

Unconcerned about appearing modish, Paul lives for pleasure, whether at
his villa in Provence - where he shares with his manservant the enjoyments of swimming, a good cuisine and the atmosphere of freedom bred by a landscape which has echoes of the Classical 'golden age' (LB 307) - or at his family seat in England, where he devises entertainments of a fantastic kind:

He gave parties at Crittenden in which he tried to express his idea of civilised entertainment. At one the music of Scarlatti was played on a harpsichord in the saloon, which was lighted only by candles. At another Stephen brought some fellow-students down from London, who played Beethoven's last Quartets in the chapel. At yet another party, actors impersonated the poets whose work they recited. Tennyson, grabbing the arm of a martyred young woman, chanted 'Maud' on a note of mounting passion; Baudelaire read his poems with a negress lying on the sofa beside him; while Verlaine in a scene of carefully arranged squalor, and caressing the ears of a butcher's boy, recited the haunting and lovely sonnet, 'Parsifal a vaincu les filles.'

Crittenden is an aesthete's paradise, with its rooms bathed in light, its decorated ceilings, glittering chandeliers, and Poussin 'Bacchanal.' One special feature is the 'Peacock Room' painted by Paul's father, who 'had been imbued with the culture of the 'nineties and had admired everything French' (LB 149). The room's design is reminiscent of Whistler's famous Peacock Room, although Boyd suggests that its inspiration is Conder:

The walls were stretched with canvas on which the eleventh viscount had painted, rather in the manner of Conder, a design of white peacocks against cypresses and mysterious grey-green trees. The woodwork was ivory-white. 

Paul is influenced by the extravagance of his surroundings, and by his aristocratic freedom from the necessity of earning his living, to form an outlook on life resembling that of the fin de siècle, with its celebration of beauty, art and leisure. Seeing his role as that of high priest of a civilization under threat from the destructive forces of industrialization, new wealth, and unprincipled power, he proclaims his beliefs about art and life in phrases which recall Oscar Wilde's aphorisms on the importance of being useless. Wilde writes:
We can forgive a man for making a useful thing as long as he does not admire it. The only excuse for making a useless thing is that one admires it intensely.

All art is quite useless. 10

And conversely: 'Industry is the root of all ugliness.' 11 Paul tells Lucinda that 'no important things are useful' (LB 361) and preaches art for art's sake to a young communist student at Cambridge:

Only the useless things have permanent value. What are the useful things? Trams, trains and motor buses. In a few years they are all out of date and forgotten rubbish. What are the useless things? Poems, paintings and buildings like this college and the chapel ....

LB 386-87.

Paul prides himself on having by-passed the industrial revolution and will not tolerate furniture beyond 1793. His London flat, notable for its 'pale green walls and vermilion lacquer chairs,' reflects an eighteenth century taste for chinoiserie. The dining room, described as 'Chinese Chippendale,' has 'black linen curtains with a design of little Chinamen, suspended in swings from ivory-coloured branches' (LB 292). In this setting of contrived beauty the aesthete indulges his taste for boys, scandalizing his relatives by his obvious intimacy with Crittenden's ex-footman. The relationship with Harry reveals a decadently effete sensibility's nostalgie de la boeuf. Like Des Esseintes, who is surfeited with English life by a visit to a railway tavern where the oxtail soup, roast beef and phlegmatic waiter adequately represent the entire substance of his anticipated experience, Paul ventures imaginatively into realms where his sensitive organism is unwilling to follow:

'This hand,' he said, counting the [boy's] fingers, 'is all I ever want to see of the country. When I look at this thumb I see the handle of a spade, and smell the freshly turned earth .... This piece of broken skin by your nail makes suddenly vivid in my mind all the accumulated activity of country life. I smell hay-lofts where a rusty nail sticks in an ancient beam. I see a red-faced boy struggling in the higher branches of a plum tree.

LB 290-91.
A narcissist, he portrays himself in tones of pompous rhetoric as the parody of the perfect Paterian. Everything is rapture:

Look at my hand - long-fingered, long-nailed, fine-skinned, it shrieks of brilliant silliness, just as yours growls of the farmyard. Everything I see and hear impinges on me, every waking minute my mind is rejecting some ugliness, accepting some beauty. The flame at the centre of my being does not burn hard and gem-like, but wavering and smoky from all these draughts. But you are impervious to them, and so you stand opaque between them and me, so that my wobbling flame recovers itself and rises pale gold and serene to a fine smokeless point.

LB 291-92.

The ninetyish assumptions and propositions of this avowed aesthete, homosexual and believer in self-expression unrestrained by conventional morality, make him more out of date entre les deux guerres than Arthur Montfort when he contrived a William Morris décor for his house in 1902. Lucinda Brayford was written during the Second World War and the Paul we meet in its final pages - evoking the early war years - is much the same age as Boyd himself. This is revealing about Boyd as it shows that he could conceive of the fin de siècle influence enduring that long. Indeed, we might be excused for thinking that Paul is partially a portrait of the novelist, particularly of the Boyd who is addicted to discursive argument, just as the heroine of Lucinda Brayford represents the novelist's affective self (we recall the Flaubertian confession, 'Lucinda Brayford ... "C'est moi"' [DC 10]).

Believing that 'the artist and the aristocrat are the only people worthy of consideration ... the rest of mankind should function to make their existence tolerable' (LB 159), Paul finds a natural enemy in a person who is his antithesis in character and values, his sister-in-law, Marian, the daughter of her husband's Headmaster and therefore not a social match for Lord Crittenden. Marian makes her first appearance in the novel in the gracious setting of Crittenden. She has kept the newly arrived Lucinda and her welcoming party waiting and, when she does eventually emerge, wearing a linen dress and carrying a basket of eggs, it is to deflate successfully the Crittenden atmosphere of pleasure, grace and dignity and to establish her own contradictory ethos of matter-of-factness, sobriety and modesty. At tea Lucinda is forced to notice that 'Marian put the basket of eggs on a yellow damask chair ...' (LB 155). There is an element of bullying evident in this incident.
which reveals Marian as a rather stubborn and repressive figure. Throughout the novel she and Paul react strongly to each other in a conflict which is based on personal antipathy tinged with class hatred. Witness Marian lecturing Paul -

'One can hardly imagine Dr Arnold or any of the great Victorian scholars loafing on the beach at St Saturnin.' She went on to praise the austere and high-minded divines of the last century, concluding, 'They don't produce men like that nowadays.'

- or Paul expressing his resentment of Marian:

Why I go on about Marian is not really because she comes from the middle classes, but because she is the last sterile expression of puritanism, which is mostly found in the middle classes. Puritanism is earnestness without an objective. The major task of the Anglo-Saxon peoples is to sweat it out of their souls.

Here we have Boyd's characteristic identification of self-denying morality not only with a particular class, that of the bourgeoisie, but with northern cultures in general, whose puritan spirit Paul's holidays in the south of France attempt to exorcize.

Although inferior to that of the Langton novels, characterization in Lucinda Brayford is more subtly typological than in The Montforts. Consequently, while a spiritual polarity expressed in the conflict between Marian and Paul raises the issues of puritanism and pleasure, it has no simple resolution in the assertion of one set of values over another, as happens at the end of The Montforts. A further complication in Boyd's evaluation of puritanism is introduced into the novel through the characterization of the businessman, Straker, in that part of the narrative which concerns Stephen Brayford. Here, however, the opposition is not simply one of aesthetes and puritans but of metaphysical good and evil, a matter to be considered in the following chapter of this thesis. At present it suffices to remain with that part of the debate about contrasting values which surrounds Boyd's presentation of Lucinda's search for a spiritual ideal. The heroine has cause to weigh the merits of both Marian's and Paul's positions and, as one might expect of the
Boyd seeker, she finds the aesthete's example more attractive.

At the same time, the aesthete's own grasp of wisdom is not beyond scrutiny. Indeed, throughout the narrative of Paul's relationship with Lucinda, Boyd questions the rightness of Paul's insistence on epicureanism as the saving grace of civilization, calling attention to a morbid and decadent strain in his behaviour and beliefs - evident, for example, in his idea of God as 'a kind of super gourmet, a horrible connoisseur sniffing the fragrance of souls' (LB 361). Paul rants theatrically:

We are tortured and twisted to wring from us cries of agony, exquisite notes of submission and sacrifice, so that this divine monster may enjoy their music. We are like Strasbourg geese whose livers are diseased to make a delicacy.

LB 361-62.

In fact the insistent image of Paul's position as one of the last surviving aristocrats in a rapidly changing social order is that of a dying leaf on a diseased tree. It is not clear whether the disease afflicts Paul from within or without. Lucinda's feeling is that 'from time to time Paul revealed himself as a living expression of antiquity, as if in him dry bones really had been made alive' (LB 440). At the same time she warns her son Stephen, who has come under Paul's spell, that Paul's world is one of illusory dreams: 'He's a dear, but he lives in a quite unreal world - a sort of mixture of the Middle Ages and ancient Greece. He could only do it by hiding himself down in Provence. None of his theories fit life as it is' (LB 410-11). There is a sense of imminent demise in all of Paul's attempts to revive the aristocratic past at Crittenden. Boyd writes within the pervasively autumnal metaphor with which he surrounds his character: 'In the autumn the house seemed in perfect accord with the season, like some enormous perfect bloom before the petals fall' (LB 495). When war breaks out, Paul's frustrated tirades against a shattered social order provoke Lucinda to reject his attitude of refusal - a refusal to recognize the possibility of any value emerging from the loss of innocent young life - as one of obscene despair. Lucinda sees in her dead son Stephen an image of a 'love of good' (LB 545) which she believes has the power 'to affirm as great a sense of truth and human value as that of the past which Paul bewailed' (LB 545). In the final analysis, then,
Boyd's portrait of Paul is that of a man who is ineffectual in the face of real suffering and the exigencies of modern life.

A comparable undermining of the aesthete's position does not occur in The Montforts. The suggestion that Arthur is capable of failing Raoul, through not understanding 'the nausea of ... mind' (M 204) produced by experience of war in the trenches, is offset by the obnoxious example of Jackie whose conscientious objection lacks the humanistic motive of Stephen Brayford's. Jackie's attitude to the war appears to Raoul as a kind of hate, identifiable with 'all that was worst in Puritanism' (M 201) and destructive of the values which make civilization a cause worth defending. At the same time, Boyd, his own devil's advocate in the canonization of aestheticism, introduces into the novel a character who is notable for possessing all the best ideas and very little of their spirit. That aestheticism can lead to a drying up of the basic human emotions of sympathy and love is vividly evidenced in Broom, to whom Raoul - and the novelist - take an ambivalent attitude. Again, as in the early fiction, Boyd warns of the dangers of hedonism. When Raoul meets Broom he is looking for reorientation and finds some stimulus and encouragement from his example. On the surface Broom seems to live for pleasure, desiring, like the aesthetes, an openness to experience that will exclude no possibility for enriching the texture of life. However, he goes too far in his active pursuit of a style of living which will allow him to extract from the world 'the maximum of enjoyment' (M 235). His programme extends from dietary measures to physical culture, the wearing of casual clothing and abstinence from cigarettes and alcohol. An example of the coming race, he is a proponent of eugenics. His children, born of different mothers, live in a Broom utopia, 'on vegetables' (M 237) and without clothes, religion, or any conventional restraint. In every possible way, Broom tries to avoid puritanism, believing that 'Puritan people are the most blasphemous' (M 241). Like Boyd himself, he upholds the value of spontaneity and criticizes the inhibiting selfconsciousness of the intellectual. Ironically, though, his dislike of intellectuality is itself chillingly cerebral and his effect on Raoul is to dampen the boy's enthusiasm by putting 'a cold finger on all the warm sensitive spots of his soul' (M 239). Because of this Raoul decides that, beneath his pretences, Broom is 'too intense a Puritan' (M 245) to have his pulse on life and determinedly rejects Broom's imperative that 'the poor, the leper, the
maimed' (M 243) be bred out of the human race. Still, for all the doubts expressed about Broom, Boyd seems to be merely cautioning against the possible perversion of an ethic of pleasure and not criticizing aestheticism as such. Consequently The Montforts largely overlooks the issue of moral suffering raised by the figure of Jackie, towards whom Raoul feels only a twinge of guilt, thinking that he has been 'ashamed of Christ' (M 201).

Boyd's frustration at the aesthete's inability to give substance to his dream of pleasure enters into the portraits of Aubrey Tunstall and Russell Lockwood in their parallel relationships with the heroines of The Cardboard Crown and Outbreak of Love. Aubrey and Russell, as already argued, are apostles of art and pleasure, but while they serve as guiding lights for Alice and Diana, imparting to them a love of Italy as a place where the good life may be achieved, they are personally ineffectual in bringing a potentially sexual relationship to a positive conclusion. At the same time, they manage to communicate the essential spiritual content of an ethic of pleasure, and the heroines acquire in the relationships a heightened aesthetic awareness and a sense of value in respect to experiences already accessible to them in the context of their ordinary lives. But while Alice and Diana have a vibrancy of personality which enables them to take pleasure in life as it comes to them, Aubrey and Russell, who rely on the richly stimulating atmosphere of Italy to sustain their appetites for a varied experience, are feebler in their enjoyment. Suspicions about Aubrey are introduced early in the novel when Alice finds that his manner is frequently uncommunicative, even cold. She commits her reservations about him to her diary: 'It seemed to me that he made his life a picture rather than a natural growth, or that he had created for himself a setting so perfect that it restricted the fullness of life' (CC 94). In the penultimate chapter Guy raises doubts about Aubrey's motives in pursuing Alice: he is possibly a fortune hunter and quite probably a homosexual. Comparable criticism is levelled at Russell Lockwood, about whom there is an air of artificiality. As Arthur Langton remarks, 'he walks as if he were carrying his heart in an alabaster vase and is afraid of dropping it' (OL 46)—and again, 'he's too precious .... He spends his life in Europe chasing beauty and grandees, instead of settling down here and marrying a girl of his sort' (OL 108). Of course Arthur's insight into Russell's personality is revealing about his own, prompting Guy's
satiric comment: 'As this was exactly what Arthur would have liked to do and had done for a short time, he spoke with great moral indignation' (OL 108). In fact Arthur and Russell are alike in their impotent dilettantism. The important point, though, is that such radical criticism of Aubrey, Russell and perhaps Arthur - key characters in the narrative of the spiritual search which extends through two novels - implies considerable doubt about the aesthete's position and has the serious consequence of undermining Boyd's general approval of an ethic of pleasure. The problem least affects the structure of The Cardboard Crown, where the implications of the criticism of Aubrey are worked out in the wistful sadness of Alice's mood at the end of the novel when she seems to reach a state of final resignation:

She could not go back in time. She could not repeat an experience. Too often we are given what we asked when we no longer have the power to use the gift. She had to go on to the next phase, for her the last, that of the static onion woman, waiting for the angel himself to remove the weight from her skirts, and to pull her up into the skies. For her there was no more vital experience. All that had ended ....

CC 167.

In Outbreak of Love, however, no such solution is found.

A. L. French, attempting to expose some of the weaknesses of Boyd's fiction by giving a detailed critique of Outbreak of Love, argues that the equivocation about Russell Lockwood effectively weakens the 'outbreak of love' theme of the novel:

Now if Russell were no more than the 'conventional but intelligent, perhaps rather precious bachelor with social ambition' that Diana finds him at first, her affair with him would seem not only self-deluding, but down-right stupid; and we would be faced with the awkward question, how could the supposedly sensitive and sensible Diana have been taken in for a moment by this animated visiting-card, this ambulant Baedeker? 12

The ambiguity French points to in the presentation of a relationship which is supposed to offer fulfilment and pleasure directs us to ponder more closely Boyd's dissatisfaction with an ethic of pleasure. I would like to add to French's argument the observation that Boyd has introduced a further source of confusion into Outbreak of Love by conclusively undermining the 'outbreak of love' atmosphere of the novel with its
ending: the outbreak of war. There is a very real suggestion that pleasure in this novel is a trivial affair, as inconsequential to a serious view of life as the clandestine omelette shared, with boarding-school excitement, by Diana and Russell. The sense of frivolity is reinforced by a humorous tone, especially prominent in those episodes connected with Wolfie and his flamboyant mistress. Finally, Outbreak of Love ends with a family party to the operetta Patience, which is of course light-heartedly satiric of the cult of aestheticism. The kind of thematic cross-reference Boyd is seeking with the other event that ends the novel, the outbreak of war, is not altogether clear, although one effect of the allusion to Gilbert and Sullivan is to make us ask whether in the course of the novel we have not been living, quite unsuspectingly, in a world of Bunthornes, Archibald Grosvenors and lovesick maidens. At the same time, another element in the plot of the operetta, namely the conversion of the military officers to aestheticism, comments suggestively on the event of war which intrudes upon Boyd's narrative. Thus, on the one hand, the novel seems to say that the wowserism of people like Mildy, who thinks that it is naughty to drink champagne in wartime, is detrimental to civilized values, that the active pursuit of pleasure may in fact be an insurance against the encroachment of pain and chaos. On the other hand, there is a strong suggestion that such frivolity of mind as the opera satirizes is an open invitation to disaster. Guy comments:

It seemed as if the opera itself, the plaintive melodies and aesthetic absurdities of Patience, provided curious intervals of unreality in the excitement that possessed the audience, and though when the last curtain fell they clapped and cheered again and again for Bunthorne and his love-sick maidens, it was merely to release their patriotic excitement and enthusiasm for the war.

OL 242.

At the same time Boyd's own ambivalence seems more pointedly evoked in a remark of Mildy's - for her an unexpectedly acute observation: 'Gilbert must have been attracted towards aestheticism, as we can only satirize those things which a part of us admires' (OL 234).

This statement reads like an unwitting comment on the tone of the novel itself, suggesting that the writer is uncomfortable about precisely what attitude to take to the dislocation he has inadvertently
introduced into his subject matter: how is he to move from an outbreak of love to an outbreak of war? Indeed, the problem of a shift in mood from the light-hearted to the serious is not solved in the novel and Boyd emerges as unconsciously self-satiric, having failed to communicate adequately the limitations he himself finds in an unqualified aestheticism. He does not wholly want to give his approval to the aesthete, as he ultimately seeks to write with conviction about the moral basis of life. What is he to do? In *The Montforts*, it seems that goodness is quite strictly equated with pleasure, evil with puritanism. In *Lucinda Brayford* and the Langton novels pleasure is not unequivocal, although the answer does not lie in the direction of a return to puritanism. Naturally, there is a desire that goodness should triumph, that delight should overwhelm frustration and pain, but for this Boyd needs a new kind of hero. *Lucinda Brayford* introduces just such a character to supplant the pure aesthete in the portrait of Stephen Brayford: the religious aesthete who merges into the martyr and saint. Even in the Langton novels which, because of the weight given to Arthur Langton's viewpoint, represent the apex of Boyd's identification with aestheticism, a different kind of hero emerges as Boyd's ideal: again, the man of aesthetic temperament given a dimension of suffering suggestive of religious rather than aesthetic values. He is Dominic Langton, the protagonist of two novels in the sequence, *A Difficult Young Man* and *When Blackbirds Sing*. This preoccupation with a religious attitude to the experience of evil is not as surprising a development as might be supposed, since it derives from the aesthetic movement itself, most obviously from the Wilde of *De Profundis* and 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol.' Indeed Boyd, in his religious aspiration, might well have expressed these sentiments from *De Profundis*:

I now see that sorrow, being the supreme emotion of which man is capable, is at once the type and test of all great Art. What the artist is always looking for is that mode of existence in which soul and body are one and indivisible: in which the outward is expressive of the inward: in which Form reveals. Of such modes of existence there are not a few: youth and the arts preoccupied with youth may serve as a model for us at one moment: at another, we may like to think that, in its subtility and sensitiveness of impression, its suggestion of a spirit dwelling in external things and making its raiment of earth and air, of mist and city alike, and in the morbid sympathy of its moods, and tones and colours, modern landscape art is realising
for us pictorially what was realised in such plastic perfection by the Greeks. Music, in which all subject is absorbed in expression and cannot be separated from it, is a complex example, and a flower or a child a simple example of what I mean: but Sorrow is the ultimate type both in Life and Art. 13
IV

THE FACE OF SORROW
CHAPTER EIGHT

THE TYPE AND TEST OF SORROW: THE CHRISTIAN STORY IN

LUCINDA BRAYFORD AND SUCH PLEASURE

... if a man is convinced of the reality of a spiritual re-birth, and has experienced it in any degree ... so he will recognize the profound spiritual truth behind the story of the crucifixion and the resurrection.

A Single Flame.

Having drawn the outline of the face of pleasure in Martin Boyd's fiction and established a parallel between his theory of a spiritual ascent in Much Else in Italy and the narrative of his leading characters in the novels, a narrative which invariably leads to the assertion of the values incorporated in the symbols of the Apollos of Veii and Tevere, this study must now pursue the path of the Boyd pilgrim in those novels which depict a transcending of a narrowly aesthetic phase. The concluding section of Lucinda Brayford, the ending of Outbreak of Love and the final novel in the Langton sequence, When Blackbirds Sing, all testify to the fact that, beyond the rich texture of experience he delights in evoking, Boyd is in the final analysis anxious to make a moral comment about life, about good and evil as a life and death contest, about risk and the possibility of grievous loss. As in Much Else in Italy, so in the fiction, he turns for this development from 'the Greek story' to 'the Christian story,' searching in the face of sorrow for those lineaments of beauty - revealed in Michelangelo's Pieta - which bear ultimate witness to the goodness of the world, despite the contradictions of pain and spiritual stress.

The move to 'the Christian story' in the narrative of Lucinda Brayford is marked by a shift in the focus of attention from the heroine to her son Stephen, who inherits his mother's luminous personality and keen capacity for enjoyment, but, through his youthful inexperience, is defenceless before the philistinism and aggressiveness of modern life. The message Boyd wanted to communicate in the story of Stephen's transformation from a pleasure-loving youth to a saintly figure crucified for his refusal to betray the delight he feels in all living things is clearly stated in a few lines at the end of his 1939 autobiography. Aware that Europe is on the brink of another catastrophic war, Boyd ends A Single Flame with a plea for moral heroism, arguing for a martyrdom like that of the Christian saints:
'Unless we are prepared to accept the crucifixion of the complete pacifist, we still have to ask, what must we do to be saved?' (SF 266). The mouthpiece for this idea in *Lucinda Brayford* is Paul, who believes that the times need 'a new generation of martyred bishops' (LB 542), that is to say, a return to the traditional Christian ethic - the solution offered to the thirties by Eliot in *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935).

Actually, its medieval setting notwithstanding, *Murder in the Cathedral*, with its preaching of inward renewal to the modern wasteland, expresses a vision parallel to Boyd's in his effort to suggest the relevance of a Gothic sense of transcendence and heroic virtue to the twentieth century. In both writers the hope is expressed that tradition might yet be revived; hence the departure from the movement towards the creation of an anti-hero in literature about the First World War produced by writers of protest like Graves, Aldington and Sassoon. Whether he knew and appreciated Eliot's version of the story or not, Boyd would have found special appeal in the type and example of the martyred bishop, conscious as he was of his ancestral connection with Thomas à Becket. At any rate his answer to the problems of a decaying civilization is that of a traditionalist, Christian imagination and, short of reproducing *Murder in the Cathedral*'s experiment of turning hagiography into literature, Boyd creates in Stephen Brayford a character with the same responsibility and function as Becket in Eliot's play. Secular authority is contradicted and challenged, and salvation is won through the refusal to compromise. The voice of protest is raised, but without a loss of idealism.

The novel was begun in the early forties and completed 'on the day war ended' (DD 211). Boyd regarded it as his war effort or, more accurately, his effort for civilization, since in it he returns with a very different intent to the theme of conscientious objection handled with more repugnance than sympathy in *The Montforts* in the portrait of Jackie's behaviour during the First World War. At the outbreak of World War II, the main strands of Boyd's thinking about the disintegration of modern civilization consisted of a deep respect for the idealism of the political extremes of monarchism and communism, an increased reverence for the tradition he found 'everywhere, in buildings, in customs and in thought' (DD 196) at Cambridge where he spent the war, and a simmering hatred for the opportunist classes, especially ungodly clergymen, rationalist intellectuals, rapacious war leaders and the bourgeois philistines of his circle, whose exclusive interest was always their own security. Out of this, a profound sense that the good and evil in man expresses itself in other than national terms led him to adopt the
attitude of a 'qualified pacifism,' about which he speaks in Day of My Delight:

... I had the greatest admiration for these young people in whom it was complete, and who said in effect: 'Murder is murder, and no political expediency can make it anything else.' They were keeping alive the value of the human individual, and to me they were the salt of the earth. To obey the Holy Ghost within you, in face of the hostility of your family, your friends and your country besotted with war, was the bravest thing a man could do. I had not the courage to do it in 1914, and I could only make up for that by befriending those who did it now.

Significantly, these comments on the war end with a quotation from Wilfred Owen's 'The Parable of the Old Man and the Young,' pleading for spiritual sacrifice in place of murder:

'Offer the Ram of Pride, instead of him.'
But the old man would not so, and slew his son,
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.

While The Montforts expresses reservations about Jackie's protest because of its apparent fantaticism and denial of human values, Lucinda Brayford offers a more positive interpretation of pacifism as a courageous affirmation of life. The reason is that in The Montforts, Boyd's presentation of the conscientious objector forms part of his critique of puritanism. Stephen Brayford, on the other hand, is the pacifist seen differently, Jackie raised to the level of martyr and saint. To this end Boyd surrounds his new character with the trappings of Christian belief but in such a way that a special interpretation of Christian myth is offered. Despite the rather 'Gothic' overlay of liturgical references in that part of the narrative which deals with Stephen, the novel avoids interpreting Christianity from anything resembling the 'medieval' world view defined and rejected in Much Else in Italy.

Stephen has a prototype in St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, on whose feast day he is born. A question is therefore raised from his first entry into the novel - his birth in Part II, chapter three - about the extent to which he will be assimilated into the type represented by his namesake. The final book of the novel, 'In Adolescentis Flore,' centres on Stephen's story, from his student life at Cambridge, through his courtship and marriage, his divorce and enlistment in World War II, to his death following a period of imprisonment in the Glasshouse for his pacifist refusal to obey orders.
Stephen undergoes a moral crucifixion which results in a fatal deterioration of his health. The doctor's diagnosis is that the illness is 'largely psychological' (LB 536). Having been brought up under Paul's influence from childhood, Stephen is an incurable aesthete, a sensitive plant who cannot bear that the world should be anything other than beautiful, true and good - but his aestheticism carries him further than Paul's towards a sense of the numinous. When we meet him on the first pages of Part IV, a young student at Cambridge, he appears as a fledgeling religious mystic aspiring to enter the Celestial City. His heightened aesthetic awareness recalls Henry Vaughan's vision of eternity - 'Like a great Ring of pure and endless light,/All calm, as it was bright' - such is his intense, almost ecstatic consciousness of the beauty in his surroundings:

All the westward facing windows of Gibbs' building appeared to be splashed with green diamonds. The evening sun was behind a film of cloud. Either from this or because its rays were filtered through the topmost branches of the trees, its light was a pale, cool green. It may also have been partly due to the quality of the old glass in the windows, uneven in its surface, so that in one window would appear four or five bright points of light, and in another only two. The semi-circular window over the pediment was a solid blaze. The light did not seem to be reflected externally, but to come from within the building, as if some supernatural assembly were there and the rooms were filled with Christmas stars.

LB 372-73.

Significantly, in view of Boyd's habitual use of images of light to express a beauty whose intensity and radiance has an eternal quality, Stephen's experience is neither of 'light through,' nor of 'light on.' Rather, it indicates an unusual confounding of the two, a meeting of the Gothic and the Classic, of spirit and matter in a manner which implies mutuality. Such apprehensions are repeated intermittently in Stephen's life, sometimes transfused with a sense of hope of imminent entry into a blissful existence.

Stephen dies of heartbreak shortly after his release from the Glasshouse, where he suffers a martyrdom of mind and body. He is physically ill-treated and undergoes a confusion of mind in which both the good and evil in his life seem to merge in a single image of pain which haunts him in recurring bad dreams. Boyd's model for Stephen is more than likely the poet Siegfried Sassoon, whose example of conscientious objection became one of the legends of the First World War. Sassoon's protest against the prolongation of the war in 1917 and his refusal to continue fighting, described by a sympathetic Robert Graves in *Goodbye to All That* (1929), shocked his contemporaries,
unused as they were to such displays of dissent. In the context of describing his own situation towards the end of the war, Boyd mentions Sassoon's pacifist protest both in the early autobiography (SF 112) and in Day of My Delight:

About this time Siegfried Sassoon made his heroic protest against the futility of the war. How it was side-tracked is told by Robert Graves in Good-bye to All That. Robert Graves says that he realised the war was futile, but that one had to go on with it as one could not let down the regiment, the credit of the Welch Fusiliers being apparently of more importance than the future of Western civilisation.

DD 79-80.

Sassoon ran the risk of incurring the death-sentence but instead was treated for shell-shock at Craiglockhart Military Hospital, near Edinburgh. Unlike Stephen, he survived his experience and, after a lifetime's flirtation with religious confession, became a convert to the Catholic Church at the age of seventy. His reverent sentiments expressed 'At the Grave of Henry Vaughan' (1924) -

Here sleeps the Silurist; the loved physician; The face that left no portraiture behind; The skull that housed white angels and had vision Of daybreak through the gateways of the mind. Here faith and mercy, wisdom and humility (Whose influence shall prevail for evermore) Shine. And this lowly grave tells Heaven's tranquillity. And here stand I, a suppliant at the door -

- resemble Stephen's poetic testimony to a belief in the afterlife written in his copy of Traherne and found by his mother after his death:

Within their cage, where glass and stone Are frozen in a mystic's dream Behind the pale gold candle gleam The scarlet nightingales intone. And are these flutes for man's delight Just quivering down the branching quire, Or do they rise by roof and spire To echo in the angel height? The wakened ear is not denied To find this house the lodge of heaven, But to the quickened heart is given To find the gate of heaven wide.

LB 538-39.
If the similarities between the two poems are not accidental, it is characteristic of Boyd that he finds more inspiration in Sassoon's religious poetry than in those outcries against the suffering of the war expressed by Sassoon's severe sketches of trench-life in *The Old Huntsman* (1917) and *Counter-Attack and Other Poems* (1918), collections influential in promoting a new realism about the war. Sassoon's poem and Stephen's have in common the celebration of a seventeenth-century poet expressed in similar imagery - angelic spirits, 'white angels' and 'scarlet nightingales,' aspiring to release into heaven through 'gateways of the mind,' or 'rising by roof and spire.' In each case the author of the poetic tribute stands humbly 'suppliant at the door' or at 'the gate of heaven wide,' having received through the poem's song a foretaste of paradise. The poem in *Lucinda Brayford* is inferior to Sassoon's but Boyd has the excuse that it would constitute Stephen's juvenilia. In any case, in addition to providing an allusive parallel, it effectively recapitulates the imagery of Stephen's personal experiences in King's Chapel (the focus of his aesthetic and spiritual life at Cambridge) and the Glasshouse (a similar yet contrasting image), where beauty and pain alike have confirmed in him the desire to escape from the 'cage' of mortality.

Although he is not a believer in the orthodox sense, Stephen is confronted by evidence that Christianity, through its art and liturgy, is still a living tradition, effectively able to communicate an image of high ideals. At Cambridge, through his participation in the services at King's Chapel, he feels a heightened sense of reverence for life: 'From the condition they produced in him he was sure that they were acts of worship, although he was intellectually uncertain about the existence of God' (LB 380).

The narrative of his life is structured around three significant Christmases and two Easters, suggesting a symbolic pattern of redemption through suffering. A prophetic hint of future troubles is introduced in Part III, chapter four, when Straker - as Lord Fitzaluncell - eclipses the Christmas Nativity-feast spirit by presenting the child Stephen with a toy tank at his birthday party on Boxing Day (the feast of St. Stephen) - a gesture which brings to mind Yeats' vision of a 'drowning' of 'the ceremony of innocence.' The figure of Straker represents Boyd's notion of modern evil, and the Christmas gift is a premonition of the future war which will claim Stephen's life, so that on two counts the episode reveals
its structural importance in the narrative's delineation of the face of sorrow. Boyd's description of the incident has an economy of evocative image which gives it something of the impact of a prose poem, creating a mood reminiscent of Yeats' 'The Second Coming': 'And what rough beast, its hour come round at last, / Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?'

Straker's parcel is opened:

It revealed a large mechanical mud-coloured toy tank. Lucinda wound it up and set it in motion. The children formed a circle and watched it. Above them glittered the fairy-like chandeliers, and behind them was the soft splendour of the lovely room. Their faces were rosy and eager. In the middle of the circle, the focus of all this beauty and attention, the tank whirred and waddled like some huge obscene slug.

Stephen looked up at Lucinda and wrinkled his nose.

The second significant Christmas in Stephen's life is the occasion of his wife's infidelity with one of Straker's circle, described in Part IV, chapter seven. Again, the episode has symbolic resonances, suggesting that more is at stake than a young man's marriage. The setting is Fitzzauncell castle and in particular an inner room which enshrines a signed photograph of Hitler. In allowing herself to be seduced by the unworthy Maurice Ablett, Heather is betraying not only Stephen but the aristocracy into which she has married and so, in Boyd's eyes, the fabric of civilization itself. Boyd believes that Straker's class throughout Europe are at the root of world war, spiritually conspiring to undermine rightful leadership within every country involved. The third Christmas used in the structuring of the novel's meaning corresponds with the final period of Stephen's life. Although gravely ill, Stephen communicates at Christmas Mass, and his death the following Easter suggests the completion of his participation in the sacramental sacrifice. He has realized his prophetic role of alter Christus, conforming to the model of St. Stephen, martyr and saint.

Boyd's use of parallel Easters underlines his theme of redemption. Early in Part IV, Stephen visits King's Chapel at Eastertide:

Suddenly, without warning from the organ, the boys burst out singing, Eya, resurrexit. The lovely noise rose and quivered high overhead in the glorious vaulted roof. Stephen found he had to blink back the tears which sometimes came to his eyes at unexpected beauty. He was hardly conscious of what followed until the singing began again. When he left the chapel with Hayman the music seemed to remain in him, heightening his whole condition and filling him with tranquil love.

LB 375.
Importantly, this passage anticipates the final lines of the novel. Throughout the Easter term Stephen continues his attendance at King's, partly for the music and partly because of an attachment which develops between himself and one of the choristers. The - mildly homosexual - relationship is one of the spirit, awakening in Stephen a 'delicate sense of love' which finds 'its right and sufficient expression' not in the exchanges of ordinary human fellowship, but 'in the cadences of Palestrina and Orlando Gibbons' (LB 382). Its growth is celebrated by the sung alleluias of the liturgical season, anticipating a suggestion of resurrection in Stephen's coincidental meeting with the boy at Dunkirk where he has been gravely wounded. On this occasion Boyd makes use of one of his favourite images, the pietà: Stephen holds the dead boy in his arms. There is perhaps a Shelleyan echo in Boyd's presentation of the relationship as a whole. Brian represents the apex of Stephen's religious aspiration. He is that 'soul out of my soul,' the pursuit of which promises the consummate perfection of selfhood. Indeed, for all the traditional liturgical symbolism surrounding Stephen, Boyd may well be closer to Shelley's neoPlatonic vision than he is to an orthodox Christianity in his evocation of Stephen's spirituality.

At the same time, since it represents the climax of the Christian year, the Easter season provides the author with a fitting symbolic backdrop to the ending of his novel, in which he hopes to suggest that the protagonist has achieved a triumph over evil according to the Christian pattern. Stephen's ashes have been scattered in the Cam and all that remains to his desolate mother is a memory. Lucinda wanders into King's Chapel where Stephen once took her for evensong. Then she was puzzled by the 'intense happiness' (LB 390) the service obviously inspired in her son and by his apparent intimacy with a member of the choir. Now, pondering, like the Virgin in Michelangelo's sculpture, the paradox of her son's life - his overwhelming failure 'in everything, in social life, in marriage, as a soldier, in all those things which give satisfaction to a young man's friends,' and his possession of 'a love of all that was good' (LB 544) - she is suddenly awakened from her gloomy reverie of death and disintegration by the filling of the church and, at the commencement of the anthem, feels the same exhilaration as her son in the Christian celebration of an eternal truth:

Suddenly, without warning from the organ, the whole building was full of song. Lucinda started with delight. She watched the boy opposite. He was taut, like a singing bird. His clear young voice floated up to the lofty branches of the roof, which are themselves a form of music:

Eva, Resurrexit! LB 545-46.
The boy of course is not Stephen's chorister, but the continuation of the liturgical ceremonies at King's symbolizes a presence which endures despite war, decay and death. Through tradition a sense of beauty and faith in the world is kept alive and Lucinda's intimation is that her son has in some way contributed to this.

By concluding the novel with Lucinda's exaltation, Boyd anticipates his interpretation of the meaning of suffering in Much Else in Italy, where his analysis of 'the Christian story' takes firm hold on the message of Classicism. In both works, the face of sorrow is revealed as one aspect of the face of beauty, as the mask worn by beauty when the only means of conquering evil is through passive surrender. Despite an acknowledgement of pain and an endorsement of the Gothic aspiration of escape from the prison of life, Boyd's attitude to suffering in the story of Stephen is that it is to be endured neither for its own sake, nor for an entirely transcendental motive, but for the sake of the world in which man lives.

Lucinda Brayford marks the maturing of Boyd's vision as a writer of fiction. Here, in contrast to the shallow aestheticism of often trivial early novels like The Lemon Farm or Night of the Party, beauty acquires a metaphysical status. At the same time, deficiencies persist in aspects of Boyd's art of the novel, most glaringly in his lack of control over the deliberately introduced intellectual content of his subject matter in Part IV. Stephen's crisis over the war occurs within a carefully constructed framework of ideas which unfortunately emerge as rather crude in comparison with the subtleties of mood Boyd manages to evoke in a poetic way to the very end. There is the strident and unanswered voice of the haranguing Paul, invading the narrative in the form of a commentary on Stephen's position and yet finally dispensed with in the face of the more significant witness of the boy's martyrdom. The problem is not in accepting that Stephen's is the faithful sacrifice which redeems the old order and raises Paul's prescriptions for nobility and the pursuit of a harmonious existence to new spiritual heights through the motive of love, but in admitting Paul's vacillating views of politics and society as serious analyses of a historical situation.

A more serious criticism, however, is that in the final section of Lucinda Brayford Boyd returns to the typological geometry of some of his earlier work through his introduction of two foils to Stephen Brayford, characters who are diametrically opposed to Stephen in ideology and behaviour, his friends Roland - communist and Spanish Civil War veteran - and Hayman, who takes Orders in the Anglican Church. In the suggestion of possible alternative paths, one representing social commitment, the other religious
profession, Boyd hopes to illustrate that Stephen's way is superior.
A further example of a character whose function is chiefly symbolic is
Brian, the 'sweetie in the choir' (LB 392) of King's Chapel whose presence
inspires Stephen with ideal emotions. Such characterization leads Boyd
into that inevitability of plot which mars his work elsewhere.
Characters have to be edged into the story at crucial points for their
symbolism to function and so their entries are manipulated to provide an
external and artificial commentary on the action. The clergyman Hayman
presides at the Christmas ceremonies immediately preceding his friend's
death, a martyr's death suggesting the completion of Stephen's participation
in the sacramental sacrifice of the Mass. The significance of this is plain.
In realizing his prophetic role, Stephen establishes the authenticity
of his spirit in contrast to Hayman's convention-bound orthodoxy, an
orthodoxy which willingly serves the blood-thirsty machinery of authority
in support of the war. Likewise Roland's appearance with Lucinda and Paul
in the final pages of the novel which describe the scattering of Stephen's
ashes in the Cam, contributes to the effect of a rather stagey tableau,
something resembling a 'disciples before the empty tomb.'

At this point in the analysis of Boyd's treatment of 'the Christian
story,' it is necessary to examine more closely the significance invested
in the idea of a spiritual crucifixion. In his presentation of the
experience of pain, Boyd returns to a theme introduced occasionally in the
lighter fiction of a religious Dark Night of the Soul, which, at least
in the early context, is seen in nothing like the exigent terms of a
John of the Cross. However, serious or light-hearted, the way in which Boyd
habitually evaluates the process of suffering is to suggest that by removing
the props of convention and set ideas, it may effect something like Blake's
cleansing of the doors of perception, elevating the human personality to an
awareness of the self's relationship with an unlimited world of spirit.

The idea of a providential and beneficial spiritual purgation, explored
in a comic way as a variation on the theme of 'the happy fault' in Nuns in
Jeopardy, reveals Boyd struggling to accept the seriousness of moral evil.
In Scandal of Spring, the hero John Vazetti undergoes an experience which
parallels Stephen's crisis. The narrative of John's story concerns his
pursuit of self-gratification in defiance of the puritan mores of his family
and the community at large. John undergoes a mental martyrdom at the hands
of society which punishes his deviation from its ethical code. In prison
for abducting a young girl, he suffers as Stephen does in the Glasshouse.
His mind is overwhelmed with disturbing images which reflect fragments of
a total reality whose ground seems one of irresolvable conflict. Yet he finds
solace in an exhaustion of spirit, an emptiness which is 'filled with a
glowing darkness, a peace he did not attempt to understand' (SS 216). He interprets this as an experience of an omnipresent, unifying 'love' (SS 216), restoring to the receiver harmony and peace. The portrait of John is a prelude to better things, notably Stephen in Lucinda Brayford and Dominic in the Langton sequence, both of whom are made to suffer by society for their refusals to accept its norms of behaviour. A less successful attempt to depict a pattern of psychological suffering is seen in the rather schematic history of Maurice Bellamy in Such Pleasure, a novel which reveals Boyd's tendency towards the roman à thèse, expounding at the level of didacticism ideas which are given more subtle embodiment in the crises of Stephen and Dominic. By contrast, the suffering of Maurice is merely the conclusion of a moral syllogism.

Such Pleasure, a combination of Boyd's first two novels and (as suggested by the mottoes to the chapters, taken from a sixteenth-century hymn about the Heavenly Jerusalem) more overtly religious than either Love Gods or Brangane, is a novel whose dominant theme is an enlarging of the spiritual faculties. Chronologically, it follows closely on Lucinda Brayford and, whilst its unwieldy, fragmented plot and rather heavy-handed use of religious symbols offers small reward by comparison, it is a revealing novel to read in conjunction with Lucinda Brayford because it articulates, albeit in a rather crude way, many of the ideas informing Boyd's first successful novel.

The plot dramatizes the idea that we have here no abiding city, but instead a dream of the perfect life represented to us by art and architecture, the beautiful forms given by men of vision to their deepest aspirations. As in Lucinda Brayford, we are introduced to a heroine (Brangane remodelled as Bridget) whose search for an ideal of life is realized more fully in the beliefs and choices of her son. The aesthetic awakening is as important in Such Pleasure as it is elsewhere in Boyd's fiction and, characteristically, it is associated with the culture, art and social forms of the aristocracy. The heroine's inspiration throughout her life is her memory of her Irish ancestral home which she loses through her illegitimacy, falling from status after her father's death. Bridget's life is a struggle to regain the dignity she imagines she has lost, but she makes no spiritual advance until possessiveness leaves her and she is able to appreciate beauty for its own sake and without the need for reminders of its connection with a privileged order. In Lucinda Brayford, Boyd offers a similar perspective on Paul, whose supposedly aristocratic ideals are in fact highly personal and eccentric:
Paul, who thought he understood himself so clearly, did not see that he disliked the aristocracy in its practical manifestation, at least the English provincial variety. He hated pomposity without grace, and the restriction of human kindness by artificial barriers. When he had been associating mostly with bourgeois and bohemians, he had idealised aristocratic life, and like Watteau, who avoided the Court, he peopled the parks and palaces of his nostalgia with graceful imagined creatures, rather than with actual fat Bourbons or with fox-hunting English peeresses. Finding himself different from his associates, he came to believe that all his own characteristics were the marks of aristocracy, even his strong powers of invective, his taste for dishes cooked with wine and garlic, and his love of boys.

Bridget's son, Maurice (there is a parallel with the Lucinda-Stephen relationship), is also sensitive to beauty, but his aspirations ultimately direct him towards religion. In the narrative of Maurice's story an early episode is devoted to the young man's reactions to the beautiful architecture of an aristocratic house. To relieve the reader of the sense that snob values are being promoted Boyd assures him that it is with the mind of the architect that the boy is communicating in his appreciative response:

His, perhaps, was the mind with whom the architect's would have been most in tune. He was the poet and prince for whom that unknown genius had created his palace. He was Fénelon and Shelley and the Chevalier de St. George.

SP 218-19.

The typical Boyd pilgrim, Maurice fluctuates between extremes - of Gothic and Classic styles in art, the medieval and the Renaissance, England and Italy, religious commitment and sensual gratification. A war (World War I) temporarily cures him of aestheticism and coarsens the effete strain in his personality. Afterwards, however, he realizes that his years in the army have demoralized him and he returns to his former sensibility. Opportunely at this time he finds a mentor in a Mr Vernon who has socialistic theories about cultural alienation. They meet at Hay, the house which had so delighted Maurice's adolescent tastes years earlier. Vernon expands Boyd's authorial comment in the earlier episode, declaring: 'Imagine half the great noblemen if there had been no architects nor painters, nor writers, or the great generals if there had been no tailors nor band music' (SP 311). The introduction of Vernon's ideas is crucial to the
development of a theme of spiritual detachment and purity in the pursuit of beauty for its own sake. The genuine content of any civilization is the ideal which informed its growth, as Vernon instructs Maurice:

The finest civilisation is rotten with imperfections, but with the rottenness there is, in anything you can call a civilisation, an attempt to reproduce the conception of what the ideal life must be. The medieval system was an attempt to approximate life to the principalities and hierarchies of Heaven. When we see an illuminated missal or Chartres, or a painting by Lippo Lippi, we don't see medievalism, but only the evidence of an impalpable medieval dream, which tugs at our own hearts. When this house stirs your nostalgia, it's not for the life led by the cross-eyed baronet over the dining-room mantelpiece, it is for the same dream that inspired the young architect.

This is the lesson which has evaded Bridget all her life, that she has been pursuing an ideal rather than a reality. A class which is superior in its own right has never really existed, so there is no aristocratic paradise to which she can return. As Vernon puts it:

Aristocracy is only a conception of life as imperfectly realised as the medieval conception of heaven. It is only a dream in the mind of the artist, and the actual aristocracy are only puppets he drapes with his ideas.

Throughout the novel the view is advanced that the aristocracy are only that in the true spiritual sense when they are dispossessed; then, a genuine quality of 'chivalry and sensibility' (SP 311), if it exists, can emerge. Vernon is tolerant of snobs as he believes that their attitudes simply reflect a hankering after a higher life. According to his notions, art is in the final reckoning the only means of creating the illusion of a perfect life, and the cultural process never reaches a conclusive end: 'There's no concrete satisfying final realisation' (SP 312). The novel modifies the implied relativism of Vernon's views, however. Consistently with habit, Boyd details an example to challenge theory in his depiction of the life of a character whose progress towards fulfilment transcends the wisdom of the spokesman of ideas. She is Janet Kirriemuir, an aristocrat of whom it is said: 'Dispossession and misfortune had given her an expression of extraordinary dignity, combined with a look of inner illumination' (SP 315).

With respect to the structure of the novel, Lady Kirriemuir is
a foil to Bridget who comes to spiritual maturity when she begins to approximate to the living ideal of her friend. Bridget is finally emancipated from the tyranny of conventional ideas of social dignity when, on remarrying into an inheritance of the estate in Ireland, she loses her awed reverence for the aristocracy:

... her marriage to Malwyn had stripped the last veil of romance, of hierarchical medieval mystery from her conception of the peerage. It had all fallen away and revealed an impecunious middle-aged man who smoked in her bathroom.

SP 333.

The novel's epitaph for Bridget, a very old lady returned to her family castle and title, sums up Boyd's text in the whole of Such Pleasure: 'Probably her life had suffered from the mistake of valuing the label more than the thing in itself ...' (SP 366).

With more respect for the integrity of his character than is warranted in Bridget's case, Boyd places Paul in exactly this perspective at the end of Lucinda Brayford. Paul has been living his private myth about the superiority of an aristocratic way of life and at last Lucinda is able to see through it: 'Paul was too convincing a prophet of disintegration. Often he amused her by his assumption that he alone stood upright in a world of moral ruin, but today she could not bear it any longer' (LB 544). As the vacillation of his beliefs - his floundering with contrary points of view about politics, society and patriotism - shows, Paul is forced to undergo a process of detachment from specific forms analogous to that of the protagonists of Such Pleasure. In this state of mind he sees that even his bête noire, the puritanical middle-class Marian, warrants reconsideration, admitting:

Every man, however fair and candid he may think himself, has a closed corner in his mind where he will not allow the light. If a ray penetrates this dark place his agony is extreme and he cries out in fury and attacks the man who has directed the light. Because of these dark corners all the fine conceptions we build up must ultimately fall. Marian is always illuminating my dark corner.

LB 443.

Boyd wants it to be apparent that Marian lives her own myth of the way to human perfection and in Such Pleasure he goes to greater lengths
(prompted perhaps by a scruple of fairness out of character with his
instinctive preference) to develop, in the portrait of Maurice's sister,
Mara, the idea that even the puritan ethic may be redeeming for a particular
individual.

The links between Such Pleasure and Lucinda Brayford are very strong.
In her spiritual struggle, Bridget appears as an amalgam of Paul and Lucinda;
Mara is Marian's counterpart in her promotion of puritan values; while the
parallel to Stephen is of course Maurice, again the religious man. As with
Boyd's presentation of the Lucinda-Stephen relationship, Maurice's story of
intellectual and spiritual enlightenment is a counterpoint to his mother's
struggle towards integrity. Both novels are concerned to represent a process
of dispossession through which the individual comes into his true spiritual
inheritance. In this process, aesthetic values of a narrow kind are
transcended in the discovery of the limits - as Mr Vernon puts it - of any
'conception of what the ideal life must be.' A nostalgia for beautiful things
does not have its root in a social framework in which some human beings are
superior to others, but derives from a desire in all men for a more perfect
life. At this level, its motive is religious, directed towards a universal
principle of beauty in the world whose reality exceeds the limits of
particular expression. For the protagonists of Such Pleasure and Lucinda
Brayford alike, recognition of this truth involves an experience of contra-
diction in which values and ideas, formerly held indispensable, are put in
a larger perspective. Considering the traditionalist frame of mind Boyd
shares with Eliot, it is not surprising that his concept of a paradoxical
path to fulfilment through suffering should closely resemble that formulated
by the poet in 'Burnt Norton' -

Descend lower, descend only
Into the world of perpetual solitude,
World not world, but that which is not world,
Internal darkness, deprivation
And destitution of all property,
Desiccation of the world of sense,
Evacuation of the world of fancy,
Inoperancy of the world of spirit;
This is the one way ....

- and in 'East Coker,' in a paraphrase of John of the Cross:

Shall I say it again? In order to arrive there,
To arrive where you are, to get from where you are not,
You must go by a way wherein there is no ecstasy.
In order to arrive at what you do not know
You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance.
In order to possess what you do not possess
You must go by the way of dispossession.
In order to arrive at what you are not
You must go through the way in which you are not.
And what you do not know is the only thing you know
And what you own is what you do not own.
And where you are is where you are not.

By a process of detachment from worldly values, both Stephen and Maurice find their vocations at 'the still point of the turning world,' where time and eternity intersect. Exposed to Bridget's extreme and pathetic snobbishness, Maurice has to search within himself to restore his sense of personal dignity. Out of the depths of his humiliation springs an unaccountable moment of peace, a moment of mystical apprehension which strengthens his sense of purpose in life. We learn from the epilogue to the novel that, having joined an Anglican monastery, he eventually becomes a writer, one imagines a kind of Anglican Thomas Merton. In depicting these developments in Maurice's life, Boyd does not necessarily depart from the position of agnosticism in regard to dogmatic religion described in

A Single Flame -

The following was, and I think still is, my attitude to the Church. In its ceremonies symbolic expression is given to spiritual truth. The historical reality of the events which provide the symbols seems to me irrelevant .... if a man is convinced of the reality of a spiritual re-birth, and has experienced it in any degree, after he has died to himself (the moral convulsion to which I have referred), so he will recognize the profound spiritual truth behind the story of the crucifixion and the resurrection, but its historic actuality will not trouble him, because he knows it is eternally true.

SF 197-98.

What is important in the story of Maurice is that he finds in Christianity a vision commensurate with his own experience of life, that out of the contradictions of pain 'such pleasure' may arise.

Stephen enters 'the way of dispossession' through his stance against the war for which he is imprisoned in the Glasshouse. Provoked by mental and physical violence, he gives himself up to hatred for the first time in his life. His sleep is haunted by nightmares, one of which is especially painful because in it the Glasshouse, a place of punishment and degradation, and King's Chapel, a place of joy and illumination, blur:

When he fell asleep his mind continued its waking processes, but in a confused fashion. In dreams we are the passive mirrors of involuntary imagination, and Stephen no longer had the iron satisfaction of directing his hatred.
He was its passive victim. Whatever innocent and happy visions from the past came to him, they were clouded and distorted by it - the plage at St Saturnin, Clare bridge, or those parts of the gardens and woods at Crittenden where he had played as a child, they all became scenes in hell, peopled by inmates of the Glasshouse and by the corpses of Dunkirk. In one of these dreams he was in the Glasshouse, which in his dream was also King's chapel. Mistily the sergeant who had first stripped and beaten him was also Brian, the end chorister. In his nightmare he tried to divide the two things, the two places, and the two people, the object of his love and the object of his hate. Then it seemed as if they were both in himself, and his body was torn apart by them, as if he were nailed to a cross made of love and hatred, and he had to reconcile the two things in himself.

LB 524.

Neither the memory of King's Chapel nor of Brian at Dunkirk have the power to alleviate the suffering from which Stephen never properly recovers, sinking, after his release from prison, into a wasting state which terminates in death. Far from providing his family with an image of despair, however, his influence rises out of the ashes of his body scattered in the Cam, to affect Lucinda with the strongest emotion she has ever felt in her life, a conviction of hope prompted by her memory of the 'power of forgiveness' (LB 545) expressed by her son's life. The names Paul and Stephen suggest a possible symbolism in the relationship between these characters, since Paul, lacking Lucinda's receptiveness, is relatively blind to the boy's witness. Doubtless Boyd intends to suggest that he will have his conversion on the road to Damascus.

Stephen's attitude of forgiveness, his tranquillity of mind in the last phase of his life, originates in an experience of peace like that which lifts John Vazetti and Maurice Bellamy from their abasement. In the midst of his worst suffering, Stephen dreams an answer to his despair and disturbance of mind. Significantly, it is a vision of extraordinary beauty, which, although it is composed of images from his past experiences, evades precise definition. One element, however, stands out as being of paramount importance. It is the transfigured face of the dead boy he held in his arms at Dunkirk:

The answer seemed to be in the form of music. He was again under the lime tree in the park at Crittenden, and some touch of the emotion he had then felt returned to him in his dreams. The branches overhead became the branching roof of a college chapel which was full of an extraordinary illumination, not dazzling nor glittering but as if everything contained light in itself. In the midst of this light was the transfigured face of the boy whom he had lifted into the sea at Dunkirk, but he had become nameless. He was singing and yet the music was hardly recognisable as sound.
It was more like a quivering in the air which was part of the all-pervading light. Stephen knew that there were words to this music, though he could not hear them sung. They were the words of Lovelace's poem:

If I have freedom in my love,
   And in my soul am free,
   Angels alone that soar above
   Enjoy such liberty.

He wept with happiness in his sleep.

LB 524-25.

Through these diffuse apprehensions, Boyd's protagonist in 'the Christian story' is brought to his final insight, that supreme spiritual beauty, in the form of selfless love, is revealed in the face of sorrow - that image of redemptive, sacrificial love which, in the face of the Christ of Michelangelo's Pietà in Much Else in Italy, marks the pinnacle of the Boyd ascent. Stephen's legacy to his mother is a moment of just such heightened illumination in King's College Chapel, a moment which expands into joy when the building fills with music. Interestingly, from the point of view of Boyd's portrait of the aesthetic temperament in Lucinda, this development has a parallel in Marius' exalted experience of beauty when he hears singing in a Christian church. It is the climax of Lucinda's story, precipitating the heroine outside her normal habits of mind into a new sphere of consciousness in which the aesthetic moment, filled with numinous presence, is able to absorb, without diminishment, the knowledge of pain.

Not surprisingly, this refinement of an ethic of pleasure to the point where suffering is accepted as a means of achieving a higher satisfaction has implications for Boyd's treatment of the search for fulfilment in the Langton novels. In a parallel movement to that elaborated in the story of Stephen, the history of Dominic through two novels of the series illustrates the afflictions of a personality whose sense of the delight of life meets with opposition. Once again Boyd translates the essence of 'the Christian story' as he sees it, affirming, from the point of view of a perfected understanding of beauty, the 'type and test' of sorrow.
CHAPTER NINE

A DIFFICULT YOUNG MAN: THE MARRIAGE OF HELLENIC AND GOTHIC

This is really what I am seeking for throughout this book, the Memlinc in the cellar, the beautiful portrait of the human face, lost in the dissolution of our family and our religion.

A Difficult Young Man.

The vision of a progress from a pagan to a Christian view of the world carefully traced in Lucinda Brayford through three generations - from the hedonism of the Vanes in their Toorak mansion, to the civilization appreciated by Lucinda in Paul's way of life and, finally, to Stephen's gift of altruistic love - also informs Boyd's picture of successive generations of Langtons in his tetralogy. An earlier chapter of this thesis has outlined the features of Boyd's portrayal of the fulfilment of a Classical ideal of beauty and pleasure in The Cardboard Crown and Outbreak of Love. In considering the preoccupations of the two remaining novels of the sequence, novels which in their narrative of the life of Dominic explore the values of the Langton family as these are reflected in the third generation, it is necessary to acknowledge Boyd's tacit appeal to the ideals of 'the Christian story,' this time managed without the elaborate overlay of Christian myth employed in Lucinda Brayford, but nonetheless pointed in its exploration of the meaning of suffering. This movement from the face of pleasure to the face of sorrow in the Langton series takes place in two stages: initially, in the narrative of Dominic's emotional development from childhood to early manhood in a world saturated with the complex influences of the family group, and, subsequently, in the description of his life as a soldier during the First World War. The present chapter concerns the first phase of Dominic's realization of 'the Christian story' as this emerges in A Difficult Young Man (1955), a highly sophisticated work in which the major themes of the fiction are embodied in more dramatic form than usual and where the creation of a leading character represents a supreme effort to bring together, in a living and dynamic way, the disparate elements of Boyd's characteristic Hellenic-Christian vision. After the qualified success of Stephen Brayford in suggesting a synthesis of Classical and Christian values, Boyd achieves in Dominic the marriage of Hellenic and Gothic which appears to have been his life-long aim.
A Difficult Young Man consolidates the success of The Cardboard Crown in employing Guy as narrator-persona - the artist as interpreter of a world and, in this instance, as a character in that world. Guy's search in his own generation for that shared 'frame of mind' (DYM 9) which is the essence of the family group, results in a kaleidoscope of images of individuals and environments, the most compelling of which is the figure of Dominic seen as the embodiment of the Langton spirit:

When I told Julian that I would write this book, the first intention was that it should be about my grandparents, but we agreed that it should also be an exploration of Dominic's immediate forbears to discover what influences had made him what he was, and above all to discover what in fact he was.

DYM 9.

As an artist in words, rather than in the more concrete medium of paint of his father and (eventually) his two brothers, Brian and Dominic, Guy nevertheless shares the family's visual sensibility, a consciousness which directs his imagination towards the communication of ideas in terms of images and patterns of images ultimately forming a private mythology. Throughout the novel, Guy's role is chiefly that of spectator, conforming to the type of the aesthete in Boyd's fiction, that connoisseur of experience already encountered in such characters as Paul, the Arthurs, Aubrey and Russell. The narrator is not without a degree of self-irony in the portrait he offers of his own aesthetic inclinations, laughing, for example, at his effete reception of English civilization - 'I was ... like a piece of old lace that has been washed in weak coffee to retain its antique colouring' (DYM 177) - or amusedly describing his adolescent notion of religion as 'plainsong, antiphons, processions and incense' (DYM 145). At the same time, despite the suggestion of dilettantism in cultural and religious matters, his obsession with Dominic as representative Langton whose legendary exploits suggest a battleground where universal good is at war with the powers of darkness, implies a search on Guy's part analogous to Alice's and Diana's movement towards a spiritual goal.

In one important respect A Difficult Young Man, as the record of the growth of a sensibility, is as much Guy's story as Dominic's. Modestly never allowing himself the limelight for very long but giving it instead to his brother, Guy nevertheless offers, through the evolving perspectives he establishes on his subject, a portrait of the artist as a young man. Early in the book, he directs attention to this fact: 'It appears to me that as I proceed with this story I am revealing not only the events of that
time, but a process in my own mind, which in turn affects what I record' (DYM 39). The importance of this is again stressed on one of the few occasions when Guy permits an incident from his own life to dominate the narrative:

To justify this I must repeat that I am one of the characters in this book, and that the things which have affected my emotional and intellectual growth, such as it is, have consequently coloured my story, and the glasses through which I see my parents, Dominic, Colonel Rodgers and the rest of us.

DYM 97.

The evolution of Guy's consciousness is a complex affair. Two important features, however, stand out. They are his instinctive and persistent love of pleasure, shared from childhood with other members of his family, and, in adolescence, a quasi-religious state of mind which he describes from the standpoint of maturity as a 'prolonged medieval dream' (DYM 116). Like the other grandchildren, including the contrary and problematical Dominic, Guy receives an inheritance of pleasure at Alice's hands: 'Where she was we collected like bees, or flies, round a honeypot .... We also had the feeling that in the background of everyone's life, there was, as a matter-of-course, a gilded house devoted to pleasure, where riches were gathered, a share of which in due course would come to oneself' (DYM 78). When in later years, his imagination is affected by an exaggerated piety, its chief inspiration is his continuing assumption that 'the end of life is pleasure' (DYM 145). The onset of a new colouring given to the expression of this belief is described in chapter nine as deriving from the ideals of the Oxford Movement, imparted to him by his tutor, Mr Woodhall:

My life at Waterpark was not spent in the modern world of 1907-1911, which now seems sufficiently remote ....

I lived in a poetic dream of medievalism. I felt like Marius when, on the mornings of early summer, I walked across the bridge and along the meadow path to the church to serve the Vicar's Mass ....

DYM 114.

The narrator believes that, emerging from church 'on the morning of St John before the Latin Gate or the translation of St Swithun, pure and foolish and full of joy as Sir Galahad' (DYM 114), he was in possession of
a precious state of innocent perception, 'when the natural world is the reflection of paradise, when the young men are sparkling angels and the children tumbling jewels' (DYM 115). Importantly for his story, this state of mind provided the lens through which many of his early apprehensions were formed, influencing especially his concept of Dominic. The gift of the liturgy to the young Guy is a vision of ceremony and, despite the pitfalls of formalism and puritanism which he eventually discovers in Mr Woodhall's approach to religion, he never really departs from the attitude of 'sweet reason' (DYM 145) encouraged by his parents.

Self-knowledge for Guy is knowledge of his family, providing a sympathetic basis for the comprehension of the universal Langton-Byngham he sees imaged in the face of Dominic. Thus, in revealing the character of his hero, it is natural that Guy should exploit the similarities and differences between himself and his brother. Guy is nondescript, conformist, moderate and contemplative; Dominic is colourful, eccentric, intense and prone to impetuous action. At the same time, as brothers, the two hold 'the same instinctive beliefs' (DYM 156), so that the picture we have of Dominic through Guy's eyes is both sympathetic and distantly impersonal. Guy can be detached and objective about this strange creature whose deep and violent undercurrent emotions frighten him, yet his likeness to Dominic gives him a penetration into the character of his hero which lends the insights and judgements of the novel a validity they would not otherwise have. Dominic may appear a queer fish, says Guy, but what I say about him is likely to be true, because I myself have behaved like him and our motives are liable to be the same. Guy is at pains to convince the reader of his identity with Dominic. Hence the parallelism of two episodes which rest on a question of honour: Dominic's expulsion from school for defending his younger brother, Brian, whom the Headmaster has insulted over a matter of dress, and Guy's refusal to be bribed by his Headmaster with 'a supper of schoolboy luxury, lobsters, iced cakes, peaches and jellies' (DYM 99) to forget an injustice. After this point in the narrative, the code of honour shared by the brothers is firmly established, reinforced by Guy's presentation of himself in his religious frame of mind as Sir Galahad in pursuit of the Grail and of Dominic, in his passionate activities of fencing with Colonel Rodgers or courting his liege-lady (whether it is Sylvia or Helena), as a knight-errant practiseing the more pagan virtues of the knightly code. Guy's youthful observations are presented as rather heavy-handed in their association of Dominic with tradition and antiquity. The young
Guy finds in Dominic's a historic face, almost a replica of that Spanish forebear, the sinister duque de Teba, whose portrait remains in the possession of the family until it is destroyed by the superstitious Sarah. Thus at one level Dominic emerges as an elaborate emblem of Guy's personal myth which enshrines a medieval view of the world. This myth continues to inform Guy's adult apprehension of life, despite his awareness of its limitations in picturing the complete truth.

Through Guy a dual vision, able to encompass both a here-and-now and a sub specie aeternitatis perspective on events, controls Boyd's depiction of reality and in particular of the chief subject of the novel, the nature and hue of the character of the hero in whom the Langton family's traits are magnified. One of Guy's chief concerns is to suggest the spontaneity of Dominic's character, his lack of reflectiveness and immediate translation of emotions into actions, traits which have the effect of increasing the drama and beauty of the present moment. In this portraiture Guy presents the face of pleasure which in The Cardboard Crown and Outbreak of Love he invests with the poetry of the Classical story. Yet, because he sees this face frequently scarred with pain, Guy is compelled in constructing his image of Dominic to have recourse to the Gothic vision, with its special intensity of emotion and sense of sorrow and sacrifice, a vision which is epitomized for him in the serene contemplation of Hans Memling:

... a collector will value more a stained and mildewed Memling found in the cellar, than a two-acre canvas by a Victorian Royal Academician. This is really what I am seeking for throughout this book, the Memling in the cellar, the beautiful portrait of the human face, lost in the dissolution of our family and our religion.

DYM 161.

It is interesting to speculate that Memling's 'The Man of Sorrows in the Arms of the Virgin,' acquired by the National Gallery of Victoria shortly after the 1914-18 war, may well have contributed something to the concept of Dominic. In any case, the deeply sensitive response to the pity of life which informs all Memling's work is appropriate to Guy's image of Dominic as the incarnation of wounded love and the narrator's reference to Memling enables him to make a point comparable to that made in Much Else in Italy through the symbolism of the Pietà.

Equally in line with Much Else in Italy's Classicist interpretation of Christ as the face of beauty, Guy does not confine his imagination to the medieval vision in his evocation of the elusive spirit of man but alludes
also to painters and paintings of the Renaissance. Guy is rather attracted by a comparison of Dominic in his sombre moods with an El Greco St. Jerome; in a happier mood, the protagonist appears 'like some devout and radiant youth, glowing with the life of the spirit, in a painting by Bronzino, or by Titian of a young Vendramin in adoration' (DYM 138). The fact that point of view is not fixed and static, that there is more than one level of understanding of Dominic being presented, is the source of much of the interest of A Difficult Young Man. Through Guy, Boyd plays with tonalities, making use of the fluid concepts of his narrator-persona to explore shade, contrast and mood. A Difficult Young Man demands that we take into account the narrator as artist, as well as his discursive voice punctuating the narrative, and its final vision is not identical with any single component of the whole, such as the elevation of the medieval ideal. Rather, 'the portrait of the human face' (DYM 161), as Guy ultimately depicts it, is one in which the clear form of a Memling or an El Greco dissolves into the shifting and disintegrating outlines of manifold suggestion. In this way the novel's special technique functions to soften and mellow the bluntness of crude dichotomies and naïve recipes for living, to transform that prescriptiveness which mars Boyd's lesser work.

From the point of view of the Langton tetralogy's obsession with the notion of heredity, understood in a spiritual as much as a physical sense, it is interesting, by way of digression, to note that Boyd's confessed model for Dominic was his brother William Merric, of whom it is suggested in Day of My Delight that he inherited the passions of Dominicus de Guzman, a forebear related to 'the same family as St. Dominic' (DD 10).1 Episodes from Merric's life, his persecution at agricultural college, his failure to adapt to the life of a farmer, are included in the portrait of Dominic. Boyd writes in 'Preoccupations and Intentions':

A Difficult Young Man was written largely to entertain; but more seriously to elucidate the character of my brother Merric, as I saw it in my childhood. I do not think that now it matters admitting that Dominic is drawn from him, but it is only Merric in his youth, and even then his circumstances were different.

PI 87.

It is quite clear from all sources - family reminiscences, Martin Boyd's autobiographies, the testimony of Merric's work itself - that this was not a man to invite neutral responses from others. Like Dominic, Merric was 'difficult,' not only in the sense of 'troublesome,' but also in the sense of 'perplexing.' Because of the very close associations of their backgrounds and shared lives as brothers, Martin discovered a double in Merric, and
this is what emerges in *A Difficult Young Man*, that Guy sees in Dominic a transcendent self, whose mystery holds a lure and fascination. Guy, Boyd's humble and self-effacing novelist-persona, is drawn to Dominic as a moth to a source of light. If his fragile concept of himself is broken and destroyed in the process, the strength and idealism of his aspiration, if not the substance of his character, are all the more revealed.

It is not at all surprising that Merrie should have dominated the novelist's thoughts during the composition of the second novel in the Langton series, published in 1955. After a long absence from Australia, Boyd returned in 1948, at a time when his brother's health was such that he may well have thought that he was meeting him for the last time. In fact Merrie died in 1959 after a series of strokes, and the novelist never again returned to Australia after departing in 1952. The circumstances of Merrie's declining health coinciding with the genesis of *A Difficult Young Man*, also possibly explains the novel's preoccupation with Dominic as a victim of maleficent forces.

Merrie Boyd is best known in Australia as a pioneer in the field of ceramic art. His pottery, bearing decorative emblems of the Australian bush, is highly prized and a book on the subject is currently being prepared by Mary Nolan, Merrie's daughter and the wife of Sidney Nolan. The influence of Merrie's style and motifs is evident in different ways in the work of his sons, the paintings of Arthur and David and the sculptures of Guy. His daughters, Lucy Beck and Mary Nolan, both painters and ceramic artists, although less well-known than their brothers, are also characteristically Boydian in their manner and approach. During the last years of his life, when illness prevented his continuing his work with ceramics, Merrie turned to drawing as a creative outlet. Christopher Tadgell, writing in the introduction to the recently-published book of these drawings, describes from a biographical point of view the intense and deeply religious personality which is revealed in the artist's work:

Merrie early began to display a marked eccentricity which was in fact a manifestation of epilepsy, though this was not realised at the time. His father's liberal humanism, on the one hand, and his mother's religious mysticism, on the other, predisposed them to be uncensorious of Merrie's often inexplicable behaviour but his own consciousness of peculiarity led him increasingly into isolation. His father's serene tolerance can not have been irrelevant to the development of an esoteric idealism within his isolation but it was his mother's resignation to the 'will of God' above all which coloured his introspection. In particular, interpreting his uncontrolled rages as 'struggles with the Devil' she seems to have
imparted to him an expiatory compunction for anyone he believed he had hurt, which developed into an extravagant tenderness towards all 'God's creatures' including common household pests. But in general the intensity of her evangelical spirit was reflected in the propensity with which, in his search for stability, Merric gave himself up to obsession - with religion, above all, and the natural world, God's creation. The ultimate product of that obsession was his art. ²

These broad facts of biography - moral extremism, hyper-sensitivity and a quasi-pantheistic love of nature - suggest the material out of which the character of Dominic was created.

From the very beginning, Merric's work was characterized by a directness of sensibility which took its delight in the world at hand, encouraging familiar images of the gum tree, the koala, the kookaburra, or an affectionate modelling of the face of a child. However, sharing in the condition of all creative Australians who, as Boyd comments in Outbreak of Love, are forced like Pater's Duke Carl to make 'a heroic effort of mind at a disadvantage' (OL 250), Merric suffered acutely from his isolation from tradition and the stimulus of other working artists. This effort is responsible for a manner which is delightfully original and powerful in its intensity, but at the same time introverted and idiosyncratic. To that extent it remains an essentially private idiom, as it was after all intended to be, a language speaking to the immediate family circle. The strange mottoes and inscriptions appearing on many of the drawings reveal that Merric regarded them as an organ of spiritual instruction. A Christian Scientist, he was in the habit of prefacing communications to his family, children and grandchildren, with the words 'a most perfect revelation.' This practice carried over into his art, whose purpose and function he obviously saw in a prophetic light. In many of the drawings there is a touch of Chagall, suggestive of a mystical temperament and aspiration. There is an attractively naïve and primitive quality in all Merric's work, partly the product of his eccentricity and partly the result of absorbed styles. Noting an 'impressionist spontaneity' deriving from the Heidelberg painters and an influence in design originating from The Studio, Christopher Tadgell characterizes Merric's peculiar style as a Gauguin-like adaption of art nouveau towards a more determined and forceful enunciation of motifs drawn from his passionate feeling for the primitive vigour of the Australian landscape. ³ It is this strange chemistry of gentle reverence combined with immoderate passion in the personality of one man that Boyd recreates in the figure of Dominic.

The two faces of Dominic to emerge in the course of Guy's narrative are the face of pleasure and the face of pain, images which, superimposed on each other, reveal a nature capable of sacrificial love. Depending as it does on Boyd's characteristic Hellenic-Christian point of view on the question
of suffering, this dual approach gains added resonance from the elaboration of the Europe-Australia theme foreshadowed in The Cardboard Crown and Outbreak of Love. Guy writes of the problem of having 'to live, split between two hemispheres, in that double world which is a theme of this book' (DYM 91). The full potential of the geographical contrast as an image of the psychological is not realized until the fourth novel of the sequence, When Blackbirds Sing (1962), where Dominic is represented as a profoundly divided man in whom the 'complex fate' of the Langton family as a whole is internalized and intensified. In the portrait of the young Dominic, who has not yet arrived at his final crucifixion, the 'geographical schizophrenia' (DYM 95) which affects the family as a whole is seen as a source of enrichment, a matter of alternative spiritual bank accounts deepening the possibilities of a significant experience of life.

In A Difficult Young Man, as in The Cardboard Crown and Outbreak of Love, Australia remains central to the narrator's mythologizing vision as a place where a love of beauty, if it is not opposed, will flower spontaneously. Guy writes, for example, at the opening of chapter two, of the Langtons' Australian home:

During the long long years I lived in England I used at intervals to dream of a place where the air had a limpid clearness and the landscape a soft brilliance of colour, such as I thought could only exist in some heavenly region of the imagination. The voices in this clear air were like bells at morning pealing. When I returned to Westhill I found that I had only been dreaming of the local countryside. I do not know if Grieg's 'Morning' from the Peer Gynt suite is good music, but it does recall for me the mornings in that place. The stillness, the marvellous liquid notes of the magpies, the distant orchestration of noises at the farm down the hill, where the clang of a milk pail marked the close of a phrase.

DYM 16.

To Guy's mind this is the world to which an essential part of his brother's spirit belongs. It is the place, for example, where Dominic's 'self-respect and his innocence' (DYM 63) are restored after his ill-treatment at agricultural college from which he returns with 'great purple weals across his back' (DYM 60). As in The Cardboard Crown, the descriptive echoes are of a Classical Golden Age, as if beauty itself had the power to restore the state of innocence:

Up at Westhill Dominic was for a while at peace with himself. It was the autumn, in those parts an even lovelier time of the year than the spring. The voice of a woman calling from one of the little farms on the hilltops, to her son working down in the paddock, has a bell-like sound in the clear air, and the mountains towards Lilydale and Gippsland are as serene as those in the background of a painting
by Giorgione. The smoke of the gum logs, rising in a thin blue line from the chimneys, scents the whole countryside, as Provence in the winter smells of burning pinewood.

DYM 63.

In surroundings like these Dominic's intense love of beauty is at times aroused to a pantheistic communing with nature, as on the occasion when he removes his clothes and, like a Greek god or a latter-day St. Francis enamoured with the whole of creation, walks proudly naked through the bush. Describing this incident, Guy alludes to the figure of the prophet or saint, intrepid and secure in his faith in God:

It was during the spring that he was at Rathain, and there are times in the spring in the Australian countryside when the air has an extraordinary limpidity and stimulating quality, as if the whole world had become new, and at the full moon the landscape is full of light and colour at midnight. It was on one of these nights that Baba, lying awake, heard the gate click and the dog bark. She went to the window and saw Dominic, naked and barefoot, walking down the path.

I have known of three or four instances of youths walking naked in the countryside at night, and there must be many more of which one never hears. It is probably no more a sign of depravity or madness than the impulse to plunge into the sea. Perhaps it is the same impulse, and Dominic may have found in it the same sense of unity with nature that gratifies the bather. It may even have had a faintly religious motive. Instructed by Sarah he accepted the Bible literally, and as he walked along the white dusty roads, where he might easily tread on a snake or a scorpion, he might have felt secure in the knowledge that the young lion and the dragon he could tread under his feet, and in the utter stillness of the bush at night, he felt there was nothing between himself and God.

DYM 52-53.

Here Guy's appreciation of the Australian landscape for its Classical overtones is tinged with a deeper religious association, just as in Much Else in Italy the pilgrims are able to build the notion of the Christian saint into their ideal of the Greek Apollo.

The importance of the Classical story in Guy's idea of the beautiful youth is, however, underlined in his description of the incident of the boy's 'worshipping' (DYM 83) his Australian cousin, Helena, whose name suggests a counterpoint to the medieval Christian reference implied in 'Dominic':

Helena sat on the narrow form in the girls' bathing hut. She was without the top half of her bathing dress and Dominic knelt before her, his head bowed on her knees.
He was in fact worshipping her with chivalrous reverence, blended with that poetic response to the natural world, which had made him walk naked in the moonlight at Rathain ....

DYM 83.

The incident was possibly suggested to Boyd by Rossetti's poem 'Troy Town' in which 'Heavenborn Helen' offers her 'two breasts of heavenly sheen' at Venus' shrine for the delectation of Paris:

'Mine are apples grown to the south,
(O Troy Town!)
Grown to taste in the days of drouth,
Taste and waste to the heart's desire;
Mine are apples meet for his mouth!'
(O Troy's down,
Tall Troy's on fire!)

Of course, Helena, like her namesake, will be abducted by her admirer in the elopement which concludes the novel. Pre-eminently, Guy's attitude to the relationship suggests the Classical story, although the incident of Dominic's 'worshipping' Helena, while it evokes the image of a votary at a pagan shrine, is also given the resonance of an act of courtly chivalry. Certainly the novel is clear about Dominic's integrity as a lover of beauty. Although Steven shares his generation's inhibited outlook in thinking of his son's behaviour as an indiscretion, the older Langton has 'a half-conscious feeling that it was innocent and even beautiful' (DYM 85). The incident recalls the affair of Baba's maids, in which Dominic first earns a reputation for loose conduct, but it stands in relation to that event as Alice's flirtation with Aubrey stands in relation to Austin's adultery with Hetty, as a revelation of a quality of sensibility whose refinement and intensity can only be admired. Throughout his narrative, Guy presents Dominic as the inheritor of Alice's tradition, a fact which he points home in the concluding phase of the novel when Dominic finds a soul-mate in Mrs Ariadne Dane, his grandmother's confidante.

A feeling amongst the Langtons that Dominic is irrepressible in his passionate commitment to life is voiced by Steven when, following the Helena episode, Laura suggests that he 'would be happier in England. He's more an English type': "English!" exclaimed Steven. "He's pure Mediterranean. He might make a good toreador" (DYM 86). Guy, in illustrating the boy's spontaneity and vigour, paints him as a radiant, god-like but contradictory figure, standing against all that is narrow, puritanical or luke-warm:
Dominic's separation from the world, which was by no means a process of ascetic denial, is one of the things I want to trace in this book. In a way the world's hostility to him was expressed through Baba, its goodness to him through Helena, and some vague and insidious evil through Cousin Sarah, but it would be very much an over-simplification to make a kind of miracle play of his life with these three women as the World, the Flesh and the Devil, and it would be unfair to Helena. But each of them did affect him in a definite and individual way.

Once again, Boyd's contrast of aesthetes and puritans comes into play but without the sense that either plot or character are being manipulated in the process, despite an overtly symbolic use of evocative names. Helena represents the principle of beauty in Dominic's life. As Guy comments: 'When she appeared the condition of life was heightened' (DYM 39). Representing the puritans, there is Baba, one of Arnold's Barbarians, Sarah, cast unambiguously in the Hebraic mould, and the northern woman of unmelting sentiments, the polar opposite of Helena, Sylvia.

Arriviste Baba - 'the World' to Helena's 'the Flesh' in Guy's medieval allegory - values status and money above charm, graceful manners and enjoyment of life and is in open hostility with the hero whose unselfconscious dignity seems to derive from a virtue in nature itself. Guy describes the woman's artifice:

She included callousness amongst the other cheap easy tricks of the social climber - pretending to forget the names of unimportant people, or being late for appointments with them, speaking a great deal of 'the lower orders' as if they were the chief affliction of humanity, and affecting a look of bewilderment when people said or did things which were not smart.

Hers is a disposition which is at home in Vanity Fair:

In the new rich society which she cultivated her attitude was respected, as rapacity and blatant push were the qualities on which its own success depended. Desmond McCarthy once said that good society was an association of people to give each other pleasure, while second-rate society was competitive. Baba would have been bewildered by this. To her parties were not for fun, and friends for love and pleasure, but means for gratifying her ambition. At any rate she never appeared to make a friend who was not rich or smart, or in some way useful to her.
Significantly, the revelation of Baba's mercenary attitudes to Helena when she is about to marry the wealthy but humanly impoverished landowner Wentworth McLeish, predisposes the girl to elope with Dominic in a spectacular (on a diminutive scale) dénouement which highlights the vitality of young passion by focusing on the picture of a church of rich, 'upholstered' (DYM 187) ladies, left in the lurch, waiting in vain for the recalcitrant bride.

Sarah, 'the Devil' in the triad with Baba and Helena, still 'pursuing her subterranean warfare against the pleasures of the family' (DYM 25), has the same distorting influence on Dominic's personality as she had on Mildy's a generation earlier, in this case, however, with the apparently worse consequence of nurturing, rather than repressing, the more vital passions. Guy comments:

She had a little dark vinegar-scented room at the head of the main staircase into which she would snatch an unwary child for largely incomprehensible religious instruction. Dominic was the most allergic to this, as he respected Cousin Sarah for her complete absence of conscious levity. He came out from sessions with her, feeling that the devil possessed a large part of him, and that only unremitting efforts to please God, Who faintly disliked him, could save him from eternal torment, which may have been true. It was she who told him of his descent from the duque de Teba, pointed out his physical resemblance to that monster, and implied that he was capable of committing similar crimes, if he neglected religion.

DYM 17-18.

Baba and Sarah correspond to the pattern of Boyd's secular and religious puritan types already familiar in the novels. Sylvia, another secular puritan whose power over Dominic becomes critical in the years of his early maturity - described in When Blackbirds Sing - represents not simply an opposition to the urgency of 'Southern fire' (DYM 190) in Dominic but a genuine possibility of his own divided nature.

Sylvia stands for that world from which Dominic must keep himself aloof if he is not to lose his purity of conscience and innocent enjoyment of life. Although at first, as Guy comments, he sees her in his imagination as 'a princess from fairyland' (DYM 143), he is awakened harshly from his dream when he witnesses her insolence to a young man of lesser social standing. Guy points out her resemblance to Baba, observing that she 'could not bear anyone to pity her. She expected everything she wanted to come to her as her right, not as a result of another person's kindness'
Both women, Australian and English, concentrate those spiritual evils Boyd sees as being at the root of the decay of Western civilization. Sylvia is, like the parvenue Baba, spurious coin, a gentlewoman in name only. Dominic, on the other hand, exhibits a dynamic, if sometimes misdirected, ability to express the creative impulse in man:

Sylvia, like many of the landed gentry was, as Matthew Arnold has observed, a barbarian, but she was a cold northern barbarian, with her savage tastes strictly canalized, and only released in certain directions, in field sports and in safe insolence. Dominic was the genuine article, the full-blooded barbarian resplendent from the south ....

DYM 164.

As a sign of contradiction in two environments which infrequently match his deep capacity for emotion, Dominic provides Guy with the material for reconstructing the lost face of the family. A living parable, Dominic is the 'Memlinc in the cellar' which has become 'stained and mildewed' through neglect of those values which might reveal its beauty. It is a sorrowful face, expressing the pity of prodigal passion which finds no mirror or response in the outer world. In imaging their possibilities, Dominic becomes the type and test of the Langton family, a figure of vicarious suffering. Despite Guy's attention to the concept of the man imbued with the ideal of pleasure, his new hero is the Man of Sorrows acquainted with grief of Isaiah 53. It follows that the others must discover themselves in him and recognize that his transgressions are an expression of their own hypocritically concealed tendencies and desires. Thus he is the liberator of their deeper selves: 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted."

The power of Guy's portrait of the family's essential spirit, the forgotten Memling, rests on a series of vignettes which show Dominic in different moods: pride, anger, grief, humility, meekness, kindness, wonder. The first of these occurs at the end of the opening chapter when Guy describes the child Dominic's quixotic gesture in offering the sceptical Baba a gift of madonna lilies. The sentiment this scene expresses, one of injured, innocent tenderness, is the emotion Guy continues to evoke in relation to Dominic throughout the novel. More than once in his life Guy feels an 'intolerable pity' (DYM 95) for Dominic. The opening of the second chapter relates an incident illustrating the unfathomable quality and strength of this feeling for his brother. It is a fine, clear Australian morning,
musical with 'the marvellous liquid notes of the magpies' (DYM 16) and distant farm noises. Guy and Dominic are riding their bicycles when Dominic fails to brake on a steep incline and is thrown over the handlebars. Guy looks at the limp and bleeding body on the road and concludes erroneously that Dominic is dead. The incident remains with Guy throughout his life as a kind of epiphany, a revelation of innocent and tragic suffering:

Behind the smiling morning I felt that a treacherous malefic force was directed against us, and for a minute, instead of going for help, I stood there, wishing to die myself. I think it is possible that the emotions I had for that minute while I stood by Dominic, believing him to be dead, caused the 'fixation', if that is the word, the concern I felt for Dominic all my life, in the inability to escape from the thought of the processes to which life subjected him. Not long ago, driving near Westhill, I saw two magpies on the road. One had been wounded by a motor-car, the other was standing beside its mate, unwilling to leave it, unable to help it. At the sight I felt a sudden dreadful depression, which I think must have been an echo of this morning, so long past.

DYM 17.

The emotional pattern underlying this episode, which begins with a sense of paradisal happiness - sharply broken by catastrophe - and ends in the contemplation of a moving image of a pietà in the world of nature, corresponds at the level of miniature to the larger movement of Guy's narrative of the afflicted and misunderstood hero. As the Man of Sorrows, fixed in Guy's mind as the dead magpie mourned by its mate, Dominic has the sympathy of the more searching members of the family, namely the narrator himself, in the role of restorer through art of the obscured family portrait, and Helena, about whom Dominic feels that if she 'did not condemn him, he did not mind about the rest' (DYM 82). Prefiguring the symbolism of the Christ of the Pietà in Much Else in Italy, Dominic represents the pinnacle of the novel's vision of the nature of man through which are apprehended the values of the two stories, the pagan and the Christian. Like the Christianized Apollo of Michelangelo's sculpture, the portrait of Dominic Boyd presents through Guy's eyes reveals the face of beauty under its two aspects of love and suffering. In summing up his attitude to his hero as an alter Christus among the Langtons, Guy might have asserted with the narrator of Much Else in Italy that, because the challenge is from 'heavenly beauty,' our courage shows in how we regard this beauty and 'save it from the injuries it has suffered.'
Dominic affects the whole family in the same way as he affects Guy, his struggle, rage and sorrow making others aware of their own spiritual condition. Chapter two of the novel describes an incident from the boy's childhood which focuses the implacable nature of Dominic's sense of pride. His grandmother has given him Tamburlaine, a fine horse, as a birthday-present, but through the spite of Cousin Sarah, who lectures him on the immorality of Sunday sports, Dominic fails to ride Tamburlaine in a race organized by his grandfather, Austin Langton. Owen Dell, a sneering cousin known to senior members of the family as Austin's illegitimate son by Hetty, has made fun of the horse but ends by riding it and winning the race. The unconscious sibling rivalry is no neutral matter because of the relationship of secret shame over their marriage which exists between Austin and Alice. When Dominic arrives on the scene to witness the insult to his pride, he drags Owen from the horse and beats him with demoniacal fury. The matter cannot be simply solved by punishing Dominic since it is his anniversary and, as he refuses to apologize and no one can think of a just solution, the family is unable to progress with his birthday tea. Guy's image for his intractability and power over the group is prophetic of the effect Dominic has on his relatives and friends on many occasions later in life: 'he is like some dark oracle which would not speak and relieve the anxiety of a threatened city, or a miraculous image which would not bleed at the appointed time ...' (DYM 29).

Dominic's susceptibility to the kind of hurt which drives the human being to desperation is prepared for in the early chapters of the novel by a series of incidents revealing the intensity of his feelings. One of these, the sketch of his early encounter with the fact of pain and death as he watches the agony of an expiring fly, is explicitly offered as 'illustrative of his emotional vulnerability' (DYM 21). Guy remarks of Dominic: 'Although at times he appeared entirely self-centred, often as was said of a very different character, I think of a high-minded Cambridge don, "he exposed himself to the full force of other people's wrongs"' (DYM 21). In describing the incident of the dying fly Boyd obviously had his brother Merric in mind. Members of the Boyd family relate anecdotes illustrating Merric's compassion for snails and spiders, likely victims of a boot or broom. The complete episode, presented in the space of two paragraphs, exemplifies the economy and control of Boyd's writing at its best:

In the country in the Australian summer, the flies are a plague, and those who have not fine wire-netting over their windows cannot live in comfort. Even so an occasional fly will find its way down the chimney and buzz maddeningly against the windows. To deal with these we had a kind of rubber squirt,
filled with insecticide powder. On one of those spring days when the sudden heat out of doors is like the blast from an oven, I was alone with Dominic in the drawing-room. A fly came down the chimney and Dominic puffed it with the mustard-coloured insecticide. It buzzed furiously against the window, then shot down the length of the room to bang itself against another, where it buzzed more spasmodically and finally lay on the sill subject to one or two last feeble tremors. It took about three minutes to die, and for that time Dominic stood perfectly still watching it.

At that time I accepted as a matter of course the death of any insect or animal which was troublesome to the human race, or which was good to eat, and could even see a pig killed without qualms. So the buzz of a dying fly was no more disturbing to me than the plop of a falling chestnut. But, again with the spiritual perception of children, or the instinctive animal knowledge they have of each other's moods, I knew that Dominic was going through some horrible experience, that inside himself he was dying with the fly he had killed. His whole expression, not only his sombre face but the dejected hand of his body, told me that he was absorbing for the first time the fact of death. I could not bear the proximity of his wretchedness, and I wished he would move, but I was too afraid of him to say so, and at that moment to interrupt his mood. It is possible that having once gone through this exposure of himself to the idea of death, he felt it to be a form of cowardice, and that to conquer it he gave himself up to the idea of violence. Incidentally, when I state that I was afraid of Dominic, I do not mean that he would injure me physically. I never remember his doing this. I was afraid of the intensity of his feelings.

DYM 21.

The occasional nature of this incident, evoking such depths of pity and morbidity in Dominic, underlines the boy's exceptional sensitivity. The incident functions as thematic preparation for two key ideas expressed in a central episode in the novel - the killing of Tamburlaine. These are Dominic's animistic identification with the horse and his masochism in accepting the maximum of guilt for wrong-doing, in this way exposing himself to the full force of an evil not his own. Dominic's destruction of what is 'a noble symbol to him' (DYM 24), 'the focus of his diffuse pride, and the symbol of his honour' (DYM 30), is less an act of spiritual suicide than a corporate act of murder on the part of his relatives. In the Tamburlaine episode the guilt of the horse's death belongs to the family for needlessly wounding Dominic's pride of self, just as the circumstances of the killing of the fly by the innocent child are brought about by the family's provision of an insecticide squirt. Boyd's vision here is specifically reminiscent of Wilde in a Blakean frame of mind, Dominic's situation resembling that of the condemned man in 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol' who is not more guilty than his observers to whom he images the sin of all:
And all men kill the thing they love,
By all let this be heard,
Some do it with a bitter look,
Some with a flattering word,
The coward does it with a kiss,
The brave man with a sword!

It has never been suggested that the Tamburlaine episode has any basis in biographical fact. However, Boyd's insights about the organic relationship between the individual and the group must have originated from his intense preoccupation with his family. Society for Boyd was to a certain extent the family and his critique of the family is his critique of society at large. Without Blake's revolutionary enthusiasm, the novelist attempts to interpret with compassion and understanding those manifestations of unrestrained and violent Energy which seem merely destructive to the conventional.

In the end, the force of Dominic's identification with his beautiful horse reveals the boy's heroism, for the slaying of Tamburlaine represents an attempt to conquer pride and to accept the family's judgement of what appears to them as a criminal streak in Dominic's nature. The act of riding Tamburlaine to death is a kind of charity since it seeks to relieve the guilty ones of responsibility by shifting the burden to Dominic himself. Ironically the act misfires, as it reveals the terrifying depth and quality of the boy's essential nature which cannot be altered by mere choice; it reveals his innocence. Dominic participates in the family's error only to reveal it all the more and to make the problem of responsibility even more acute. Subliminally, the family are unable to dissociate the idea of guilt from its collective origins. In the minds of Sarah and Diana the connection is made symbolically through an obsession with the likeness of Dominic to the portrait of the Teba ancestor, the murderer of altar boys. When she hears that Dominic has killed Tamburlaine, Diana anxiously searches the face in the portrait and thinks of Wilde's poem:

Diana took up a candle and examined the Teba portrait. Apparently the duke had killed the thing he loved, and now Dominic had done it. She did not know what Wilde meant, but she supposed that it was that the evil in our nature was afraid of the good, and tried to kill it.

DYM 72.

Diana has not the moral courage to face the fact that she in her irresponsibility, Wolfie in his calculated innocence, Baba in her vindictiveness, and Sarah in her assiduous cultivation of a guilt-ridden streak in Dominic, are all implicated in the slaying of the beautiful animal,
and more seriously, in the psychological wounding of an innocent, sensitive
and idealistic child. With a hypocritical fascination for the lurid, the
puritanical Sarah turns to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* to throw some light
on the event:

> Since the night when Dominic had come in, leaving Tamburlaine dead in the drive, and had stood underneath that portrait, Sarah had not merely disapproved of it, but had loathed it. She formed the superstitious belief that it had an influence on him, and that there was some kind of Dorian Gray connection between him and the picture. She read that book with avidity, keeping it in a brown paper cover beneath her underclothes in her chest-of-drawers.

*DYM* 93.

Instead of facing her own guilt, Sarah burns the portrait. However, in one way this is a sympathetic act towards Dominic, as Sarah identifies with him as an outsider and sets out to rescue her own injured self by locating a specific object of blame. In reality the portrait can only symbolize that diffuse, group culpability in which Sarah has a hidden share.

The contrast between the power and spontaneity of Dominic's feelings and the insensitivity of others is finely managed by Boyd in this episode. When Wolfie, sounding like a 'Wagnerian libretto,' insults Dominic with the question 'Why did you take my daughter into the forest?' (DYM 65), he is hypocritically indulging his own lasciviousness, a mood which continues to dominate the period of Dominic's absence when the boy is undergoing his torture of soul and riding Tamburlaine to death. Dominic has disappeared into the depths of dark night, his return is long overdue, he is perhaps injured, even dead. All the while Wolfie is at the piano, nonchalantly playing 'Forest Murmurs.' His self-deception and bad faith are obvious.

The extent to which violence simmers beneath the surface in the lives of ostensibly safe, respectable members of the family, is made abundantly clear in the instance of Baba, a relative by marriage and the least understanding of Dominic's personality. Whenever Baba approaches Dominic something goes wrong, as if the two were enemies at a buried psychic level. In an early incident, her manipulations and bad temper constitute the remote cause of an accident involving Dominic and Helena in which Dominic is presumed to have jumped out of the drag after Helena. It seems that Dominic's and Baba's neurotic tendencies are mutually opposed. Dominic's most extreme assertions of his pride aggravate Baba's need to overcome her feelings of personal inferiority. Again Dominic is innocent, for it is Baba who has made a profound error in wanting to subsume nobility
of self under those snob values she attaches to her marriage into the Langton family. Dominic's superiority over Baba is a moral one: the superiority of innocence and chivalrous emotion over meanness and grasping vulgarity. Focusing, as it does, moral enmity, the Baba-Dominic polarization enables Boyd to explore the grievous risk to the generous person when he is exposed to 'the full force of other people's wrongs.'

As the incident at the bull-ring reveals, Dominic is in fact in danger of his life - such is the intensity of Baba's hatred and jealousy. Like a medieval knight proving his worth to his lady, Dominic jumps into the bull-ring to retrieve the rosette for Helena - a gesture of spontaneous heroism which provokes the insecure Baba, who has 'always hated him, more for his good qualities than for his bad' (DYM 151). As he clambers for safety, she pushes his hand away in an irrational and outrageous movement of rejection which manifests her cowardice in the face of genuine nobility of spirit.

In Guy's mind nobility is associated with the idea of sacrifice. Both brothers, in their different ways, are fascinated by this possibility of human action, Guy by the Christian redemptive myth which he approaches by means of the symbolic sacrifice of the Mass, Dominic by the pagan rites of the bull-ring or the more general possibility of self-immolation for the sake of one's honour. During a bout of fencing with Colonel Rodgers Dominic is overheard muttering 'I'd like to be wounded' (DYM 112). Guy comments:

Dominic probably did not know what he meant. If I had said in reply: 'All right. Let me slash your face,' he would certainly not have agreed. He was using the wrong words to express feelings that he had when he watched the dying fly, or when he stood by Tamburlaine's grave. It was a recognition that the violence of his nature caused suffering and death to others, and that he would rather bear it himself. To this extent only was he suicidal or sacrificial. This alternative which faces all of us in some degree, whether to inflict or to endure, may have appeared to him so dreadful that he thought it would be better to cease upon the midnight, with or without pain .... It is even possible that his excitement when his imagination was confronted with the idea of the bull-fight was due to an atavistic response to the idea of the ritual sacrifice which is said to have been the origin of this sport, the primitive gropings towards the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart.

DYM 113.

Because of his emotional wounds, as the mature Guy suggests, Dominic is identifiable with the victim of the bull-fight, whose sacrificial function
he instinctively recognizes. The religious dimension in his life that this obsession seems to argue occurs to the Christian imagination of the narrator with the same force that the symbolism of Mithras sacrificing a bull suggests 'the Christian story' to the pilgrims of Much Else in Italy when they ask: 'Is the bull the symbol of the innocent life on this earth?' and 'does this express a dim apprehension of the eternal sacrifice of Christ?' (MEI 32). Certainly Dominic's behaviour, in its unpremeditated displays of courage and love, surpasses the aesthetic medievalism of the youthful Guy in illustrating the Christian path of vicarious suffering.

The intensity of Dominic's feelings and the extravagance of his actions - his leaping out of the drag after Helena, his defending the honour of his horse against Owen Dell, his riding Tamburlaine to death, his braving the bull-ring - make it impossible for the youthful Guy to retain the idea of his brother in the solution of his adolescent dream and towards the end of the novel the narrator explains how he was converted to a more liberal Christianity, preparing the way for the final part of the narrative to affirm in an unqualified and appreciative way the noble and generous ideals summed up in the person of Dominic. Guy's tutor gives him a copy of Jeremy Taylor's Holy Living and Holy Dying which, together with Mr Woodhall's prescriptions for an ascetic Lent, disillusion him with a religion which seems to cultivate ugliness and self-denial for its own sake:

... I read that God had placed the nose, 'the foulest sink of the human body,' in the middle of our faces to humiliate us .... Jeremy Taylor had affronted my humanism. I should, of course, have realised that he was heretical. That man is made in Christ's image, and that Christian truth is more faithfully expressed in Blake's words: 'Love, the human form divine.'

DYM 173.

Guy's intellect and sensibility are opened to a wider vision of religious truth and the narrator capitalizes on this adolescent change of heart to bring the story to an end with the elopement of Dominic and Helena, an incident which, in challenging restrictive convention, epitomizes love incarnate in the human person.

Guy's conclusion of his story with an episode which is unambiguous in its revelation of a motive of love behind his brother's excessive behaviour celebrates the dynamism of Dominic's personality and generates a final mood of spontaneity and confidence which justifies the narrator's Swinburnian praise, on the family's return to Australia, of Melbourne as
an Antipodean Florence:

It was now the very early spring when the streets of Melbourne are delicious with boronia and violets. Firenze deserves its name for its beauty, but actually Melbourne is more pervaded with the scent of flowers, and when we returned, especially with Dominic in our company, Swinburne might have written of this rectangular, business-man's haunt:

'Back to the Flower-town, side by side,  
The bright months bring  
Newborn, the bridegroom and the bride,  
Freedom and Spring.'

DYM 178.

The irony which surrounds these sentiments, stemming from the thought of the commercial bargain of Helena's forthcoming marriage to Wentworth McLeish, evaporates with the interference of Dominic. Making good the poem's vision of delight, the hero's elopement with Helena represents a decisive return to the face of beauty, a resurgence of his (and the family's) essential pleasure-loving spirit in triumph over the forces of philistinism. At the symbolic level, the novel's major themes are brought together in a clever synthesis of ideas in the marriage of Gothic and Hellenic which is implied in the union of 'Dominic' and 'Helena.' Dominic's essential spirit, despite his experience of Gothic sorrow, embraces everything which Helena represents in the way of beauty, self-respect and joy, and, in concluding on this note of contraries reconciled, Guy effectively pictures the life-in-death paradox of love which is the theme of his book.

At the same time as it suggests abundant fulfilment, the elopement looks forward to a problem which will be aggravated for Dominic as he matures, namely his continuing emergence as a sign of contradiction. Relying on A Difficult Young Man's portrait of the hero as a figure embodying positive values, When Blackbirds Sing, the final novel in the sequence (although Boyd intended a third on the subject of Dominic's spiritual struggle), concentrates on the contra mundum facet of Dominic's behaviour which inevitably brings retribution in its train. Commenting on his treatment of matters of moral consequence in his work, Boyd in 'Dubious Cartography' speaks of 'a commonplace among thoughtful people, that the moral law and the law enforced by the state and society, though related, are not identical' (DC 12), pointing out that

this discrepancy has been one of my chief preoccupations. I wrote an autobiography simply to illustrate it from my own
experience. It simmers all through A Difficult Young Man and even lighter novels. In When Blackbirds Sing it finds complete expression. Dominic goes through mental anguish to divide the two laws, and having done so is prepared to face a firing squad rather than deny the one he has chosen.

DC 13.

For the Dominic of the war years, the ruling fact of life is pain, not merely physical hurt, but a deeply felt moral sense of being overwhelmed by evil. A final resolution of conflict awaited the novel Boyd never wrote but, although a pattern of spiritual renewal is only incompletely suggested in When Blackbirds Sing, this does not prevent the book's intensified portrait of the afflicted hero from emerging as Boyd's major protest against the existence of suffering.
CHAPTER TEN

THE HUMAN FORM DIVINE: WHEN BLACKBIRDS SING AND

THE SACRIFICE OF LOVE

Should he like St Francis have bent and kissed that hideous cheek? Then he thought what a beastly thing that would have been when the boy offered his whole face, to kiss only the side that was distorted and horrible, ignoring what he still had of life and health ....

When Blackbirds Sing.

In continuing to describe the face of sorrow in When Blackbirds Sing, Boyd explores that dark territory of the human psyche which the pilgrims of Much Else in Italy recognize in the Gothic 'nightmares of Bosch and Grünewald' as given up to the worship of pain. At the opening of the novel, Dominic is travelling north, beyond the soothing reach of Helena's influence, into that psychological hemisphere which, if it becomes the exclusive habitation of the spirit, is death itself. Like the narrative of Stephen Brayford's pacifist protest, When Blackbirds Sing concentrates on the individual conscience as the area of discord in the defence of basic human values. The protagonist of this novel is both a lover of beauty and its betrayer when, coerced by the forces of hatred in a situation of war, he gives himself up to the idea of murder.

When Blackbirds Sing is partly an autobiographical novel in that the events, incidents, periods and locations of Dominic's active service at the front follow closely the writer's involvement in World War I as this is sketched in A Single Flame and Day of My Delight. Deploiring the acquiescence of inexperience and innocent trust which destroyed the lives and idealism of a generation of young men disposed to romanticize the war in the fashion of Julian Grenfell (from whom the novelist took the title of his book), Boyd set out, in his retrospective analysis of the moral dilemma of the soldier, 'to show the awakening of a young man, caught in the 1914 war, to the reality of what he was doing, and to spotlight the essential act of murder' (DD 276) which, 'multiplied by hundreds and thousands' (PI 87), constituted the war. Although he had little to say about the agony of the war, either during it, when he was writing idealistic verses in the vein of Rupert Brooke, or after, when
he embarked on Love Gods, Boyd later judged that it had profoundly affected his outlook at a largely subconscious level:

... in the trenches of the 1914 war, Good Friday became one of the facts of daily life, and there germinated my deepest preoccupation, too deep to be often in my conscious mind, or I could not have survived. This was with the intolerable imbecility of war, but particularly modern war, declared and directed by old men, who made their heroic speeches of defiance, and then scuttled down into their 40 foot deep shelters, while the corpses of the young men, who had no clue to what it was about, lay in rows along the trenches.

PI 83.

Like other young men of his generation Boyd lived through the war in a state of mind which encouraged him to repress knowledge of one reality, the actual course of events, in favour of another reality, inward subjective mood: a hazardous practice, as he learned to appreciate later, and one which left permanent lacunae in his knowledge and memory of the facts. At the outbreak of war, as chapter one of this thesis has already pointed out, Boyd was taken up with experiences of aesthetic discovery, pursuing the vision of romantic socialism represented by Morris and Shaw, absorbing the sensuousness of Wagner, Debussy and Post-Impressionism, and reading Beerbohm when others were occupied with Infantry Training. Throughout the war his aesthetic preoccupations remained intact. London offered pleasures and excitement for soldiers on leave which held an irresistible attraction. Boyd writes: 'London all through the war was like a city at the height of its "season," the theatres thronged, the restaurants full of smart women and officers in uniform' (DD 78). In 1918, at Reading where he was studying to be a pilot, he was still assimilating a now dated aestheticism: 'At Reading I soaked myself in the poetry of Rupert Brooke and Oscar Wilde, and wrote some derivative verse. What prose I wrote in the next two or three years was in a painfully overdecorated style' (SF 147).

As late as 1965 he could piously describe Brooke as 'the poet of friendship and the English countryside, the poet of my generation, who expressed the mood of his time, before the sneer came in with Lytton Strachey and the sewer with Freud' (DD 104). Brooke's poetry which
Boyd quotes or refers to on several occasions in his early fiction was
a strong formative influence on the novelist, who learned nothing at
the time from contemporary protesters writing about the war. Somewhere
in Boyd's experience of the war years the real war was mislaid. It has
very little to do with his first fiction or even with the ostensibly
war-inspired poems of *Retrospect* (1920). The tone of *Retrospect*, whose
very title is that of one of Brooke's poems, is firstly one of regret
that the war is over. Those verses in the volume which express a mood
of disillusionment are, as chapter three of this thesis remarks, con­
cerned with the disappointments of returning to civilian life. The
opening poem in the collection, the sonnet 'Certainty,' echoes the
sentiments of Brooke's 'Peace,' the first in the 1914 sonnet sequence
which begins applaudingly: 'Now, God be thanked who has matched us
with His hour.'¹ Boyd writes with heavy nostalgia for the romantic
carpe diem feeling inspired by the danger of being a soldier:

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Short is the song? then let the song be sweet
We sang, and scattered flowers in the way
And filled with love and wine the laughing day.
And early rising each new dawn to greet
We knew ere night would noble deeds be done.
Ours was the air to ride, the world to shatter,
And if death came at length, 'twas swift, no matter
But the red setting of our splendid sun.
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R 7.

For Brooke too, death on the battlefield held no fear. His sonnet
concludes:

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Nothing to shake the laughing heart's long peace there
But only agony, and that has ending;
And the worst friend and enemy is but Death.²
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Another close parallel exists between Boyd's sonnet 'The Dead' (R 15)
and Brooke's famous 'The Soldier,' the final sonnet in the war sequence.
While Boyd writes from the point of view of one who has survived the
war and Brooke as one about to die, the similarities are striking, ex­
tending even to the image of a productive field. In place of Brooke's
'corner of a foreign field/That is forever England,'³ however, the
Australian thinks of harvesting 'the Empire's grain' (R 15). In the light of Boyd's later claim that the agony of the war had made a deep impression on him, these sentiments - especially in the post-Brooke context in which they appeared - suggest an initial desire to repress the vision of Good Friday. In When Blackbirds Sing, the use of Grenfell's 'Into Battle' (1915), which celebrates, like Boyd's 'The Dead' and Brooke's 'The Soldier,' the idealism of death in battle - 'And he is dead who will not fight;/And who dies fighting has increase' - is ironic, as the story of Dominic's awakening to an appreciation of the moral evil of war is meant to puncture the illusion of such romantic attitudes, to reveal the lie in promises of glory and ecstasy on the battlefield. However, the unfolding of the novel shows that Boyd himself was too long addicted to the narcotic to break the habit at will. Despite his avowed aim 'to spotlight the essential act of murder,' his protagonist's experience of war is captured less in incidents like the killing of the German soldier than in descriptions of the gratifications of Dominic's leave in England or his romantic friendship with a young subaltern at the front. Those who, like Owen and Sassoon, saw the pain, filth and mud wrote about the horror of war; they searched their consciences and protested then and there. Others, if Boyd's fiction may serve as evidence, suffered delayed shock and, long after the event was over - the dead buried, the protests recorded for history - returned to the hole in the fabric of their lives to ask what had actually happened.

While the delayed shock of the war allowed Boyd to sharpen his political and social conscience, it could not, in retrospect, replace the experiential loss arising from his limited insight at the time of his actual involvement in the war. Consequently there is a gap in When Blackbirds Sing between theory and fact, a failure to adapt ideas to the particular and idiosyncratic experiences of the protagonist. Dominic's crisis of emotional and intellectual revulsion from the war is ultimately unrealized in a fictional sense. As an existential crisis it lacks dramatic force. As a symbolic representation of suffering it fails to relate to a world of concrete experience. The hero's 'sensation of a jam in his brain' (WBS 125), indicative of an inner conflict about the morality of the war, becomes the diagram for rather than the realization of Boyd's fictional concept, a verbal cue on which too much depends.
Likewise, Boyd's narrative of the key incident of the novel, Dominic's killing of the young German soldier in hand-to-hand combat, lacks a sense of proximity and immediacy of feeling, so that the death seems general rather than particular, despite the provisions of 'eye open to eye,' 'involuntary response,' and 'instinctive movement' (WBS 119).

The result is that we are encouraged to read the novel as a tract rather than a work of art. Taking Eliot out of context, we could say that during the war Boyd had the experience but missed the meaning while, in *When Blackbirds Sing*, he discovers the meaning but fails to recapture the experience.

The deficiencies in *When Blackbirds Sing* might have been overcome by the retention of that complex perspective offered by the narrator in *A Difficult Young Man*. This would have allowed the novelist to invest his material with a meaning transcending the perception and judgement of the actual protagonist of the story. Through Guy in *A Difficult Young Man*, Boyd is able to offer a sophisticated adult point of view on Dominic's childhood and adolescence. There is no reason why the same technique could not have been used to comparable effect in the novel describing his transition to adulthood.

At any rate, the two novels dealing with Dominic have in common a search for the face of beauty behind that of sorrow but while in *A Difficult Young Man* the perspective relies upon the diffuse apprehension of a consciousness - Guy's - probing layers of the past within itself, in *When Blackbirds Sing* the process of discovery is linear, determined by the growth of a consciousness - Dominic's - seen in a strictly sequential temporal pattern. The first of these approaches is of course more interesting in that it evokes a sense of consciousness through memory as something rich and vital, able to give enduring existence to the otherwise transient and evanescent. By comparison, the presentation of a mental development in *When Blackbirds Sing* is mechanical and predictable, lacking in dynamism. But more than ever Boyd needs a synthesizing principle because he is making a final attempt to come to terms, morally and metaphysically, with the divided world of his fiction. *When Blackbirds Sing* depicts a search for self on Dominic's part, not simply a search for a geographical and social identity, but for the ultimate mystery of one's being. Following the pattern of other novels, this
search takes place within a framework of antinomies, this time basically those of love and hate, good and evil, recapitulating at the same time the customary divisions of pleasure and puritanism, South and North, Right and Left. Thus Boyd is able to offer us both the personal and moral and the socio-historical dimensions of selfhood within a single narrative.

The chief characters in the novel to bring into focus the question of Dominic's identity are his Australian wife, Helena, and his English mistress, Sylvia, who symbolize the divided poles of the personality at the same time as they reintroduce the theme of divided hemispheres, the actual geographical disorientation the Langton family is periodically subject to. Unlike another character in Australian fiction who feels 'doubly alien,' \(^5\) Dominic is untroubled by a change of skies: 'For him it was not true that the skies but not the soul had changed' (WBS 21-22). The proposition is that he has two different and distinct cultural inheritances and that on opposite sides of the globe he is two different persons, his susceptibility to the effects of 'geographical schizophrenia' being explained by his characteristic of surrendering himself to the present moment, which always has a dominant power over him. While he possesses this dual nature, however, there is a strong suggestion that his most genuine self is Australian rather than English, southern rather than northern, and that it finds its fullest expression with Helena rather than with Sylvia. In contrast to the mondaine Sylvia who stimulates his desire to experience and know more of the world, Helena belongs to the Eden world of his childhood which is loved because it is already known. Dominic's marriage to Helena and his life with her on their New South Wales farm satisfies 'his deep feeling for the natural world and his longing for complete human fellowship' (WBS 6). The two women, in their different situations, are contrasting influences. In relation to Helena Dominic's attachment resides in a quality of feeling rooted in a genuine experience of a harmonious existence. For example, on the voyage from Australia to England Dominic comforts himself by thinking of her in the setting of their life together on the farm:

He filled his mind with pictures of her, in the dairy skimming the cream, or doing things with plums and apricots and tomatoes, drying them in the sun to use in the winter, or shaking the seeds from the pods of poppies. She was always engaged in country activities of this kind. Sometimes she was waiting for him, leaning over the
gate when he came in from riding, or even sitting on the flat top of the gate post, which made him laugh. She also did this for him. He did not laugh easily and she released his laughter. He thought of her after their baby was born. He remembered his emotion, how through this she had brought him into the human fellowship from which he had always felt excluded, and had related him to the natural world which was his home.

WBS 8.

While he is away from Australia, reminders of this world return to him in the form of letters from his wife, vivid in detail of her existence on the farm. By means of this intermittent revival of Dominic's consciousness of his home and sense of relationship with another human being Boyd elaborates the picture of one pole of his character's personality, that aspect of self which is focused on innocence, peace and harmony.

Throughout the novel Dominic's response to Helena is seen in the same light as his appreciation of beauty and order in nature. It is one with his delight in the young men, innocent and dignified, who are diving for coins at Teneriffe: 'The divers moving in patterns beneath the translucent sea were not only beautiful to watch; he also thought that they must feel the water as a fish feels it, and savour its acrid salts as a fish would do' (WBS 11). Dominic's appreciation is identical with the impulse that prompts him to contemplate the mysteries of a chestnut bud, to become 'absorbed in its delicate beauty, the mysterious unfolding of the young leaves' (WBS 77) and to shed his clothes and walk naked in the moonlight with his friend Hollis - an act which recalls the incident at Rathain during his childhood. Expressing himself in this way, Dominic is innocent and at peace with the world, but it remains for him to learn knowledge of good and evil and the chief catalysts in this process are Sylvia and the reality of the war, sex and violence, which introduce him to the evil within himself, the hungry worm in the bud.

In relation to Sylvia, Dominic's attachment originates in the stimulus she gives to a passionate dream of fulfilment in experience and knowledge of the world and self beyond the unselfconscious harmony of Eden. In many respects Sylvia is Dominic's polar opposite, at the same time as she represents a distinct attraction. Boyd writes in When
Blackbirds Sing of 'the striking contrast between them,' a contrast of southern 'dark' and northern 'gold' (WBS 49). The geographical division in the continuity of his character's life, underlined in the contrast in appearance between Dominic and Sylvia, suggests to the novelist a larger pictorial image of the self divided between two European poles, as well as between Europe and Australia, age-old worldly wisdom and arcadian innocence. A variation of this image of a hemispheric division of contrasts makes an effective appearance in the penultimate chapter of the novel where the evil in man and the goodness of untouched nature are seen in the starkness of their opposed reality in the face of Hollis, one side of which has been permanently shattered by a war injury. The impact of Hollis' face on Dominic brings home forcibly the self-deception of his feeling - on first arrival in Europe when he and Sylvia become lovers - 'that at last he possessed all that he rightly owned, the other part of his double world, making it complete' (WBS 64).

The possible misuse of sex, which only gradually becomes apparent to Dominic as he begins to recognize Sylvia's callousness and expediency in human relationships, is Dominic's proof of a malign tendency within his own psyche. It is the same perversion of the goodness of nature to selfish ends which is responsible for the carnage of the war. Dominic begins to see himself as a ravenous and destructive creature and behaves accordingly, penetrating deeper into the mystery of evil than Stephen Brayford in his passive surrender to suffering.

In his relationship with Sylvia Dominic has been living a surrogate of human fulfilment. Still, much of their love-making has given him relief and satisfaction and has a positive side. Indeed, the relationship as a whole suggests the hedonism the novelist writes about and abstains from reproving in his early work. But, as Boyd's novels habitually affirm, man does not live by his appetites alone and Dominic soon discovers the inadequacy of a commitment which does not extend beyond physical gratification. To begin with, Sylvia fails to understand his desire to consecrate their affair by the receiving of Communion prior to love-making. While Dominic wants 'all his worlds to be reconciled, his life integrated' (WBS 85), Sylvia does 'not like the partitions to be removed between the pigeon-holes of opposing ideas' (WBS 86). In a way which counterfeits his feeling of a bond with humanity through
Helena, she initiates him into the communality of his fellow men: 'With Sylvia he had broken through into their company. He was the same as other satisfied, normally sensual men, which, he thought, he had always wanted to be' (WBS 88). The moral ambiguity of this desire to reach the common level is revealed in the fact that Sylvia becomes identified in his mind with the Béthune prostitute who gives Hollis his first sexual experience and whom Dominic himself visits once the process of moral disintegration begins to remove his customary inhibitions.

A feeling that he has been following a false light with Sylvia begins to impress itself on Dominic when he is offended by the subterfuge she is willing to practise towards her family and friends in order to spend a few days with him in Cornwall. The couple live out an unhappy period of emotional disharmony. Dominic is absorbed in an exalted, idealistic dream of spiritual fulfilment. He is a natural Romantic and his mood, stimulated by the beauty of St. Michael's Mount, is coloured by Wagnerian thoughts: 'The evening sun, shining on the little monastery-castle which crowned the mount, made it appear like some Wagnerian shrine of the Holy Grail' (WBS 91). Echoes of Parsifal introduce an image of Dominic as a dedicated knight and Sylvia as a Kundry figure who stands in the way of success. Dominic is unable to perceive the inferior nature of his relationship with the fallible, flesh-and-blood woman whom he is pursuing in place of the Grail, although he wants to penetrate the truth, 'to understand Sylvia, to know why it filled him with longing to be united to something outside himself' (WBS 92). Boyd comments: 'But he could not change his nature in a night, and he still expected that in Cornwall his love would have meaning beyong itself, would be linked up with the moonlit castle and the sea' (WBS 94).

Unfortunately for his belief that he is uniting his double world and completing his personality, the illusion of fulfilment turns to nightmare when Dominic mentally associates his mistress with the cruelty of the war. At this point Sylvia emerges fully as the secular puritan familiar in other novels, a destructive figure belonging to the same class in Boyd's fiction as Baba or Straker. Her pursuit of gratification with Dominic serves the petty whims of ego and she fails to comprehend her lover's aspiration towards a consummation of self and other in harmony with universal nature. The turning point in the relationship,
recalling a similar incident in *A Difficult Young Man*, is a remark Sylvia makes to a young soldier about to leave for the front: 'Have you been over the top yet?' (WBS 104). This act of emotional brutality makes Dominic aware of his latent hostility towards her and provokes in him 'the symptoms of an inner explosion' (WBS 104). His moral nature is outraged by the woman's cynicism and, in the disturbance of mind which ensues, Sylvia is fully implicated in the horror and evil of war.

In a counter movement to his infatuation for Sylvia, Dominic's sense of the crime of war is sharpened by his friendship with Hollis, a young soldier whose innocence and spontaneous delight in the world stirs in him a latent consciousness of the dignity of all men, including the enemy. Returning to the theme of beauty, Boyd once again appeals to the Hellenic ideal in his celebration of the beautiful youth. Alone in a moonlit orchard, Dominic and Hollis are stirred to an exultant joy in being alive and at one with nature. They shed their clothes and, like two Greek statues, stand naked among the trees:

The two young men stood naked, restored to innocence in the stillness of the natural world. There was no sound, and yet it seemed that the stillness was full of sound beyond their perception, the sound of life growing in the trees, and thrusting up the young blades of grass. Hollis was going to say: 'We are like the Greeks,' but he could not speak. There was something in the night far beyond this allusion, and he felt not only would it be wrong to speak, but that if he did his voice would break beyond his control. 'I wish we could stay here for ever,' he said at last.

WBS 79.

The pastoral setting links this passage with the novel's evocation of the world of Helena - harmonious, innocent and natural - suggesting that, in his relationship with Hollis, Dominic is restored to that hemisphere of his psyche eclipsed by Sylvia. Hollis is, in fact, an alter ego whose image focuses the protagonist's self-respect.

The fact that Hollis is wounded horribly, leaving Dominic to face his circumstances alone, ends Dominic's exaltation. Prone to a mental condition which is alluded to periodically as a 'jam in the brain' - Boyd's shorthand for the psychological process which unbalances the protagonist from time to time - Dominic finds that his sanity is threatened by his growing conviction that he is living out of harmony with the forces
of good in the world. His problem is an inability to reconcile conflicting emotions and ideas in the attempt to accommodate both pleasure and pain, good and evil, in his picture of the world—a state of mind which precipitates him into that dangerous zone of mental disturbance which Boyd depicts in the life of Stephen Brayford. Contemplating the fact of moral evil, he faces the question which has preoccupied him since childhood: the question 'whether to inflict or to endure.' Like the hero of Lucinda Brayford when his trust in authority and acceptance of ordinary social conventions is undermined, Dominic is tormented by confused dreams, dreams in which the good in his life merges with and is tainted by the knowledge of evil. In these his own personality is identified with the figure of his Company Commander, the brutal Harrison, and that of his childhood mentor in the arts of violence and cruelty, Colonel Rodgers, whose genuine blood-lust has been fully apparent since the country has been at war. In a fundamental redirection of his spirit, Dominic's pursuit of the pleasures of love with Sylvia suddenly turns into a desire for the orgasm of hate and he pledges himself to violence: 'He was saying: "We must have the orgasm, the orgasm of killing. Never mind women. Pierce another man with a sword. Don't release the seed of life, but the blood of death."' (WBS 107). The bringing together of sex and violence in this episode makes explicit a parallelism which runs throughout the novel between Dominic's liaison with Sylvia and his involvement in the war, the two spheres in which the protagonist makes the transition from Innocence to Experience.

Boyd presents Dominic's new mood of inflamed hatred in the light of a masochistic failure to face the challenge to life, a failure the author sees as common to most human beings, who would rather face an actual crucifixion or have others face it than undergo a moral crucifixion involving a sacrifice of pride or prejudice. Tellingly, within the autobiographical context of Day of My Delight, he returns, in a chapter entitled 'Pleasure and Death,' to the question raised but left undecided by the equivocal ending of Outbreak of Love, namely the relationship between the impulse to enjoy life and the masochistic urge to undermine it: 'Someone has written about the "mystique of war." What is the "mystique of war"? Is it some hideous atavistic need to compensate for one's pleasure in life by pouring out blood, but not one's own?' (DD 80).
Boyd's hypothesis is that man cannot bear too much happiness and this is the perspective given to Dominic's behaviour when he chooses to live out his role as soldier to its logical extreme of violence.

Humiliatingly unable to resolve the conflict in his own mind, Dominic delivers himself up to the idols of the trenches, 'the three F's .... war, hunting and sex' (WBS 109). In the insanity of this mood, he betrays himself in three ways: by affronting human decency in an obscene lecture to his men on 'the pleasure of killing another man' (WBS 116), by insulting the memory of Hollis in a visit to the prostitute and, finally, by consummating his new dedication to violence through the killing of a young German soldier. Boyd describes Dominic's selfconscious act of murder:

... he found himself face to face with a German soldier, and he lifted his revolver to fire.

As he did so he looked in the German's eyes. He was a boy of about the age of Hollis, to whom he had an odd resemblance. In the half second while he lifted his revolver, he gave a faint glance of recognition, to which the boy made an involuntary response. But Dominic did not stay the instinctive movement of the hand, and in that instant of mutual human recognition, with eye open to eye, he shot the boy, who fell dead a yard in front of him, rolling over and over as Hollis had rolled in the dew.

WBS 119.

This action represents the desperate effort towards moral suicide of a fundamentally disillusioned man and recalls the incident of the killing of Tamburlaine, 'the symbol of his honour,' in A Difficult Young Man. Within this frame of moral reference, however, Dominic's commitment to evil takes on a different aspect, suggesting that obscure motive of expiation and sacrifice which governed the mind of the distraught child. In Boyd's application of the idea of the doppelgänger, familiar in Romantic literature, Dominic meets in the German boy a mirror of Hollis, his second self. In his killing of the doppelgänger, as in the slaying of the beautiful animal, Dominic again kills the thing he loves, namely his own moral self. This is the climax of his nightmare of moral confusion in which, unlike Stephen Brayford, he chooses to participate in the worst evil which he explicitly rejects. Even so, the act suggests an effort of the
will to bring a spirit of truth into an already blasphemous situation created by the military lie that it is right to kill.

Confronted with the knowledge of his guilt, inescapably focused in his memory of 'the half-second in which he exchanged with the German boy that glance of human recognition, and at the same time shot him dead' (WBS 121-22), Dominic sees through the moral confusion surrounding his murderous behaviour, and rejects the authority which has condoned his offence against another human being. Boyd's treatment of the act of recognition which haunts his hero recalls the ghostly encounter in Wilfred Owen's 'Strange Meeting,' when the dreamer of the poem meets a stranger in hell whose suffering mirrors his own and who finally reveals himself as the enemy:

I am the enemy you killed, my friend.  
I knew you in this dark: for so you frowned 
Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed.  
I parried; but my hands were loath and cold 
Let us sleep now ....  

Together with the complementary experience of recognizing the enemy in his military superior, Dominic's identification with the German soldier puts the idea of war on a completely different basis. Significantly, his Company Commander is cut to the pattern of the Boyd barbarian, occupying a role in Dominic's life at the front comparable to that of Baba in his earlier years. Dominic's original approach to the war is coloured by his notion of honour, duty and chivalry, a completely alien and threatening thing to the expedient Harrison. On an occasion when his bearing has provoked the man to insult him, Dominic has to be dissuaded from engaging him in a duel, in an incident which prompts an explosive insight in the hero's mind:

Harrison is my real enemy .... The Germans are only my artificial enemy. I knew nothing about them except what I read in the papers. When I see them, when the prisoners come in, they are not my enemies. They are the same as everyone else. They are just like the people you see in the street - in London or Melbourne or Paris or anywhere. They are not my real enemies. Harrison is my real enemy.  

WBS 113.

The antipathy between Harrison and Dominic manifests at a personal level
the disgust Dominic feels on a larger scale when, having rejected the war ethic of out-and-out slaughter, he realizes that the general conduct of the war is degrading for all concerned.

His talks with Lord Dilton, which take place after an injury returns him from the front, help to set his personal insights regarding the immorality of war in a larger socio-historical framework. These conversations chiefly concern the subject of class conflict and the war, allowing the novelist to introduce his previously elaborated theme of a division between Right and Left in society, and to relate the search for personal integrity to a wider social and historical context. Like Boyd himself in his political pamphlet of the sixties, Why They Walk Out (where the two World Wars are eccentrically referred to as Civil War I and Civil War II), Dilton argues that the escalation of the war is motivated by class spite. His opinion is that, while such people as himself and Dominic believe they are fighting to preserve their way of life, Lloyd George, the Welsh Baptist, is fighting to destroy it. In Boyd's moral scheme Lloyd George is left of the pale, occupying a place beside Baba and Straker. Dilton declares: 'He wants a "knock-out blow" and he'll knock out Europe, England included. He hates us. He declared war on us long ago.' (WBS 99). Conversely Lord Lansdowne is praised for his outspokenness about the threat of the war to European civilization itself. Dilton's point of view is foreshadowed by Boyd in chapter fourteen of Such Pleasure, where Lansdowne's historical stance for a compromise peace is given sympathetic fictional treatment in the actions of the character Lord Kirriemuir, whose cause is espoused wholeheartedly by the narrative voice:

Lord Kirriemuir's offence was to make a speech in the House of Lords, pointing out that there was no prospect of the war ending for years, and to settle down to a 'War of Attrition' which seemed to be our policy, might well end in the collapse of European civilisation. He continued with surprising accuracy to foresee the disastrous sequence of events which has actually happened since that date.

SP 243.

The chapter goes on to elaborate with obvious authorial approval the notion put forward by Dilton in When Blackbirds Sing of the war as a class rather than a national conflict, and one whose aim is to destroy
that traditional European culture whose foundation is the crumbling 'feudal structure' (SP 244).

However, while these perspectives are relevant to Dominic's personal crisis about his moral position as a fighting soldier, Dilton - like the last representative of feudalism, Paul of Lucinda Brayford, in his similar stance against the conduct of the Second World War - merely speaks for a class and a tradition. Dominic himself, like the martyr-hero Stephen, whose moral courage surpasses Paul's in Boyd's earlier portrayal of the pacifist solution, is turning his mind towards a larger cause, that of God immanent in man. To this end he rejects all authority other than that of the 'Holy Ghost' (WBS 138), as he tells the uncomprehending Dilton. In this development, Boyd returns to the religious theme of Lucinda Brayford, with its emphasis on a principle of divinity in man and nature:

What made it impossible for him to fight again was the brief exchange of human recognition as he shot the German boy.

He believed that then he had violated every good thing he knew, all his passion for the beauty of the created world, which he had felt when he watched the Spanish divers, when he had held the chestnut bud in his hand on the steps of the village church. More, that glance came from the recognition of their deeper selves, a recognition of kind, which wiped out all the material obligation of their opposed circumstances.

In that act he had violated the two things to which his whole being responded in worship; the beauty of a living human body, all the miracle of its movement and thought; and the relation of two souls in brotherhood. He had affronted both nature and God, which cannot be separated.

WBS 137.

The path by which Dominic arrives at this point of commitment is also prefigured in the earlier portrait of the pacifist hero. It is that of the via negativa, the way of the Dark Night, implicit in Boyd's depiction of the moral convulsion which releases Stephen from his attachment to specific ideas and structures in his quest for truth and opens the way for a larger vision of reality. As already remarked, however, Dominic's suffering through the unregenerate elements of his nature is more severe than that undergone by the innocent Stephen.
The recognition of the sacredness of the inner man brings the novel's theme of a divided self to the point of resolution, introducing a movement towards healing and unity. At the home for shell-shocked soldiers, Dominic sees in the half-shattered face of Hollis a mirror of his own injured psyche. Furthermore, the setting for the encounter — with its view of St. Michael's Mount from the opposite side to that seen from Penzance where Dominic spent a holiday with Sylvia — images the change that has taken place in his understanding of reality since he first believed that he was taking possession of the other half of his double world, making it complete. Suffering has brought him closer to his goal and at this stage of the narrative he is Boyd's pilgrim contemplating the face of wounded innocence. The pity of war, in its sacrifice of healthy young lives, is poignantly underlined for Dominic in its consequences for his friend. Hurt in mind as well as body, Hollis attempts to live out a symbolic ritual of harmony, urging Dominic to make a night rendezvous with him at a nearby orchard in spring bloom. Obsessed with the approaching fullness of the moon, he desires to repeat their earlier joyful experience and to repossess his innocence and physical wholeness. The sad little drama of Hollis' clinging illusion accentuates Dominic's awareness of those dualities of pleasure and pain, good and evil, innocence and experience, which have caused his periodic 'jam in the brain':

Everything here was double and confused. Even the view of St. Michael's Mount had become a sort of hallucination of duality, which had its exact and dreadful counterpart in Hollis' face. Outside of this place Venus and Mars had kept their separate identities, but here they were united into a horrible hermaphrodite.

WBS 167.

The connection in Dominic's mind between love and war is of course made by his memory of Sylvia. Discovery of the sacredness of the human person throws the casual affair into truthful relief, revealing it as an insult to the 'essential self' (DD 272).

A desire to escape these nightmarish visions coincides with a letter from Dilton telling Dominic that he has been invalided out. The moment of parting with Hollis provides the novel with its symbolic dénouement, as Dominic overcomes the fatal masochism in his nature which Boyd believes is at the heart of human evil. Usually ashamed of and
secretive about the injured side of his face, Hollis, in a pleading gesture, turns it towards Dominic who contemplates his choice:

Should he like St Francis have bent and kissed that hideous cheek? Then he thought what a beastly thing that would have been when the boy offered him his whole face, to kiss only the side that was distorted and horrible, ignoring what he still had of life and health, the smooth fresh skin of his youth. And that is what everyone was doing. They would only caress youth when it was wounded. The whole and the sane must pass first through the Moloch jaws.

WBS 170.

By caressing the unblemished side of boy's face, Dominic restores himself to grace and finds once again innocence, hope and belief.

Representing a forceful return to the theme of North and South, the movement towards restoration finds its symbolic completion in the hero's abandonment of Europe for Australia and Helena. Europe - which has meant suffering, an awakening to knowledge of evil - appears to Dominic as destitute of spiritual force:

On the ship he entered that strange dream-like existence between two worlds. He now thought of Australia as his home. He had sweated Europe out of his system, and had done so with his blood. He had left the traditional room. His place was out in the open, in the natural world where Helena was waiting for him. That was the only place where he had come to terms with life.

WBS 173.

The image of 'the traditional room,' emptied of life, is one that occurs to the protagonist when he is convalescing in Hermione's converted house. While the architecture of the house, with its echoes of Greece and Rome, gives witness to a long tradition of European culture, its use as a hospital reflects the end to which civilization has come. In this place Dominic can think of only one thing: the murder of the German boy. The episode is reminiscent of Lucinda Brayford, where the state of European civilization after the Second World War is symbolized by another Heartbreak House, the converted casino in which Lucinda encourages her wounded husband through a critical period. Unlike Lucinda Brayford, which asserts the continuation of Western civilization in the traditions of King's Chapel, however, When Blackbirds Sing rejects Europe altogether as a
spent force. This is a moment of momentous significance in Martin Boyd's novels, a moment in which one pole of the habitual dialectic is cancelled. In fact the matter does not rest there, as Dominic's disillusioning return to Australia illustrates.

The completed pattern of spiritual growth in *When Blackbirds Sing* is seen in the movement from Helena and Australia to Sylvia and war-torn Europe and back again, but without the comforting sense that the answer lies in the south. When Dominic finally leaves Europe it is the outward expression of his inward catharsis. The return to Australia is a return to the innocent hemisphere, corresponding to the touching of the unblemished side of Hollis' face. Dominic encourages himself to forget the pain of his European sojourn with the consoling thought that 'his place was out in the open, in the natural world where Helena was waiting for him. That was the only place where he had come to terms with life' (WBS 173)

And on the way home innocence begins to assert itself:

> He thought of life ahead and Helena waiting for him. They would live at peace together, eating the fruit of their own vine, and no one else would matter. Their children would grow up in the innocence of the natural world. He elaborated his dream during the weeks of the voyage. He re-read Helena's letters, the detailed description of life on the farm, at last visualizing it with the full force of his imagination.

WBS 174.

Daydreaming about Helena, Dominic is in fact deceiving himself, for the springs of life are more inaccessible than he imagines, residing somewhere in the obscure region of his relationship with an uncompromising inner being which demands his total surrender of attachment and pride.

Dominic has yet to learn that he is not the man who left Australia and that he will never again be able to inhabit Eden in the unselfconsciousness of his former existence. Helena herself, when she steps out of the myth of innocence into her new life with him, is found wanting as he begins to perceive the void of incomprehension which stretches between them as a result of his hard-won intellectual and spiritual maturity. Like the protagonists of *Lucinda Brayford* and *Such Pleasure*, Dominic has reached a point where human structures no longer serve to express the truth of his own position and this is forcefully summed up in his action
of throwing his military medals into the dam, an action which shocks Helena. As in the portrait of the pacifist in Lucinda Brayford, Boyd's model is perhaps Siegfried Sassoon, whose protest gesture of consigning his Military Cross to the Mersey received publicity during the First World War. Dominic's motive is a wish to make reparation for his denial of his inner nature: 'These medals were given him for his share in inflicting that suffering, that agony multiplied and multiplied beyond the possibility of calculation. And this Military Cross was awarded for what to him was the worst thing he had ever done, when he had violated his own nature at its deepest level!' (WBS 187). Helena's response is incredulous and the novel concludes on a note of uncertainty and confusion, even bitterness: '"You're not serious?' she said' (WBS 188).

The abruptness and inconclusiveness of this ending may to some extent be explained by the fact that the author planned a fifth novel in the series. What its subject matter might have been can be guessed from hints in The Cardboard Crown, where the narrator refers to Dominic's peculiar behaviour in the eyes of Melbourne society when he makes a spectacle of himself as a modern St. Francis. Guy relates how at a social gathering a doctor comments, somewhat uncharitably, on Dominic's reputation: 'Distinguished! He looked very distinguished when I met him in the hospital, a hundred yards from his room and carrying an armful of bed-pans. He thought he was helping the nurses. Distinguished!' To which Guy retorts: 'He doubtless thought he was St Simon of Cyrene, helping our Lord to carry the Cross' (CC 9). At Westhill, the family house Guy is redecorating, there is a painting by Dominic of the crucifixion. Guy's remarks about this picture suggest that Boyd intended to return to the theme of the saint:

I looked ... at the huge crucifixion painted by Dominic, the tortured body, the face hidden by hanging hair, the conspicuous genitals. It was not a thing that could properly be shown, except perhaps to Trappist monks on Good Friday, and yet I could not bring myself to paint it out.

CC 15.

As a climax in an incomplete story of spiritual suffering, intended to explore the full ramifications of the experience of Good Friday, the
meaning of Dominic's unsatisfactory return to the south and Helena is surely clear. It would seem that throughout the sequence of novels Boyd intends the mythology of different places and cultures to be seen in the modifying perspective of an idea of spiritual dispossession. The Langtons' homelessness, reflected in their constant journeying, gives the tetralogy an overall unity in terms of the biblical theme that we have here no abiding city. Such Pleasure, which preoccupied Boyd immediately prior to the writing of the Langton books, states the idea openly in its verse mottoes which describe man's longing for the coming of the New Jerusalem:

Ah my sweet home, Hierusalem
Would God I were in Thee!
Would God my woes were at an end
Thy joys that I might see!

SP 5.

Likewise Guy's imagery suggests similar perspectives when he comments on the Langtons' rootlessness: 'On Alice's death we were like the Jews after the dispersion, and anyhow we were always a little like this through our homelessness on either side of the world' (DYM 78). Looking at When Blackbirds Sing in this light, it is possible to interpret Dominic's twin allegiances to Europe and Australia in the context of his experience of a Dark Night. In that case Europe and Australia emerge as symbols of the good in Dominic's search for fulfilment, a good which in the end must be transcended if Dominic is to reach a spiritual reality beyond definition.

Guy's feelings about Dominic's painting of the crucifixion are perhaps indicative of Boyd's own attitude to the reality of Good Friday. It is something which the novelist does not believe can be properly exposed to the public and yet he cannot bring himself to paint it out. The portrait of Dominic represents his most serious effort at depicting an alter Christus, one who has experienced the Dark Night of the Spirit. Throughout his writing career Boyd is concerned to portray a search for a reconciliation of opposites and his nearest approach to such a synthesis is When Blackbirds Sing. Here we find a concise summary of his major preoccupations. The theme of pleasure is put in some perspective through the concern with suffering. The obsession with Europe is exorcised.
In the figure of Dominic we have Boyd's last statement of a resolution of the contraries of pleasure and pain, good and evil, Australia and Europe, South and North, Classic and Gothic, Right and Left. The result is the portrait of a protagonist who is no longer at home with his family, class or country. Dominic is forced to leave all particular forms behind; he does not fit into any scheme. Unfortunately, as previously argued, the depiction of the crisis in his life is too abstract and diagrammatic to be dramatically convincing. In view of this it is not surprising that Boyd did not complete the series, as intended, with a further novel on the subject of Dominic's via dolorosa. In *When Blackbirds Sing* he has simply gone as far as he is able. Perhaps it might be possible for the biographer to assemble sufficient evidence about Boyd's own life to suggest that the novelist lived out some of the implications of his last novel in his final years when, physically ill, out-of-pocket and troubled in his mind about the state of the contemporary world, he became increasingly radical in his statements about the iniquity of social and political structures.
V

A TECHNIQUE
CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE COLOUR OF EXISTENCE: LITERARY IMPRESSIONISM

... I can only proceed like the painter Sisley, who, when he wished to convey an effect of green, put a dot of blue on his canvas, and then a dot of yellow beside it. From a little way off the green thus appears more lively and more luminous.

A Difficult Young Man.

In the course of this study, emphasis has been placed on the aesthetic point of view in Boyd's novels, on the adherence of Boyd's vision to those values, imparted to him as a young man, which determined his investigation, through art, of the ethics of a life grounded in pleasure. The prominence of the figure of the aesthete in the novels, the presence of a search on the part of the Boyd protagonist for an existence in conformity with a belief in the perfectibility of all human desires - particularly of love and sensory satisfaction - and, finally, the interpretation of the religious motive as a reverence for a principle of harmony in nature revealed as beauty, offer a weight of evidence for the recognition of Boyd's as a fundamentally aesthetic temperament at work in fiction. These matters concern the substance of Boyd's narratives at the level of thematic content. It remains to discover their ramifications for his overall approach to and handling of the novel form.

THE CHANGING FACE OF TRUTH

Writing about himself as a novelist, Martin Boyd, who liked to paint and executed a number of engaging works on subjects which mattered to him - the delights of the natural world, the athletic human figure, a graceful creature like the dolphin, happy children - noted that he possessed a painter's eye for exact and truthful observation:

I come of a family prolific in painters, with the impulse to record what they see .... I had the same impulse as my parents and brothers, but used words instead of paints .... In addition to painters, I have on my mother's side about five generations of legal forbears, who have bestowed on me a passion for lucid explanation. I cannot endure that people should go away, or 'get away' with a false view of a situation.

PL 84.
The importance invested in the idea of clarity of vision is revealing about the impetus behind his life-long quest for a moral touchstone, an impetus which led him to explore the nature and accessibility of truth. Throughout his fiction, the way in which truth is perceived by man is a forefront concern, beginning with the metamorphosing vision of a character like Edward Browne in Love Gods who, exposed to the different atmospheres created by people's beliefs - hedonist, puritan, humanist, religious - experiences a changed sense of what is real. For Edward, as for so many of the later Boyd protagonists, truth is complicated, problematical, evading definition.

A probing of the basis of knowledge which underlies this characterization of a man in quest of moral certitude in the midst of a life of emotional and mental flux is precisely identified as early as The Montforts through the mouthpiece of Broom, when he sets out to instruct the young Raoul, who is confused about his ethical principles. Like Edward, in search of fulfilment, Raoul is in a frame of mind to experiment with experience rather than to accept conventional moral formulae. Encouragement to avoid any restriction of experience is offered by Broom in the argument that truth cannot be circumscribed by any intellectual system. In stressing the need for an expansion of mind, a 'negative capability' towards life, Broom invokes the metaphor of a view from a great height -

Have you ever flown in an airplane? The world is just a map below one, the greatest palaces are less than toys and all the affairs of men have dwindled to proportionate insignificance. It is the most peaceful feeling that I know. But one does not feel nearer any god there may be. One feels a god one's self, being able to view with such great detachment, from so great a height, the puny activities of mankind. It must be disastrous to any spiritual humility to live at this eminence. Don't you think so?

- from which he draws the conclusion that all attempts at rationalization and definition must be recognized as partial approaches to the truth:

I should think it must be very difficult for people living on a height to have any fixed convictions. The Archbishop of Canterbury is doubtless an intelligent man, and so, probably, is the Chief Rabbi, and so is Bertrand Russell, and so is H.G. Wells. Yet the profound convictions of these four men are poles apart. It is inconceivable that any one of the four should be absolutely right, and the other three absolutely wrong. Yet each is obliged
to maintain that he is. To make a virtue of consistency has been one of the greatest moral errors. The light on the face of truth is always changing. We cannot photograph it at one moment and say: 'There is truth, established for ever.' The philosopher must demand the right to be inconsistent. We may hold separate threads of truth which it may seem can never be woven into one pattern. But we cannot reconcile everything till we know everything. Until we know everything we may hold almost entirely conflicting opinions. Only the stupid man can be entirely consistent. The cultivated man can never have any final opinion; therefore the cultivated man can never have any religion, or any morals, except provisionally.

Broom attempts to evoke the vastness of reality before which each man's perception of the world is seen as narrowed by the limitation of his point of view. Man has only to think of a more privileged vantage point than that accessible to a particular individual to realize the inconclusiveness of any attempt to explain or encompass reality. The possibility of an ultimate synthesis can only be entertained with a complete openness of mind towards all experience and Raoul is advised to trust in the truth of his own perceptions, keeping an unprejudiced attitude to the likelihood of contradiction. The same idea of seeking lucidity in a state of suspended judgement in which the truths of a manifold experience can make their impact is explored in Boyd's allegory of a journey towards wisdom in Nuns in Jeopardy. In several instances in this book the metaphor for this is again that of a viewpoint from a dizzying height at which prejudices fall away. The paradox of detached vision as Boyd presents it here is that it allows for a greater intimacy with the factual minutiae which disclose meaning in the world and personality in human beings. The argument of Nuns in Jeopardy is for sensitivity to experience so that - in the words of Mr Smith - life may be lived 'against the background of reality' and not of the 'illusion' (NJ 139) of artificial intellectual constructions. Spokesman for the totality of human experience, Smith boasts of its superior truth: 'People confide in me ... because I don't judge them. And because I never misinterpret what they say' (NJ 140). In other words, he allows each individual his idiosyncratic grasp of reality, his situational and dispositional point of view.

A special preoccupation with the question of truth arises in the mature fiction in the professed belief of the narrator of the Langton books that statements about are approximations, that they never circum-
scribe or explain reality. Guy insists that 'one can make exact state-
ments of fact, but not of truth' (DYM 165) and at the outset of the
novel sequence warns of the limitations of his attempt to reconstruct
the past:

All history is a little false. It is only fair to remember this
when judging the characters in my book. You see them only as they
exist in my imagination.

CC 30.

Throughout his narrative Guy invites his readers to share his scepticism
about the possibility of verifying his story. For example, the episode
which concludes A Difficult Young Man, the elopement of Dominic and
Helena, involves an exhaustive post-mortem regarding the possible thoughts
and motives of the characters. What did Cousin Hetty feel on seeing the
pattern she desired for her own life in 1860 completed with such 'drama-
tic effect' (DYM 189) in 1911? To what extent did members of the family,
either consciously or unconsciously, encourage the elopement? How much
did Helena know of her feelings for Dominic and did she in fact behave
cold-bloodedly in jilting McLeish? Exactly how were the arrangements
managed and what emotions, at the last minute, compelled Dominic's
action? Guy uses a visual image to evoke the piecemeal way in which the
family arrived at some approximation to the truth:

The hour following the débâcle was like that following a street
accident. One hardly knows what has happened until the ambulance
has driven away and the crowd of sightseers and loiterers dispersed.
For the rest of the day members of the family continually rang each
other up, or visited each other's houses, and gradually, though
confused with much error and speculation, came into possession of
the facts.

DYM 189.

Through Guy's approach to the facts of his story, the emphasis falls on
the subjective colouring of an individual's grasp of truth, a grasp which
is inevitably fallible since it can never be made on the basis of the
complete range of possible evidence.

A similar presentation of the insecure ground of intellectual judg-
ment is found at the end of The Cardboard Crown when the narrator voices
his suspicions about Aubrey Tunstall. Having gone to great lengths to
give Alice's view of her relationship with Aubrey during their last
meeting, Guy queries her penetration of the truth:

The last chapter gives Alice's account of what happened in Rome,
but is it necessarily a true one? I do not mean that she deliberately
falsified it. She was incapable of telling an untruth and she would
have had no object in doing so. She wrote in her diary to preserve
her memories. But she was obviously in a highly emotional state
and afraid of making a fool of herself. She was not likely to see
others clearly, or to read Aubrey Tunstall's character accurately.

Guy's doubts multiply. Were not the Tunstalls all 'bad hats' (CC 155),
as people said? Had Aubrey perhaps become a fortune-hunter, having lost
both his income and his reputation? Why did he attempt to conceal his
reduced circumstances from Alice and why was there an unexplained absence
from Rome during her visit? Was he simply cautious about Alice because of
his ignorance of the state of her marriage? Or was he trying to avoid
the false position of offering love to a woman when his sexual inclination
was towards men? Guy concludes his examination of motives by stressing
the impossibility of certain knowledge:

I was once at a detective play in London. At the end, when
the villain was discovered and arrested, a woman in front of me said:
'Well, I don't believe he did it.' Whoever reads this is at liberty
to take the same attitude, to disagree with the author about his
characters. As I have written earlier, if Mildred or Dominic had
compiled this book, the story would be very different. Mildred
would have magnified the bouquets to beds of roses, as in the novels
of Mrs Glyn, while Dominic would have seen Aubrey as spending agonized
ights of prayer, wrestling with his temptation. Perhaps we
would all be wrong. Aubrey may simply have been an ordinary man
of good principles, immensely enjoying Alice's company, but as
determined as she that their friendship should be above reproach,
though nowadays it is unusual to contemplate such a possibility.

Everything, as Guy sees it, depends on the disposition of the mind which
perceives and assesses the facts.

A similar exposure of the relativity of an individual's perception
of the truth is made when Guy wonders, in the final chapter, about Alice's
apparent neglect of her favourite daughter, or when he speculates in *A Difficult Young Man* about the anecdote of Dominic's seduction of Baba's maids, asking whether it is fact or fabrication. Very often it is Arthur's credibility which is in doubt because of his tendency to embellish the facts. The raconteur's picture of Westhill in the 1890's, for example, is distorted by his effort to suggest great excitement and activity there. Guy comments:

According to Arthur anyone standing on the lawn would hear, in addition to the crying of babies, the noise of hammering from the forge, of bassoons from Austin's music room, of Wolfie at the drawing-room piano, and more distantly an irate cook raging at the children in the kitchen. Then from the stable-yard of this slightly shabby house in the Australian bush would appear a grand carriage with blazons on the panels, driven by a groom in a bowler hat, or else a six-in-hand drag with delighted shouting postillions of seven years old.

This picture cannot be quite true, as all those sounds would not be heard from the same point, and children of seven could not ride carriage horses at anything more than an amble.

CC 162.

At the same time he qualifies his scepticism with the remark that 'all the same there must have been some truth in it,' (CC 162), attempting to verify this hypothesis by consulting the happy memories of an old lady who had stayed at Westhill in 1895 and Alice's diary entries for that date. However, the very need to appeal to alternative points of view only serves to highlight the problem at large. Truth remains complex, evanescent, dependent on the character and situation of the perceiver.

Guy's sensitivity to the subtleties of reality makes him a connoisseur of experiences in his effort to give scrupulous credence to the differing and sometimes contradictory responses of the eye-witnesses on whom he depends. His attitude, like that of Pater arguing for variety and multiplicity, or of Wilde asserting in his *enfant terrible* manner the truth of falsehood, is essentially that of the aesthete in its openness to the testimony of a mood created by particulars which may be so fleeting that they are the possession of a single mind, a mind which is at once predisposed and fortuitously placed to receive them. In one way or another, Boyd comes back to this kind of sensibility in his fiction, turning his attention to the concrete facts of which each experience is composed and
at the same time acknowledging the primacy of the perceiving eye.

Behind this affirmation of Broom's insight that 'the light on the face of truth is always changing' we detect the more extreme voice of Pater, spokesman for the aesthetic approach to experience, whose Conclusion to *The Renaissance* stressed the subjective authority of perception:

At first sight experience seems to bury us under a flood of external objects, pressing upon us with a sharp importunate reality, calling us out of ourselves in a thousand forms of action. But when reflection begins to act upon these objects they are dissipated under its influence; the cohesive force is suspended like a trick of magic; each object is loosed into a group of impressions - colour, odour, texture - in the mind of the observer. And if we continue to dwell on this world, not of objects in the solidity with which language invests them, but of impressions, unstable, flickering, inconsistent, which burn and are extinguished with our consciousness of them, it contracts still further: the whole scope of observation is dwarfed into the narrow chamber of the individual mind. Experience, already reduced to a swarm of impressions, is ringed round for each one of us by that thick wall of personality through which no real voice has ever pierced on its way to us, or from us to that which we can only conjecture to be without. Every one of those impressions is the impression of the individual in his isolation, each mind keeping as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world.2

Such an emphasis on the inward and integral 'personality' of consciousness as a receiver of impressions laid the foundations for a whole movement of literary experimentation with the idea of a relative, shifting, transient truth. Reality for Pater is always grasped in its relationship with the 'individual mind.' Thus 'the theory or idea or system which requires of us the sacrifice of any part of this experience, in consideration of some interest into which we cannot enter, or some abstract theory we have not identified with ourselves, or of what is only conventional, has no real claim upon us.'3

This flight from abstraction, directing consciousness towards the concrete, immediate and most vivid aspects of experience, is seen in Wilde's plea - borrowed from *The Renaissance* - that the aim of life should be experience itself rather than the fruit of experience, and in the whole cult of sensation in literature and the visual arts which was at the heart of *fin de siècle* aestheticism. As the passage from Pater illustrates, philosophical extremes meet in the aesthetic position. On the one hand,
reality is nothing but an isolated 'dream of a world,' in the centrality of consciousness, its withdrawal into an individual and inviolable point of view, yet, on the other, it is identical with the tide of external impressions which flood the mind. Thus, in choosing to emphasize subjectivity, the artist is free to concentrate entirely on the concrete, sensational and, as it happens, impressionistic aspects of experience.

In the celebrated Conclusion Pater describes human personality in terms of change and flux, as 'a tremulous wisp constantly re-forming itself on the stream,' speaking of the impossibility of making assumptions beyond this point:

It is with the movement, the passage and dissolution of impressions, images, sensations, that analysis leaves off, - that continual vanishing away, that strange perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves.

From this position he derives an idea of value based on a sense of the beauty of a particular experience, uncomplicated by other considerations:

Every moment some form grows perfect in hand or face: some tone on the hills or sea is choicer than the rest; some mood of passion or intellectual excitement is irresistibly real and attractive to us, - for that moment only. Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end. A counted number of pulses only is given to us of a variegated, dramatic life. How may we see in them all that is to be seen in them by the finest senses? How shall we pass most swiftly from point to point ...?

That equally seminal work, Marius the Epicurean, acts out in the history of Marius the implications of these ideas. Marius is oriented to receiving the fullness of experience as it reaches him in the vitality of its momentary impact as sensation. Through the various phases of his life, in the company of stoics, hedonists and Christians, he remains in intellectual uncertainty, but is nonetheless receptive to the suggestions of relative quality, in terms of beauty and pleasure, offered by each impression:

If he could but count upon the present, if a life brief at best could not certainly be shown to conduct one anywhere beyond itself, if men's highest curiosity was indeed so persistently baffled - then, with the Cyrenaics of all ages, he would at least fill up the measure of that present with vivid sensations, and such intellectual apprehensions, as, in strength and directness and their immediately realised values at the bar of an actual experience, are most like sensations.
As in the Conclusion, the 'point to point' intensity of each sensation or impression suggests reality at its most unchallengeable, the truth of immediate perception which, no matter how transient, is authoritative while it endures:

... he, at least, in whom those fleeting impressions - faces, voices, material sunshine - were very real and imperious, might well set himself to the consideration, how such actual moments as they passed might be made to yield their utmost, by the most dexterous training of capacity.  

Wilde, in proclaiming the 'new Hedonism' by which, as observed in the opening chapter of this study, he announced the fin de siècle, simply echoed Pater's claims for the imperiousness of the moment: 'it was to teach man to concentrate himself upon the moments of life that is itself but a moment.  

Pater's focusing on a world viewed strictly in its relation to the subjective observer, led not only to the fin de siècle, giving direction to a talent like Wilde's, but equally to a number of other writers willing to exploit the impressionistic aspects of experience. An element of impressionism in modern writing of the English tradition, from James onwards, also owes something of a diffuse and largely undocumented nature to the revolution in painting initiated by the French Impressionists, which altered conceptions of the way man views and has knowledge of reality. For the Impressionist painters, the aim was to reproduce the actual sensation of observing the world by capturing the evanescent, every momentary trick of chance in colour, texture, shade and movement. Thus immediacy became the supreme value, as artists like Monet in his series on the Gare Saint-Lazare set out to explore the dynamic changeableness of a scene or object as it appears to the eye in consecutive instants. James, to whom the concreteness of painting as an expressive medium had special appeal, enabling him to assert that 'the analogy between the art of the painter and the art of the novelist is, so far as I am able to see, complete,' shared both the Paterian and Impressionist artist's desire to depict reality's instantaneous effects on an observer. Like the more scientific members of the Impressionist Movement, to whom the impression meant increased accuracy in registering the myriad concrete particulars
which constitute a visual event, James wanted to render 'the colour of life itself' by giving due importance to 'exactness,' to 'truth of detail.' 'It is here,' he argued, in 'solidity of specification,' that the novelist competes with life; it is here that he competes with his brother the painter in his attempt to render the look of things, the look that conveys their meaning, to catch the colour, the relief, the expression, the surface, the substance of the human spectacle.' At the same time, like Pater, he emphasized the singularity of the individual mind, stressing that 'the ways' a novel can render experience interesting are 'innumerable' and 'as various as the temperament of man,' becoming 'successful in proportion as they reveal a particular mind, different from others': 'A novel is in its broadest definition a personal, a direct impression of life: that, to begin with, constitutes its value, which is greater or less according to the intensity of the impression.'

The way in which James can bring both emphases - the sense of inwardness and of a concrete, particular world - to bear in his fiction is illustrated by a passage in The Ambassadors (1903) describing a walk taken by Strether and Miss Gostrey. The narrator selects from Strether's available impressions to point up the patterning of mood and significance the experience creates for the subject's awareness of the event:

All sorts of other pleasant small things - small things that were yet large for him - flowered in the air of the occasion; but the bearing of the occasion itself on matters still remote concerns us too closely to permit us to multiply our illustrations. Two or three, however, in truth, we should perhaps regret to lose. The tortuous wall - girdle, long since snapped, of the little swollen city, half held in place by careful civic hands - wanders in narrow file between the parapets smoothed by peaceful generations, pausing here and there for a dismantled gate or a bridged gap, with rises and drops, steps up and steps down, queer twists, queer contacts, peeps into homely streets and under the brows of gables, views of cathedral tower and waterside fields, of huddled English town and ordered English country.

Already, the empirical details of the walk are being related to a consciousness which is not passive, like a cinematic screen on which images are projected, but empowered to modify and colour the facts with its own inner life: 'Too deep almost for words was the delight of these things to Strether; yet as deeply mixed with it were certain images of his
inward picture. He had trod this walk in the far-off time, at twenty-five; but that, instead of spoiling it, only enriched it for present feeling and marked his renewal as a thing substantial enough to share.'

In focusing on the subjectivity of consciousness but at the same time stressing the reality of emotion as 'a thing substantial enough to share,' James is close to, yet moving away from, Pater's concept of 'the narrow chamber of the individual mind' which keeps 'as a solitary prisoner its own dream of a world.' In the essay previously quoted, 'The Art of Fiction' (1884), the same tension is evident between an acknowledgement of the uniqueness and privacy of individual experience and a belief in the possibility of communicating knowledge of an objective reality. Here is James at his most Paterian, reproducing The Renaissance's vision of experiences as a 'swarm of impressions':

Experience is never limited, and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spider-web of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness, and catching every air-borne particle in its tissue. It is the very atmosphere of the mind; and when the mind is imaginative - much more when it happens to be that of a man of genius - it takes to itself the faintest hints of life, it converts the very pulses of the air into revelations.

However, when he goes on to elaborate the power of the mind to penetrate beyond the fragmentary to a more general truth -

the power to guess the unseen from the seen, to trace the implication of things, to judge the whole piece by the pattern, the condition of feeling life in general so completely that you are well on your way to knowing any particular corner of it

- he is far removed from the Impressionist Pater, having ventured into the Realist sphere of George Eliot, with its assertion of the possibility of inductive knowledge, even if fed by 'the veriest minutiae of experience.' When James concludes that 'if experience consists of impressions, it may be said that impressions are experience,' he is, unlike Pater, affirming the mind's contact with a complex, ordered world of external relationships. In arguing that one function of the novelist is 'to trace the implication of things,' James aligns himself with the upholders of the scientifically-oriented mode of Realism.
The Realist aesthetic, of which George Eliot is perhaps the most selfconscious practitioner in English fiction is not preoccupied with the human subject as an observer of fragmentary, transient experience, but as one who has connections with a large world. Unlike Pater's, George Eliot's interest in the concrete world extended beyond the mere phenomena of experience to the advancement of empirically verifiable hypotheses about the laws governing their circumstances. Influenced by the vision and discoveries of science, George Eliot's aim in fiction was to adopt an analytic approach to the investigation of phenomenal relationships. Her omniscient narrator in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), a novel in which growth and development in the consciousness and behaviour of individuals are presented as being subject to the same laws as material evolution, comments with a Darwinian sense of the interconnecting links in nature, on the relatedness of all phenomena:

> In natural science, I have understood, there is nothing petty to the mind that has a large vision of relations, and to which every single object suggests a vast sum of conditions. It is surely the same with the observation of human life.  

Within the context of thought exemplified here, the momentary and evanescent in experience vanish in the face of historically conditioned relationships conceived as process, tangibly defined in space and as endurable as the passage of time itself. Since, in George Eliot's view, it is the function of imagination to bring these relationships to light it is of prime importance that all possible evidence should be considered in the assessment of a situation. Thus accumulation of detail replaces the fleeting impression in her treatment of fact. Witness the deliberate approach to reconstructing a scene declared at the opening of *Adam Bede* (1859), which, in contrast to the Impressionist analogy appropriate to a theory of experience as immediate and elusive, is firmly based on an appreciation of the exhaustive detailism of Dutch Realist painting:

> With a single drop of ink for a mirror, the Egyptian sorcerer undertakes to reveal to any chance comer far-reaching visions of the past. This is what I undertake to do for you, reader. With this drop of ink at the end of my pen, I will show you the roomy workshop of Mr Jonathan Burge, carpenter and builder, in the village of Hayslope, as it appeared on the eighteenth of June, in the year of our Lord 1799.
In depicting the material condition affecting the characters, George Eliot is less interested in its immediate impact on their sensibilities, although this has its part to play, than in unearthing the hidden causes determining the nature and pattern of their lives. The famous pier-glass image which opens chapter twenty-seven of *Middlemarch* (1871-72), expresses her concept of human behaviour evolving as part of a chain or web of causes and effects. The glass is scratched with random intersecting lines. Holding a candle-flame to the surface may give them the appearance of organization around a central focus, but this is an illusion: one's place in the larger web is always relative and circumscribed.

In a parallel development to the thinking of her contemporaries J.S. Mill, Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer, all of whom answered the question of the applicability of science to a study of human nature in the affirmative, George Eliot brought the inductive method to bear on the area of human psychology. The implication of this for her fiction is that she goes beyond a world of surfaces to reconstruct the circumstantial evidence surrounding a state of affairs for the express purpose of analysis and comment. In so doing, she largely ignores the evanescent and spontaneous to give a rationalized picture of the developing consciousness of her characters, breaking down the elements of experience into a story or plot illustrative of the empirical laws which govern the growth of personality and the pattern of a life.

A concept of the novel built on a vision of man's conscious life as concentrated on the impression rather than on analysis and reflection, is encountered in the theory of Ford Madox Ford, who surpassed James in stressing the spectacle of human life, 'the look of things ... that conveys their meaning.' More exclusively linked to the Aesthetic Movement than James through his background, Ford became a less cautious spokesman for and practitioer of an 'Impressionist' technique in literature. His connection with the visual arts made natural and perhaps even inevitable the choice of a literary style having affinities with the movement in painting which, in England, had made its initial impact through the notorious Ruskin-Whistler debate. Like his friend Joseph Conrad, Ford was highly sensitive to visual experience and spontaneously focused his ideas about literary representation on the notion of a seen world. The consequence of this was the rejection of an ordering, chronological approach
to the material of fiction in favour of the immediate impression as the
\textit{sine qua non} of the experience of life. Writing of his literary associa-
tion with Conrad Ford stated:

\begin{quote}
We agreed that the general effect of a novel must be in the
general effect that life makes on mankind. A novel must therefore
not be a narration, a report. Life does not say to you: In 1914
my next-door neighbour, Mr. Slack, erected a greenhouse and painted
it with Cox's green aluminium paint .... If you think about the
matter you will remember, in various unordered pictures, how one
day Mr. Slack appeared in his garden and contemplated the wall of
his house.\footnote{17}
\end{quote}

Similarly, Conrad asserted, in his Preface to \textit{The Nigger of The Narcissus}
\cite{1897}, that 'it is not in the clear logic of a triumphant conclusion;
it is not in the unveiling of one of those heartless secrets which are
called the Laws of Nature' that the virtue of art lies. On the contrary:

\begin{quote}
To arrest, for the space of a breath, the hands busy about
the work of the earth, and compel men entranced by the sight of
distant goals to glance for a moment at the surrounding vision
of form and colour, of sunshine and shadows; to make them pause
for a look, for a sigh, for a smile - such is the aim, difficult and
evanescent, and reserved only for a very few to achieve. But some-
times ... even that task is accomplished. And when it is accom-
plished - behold! - all the truth of life is there: a moment of
vision, a sigh, a smile ....\footnote{18}
\end{quote}

Others were quick to identify this as an 'Impressionist' approach, a
label which still had connotations of the daring and revolutionary, but
as Ford commented, 'we accepted the name because Life appearing to us
much as the building of Mr. Slack's greenhouse comes back to you, we saw
that life did not narrate, but made impressions on our brains.'\footnote{19}

Like Pater, these men sought the essence of life in momentary
sensation. In the well-known statement of his aims as a literary artist,
Conrad reaffirmed the Paterian belief in the supreme truth of the moment:

\begin{quote}
My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written
word to make you hear, to make you feel - it is, before all, to
make you see. That - and no more, and it is everything ....

To snatch in a moment of courage, from the remorseless rush
of time, a passing phase of life, is only the beginning of the task.
The task ... is to hold up unquestioningly, without choice and with-
out fear, the rescued fragment before all eyes in the light of a
sincere mood. It is to show its vibration, its colour, its form; and through its movement, its form, and its colour, reveal the substance of its truth - disclose its inspiring secret: the stress and passion of each convincing moment.

Likewise Ford in his reflections 'On Impressionism' dwelt on the value of 'the record of the impression of a moment.' In the same article, he emphasized the manifold ways in which experience is modified by the temperament and point of view of the observer:

It is ... perfectly possible for a sensitised person, be he poet or prose writer, to have the sense, when he is in one room, that he is in another, or when he is speaking to one person he may be so intensely haunted by the memory or desire for another person that he may be absent-minded or distraught.

Hence 'a piece of Impressionism should give a sense of two, or three, of as many as you will, places, persons, emotions, all going on simultaneously in the emotions of the writer,' its function being to render those queer effects of real life that are like so many views seen through bright glass - through glass so bright that whilst you perceive through it a landscape or a backyard, you are aware that, on its surface, it reflects the face of the person behind you. For the whole of life is really like that; we are almost always in one place with our minds somewhere quite other.

In the fiction of Ford and Conrad, it is precisely this awareness of the multifacetedness of experience, the power of each impression to modify accompanying impressions, that comes to the fore and dictates matters of technique. For both writers, effective release from the tyranny of static fact through the suggestion of a moving, fluid reality comes with the identification of the author with the point of view of the protagonist (a stance which enables the author to share a character's sensations, thoughts and emotions), and, in particular, with the scope given to this by the use of first person narration. The role of temperament, so important in the Paterian view of reality, comes into play in _Heart of Darkness_ (1902), for example, in Marlow's narrative of a voyage whose physical adventures affect him as significant events of the mind. Likewise the
advantages Ford derives from using the neurasthenic Dowell as a medium through which the events of a disintegrating world are communicated is clear in The Good Soldier (1915). As John A. Meixner notes: 'the neurotic sensibility, turned in on itself, is apt to be heightened above the normal in its perception of emotional pain. It will be peculiarly receptive to the ache of the universe.'

Stephen Crane, whose affinities with James and Conrad have been observed by critics but who has been linked more closely than either of these experimenters with impressionistic prose to the example of French painting on account of his adoption of techniques suggesting a direct parallel with the devices of the visual artist, is recognized as the most striking exemplar of an Impressionist style in American fiction. Elements suggestive of the Impressionist vision are obtrusive from the very outset of Crane's career as a writer. His first story, Maggie: A Girl of the Streets (1892), is notable for its daring, often synaesthetic, use of colour images whose effect is to heighten mood to a point where the emotion itself, rather than a character, becomes the protagonist in a scene. Two vivid examples suggest themselves: 'She received a stool and a machine in a room where sat twenty girls of various shades of yellow discontent' or, alternatively, 'Maggie's red mother, stretched on the floor, blasphemed and gave her daughter a bad name.' In The Red Badge of Courage (1895), greatly appreciated on its English publication by Conrad and Ford, various characteristics of style stand out: a sense of pictorial detail reminiscent of the pointillist canvases of the later Impressionists ('Tents sprang up like strange plants. Campfires, like red, peculiar blossoms, dotted the night'), a calculated juxtaposition of scene and events to create shimmering, fluid images of colour and movement, a varying of point of view— for similar effect—within the description of a single scene, and, finally, the blurring of the narrator's consciousness with that of the protagonist, as he shares the latter's most intimate thoughts and emotions, his most immediate sensations.

It has been suggested that Crane's mature method, and the concept of the novel it implies, owes something to the influential credo of literary Impressionism announced by Hamlin Garland in Crumbling Idols (1894).
Although Garland did not exploit the full potential of his theories in his own writing, he laid the groundwork for a succeeding generation to investigate his insistence on a subjective 'tone, a color, which comes unconsciously into [the] utterance' of the observer who 'aims to be perfectly truthful in his delineation of his relation to life.'

A writer who hopes to capture the exact quality of man's perception of reality will, he argues, concentrate on 'singleness of impression' rather than attempt the conventional 'mosaic' reconstruction of Realism. The relevance of this principle to Crane is seen in the first lines of *The Open Boat* (1897), where the fear of the men in the threatened vessel imposes its own structure on their awareness of the scene:

None of them knew the color of the sky. Their eyes glanced level, and were fastened upon the waves that swept toward them. These waves were of the hue of slate, save for the tops, which were of foaming white, and all of the men knew the colours of the sea.30

The contrasts in Crane's evocation of the sea, which continues with his description of different phases of the day (at sunrise 'carmine and gold was painted upon the waters. The morning appeared finally, in its splendour, with a sky of pure blue, and the sunlight flamed on the tips of the waves')31 recalls Garland's praise of the Impressionist painters' bold use of colours:

The impressionist does not believe nature needs toning or harmonizing. Her colors, he finds, are primary, and are laid on in juxtaposition. Therefore the impressionist does not mix his paints upon his palette. He paints with nature's colors, - red, blue, and yellow; and he places them fearlessly on the canvas side by side, leaving the eye to mix them, as in nature.32

For something analogous in Australian literature to Garland's and Crane's emphasis on the power of consciousness to shape its own reality one has to look to two contemporary writers of 'local colour' fiction, Henry Lawson and Joseph Furphy, although an interpretation of their vision along Impressionist lines remains to be explored.33 No theory of Impressionist writing comparable to Garland's emerged on the Australian scene and one would have to appeal to such documents as the Heidelberg painters'
manifesto to suggest a milieu conducive to the appearance of a local version of the world-wide trend towards Impressionism in literature. The manifesto printed on the title page of the catalogue of the 1889 Impression Exhibition did achieve a notor'city which could not have left writers totally uninvolved with the issues it raised as it addressed the public, in what were interpreted as revolutionary terms, on the forever moving and altering aspect of things:

An effect is only momentary: so an impressionist tries to find his place. Two half-hours are never alike, and he who tries to paint a sunset on two successive evenings, must be more or less painting from memory. So, in these works, it has been the object of the artists to render faithfully, and thus obtain first records of effects widely differing, and often of very fleeting character. 34

Adherence to the Impressionist concept of reality is not limited to a small group of writers but forms the basis of a significant modern development in the art of fiction. Virginia Woolf, contemplating the mind in its everyday activities as exposed to 'a myriad impressions,' demanded a new attention to minuscule detail in evoking the irreducible complexity of experience: 'Let us trace the pattern, however disconnected and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident scores upon the consciousness.' 35 Through the intricate vision of her novels, the reader is more than ever taken into the private sphere of a character's feeling and thinking life, to share the subject's sense of multiple planes of reality, and hence of the self, in the face of phenomena which alter from moment to moment. This view of man as a consciousness bombarded by 'an incessant shower of innumerable atoms' 36 gave a fresh range of thematic interests to modern fiction, emerging in Katherine Mansfield's displays of intense sensibility and F. Scott Fitzgerald's explorations of the glowing, deceptive surfaces of reality and finding its major expression in Joyce's Ulysses (1922). Here the break with the conventional novel is complete, as the interior monologue, capturing the progression of the subject's instant-to-instant life of consciousness, unfolds in the place of any semblance of a plot-based narrative. Stephen Dedalus' entertainment of the idea of his being residing in the objects which offer themselves to his perception recalls the thoughts of Pater's Marius when,
preoccupied with the possibility that the outer world may well be an illusion, he decides that 'he, at least' might make the most of each moment, each visible impression. Likewise Stephen dwells on the immediacy of consciousness –

Ineluctable modality of the visible: at least that if no more, thought through my eyes. Signatures of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, that rusty boot. Snotgreen, bluesilver, rust: coloured signs.

- before an inner Aristotelian voice prompts him back to the idea of a more solid world. Joyce qualifies the mood: 'But he adds: in bodies. Then he was aware of them bodies before of them coloured.'

The original hypothesis is exhaustively investigated by the stream of consciousness technique itself and admitted as constituting at least one imperious aspect of the perceptive mode by which man experiences the world, if not the whole reality of that world.

Virginia Woolf, perhaps less certain of a reality outside the mind than Joyce (everything in her world dissolves in the flux of mood, escaping the rigours of the intellect to which the latter submits), is also extreme in her methods of overcoming the conventional concept of character as something amenable to a process of analytic delineation - although she does not penetrate as far into the labyrinthine ways of a single mind as does Joyce with Bloom, Stephen or Molly. Jacob's Room (1922), for example, avoids the suggestion of plot by concentrating on discontinuous impressions in an attempt to evoke the multifarious guises of personality. In the stories of Katherine Mansfield, the management of detail is calculated to suggest the startling way in which objects and impressions may interact in the mind of the perceiver in defiance of known laws governing material things:

There were tangerines and apples stained with strawberry pink. Some yellow pears, smooth as silk, some white grapes covered with a silver bloom and a big cluster of purple ones. These last she had bought to tone in with the new dining-room carpet. Yes, that did sound rather far-fetched and absurd, but it was really why she had bought them. She had thought in the shop: 'I must have some purple ones to bring the carpet up to the table.' And it had seemed quite sense at the time.
When she had finished with them and had made two pyramids of these bright round shapes, she stood away from the table to get the effect—and it really was most curious. For the dark table seemed to melt into the dusky light and the glass dish and the blue bowl to float in the air. This, of course, in her present mood, was so incredibly beautiful.... She began to laugh.

In the fiction of F. Scott Fitzgerald, the unreliability of perceived fact is emphasized by the portrayal of fragmentary experience which, in two early novels—This Side of Paradise (1920) and The Beautiful and Damned (1922)—finds it appropriate expression through the quotation of snatches of song, the presentation of dialogue as a dramatic interlude, the inclusion of letters, poems and prose vignettes. Fitzgerald was a master of the impression, exploited under such headings as 'Snapshots,' 'Interlude,' 'Descriptive,' 'Crescendo!,' 'Aftermath,' 'First Appearance,' 'A Little Lull' (This Side of Paradise) and 'A Flash-back,' 'Admiration,' 'Dissatisfaction,' Magic,' 'Black Magic,' 'The Interval,' 'Two Encounters,' 'Three Digressions' (The Beautiful and Damned). Almost everything in Fitzgerald is seen in complementary perspective. Characters, settings, incidents and details are all juxtaposed to give the outline of things a shimmering luminosity. The use of a first person narrative voice in The Great Gatsby (1925) and The Last Tycoon (1941) is contrived to exploit the sensational in experience to its utmost for excitement and instantaneous impact. What is more, it releases the writer from the responsibility of judging a hedonistic world. Even those mental operations of his protagonists which come closest to intellectual and moral judgement resemble the 'intellectual apprehensions' appreciated by Marius as being 'most like sensations.'

Examples as diverse as those of Pater, James, Conrad, Ford, Garland, Crane, Woolf, Joyce and Fitzgerald clearly illustrate a tradition of Impressionism in English and American fiction, although, to date, critical discussion of it has been chiefly confined to individual studies, affording insights of a local nature. This tradition comprises a large body of fiction which focuses on the impression seen in very special relation to the experiencing eye. To some extent such an emphasis is the outcome of nineteenth-century aestheticism, reinforcing developments within the wider tradition of the English novel. From the impact of painting in his family environment, and from aestheticism in particular, Martin Boyd derived comparable ideas. The second chapter of this thesis has elucidated the novelist's vision of the world as it is expressed in Much Else in Italy, pointing to the notion of the 'phenomenon' as being of primary importance and con-
necting this historically with aestheticism's interest in sensation. Equally, Boyd's concept of the phenomenon may be interpreted along Impressionist lines, since it implies a subjectivist attitude toward experience similar to that of writers for whom the truth of perception matters above all else. The revelations which come to the pilgrims of Much Else in Italy - on the Feast of the Assumption, for example, when the sea seems a living fabric of water and light - are inevitably communicated through the medium of the phenomenon. At the same time the phenomenon, as Boyd conceives it, has a heart: an inward aspect termed the 'noumenon.'

In some respects, as argued in an earlier chapter, this noumenon recalls an ideal Platonic world where the essence of things resides. However, it is Plato very much seen from the this-worldly standpoint of a mind like Pater's. The noumenon is not something removed from experience, static and complete. Expressing 'itself in matter,' as Boyd emphasizes, it shares the characteristics of material processes, as altering, unpredictable and dynamic movement. Indistinguishable from these processes, its presence is revealed in a special moment, a Boydian epiphany, when the phenomena disclose their two-sided nature as matter and spirit. In other words, the concept of the noumenon, far from suggesting a departure from the realm of the experiential, confirms the bias towards individual insight, towards a personal, subjective approach. The vision of a dual reality of noumena and phenomena is epitomized in Much Else in Italy by the image of light: the central symbolism of the Apollo, god of light, who, in the final revelation to the pilgrims amongst the shrines of the Hellenic-Christian tradition, appears as the Christ of the Incarnation. Variations on the theme of light, which hold together the somewhat random reflections of Much Else in Italy, are used in their traditional Christian association but with overtones suggesting the distinctive values of one who believes in the revelatory power of the impression, in openness to experience, sensitivity of perception and spontaneity of response.

AN IMPRESSIONIST TECHNIQUE

The importance of the impression to Martin Boyd's art of the novel, and hence the appropriateness of regarding his work as belonging to the stream of literary Impressionism, is apparent from his earliest fiction. At their best, the prentice novels are loose tapestries of impressions, juxtaposing contrasting characters (largely on the basis of Boyd's aesthetes-and-puritans typology), settings (often countries, as in the
more significant novels), images and incidents. Consistent with Boyd's preoccupation with the values of aestheticism, they rely for their finest effects on the evocation of the immediate sensations Boyd chooses to illustrate the flowering of a mood of pleasure. Examples multiply: Edward enjoying the sun at Nice (LC), Tony lying naked in his canoe (DI), Davina and Michael swimming at Silver Island (LF), Lucinda Dobson's daughter, Verona, luxuriating in her bath (NP).

The pictorialness of scenes like these entirely justifies Boyd's description of his approach to writing as verbal painting. But it is painting in which, as with the vision of the Impressionists, light and colour have a dominant role to play. The charming 'Heidelberg' touches which distinguish parts of The Montforts and Lucinda Brayford have been noted in previous chapters of this thesis. That Boyd, in portraying Australian scenes, should reproduce the tone and subject matter of paintings like those of Streeton, Conder, Roberts, or the Boyds themselves, is not surprising. Reconstructing a scene from his childhood in The Montforts, he captures the effects of the countryside around Yarra Glen. The description is reminiscent of the lyrical Impressionism of his brother, Penleigh Boyd:

Crosspatrick, the farm on which Kenneth and Sophie had settled, was situated on the banks of the Yarra about four miles from San Dominique. The house was a long wooden building, painted white, with wide verandahs facing east and west .... In June the bank of the river for miles and miles, as far as one could see, was a golden line of wattle blossom, threading its way through the middle of the valley. In later years Raoul Montfort Blair thought of this valley that was his early home as a place filled with sunlight and yellow flowers. In the summer one began the day on the west veranda to escape the rays of the early sun, and ended it on the cool east side of the house, and, from the shade, watched the flooding light on yellow fields, and the changing opalescent colours on the mountains beyond. In the autumn and winter one reversed the process, and began on the east and ended on the west side, basking as long as possible in the pale golden warmth.

Elsewhere, in novels unconcerned with the Australian scene, Boyd's consciousness of the play of light over objects and surfaces in a scene recalls the subtlety and nuance of the Impressionist vision. Witness a prose Bonnard from Night of the Party -

To-day was the focal point of her life. The sunlight came at an angle into the bath. When she rippled the water it made little
green glinting waves. She lifted an arm and watched the drops like
moonstones on her smooth skin. She ran her hands down her sides
feeling her contours from her breasts to her thighs.

NP 35.

- a Sisley from Dearest Idol -

The sunlight was like a splashed liquid, a gold transparent
fluid spilled carelessly on the thick young foliage of the chestnuts,
illuminating here and there the pink and white cones of their blooms.
Beneath the trees it fell in pools of yellow on the grass, and, be­
yond their shade, glittered on the brown surface of the stream.

DI 11.

- or a Renoir (with touches of Dufy) from Love Gods:

Edward, clad in light grey flannels, sat under the parasols
in front of an hotel on the Promenade des Anglais at Nice, and
gazed dreamily out over the sparkling Mediterranean. The striped
yellow canvas glowed in the sun, and little yellow jewels danced
in the glass of vermouth beside him. Mondaine and demi-mondaine
women, scented and soignées, sat about murmuring pleasantly to
well-dressed men. Somewhere an orchestra was playing sentimental
musical-comedy tunes. The whole place was like a musical comedy,
the glaring brightness of the sky, the clothes and well-made faces
of the women, the white wedding-cake buildings, the palms, the
parasols, and the masses of pink geraniums.

LG 262.

The two novels of Boyd's early phase which most exploit the visual
impression are The Lemon Farm and Night of the Party. In The Lemon Farm,
an en plein air feeling predominates in descriptions of seascapes bathed
in dazzling sunlight. At the same time, Boyd is sensitive to the tran­
sient moods created by the altering appearances of interiors, as his des­
cription of Davina's living room, illuminated by the light of late after­
noon, illustrates: 'The late sun streamed into the queer modern room, and
reached the enigmatic picture over the mantelpiece. It awakened yellow
jewels in the wine-glasses, and the smoke which floated from their ciga­
rettes was rose-coloured. The moment was tranquil and happy' (LF 169).

Night of the Party is even more overtly dependent on the strength of visual
images to suggest the mood of its characters since its chief protagonists,
Gavin and Lucinda, are painters who view the world with Post-Impressionist
eyes. Gavin's puritanical wife, Ella, although of more conventional ima-
gination, responds nonetheless strongly to visual stimuli in her environment. Like the heroine of Katherine Mansfield's story 'Bliss,' who makes a symbol out of the flowering pear tree in her garden, Ella focuses on the illusion of fulfilment suggested by an apple tree in bloom. On the occasion of Freddie's first advances towards Lucinda, Boyd creates a boldly graphic image: 'The full moon was like a large yellow plate in the eastern sky' (NP 131).

Boyd's use of light in Night of the Party has deliberate thematic resonance. Light is life, as this scene, particularly reminiscent of the rich effects of a Renoir, suggests:

On the table the champagne glasses were full of golden jewels. The pink tulips glowed in the evening light, and in some curious fashion they seemed to her part of the life that glowed in Freddie's brown face, and that moved in Gavin's fine hands, that gleamed in his long black hair.

NP 127.

Pointedly, Ella, who manifests 'the genuine puritan revulsion from a life so conspicuously dominated by pleasure' (NP 128), is seen as the obscurer of light in this satisfying world of sensuous, visual experience:

The whitewashed wall of the cottage was dazzling in the sunlight, the apple blossom was startling against the enamelled sky. From the flowers in the borders came fresh, indistinguishable scents. The sun glinted on the spoon of the coffee cup which Lucinda had put on the grass. There was heavenly drowsiness over the afternoon, but Ella stood there, shutting out the sun and half the view, and engrossed in some thought of her own which made her indifferent to the fragrant world around her.

NP 164-65.

Flowing from the significance invested in the idea of light, images of colour are used in the novels to suggest the quality of experience. The heroine of The Lemon Farm hates 'colourless things' (LF 72), while Edward in Love Gods comments: 'It was strange how, when life had become dry and empty, something pleasant would turn up and change the colour of existence' (LG 276). The way in which colours complement each other in a landscape brings to mind the unity of the world to Michael Kaye:

As he rowed away, and gradually saw it as a whole, fawn-coloured dunes, silver grasses touched with green, and all bathed in the
cold sunlight, and with the bright pale water beyond the stern of his boat, he had a queer sense of union with it, that he and the boat and the island and the sea were one thing, complete and alive in some mutual satisfaction.

LF 8.

In contrast to this, an alienating quality in the Australian landscape is emphasized in *The Montforts* by an image of starkly differentiated colour: 'Beyond the house, silhouetted black against it, the setting sun had painted the sky blood-red' (M 25). The opposed spirits of place, belonging to the old world and the new, are evoked in *The Picnic* by a vision of 'brown' transformed into 'dazzling green' (P 45) in the English spring, so unlike the Australian, in which the transition is less dramatic.

Like other writers of Impressionist inclination, Boyd frequently endows intensity of experience with value and communicates this by means of external description. In *The Montforts*, for example, the sexual bond between Richard and Aïda is brought into sharp relief through a concentration on the lovers' mutual response to their own physical presence. The fierce light of the sun, with its contrasting shadows, images their sense of a radiance emanating from their own persons:

In the early afternoon the heat was terrific. The sun glared from the high, hard, blue sky, and cut sharp, deep shadows under the archways and the baked and faded tiles of the roofs.

Richard and Aïda ... saw only each other, standing out vividly against a world dimmed to insignificance behind their radiance.

M 117.

Here what is actual is given the force of a metaphor. Something similar happens in the descriptive scenes of *Nuns in Jeopardy* but with specific symbolic intention. A beauty which can be pictured has a special authority in the novelist's system of values, assuming, at times, an iconographic quality. There is the example of the Apollos in *Much Else in Italy*, and in *The Painted Princess, A Fairy Story* (1936) Leonardo da Vinci returns to life to paint a face on a little girl whose human form has taken the shape of a chrysalis. The face suggests the ideal of beauty which must be preserved if civilization is to survive. In the story, everything depends on this image which Boyd attempts to invest with a
Paterian intensity:

... all the magic power which slumbered in him during his life-time, bursting now and then into a gem-like flame, at this moment was released into free and perfect expression, and he was able to emblazon on Erna that vision which had haunted him from birth, of a face which should express the knowledge of every grief and pleasure to which the human spirit can be tuned, and yet which had lost nothing of its serene and spring-time loveliness.

PP 29.

Boyd's tentative exercises in the depiction of those immediate sensations which make up an individual's perception of the quality of his life first come to fruition in Lucinda Brayford. The heroine's repeated glimpses of a superlative beauty, in situations which recall her original vivid experience at the Tarpeian Rock, is one illustration of Boyd's concentration on the impression in his arrangement of narrative events. In this instance, an intensely pleasurable sensation of light and colour focuses the potential of a finely wrought temperament. On other occasions, the impression is used to effect to convey the special character of the historical moment. For example, the delightful but illusory flavour of the Edwardian belle époque in Australia is finely captured in Melba's singing at Tourella, while the European mood is revealed in the pageantry of Schéhérazade which celebrates, with the ominous overtones of impending tragedy, the beginning of Lucinda's European experience.

Such details make it abundantly clear that Boyd's primary conception of this work was not that it would develop an argument - despite some obtrusive elements of didacticism. Tellingly, his analogy for his achievement in Lucinda Brayford is a musical one. Speaking of its composition in 'Dubious Cartography,' he makes an allusion to Pater's poetic statement in The Renaissance that 'all art constantly aspires towards the condition of music' 39: 'If it is true that all art should approximate to music, I have made the approximation in this book, and in fact, while I was writing certain chapters, I had the second movement of Beethoven's seventh symphony beating in my brain' (DC 10). Boyd is safely within the sphere of his artistic powers when he foregoes commentary and remains with the music, that is to say with the ultimately aesthetic technique of Impressionism. The best of Lucinda Brayford reflects the form of a symphony, as the author constructs a complex pattern of complementary and contrasting impressions to provide an analogue for emotion, for the
inner life of a character: Lucinda absorbed in the scene at the Tarpeian Rock, touching the shattered body of her injured husband, or, in her exultant moment, awakened in all her faculties by the sight and sound of the Easter Resurrexit in King's College Chapel.

This approach finds its fullest expression in the Langton novels where it is described in the following terms by Guy, commenting on his narrative method:

... I can only proceed like the painter Sisley, who, when he wished to convey an effect of green, put a dot of blue on his canvas, and then a dot of yellow beside it. From a little way off the green thus appears more lively and luminous. So I must put these dots of contradictory colour next to each other in the hope that Dominic may ultimately appear alive. And this is more or less my method throughout the whole of this book - to give what information I can, and let the reader form his own conception of the character.

It is in those sections of the Langton sequence where Guy's 'Sisley' technique is sustained that the element of Impressionism in Boyd's imagination is most intimately linked with the form of the novels. In a pioneering article on the Langton novels - written before the series was complete - Brian Elliott rightly emphasized Boyd's style as being of 'pivotal interest' and focused on the fact, central to any study of the novelist as a serious artist, that he was concerned with the possibility of adjusting technique to vision: 'Boyd questioned the form - or rather, in the end he learned to question the form - as he questioned everything else.' As part one of this chapter has argued, a chief preoccupation of the later novels is with the subjective basis of truth. It was precisely the challenge of communicating the ambiguities of perception which gave Boyd a decisive impetus in the development of technique.

The bias towards representing the subjective aspects of experience is noted by several critics writing on Boyd. Chris Wallace-Crabbe, analyzing The Cardboard Crown, puts the emphasis on the novelist's complex use of the narrator as the operative formal principle in his mature art ('Although certain figures - Alice, Austin and Aubrey - are so important to the dramatic development, Boyd's play of viewpoints is so arranged as to lend colour and dimension to his narrator, Guy Langton, the character who perceives and elucidates'), as does F. Wallace, writing later on the completed sequence of novels. G.A. Wilkes similarly identifies the
basis of Boyd's technique ('His method consists chiefly in the manipulation of point of view'), and Brian Elliott's concentration on 'style' indicates an early move towards the same insight. In elucidating the phases and viewpoints of Lucinda Brayford, G.A. Wilkes contributes to our understanding of the way this novel is enriched by a narrative flexibility which can interpret the world through the eyes of different characters, justifying his claim that it 'inaugurates ... the most distinguished phase of Martin Boyd's career.' Insofar as this new interest in point of view is a preparation for the more radical innovation in narrative method of the Langton novels it represents the discovery of a technique suited to Boyd's aesthetic savouring of qualities and nuances in experience and constitutes a major breakthrough in the development of his art.

The single most important factor to contribute towards a new richness of texture in Boyd's writing is the use of Guy as narrator. Because the events of the novels are refracted through the eyes of a character in the story they assume a significance over and above their simple narrative interest to become part of a complex web of thought and feeling projected as one man's approach to the truth. The narrator himself emphasizes his pivotal role in calculated statements concerning his involvement in the events he is describing. The complication of Guy's search into the past and his consequent portrayal of himself as a child and adolescent lends further density to an already rich pattern. Boyd is able to make use of the contrast between the narrator's adult and childhood vision to suggest the radical way in which situation and disposition colour the truth. Characteristically, Guy borrows an analogy from the visual arts to evoke this aspect of his narrative. His youthful impressions shine through the 'adult glaze of knowledge' like the varnished colours of a Poussin pastoral (DYM 40).

The source of interest in Guy's picture is, more often than not, his vivid recollection of personalities other than his own. In comparison with the tortured Dominic or the bon vivant Arthur, the narrator hesitates on the borders of both the religious and aesthetic views of the world, neither hot nor cold. Yet the situation is rather like that of a David before Goliath. As a child, Guy sees himself as a 'mouse' who is 'going round to gnaw all the ropes and let out the lions' (DYM 33) and, as an adult, even though he remains a rather colourless character who
relies on an eclectic gathering together of material from such sources as Alice's diaries and Arthur's anecdotes to enliven his picture, he is assured a pre-eminent role. While Alice's and Arthur's points of view, interesting in their own right, serve a key function in lending 'colour and dimension' to the narrative, they are at the same time, like his own youthful impressions, subject to the unifying and finishing 'glaze' of Guy's reflections and interpretations. We are made very conscious of the fact that Arthur is not to be trusted. If he is not simply stretching the truth, we are warned, he is more than likely lying outright - as when he is 'engaged in drawing red herrings across the trail of family scandals, and even in drawing further different-coloured herrings across the trail of the red ones' (CC 47). Such cautions throw a modifying light over Arthur's total contribution. More than this, Guy's image in this instance relates to the heraldic metaphor used to express his notion of social justice in the passage from The Cardboard Crown elaborating the distinction between Right and Left, so that it highlights the narrator's role as the determined researcher of hidden facts. Finally, Alice's diaries may be Guy's chief source of factual information but even verbatim quotations from these do not stand by themselves since they appear in a chosen context. Commenting early in the sequence on a passage from the diaries, Guy pointedly remarks: 'It made a pleasant enough picture, a rather thin water colour, but was hardly material for a novel' (CC 20). The function of art as both Guy and the novelist envisage it is to facilitate a clear perception of the undisguised truth by a process of assembling as many facts as can be brought to light and viewing them from as many different angles as possible.

F. Wallace, who explores, as I have been doing, aspects of what he appropriately describes as Boyd's 'complex technique of multiple vision,' observes in passing the connection between this technique and that of the Impressionist painter. The comparison is fruitful in all its ramifications and demands a fuller exposition. A very good example (as a single incident, perhaps the best) of the way a genuine literary equivalent of the Impressionist exploration of subjective viewpoints works to give 'colour and dimension' to Boyd's writing and to focus on the question of the accuracy and truthfulness of perception itself is the description in The Cardboard Crown of the fated Langton dinner party at which Austin announces that he has eloped with Alice. The question
of truth is specifically raised, as it is in the early pages of the novel when Guy and Julian discuss the responsibility and role of the artist. Throughout his reconstruction of this event and his analysis of its significance, Guy expresses his concern about the reliability of his witness. However, he sees his task of revealing something of the truth made feasible by the recognition that knowledge is an intuitive process. Later, in *A Difficult Young Man*, stressing the impossibility of making 'exact statements' of truth, he suggests: that 'is why the scientist is forever inferior to the artist' (DYM 165).

In his handling of the dinner party incident, the effect of his scrupulousness, combined with a confidence in the simple revelatory role of the artist, is to suggest that truth is as much a subjective as an objective matter. The effects of Austin's announcement on its immediate and wider audience are determined by point of view, as the chapter makes abundantly clear by means of the double vision of the event we are given through the eyes of Arthur, who was actually present, and Mildy, to whom the story was told by other guests. Besides the contrast they provide between witness and hearsay, Arthur and Mildy represent the aesthete and puritan in Boyd's characteristic division of characters; their accounts interpret the reactions of people and the mood of the occasion in entirely different ways. Point of view is further complicated by the fact that we receive Arthur's and Mildy's impressions second-hand from Guy who, as he says, has his own personal feelings about the people involved and the likelihood of various aspects of the different accounts being true but who is at the same time uncertain. Arthur may have been an 'eye-witness' (CC 30), but he is given to 'embroidery' (CC 30) and so is an unreliable reporter. Arthur's truth is coloured by the intensity of his feelings about people - Hetty in particular, whom he dislikes. His opinion of Hetty's behaviour on this occasion is that it was outrageous. A biblical reference gives witty reinforcement to Guy's search for 'gospel' truth: 'That is the story according to Arthur' (CC 34), the narrator jokes, conscious of a need to fill out his account - '... it seems best to bring up the whole load, from which the gold of truth may be picked to suit individual taste' (CC 34). Mildy's story, which follows, contradicts Arthur's in its attempt to play down the unconventional in Hetty's behaviour: 'They say that Cousin Hetty was a tiny bit sad, as she had once had loving thoughts of Papa, though of course she was much too well-
bred to show it, but she went home as early as she could without its being noticeable' (CC 34).

In an attempt at clarification after the contradictory stories of Arthur and Mildy, Guy gives scrupulous attention to every avenue of investigation which might lead to a better understanding of what took place. What he knows of Alice's education is taken into account to see how consistent it is with the story of the elopement itself:

Whichever account is true, it is still difficult to understand how Alice could have lent herself to this escapade, and whatever Arthur and Mildred may say, she must have hated this dramatic appearance in the middle of a formal party, and the exposure of herself as someone who had offended against the conventions. She always had a strong sense of decorum, though she was also very romantic. She had been taught French and some Italian by her aunt, and she was steeped in poetry and picturesque legend. It is possible that she found in stories like Isabella and the pot of basil, and in Romeo and Juliet, precedents which put her adventure above early Colonial society.

CC 35.

As yet 'another consideration' (CC 35) contributing evidence, Guy revives his own childhood feelings about his grandmother - 'impeccably dignified' (CC 35) and incapable of folly - before he turns to the reactions of the couple's relatives and society at large, including the attitude of the court which Austin faced 'for abducting a ward in chancery' (CC 35).

The court, presided over by Austin's father, is a parody of impartial judgement, adding humour to Guy's evocation of his belief that the human witness and judge is not a detached observer of static reality but sheds his own qualifying light over objects and events:

The court was filled with the people who had been at the dinner at Bishopscourt and their intimate friends. Sir William was on the bench, so that it was more like a family party than a legal proceeding. When Austin stood up to make some statement his father said impatiently: 'Sit down, Austin.' Everybody laughed. It was impossible that in this atmosphere anything unpleasant should happen, and Austin, in the carriage of the judge who had tried him, drove home to enjoy his wife and her wealth.

CC 35.

As if to apologize for the lack of determinacy in his investigation of the judgement of society through its legal processes, Guy conducts his own enquiry into Austin's motives for marrying Alice, producing the hypo-
thesis that 'Austin was ... like the saintly Alyosha Karamazov, who was indifferent as to who paid for his food and shelter, though he was a quite unconscious parasite, and would not have sponged on anyone who could ill afford it' (CC 36). The chapter concludes with a retrospective glance at Arthur's attitude to Hetty in the light of the fact that she was permitted by her responsible elders to accompany the newly-married couple on what amounted to their honeymoon voyage. Guy weighs this odd circumstance against Arthur's story that Hetty, at the loss of Austin, was visibly possessed by jealous rage, and draws an inference which favours the truth of the anything but dispassionate point of view of the raconteur who, if he is not 'a reliable witness' (CC 30), is at least an artist, like the narrator himself:

The fact that Hetty was allowed to travel with the Langtons rather discredits Arthur's account of the Bishopscourt dinnerparty, for if she had revealed her passion for Austin with such devouring rage, surely no one in their senses would have let her accompany him and his wife on what was almost a honeymoon. It is hard to explain, but then if we look at history we find it full of far worse idiocies on a far greater scale. We must accept that people do behave idiotically, and that this was one of those occasions.

CC 38.

Almost every incident in Guy's story is structured in this complex way and the technique has larger implications in its shaping of the actual narrative. Commentators on the Langton novels have noted that their plots are not handled in a conventional way. Brian Elliott describes Boyd as 'throwing the plot itself away, or relegating it to the background and concentrating upon intimate details and closer portraiture, while G.A. Wilkes observes that the novels disregard chronological order and that this lends the novelist a certain scope in reconciling 'amplitude (in the series as a whole) with the intensiveness of treatment (in each individual novel) which his peculiar gifts demand.' Chris Wallace-Crabbe warns that a search for a rigid structure in The Cardboard Crown will not turn up anything very definite in terms of the organization of simple narrative. The especially novel and disarming approach to narrative structure of A Difficult Young Man is indicated by Leonie Kramer:

... in A Difficult Young Man, more than in any of the other Langton novels, Boyd gives the impression of looseness and casualness in his story-telling. There are many times when Guy Langton seems quite artless. He gives the appearance of confiding in his audience informally.
who feels at the same time that Boyd is very much in control, directing the reader through Guy's theoretic statements about his art. The narrator's comparison of himself to the painter Sisley, to which Leonie Kramer refers, is very much to the point. Indeed, 'looseness and casualness' in the story-telling emerges as a positive attribute of Boyd's style when his development of a literary Impressionism is taken into account. An Impressionist painter explores gradations and intensities in the perceived object. He is concerned with momentary effects, changing light and colour, dissolving surfaces. Such an insistence on the relativity and instability of perception becomes, when translated into the terms of the novel, a breaking up of conventional fictional forms. The Langton novels in particular, with the exception of When Blackbirds Sing where the narrative is linear and uncomplicated, are loose assemblages of incident and episode whose connection is random rather than intrinsic.

The Impressionist painters broke up their palettes into primary tones and applied colour in broken patches with the idea that the remixing should take place in the eye of the observer. In comparing his approach to the Sisley method of applying paint in 'dots of contradictory colour,' Guy points out that his aim is to give an effect which will be 'more lively and luminous.' Ford Madox Ford, using the metaphor of sound, points up the advantages of the simple juxtaposition of 'the composed renderings of two or more unexaggerated actions or situations' as a technical device for the novelist. It will, he claims, 'extraordinarily galvanize the work of art in which the device is employed':

... let us use the ... easy image of two men shouting in a field. While each shouts separately each can only be heard at a distance of an eighth of a mile, whilst if both shout simultaneously their range of hearing will be extended by a hundred-odd yards. The point cannot be sufficiently laboured, since the whole fabric of modern art depends on it.50

In practice, with a similar motive of intensifying as well as varying his picture, Boyd juxtaposes incidents which reveal different facets of his subject. For example, the incident of Dominic's obsession with a dying fly is presented as the 'corrective blue to the happy yellow' (DYM 20-21) of an enjoyable day when his mood is influenced by a great deal of reciprocated affection. Such is Boyd's Impressionist method on a small scale. Throughout the sequence as a whole the episodes are divided
between Australia and Europe, thus providing, on the larger scale, a similar pattern of qualifying contrast to enhance the ultimate vision of 'blue and yellow' in the Langton novels: that of the two faces, of sorrow and of pleasure.

More than this, liable to the charge that he writes the same novel - the history of a family - many times over, Boyd exploits the positive side of his limitation by setting himself the task of exploring diversity within set circumstances, rather like the painter Monet registering accidental effects under varying conditions in sequences of paintings on the same subject - haystacks, poplars, Rouen cathedral or the railway station of St. Lazare. Consider the parallel situations of infidelity and extramarital flirtation involving Alice, Austin, Hetty and Aubrey in *The Cardboard Crown* and Diana, Wolfie, Mrs Montaubyn and Russell in *Outbreak of Love*. Familiar situations form a repeating pattern with tonal variation as they appear in fresh aspect with the infusion of a new set of characters. In *Outbreak of Love* and *A Difficult Young Man* the motif of a pair of lovers recurs with sparkling modification in the contrasting descriptions of a conventional courtship and marriage, in the case of Josie and John, and of an unconventional union and elopement, in the case of Dominic and Helena, which in turn parallels that of the young Austin and Alice in *The Cardboard Crown*. The pattern is repeated in muted tones in the mature relationships of the older generation when they experience an 'outbreak of love' in their later years. In reproducing his basic situations Boyd offers, like the Impressionist painter who avoids monotony in his pictures of the same scene by the alteration of minute detail, a vision of subtle variety. The title of *Outbreak of Love* points to one of his preoccupations throughout the Langton tetralogy, a desire to communicate various moods and expressions of the one emotion. There is, moreover, a moral attitude, that of openness to the complexities of human experience, implied in Boyd's exploration of degrees of contrast within a pattern of sameness. With the portraits of Dominic and Josie, for example - at the opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of their conformity to the social rules - there is a Blakean resonance in the delineation of tiger and lamb existing side by side in the same generation.

While there may be some truth in the charge of repetitiveness levelled at Boyd, there is no reason why repetition should not, in its way, be as rewarding as Monet's series on Rouen cathedral, where everything depends
on the capturing of fine mutations of tone under changing light. Certainly Boyd's new approach characterizes his most exciting work: it provides a technical means of achieving aesthetic richness, variety and complexity, the real criteria of the Impressionist novel.

Perhaps more important than anything else, a way is found of approaching the problem at which his mind habitually balks: that of evil and suffering. When Boyd is painting the appearance of the suffering face his measure of success is gratifying. When he assumes the role of prophet his failure is proportionate to his impatience to provide an answer. In large sections of argument in Brangane and Such Pleasure, in the pages dealing with Paul's ideas in Lucinda Brayford and in the attempt at providing an intellectual framework for Dominic's moral crisis in When Blackbirds Sing, the man of sensibility disappears, to be replaced by Boyd-the-preacher, worried and scrupulous, distrustful of himself. When the discursive voice enters, it detracts from the management of an art which is most effective when it is richest in nuance and subtlety. It is here that the narrator has a key part to play. In The Cardboard Crown and A Difficult Young Man, where the novelist consistently adheres to his use of Guy as narrator, evil is redeemable in aesthetic terms. It is simply the shadow in Guy's picture which allows the brightness to shine more luminously, the childish pathos of Alice deprived by Hetty of the cardboard crown, for example, or of Dominic with his gift of madonna lilies spurned by the disdainful Baba. Even when, in A Difficult Young Man, Guy relates the story of Baba's attempt to murder Dominic - a serious incident illustrating the secular puritan's sabotage of goodness - we have the same detached treatment, an 'aesthetic contemplation' of experience, passive to light and dark alike, something analogous to Nick Carraway's sifting of contrasting impressions in The Great Gatsby. Similarly, a grim incident like the malicious spoiling of Mildy by Sarah in The Cardboard Crown emerges as part of the larger 'repeating pattern' (CC 109) of good and bad fortune which the narrator believes are as inseparable in life as the warp and woof of woven cloth. When Boyd's confidence in the aesthetic point of view lapses as it seems to do when he loses sight of his narrator in sections of Outbreak of Love and for the duration of When Blackbirds Sing, the result is an alienation of the true qualities of his sensibility and a consequent diminishment in the power of his artistry. Boyd was nearest to recognizing the motive principle of his creativity when he wrote:
At the deepest level, morals and aesthetics are the same thing, and morals probably emerged from aesthetic revulsions. Italians say of a thing that is morally bad, that it is 'ugly.'

PI 89.

What happens to 'character' in this context? Again, a comparison with the visual is illuminating when we consider the depiction of the human form in Impressionist painting. In her book on Tom Roberts, Virginia Spate points out that the Impressionist 'treated the human form as a substance like any other substance, transforming or even almost dissolving it in order to represent the action of light,' while more conventional painters 'used the human figure to express ideas and emotions and were therefore not prepared to melt it into tissues of colour.' The literary Impressionist's preoccupation with sensation likewise dissolves the human figure into atmosphere, so that it appears as one impression among others. To Pater in the Conclusion to The Renaissance, for example, features in the human 'hand or face' are merely captivating variations in one's field of sensory impressions. Thus it is that Marius the Epicurean approaches 'faces, voices' as if they were simply qualities among others within his range of vision. Such an approach to personality informs Boyd's treatment of character in Langton novels, where the use of a free narrative technique gives expressive release to the novelist's aesthetic sensibility. The narrator, Guy, is himself a self-confessed Impressionist who, in the manner of Pater, does not feel compelled to distinguish the human form from a general atmosphere. The voices of Alice, through her diaries, and of Arthur and Mildy, through their reminiscences, are of fugitive and spasmodic interest to Guy, affecting him at all times according to his predisposition and mood, while figures and faces appear to him as particular characteristics within a larger impression in which context lends its own colour and definition to human personality. After the killing of Tamburlaine, for example, Dominic is featured in Guy's story as an illuminated face with dark eyes emerging from the shadows and ominously like the portrait of his Teba ancestor which hangs overhead. The whole presentation of Dominic amounts to a composite picture in which various contextual elements play an important part: the protagonist's double world of England and Australia, his position as a member of two families, the Langtons and the Bynghams, and his association, through his resemblance to the duque de Teba, with the past, all contribute to the concept we form of Dominic's personality. Even in When Blackbirds Sing, where Guy's role has disappeared, Boyd resorts to a similar
Impressionism of detail in which factors from the protagonist's background are used as splashes of colour in his portrait of Dominic:

Perhaps people of mixed blood have more varied nostalgias than those whose forebears were all of the same kind, living in the same place. From long generations of farming squires at Waterpark he found his deepest satisfactions on his own farm; from the Bynghams he inherited the impulse towards full-blooded bouts of extravagance; while from the Tebas he took his looks and his arrogance and his sombre passions, a taste for magnificence and the houses of the great.

WBS 51.

Except perhaps in the minds of Boyd's characters - when for example, after the killing of Tamburlaine, 'the family ... could see no mitigating circumstance, and put it down, probably owing to Diana's talk about his [Dominic's] resemblance to the Teba portrait, to inherited sadism' (DYM 73) - the idea of inherited character which permeates the Langton novels is not a theory of personality seriously considered, but another rich source of shade and tone for the embellishment of Boyd's picture. Living members of the family are used in much the same way as the Teba portrait to define and elaborate Dominic's character. Often this is achieved by the suggestion of contrast rather than of similarity, as in the portrayal of Bertie and Baba in their relationship with Dominic -

Bertie and Baba were the centre of the opposition to Dominic, those who thought something should be done about him. Bertie, although he was far above Baba in thought and deed, was friendly with her because he thought she had that common sense so lacking in the family. They were like patches of strong tweed on a piece of beautiful but tarnished brocade, and when they gave a tug at it, expecting it to fulfil their tweedy notions of the function of all fabric, the old silk tore and came apart

DYM 62.

- or in the description of the three faces of the bull-ring which focus for Guy the emotional reality of that occasion: 'Those three faces, Baba's frightened and vicious, Dominic's indignant, and George's incredulous, are what remained, large and sharply etched against the colour and noise of the day' (DYM 151). And the same is true of the contrast between Sylvia and Dominic in When Blackbirds Sing: '... Dominic dark, arrogant and southern, Sylvia a pure gold product of the north' (WBS 49).

It is important to notice that while his effects are varied, Boyd concentrates on external appearances in a way which tends to ignore the
exploration of psychology. Thus Guy, aware that he probes very little beyond surfaces to reveal the character of his hero, alerts the reader:

... Dominic was a kind of Dostoevskian character with perhaps a touch of Cervantes, and I cannot drag him down deep enough into the vats of black and purple dye. The reader will have to exercise his ingenuity to construct the inner nature of someone whose exterior is only presented to him lightly drawn.

DYM 55-56.

Consistent with the values implied in his Impressionist analogy, Guy's emphasis is entirely on the graphic, the witness of tangible fact. For example, Dominic's love for Helena is suggested entirely by its physical demonstrations, as if the photographic record of contact constituted the only real evidence of its existence. Dominic jumps, or falls, out of the drag after Helena. Conscious of the problem of verifying interior motive and passion, all Guy is prepared to admit is that an undeniable bond, whatever its nature, exists between the two:

He went after Helena. One can only write 'he went' as it was never finally agreed whether he jumped, or was flung off the box by the same lurch, or whether he fell trying to grab her skirt to save her. Whatever his impulse, he crashed heroically and uselessly into the thicket below.

DYM 43.

The chapter describing this incident ends with the following bald statement printed as a single paragraph:

After this, Dominic had a scar on his left cheek, close to his mouth.

DYM 45.

Guy's description is equally concrete when he tells how later in life Helena acknowledges Dominic's enduring badge of commitment, the scar on his face:

... as soon as I stepped out into light, I saw on the far side of this place, under a window ledge on which there was a pot of straggly carnations, Dominic and Helena, standing together. They were perfectly still and she was touching the scar beside his mouth.

DYM 153.
And again, it is the actual event of the elopement which sets the final seal on the established union. Emphatically, Boyd presents the body of love, leaving its soul to the penetration of intuitive insight — in what amounts to a version of the discovery of the noumenon in *Much Else in Italy*. A liveliness is introduced into the presentation of externals through Guy's Impressionist sensitivity to qualifying detail. On the occasion of Alice's funeral when black is ordered by convention, Dominic's appearance gives an impression of variegated colour, indicating the genuine and complex nature of his grief:

... they did say that the only black Dominic wore were the smuts on his face. This was not quite true as somewhere on the journey he had acquired a black armband, but had forgotten to change his bright blue tie.

DYM 59.

After several paragraphs, it is further revealed that he bears, under his shirt, purple wounds inflicted by his peers at school. Boyd has in effect given us a portrait of The Man of Sorrows in a few brief strokes.

The depiction of other characters in the Langton novels is of a piece with the treatment of Dominic. Guy's evocation of the would-be Salome of his grandmother's generation, whom he has come to know through the reminiscences of Arthur, concentrates on surfaces in a manner which suggests the visual luxury of a Degas. Here is the determinedly seductive Hetty, parading herself before Austin:

She had a new dress, folds and folds of white muslin. She wore a crown of white roses on her glossy hair, and an expression of determination on her square glowing face, of which the only beauty was in its vitality, in the texture of her skin, and in her rather too magnificent eyes.

CC 26-27.

In contrast to this radiant vision in white, Hetty appears in Guy's mind as associated with black, fixed in his imagination as a scar or rent in a bright tissue of colour:

... I write of 'the small black figure of Cousin Hetty.' She was not black at all, neither her skin, nor at that age her clothes. I am not even sure that her hair was black, as when I knew her it was grey. It may originally have been bright red but I imagine her as somehow black against the bright landscape.

CC 30.
Likewise Sarah's effect on Guy is strongly connected with the atmosphere she creates in her surroundings. Like Hetty, and to a certain extent Dominic himself, Sarah is one of Guy's black souls. Black is the colour of the alien and the terrible which Guy would like to see banished from the Langtons' midst. He writes of Sarah: 'When I told Julian to paint the Assumption of the Virgin in the chapel, I think my motive as much as anything was to send the black ghost of Cousin Sarah ... shrieking out into the Australian bush' (CC 111). Boyd is not alone in his practice of blurring characters into their backgrounds. A more extreme instance, perhaps a classic example of an Impressionist dissolution of personality into the landscape, occurs in Stephen Crane's _The Red Badge of Courage_, where the protagonist is able to stand aside from himself and view his own figure detachedly, as part of the general aspect of things: 'Standing as if apart from himself, he viewed that last scene. He perceived that the man who had fought thus was magnificent.' Personality blurs with the scene, becoming identified with its surroundings:

Presently he began to feel the effects of the war atmosphere - a blistering sweat, a sensation that his eyeballs were about to crack like hot stones. A burning roar filled his ears.

Following this came a red rage.53

Boyd's outlines of the human subject are more sharply drawn than Crane's, but the difference is a matter of degree rather than kind. Both novelists blur subjective and objective experience, as in Crane's 'red rage' or Boyd's evocation of the black intensity of Hetty's, Sarah's or Dominic's souls.

A suggestive analogy, and even rationale, for this approach to personality is provided by one of the incidents in _A Difficult Young Man_. When they are children, Guy and his brother Brian elaborate a theology of soul-mixtures which, despite its intellectual naïveté and the casual way it is introduced, extends in its image of coloured paint as the essential ingredient of human character, the narrator's own image of himself as an Impressionist painter:

'When a baby is born God pours its soul into it,' said Brian. 'He's got a lot of pots of soul-mixture round Him, so He can make everyone different by giving them different mixtures. He's got a black pot of gloomy soul, and a yellow pot of happy soul, and a red pot of angry soul, and a blue pot of truthful soul. He looks at the baby and mixes up its soul to suit its face, and the Holy Ghost says: "You can't put in so much yellow when it's got a mean little
nose like that," so then God puts in some green.'

'But if you put in happy and truthful mixtures together, they'd go green,' I objected.

'No they wouldn't,' said Brian. 'They'd remain separate in a very nice pattern. But when God was filling up Dominic's soul He'd run out of yellow, so the Holy Ghost said: 'Well, put in some red. It's a nice cheerful colour anyhow.' So God put in a lot of red, and then He said: 'He ought to have some black in a face like that,' and God said: 'It's very difficult to know what to put in him. Perhaps I'd better just fill him up with black.' So He did and we have to put up with it, like the snakes in the summer.'

DYM 31-32.

Qualitative, that is to say, moral difference is something which cannot be defined exactly and, since one's approach to it is necessarily metaphorical, Guy deems the bold simplicity of the child's vision a valuable aid to understanding and knowledge.

Arguing against those critics who are inclined to regard Boyd's treatment of character as static and predictable, Leonie Kramer, who believes that his vision in the Langton novels is focused on 'character in the making,' insists that the novelist's 'highly original method of depicting his characters' ensures that they have 'the unpredictability of real life.' I would like to suggest further that it is not the change of growth in his characters that Boyd sets out to depict but the alteration of difference. Thus it should be stressed that 'character in the making' as we find it in the Langton novels is not presented as the integrated movement of an individual growing and developing in linear time but as the impression of an observer or of several observers who witness the signs of change, the variability of human personality at different times and under different conditions.

It would be a mistake to judge Boyd's presentation of human personality by the criteria of the Realist novel, the criteria we apply to fiction in which character is depicted as historically conditioned process and growth, an approach illustrated by George Eliot's reflection early in Middlemarch on her evolving character: 'He was at a starting-point which makes many a man's career a fine subject for betting .... The risk would remain even with close knowledge of Lydgate's character; for character too is a process and unfolding. The man was still in the making ....' George Eliot believed, with the confidence of nineteenth-century science, that this process could be mapped and, with the energy of a Comte, set out to provide a comprehensive analysis of the elements involved in the formation of personality from biological dependence on the physical environment to
complex socio-historical influences. This kind of thoroughness is alien to the aesthetic sensibility and, although Boyd shares with George Eliot and science a compulsion to record the data of experience accurately, he narrows his range to the immediate impression and is not tempted, like the Realist, to explore the manifold relationships of any single event to 'that ... range of relevancies called the universe.' As if in reply to the demands of a George Eliot, Boyd has his narrator explain at one point in A Difficult Young Man:

Perhaps I should state here that this does not pretend to be a faithful picture of life on the borders of Somerset and Wiltshire forty-five years ago .... I am now in England, so could go down to Frome to verify my impressions of the neighbourhood, but I feel that this might be rather like patching a painting with an accurate photograph, or at any rate removing the adult glaze, so that the book would be like a painting only restored in parts. I could for example confirm or correct the impression I have of Frome church to which I used on some Sundays to ride on my bicycle. It was an 'advanced' Anglo-Catholic church even in Alice's day, and I remember a rich, rather dark chancel with figures on the rood screen, and outside the Stations of the Cross carved in stone along the wall of a flight of steps. If this memory is inaccurate it will qualify the truth of other things I recall, but I feel it is better to trust to it and to keep the picture in tone, even if here and there it may result in slight misrepresentation of the background.


Such an aesthetic is very different from the 'Dutch Realist' aims elaborated in chapter seventeen of Adam Bede, where exact documentation is considered to be of primary importance:

... my strongest effort is to avoid any arbitrary picture, and to give a faithful account of men and things as they have mirrored themselves in my mind. The mirror is doubtless defective; the outline faint or confused; but I feel as much bound to tell you as precisely as I can what that reflection is, as if I were in the witness-box narrating my experience on oath.

George Eliot uses factual information to discover a pattern of causal relationships in her character's environment. Despite frequent references to and obvious admiration for such explorations in Dostoyevsky and Lawrence, Boyd makes no attempt to probe the buried secrets of human psychology. We are to be content with Brian's 'pots of soul-mixture' or Guy's 'vats of ... dye.' A Maggie Tulliver, an Ivan Karamazov, a Paul Morel, a Richard
Mahony, the situated, evolving characters of Realist fiction are not to be found in Boyd. Rather, his shimmering, Impressionist surfaces which render the diverse qualities of personality as they are revealed in different circumstances to different witnesses, recall the fluid, multidimensional egos of the subjectivist world of Crane, Ford, Woolf or Fitzgerald. The comparison with Impressionist writers of this stature points home the fact that Boyd's less trenchant requirements in the setting of his fictional scenes do not preclude seriousness of tone when this is warranted to suggest the full range of human emotion. The descriptions of Dominic's killing of Tamburlaine or Baba's attempt to murder Dominic are completely serious, intensely so, but their purpose in the total context is not to offer an analysis of the psychology of either Dominic or Baba, the psychological interest being subordinate to an Impressionist vision of bright spots of time and shadowy reaches of experience.

The purpose of this chapter has been to connect Boyd with a stream of Impressionist writing through two aspects of his work which stand out as central to his vision, namely an enquiry into the nature of truth - which leads him to adopt a subjectivist approach to experience - and the development of a technique of representing the world as it appears to the individual observer. Boyd's early writing already displays a consciousness of the changing face of truth, a frame of mind which prompts the writer to put his trust in the authority of perception, the impression as it appears to the witnessing eye. The linking of a graphic Impressionism with the especially subjective approach to truth permitted by the use of a narrator-persona enables the aesthetic qualities of Boyd's sensibility full rein. It is not surprising, therefore, that his finest achievement is represented by The Cardboard Crown and A Difficult Young Man. The invention of a character like Guy and his employment as a story-teller effectively releases Boyd from the dogmatism which mars some of his work, permitting him to put forward ideas and opinions with a formal tentativeness which omniscient narration precludes. The new technique is, in fact, perfectly suited to the novelist of aesthetic temperament, allowing as it does for the exploratory and experimental in the savouring of experiences.
CONCLUSION

In focusing at the outset on Martin Boyd's early background, with its cultural roots in the late nineteenth century, this thesis has aimed to indicate the large role that the vision and tenets of aestheticism played in the development of his artistic temperament. Subsequently, it set out to argue that the ideal of beauty represents to the novelist (in a comparable adjustment of his priorities to that witnessed in the late Victorian and fin de siècle period) the supreme value in both art and life. At this point the argument concentrated on Boyd's theorizing in Much Else in Italy. In the elucidation in this book of a number of concepts, moral and aesthetic, which bear on his maturely considered religious view of the world, Boyd emphasizes the importance of beauty to both the Christian and Classical imaginations, offering in the process a personal view of Christianity classicized which has identifiable affinities with the ideas of influential nineteenth-century analysts of Western civilization like Arnold and Pater. After considering Boyd's aestheticism from a biographical point of view and from that of the writer's own commentary, the thesis approached his fiction with the aim of highlighting specific preoccupations in the novels relating to the aesthetic vision.

A distinctive pattern emerged, connecting Boyd's imagination to the historical movement in art which advanced pleasure as man's personal and social goal in place of the puritanism of Victorian moralists. At the same time, a desire to place this emphasis within the framework of the highest ideals became evident in Boyd's growing concern to accommodate the fact of suffering in his depiction of a fictional world. Thus it was discovered that the aesthetic values affirmed in the novels have a religious orientation comparable to that of Much Else in Italy.

An allowance for an uncircumscribable mystery at the heart of things explained, finally, the novelist's development of a special narrative technique capable of evoking reality as something unpredictable, living and changing, dynamic in its relations with the experiencer. With the establishment of these perspectives on Boyd's aestheticism, the thesis penetrated the set of artistic motivations which prompt the novelist to approach both the good and evil in life from the point of view of its contribution to an enrichment of experience. In retrospect, Boyd's position can perhaps be best summarized by the phrase he wittily employs to modify the celebrated dictum of l'art pour l'art: 'Art, for God's sake' (PI 89).
APPENDIX

SOME NOTES ON AESTHETICISM AND IMPRESSIONISM IN AUSTRALIAN
ART AND LITERATURE AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

I

While Australian culture at the turn of the century contained within itself some of the conditions which produced a phase of inward-feeding decadence in the movement towards art for art's sake on the European scene, the element of frontier adventuring and the building of a new society and way of life created in Australia a different set of circumstances for the artist and consequently a different task. Often the attraction towards fin de siècle romanticism was strongly felt, but before the artist could be enticed into the artificial world of Des Esseintes or Venus and Tannhäuser another, more coercive force encroached on his imagination, directing him back to reality. He felt the imposition of his surroundings, neither tamed by tradition nor stale to a worn sensibility, with the consequence that what was within was freshly explored in relation to the real world.

The art of Sydney Long is a case in point, illustrating the situation of the Australian artist who, in affecting a European style, was compelled to admit other concerns, more pressing than the indulgence of visual ideas - shapes and colours abstracted from actuality. Long's well-known 'The Spirit of the Plains' (1897) and 'Pan' (1898), both powerfully influenced by art nouveau, have become synonymous with the style as it is recognized in Australian painting. In these works, the contemporary European vision is clearly present in the flattening of landscape into a decorative pattern, frieze-like in its simplicity, as in a Henry Van de Velde architectural panel, Alfred Mohrbutter tapestry or Bruno Paul poster. The figures of pipers and dancers which compose the foreground of Long's paintings and reveal his imaginative habit of peopling the bush with the satyrs and dryads of Classical mythology, are choreographed, rather than arranged, to achieve a harmonious rhythm of graceful line and muted colour. Like art nouveau such paintings are ornamental, bespeaking pleasure in the possibilities of free, minimally referential form. At the same time, Long's mythologizing of the Australian landscape in an attempt to reveal its peculiar nature or
spirit runs counter to the art nouveau aesthetic. In a sense Long's projection of design onto his paintings is far too studied to be pure art nouveau, where spontaneity, capriciousness and asymmetry are the dominant traits. His subject matter obtrudes, arresting a free suggestion of sensous luxury by a selfconsciousness and uncertainty of tone alien to the mood of art nouveau. Long was aware of the problem of coming to terms with place and in an article in Art and Architecture (1905) wrote about the unsuitability of an uncritical application of European styles to the interpretation of the Australian landscape. What the article reveals about the predicament of the artist in Australia is his very need of orientation. How is he, as Whistler suggests, to play upon Nature's keyboard if he has not yet discovered its harmonies? In a passage which on the surface depends for its expression and point of view on Whistler's praise of the artificial over the natural in the 'Ten O'Clock Lecture,' Long in fact turns his attention to the problem of revealing what is actually new in nature - as it is to be encountered in the Australian scene - and affirms 'the surest of all foundations' for achieving this end, namely 'realism.' The quest as Long sees it is for accurate tones in conveying the special quality of Australian light. Streeton, he argues,

recognized this when he painted his brilliant landscapes in such a bright colour key, but, unfortunately, in many instances, he pitched it too high and neglected altogether the more sombre side. But although in his eagerness to get sunlight, he rushed from the blackness of Conrad Martens to the opposite extreme, yet he had a healthy influence on our Art, and it remains for our painters to take the texts of these two men and preach a sermon on Australian painting.  

Furthermore, Long expresses the need for a mythology to blend with the distinctive features of the country. Despite his own Classical borrowings, he prophesies a completely new preoccupation for the artist in the creation of Australian myth: 'Instead of Pans and Centaurs, he will bid the Aboriginal blossom out in all the graceful proportions of his manly vigour ....'  Long's preoccupations are those of the artist compelled to make a fresh start, aware that it is his historical task not to modify or refine but to pioneer. These were the preoccupations of a generation of Australian painters excited
by the recognition of difference in their environment and seeking the means of communicating their discoveries.

A visual approach which suitably matched the impulse towards novelty and a free play of emotion (combined with a respect for the actual) presented itself in the Impressionist movement and its diffuse impact in Australia began the first school of local painting to express a truly native vision. Art historians and critics differ in their emphases when discussing the genesis of the Australian 'Impressionist' school, especially in assessing the extent and nature of the French influence. However, it is generally accepted that the methods of French en plein airism and the visual example (if not the precise techniques) of Monet and his followers played a significant part in the development in Australia of a pliant and adaptable style of painting which was able to give unusual access to its own time and place. Whistler's tonal impressionism is also regarded as contributing a great deal, both technically and imaginatively. Robert Hughes judges, for example: 'Certainly, Roberts's palette, shared by the whole Heidelberg School later on, was close to Whistler's tonal impressionism: cobalt, sienna, raw umber, Naples and chrome yellow, ochre, Venetian red and black.' Alan McCulloch, in The Golden Age of Australian Painting: Impressionism and the Heidelberg School, while guardedly cautious about the working of the metamorphosis which took place in the outlook of Australian artists in the eighties and nineties, accepts the idea of a shaping influence from the broad European movement towards en plein air Impressionism and directs attention to the historically congenial circumstances of its reception. Australians were, McCulloch points out, slow to assimilate the movement 'and then not so much through direct contact as in response to world-wide trends.' All the same, impressionism did arrive in Australia at a crucial moment in colonial aesthetic history, when the first stirrings of informed public interest were beginning to give support to new ideas about the indigenous life of the community and its environment. The new art was ideally suited to the expression of these ideas and the lives of those who worked in the camps at Box Hill, Mentone and Eaglemont and the studios of Melbourne.

The consequence of this directing of the Impressionist vision towards an interpretation of the Australian scene was - as in the case
of Long's adaptation of art nouveau - an intrusion of specific ideas expressive of local consciousness. While there were exceptions to the rule, notably in the work of E. Phillips Fox whose application of Impressionist ideas produced work of a distinctively European stamp - witness his well-known The Art Students (1895) and The Ferry (1911) - the general outlook was affected by a wish to respond to those attributes which belonged to the country uniquely. Paintings were often conceived from a historicizing viewpoint, concerned with what were judged to be typical incidents or scenes illustrative of rural or city life: Roberts' heroic 'Shearing the Rams,' 'The Golden Fleece,' 'The Breakaway' or 'Bourke Street,' Streeton's dramatic "Fire's On!" Lapstone Tunnel or the panoramic 'Still Glides the Stream' and 'Purple Noon's Transparent Might,' McCubbin's anecdotal 'Down on his Luck,' 'Bush Burial,' 'On the Wallaby Track' and patriotic triptych 'The Pioneer.' For McCubbin nationalistic sentiment was a definite aim while in Roberts' case, as Hughes has observed, his imagination runs parallel to the prevalent tone of Australian writing in the nineties. His virtues of mateship, courage, adaptability, hard work and resourcefulness are the very ones Lawson celebrated in his short stories, and Joseph Furphy described in Such is Life. Their use indicates a growing sense of cultural identity.

The fact that a number of artists had a relationship with journalism through their graphic work for newspapers and magazines - Roberts worked for the Picturesque Atlas of Australasia, Julian Ashton for the Atlas, the Illustrated Australian News and Australasian Sketcher, Conder for the Illustrated Sydney News - no doubt contributed to the tendency to convey a pictorial message in a body of work produced by members of the Heidelberg school.

Nor was the intrusion of deliberate elements aimed at defining the character of the local environment confined to paintings of concretely descriptive orientation. Robert Hughes has commented on the search for the 'soul of the bush' in the work of Sydney Long, David Davies, John Ford Paterson and Walter Withers, an attitude which he relates to the romanticizing tendencies of writers like Clarke, Gordon, Lawson and Boake. Bernard Smith's earlier analysis was more penetrating in drawing the useful distinction between those writers who, like Marcus Clarke, painted the bush in sombre, melancholy
tones and those who, like A.G. Stephens in his introduction to The Bulletin Story Book (1901), appreciated 'Verlaine's cult of faded things, extolling the hinted hue before the gross colour' which, as Stephens urged, 'finds a natural home in Australia - in many aspects a Land of Faded Things.' Paintings like David Davies' 'Moonrise, Templestowe,' Streeton's 'Box Hill, Evening' or, again, Long's 'The Spirit of the Plains' dress up reality in a light Verlaine mood. We actually have to wait until the 1940s before we see anything in Australian painting resembling Clarke's or Lawson's sense of the weird. Disregarding the finer points of the argument, however, the important fact to recognize is that the process of interpreting the spirit of the country in terms of romantic feeling depended on an intellectual coming to terms with the landscape which precluded an exploration of pure form. The artist's curiosity about all the aspects of a land as yet virgin to the European imagination was put into words by Arthur Streeton in a letter to Tom Roberts. With Conder, one of the more romantic talents of the Heidelberg group, Streeton saw in the immensity of the country a spiritual and artistic challenge difficult to meet:

I picture in my head the Murray and all the wonder and glory at its source up toward Kosciusko ... and the great gold plains, and all the beautiful inland Australia, and I love the thought of walking into all this and trying to expand and express it in my way. I fancy large canvases all glowing and moving in the happy light and others bright decorative and chalky and expressive of the hot trying winds and the slow immense summer. It is IMMENSE, and droughts and cracks in the earth and creeks all baked mud. But somehow it's all out of reach ....

With such a vision to fire the artistic imagination there could be no question of a demand for anodynes for tired sensibilities, although an element of escapist reverie, having the flavour of the fin de siècle cultivation of the unusual or the fantastical, exists in the work of a small number of individuals.

Of this group Blamire Young, the author of a play with the suggestive title Art for Art's Sake, produced in Melbourne in 1911, is a strong but minor talent. Sometimes evoking a melancholy akin to Poe's in an off-key, almost lurid use of colour (in, for example, his painting of Granfer Cantle from Thomas Hardy's The Return of the Native), Young also exhibits the light stroke and delicate sense of harmony characteristic of Conder. The link is perhaps Whistler. It
is claimed that Young introduced Conder to the art of Whistler at a
time when Young himself, stationed at Katoomba as a mathematics teacher,
was only beginning to learn the rudiments of painting. Both
English émigrés, neither felt the urge, which clearly inspired Roberts,
McCubbin and Streeton, to create a nationalist art. It is pertinent
to note that, while it resembles the Heidelberg vision, Conder's
Australian output reveals the presence of a more European sensibility
at work in the artist who was to emerge as a representative talent of
the English nineties. Despite such distinctively Australian pictures
as 'Yarding Sheep' and 'Under a Southern Sun,' pastoral subjects
expressing man's traditional and settled relationship with the
landscape and executed in a light, lyrical manner predominate. Young's
visual fantasies are quite removed from the preoccupations of the
Heidelberg painters as such titles as 'Deep Sea Berries' and 'Mansions
of the Grey Thrush' indicate. They owe something to Whistler, Japanese
draftmanship, *art nouveau* and the art of the poster, yet Young appears
anything but a derivative painter.

A less original vision is expressed in the work of another
Englishman, Bernard Hall, who from 1892 was the Director of the
National Gallery of Victoria and shared with McCubbin (in unhappy
relationship) the control of the Gallery schools. A painting entitled
'The Quest' (c.1905) qualifies as one of the best examples of a rarely
followed Symbolist style in Australian painting. In this work Hall,
with lines chosen from The Rubaiyat, follows the Symbolist habit of
illustrating a poetic text: 'I Sent My Soul Through the Invisible/
Some Letter of the After Life to Spell.' The soul, represented by an
elongated human figure precariously poised on a suspended globe,
withdraws in fearful anticipation of an unknown force. There is a
hint of illumination in the halo which surrounds the head. Although
reminiscent in its occult subject matter of paintings by Symbolists
like Carlos Schwabe and Jean Delville, Hall's vision in this work is
more fragile and tentative than its European counterparts and points
to milder preoccupations. An admirer of the academic aestheticism of
Alma-Tadema and Albert Moore, Hall delighted in working up the
sensuous qualities in his subjects. These are frequently drawn from
the world of the studio: arranged interiors with posed models,
objects and harmonious backdrops.
Young's creation of a rather esoteric world and Hall's failure to take any interest in Australian subjects (as Daniel Thomas remarks, Hall 'seems never to have painted an Australian landscape or a subject from Australian history') distinguishes these artists from the mainstream of Australian painting of the period which, although often overtly desirous of emphasizing painterly qualities, fails to exhibit unqualified signs of an art feeding off itself. Young was greatly preoccupied with techniques and his method of handling watercolour (colours were applied to a wet surface to achieve the formation of spontaneous patterns) was one of the unusual features of his work through which he was able to achieve a fluidity of colour striking in its effects of nuance and suggestive of dimensions of extraordinary sensible experience. A 1978 exhibition, 'Aspects of Australian Art, 1900-1940,' which included paintings by Blamire Young and Bernard Hall now in the Australian National Gallery collection, indicates a growing appreciation of the contribution made by these artists. In the past, both have been neglected in favour of the more accessible Sydney Long whose achievement lies in his successful grafting of an art nouveau style onto an essentially objective rather than fantasy-oriented vision.

Perhaps the most dazzling aesthetic strain in Australian painting exists in the distinctively Whistlerian canvases of Conder and Streeton, but the fact that this aspect constitutes only one element in a more complex vision oriented towards the real rather than an artificial world does not advance the case for a fin de siècle mood in Australia. The later Conder is already present in his Australian period but with the important difference that it is an open air world he depicts and not the 'drowsiness of a replete civilization,' 'the indefinable hot-house atmosphere of decadence' that Holbrook Jackson ascribes to his most characteristically fin de siècle work. On the contrary, the delicacy which is evident in later paintings like 'The Blue Bird' (1895), 'The Harem' (1897), 'The Shadow' (1900) and the exotic decorations for silk fans - and which becomes in this highly imaginative context a languorous daintiness - suggests in Conder's Australian period the vitality of his response to the real landscape. His ability to convey the more tremulous aspects of feeling is unrivalled by any other painter except Streeton, who in a number of fine works exhibits a comparable enjoyment of sensuous elements explored in subtle detail.
and with an eye for evanescent effects. A painting like Streeton's 'Souvenir of Little Sirius, Mosman' in which dancing nudes frolic towards an inviting shoreline framed with gum trees, displays a lyricism unattempted by more soberly realist painters like Roberts and McCubbin. Exploiting the possibilities of pure form in a manner more restrained than Whistler's, many of Streeton's views of Sydney Harbour are remarkable for their recollection of a Japanese sense of pictorial arrangement. 'Sirius Cove' and 'The Long Wave, Coogee' are perhaps the most striking and daring of these.

Conder made a contribution in another direction by anticipating an art nouveau trend in the work of such diverse artists as Violet Teague (a regular exhibitor with the V.A.S.), the black-and-white illustrator D.H. Souter, the artist in woodcut, Ernest Moffitt, and on at least one occasion, Walter Withers (who revealed an unusual aspect of his art in six decorative panels commissioned for the Manifold family's homestead at Camperdown, Victoria). In the catalogue covers he designed for the 9x5 Impressions Exhibition (1889) and a V.A.S. exhibition (March, 1890), Conder exploits the characteristic art nouveau line, curving in abstract imitation of plant forms. The pictorial detail of these cover designs is minutely analysed by Bernard Smith. It suffices to comment that both are visual poems expressing the fin de siècle message of the fleetingness of beauty and illustrating the Heidelberg painters' en plein air credo. In the 9x5 catalogue a sprig of falling blossom points the message of transience while a bound female figure with grim visage personifies the threat from 'Convention.' The 9x5 exhibition itself was not especially art nouveau but redolent of Whistler in all its aspects from the elaborate preparations which were made in decorating the showroom to the form and content of the paintings themselves. Recapitulating the carpe diem theme of his design for the catalogue, Conder included a work with the title 'Old Time is Still a' Flying,' borrowed from Herrick's poem 'Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,' and so introduced, as Ursula Hoff points out, a note of 'poetic symbolism' over and above 'the alliance of Impressionism with aestheticism' that the exhibition as a whole reflected. This tendency to explore the figurative appeared in a no longer extant painting entitled 'Hot Wind' (1889) when, in a decadent vein and under the spell of a minor
fin de siècle writer obsessed with female emancipation, Conder turned his attention to the image of seductive feminine evil. A comparable choice of subject was made by Streeton in 'Standing female figure' (1885), which depicts a haloed semi-nude temptress, but neither piece is typical either of the artists' or the period's preoccupations.

In the sphere of sculpture, Bertram Mackennal, an expatriate Australian who became noted among British artists during the Edwardian period and who began his career rather notoriously with his figure of Circe (1893) - shown at the Paris Salon and Royal Academy - is worth mentioning from the point of view of an art nouveau influence in Australia. Commissions from Australia came to him when he was living abroad as he was well-known as the son of another sculptor, J.S. Mackennal, a founder member of the Victorian Academy of Arts and a contributor to Melbourne's very first exhibition of art works. The Circe, which reveals a number of influences - including that of Rodin - was purchased by a private collector, Carl Pinschof, when Mackennal returned home briefly in 1900 and later it became the property of the National Gallery of Victoria. As Graeme Sturgeon comments in his recent book on Australian sculpture: 'in his Circe he [Mackennal] incorporated elements of the emerging art nouveau style into the writhing snakes entwined in the figure's hair and into the swirling movement of the strongly modelled base.' Sarah Bernhardt, herself one of the cult heroines of the fin de siècle, had noticed Mackennal's work on her visit to Australia in the early nineties - actually championing his cause in the local press with her statement that he would be better received in Paris that he had been at the hands of a local committee. Mackennal later made a relief model of the actress and executed a number of female portraits of distinctly art nouveau inspiration.

A figure who has some claim to be regarded as the most fin de siècle artist to emerge on the Australian scene is Norman Lindsay. Rejecting what he saw as the gospel of 'facts' followed by Impressionist painters, Lindsay stood apart from local fashion. Like Beardsley and Wilde, he regarded life itself as the real arena for art and assiduously cultivated the image of one devoted to revealing, through his creativity, the existence of the Life Force. Jack Lindsay has indicated that, prior to the First World War, his father's Nietzscheanism was 'used to
concentrate his love of energy and fertility, his contempt for other-worldliness and the lies by which men shrouded cruelty and repression.' Well-known to the public through his black-and-white illustrations for the Bulletin, the Lindsay of the pre-war period should be seen against the backdrop of a vigorous campaign that he and other self-styled bohemians waged against the 'wowser' element in the community. To bait churchmen and temperance ladies, he drew satiric anti-wowser cartoons with amusing captions like 'And the Salvation Army is to rage freely' with its vague echo of Whistler's '10 O'Clock' lecture ('And now from their midst the Dilettante stalks abroad. The amateur is loosed. The voice of the aesthete is heard in the land...') which in turn lightly parodies the Song of Songs. The debate was so exciting to the public that in 1910 one newspaper editor went to the extreme of claiming that he had invented the term 'wowser.' Lindsay's own favourite definition, which his biographer John Hetherington claims he liked to quote, was that of C.J. Dennis from the glossary to Backblock Ballads: 'an ineffably pious person who mistakes the world for a penitentiary and himself for a warder.' The controversy surrounding Lindsay over his two pen drawings 'Pollice Verso' (1904) and 'The Crucified Venus' (1912) make him one of the fixtures in the history of public taste in the first decade of the century. While the National Gallery of Victoria acquired 'Pollice Verso' at an exhibition in Melbourne in 1907 the publicity that followed was such that the picture had to be turned to the wall for the duration of the show. Since it was a rather unsubtle representation of the rejection of a 'crucified Redeemer' which had already been given notoriety in literature by Gautier and Swinburne decades earlier, it is difficult to know why it caused such an uproar. The Bulletin, 16 February 1905, published a reproduction of the drawing and defended it as expressing 'the challenge of Pleasure to Asceticism': 'There is no intention to represent the Crucifixion. The crucified figure is the symbol of Asceticism; the rout of revellers of Epicureanism.' A work of similar motive, 'The Crucified Venus,' when shown in Melbourne in 1913, so outraged the public that it was removed from sight until Julian Ashton's threat to withdraw the New South Wales exhibits resulted in its restoration.

In later years, reflecting on the subject of 'sex' in Creative Effort (1920), Lindsay expressed his anti-puritanism in defensive but
strong words:

Asceticism may be only the failure of the life impulse. The nun, the celibate priest - perhaps it is life which rejects here. But puritanism is active opposition to all that is fecund, super-abundant, life-producing, and therefore we must class it as the worst immorality. 27

For all his avowed anti-puritanism, however, Lindsay lacked the playful spirit of the fin de siècle and his work is characterized by an ebullience unknown to aesthetes of delicate and effete sensibility like Beardsley, Conder and Wilde. His very love of the muscular and his almost missionary fervour in promoting a hedonistic outlook makes him the perfect illustration of A.W. Jose's comment that turn-of-the-century culture in Australia was chiefly characterized by its youthfulness.

II

Turning from the visual arts to literature, it is not difficult to recognize that the circumstances which worked to modify the fin de siècle impulse in painting affected writers as well. The writer confronted a landscape and way of life which directly challenged him with its novelty and, as with painting, the chief direction taken by the literary imagination was towards an eager interest in local reality. A.W. Jose offers his personal recollection of the climate of the nineties:

Talk of 'a nest of singing birds?' Every one sang. Everything Australian was worth writing about, in verse, if possible. The diggings and the sea-ports, the slums and the Outback, the selections, and the stock-routes, and the wheat fields, and the artesian bores, all found their poet, and usually found him in high spirits. 28

While a caricature has often been drawn of Australian writing at the turn of the century matching somewhat R.H. Croll's facetious profile of the state of poetry encapsulated in a quatrain for the Bookfellow in 1899 -

Whalers, damper, swag and nose-bag, Johnny cakes and billy-tea,
Murrumburra, Meremendidocoowoke, Youlgarbudgereee,
Cattle-duffers, bold bushrangers, diggers, drovers, bush race-courses,
And on all the other pages, horses, horses, horses, horses 29
- efforts to play down the indigenous orientation of writers like Lawson and Furphy, even with the admirable motive of bringing to light their mastery of form and subtlety of vision, obscure the essential point of difference between Australia and Europe. When the Australian artist came to interpret his world, he faced a society in a formative phase whose values were quite different from the artifice, luxury and refinement pursued by the fin de siècle.

Generally writers chose to follow the naturalist stream in European literature. Whether the style created the subject or the subject the style is difficult to determine but, as with the Impressionist school in painting, writers found the confidence to attend to immediate and particular experience. It goes without saying that this response took many forms, sometimes providing an undistorted picture of local life, sometimes casting a romantic haze over the facts in the creation of myths about how life ought to be rather than how it actually was. With that added dimension of light irony he was able to express through his narrator in Such is Life (1903), Furphy captured the feeling of romantic promise which painters like Long and Davies and poets like Paterson and J. le Gay Brereton invested in the natural landscape:

It is not in our cities or townships, it is not in our agricultural or mining areas, that the Australian attains full consciousness of his own nationality; it is in places like this .... To me the monotonous variety of this interminable scrub has a charm of its own; so grave, subdued, self-centred; so alien to the genial appeal of more winsome landscape, or the assertive grandeur of mountain and gorge. To me this wayward diversity of spontaneous plant life bespeaks an unconfined, ungauged potentiality of resource; it unveils an ideographic prophecy, painted by Nature in her Impressionist mood, to be deciphered aright only by those willing to discern through the crudeness of dawn a promise of majestic day.

In emphasizing the sphinx-like mystery of the bush, Furphy transfers to the landscape itself the difficulties of the newcomer in coming to terms with his surroundings.

Like the 'Impressionist' school in Australian painting, the literature which turned toward naturalistic modes of expression was concerned with the unfettering of the artist's vision, the freeing of his imagination from stylistic habits relating to the presentation of
narrative, character and scene, so that the raw and novel experience before him could be communicated in the full impact of its paradoxical familiar strangeness. Miles Franklin speaks for the writer who felt that he had a new story to tell and wanted to be uninhibited in the telling of it:

This is not a romance — I have too often faced the music of life to the tune of hardship to waste time in snivelling and gushing over fancies and dreams; neither is it a novel, but simply a yarn — a real yarn. Oh! as real, as really real — provided life itself is anything beyond a heartless little chimera — it is as real in its weariness and bitter heartache as the tall gum-trees, among which I first saw the light, are real in their stateliness and substantiality.

A similar (if more mature) choice against gesturing conventionality is made by Lawson at the end of 'The Union Buries Its Dead' (1893) in his rejection of wattle, tearful mate and 'sad Australian sunset' — the customary paraphernalia of romance aiming to arouse pathetic emotions. Likewise Furphy, in describing the subterfuges of writers in the manipulation of plot for dramatic effect, declares 'such is not life' — a fact which does not prevent him from incorporating more than a little romantic material into his own novel.

Especially relevant in the context of this discussion is the more than superficial parallel which exists between the literary art of Lawson and Furphy and the visual imagination of key figures of the Heidelberg group — Roberts, McCubbin and Streeton. The particularity of observation in the description of landscape, the sense of fresh response, the intensity of recognition of the local environment in Lawson's writing is closely related to the outlook of the Heidelberg painters. In 'Water Them Geraniums' (c.1900) the narrator, Joe Wilson, becomes aware of his surroundings as he begins to describe the new home to which he has brought his wife — 'She hadn't seen it before, and somehow it came new and with a shock to me, who had been out here several times' — and, startled into selfconsciousness by her obvious repugnance towards both the house in the bush and the bush town they have left behind, receives the full impact of his environment for the first time: 'I thought even then in a flash what sort of place Gulgong was ....' Follows a description of the town's desultory galvanized iron and weatherboard substance and the disaffected apologies for human beings
it harbours. Exhibiting the same spirit of recognition of the local environment as the Heidelberg painters in their choice for subjects of drovers, selectors, shearers, prospectors and splitters, Lawson selected representative types of the society he knew, mostly victims of circumstance like the bushwomen of 'The Drover's Wife' (1892) and 'Water Them Geraniums,' the city down-and-outs of "Dossing Out" and "Camping" (1893) and the 'rising Australian generation ... represented by a thin, lanky youth of about fifteen' 35 whose dehumanizing work in the cowyard is described in its rough and petty detail in 'A Day on a Selection' (1892). In his sense of the pathos of individual lives, Lawson resembles McCubbin, the more anecdotal painter of the Heidelberg group. Both Lawson and McCubbin deal with the sadness of people faced with misfortune, Lawson in stories like 'The Bush Undertaker' (1892) and 'The Union Buries Its Dead', McCubbin in paintings like 'On the Wallaby Track' (1896), 'Down on His Luck' (1889) and 'Bush Burial' (1890). The dominant tone in both cases is one of compassion and differs sharply from the unrelenting bitterness of Barbara Baynton's stories which have evoked comparison with the art of Maxim Gorki. 36

It is in his talent for evoking atmosphere - a sense of the creative power of the eye - without distorting factual truth as it is concretely revealed, that Lawson resembles the Heidelberg painters most fundamentally. Clearly, in emotional attitude, Lawson is the reverse of Roberts and Streeton whose visual celebrations of nature correspond to the romantic feeling for the bush Lawson decried in Paterson's verse in the famous debate which took place in the pages of the Bulletin, 37 and in the course of which Paterson defended his 'vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended' 38 against Lawson's

'Sunny plains!' 'Great Scott!-those burning wastes of barren soil and sand
With their everlasting fences stretching out across the land!
Desolation where the crow is! Desert where the eagle flies,
Paddocks where the lumpy bullock starts and stares with reddened eyes;
Where, in clouds of dust enveloped, roasted bullock-drivers creep
Slowly past the sun-dried shepherd dragged behind his crawling sheep.
Stunted peak of granite gleaming, glaring like a molten mass.
Turned, from some infernal furnace, on a plain devoid of grass. 39
However, Lawson is closer to Paterson than he realized. Each describes in graphic terms an intensely personal feeling for the bush, the difference being that one isolates the attitude of optimism, the other, pessimism. A common factor which relates both to the Heidelberg painters' appreciative vision of light is the element of subjective feeling entering into the picture as an aspect of perceptive truth. In the case of Lawson's lines, supposedly correcting Paterson's romanticism with stark fact, a pictorial luminosity renders the scene of sun-drenched surfaces comparable to Streeton's vibrant painting of rock contours, "'Fire's On!' Lapstone Tunnel.'

A noticeable feature of Lawson's writing is the tendency to organize reality around a selected focus so that, while there is no departure from fact, subjective value is invested in a scene by an emphasis on the witnessing eye. This gives scope to an exploration of the impressionistic element in perception. In the answer to Paterson capital is made out of a special point of view, that of the lording crow or eagle, by means of which man's position in the landscape is diminished: his place is in the midst of a cloud of dust or as a speck behind a group of straggling sheep in an interminable waste of plain crossed by never-ending fences. A similar management of point of view to give compositional weight to some details in a scene above others is seen in the vague, drifting forms of Lawson's 'faces in the street', the band of strangers who follow the union man's coffin in 'The Union Buries Its Dead,' and the tide of dogs and galloping horses in 'The Loaded Dog' (1899). The result in each case is the suggestion of mood through concentration on a single impression.

This special handling of a naturalistic technique, bringing to mind the practice of the Heidelberg painters in their application of Impressionist methods, is illustrated by reference to a concept of literary Impressionism worked out by a contemporary of Lawson's in America, Hamlin Garland. A seminal document in the study of a stream of American Impressionist writing whose most notable early exponent is Stephen Crane, Garland's Crumbling Idols, published in 1894, as well as being a statement of his own aesthetic ideas, is also, as the authority on French Impressionism, John Rewald, has claimed, 'the first all-out defense of the [Impressionist] movement to be written in English.' The appeal of Impressionism for the author of Crumbling Idols, who had been considerably preoccupied with the notion of local colour in his
stories of midwest farming life in the 1880s and 1890s in Main-Travelled Roads (1891) and Prairie Folks (1893), was the confirmation it gave to the value of this notion and the means it afforded for illustrating the literary method Garland chose to label 'veritism.' The parallel of Garland's theory with Lawson's practice is quite gratuitous apart from the fact that both writers were responding to a need to discover a way of handling an area of human life barely touched by the literary imagination and that both were working in the same general context of a world-wide interest in Impressionist painting. Nevertheless, the concept of 'veritism' or literary Impressionism (the words, as Donald Pizer points out, were interchangeable in Garland's system) bears remarkably on Lawson's technique.

In his definition, offered as a serious modification of the concept of realism, Garland stressed two values for the artist: truth to fact and truth to his personal reception of that fact: 'Impressionism, in its deeper sense, means the statement of one's own individual perception of life and nature, guided by devotion to truth.' In the future, fictional writing 'will teach, as all earnest literature has done, by effect; but it will not be by direct expression, but by placing before the reader the facts of life as they stand related to the artist.' Before arriving at this formulation Garland had written in a letter of 1891:

I am ... an impressionist perhaps, rather than a realist. I believe with Monet, that the artist should be self-centered, and should paint life as he sees it. If the other fellow doesn't see the violet shadows on the road, so much the worse for him.

The contrast between Realism and Impressionism in painting, and its implication for the literary artist, was worked out with precision in Crumbling Idols:

If you look carefully at the Dutch painters and the English painters of related thought, you will find them working out each part of the picture with almost the same clearness. Their canvases are not single pictures, they are mosaics of pictures, packed into one frame. Values are almost equal everywhere.

Impressionist painters, on the other hand,
select some moment, some centre of interest,—generally of the simplest character. This central object they work out with great care, but all else fades away into subordinate blur of color, precisely as in life. We look at a sheep, for example, feeding under a tree. We see the sheep with great clearness, and the tree and the stump, but the fence and hill outside the primary circle of vision are only obscurely perceived. The meadow beyond is a mere blur of yellow-green. This is the natural arrangement. If we look at the fence or the meadow, another picture is born.  

Garland saw the Impressionist approach as iconoclastic, challenging settled attitudes ('It stands for an advance in the perceptive power of the human eye') and in the context of a review article on an exhibition of Impressionist painting held in Chicago, an article devised as a discussion between three fictional visitors to the exhibition, he made an eminent painter argue for the validity of the impression:

... an impression of the scene is really far truer than all of the actual facts .... to begin with, the artist must select some particular plane upon which the eye is focused .... the eye is not square.

The relevance of these ideas to Lawson's stories becomes apparent when attention is drawn to his particular method of approaching fact.

Like his contemporaries in the visual arts, largely concerned with effects, Lawson selects a centre of interest, a simple event, and explores its details so that what is being described becomes an analogue for emotion itself, revealing the contours of the individual heart. Thus 'The Union Buries Its Dead,' while preoccupied with empirical details—the two-by-two procession of followers to the graveside, the man's only identification in the union ticket, the initials on the coffin, the drops of holy water, the thudding lumps of clay, the absurd detail of the hat held by a respectful bystander as a sunshade for the priest—is less concerned with external fact than with an eddy of consciousness.

Centring on—what?—the burial of an unknown man. The interest of the story is built around concrete details focused on one fact. But here Lawson's sense of the ironic begins to operate. Instead of leading as it promises to a secure truth, the train of empirical details is mocked by the object of their focus: a kind of non-fact introduced by the
namelessness of the man. Lawson hollows out his story at its heart, not, however, to reduce its meaning but - for all his bitterness - to highlight the element of human feeling which through its simple presence suggests significance and value. Thus it is that a technique concerned firstly with objectivity ends by paradoxically suggesting its opposite. The concrete vanishes at the appearance of an emotion which is the real subject of the story: human curiosity, empathy and a sense of fellowship with death as if each onlooker himself were that corpse.

Similarly, in 'The Loaded Dog,' where attention is concentrated on the skirmish surrounding the event of a dog retrieving an explosive and innocently menacing a group of bystanders by refusing to part with it, scope is given for reflection through a comparable undermining of the empirical. Again, selectivity of detail focuses attention on a single fact, this time the 'loaded dog,' and once more this fact becomes in a sense a non-fact in the farcical black comedy of the explosion. Lawson's theme is the irony of nature's indifference, a humorous irony which points to an underlying pessimism. But to see no further than this is to miss the dramatic point of the story. Lawson's loaded dog, which compels the notice of both animal and human onlookers, comments upon the unpredictability and uncontrollability of the forces of life, it functions as an emblem of those 'explosive' forces. The anarchic spectacle of a small event in nature is absorbingly evoked:

Nearly a dozen other dogs came from round all the corners and under the buildings - spidery, thievish, cold-blooded kangaroo dogs, mongrel sheep - and cattle-dogs, vicious black and yellow dogs - that slip after you in the dark, nip your heels, and vanish without explaining - and yapping, yelping small fry. They kept at a respectable distance round the nasty yellow dog, for it was dangerous to go near him when he thought he had found something which might be good for a dog to eat. He sniffed at the cartridge twice, and was just taking a third sniff when—

What fascinates Lawson is the sheer energy of the event. However gruesome its consequences, the fact of something happening is an occasion for wonder. One is reminded rather forcibly of the romanticized naturalism of Lawson's contemporary in America, Stephen Crane, who has been seen as a literary Impressionist and inheritor of Garland's ideas. Certainly there is a suggestive parallel between the mood of awe at the drama of empirical nature created by Lawson in 'The Loaded Dog' and
that evoked by Roberts' painting of breaking sheep or Streeton's of the Lapstone tunnel mining accident.

As with the Lawson stories, an analogy with Impressionism suggests itself with some persuasiveness in the case of Joseph Furphy's novel *Such is Life* (1903). Despite the tongue-in-cheek self-deflation of the author's description of his book as a series of yarns, loosely federated, a description which does scant justice to its intricate organization as a unified work, the phrase does capture quite accurately its tone and method. Furphy's episodic handling of his material parallels Lawson's attraction for the short sketch. Both are consistent with the fragmentary approach of Impressionist art and allow full scope for a preoccupation with point of view, a matter which concerns Furphy as much as it does Lawson, with the difference that what is implicit in Lawson Furphy brings out into the open in a selfconsciously philosophical enquiry into the nature of truth.

The extent to which Furphy is capable of rivalling in description the Heidelberg painters' interpretation of a bush landscape is beautifully illustrated in his portrait of Mary, the type of the 'perfect young-Australian ... a dryad among her kindred trees.' The en plein air feeling is there (it continues through the whole book) together with a sense of Impressionist particularity, bright colour and immediacy of effect:

The long-descended poetry of her nature made the bush vocal with pure gladness of life, endowed each tree with sympathy, respondent to her own fellowship. She had noticed the dusky aspect of the ironwood; the volumed cumuli of the rich olive-green, crowning the lordly currajong; the darker side of the wilga's massive foliage-cataract; the clearer tint of the tapering pine; the clean-spotted column of the leopard tree, creamy white on slate, from base to topmost twig. She pitied the unlovely balah, when the wind sighed through its coarse, scanty, grey-green tresses; and she loved to contemplate the silvery plumage of the two drooping myalls which, because of their rarity here, had been allowed to remain in the horse-paddock. For the last two or three springs of her vivacious existence, she had watched the deepening crimson of the quondong ... she had marked the unfolding bloom of the scrub ... she had revelled in the audacious black-and-scarlet glory of the desert pea. She knew the dwelling place of every loved companion .... To her it was a new world, and she saw that it was good.
Overtly concerned with the nature of reality, Furphy points up the part played by the girl's inward disposition in her impression of the landscape. At one level, the level of emotion, the experience of romantic identity with nature is presented sympathetically. Furphy revels in the particularities of shape and colour revealed in the bush setting and in the Sydney Long embodiment of its spirit the girl seems to present. However, this lyrical mood is punctured at the intellectual level - its relation to reality being brought into question - when Tom Collins discovers that Mary has died after being lost in the bush.

Where Lawson begins with the world of seemingly neutral sense impressions and goes on to suggest their significance, Furphy begins with the subjectivity of human interpretations and then allows his characters to stumble against brute fact. However, this does not, as the irony of Mary's fate might suggest, lead to an outright denial of the shaping power of consciousness. In the famous series of anecdotes concerned with searches for lost children, the first of which describes the train of evidence leading to the discovery of Mary's body, the way in which human perception tends to organize reality around a selective point of focus is explored. The stories are related by members of a group of 'yarning' men who, like the narrator himself who is one of their audience, are absorbed in a 'troubled calculation of probabilities.' By setting side by side anecdotes about the same topic related by different storytellers, Furphy highlights the individual point of view, making apparent in each case a mind which selects and presents according to itself. The fact that the stories are about searches, that is to say about the effort of man's intellect to interpret the evidence of a factual truth, makes the exploration of point of view doubly significant and, of course, surrounding this we encounter the intelligence of Tom Collins, casting his net of personal consciousness over the whole episode. The use of a narrative persona, it is interesting to note, is also a feature of a number of Lawson stories, through which is achieved a comparable emphasis on the perspective of individual consciousness.

In the first and most impressively constructed story (Collins confides: 'Thompson told a story well'), the narrative is shaped around the successive discoveries of items of the child's clothing and possessions - tell-tale crumbs of bread, discarded boots, milk billy and sun-bonnet - and, eventually, of the dead child herself. The element of
suspense is played on by the narrator as he returns periodically in his tale to the motif of an approaching storm. In the rehearsal of pathetic objects giving witness to the child's presence, there is a reminder of Lawson's creation in 'The Union Buries Its Dead' of a sense or irony through his concentration on a train of concrete details in the description of the progress of the funeral. In both stories, the existent mocks the non-existent to the point of dramatizing its possibility.

The second story, which ends fortunately, describes in the stumb­ling prose of a barely articulate man a similar pattern of clues - 'I bumps up agen the kid's tracks, plain as ABC.' 54 Again there is apprehension, this time allayed. In the final story 'the most fearful thing of all,' 55 the failure to find any evidence at all of the lost child, is faced in its disquieting truth by a man with a cause for com­punction in that he has been, through his anger towards the child, the inadvertent cause of its disappearance. The final storyteller is obsessed with one image, that of a last exchange of glances between himself and the retreating, emotionally wounded boy:

Think of it! While he was going away, crying, he looked back over his shoulder at me, without a word of anger; and he walked up against a sapling, and staggered - and I laughed! - Great God - I laughed! 56

Taken together, the stories illustrate the law of chance: a child may be found dead, it may be found alive, it may not be found at all. These contingencies offer the opportunity for an exploration of tonality, of difference within the same situation, like the range of effects under varying conditions painted by the Impressionists in series such as Monet's of Rouen cathedral or the waterlilies. Within each piece, the suggestion of an Impressionist interest in what Hamlin Garland described as the 'unequal values' of a perceived scene is strongly evoked in the narrator's selective fixation on the details marking the last appearance of a missing child. The storyteller who relates 'I bumps up agen the kid's tracks, plain as ABC' crudely parodies Thompson's narrative method but in so doing summarizes Furphy's approach in the first two stories of following the eye in its search for significant fact. In each case what eventuates is an impression rather than a fully worked out picture.

The idea of a subjective element in perception - Garland's principle
that 'the eye is not square' - comes to the fore in an ironic, darkly comic way in the final story. Again we are given a slice of reality - this time an aborted search which gives place in the narrator's memory to the pathetic event of the boy's clash with the sapling. Despite the melodrama, the incident has the force of a commentary, albeit perplexed (Furphy remains the philosopher), on the dual nature of reality: reality in its concrete, factual aspect (summed up concisely and with wry humour in the indifferent interference of the tree) and in its insubstantial, inward aspect (as attested to by the boy's look of wounded consciousness). While this incident brutally affirms the reality of the empirical world, it at the same time appears to verify a challenging hypothesis about human perception of this reality: that perception never takes in the whole with equal clarity. Why else would the boy have clashed with the tree? Perhaps unwittingly, Furphy makes the story illustrate its own premise of selective vision: the man's attention is riveted to the boy, the boy's to the man. A sense of ironic contradiction is also evoked in the group of stories taken as a whole. With the clear pattern which emerges in the narrators' choice of dénouements for their tales, Furphy presents a clever paradox, for the fact that the full range of empirical possibility has been evoked suggests not the randomness of human consciousness in its reception and interpretation of fact but the shaping power of mind directed by unconscious intention. Thus, in a complex way, Furphy takes Impressionism both as his method and his theme.

Considering its local orientation it is not surprising that such writing as Lawson's and Furphy's, from its very first appearance in the pages of the Sydney Bulletin or in the same magazine's book publications chosen and edited by A.G. Stephens, attracted the label of a 'national school' of literature. Stephens, for example, reviewing Lawson on the appearance of his volume of poems entitled In the Days When the World Was Wide (1896), compared him to A.B. Paterson with the comment: 'In these two writers, with all their imperfections, we see something like the beginnings of a national school of poetry. In them, for the first time, Australia has found audible voice and characteristic expression.' As limiting as the concept of a selfconsciously nationalist literature may be to the free evolution of creative talent, the idea was typical of Stephens' answer to the Australian cultural void and the need for a stimulus to be given to the birth of an artistic tradition. His aim was to arouse the popular imagination with the conviction that if
Australians were 'not History's legatees' it was because they had 'the chance to be History's founders and establishers.' In the absence of ancient monuments to past civilizations the challenge was to 'create the legendary associations that are such a powerful binding force in national life.'

As a literary entrepreneur, A.G. Stephens was unmatched in his success, both as editor of The Red Page and as the guide and patron of a number of writers who were published by the Bulletin in book form. Part of this success was unquestionably due to the fact that he was one of the keenest promoters of an Australian consciousness to emerge in the 1890s, a stance encouraged by the nature of the Bulletin itself as increasingly, on the wave of democratic journalism making its impact in England and America, the magazine's content and tone was tempered to the uneducated curiosity of a large and eager audience in the working class. The Bulletin was at the hub of literary activity in the 1890s and this has been traditionally viewed as a corollary of its nationalistic orientation. However, as detailed researches into the files of the Bulletin have shown, its contribution — including Stephens' on the Red Page — was widely varied and by no means the one-dimensional onslaught of nationalism that habitual interpretations of its role and, in fact, profiles of the whole literature of the period, have suggested. Moreover, the informed eclecticism evident in the choice of material to be published or reviewed on The Red Page makes it clear that Stephens saw himself, in the context of a magazine of wide distribution and popular appeal, as fulfilling a policy of broad survey, responding to what was new in the European, American and Australian scenes. His own sense of literary value was derived from wide reading in the literatures of other countries and it was this secure grasp that made what might otherwise have been a chauvinistic obsession with the state of local writing a valuable stimulus to genuine creative talent. His ability to make demands on writers, insisting that they pursue the highest standards in their work, while at the same time making them secure in a sense of the importance of their own place and time, is given its due by Vance Palmer: 'He could turn in a stride from Daley to Oscar Wilde, from Verhaeren back to Lawson; and he wrote always with a robust sense of his Australian origins, taking his saws and instances from the life he knew.'

Stephens' receptivity ensured that a talent as widely divergent from anything remotely suggesting patriotic inspiration as that displayed by
Christopher Brennan, in poems after Baudelaire and Mallarmé submitted to The Red Page, was given the publicity it deserved. Brennan's work did not fail to impress Stephens in spite of the fact that he did not appreciate its outstanding superiority to other verse being written at the time. The appeal clearly rested with Brennan's easy association with the European tradition, an important criterion in Stephens' assessment of literary value. Both French and English aestheticism, represented by writers like Arthur Symons, D.G. Rossetti, Richard Le Gallienne, Verhaeren, George Moore, Swinburne, Christina Rossetti, Wilde and Yeats, were frequent subjects for the attention of The Red Page. Not a little of the extensive space given to the discussion of Symbolist poetry was due directly to Brennan's influence through his own poetry — several pieces from the not very widely circulated XXI Poems (1897) first appeared in the Bulletin — and through a series of articles expounding the Symbolist aesthetic begun in Stephen's magazine the Bookfellow (1899) and, on its expiry, completed on The Red Page. The articles, which included discussions of Baudelaire, the Parnassians, Verlaine, Rimbaud, Mallarmé and de Régnier with translations of carefully chosen illustrative examples, stimulated intense, if sceptical, interest from many quarters. Stephens himself set poems by Verlaine and Baudelaire for translation in the Bookfellow and on The Red Page and reviewed Arthur Symons' The Symbolist Movement in Literature (1899) at some length. On the death of Mallarmé, he manufactured a debate about the poet's greatness to which Brennan contributed a seriously evaluative piece. This was, however, somewhat belittled by its rather flippant presentation as the first article in a series headed I.—Yes! II.—No! III.—Yes—No.

The limits of Stephens' appreciation of Symbolism are evidenced by his inclusion on The Red Page of a trivial satire by Dowell O'Reilly in which Brennan is lampooned as 'the tinkling cymbalist' and by his own rather wittier 'The Crown of Gum Leaves,' in which the idiosyncratic styles of several poets, including Brennan, are parodied in the context of an imagined competition between local bards. Brennan's alias, the author of a poem of obscure meaning entitled 'The Soul of the Seer,' delays his performance by embarking on a laboured commentary on his Symbolist method. The climax of Stephens' satiric humour is reached in his attribution to the 'Symbolic Poet' of Mallarmé's
Je suis hanté. L'Azur! L'Azur! L'Azur! L'Azur! 67
translated as
O Blue! O Blue! O Blue! O Blue! O Blue! 68
- the final majuscule ridiculing Brennan's habit of omitting one at the beginning of each line. It should be said that Stephens was willing to become the butt of Victor Daley's humour in 'Narcissus and Some Tadpoles,' published in the Bookfellow in 1899, where he is lightly mocked for his patronage of romantic imitators of European aestheticism:

A Poet I construct, not ill
As druggists make a patent pill.
The method easy is. As thus:-
An ounce or so of Swinburne, plus
A drachm of Doctor Watts, a grain
Of Burns, a scruple of Verlaine

You have a Poet smart and able.
Who only needs a local label. 69

Since Daley wrote verse according to this prescription and was given solid editorial patronage by Stephens, the satire was just as much directed at himself. Stephens' The Crown of Gum Leaves' probably owed its inspiration to Daley's earlier sketch where Brennan, alias the 'Voice of Silence,' intones unintelligibly:

i was Awake - yet not awake
and saw a spectral band
that did a cold Blue music make
upon a scarlet Strand
while sorrow, like a Hooded snake
strove sobbing through the land
and On the high asylum roof
a widowed Crayfish mourned aloof. 70

It is important to note, however, that this otherwise amusing and innocuous ridicule was not countered by a more serious appreciation of the poet's work. In justice to Stephens, his audience in the Bulletin, and even in the Bookfellow, was largely unsophisticated and the adoption of a frivolous tone was one means of introducing a poet whom many would have dismissed as difficult, remote and esoteric. But in making novelty and humour the basis of his presentation of Brennan, Stephens revealed a fundamental lack of seriousness, a lack which was also apparent in his inadequate response to the melancholic earnestness of Lawson and the
sharp social commentary of Barbara Baynton and which can only partly be excused by the publishing context within which he worked to promote Australian writing.

In the climate of new birth which his contemporaries set out to create, Brennan was completely out of his element. Towards the end of his life, commenting in justifiably patronizing tones on the misguided fervour of the literary nationalists, he stressed the validity of the writer's link with tradition:

The pioneers brought hither the stock from which we spring; they brought the civilization in which they were bred, and adopted it to the needs of their new home. The poet brings hither, too (for he is a colonist and a pioneer) the art whose beginnings are lost in the mystery that envelopes the origins of the white race: he colonizes, I say, for I can only smile at the generously patriotic absurdity of so many of my friends (some now, alas! gone) who urged me so often to shut my ears to the sirens of antiquity and even of yesterday. Here they said, here and now we have our being: our country is new, our country is beginning: let us make an entirely new start. As if it were possible! 71

Any genuine response to local reality, he argued further,

will be the slow deposit of life and time: it will be instinctive and unconscious. And it will show itself, not in the deliberate choice of supposedly Australian subjects, but in the individual element of style: in how far the very primal movement of the writer's imagination has been influenced previously from childhood by the shapes of our promontories and beaches, our hills and forests, by the flow of our rivers and our tidal streams. 72

Brennan's own poetic inclination was to reveal the oneness of things at the ground of their existence, to dissolve the particular into the universal. As he wrote with a romantic love of the absolute in his appreciation of Mallarmé's achievement:

Does not everything tell us with constant voice that all material beauty is our birthright waiting for the soul to give it significance? Is not the drama of all passion and dream written day by day upon the heavens? Do not all things concert to proclaim the type, la figure que nul n'est, with which all may feel themselves akin? To contemplate this mystery, the ideal likeness of all things that be, to turn the steps of a generation towards the source, towards Eden, for this end Stephane Mallarmé lived. 73
Beauty, in Brennan's view, is not the virtue of things in their own right but is lent by a power of the soul which is able to pursue their 'convergences ... back to that point where they unite in mystery.'  

In his own poetry, the search for a non-particular experience of beauty led him to the Symbolist practice of blurring sensuous experiences through the device of synaesthesia and the invention of symbols to convey the idea of immaterial presence: such key metaphors from *Poems 1913* as 'sweet silence after bells' and the 'pale absence of the rose' or the Mallarméan reverie of the 'Secreta Silvarum' section of 'The Forest of Night' sequence where entry into a shady wood arouses the imagination to dreams of 'satyr-shapes,' unicorns, centaurs and the elusive Pan:

... whom behind each bole sly-peering out
the traveller knows, but turning, disappear'd
with chuckle of laughter in his thicket-beard,
and rustle of scurrying faun-feet.

In its introduction of Classical figures into a landscape which the poet is careful to define negatively as a 'rarer wood' where there are no distracting noises of birds or echoing flints to 'blaze, noon-tide terrific,' 'Secreta Silvarum' parallels Sydney Long's *art nouveau* rendering of the bush. The quality is mannered, *fin de siècle* perhaps, rather than strictly Mallarméan and Symbolist — a judgement which is supported by G.A. Wilkes' exploration of Brennan's reception of the nineteenth-century aesthetic legacy.

In an illuminating article, 'Brennan and his Literary Affinities,' Wilkes goes a long way towards establishing the fairness of the view that the poet is not simply 'a lonely heir of the French Symbolist movement' but, in a number of important respects, 'a poet of the nineties.' From the evidence Wilkes brings to bear, it is clear that Brennan read Swinburne, Pater and Baudelaire as a very young man and, as a student in Berlin in the early nineties, came to know the French decadent tradition from Gautier to Huysmans intimately while at the same time becoming acquainted with what was topical in England through the purchase of books by Morris, Meredith, Wilde and (two years after its publication) Whistler's *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies* (1890). Mary Merewether, arguing the case for Brennan's close familiarity with Yeats later in the decade, reinforces this view of a poet involved in
the contemporary European scene and consciously shaping his own talent within the context of the latest literary culture: 'Brennan's collection of periodicals ... gave him a growing and immediate awareness of the writers of the nineties.' 79 In isolating specific ways in which decadent fashion influenced Brennan's modes of expression, Wilkes points to the Baudelairean idiom of central poems in 'Towards the Source,' the use of personae in the manner of Swinburne, the introduction of the image of a retreat from the world in 'The Forest of Night,' the appeal to the cult of the fatal woman in the figure of Lilith, the inclusion in some sections of Gothic and Satanic elements recalling the sado-masochistic turn of the decadent imagination and, finally, the use of characteristic verse forms. Behind these practices and sustaining the suggestion of a fin de siècle quality in all Brennan's work, there is a persistent orchestration of the mood of romantic aspiration by which Mario Praz defines the character of the decadent tradition. 80

In drawing the link between Brennan and the nineties, however, it is important not to overlook the fact that the poet was a more seriously philosophical artist than many of his contemporaries, and that his habit was to elevate the legacy of decadence to a higher plane. Without the tendency of l'art pour l'art to diminish significance to the point where only brittle, glittering surfaces remain, as in the ingeniously worked imagery of Wilde in a play like Salome or the subtleties of sensation evoked by Beardsley in the 'Rape of the Lock' illustrations, Brennan's method in Poems 1913 was to draw on a rich mine of aesthetic sources while keeping them subordinate to a larger exploration of meaning transcending the pursuit of experience for its sheer tonic effect. For example, in the poem's symphonic motion from dawn through the strength of the day to shadowy evening, night and the shuddering stroke of 'One!' and in the accompanying shifts of scene from 'luring glades' and disquieting heart of the forest to ravine, valley, plain, silhouetted city and, finally, mysterious crypt beyond 'chapels black with mould, past ruined doors' the tonal variations of 'The Quest of Silence' section of 'The Forest of Night' reach points of brilliancy, as in the 'Fire in the heavens' passage which culminates in the compacted, crystalline intensity of 'the cicada's torture-point of song.' 81 Unlike Wilde's displays, however, these effects do not draw exclusive attention to themselves as a momentary thrill for the senses but function to prepare the imagination for the reception of a moral understanding. For this reason, features
of Brennan's poetry closely related to fin de siècle practices, borrowings and allusions are not obtrusive. In fact the poet's large degree of intellectual control establishes a more fundamental connection with Romantic and high Victorian moral seriousness.

To take a particular case: even when in order to suggest the rich mysteries of night Brennan creates an image of a landscape sculptured out of basalt, jade and marble and invokes the vision of an oriental city illuminated in a flash of lightning, he is not introducing the element of luxury for its own sake, like Wilde exploiting the sensational in Herod's bargaining speech in Salomé. Certainly, like the fin de siècle at this point, Brennan is fascinated by the artificial, but for a larger purpose: to introduce a feeling of distance and alienation, of a vacancy in nature hinting at the possibility of a transcendent mode of completion or fulfilment. Similarly, richly sensuous lines like

The tuberose thickens the air: a swoon
lies close on open'd calyx and slipt sheath
thro' all the garden bosom-bound beneath
dense night that hangs, her own perturbing moon

(lines which in the context of many of Swinburne's poems could stand in their own right - in Brennan's dense poetic structure bear the weight of several alternative and complementary meanings in a relationship of correspondence which serves to modify in a complex way the instantaneity of a surface effect.

The most striking reflection of fin de siècle preoccupations in Brennan's poetry is found in his treatment of Lilith in a major section of 'The Forest of Night.' In the tradition of nineteenth-century creators of chimeras and fatal women - figures like Swinburne's 'Faustine' and 'Dolores,' Rossetti's Lilith, Laforgue's, Milosz's and Wilde's Salomes and, in pictorial art, Moreau's Helen, von Stuck's 'The Sphinx' and Klimt's ambiguous Judith-Salomes - Brennan elaborates the figure of Lilith, Adam's original lover, 'the shae of brides.'

Taking for comparison Swinburne's handling of the Fatal Woman in Dolores, who embodies the titillation of an ambivalent purity, Brennan's Lilith, while retaining the fascination of Swinburne's lady, assumes more significant status as a figure of occult meaning. The strongest use of the siren in nineteenth-century art has this connotation, suggesting, with something of Blake's unafraid inversion of accepted spiritual values, the blindness of judgement which blesses the tame, conventionally tried-and-safe
expressions of the human spirit while blotting out all that is incompatible with the established code.

The strength of Brennan's vision, in its interpretation of aesthetic styles and decadent themes, has no parallel in other Australian writing of the period. Interestingly, in pointing to a tradition in poetry running counter to and superseding the 'horse-bard' school, Brennan indicated that he saw a mirror of his own poetic inclinations in the verse of Roderic Quinn, whom he designated as belonging to 'the same poetical lineage as Kendall and Daley.' But the comparison rather suggests George Eliot's image of Milton looking for his portrait in a spoon. In the absence of literary friends able to match his own breadth of culture, sophistication and knowledge (he lamented that when the tone of London's artistic society 'degenerated, as it did in the eighties and nineties, Australia was bound to touch shuddering depths of vulgarity. Its culture was a wonderful kind of high life below stairs, where the high life imitated had beforehand modelled itself on the below stairs'), Brennan's sympathy went out to a small group of writers who appeared to preserve the integrity of their personal muse. On the appearance of Victor Daley's At Dawn and Dusk (1898), Brennan responded to Stephens' invitation to review the volume on The Red Page and used the occasion as an excuse to elaborate his theory of metaphor as 'no embroidery, no garment: but the very texture, the very flesh of the poetry.' Judging on this basis, he applauded the lush floral metaphors of Daley's 'Fragments' and 'Passion Flower' but there was, at bottom, small matter for comment in the terms which he regarded as significant. Tellingly, he dismissed 'The Dream of Margaret' - a poem which might have appealed because of its development of the figure of the Fatal Woman - for its 'incoherence' and failed to comment on the mesmeric Eve of 'The Serpent's Legacy.'

Unlike Brennan's, confidently courting beauty in strange places, Daley's aestheticism was most itself in a mild and melancholy dreaming. 'At Dawn and Dusk' significantly begins with 'Dreams':

I HAVE been dreaming all a summer day
Of rare and dainty poems I would write;
Love-lyrics delicate as lilac-scent,
Soft idylls woven of wind, and flower, and stream,
And songs and sonnets carven in fine gold.
Throughout the book, poems like 'The Nightingale,' 'A Sunset Fantasy,' 'Poppies' and 'The River Maiden,' with their archaic diction and echoes of Keats, Coleridge and Tennyson, restate the theme of art as visionary dream, a notion strikingly adhered to in the work of several other poets of languid sensibility. Dreams in Flower is the evocatively descriptive title of Louise Mack's volume of lyrical verses published by the Bulletin in 1901, and the same drowsily imaginative frame of mind is revealed in Quinn's The Hidden Tide (1899) and James Hebblethwaite's A Rose of Regret (1900), also Bulletin Books. 90 Revealingly for the tenor of his later work, Quinn's first poem for the Bulletin was entitled 'A Dream.' 91

In contrast to the Golden Treasury manner of the lotus-eaters, a more vibrant approach - having the keen flavour of the fin de siècle's immediate response to beauty - occasionally directs the poets of the period towards the values of novelty, spontaneity and boldness of form. The New Zealander, Arthur Adams, for example, achieves an unusual sharp edge and brilliancy of sensation in his 'Sydney Nocturnes,' with their contrasted moods imaged in Whistlerian colour. His evocation of Sydney Harbour by night in 'From the North Shore' (the first piece in the sequence) equals Wilde in its singing tones and rendering of the pictorial:

Upon her gleaming bosom, wet
With tears and quivering,
In ropes of golden beauty set
Her vivid jewels swing.

Upon the pathway of the night
She, pausing often, paces;
About her body waves gleam white
Like froth of filmy laces;
And to her pleasure hurrying,
Their torches holding high,
On molten waters smouldering
The ferry-boats flame by 92

- as do the concluding lines of 'From a Cremorne Balcony':

Upon her torch-lit path afloat
A red bacchante ferry-boat!
And, where the picture seems to lack,
A skiff drifts by - a blot of black,
Poised like a butterfly, that note
Etched on the moonlight's silver track!-
Enough to call our Whistler back! 93

Victor Daley's 'After Sunset,' 94 also describing Sydney at night and
comparably present in its response, creates this impression more by means of its music than by the controlled use of seductive imagery. In addition to these examples, details of John Shaw Neilson's work, his consciousness of colour, for instance (expressed through phrases like 'red lovers,' 'green girls,' 'yellow air,' 'the green time,' 'the white weather' and 'the red death'), suggest an imaginative affinity with French Symbolism or with the Impressionism of Stephen Crane's poetry or Wilde's in a Whistlerian mood.

Nevertheless, Australian poets, apart from Brennan, are disappointingly timid and derivative when it comes to the exploration of the aesthetic vision. Mention has been made of Daley's unexciting use of the convention of the Fatal Woman. Hugh McCrae's Satyrs and Sunlight (1909) reflects through its sportive use of Classical myth the anti-puritanism of the fin de siècle but at a time when it was no longer novel or adventurous.

As a studied attempt to provide a meeting ground for Australian and European fashion in artistic styles and ideas, Stephens' in its own way daring little venture in literary journalism, the shortlived the Bookfellow of 1899, seems to typify the Australian dilemma. A curious pastiche of contemporary European and Australian topics, the magazine seems to express, apart from a general liveliness and the high quality of some of the articles (chiefly Brennan's on French Symbolist poetry), the incompatibility of the two cultures. There is an element of absurdity, of which Stephens could not have been unaware, in the printing of notes and gossip about Sarah Bernhardt, Puvis de Chavannes and Burne-Jones alongside an imagined interview with 'Steele Rudd' about 'Dad's' pioneering hardships and the Rudd family's attitude to the stories written about them; in a comparison of Whistler with Marshall Hall; in the simultaneous recommendation of Baudelaire and Will Ogilvie; in the printing of lines from Rossetti's 'The Blessed Damozel' only to parody them in banal verse by a would-be satirist and rhymester:

The blessed Poster Girl leaned out
From a pink-purple heaven,
One eye was red and one was green;
Her bang was cut uneven;
She had three fingers on her hand,
And the hairs on her head were seven.

Stephens must be given credit for bravura, so eminently the spirit of
the fin de siècle, and there is certainly much of interest, amusement and
value in the magazine — in an obituary piece on Aubrey Beardsley, for
example, which is accompanied by reduced reproductions of his work. 99
Yet for all the fun to be had from the pages of the Bookfellow, it is
clear that the sophistication of the French Symbolists, English Pre­
Raphaelites, Whistler, Beardsley and Brennan himself was something
alien to the Australian mood. Recreating her experience as a music
student in Leipzig in the 1880s Henry Handel Richardson was able to
write in Maurice Guest (1908) about an entirely different world, where
art, bohemianism and even decadence had an accepted place. In contrast,
Brennan's wry 'Reflections of a Retired Symbolist Poet 1916' seem to sum
up the extent of the fin de siècle spirit's discomfort in Australia:

I dwelt with my unpublished screed
Among the untrodden ways
A bard whom there were few to read
And fewer still to praise. 100

Small wonder that no Australian poet or writer of the period could appear
to uphold the Wildean notion that 'Life imitates Art far more than Art
imitates Life.' 101 As the realist-oriented Impressionism of Lawson,
Furphy and the Heidelberg painters testifies, 'Life,' with the full
impact of a still novel environment, had it nearly all its own way in
the Australian nineties.
CHAPTER ONE

1 In A.R. Chisholm and J.J. Quinn (eds.), The Prose of Christopher Brennan (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1962), p.171.


5 My authority is a letter to Brian Elliott, 13 February 1972, in which Martin Boyd reveals this and other details about the biographical element in The Cardboard Crown. See CC pp.24-25 and pp.45-50 for the fictionalized portrait.

6 Other works are two biographical dictionaries, The Georgian Era (1832-34) and A Universal Biography (1835), and Lectures on the Poets and Poetry of Great Britain (1839). Shortly after his arrival in Sydney he became for six months the editor of the weekly Literary News (beginning 12 August 1837).


8 DD pp.12-13. Also the cited letter to Brian Elliott.


11 'Public Institutions in Melbourne, Newspapers, &c,' The Illustrated Australian News, Special Edition for Paris Exhibition, Melbourne, 10 June 1878, p.95.

Boyd writes of Emma à Beckett: 'Our grandmother brought the family a large and increasing fortune, which undivided would now be worth millions .... I have used her diaries in my Langton novels, inserting whole passages unchanged, except those necessary for the fictional romance.' See DD p.13.

The character Julian is a representative of the generation of Arthur Boyd, the novelist's nephew, and is in fact modelled on the painter (Franz Philipp's claim, Arthur Boyd, p.21). The break with Europe seemed true in 1950 but since then has been called into question.


Letter to the present writer, May 1978.

A Tom Roberts portrait (c. 1887) of Madame Pfund hangs in the National Gallery of Victoria.

My knowledge is of paintings in the collections of Helen à Beckett Read and
Guy Boyd.


35 My authority for the length of their visit is Christopher Tadgell, in Merric Boyd Drawings, who writes: 'They went to England shortly after Merric was born [ie. 1888] and stayed until 1893.' Introduction, n.pag.


37 When they are available for study, the diaries of Boyd's grandmother could throw some light on this matter.

38 See SF p.6.


40 Arthur Merric Boyd exhibited 'Victoria Coast, Australia' and Emma Minnie Boyd, 'To the Workhouse.' I am indebted to the Librarian of the Royal Academy of Arts for this information (letter of 26 July 1979).


44 For details of these and other academic paintings in Australian collections see Victorian Olympians, An Exhibition of works in Australian and New Zealand collections, with some loans from overseas, arranged by the Art Gallery of New South Wales, June 20 - July 20, 1975 (Sydney: The Trustees of the Art Gallery of N.S.W., 1975).
The knowledge that Boyd took for his inspiration for the Langton novels from the diary of his grandmother, Emma à Beckett, who accompanied his parents on their European tour in the early nineties, makes a reference to Whistler in Alice's diary for 1892 especially interesting. See CC p.20. Whistler is again mentioned in the same novel when Guy is describing the Langtons' activities at Waterpark in the early nineties: 'Sometimes they went shopping in Bath or up to London to see a play or Mr Whistler's pictures ....' See CC p.127. These details no doubt recall the Boyds' stay at the family home, Penleigh, where their second son, its namesake, was born in 1890.


53 Confessions of a Young Man (London: Heinemann, 1952), pp.29, 61, 143 and 69.


55 The Works of John Ruskin, III, 137.

56 'Mr. Whistler's "10 O'Clock,"' p.53.


Complete Works of Oscar Wilde, pp.1205 and 992.

The Eighteen Nineties, p.46.

Information given in letters to the present writer from Mrs G. M. à Beckett Boyd (dated 13 October 1974) and Mrs A. Boyd (dated 21 October 1975).

One school of thought (including Raymond Williams and David J. De Laura) minimizes the significance of Ruskin in stimulating the Aesthetic Movement. In surveying aesthetic culture in this chapter I prefer to follow the argument of Graham Hough in The Last Romantics which seems to me to take appropriate account of the impact of the visual arts (and hence Ruskin) to the movement as a whole.

To appreciate the importance of this magazine for the developing ideas and aims of the Boyd children one has only to look at the work of the novelist's brother, Merric Boyd, the potter, with its obvious relationship with art nouveau - an indebtedness discussed by Christopher Tadgell in Merric Boyd Drawings (see note 31 above). The flair Martin Boyd later displayed when writing on the subject of interior decoration for the British Australasian (an interest which carried over into the novels, with their often detailed descriptions of furnishings) may well owe something to the example of The Studio.


The Works of John Ruskin, X, 197.


In The Renaissance of the Nineties, (London: Alexander Moring, 1911).

The Romantic Nineties, p.28 and p.vi.

Evidence for this is given in the Appendix, an abbreviated version of which appears in the following pages in the sections describing the artistic and literary achievements of the Australian nineties.

See Bernard Smith's argument in 'Genesis, 1885-1914,' chapter four of Australian Painting, 1788-1970.


Australian Painting, 1788-1970, p.82.
For a more detailed consideration of the impact of Impressionism on Australian painting see my Appendix.


A painting by Abrahams on the same subject also survives as a record.

The Story of Australian Art, From the Earliest Known Art of the Continent to the Art of To-Day, 2 vols. (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1934), I, 160.

Reviews by R.A.M. Stevenson (The Pall Mall Gazette, 4 April 1898), Sir Thomas Humphrey Ward (The Times, London, 4 April 1898) and D.S. MacColl (Saturday Review, London, 16 April 1898) in Documents on Art and Taste in Australia, pp.213, 215 and 219.


The Studio, IX, 70.

XIX, 274.

XX, 277.

XXII, 60.


XXXIX, 362.


See Lionel Lindsay's essay 'Norman Lindsay: His Inspiration and Technique' (1918), reprinted in Norman Lindsay's Pen Drawings (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1974).

For a more detailed account of the writers discussed in this and the following paragraphs on the literature of the period see my Appendix.


This title and that of 'the Red Page\adamantus' were employed by Victor Daley in a satiric poem entitled 'Narcissus and Some Tadpoles' published in the Bookfellow, 29 April 1899.

At Dawn and Dusk (Sydney: The Bulletin Newspaper, 1902), p.15.


The Romantic Nineties, p.40.

A.W. Jose affirms: 'the twin deities of Australian literature in the Nineties (I know Melbourne critics will scoff at this, but I affirm it unashamedly) were Banjo Paterson and Henry Lawson' (Ibid.,p.15). Jose's selfconsciousness about flying in the face of Melbourne opinion highlights the position of Sydney as the literary centre of the 1890s and underlines the importance - from the regional as well as the family point of view - of the influence of painting rather than literature in Martin Boyd's background.


Letter to the present writer, May 1978.

Ibid.


The Earl's Choice, p.174.

'The Gentleness of True Gianthood,' Mitre, Michaelmas 1910, p.4. Martin Boyd was co-editor of the magazine in this year. While the article is unsigned, its language suggests passages in Boyd. See, for example, SF pp.25, 248 and 252.

Editorial on the resignation of Canon Long, Mitre, Michaelmas 1911, p.2, when Martin Boyd was editor.

Introduction, p.xvi.

'Beardsley-Swinburne' seems to be shorthand for fin de siècle art and literature, unless it is a mistaken substitute for 'Beardsley-Wilde,' which makes more sense because of Beardsley's numerous illustrations of Salomé. (Boyd might have known Beardsley's drawing of Swinburne's 'Atalanta in Calydon,' however.)
CHAPTER TWO

1 For Martin Boyd's horror of British drama of the fifties see DD p.259.


4 Ibid., p.108.


6 Alan Shadwick, in a letter to Terence O'Neill, 21 December 1976. Correspondence held by the National Library of Australia.


9 Ibid., p.185.


11 Plato and Platonism, p.146.


13 Boyd's terminology is not Kantian. Whereas Kant's noumenon is unknowable, Boyd's suggests the possibility of intuitive knowledge.

14 The companion motto is from Fénelon, urging that everything possible should be done to make religion attractive to children - in context, another plea for intellectual humility.

... I would suggest that it is inserted in order to preclude any questions that might arise later on about the local divinities who inspire Socrates ...' (p.26).

The Renaissance (see chapter one, note 52), p.200.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1941, p.103.

An understanding of the Victorian foundations of Boyd's upbringing suggests the probable source of this attitude of mind: the prevalence of the Greek ideal for youths in Victorian education. William Gaunt writes:

... to the Victorian idealist ... the triumph of Greece was its creation or representation of a supreme form of human beauty. It was an idea which appealed particularly to school masters because it was the aim of that essentially Victorian institution the public school, to create a human type - to turn a middle-class British youth into a strong and handsome aristocrat.


The Renaissance, p.187.


Ibid., pp. 146-47.

Ibid., pp. 160 and 161.

Ibid., p.164.

The allusion to Berenson's 'tactile' values is part of a recurring motif.


For a comparison with Boyd's family religion see chapter one of this thesis, with particular reference to the quotation from 'Preoccupations and Intentions' where the biblical examples are those of Much Else in Italy. The parallel gives added strength to the idea of the travel book as a personal statement anticipating the Southerly article by ten years. It is also interesting to note possible prototypes for Boyd's description of the character of Christ in Wilde and Pater. Wilde in De Profundis sees Christ as the type of the 'romantic temperament':
He was the first person who ever said to people that they should live 'flower-like' lives. He fixed the phrase. He took children as the type of what people should try to become. He held them up as examples to their elders .... He felt that life was changeful, fluid, active, and that to allow it to be stereotyped into any form was death. He saw that people should not be too serious over material, common interests: that to be unpractical was a great thing: that one should not bother too much over affairs. 'The birds didn't, why should man?' He is charming when he says, 'Take no thought for the morrow. Is not the soul more than meat? Is not the body more than raiment?' A Greek might have said the latter phrase. It is life perfectly for us.

Complete Works of Oscar Wilde, p.931.

Marius the Epicurean posits two Christs in a manner suggesting Boyd's evocation of what are seen as the opposed Pauline and Gospel traditions of the New Testament. Pater's formulation of a dual heritage, although not as sharply accented as Boyd's, attributes a more creative function to 'an influence tending to beauty, to the adornment of life and the world' than to the spirit of religious conquest. In this fashion, it brings to the fore a conception of Christ approaching Boyd's princely figure:

The sword in the world, the right eye plucked out, the right hand cut off, the spirit of reproach which those images express, and of which monasticism is the fulfilment, reflect one side only of the nature of the divine missionary of the New Testament. Opposed to, yet blended with, this ascetic or militant character, is the function of the Good Shepherd, serene, blithe and debonair, beyond the gentlest shepherd of Greek mythology; of a king under whom the beatific vision is realised of a reign of peace - peace of heart - among men. Marius the Epicurean: His sensations and Ideas, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1921), II, 114.

32 'Winckelmann,' The Renaissance, pp.216 and 217.
33 Ibid., p.215.
34 Ibid., p.217.
35 The expression is Heine's, quoted by Arnold in 'Pagan and Medieval Religious Sentiment,' The Complete Works of Matthew Arnold, III, 227.
36 Interestingly, the hymn 'Hail gladdening light ...,' quoted by Boyd on p.57 is employed (in different translation) by Pater in the chapter describing Marius' experiences in the Christian house of Cecilia.
37 Marius the Epicurean (see note 29 above), II, 125.
The spiritual forces of the past, which have prompted and informed the culture of a succeeding age, live, indeed, within that culture, but with an absorbed, underground life. The Hellenic element alone has not been so absorbed, or content with this underground life; from time to time it has started to the surface; culture has been drawn back to its sources to be clarified and corrected. Hellenism is not merely an absorbed element in our intellectual life; it is a conscious tradition in it.

p.209.

Marius the Epicurean, II, 125.

Stated in equally strong terms in Day of My Delight where it is argued that 'the depravity of much modern art is ... due to the diseased puritanism dwelling in the mind of the artist' (p.283).

'Winckelmann,' The Renaissance, pp.193-94.


Ibid.

The 'Third Temptation' mentioned in this passage is to 'spiritual pride.' See MEI p.25.

Marius, II, 106.

Ibid., p.87.

Plato's Phaedrus, p.93.

See MEI p.57.

Marius, I, 32.

The Aesthetic Adventure, p.15.

The Last Romantics, pp.5, xv (Introduction) and 13.


The Works of John Ruskin, III, 333.


'The Blessed Damozel,' Doughty, p.3.

Sonnet No. xix of The House of Life, Doughty, p.216.


A point stressed by Hough. See The Last Romantics, p.24.


Confessions of A Young Man (see chapter one, note 53), p.40.

Dobrée, p.45.


'As Kingfishers catch fire ...,' Gardner, p.51.

'Hymn to Proserpine,' Dobrée, p.42.

'The Windhover: [To Christ our Lord],' Gardner, p.30.

'The Blessed Virgin Compared to the Air we Breathe,' Gardner, pp.54-55.

Complete Works of Oscar Wilde, p.32.


Complete Works of Oscar Wilde, p.32.

Ibid., p.29.

Ibid.

The Renaissance, p.250.

Complete Works of Oscar Wilde, p.955.

Ibid., p.920.

Ibid., p.928.

See The Renaissance, p.217.

Marius, II, 88.

The Prose of Christopher Brennan, p.172.

These issues have been coming to the fore increasingly in the last decade, notably in the contributions of A.D.Hope, who connects the aristocratic ideal in Boyd with his exploration of pleasure as the basis of civilization — see 'Knowing Where to Stop: Martin Boyd's "Lucinda Brayford,"


Ibid., p.97.

Ibid., p.93.

Ibid.

Ibid., pp.96 and 97.

A.D. Hope, 'Knowing Where to Stop: Martin Boyd's "Lucinda Brayford,"' *p.212.*

'Phrases and Philosophies for the Use of the Young,' *Complete Works of Oscar Wilde,* p.1206.

'Gentlemen vs. Lairs,' *Quadrant,* IX (1965), 18.

Examples which readily come to mind are Ruskin contrasting the character of northern and southern countries in *Stones of Venice,* Pater evoking the significance of the south to Winckelmann in *The Renaissance,* or Morris narrating a journey from the north and alternating Classical and medieval stories in *The Earthly Paradise.*

'The Achievement of Martin Boyd,' p.92.

'Martin Boyd, An Appreciation,' *Meanjin,* XVI (1957), 15-16. Elliott is referring to 'style' in the sense that Pater argued for it as a dimension of sensibility in his essay on style in *Appreciations.*


'Martin Boyd,' *The Australian Quarterly,* XXXV (1963), 37.

'The Seriousness of Martin Boyd,' *Southerly,* XXVIII (1968), 91-109.


'The Family Face, Martin Boyd's Art of Memoir,' *Australian Literary Studies,* VII (1976), 274.
CHAPTER THREE


2 A tentative composition date for The Tea-Time of Love, the only novel to be published after the Langton series, is 1962. See Boyd's 1968 Southerly article, 'Preoccupations and Intentions,' where 'a light comic novel, something like Outbreak of Love but set in Rome' (p.89) is mentioned as having been completed six years earlier.


6 See O'Faolain's discussion in The Vanishing Hero, pp.6-7.

7 It is reasonable to assume that Boyd is the author of this verse.


10 Complete Works of Oscar Wilde, pp.140-41. A variation of this statement occurs on p.31: 'Nothing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul.'

11 See Geoffrey Keynes (ed.), Blake, Complete Writings, With Variant Readings (London: Oxford University Press Paperback, 1969), p.615: 'Men are admitted into Heaven not because they have curbed & govern'd their Passions or have No Passions, but because they have Cultivated their Understandings.'


13 Complete Works of Oscar Wilde, p.163.

14 Conclusion, The Renaissance, p.250.

15 'The Achievement of Martin Boyd,' (see chapter two, note 82), p.94.

16 As Brenda Niall points out, a representative of the genre to which Nuns in Jeopardy belongs. See her Martin Boyd, Australian Writers and their Work, p.17.

See my comments in chapter two of this thesis, pp.63 and 78-79.

This novel is not readily available. For a description see Brenda Niall, 'Martin Boyd as "Walter Beckett,"' Australian Literary Studies, VIII (1978), 369-71. Dearest Idol was unknown until its recent discovery by Terence O'Neill.

London: Duckworth, 1904, p.130. Acknowledgement to R.V. Johnson for this reference. Chesterton's statement may well owe something to Pater: 'Hellenism, which is the principle pre-eminently of intellectual light (our modern culture may have more colour, the medieval spirit greater heat and profundity, but Hellenism is pre-eminently for light), has always been most effectively conceived by those who have crept into it out of an intellectual world in which the sombre elements predominate.' The Renaissance, p.200.

CHAPTER FOUR


2 In a letter to Nettie Palmer, 27 November [1928], thanking her for her favourable review of The Montforts in the Bulletin, 10 October 1928, p.5, Boyd refers to his oversight on the matter of the date of the opera (ie. 1871), remarking: 'You are the only person who spotted the Aida anachronism.' Palmer papers, National Library.

3 Galatians 4. 22-23.

4 The portrait of Henry outlined in the 1963 revised novel is all the more interesting because it restores details included in the American Madeleine Heritage (1928) but omitted in the first English (Constable) edition of the same year. Brenda Niall observes in the Introduction to Lansdowne's reprint of the revised edition: 'In the 1928 [English] version, Sir Henry Montfort is sketchily drawn. The revision gives him a mistress, an illegitimate son, and a sense of community with fallen man .... ' See also her textual comments in Martin Boyd, Australian Writers and their Work, p.10.

5 It is interesting to note that David Boyd, the novelist's nephew and a son of Merric Boyd, worked on 'The Trial' series in Rome at a time when Martin Boyd, who was then resident in Italy, was revising The Montforts. Knowledge of these pictures on the novelist's part may have influenced
the restoration of elements in the portraiture of Judge Henry omitted in the Constable edition. See Boyd's comment on his nephew's paintings of 'blind looming judges' (DD 10).

6 I have been unable to trace this parody of Swinburne. Perhaps Boyd himself is the author.

7 In answer to a request to republish three poems from Retrospect Boyd wrote in a letter to John Laird dated 27 August 1969: 'They are derivative and sentimental and, as far as I remember, false in their assumptions. It would embarrass me to have them brought to light in my old age.'


9 Ibid.


11 'Bathing in Australia,' The British Australian and New Zealander, 49 (20 January 1927), 13.

12 Australian Painting, 1788-1970 (see chapter one, note 34), p.99.

13 A distinctive parallel with The Montforts exists in the concluding of Francis Adams' story 'Dawwards' (included in Australian Essays) on an Arnoldian Hellenic note in Gildea's meeting with Miss Medwin, who argues the virtues of pagan culture. The protagonist has previously discussed Australian civilization with 'a singularly bright and intelligent girl' at a ball, a Miss Shepherd, 'who had pleased him by herself expressing her consciousness of this state of social transition of theirs, and ascribing the true reasons for it' (p.95). Miss Shepherd (like Boyd's Mabel) stands for intelligence while Miss Medwin (like Madeleine) conjures up a more exciting ideal of 'truth and light and joy' (p.165). Gildea ponders the relevance of the latter's ideas for Australia, remembering a remark made by the girl's mother that 'as you approached Melbourne from the north, it was like the bay of Naples with Vesuvius' (p.166).

CHAPTER FIVE

1 In these comments, Boyd is evoking the mood which inspired his portrait of pre-war Melbourne in Outbreak of Love. As the following analysis will show, they apply equally to his recreation of the historical scene in Lucinda Brayford.


3 Virgil, The Pastoral Poems: The Text of The Eclogues with a Translation
by E.V. Rieu (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972), pp.52-53. W.S. Ramson was the first to comment that 'the name Lucinda is close to that of Lucina, goddess of childbirth' in 'Lucinda Brayford: a form of music' (see chapter two, note 97), p.225.

4 Australian Essays (see chapter one, note 13), pp.5-6.

5 'Lucinda Brayford: a form of music,' p.222.

6 The Australians (see chapter two, note 100), pp.92 and 95-96. Adams borrows from Marcus Clarke's definition of the coming Australian.

7 G.F. Watts (see chapter three, note 20), pp.133-34.


10 The Radcliffes and The White House figure again in Outbreak of Love.


CHAPTER SIX

1 See PI p.86.

2 Day of My Delight makes clear the degree of licence taken by Boyd in his use of family biography, especially in his drawing of Austin Langton from the model of his a Beckett grandfather. See DD pp.12-13.

3 The Marriage of Heaven and Hell in Blake, Complete Writings (see chapter three, note 11), pp.149 and 151.

4 See my comment, chapter one, p.31.

5 I have been unable to trace this Withers painting. From Boyd's description, it resembles 'A Bright Winter's Morn' (1894) or perhaps 'Tranquil Winter' (1895). Both of these pictures are owned by the National Gallery of Victoria.

6 Imaginary Portraits in Walter Pater, Selected Works (see chapter one, note 25), p.147.

7 Ibid., pp.148-49.

8 The novelist's brother, the painter Penleigh Boyd, had a studio at Warrandyte.
CHAPTER SEVEN

1. The motto to Book III of The Montforts (which covers the story of Raoul) is from Imaginary Portraits.


5. Lauderdale (pseud.), Victoria's Representative Men at Home: Australia's Upper Middle Class in the Edwardian Age (Melbourne: Punch Office, 1904).


8. Ibid., p.27.

9. Through The Studio magazine, Boyd had the opportunity of being acquainted with the interior decoration of both Whistler and Conder. See in particular 'The Peacock Room Decorated By J. McNeill Whistler,' The Studio, XXXII (August 1904), 242-46, the first important article on Conder by D.S. MacColl, 'The Paintings on Silk of Charles Conder,' The Studio, XIII (May 1898), 232-39, and T. Martin Wood's 'A Room Decorated by Charles Conder,' The Studio, XXXIV (April 1905), 201-10, with their black-and-white illustrations.


11. 'Phrases and Philosophies For the Use of the Young' in Complete Works of Oscar Wilde, p.1206.


CHAPTER EIGHT

1. See SF p.4, DD pp.10 and 69.


Acknowledgement to W. Milgate for identification of the mottoes as verses from a sixteenth-century manuscript by 'F.B.P.' (British Museum Addl. Ms. 15, 225), a translation of a passage in the popular prose Meditations of St. Augustine (Liber Meditationum) much printed in the Renaissance, with help from a Latin hymn by Cardinal P. Damiani included with the Meditations in sixteenth-century editions. F.B.P.'s version was used in nineteenth-century hymnals, where Boyd no doubt found it. The verses are employed in random order in Such Pleasure and are acknowledged on p.121 as belonging to a sixteenth-century poet.

Four Quartets (London: Faber, 1959), pp.18 and 29.

Ibid., p.15.

See Acts 8.1 where Paul condones the stoning of Stephen. The parallel becomes doubly interesting when we consider that Boyd criticizes Paul in Much Else in Italy (see pp.84-86), arguing that his presentation of Christianity is destructive.

CHAPTER NINE

Boyd's interest in his family origins is shown in the genealogy he himself compiled. See A Brief Account of The Boyds of Kilmarnock and their cadets the Boyds of Crosspatrick Co. Mayo, Together with their alliances including a full pedigree of the Becketts of Lavington in the La Trobe library.

Introduction, Merric Boyd Drawings, n.pag. (see chapter one, note 31).

Ibid.

Arthur Boyd is equally fascinated by this theme. See his illustrations of the legend of St. Francis in T.S.R. Boase, St. Francis of Assisi (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968).

Doughty (see chapter two, note 54), pp.11-13.

Isaiah 53.4.


CHAPTER TEN


Ibid.

Ibid., p.23.


Guy Boyd, the novelist's nephew, describes a similar episode in his experience of World War II: 'When it came to bayonet practice the sergeant said I wasn't putting enough spirit into the stabbing of the straw-filled hessian dummy. At that I went berserk and stabbed and stabbed and stabbed and hacked at the thing until the straw came out all over the place.' See Guy Boyd (chapter one, note 31), p.30.


Compare Guy Boyd: 'On one occasion, brought before the C.O. in connection with the refusal to bear arms and asked if he would defend his mother if she were attacked by a Japanese soldier, Guy replied that he would defend her against an attack by an Australian also' (p.32). It is interesting to note that David Boyd's attitudes to and treatment by military authority also parallel Dominic's. See Nancy Benko, The Art of David Boyd (Adelaide: Lidums, 1973), p.207, for relevant biographical details.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

In his later years Boyd held exhibitions in Cambridge and Melbourne.


Ibid., p.251.

See chapter one, p.28.

The Renaissance, pp.249 and 249-50.

Marius the Epicurean, I, 144.

Ibid., I, 146.

Complete Works of Oscar Wilde, p.104.


Ibid., pp.22, 12 and 8.


The Art of Fiction, pp.10 and 11.

14 The Art of Fiction, p.11.


21 Poetry and Drama, II (June and December 1914), 173-74.


29 Ibid., p.100.


31 Ibid., p.33.

32 Crumbling Idols, pp.100-01.

33 See my Appendix for a more detailed discussion.
Title page, Catalogue of 'The 9 x 5 Impressions Exhibition' at Buxton's Rooms, Swanston Street, Melbourne, opened 17 August 1889.


Ibid., p.189.


'The School of Giorgione' in The Renaissance, p.140.

'Martin Boyd, An Appreciation' (see chapter two, note 92), pp.15 and 16.


See 'The Craft of Martin Boyd' (see chapter two, note 96).

'The Achievement of Martin Boyd' (see chapter two, note 82), p.95.

Ibid., p.94.


'Martin Boyd, An Appreciation,' p.22.

'The Achievement of Martin Boyd,' p.96.


'The Seriousness of Martin Boyd' (see chapter two, note 95), p.93.


'Martin Boyd' (see chapter two, note 94), pp.34, 33 and 38.


Ibid., p.214.


APPENDIX

1 'The Trend of Australian Art Considered and Discussed' (see chapter one, note 75), p.264.

2 Ibid., p.267.

3 The Art of Australia (see chapter one, note 34), p.54.

5 The Art of Australia, p.59.

6 Information given by McCulloch in The Golden Age of Australian Painting.

7 The Art of Australia, p.76.

8 Australian Painting, 1788-1970 (see chapter one, note 34), pp.100-02.


11 I have been unable to locate a copy of the play in an Australian Library.

12 His teacher was the cartoonist Phil May. See Australian Painting, 1788-1970, p.97.

13 Outlines of Australian Art (see chapter one, note 30), p.34.

14 The Eighteen Nineties (see chapter one, note 39), p.273.

15 See Australian Painting, 1788-1970, p.104.

16 Ibid., pp.95-96.


19 Mrs Mannington Caffyn whose home he frequented in Melbourne.


23 James McNeill Whistler (see chapter one, note 54), p.55.


26 See Norman Lindsay, p.58.
27 Creative Effort, p.237.
28 The Romantic Nineties (see chapter one, note 17), p.28.
30 Such is Life, Being Certain Extracts from the Diary of Tom Collins (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1962), pp.80-81.
33 Such is Life, p.336.
34 Roderick, Henry Lawson, Volume One of Collected Prose, pp.571-72.
35 Ibid., p.43.
37 For an illuminating and well-documented description see Bruce Nesbitt, 'Literary Nationalism and the 1890s,' Australian Literary Studies, V (1971), 3-17.
38 'Clancy of the Overflow' in Clancy of the Overflow and Other Verses (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1946), p.19.
39 'Up the Country' in The 1890s (see note 9 above), p.152.
43 Crumbling Idols (see chapter eleven, note 28), pp.42-43.
44 Quoted by Pizer, Hamlin Garland's Early Work and Career, p.124.
45 Crumbling Idols, pp.98-99.
46 Ibid., p.109.

47 Impressions on Impressionism: Being a Discussion of the American Art Exhibition at the Art Institute, Chicago, by A Critical Triumvirate (Chicago: Central Art Association, Autumn 1894), p.16.

48 Roderick, Henry Lawson, Volume One of Collected Prose, p.335.


50 Such is Life, p.91.

51 It is interesting to speculate whether or not Furphy's portrait of Mary owes something to McCubbin's 'The Lost Child' (1886).

52 Such is Life, p.247.

53 Ibid., p.232.

54 Ibid., p.242.

55 Ibid., p.245.

56 Ibid., p.246.


58 The Red Pagan (see chapter one, note 19), p.156.


61 Foreword to A.G. Stephens: His Life and Work (Melbourne: Robertson and Mullens, 1941), p.2.

62 Bruce Nesbitt observes that 'the Bulletin itself frequently satirized the movement before the paper's editors realized that it was more than a momentary fad.' See Aspects of Literary Nationalism, I, 213. For knowledge of material on The Red Page in this and the following paragraph I am indebted to Carmel Maguire. The commentary is my own.

63 In 'Symbolist Poetry,' The Red Page, Bulletin, 19 May 1900.
'Was Mallarmé A Great Poet?' reprinted in The Prose of Christopher Brennan (see chapter one, note 1), pp.281-84.


'The Crown of Gum Leaves,' an almost identical version of which is to be found in The Red Pagan, appeared on The Red Page, Bulletin, 7 December 1901.


The Writer in Australia, p.115.


Ibid., p.383.

The Prose of Christopher Brennan, p.282.

Ibid., p.283.


Ibid., pp.111-12.

Ibid., p.112.

Australian Literary Criticism (see chapter one, note 93), p.41.


The Verse of Christopher Brennan, p.118.

Ibid., p.123.

Ibid., p.144.

'Some Makers of Australia,' p.385.

Ibid., p.387.

'The University and Australian Literature: A Centenary Retrospect,' The Prose of Christopher Brennan, p.221.

'Victor Daley's At Dawn And Dusk,' The Prose of Christopher Brennan, p.191.

Ibid., pp.191-92.
At Dawn and Dusk (see chapter one, note 96), p.1.

The three volumes mentioned were reprinted in A Southern Garland (Sydney: The Bulletin Newspaper Company, 1904).


The 1890s (see note 9 above), p.35.


See Wine and Roses (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1911), pp.105-07.

These examples are from 'You, and Yellow Air' (c. 1910) and 'The Loving Tree' (c. 1914). See A.R. Chisholm (ed.), The Poems of Shaw Neilson (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1965), pp.78-79 and 140-41.

Bernhardt had visited Australia at the beginning of the decade.

Marshall Hall was Professor of Music at the University of Melbourne and gained notoriety for his profane verses and bohemian behaviour. A.W. Jose recalled him as 'probably the nearest thing to a romantic inhabitant of Melbourne in those years' (The Romantic Nineties, p.41). Wolfie von Flugel of Outbreak of Love may well be partly modelled on him.

Signed Carolyn Wells, Bookfellow, 5 (31 May 1899), 15. A slightly different version appeared the previous year in The Studio, XIII (May 1898), 259.

(Unsigned), 'Aubrey Beardsley,' Bookfellow, 5 (31 May 1899), 27-31.

The Verse of Christopher Brennan, p.237.

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