

desire to return to a homeland is well established in most studies of migration and it is easy to observe that many successful settlers in New Zealand in the nineteenth century died in Britain. A distaste for the idea of parents settling close-by is not unusual among young men, and is often expressed with considerable euphemism in their letters to those parents. It is, after all, a feat of some sensitivity to provide suitable reassurance to the family about the fortunes of their son or brother without encouraging them to become a nearby encumbrance. But this is one of a number of areas where judgement has to be suspended. Dr Stone is much better informed than anybody else about the development of Campbell's views after 1860 and his conviction about the strength of Campbell's attachment to Europe might be substantiated in his next volume.

This is true too of themes such as Campbell's attitudes towards Maoris and towards politics. It is the 1860s that will tell us how Campbell reconciled his early appreciation of Maori culture, within limits even then, and the ambitions of himself and his associates. Similarly, Dr Stone shows that Campbell appreciated the political efforts and antics of his partner and friends but genuinely felt some reluctance to be involved himself; his evaluation of the importance of politics was still to be formed in 1860 if more than a reaction of the moment was ever needed. There is some frustration in having to wait for another volume to pursue such questions, but there is enough interest in this book for one to be willing to believe that Dr Stone was right in his judgement that Campbell deserves a two-volume biography.

The interest extends beyond Campbell personally. For example, Dr Stone has provided a useful account of the early economy of Auckland, showing the importance of the capital imports associated with officials in the 1840s in a different light, and setting out, more or less in passing, the links between Auckland and Australia and the Pacific which differed from an early date from those of other New Zealand settlements.

Young Logan Campbell will also become a standard reference for the way in which the mortgage market worked before the expansion of trading banks in the 1860s. These examples reflect the reviewer's interests and there would be no difficulty in providing others from various perspectives. The book deserves a wide readership and its sequel will be awaited with eagerness.

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A History of Australia, vol. 5: The People Make Laws. 1888 - 1915. By C. M. H. Clark. Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1981. xv, 448pp., N.Z. price: \$30.60 hard cover, \$21.08 soft cover.

I WAS never a student of Manning Clark's. It is worth making this clear, as those who beheld him face to face in the classroom tend, paradoxically it might seem, to see his work as through stained glass darkly. One suspects that when they read the words of the master they are overpowered again by the magic of student days when history became alive.

The importance of Manning Clark's work cannot be dismissed. Perhaps more than any other historian of his generation he has changed the agenda of Australian historical discourse, ensuring that the culture of religion now occupies its proper place. He has, through his insistence on his chosen themes, persuaded us to see ourselves differently. An historian can hardly hope for more.

Yet the continuing saga of his *History*, now in this its fifth volume, presents any conscientious reviewer with problems. It is increasingly difficult to go half way with Clark. If unable wholly to accept his vision one tends to find oneself mesmerised by the excesses of his prophetic prose, while another reader may see only the totality of the historic mosaic.

It is not easy, however, to say precisely what the vision is. It is, it almost goes without saying, tragic, and in personal terms this is spelled out in the life histories of Alfred Deakin and Henry Lawson. Yet at another level the story is predictable enough. Although the volume is called *The People Make Laws*, the tablets seem always to be safely in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Chapter 5 is called ' "Federation or Revolution?" ' but there is never any doubt about the outcome. Although Clark talks about the bourgeoisie being 'under siege', it is never quite clear from where the threat comes. Certainly not from the Labor party; and, as Clark himself appreciates, Norman Lindsay and Marshall-Hall are hardly acceptable revolutionaries either. If Clark does convey a sense of threat it is from some indefinable 'uproar' (of which more anon) in the wings. At one point we are told that 'like Labor, the women's movement had made no analysis of power in a capitalist society' (p. 192). But if Clark himself has done so it is only in the sketchiest manner.

That, in a sense, is no surprise. Although Clark *sounds* more ideological in this post-Whitlam world, his history has always been more concerned with 'the eternal verities'. The vision, at this level, is one of a ceaseless panorama of human activity, in which the strivings of the individual are juxtaposed against the rites and ceremonies of congregations, crowds and audiences. As the canvas of Clark's history becomes broader, the brush strokes are necessarily more impressionistic. The narrative seems to be overwhelmed by the onrush of events. In this tumult there are plenty of things happening, but little sense of why or wherefore.

The nature of this narrative, with the principal characters being shuffled like a pack of cards and dealt out in each chapter, requires all sorts of literary artifices. At times Clark simply gives up: 'In the meantime life went on. All those who were nervous and irritable were urged to take Doan's Kidney and Backache Pills . . .' (p.260). The choice of characters contains few surprises. Apart from the stars, Lawson and Deakin, there are regular appearances from Barton, Reid, Wise, C. J. Dennis, Steele Rudd, Marshall-Hall, Judkins, Norton, Wren and Daisy Bates. Some of the set pieces such as the horse and buggy tour of the joint committee investigating sites for the national capital, with Lyne and Reid 'engaged in a contest to see who could display the most geniality' (p. 222), nicely juggle farce and symbolism: vividly we see that rorty crew of politicians joking their blinkered way through the drought-stricken landscape. That many of these cameos risk being cartoon caricatures does not in itself invalidate them: where they often come to grief, however, is in the banal imagery of Clark's chosen literary style.

Clark's style is accessible, and this is no doubt one good reason for his popularity as an historian. But this admirable clarity is harnessed to the demands of a kind of code language which Clark relentlessly draws upon. So Parkes 'had dreamed a great dream', while Cardinal Moran was 'a man with the image of Christ in his heart'; Furphy is 'the sage of the Riverina' and Melba 'a woman with a golden voice'; Reid is 'Rabelaisian' and Deakin 'the servant of Mammon'; Ireland is always 'mad Ireland' or 'Erin's green isle'; God is 'the author of his being' and Christ 'the Galilean'. At times it is hard to keep a straight face, as when learning that Groom was 'a cautious heart over which chilly winds often blew' (p. 259) or, apropos of Barton meeting the Pope, that 'four melancholy eyes confronted each other briefly in Rome' (p. 219). There is a good deal of 'madness' and 'Saturnalia', though Deakin's heart is 'not troubled by all the uproar, the curses, the hissing and the mud' (p.220). Uproar, be it noted, abounds: it is even going on inside 'the trousers of males' (p. 271).

Nor can these flourishes simply be accepted as quirks or eccentricities, for their cumulative effect is to undermine the narrative. Nowhere is this clearer than in Clark's treatment of Deakin and Lawson who, in theory, should make an excellent pair of protagonists. 'At a point in the narrative', Clark explains in the Preface, 'Alfred Deakin begins to be referred to as Mr Deakin. I hope the reason for this emerges from the description of what happened to the public man, and what happened to the private man.' If 'the reason . . . emerges', this does not render the device any less artificial or any more acceptable: it is, to say the least, a facile piece of narrative gamesmanship. That Clark is sympathetic to Deakin and Lawson—their tragedies are 'the tragedies of Australia writ large' (p. vii)—does not, in itself, help. Deakin's agonizing never comes alive; to be told, at the end of the book, that 'Mr Deakin was still searching for a personal saviour' (p. 425), suggests how paralysing the banality has become. With Lawson there is more success, though there is still an awful repetitiveness as 'Australia's great native son' is shuffled on for another binge in the gutter. More seriously, the whole contrast between Lawson, the Australian, and Deakin, the 'Australian-Briton', remains tenuous, particularly in the context of the imperialism of the Great War, which captured Lawson as much as it did Deakin. The differences between the men were obviously great, particularly in terms of psychology and culture, but Clark's model, to my mind, obscures as much as it clarifies them.

Manning Clark is an historian who takes risks. We need such historians. My lurking fear, however, is that his example will deter rather than encourage others. There will be the few disciples whose works will echo the prophetic ring of the master, but many others may simply retreat from Clark's *History* into the safety of specialist studies or careful syntheses. This would be a pity—and it would, in a sense nullify the deeper purpose of his work, which, in the tradition of the great teacher, is surely to inspire and galvanize. Yet the critic cannot evade his duty. The temptation to praise (and, in effect, dismiss) Manning Clark's *History* as a quirkish *tour de force* should be resisted. We need to confront the reality of its flaws, fatal or otherwise.

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