

Rifled Sanctuaries: Some Views of the Pacific Islands in Western Literature to 1900. By Bill Pearson. Auckland University Press, Oxford University Press, 1984. 93 pp. Price: N.Z. \$11.45.

THE PUBLICATION of the 1982 Macmillan Brown Lectures is a notable event. Hitherto Dr Pearson's writings on the Pacific have been confined to articles and reviews in scholarly journals. Now, in an expanded version of the lectures, he surveys the whole field, only limiting himself to the period before 1901.

A summary on the back cover speaks of the author's 'unrivalled' knowledge of Pacific literature. Without questioning the claim, I suggest that even more important than the extent of his erudition is the nature of his approach to the cultures and peoples of the Pacific. While basically historical, it includes other considerations — anthropological, philosophical, ethical, political. It is a humane approach, linking Dr Pearson with George Forster, whom he so often cites, and with George Orwell, another humanist, essayist, novelist, and literary critic.

The text is divided into three sections, partly chronological, partly thematic, each the subject of a lecture. The first, 'Fall from Grace', discusses the period from the arrival of European navigators in Tahiti to the establishment of Christian missions. It might seem that nothing more remains to be said about this, the phase of Pacific history most written about and debated. Yet in a necessarily brief survey Dr Pearson makes some illuminating disclosures. He indicates, for example, the continuance among modern Polynesian writers of the satiric tradition of the *arioi*, the strolling players of Tahiti. Again, in a re-examination of verse prompted by the voyages, he adds substantially to the score of names gathered by less diligent predecessors. 'Peter Pindar' joins the roll of poetasters and so does the tantalizing figure of Robert Southey. I am curious about the still unpublished satire he wrote as a boy and placed in the mouth of Omai. And I find it hard to believe that Coleridge, architect of the radical Pantisocracy, uttered the reactionary views Southey ascribed to him. Dr Pearson needed more space to elaborate these and other statements.

The second lecture, 'Rescue and Captivity', largely concerned with fiction based on narratives by voyagers and missionaries, shows Dr Pearson at his most informative and most trenchantly critical. I was previously unaware of Edgar Allan Poe's association with the Pacific and quite ignorant of the American industry which reshaped tales from the South Seas according to dime novel conventions. On the other hand, I have long been familiar with R. M. Ballantyne's *Coral Island*. I was enthralled when our teacher read it aloud — in Standard 3, I think — and, if memory does not mislead me, I repeated the performance to my own hapless pupils. Dr Pearson says this 'classic' was still being reprinted in 1975 and traces its doctrine of 'preposterous white supremacy' as far back as 1773 in Hawkesworth's *Voyages*. Can we wonder that racism and colonialism still beset us?

Up to this point most of the authors wrote 'vicariously', using the material of others. In a third lecture, 'Views from the Beach', novelists and narrators drew on their own experience. They are a mixed collection, ranging from 'beachcombers' in the old sense to such privileged sojourners as Robert Louis Stevenson. Besides him they include some of the best-known writers on Pacific themes — Herman Melville, 'Pierre Loti', Louis Becke. Dr Pearson gives a

critical summary of each (devastating in Becke's case) and when discussing Melville reveals the personal experience behind D. H. Lawrence's recantation of his first idealized view of the Polynesians. With pleasing symmetry the book finally returns to the *aroi* and celebrates the achievement of Albert Wendt and other island-born writers of our time.

Rifled Sanctuaries is a fascinating but also a provoking book. Though no mere catalogue of names and titles, there is scarcely a page that does not cry out for expansion. How long shall we wait for the major work — series of works — that will convey the full extent of Dr Pearson's researches and reflections? With a special urgency this reviewer joins his juniors and betters to point out that with the years the clatter of 'Time's wingèd chariot' becomes damnably noisy.

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In the Light of the Past — Stained Glass Windows in New Zealand Houses. By Jock Phillips and Chris Maclean. Oxford University Press, 1983. 143 pp. Price: N.Z. \$40.00.

THOSE OF US with long memories, who may visit a second-hand dealer's and see leadlight windows, sometimes of peculiar hideousness, offered for hundreds or even thousands of dollars, are quickly made to realize that these discarded artefacts of an earlier generation have become cult objects for the young. So far they do not appear to have reached the local antique market but in New York, last year, Christie's were proudly selling windows designed by the great American architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

Jock Phillips and Chris McLean have taken a long hard look at windows which have survived *in situ* and others recently manufactured in this country and have produced a handsome and engaging book describing their history and design, with case studies of some particularly talented designers. Readers may consider, however, that there is insufficient information on the techniques involved in making these windows.

'Stained glass' is a rather imprecise term for windows made up of relatively small pieces of coloured glass joined by lead comes. The colour may come from the use of oxides in the pot metal — the term by which glass in the process of manufacture is known — or it may come from true staining with silver chloride to produce yellows on clear glass or greens on blue glass. The glass may be painted for detail and then fired, or it may be flashed with vitreous enamels and then etched. There is a considerable variety of techniques all coming under the general description of stained glass.

From its first use, when it seems to have been derived from mosaic or enamelling and to have been influenced by manuscript illumination, the pieces of glass have been joined by flexible strips of flanged lead which, in combination with black pigment for lining and stippling, gave stained glass its typical appearance. Some glass, rejecting the use of colour as over-indulgent, relied entirely on the