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Sentimental thoughts of 'A moody bloke': C. J. Dennis

'OUR chief object in coming out is to make money', began Dennis' first editorial for the *Gadfly*. Dennis made no money and resigned late in 1907 to 'eke out an existence as a freelance journalist' in Melbourne, from where he sent the *Gadfly* a poem, 'Apostate', announcing his willingness to exchange principles for cash. Dennis survived the next seven years through the generosity of friends who removed him to Toolangi where there was no opportunity to buy flash shirts and ties, and where his journalism amounted to a living wage only because he had private support, free board and few expenses away from the city. The publication of *Backblock Ballads* in 1913 did not improve matters, since such royalties as were earned were held up by his publisher, E. W. Cole, in an effort, Dennis suspected, to force him to settle for 'a sum down for the copyright'.[1] With this bitter experience in mind, he forwarded the typescript of *Songs of a Sentimental Bloke* to Angus and Robertson, along with a portfolio of publishing proposals all 'with an eye to the greatest possible profit'.[2] In this mood, he reprinted 'The Austra-laise' and dedicated it to the Australian Expeditionary Force. Dennis was rewarded beyond his wildest expectations: royalties from the first year's sales of *The Bloke* amounted to almost £900.

As he offered to do in 'Apostate', Dennis had climbed down 'Parnassus slope' to

> . . . a place
> Where the haggling traders dwell,
> Who will buy the wares of the man who cares
> His soul and slush to sell.'

After seven lean years, the apostate won the traders' approval by mocking their shallow emotions, by 'singing them muck'. Keeping his

social and political radicalism out of sight, he tempted the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie to confirm his low opinion of them by approving his parody of their views of love and respectability. Dennis' cynical approach was well put when he sought Croll's advice about killing Bill's and Doreen's 'baby towards the end to get a weep into it . . . Just as well to run the gammit (whatever that may be) of the emotions.'[6] Dennis' letter asking Henry Lawson to write a preface for *The Bloke* explained that the aim was 'to show the poor blind snobs that beautiful thoughts are quite possible amongst the vulgar whom they affect to despise and pity'.[7] When Lawson quoted this passage in his preface, Dennis was alarmed that such forthrightness would affect sales, and he prevailed on Lawson to leave out even a bowdlerised version that sniped at 'the polite indifference' and 'foolish outer crust of social superiority'.[8] 'I don't want to spoil the tone of the whole book with an unsympathetic preface', he told his editor. 'The tone is geniality and optimism, and any sarcastic references of mine to any person or class is [sic] likely to jar.'[9] He wanted the 'illustrations and get up . . . to be aesthetic enough to balance the coarseness of the dialect . . . with the deliberate intention of catching a certain class of reader'.[9] Not even Dennis' low opinion of suburban Australians had led him to expect the welcome which his burlesque of their emotional and aesthetic sensibilities received.

That Dennis was temperamentally capable of sustaining deliberate deceit and self-mocking satire is clear from Croll's reminiscences of Dennis' adapting, 'shamelessly, classical poems to nigger minstrel airs' and singing 'Oscar Wilde's heart-breaking "Ballad of Reading Gaol" to the tune of "Playing on the Old Banjo" '.[9] In 'A Guide for Poits', Dennis used his control of poetic conventions to laugh at his own achievements:

> The triplets comes much 'arder than the twins;
> But I've 'ad to bear 'em fer me sins.
> 'Ere, fer a single line, yeh change the style,
> Switch orf an' rhyme the same as you begins;
> An' then yeh comes back at it wiv a smile,
> Pretendin' it's dead easy orl the while.[10]

'Austra-laise' is another example of Dennis' literary tricks since it also dealt with matters very close to his heart, yet still poked fun at them. As an ardent nationalist Dennis wanted an Australian anthem, but instead of submitting a serious entry for the *Bulletin*'s competition he recognised the impossibility of a national song arising in this way, and so he ridiculed the contest, along with the lack of true national feeling that made such competitions inevitable. Far from being the jingoistic march it became after 1914, the 'Austra-laise' was supposed to be sung to the *Merry Widow* waltz.[11]

Contrary to the current image of Dennis as the RSL's man, he had been quite a progressive propagandist. The Adelaide satirical weekly, *Gadfly*[12], which he edited for almost two years, was strongly pro-Labor and protectionist:

> Same old, tough polygamist; same old, fat monopolist;
> Greedy eye and grasping fist; air of smug propriety.
> Mastadon or merchant robber; feudal lord or Crownlands jobber—
> It's the same old Tory slobber, same old whine—'Society!'[13]

During his short 1914 stay in Sydney, he wrote for the *Worker*, which he hoped would publish *Songs of a Sentimental Bloke* as a book. Through his friendship with Labor Prime Minister Fisher, Dennis found work in the Navy office on 28 January 1915; a year later, he was confidential secretary to Senator E. J. Russell, Assistant Minister in Hughes' government. Dennis left the public service in 1916 after a serious tram accident, and after the success of *The Bloke* relieved him of the need for regular employment. It is also probable that as an Irish Catholic he was uneasy over conscription, a topic he carefully avoided if ever George Robertson prompted him for an opinion.[14]

Songs of a Sentimental Bloke is not the biography of one larrikin who wandered into Toolangi. It is an amalgam of numerous people, but above all it is autobiographical. Dennis used 'Sentimental Bloke' as a pen name before 1914, and the title and text of his book are compatible with his being the Sentimental Bloke writing songs about Bill, his cobbers and their tarts. No single impulse produced all the poems selected for *Songs of a Sentimental Bloke*, if only because they were written over a five-year period. The constant elements in their production were supplied by Dennis' personal, cultural and socio-political concerns. This complex of interests means that *The Bloke* sequence operates on a number of levels, with in-jokes, deliberate ambiguities and triple meanings. For Dennis to be understood, he must stop being seen as 'The Laureate of the Larrikin', a title he never earned anyway. It is too often forgotten how literary a 'Laureate' Dennis was.'

The Bloke is prefaced by two philosophical verses, in French, from the Belgian poet, Montenaeken, before opening with 'A Spring Song'. Chisholm correctly found intimations of Shakespeare's sonnet beginning 'When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes' in Dennis's lines,

> The world 'as got me snouted jist a treat;
> Crool Forchin's dirty left, 'as smote me soul;

An' all them joys o'life I'eld so sweet
Is up the pole.

Dennis underlined the connection by including in the next line the phrase, 'as the poit sez'. Shakespearean allusions abound in *The Bloke*, where 'The Play' is merely the most obvious. Dennis' devotion to Shakespeare stopped him playing with the bard's name in the line 'The dramer's writ be Shakespeare'. Dennis called his Toolangi home 'Arden', and promised his publishers a set of poems treating a dozen Shakespearean plays in the manner of Bill and Doreen at 'The Play'. *The Bloke* concludes with 'The Mooch o' Life', which echoes those sonnets where Shakespeare counsels his young friend to live again through a son, advice which touched on Dennis' own predicament.

Using the language of the streets intensified Dennis' determination to place his work firmly within the traditions of English letters. As Bill observes while watching *Romeo and Juliet*,

Some time, some writer bloke will do the trick
wiv Ginger Mick.

Dennis' literary conceits have been recognised by previous critics, but they have never carried their investigations through in any detailed fashion. Ian Mair suggested that far from stealing from Louis Stone's *Jonah*, Dennis deliberately set out to invert Jonah's fate.[15] Porteous pointed out that, despite all H. M. Green's hard phrases about the deceitful one-sidedness of Dennis' picture of larrikins, Green's charges are, in fact, a recognition that *The Bloke* 'is an alert and intelligent reshaping and use of a literary convention ... which perhaps recall not too inaptly the light-hearted literary slumming of some sixteenth and eighteenth century poets'.[16] Similarly, Macartney's opinion that, by extending a metaphor to more than 80 lines, Dennis produced 'an obvious contraption',[17] can be taken as praise, rather than blame, if 'The Stoush o' Day' is a conscious parody of homeric device.

The density of Dennis' intentions is apparent in the titles of his two most popular works. Ginger Mick's moods could refer to Mick's speech patterns; his opinions on war, classes and nationalism; or be a synonym for 'songs' in *Songs of a Sentimental Bloke*. Dennis uses 'sentimental' in far more difficult and contradictory ways, the range of which was evident in contemporary reviews. On the affirmative side, the *Age*'s critic wrote that Bill had 'acute sensibilities' and thrilled with 'passion and sentiment'.[18] Negatively, the *Lone Hand* referred to 'the crude sentimentality which is always found in the lowest strata of society'.[19] Bertram Stevens combined a host of aspects in one article when he equated 'humour and sentiment' with 'laughter and tears'; claimed that the USA 'reek[ed] with sentiment'; and coupled 'decent sentiments' with 'morals'.[20] These few examples indicate the problem of understanding the intention and reception of Dennis' work. If the Sentimental Bloke is Dennis and not Bill, there is a conscious confusion in the title's intention. Dennis himself was not sentimental in any mawkish sense, except when drunk. In its noble sense of 'refined or elevated feeling', 'sentimental' expressed Dennis' evaluation of his sober self. Finally, there is Dennis' public posturing as conventionally sentimental in order to trap the bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeoisie financially, through book sales, and aesthetically, through having them praise his contrived emotional falsehoods as profoundly decent human feelings. The book was successful on all counts. The *Age* spoke for those whom Dennis had hoped to trick when it found nobility in his work; Norman Lindsay, that other great hater of suburban moralising, unwittingly endorsed Dennis' own views by crucifying a copy of *The Bloke* outside his Springwood home.[21] Dennis' successful concealment of social criticism and literary concerns prompts the question: what else might be hidden within his seemingly simple verses?

Three years before C. J. Dennis became Australia's best-selling poet, he wrote 'The Corpse that Won't Lie Still'. The theme is a familiar one of the persons from Porlock distracting authors from the hard business of writing. One difference is that Dennis recognised in his tormentor his own other self.[22] At dinner one night, Dennis' wife asked Will Dyson to tell her

> '... something about Den ... as a young man ... Did he always have that queer sort of awayness?' Will nodded. 'I know what you mean. Clarrie really belongs to the Cloister, you know. There were only two things that prevented him from becoming a monk. One was his aptitude for rhyming, the other—his appetite for—' he glanced across at Den, who was sitting opposite, 'his appetite', he finished lamely.[23]

There is no disputing Dennis' alcoholism. The *Australian Encyclopaedia* acknowledged that his work was 'frequently interrupted by a weakness for what one of his characters termed "gettin' on the shick".'[24] According to Dennis' wife, he 'learned to drink' when he was about 22 years of age, loafing as a barman in his father's hotel. The problem did not go away, and after Dennis took a flat in Melbourne in 1922, Mrs Dennis wrote to George Robertson 'in despair. Den is in hospital again, he has been drinking very badly this last two years.'[25] He continued to drink when they returned to Toolangi, where Mrs Dennis often held his head under a

tap to sober him up enough to write verse for the *Herald*.[26] If the appetite which Dyson would not name was for alcohol, there seems little point in his reticence, since Mrs Dennis was all too painfully aware of that.

Some hints about Dennis' personality come from Chisholm's biography. A woman who sat beside Dennis at school remembered him as an 'effeminate ... coddled too much by his maiden aunts ... he was dressed rather like a doll and he played mostly with the girls ...' A friend from Dennis' adulthood was puzzled by his 'split personality', which 'created tough and hardy fighting men, and yet he himself used to get thoroughly upset if he had a sore finger'. Chisholm considers that Dennis' 'tough guys' were the product of a revulsion from his own prim upbringing, and an expression of a lifelong desire to escape from his own slight and increasingly asthmatic body.[27]

One intriguing clue is the appearance of beef-cake photos in the *Gadfly*, especially the full-length, side view of a completely naked young swimmer who was visiting Adelaide. In the next issue Dennis told those who had expressed disgust to ask themselves why they found 'the body of my fellow—a strong, healthy body, glorifying in health and strength' repulsive, when others saw only 'health and beauty'. Dennis claimed that the 'picture of an athlete—a well-made, well-developed athlete—was published for exactly the same reason as statues are erected in public places ...'[28]. If the Victorian concealment of pornography in culture and sport is left aside and Dennis' explanation accepted at face value, it is still necessary to acknowledge the fascination which 'well-made, well-developed' male bodies had for him. Significantly, his prose on this occasion was uncharacteristically evocative and serious. Usually, Dennis lampooned wowsers, but this time it was as if they had struck too deeply for a lighthearted response to suffice.

After his 1916 accident, and his financial success, Dennis married a widow, Mrs Price. In response to Will Dyson's remark that 'Clarrie was the last man I ever thought would get married. How did you get him to propose to you?', Mrs Dennis replied, '... because I fed him'. In presenting herself as 'a big solid lump of a woman', and as Dennis' housekeeper, Mrs Dennis suggested that their childless marriage may not have been particularly physical.[29]

Dennis' sexuality is important for an understanding of the intentions of his work. Chisholm approached this matter when discussing the last of the Bloke's songs, 'The Mooch o' Life', which was, he observed:

> ... accepted as a reflection of the author's own experience: he was pictured as a 'reformed character' who ... had attained complete felicity, domestic and spiritual ... How was any reader, lacking personal acquaintance, to know that ... this expression of rich tolerance towards all mankind and thorough happiness in a family circle, was in fact written by a lonely bachelor, a man who at times had to be saved from himself, and who, even while writing of quiet joys, was confessing to a friend that he had to 'work like blazes to fend off the blues'?[30]

While the innocence, amounting to asexuality, of Bill's courtship manner can be attributed to Australian males in general, Bill's innocence is so pronounced as to appear girlish. This aspect was captured in Longford's film, and highlighted by Gye's illustrations for the original edition, where Bill and Doreen are kewpie dolls, with neither breasts nor genitals. Gye proclaimed Doreen's navel as 'correct, for I drew it from my own, in front of the mirror'.[31]

Whilst publishing *The Bloke* and *Ginger Mick*, Dennis wrote *The Glugs of Gosh*, which critics have praised for its 'amusing and intelligent' qualities and its 'humorous and lyrical dexterity', whilst finding that it 'labours the obvious', and that its content is 'shallow and pretentious'.[32] No one has improved on Bertram Stevens' often rehashed opinion that, as satire, *The Glugs* lacked 'bite and directness, the objects of his attack not being apparent at first sight'.[33] Equally, no one has asked why Dennis lost the 'bite and directness' which had been obvious in his earlier verses for the *Gadfly*, *Bulletin* and *Worker*, when the following was typical of his political punch:

> Princes and Premiers from over the seas
> Will jostle the Rajahs and Labor M.P.s
> The peerage and beerage will crowd in the Strand,
> With squatters and rotters who libel their land.[34]

'Bite and directness' are present in *The Glugs*, though they are not as striking as in some of Dennis' earlier work. None the less, Dennis carried into *The Glugs* all the issues which had flamed his political and social writings before 1915.

'He's a grocer' was Dennis' favourite phrase of polite abuse. Attacks on 'smug suburbanites' run through all his material. Late in 1909 he wrote 'Suburbia—a yearn', which is one of the earliest examples of the pejorative use of 'suburban' in Australia. Some four years later, 'Culture and Cops' tells of a householder who fetches a policeman to catch a burglar. When the officer sees a framed 'Coloured Supplement' on the man's bedroom wall, he hisses:

> 'Accursed Philistine! ...
> ... O, wretched man,

Was I lured here for this?
O, Goth! Suburbanitel Repent!
Tear down that Christmas Supplement![35]

Jibes at petit-bourgeois mores are woven through the entire sequence of thirteen Glug poems as the Glugs are ridiculed for their conformism, which makes them easily identifiable because they are all 'awfully Gluglike', all doing the same things so that even 'a dexter Glug's like a sinister one!' Their traditions about eating, sleeping, the law, taxes and warfare are relentlessly derided as nothing more than the mindless repetition of the ignorance of their 'grandpas', until a young Glug is considered mature only when he

. . . gets an obstinate look,
And copies his washing-bill into a book,
And blackens his boot-heels, and frowns at a joke . . .

The few Glugs who warn their fellows against impending disaster are all punished

. . . for having no visible precedent, which
Is a crime in the poor and a fault in the rich.

Dennis' assault is merciless, as he laughs at the tree-climbing which the Glugs do in order 'To settle the squirming in their brains'. No sympathy is given to their 'vague unrest', since

. . . lacking wit, with a candour smug,
A Glug will boast that he is a Glug.

Towards so impenetrable a wall of complacent, self-righteous stupidity, Dennis expresses no sentimentality, in any sense of the word.

The picture of the typical Australian to emerge from *The Glugs* totally contradicts the one popularly taken from *The Blake* and *Ginger Mick*, where we are independent, resourceful, haters of authority and good mates. By contrast, Glugs are bound together by mindless conformism; they anticipate A. F. Davies' view that, above all, 'Australians have a characteristic talent for burcaucracy'.[36] If Dennis' own estimate that *The Glugs of Gosh* was 'the best thing I have written'[37] had become widespread, his centenary celebrations in 1976 might not have been so fulsome.

The hero of *The Glugs* is Sym, another of Dennis' literary masks. Sym's education and career, like Dennis' own, were dominated by 'his maiden aunt'; Sym was a tinker, while Dennis was a *bricoleur*, fascinated by tiny

screwdrivers and repairing things;[38] 'Emily Ann' invokes Dennis' bride-to-be, just as 'The Little Red Dog' was based on Dennis' own dogs. After failing at trade, Sym also lives in the countryside; a prophecy proclaims that '*Ye rimer shall mende ye who mendes pottes and pans*'. The scheming Mayor of Quog exalts Sym until he is 'a craze' among the Glugs.

'The Rhymes of Sym' suggests more subtle parallels between Sym and Dennis. Sym's first rhyme is required to be 'on the errors and aims of his times'. The error is 'lust for gain' when people should seek 'fresh treasure in the hearts of friends'. Sym is sentimental in the older sense of possessing refined and elevated feelings, though he has traces of the other meaning of 'sentimental' as emotional self-indulgence. In Sym's second rhyme, which has to be about 'the symptoms of sin that he sees', the devil tempts Sym three times. Sym denies having 'a darling sin', drinking wine, or lusting after women—and thus sins three times by lying about each. Here, Dennis confesses to personal faults, and to the licence he took in presenting his larrikins as largely blameless lads.

When Sym is allowed to deal with whatever he likes, he paraphrases *The Glugs of Gosh* and Dennis' attacks on wowsers and politicians, through the career of a public official who spends his time hunting the Feasible Dog. This creature's desire to devour 'everything strictly superior' recalls George Reid's Socialist Tiger, which Dennis had bagged a decade earlier in the *Gadfly*.[39] In a debate between Sir Stodge and Sym which follows Sym's popular success with his three rhymes, Dennis parodied his cultured critics' dislike of slang. Sym is putting his case in everyday words until Sir Stodge, here Deakin,[40] interjects in Latin and wins over the crowd of Glugs by his 'learning'. When Sir Stodge asks,

Shall this man filch our wits from us
With his furor poeticus?

the 'man' was as much Dennis, as it was Sym.

Although Dennis' practical experiences in the public service sharpened his critique of both government employees and their political masters, whom he grouped together as 'The Swanks' who ruled over Gosh, his attacks on them went back as far as the first editorial in the *Gadfly*, which opposed the seniority principle in the South Australian public service. The leader of the Swanks, Sir Stodge, was built around an amalgam of Australia's anti-Labor leaders such as Deakin and Sir John Forrest',[41] the would-be Prime Minister:

His brain is dull, and his mind is dense,
And his lack of saving wit complete;

But most amazingly immense
Is his inane self-confidence
And his innate conceit;

as well as Sir George Reid,[42] Dennis' old free trade enemy:

The meretricious, avaricious
Vicious Swank of Gosh.

If these lines 'labour the obvious', they cannot be said to lack 'bite and directness'.

Dennis' political ideas carried through from his pre-war position into *The Glugs*, where they are concealed by artifice so that the targets are not immediately obvious. Partly, this concealment resulted from the war-time censorship: if Dennis had put his views as openly as he had before 1915, *The Glugs* might not have been printed. Presumably, only his public reputation as a patriotic versifier enabled Dennis's anti-war republicanism to pass unnoticed in *The Glugs*, where war was mocked as absurdly uneconomic. When the Ogs finished fighting the Glugs, King Splosh asks: 'whom does it profit—my people, or Podge?', and the enacted answer is, neither. Kings were not safe from criticism, even in 1917, and Sym begins his political education by asking his father, Joi, if

a soul should crawl
To a purple robe or a gilded chair?

and ends by announcing that

Strong is my arm if the cause it be ruin's.
But a fig for the cause of a cunning old king.

When Joi is executed for advocating regicide, Dennis' sympathies are clearly with him. Sym's enemies are those who 'profit' by trading 'with Hate' as he carries forward both his father's rejection of 'Greed' and his love of 'peace, sweet peace'.

Two of the thirteen poems in *The Glugs* deal 'with the Ogs, of Podge, and their crafty dodge'. The Land of Podge stood for all the nations who dumped manufactured goods here: Germany, until 1915, when its place was taken by Japan and the USA—but always there was 'the Empiah'. Like all the themes in *The Glugs*, protectionism was an old battleground for Dennis; in particular, there were his attacks on Sir George Reid, into whose mouth Dennis had put these lines, in 1906:

This country was created, as full everybody knows,
For the foreign manufacturer of cheap and shoddy clothes.

'Twas intended for a Paradise of warehouses and runs,
Giving billets and a refuge to unstable younger sons.[43]

The crafty dodge practised by the Ogs was to sell to the Glugs

. . . pianers and pickles and spanners
For seventeen shiploads of stones.

Despite objections, from un-Glug-like Glugs, that 'we ought to be taxing these goods of the Ogs',

. . . every month to the land of Gosh
The Ogs, they continued to come,
with buttons and hooks, and medical books,
And rotary engines, and rum,
Large cases with labels, occasional tables,
Hair tonic, and fiddles and 'phones;

When Gosh is 'stony-broke', the Ogs attack, throwing Gosh's stones against the disarmed Glugs who throw back the goods they had got from the Ogs.

The main thrust of the Ogs poems was protection versus free-trade. Dennis' concern was to build up Australia. Unlike so many professors of high culture, he did not find war uplifting or exciting. In *Ginger Mick*, he pictured war as 'rotten greed an' butchery'. The real battle for Australia, he said, would begin when the European war was over, in

. . .the fight that never knows the firin' uv a gun:
The steady fight, when orl you boys will show wot you are worth,
An' punch a cow on Yarra Flats or drive a quill in Perth.

Although Dennis detested the petit-bourgeoisie for their paltry moralising and conformism, he defended the social relations of production upon which their existence depended. He feared Jewish financiers, party politics, monopolies and Bolsheviks,[44] he championed elected ministries, country life, small-scale production and a national consensus.

During the great war, Dennis faced all his fears in new and terrible forms as mass society encroached on petit-bourgeois individualism in unprecedented ways, through conscription and censorship. Like Dowell O'Reilly and Vance Palmer,[45] Dennis was torn between his long-standing radicalism and an ineradicable fear of proletarian power. The path Dennis chose was decided by personal elements; the need to choose was socially determined. The coalition of classes which returned Labor governments in 1910 and 1914 was destroyed in the maelstrom of war and revolution which, in turn, deprived Dennis of some 'bite and direct-

ness' because his avowed enemies henceforth included the organised working class. Dennis' verse was profoundly influenced by changes during the war, but not in the way that is commonly supposed. He did not find direction by becoming a jingo; he lost direction as his aesthetic criticism of the petit-bourgeoisie was rendered irrelevant by the new material demands placed on the petit-bourgeoisie by the proletariat and by monopoly capitalism. Dennis reluctantly and fitfully sided with the monopolists, as his later writings for the Melbourne *Herald* indicate.

[1977]

12 In addition to the three MPs on active service in 1916, Senator O'Loughlin, D. C. McGrath and A. T. Ozanne, Alfred Hampson volunteered in January of that year but was rejected because he was too old. Many other anti-conscriptionists had been members of the Australian National Defence League which campaigned vigorously for voluntary service in the decade before the war. Jauncey *Conscription in Australia* pp. 16 and 247.

3 Sentimental thoughts of 'A Moody Bloke': C. J. Dennis.

1 C. J. Dennis to R.H. Croll 3 February 1914, NLA MS 78/1.
2 Dennis to Angus & Robertson 23 March 1915, ML Uncat. MS 314/6.
3 *Gadfly* 24 December 1907, p. 1577; cf. 'Up Parnassus' 14 December 1906, p. 777.
4 Dennis to Croll 3 February 1914, NLA MS 78/1.
5 Dennis to Lawson 24 March 1915, ML MS 1920.
6 Dennis to Lawson 30 June 1915, ML MS 1920.
7 Dennis to Shenstone 30 June 1915, ML Uncat. MS 314/6.
8 Dennis to Angus & Robertson 8 April 1915, ML Uncat. MS 314/6.
9 *Australian National Review* May 1939, p. 41.
10 *Backblock Ballads and Later Verses* Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1919, p. 40.
11 *Gadfly* 18 November 1908, p. 7.
12 R. Wighton 'C. J. Dennis and the *Gadfly*' *Australian Letters* 4, 3, March 1962, pp. 12–27.
13 C. J. Dennis *Backblock Ballads and Other Verses* Melbourne: E. W. Cole, 1913, p. 109.
14 e.g. Robertson to Dennis 4 November 1916, ML Uncat. MS 314/6.
15 *Age* 22 June 1957.
16 A. Porteous 'The *Sentimental Bloke* and his Critics' *Australian Literary Studies* 1, 4, December 1964, p. 267.
17 F. T. Macartney *Australian Literary Essays* Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1957, p. 80.
18 *Age* 30 October 1915. Robertson made Dennis remove 'The Doubts of' from the title of the *Digger Smith* poems. Robertson to Dennis 6 August 1918, ML Uncat. MS 314/6.
19 *Lone Hand* 2 December 1918, p. 572.
20 *Daily Mail* (Brisbane) 2 August 1919, reprinted in *Australian National Review* August 1938, p. 21.
21 *Mirror* (Sydney) 30 June 1917, cited in Porteous 'The *Sentimental Bloke*' p. 272.
22 NLA MS 75/21 (4) dated 27 September 1913.
23 M. Herron (pseud.) *Down the Years* Melbourne: Hallcraft, 1963, p. 64.
24 *Australian Encyclopaedia* Sydney: 1963 Grolier Society, vol. 3, p. 235.
25 Biddy Dennis to G. Robertson received 6 March 1924, M L Uncat. MS 314/6.
26 *Age* 24 July 1976.
27 A.R. Chisholm: *The Making of a Sentimental Bloke* Melbourne: MUP, 1963, pp. 20 and 52.
28 *Gadfly* 13 February 1907, p. 1008.
29 Herron *Down the Years* pp. 64 and 36.
30 Chisholm *The Making of the Sentimental Bloke* pp. 61–2.
31 Quoted by R. H. Croll in *Australian National Review* May 1939, p. 42.
32 E. M. Miller and F. T. Macartney *Australian Literature* Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1956, p. 148; and H. M. Green *A History of Australian Literature* Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1962, p. 401.
33 *Daily Mail* (Brisbane) 2 August 1919, reprinted in *Australian National Review* August 1938, p. 24.
34 *Backblock Ballads and Other Verses* Melbourne: E. W. Cole 1913, pp. 129–32.
35 NLA MS 75/21 (3) dated 5 March 1914, published in *Backblock Ballads and Later Verse* p. 96.

36 A. F. Davies *Australian Democracy* Melbourne: Longman, 1966, p. 4.
37 *Home* December 1922, p. 80.
38 *ABC Weekly* 29 September 1956, pp. 8–9.
39 *Gadfly* 13 June 1906, p. 9, and 15 August 1906, p. 4.
40 cf. 'Affable Linguist' *Gadfly* 2 May 1906, p. 3.
41 cf. *Gadfly* 24 October 1906, pp. 721–2.
42 cf. 'Versatile Reid' *Gadfly* 15 August 1906, p. 20.
43 'Selfish Australia' *Gadfly* 31 October 1906, p. 759.
44 *Random Verse* Melbourne: Hallcraft, 1952, pp. 21–2 and 83.
45 See Meanjin D. Walker 'The Prophets Downcast' 2/1976, pp. 149–57.

4 Norman Lindsay's *Vision*

1 John Docker 'Norman Lindsay's *Creative Effort*: Manifesto for an Urban Intelligensia' *Australian Literary Studies* 6, 1973; Douglas Stewart 'Slessor and *Vision*' *Quadrant* 19, 4, 1975.
2 K. Marx and F. Engels *Selected Works* Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969, vol. 1, p. 424.
3 Jack Lindsay *The Roaring Twenties* London: Bodley Head, 1960, pp. 137, 66, 67 and 190.
4 ibid. p. 98.
5 Andrew McCunn 'Melophobia' *Vision* 3, p. 23.
6 'Foreword' *Vision* 2, p. 4.
7 *Art in Australia* 2nd series. 2, p. 43.
8 Jack Lindsay 'Social Purpose as a Manifestation of Art' *Art in Australia* 3rd series. 3, no pagination.
9 Norman Lindsay 'The Inevitable Future' *Art in Australia* 2nd series, 1; page numbers will be inserted after each quotation.
10 Norman Lindsay *Creative Effort* Sydney: Art in Australia, 1920; page numbers will be inserted after each quotation.
11 'Foreword' *Vision* 2, p. 3.
12 J. Hetherington *Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian* Melbourne: OUP, 1973, p. 91.
13 N. Lindsay 'The Sex Symbol in Art' *Vision* 1, p. 25.
14 *Creative Effort* pp. 244–5.
15 'Foreword' *Vision* 1, p. 3.
16 'Foreword' *Vision* 2, p. 3.

5 Literary responses

1 D. O'Reilly *Dowell O'Reilly from his Letters* Sydney: Angus & Robertson 1927, p. 178.
2 D. O'Reilly *The Prose and Verse of Dowell O'Reilly* Sydney: Angus & Robertson 1924 pp. 29 and 98.
3 *Letters*, pp. 31–2.
4 ibid. p. 50.
5 *Prose and Verse* p. 31.
6 *Letters* pp. 172, 160, 171–2, 194, 195, 204 and 206.
7 ibid. pp. 207, 209–10, 211–12 and 219.
8 *Poems by Furnley Maurice* Melbourne: Lothian, 1944, pp. 24, 26, 36–9 and 40.
9 ibid. pp. 44, 62, 126–7; Frank Wilmot to Nettie Palmer 26 April 1933, NLA MS 1174/1/4249.
10 C. W. W. Webster *Between Two Worlds* Melbourne: Lothian, 1923, pp. 47, 58, 64 and 65.