Mythmaking and Masculinity in the Fiction of Norman Lindsay

by

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Abstract

A leader in early twentieth-century bohemia, Norman Lindsay’s position in Australian culture has been elevated to the level of myth. This thesis evaluates the mythopoeic construction of Lindsay’s cultural legacy, paying particular attention to the role of gender. Moreover, it focuses particularly on the role of his fiction in exploring the dynamic between the artist, nation, and masculinity. While many are familiar with Lindsay’s art whether it be his Bacchanalian pen and ink drawings, satirical cartoons, children’s picture books, or propaganda work, far less are familiar with the eleven novels that he wrote over the course of his lifetime. However, these novels were incredibly popular within Australia at the time of publication and subsequently through further editions. Combining close readings, archival research, and theories of masculinity, authorship, and cultural production, this thesis examines how Lindsay promoted a vision of modern Australia culture as simultaneously urban and pastoral, networked and isolate, larrikin and learned, radical and conservative. Examining key areas of Lindsay’s mythmaking such as the muse, bohemia, the larrikin, and the artist, it becomes apparent that the relationship between Lindsay, the person, and his work is highly refracted and richly complex.

The mythology surrounding Lindsay’s focus on the female nude, and the translation of these images into a muse relationship with his models is analysed in Chapter 1. Considering the function of The Muses, as well as muses in Lindsay’s novels will provide a deeper understanding of his artistic reliance on the feminine form, and whether that relationship can usefully be considered as a co-dependent artist-muse conjunction. Moreover, I consider how Lindsay may have regendered the muse through his brother Lionel. In Chapter 2, I explore Lindsay’s long-term project to reconstruct Australian hegemonic masculinity by elevating the masculine artist to the position of masculine ideal. As I demonstrate, Lindsay’s ‘exclusive male earth’ was not an earth peopled only by men, but rather an earth where the values and desires of men were served by women, or ‘the feminine image’. Chapter 3 investigates the controlling
male gaze in Lindsay’s fiction, focussing in particular on two of his novels which feature a female protagonist, *The Cousin From Fiji* and *Dust or Polish?* Contrasting Lindsay’s own analysis of the novels with a combination of feminist theories of desire and the gaze and close readings, I investigate the limitations of female agency in Lindsay’s work.

Analysing Lindsay’s semi-autobiographical and autobiographical writing in Chapter 4, I consider Lindsay’s mythmaking around the bohemian artist and, particularly, the significance of its homosociality. In Chapter 5 I explore Lindsay’s engagement with the ‘larrikin’ and national identity. I argue that Lindsay’s focus on the pre-teen and adolescent boy allowed him to create an idealised masculine standing outside both inherited or European social norms and the feminised domestic sphere. I also consider the significance of larrikinism in relationship to censorship in Lindsay’s writing, focussing in particular on the publication of *A Curate in Bohemia* and his use of anthropomorphised animals to satirise those in power.

Chapter 6, I investigate Lindsay’s unpublished manuscripts, specifically *La Revanche* - or *Les Traditiones vive le l’irror Gate, A Romance by Marie Corelli* is a handwritten and assembled rough manuscript containing both original narrative and photographs of Norman Lindsay and his friend and future brother-in-law Bill Dyson acting out the scenes. As an example of Lindsay’s uncensored writing it is significant, as its scatological subject matter opens up new discussion of the role of humour and satire in Lindsay’s writing. While exploring its significance within Lindsay’s larger corpus, I also address issues of *La Revanche*’s archival veracity and the value of ephemera.

Chapter 7 places Lindsay in a transnational literary field, linking the masculinity explored in D.H. Lawrence’s *Kangaroo* with Lindsay’s masculinity project. Identifying their concerns regarding Australian constructed and contested masculinity allows for a deeper understanding of the relevance of Lindsay’s project to discussions of masculinity in their contemporary global context. Lawrence, a modernist writer in direct conflict with Lindsay’s narrative realism, positions Lindsay as both internal
and external to global masculinity, highlighting his relevance while giving space to his difference and Australian nationalism.

Despite the popularity of Lindsay as a colourful figure in Australian cultural history, there remains little comprehensive critical analysis of Lindsay’s output, far less of his writing. In critiquing the myths surrounding Lindsay at a culture-maker and breaker, this thesis provides insights into early twentieth-century Australian culture and Lindsay’s role as a novelist. It provides a methodology that accommodates the various fictions of self and nation across mediums and a better understanding of both its textuality and gendering.
Introduction

In the preface to his first published novel, *A Curate in Bohemia*, Norman Lindsay wrote that

A trifling story of this description does not deserve the dignity of a preface, but in my more uneasy moments it seems to demand some sort of sneaking apology.\(^1\)

The apology was to his friends, who featured as characters in the novel, and not to the unknown reader. This ‘mean way of dodging the consequence of tampering with the sacred name of friendship’ was included in the 1936 reprint, with an addendum that noted

This story is dated, not so much by the above date [the original preface was written in 1912 for the 1913 publication], as by the innocence of a pre-war earth. It was possible in those days to have a lark with an exercise of scribbling. Possibly it may seem an experiment in optimism to reproduce the performance at this date.\(^2\)

In these two prefices we can see the oscillating emotions Norman Lindsay attached to his writing, from his first publication in 1913 to his last in 1968, a year before his death. The original preface was an attempt to circumvent any anger or distress his reproduction of his friends into humorous caricatures may cause, or may have caused to be directed at himself, by these ‘awfully decent chaps’ (that he also borrowed his two female characters from life seems of lesser consequence). The added note expresses the lightness of intent in the writing; by focussing on its publication before World War I Lindsay seeks to excuse its frivolous subject matter, a frivolity he feels may be inappropriate following two world wars and a depression.

In contrast to Lindsay’s professed attitude, writing about Norman Lindsay’s writing is not an exercise to be taken lightly. The triviality with which he

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2 Norman Lindsay, *A Curate in Bohemia*, p v-vi
professed to view his writing is not consistent with either the themes of his novels, or their intended effect on his readers. Lindsay’s most well-known written work is a children’s book about a cut-and-come-again pudding with a potty mouth; the popularity of this humorous novel of thievery and gluttony would not have surprised Lindsay himself as it was written to prove his point that children are more interested in food and mischief than fairies and morality tales. Despite the ongoing popularity of *The Magic Pudding*, the relative obscurity of his other written works may have made him question his dedication to the future development of a distinctly Australian literature.

In this thesis, I explore the extent that gender underlies much of the mythmaking surrounding Lindsay and his vision of a distinctly Australian literature. Lindsay asserts the superiority of the male gaze and a culturally specific homosociality that extends and contemporises the larrikin with Australian masculinity in the twentieth century. As this thesis demonstrates, he offers a vision of Australia underpinned by a reconsideration of the role of fiction and art and its gendered production.

From his childhood Lindsay, as well as drawing constantly, ‘had an itch to scribble prose’⁴, writing ‘abortive small novels I was always starting and never completing beyond a chapter or two’⁵ and had to hide from his mother. In an article published in the *Bulletin* in 1929 entitled *Rocks and Mud and Novels* he wrote that the novelist had the power to create Australia.

He can make Australia not only a place worth living in, but a place where life exists. Life is the burgeoning of the human ego by a release of its emotional mechanism as a conscious impact, and not a blind automatonism that grubs for food and clothes. Pictures, poetry, and music reach only the minority, and at that only of those already developed to react to an imagery of life, but prose goes

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⁵ Norman Lindsay, *My Mask: for what little I know of the man behind it*, Angus and Robertson Publishers, Sydney, 1976, p 229
⁶ Norman Lindsay, *My Mask: for what little I know of the man behind it*, p 50
everywhere. It is a rapier and a bludgeon, a brickbat and a hypodermic syringe; and squirm, kick and struggle as it will the human ego must come into its operating theatre for clinical analysis.\(^6\)

Lindsay published eleven novels over his writing career during the first half of the twentieth century, when getting books published locally was difficult due to the stranglehold English (and later American) publishers held on the market. This accomplishment, as well as the numerous editions of many of his works both before and after his death in November 1969, place him within the ranks of successful Australian writers. His novels have not become canonically accepted ‘classics’ and his place as a thriving writer tends to be subsumed by his notoriety as an artist.

While most talented artists were encouraged to travel and study overseas to improve their art, Lindsay was offered a travelling scholarship by eminent Sydney artist and teacher Julian Ashton and refused; his biographer John Hetherington wrote that Lindsay had ‘formed the opinion that Europe devitalised the work of practically every young Australian artist who went there to study’, that it was ‘impoverishing to its national character, and he did not want that to happen to him.’\(^7\)

Enmeshed as he was in the bohemian art worlds of Melbourne and then Sydney, Lindsay’s milieu included many writers as well as artists, and through constant social and journalistic interaction he ensured his vision for the creative arts in Australia was known, if not always supported. In Melbourne, where his life-long bohemian preference for rooms rather than houses was established, his associates included Edward and Bill Dyson, who became his brother-in-law, his brothers Lionel and Percy, artists Hugh McLean and Max Meldrum and publisher Jack Castieau, providing a multitude of minds bent on artistic expression on which to shape his own


ideals which, as he noted in his autobiography *My Mask* was ‘a concept of life and art based on Rabelais and Nietzsche’.

Lindsay’s attraction to Nietzschean philosophy, in particular *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, developed as Lindsay engaged with the horrors of the First World War, culminating in his philosophical doctrine *Creative Effort*. While this text attracted little notice when it was published in 1920, and republished in 1924, Lindsay’s ideas aligned him with the vitalist movement in Australia. In *Australian Literature and the Symbolist Movement*, John Hawke identifies Lindsay’s philosophy as ‘Lindsayan vitalism’, writing

> Although *Creative Effort* must be viewed as a dubious simplification of Symbolist theories, it does coincide with Brennan [academic and poet Christopher Brennan, whom Hawke identifies as central to Symbolist philosophy in Australia] on many points and can be located alongside the Symbolist movement in general.

Vitalism exults Life as a separate experience from material Existence, and for Lindsay Life was found by those who reached a pinnacle of artistic and aesthetic superiority. Hawke paraphrases Lindsay’s views as found in *Creative Effort*: (Great artists, according to Lindsay, ‘are a connection with Life beyond earth’) and he also notes that Lindsay’s interpretation of Nietzsche’s Eternal Recurrence ‘serves to justify a contemptuously Olympian representation of everyday life.’

His move to Sydney in 1901 expanded his group to include *Bulletin* editor J.F. Archibald, Julian Ashton, again his brother Lionel when he returned from Spain, Henry Lawson, Steele Rudd, ‘Banjo’ Paterson, Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton and close friend poet Hugh McCrae. The decided masculine bent of this group is not accidental; for Lindsay femininity was
the motivation behind artistic production rather than a producer of it, and very few female artists or writers became part of his social circle.

Through these relationships, his high-profile exhibitions, his cartooning work for the *Bulletin* and *The Lone Hand*, as well as the articles he published in both magazines, Lindsay developed into a person able to influence the turnings of Australian art and letters; he supported writers whose work he admired by agreeing to illustrate their novels or introducing them to one of his many contacts. Poet Hugh McCrae and author Louis Stone were among the writers Lindsay championed, as well as poet Douglas Stewart and war-writer Lawson Glassop, whose manuscript of *We Were the Rats* turned up at Springwood in a ‘weather-beaten army kit-bag’\(^{12}\). His biographer John Hetherington wrote that ‘...he went on looking for poets and writers. He could never resist the possibilities lurking in a manuscript.’\(^{13}\)

**Significance of the thesis: looking at Lindsay the writer.**

I argue that Norman Lindsay’s novels, while not an extension or ekphrasis of his visual art, do hold a place of significance in the formation of a distinctive and successful Australian literature. This significance can be found in many areas of literary production: the originality of their subject matter, the promulgation of a philosophical vision, and a focus on a specific masculine experience that he desired to characterise as part of a national identity. For Lindsay literature, whether novel or verse, was integral to the development of national identity. He wrote

> In Australia we have arrived at that point in automatic national growth where its mechanism must be consciously defined, or there will be no further growth worth defining. The novel must come, or we will remain unknown to ourselves and non-existent to other

\(^{12}\) John Hetherington, *Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian*, p 223

\(^{13}\) Ibid.
peoples, save as dumping-ground for their commodities, mental or otherwise.\textsuperscript{14}

Norman Lindsay resituates and renovates Australian bush tropes for a newly urban Australia, locating many of his novels in inner urban Melbourne and Sydney. He also investigates the interior adolescent and adult romantic life in country towns. While he does not limit himself to male characters, his female characters are never able to slide out from under the male gaze of both the author and his implied male reader. Five of his eleven published novels contain some element of autobiography, and his remaining six novels contain characters and circumstances that borrow either slightly or significantly from Lindsay’s own experiences or those of his friends and acquaintances.

In much of the scholarship around Lindsay’s writing, it is the connection to reality, on the one hand, and the validity of the imagination, on the other, that come under discussion. For example, the imaginative leaps evident in \textit{The Magic Pudding} and \textit{The Flyaway Highway}, Lindsay’s two novels for children, involve anthropomorphic animals and value creative, active imagination above mundane life. The representation of ‘ordinary’ life in his novels for adults sees an avid exploration of interpersonal motivation but is offset by a difficulty to clearly imagine three-dimensional human characters.

While Lindsay’s writing style has not been critically appreciated, I contend that his humour and the cultural specificity of his work had currency when it was first produced and still shapes aspects of national identity today. Spanning half a century, his novels were published in Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Even when comedic, his characters support Lindsay’s philosophies of creativity, nationhood, and masculinity via internal monologue, or dramatic realisation.

Lindsay fought hard against the expatriation of Australian artists and writers overseas, although the basis for this resistance can be attributed

\textsuperscript{14} Norman Lindsay, \textit{Rocks and Mud and Novels}, Bulletin, Sydney, May 1929, reproduced in \textit{Norman Lindsay on Art, Life and Literature}, p 79
both to his lack of artistic success in England as well as to his natural affinity with Australia. He understood the need to try a talent in a larger pool than Australia provided, but as he is quoted as saying to his son Philip when he wanted to travel to England, ‘It’s unfair for creative Australians to go running off overseas.’\(^\text{15}\) He wrote about Australian people in distinctly ordinary urban, suburban and country scenes, demonstrating the ridiculousness of love and the power of art. Woven into all his novels is a sense of an idealised masculinity being explored and affirmed. This idealised masculinity can be linked to Norman’s youthful adoration of, and adult schism with, his elder brother Lionel. Lionel Lindsay’s biographer Joanna Mendelssohn wrote ‘One of the problems with *Halfway to Anywhere*, as with all Norman’s fiction, is that it is in itself a weapon in the quarrel between the brothers.’\(^\text{16}\)

### Lindsay as Novelist

Kerin Day notes that Lindsay was ‘increasingly convinced of the importance of the novel to a country’s culture’, quoting Lindsay saying in a 1934 interview with *B.P. Magazine* that

> The novel is the most suitable means for reaching the minds of the people…The novel penetrates everywhere; it is the cheapest and easiest method of distributing ideas. We cannot emphasise too much its importance in making Australia part of the great movement in the world’s advance in culture.\(^\text{17}\)

Day further explores Lindsay’s engagement with imagination in his novels, discerning

> In the works of Flaubert and Zola Lindsay objects not so much to the realistic presentation of material, the recording of everyday events, as to such recording unenlivened by any vision (either on

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\(^\text{15}\) John Hetherington, *Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian*, p 178


\(^\text{17}\) Kerin Day, *A Study of the Aesthetic Theory and Creative Writings of Norman Lindsay, and their Relationship to the Work of Kenneth Slessor and R.D. Fitzgerald*, p 22
the part of the author or the characters themselves), such as gives meaning to daily affairs. The writer's perspective is urged as of crucial importance. Lindsay is not so much interested in the literature of fact as the literature of the imaginative sense of fact; his concern is always with the effort that imposes a vision, with imaginative effort.\textsuperscript{18}

His combative engagement with cultural strictures began with critical responses to his drawing \textit{Pollice Verso}, shown in the annual exhibition of the Royal Art Society of New South Wales in 1904, a drawing Lindsay spoke of as ‘the first affirmation of my credo’. Lindsay created a reputation through a flagrant dismissal of predominant conservative Christian values, fashioning ‘genius’ on Romantic provocation and occasional social transcendence. The \textit{Sydney Morning Herald} art critic wrote of \textit{Pollice Verso} and Lindsay’s other exhibited works that ‘the subjects suggest an artist with an imagination in an advanced stage of decomposition.’\textsuperscript{19}

In 1929 he wrote in the \textit{Bulletin}

A people may gain a certain aesthetic value from the art of other nationalities, but their individual consciousness will not be deeply stirred by it. A Sydney girl may read of the emotional disturbances of a London girl in a novel about London and be entertained, but there the process ends. She must meet herself in type matter hurrying down George Street to bump into the boy at the post-office corner who takes her to Manly on Sunday before her own performance of that simple itinerary in the emotions becomes an amazing reality to her. The personality of a city which becomes so mysteriously an identification of the people who live in it, has nothing to do with architects and aldermen and kings and legislators, but with novels.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{18} Kerin Day, \textit{A Study of the Aesthetic Theory and Creative Writings of Norman Lindsay, and their Relationship to the Work of Kenneth Slessor and R.D Fitzgerald}, p 35-36

\textsuperscript{19} John Hetherington, \textit{Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian}, p 57

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
His concern about the lack of an Australian literature telling specifically Australian stories is partially born out; Nicole Moore writes in *The Literature of Australia* that

In the 1920’s, under the colonial book-trade agreements of the British empire, Australians imported 3.5 million books annually. The most popular authors were British, in a broadly Anglophilic reading culture, while the best-selling novel in 1935 was the perennially popular detective fiction, Fergus Hume’s *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*, from 1886. Angus and Robertson, then Australia’s only really successful publishing house, sustained itself through the 1930s and 40’s by publishing the books of Ion Idriess and Frank Clune…

Significantly, Drusilla Modjeska notes that in the 1930s ‘women were producing the best fiction of the period and they were, for the first and indeed the only time, a dominant influence in Australian literature’[^22^]. Their publishers, however, remained predominantly British or American. Another Australian publisher of mainly pulp fiction, the New South Wales Bookstall Company, which produced Australian novels throughout the first half of the twentieth century, including Norman Lindsay’s first novel *A Curate in Bohemia*, is not considered to have contributed to the flowering of an Australian literature by most commentators.

Lindsay was convinced that Australia was the site of the next artistic Renaissance in the 1920’s and that it would be distinguished from the pretensions of European modernism. A series of financial circumstances in 1931-32 forced the price of imported books up by 35 percent, which Lindsay interpreted as the perfect situation for the introduction of an Australian-based publishing house.

This, he reasoned, could open the way for Australia to launch a native book publishing industry on a daring and adventurous scale,

thus creating conditions in which a vigorous school of creative writers would thrive and grow.\textsuperscript{23}

This event coincided with Lindsay’s post-\textit{Redheap} censorship in 1930 and the 1931 banning of the Norman Lindsay Number of \textit{Art in Australia} for ‘obscenity’\textsuperscript{24}. Fear of arrest and disgust at the eagerness to label and censor his work motivated his journey to the United State of America. Significantly, in America he was considered a writer rather than an artist. As he was unsure whether he would ever recover from the creative block that prevented him painting for nearly five years from about 1929 to 1934, the American focus on his writing and their admiration for it was a pleasant contrast to the nastiness he had fled Australia to escape.

While much of this thesis explores Lindsay’s writing in an Australian context, placing him within a transnational context allows for further understanding of his approach to masculinity and feminine appropriation. David Herbert (DH) Lawrence wrote \textit{Kangaroo}, a semi-autobiographical exploration of his experiences in Sydney and coastal New South Wales in 1922, and his engagement with contested colonial masculinity both complements and contrasts with Lindsay’s approach.

Lawrence’s protagonist Richard Lovat Somers positions himself as a transgressive artist observing society and refusing to engage, but also superior to what he sees as society’s weaknesses. Lindsay’s self-positioning mirrors that of Somers, who is largely based on Lawrence; Lawrence’s more sophisticated and educated analysis of gender construction provides a counterpoint to Lindsay’s project. Lawrence’s interiority contrasts with Lindsay’s less nuanced satire, highlighting both writers’ deep ambivalence around productions of hegemonic masculinity.

Lindsay himself considered humour to be ‘a supreme expression of the indomitable human spirit’\textsuperscript{25}. When he achieved his best results, he

\textsuperscript{23} John Hetherington, \textit{Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian}, p 192
\textsuperscript{24} However, it is possible the result was due to backroom manoeuvrings rather than an ill-supported case. See John Hetherington, \textit{Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian}, p 188
\textsuperscript{25} Norman Lindsay, Introduction to Edward Dyson’s \textit{The Golden Shanty: Short Stories}, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1963, p x
managed to mix humour and pathos in equal measure, an example being Cora’s accidental manslaughter of her grandmother in *Age of Consent*.

She was whacking at Cora with a ragged length of paling, insensate with anger at a defiance of her rights, her authority, her just revenges. Cora made nothing of the paling; she darted in suddenly and grappled with the old woman, tugging at something clutched in her claws. The old woman dropped her stick to grip it with both hands, tugged all over the place by Cora’s furious jerks to snatch it from her. She was whistling maledictions, but no jerking could detach her clutch on that bag, which held a panacea to all her evils. The temper behind Cora’s level brows went suddenly berserk. She put forth the strength of her potent muscles in a violent swing which lifted the old woman off her feet and sent her sailing into the air. An appalling screech went up with her, cut sharply short, like a clicked-off gramophone. Then there was only Cora standing in the yard with her breast heaving anger and a coloured bag in her hand.26

Accompanied by an illustration of the altercation, Lindsay juxtaposes Cora’s youth and strength against her crone grandmother to great comic effect, creating an image of Cora spinning around like a merry-go-round and her grandmother ‘whistling’ but holding on for the ride. The image is broken with the ‘screech…cut sharply short’, and the final flourish in the scene finds Cora the surprised victor and the grandmother vanquished.

26 Norman Lindsay, *Age of Consent*, Ure Smith Pty Ltd, North Sydney, 1968, p 213
Although this scene features the protagonist artist Bradly Mudgett only as a bystander, it is for his benefit that Cora’s grandmother is removed so precipitously. Masculine artistic imperative required Cora to be available both as a model and, finally, as a lover, and Cora’s alcoholic crone of a grandmother proves useful both for humorous effect and as an obstacle device for the narrative.
A close inspection of the publication dates of Lindsay’s written works demonstrates a period of great writing intensity from 1930-1938, when he published seven books, all fiction or autobiographical-fiction. There is a break from 1938-1945, when he published *The Cousin from Fiji*, then he published *Halfway to Anywhere*, the middle book in his Redheap trilogy, in 1947, followed by his last work of pure fiction, *Dust or Polish?* in 1950 (*Rooms and Houses: An Autobiographical Novel*, was published in 1968 but contains much autobiographical material, as the title establishes).

One possible explanation for this period of intense output is his artistic block, which he called his ‘phase of the Hunchback’, a ‘personal adaptation of an idea expounded in A Vision, an abstruse work of philosophy which the Irish poet, WB Yeats, had published…’.27 Hetherington, too, notes that “He would go to his studio and sit for hours with a pencil and a blank sheet of paper in front of him, waiting for images to form in his mind; nothing would come, or at any rate nothing new.”28 Yet Lindsay did produce work for the *Bulletin* in 1932 after a long spell (he resigned in 1923). He could ‘even invent a range of characters for whatever novel or short story he happened to be writing as a pastime and steer them through a pattern of hilarious or dramatic situations…’29.

Furthermore, his routine at 12 Bridge Street, his Sydney apartment for nearly 10 years from 1934, involved one to two hours of novel writing in the morning before starting his oil-painting.30 However, not all the novels published in this period were written at the time; for instance, *A Cautious Amorist* was published in 1932 but, according to Hetherington, it was written in 1912, prior to the publication of *A Curate in Bohemia*.

Lindsay’s success as a writer can be variously gauged; his output of eleven adult novels is significant, especially for a writer who was also engaged in prolific artistic output and, with his *Bulletin* work, the deadlines of weekly journalism. His novels have been published into three markets successfully; Australia, the UK and the United States, and his novels have

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27 John Hetherington, *Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian*, p 180
28 John Hetherington, *Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian*, p 179
29 John Hetherington, *Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian*, p 180
30 John Hetherington, *Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian*, p 209
been reprinted in many editions in all those markets. His most successful novel *A Cautious Amorist*, though little known in Australia, was originally published in 1932 in the United States by Farrar and Rhinehart and ‘reprinted in hardback editions by two other New York publishers throughout the 1930s and 40s’. Lindsay called it ‘a small dollar mine’ and wrote in *My Mask*, published in 1970 just after his death that it was ‘selling to this day in repeated cheap editions’. Its UK publisher, T Werner Laurie, reprinted it in hardcover from its original printing in 1934 until at least 1951; Jack Lindsay wrote in his autobiography that the book ‘sold millions’. Thea Astley named *The Magic Pudding* and *The Flyaway Highway* as two of her favourite childhood novels, indicating the formative influence his fiction had on later Australian writers.

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32 Norman Lindsay, *My Mask: for what little I know of the man behind it*, p 238
Norman Lindsay's Published Literary Works (Excluding Art Books)

### Novels for Adults

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<td>London</td>
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<td>The Cautious Amorist</td>
<td>1932</td>
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<td>The Magic Pudding</td>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Angus and Robertson</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
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<td>The Flyaway Highway</td>
<td>1936</td>
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### Reminiscences, Criticism, Philosophy

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
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<tr>
<td>Creative Effort</td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>Art in Australia</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
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<td>Madam Life’s Lovers</td>
<td>1929</td>
<td>Fanfrolico Press</td>
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<td>Hyperborea</td>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Fanfrolico Press</td>
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<td>Bohemians of the Bulletin</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Angus and Robertson</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Scribblings of an Idle Mind</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Lansdowne Press</td>
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### Autobiography

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<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>Angus and Robertson</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
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Patricia Holt assesses the sales of Lindsay's first published novel, *A Curate in Bohemia*, as 28,000 between 1913 when it was originally published and 1921, noting that it was 'constantly reprinted' by original publisher the New South Wales Bookstall Company, and that its London publisher T Werner Laurie sold 64,000 copies between 1937 and 1941.\(^{34}\)

It is also interesting that, according to Holt, two of Lindsay's novels, *Mr Gresham and Olympus*, (New York, 1932, also published as *Miracles by Arrangement* in London in the same year) and *Pan in the Parlour* (New York, 1933; London, 1934) have not been published or distributed in Australia at all, even though *Pan in the Parlour* sold 38,000 copies over eight English editions from 1934 to 1939.\(^{35}\) In Australia in the early part of the twentieth century ‘A book that sold 2000 copies was considered a best-seller’\(^{36}\), while C.J Dennis’ *Songs of a Sentimental Bloke*, first published in 1915 and ‘a rapid and enduring seller’, achieved sales of 100,000 in its first four years.\(^{37}\)

Miles Franklin, who was publishing over almost the same period as Lindsay, published fifteen novels (although not always under her own name), the most commercially successful being the 1945 Australian Pocket Library edition of *Old Blastus of Bandicoot*, which sold 25,000 copies in its first year and netted her just over £311. By comparison, *My Brilliant Career* sold ‘several thousand copies…in a colonial edition (1902-1904), but that meant lower royalties, a mere £27/8/10 over two years’.\(^{38}\)

*Age of Consent*, originally published by T Werner Laurie in London in 1938, was not published in Australia until Ure Smith published it in 1962,

\(^{34}\) Patricia Mary Holt, *Norman Lindsay's Modern Art: Pictures and Novels with Spirit*, p 130

\(^{35}\) Ibid. Holt notes that she has seen a 1939 hardback edition of *Pan in the Parlour*.


although it ran to nine hardcover reprints between 1938 and 1951 in England. Holt writes of its American reception

In Canada and the United States, apart from the hardcover editions of *Age of Consent* being published by Farrar and Rhinehart followed by Grosset and Dunlap, cheap pocket paperbacks also were published from the late 1940s through to 1960 at least. The 1948 Pocket Books edition of *Age of Consent* had six printings in that year alone, while the New York Bantam Pocket Books edition of 1959 had at least two printings. Norman even had a readership in Denmark; a Danish translation of *The Cautious Amorist* appeared there in 1936, while a Danish translation of *Age of Consent* appeared in 1939.39

As Holt notes, *Age of Consent* became popular in Australia following the production of a film in the late 1960s directed by Michael Powell, produced by Michael Powell and James Mason, and starring James Mason and Helen Mirren. This film, according to Holt, was still showing to ‘packed cinemas in Sydney’ at the time of Lindsay’s death in November 1969. This collected evidence of popularity and sales demonstrates that Lindsay was an internationally recognised and popular author whose books were well-read and appreciated.

As a writer, Lindsay always wrote what he valued and found entertaining; Kerin Day, in her 1976 unpublished thesis identifies his themes as ‘concern…with the effort that imposes a vision, with imaginative effort’.40 She also notes that the ‘feminine image’ is vital to Lindsay’s written work:

> The importance to the imagination of the feminine image, and the necessity of the imagination to man’s effort to apprehend the fullness of life and develop his own potential…41

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39 Patricia Mary Holt, *Norman Lindsay’s Modern Art: Pictures and Novels with Spirit*, p 178
41 Kerin Day, *A Study of the Aesthetic Theory and Creative Writings of Norman Lindsay, and their Relationship to the Work of Kenneth Sessor and RD FitzGerald*, p 36
Exploring the mythologised ‘Norman Lindsay’

The mythology of Norman Lindsay is a contested one; while the existence of a narrative larger than the person himself certainly exists, it is a disputed narrative. Opinions regarding his art, his writing, and his influence on the development of Australian culture vary widely, and all can be considered to have influence on Lindsay’s wider mythological scaffolding. For instance, James McAuley writes of Lindsay’s influence on the poet Douglas Stewart.

Stewart’s literary values come from within the romantic stream. At the head of the stream is Sir Walter Scott with his narrative forms, his contact with the ballad tradition, his healthy vigour, and his mixture of romance and realism. But downstream, as we are reminded from time to time, are camped the Australian vitalists, including Norman Lindsay and Hugh McCrae, and the stream is not the same after it has passed them.42

This statement imbues Lindsay with significant influence on the development of Stewart; Bernard Smith in his *Australian Painting 1788-2000* also finds that Lindsay had significant positive influence on Australian art.

Prior to the First World War, Norman Lindsay’s art and thought exercised a stimulating and civilizing effect upon Australian culture. The bent of his genius lay in formal experiment or formal construction, though technical problems and their solution delighted him; it lay in his use of art as a moral weapon to create an apotheosis of the *élan-vital* he believed in, and to belabour orthodoxy.43

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In the first chapter of her book on the Lindsay family, *Letters and Liars: Norman Lindsay and the Lindsay family*, Joanna Mendelssohn outlined the Lindsay myth in great detail, beginning, like all good stories, with a sense of time and place; ‘There once was an artist who lived in the Blue Mountains above the city by the sea.’ The fairy-tale nature of Lindsay’s mythologised life continues till the chapter concludes with ‘The story of Norman Lindsay is one of the great myths of our culture, yet so much of it is untrue.’

Mendelssohn trawled through three libraries worth of letters between Lindsay family members, initially in her research for a biography of Lionel Lindsay, and found that the archives were a slippery landscape of the hidden and the obvious. The fallacy that truth hides in the archives for the persistent is a seductive one, but for this family of artistic notables truth was a prism of coloured half-truths. One of the texts I have used, John Hetherington’s authorised biography of Lindsay, Mendelssohn found to have deliberately excluded an affair Lindsay had with painter Margaret Coen, that Norman and his sister Mary wrote letters to present their own version of facts and events on the understanding those letters would be archived, and that Rose Lindsay had curated/censored much of what had been deposited in the archive.

Robert Menzies wrote of Norman in his foreword to Daryl Lindsay’s book of the Lindsay family *The Leafy Tree: My Family*, that ‘…his versatility as an artist and illustrator and author and encourager of the young must be almost unique…In both a literary and an artistic sense, Norman has provoked controversy and has sometimes sustained superficial injuries. But his reputation will survive. He must have a great place in the history of a remarkable family.’ Menzies, who was closer to both Lionel and Daryl, placed his estimation of Norman as part of ‘the history of a remarkable family’, one that has ‘written a remarkable chapter in the artistic history of Australia – unsurpassed in any family story…’

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44 Joanna Mendelssohn, *Letters and Liars: Norman Lindsay and the Lindsay Family*, p 1-5
45 Robert G Menzies, Foreword, in Lindsay, Daryl, *The Leafy Tree: My Family*, p ix
46 Robert G Menzies, Foreword, in Lindsay, Daryl, *The Leafy Tree: My Family*, p vii-ix
My own explorations in the Mitchell and La Trobe Libraries, and the National Library of Australia have led me, however, to diverge from Mendelssohn, as my focus oscillated between Lindsay’s published and unpublished writings. It is possible that what an author chooses not to publish is just as telling as the work that is in the public domain. Lindsay’s letters elaborate on ideas and philosophies he repeated in print, but provide a less sanitised version, as does the unpublished manuscript *La Revanche* - or *Les Traditiones vive le l’irror Gate*, *A Romance by Marie Corelli*. Consideration of *La Revanche*, untrammelled by censorious editors and publishers, leads to consideration of Lindsay’s self-censorship when publication was extant. How reliable, then, are his novels as an indication of his thoughts, values, ideals?

As Mendelssohn noted, the level of fact supporting mythopoeic production might be negligible, but its influence can be repeated and affirmed even when the intention is to refute its existence. Norman’s brother Daryl, in his book on the Lindsay family dedicated a chapter to Norman but thought that ‘

…for many years the myth of Norman Lindsay, the protagonist of the nude, free love and anti-Christian doctrine, lived on in the public mind. But such things are shortlived and we are only mildly amused by it all today.47

In her unpublished thesis examining the publication histories of Norman’s writing with a fascinating in-depth analysis of Norman as an illustrator of his own and other’s works, Patricia Holt examined articles and photographs that demonstrate some of the more significant steps in the production of the Norman Lindsay-artist-genius mythology. An article in the March 1923 edition of *The Home* magazine featured an article on Norman Lindsay’s hands, comparing them to 16th century etcher Albrecht Dürer’s hands, with an accompanying reproduction of a Dürer drawing of hands ‘almost certainly his own’ and a photograph of Lindsay’s hands in the same position. The caption reads

47 Daryl Lindsay, *The Leafy Tree: My Family*, p 57
The hands of Norman Lindsay, 20th century. These are the hands of a modern master of engraving, and appear to be a close reproduction of the hands of Dürer. Compare the relative length of the fingers, and the general appearance of acute sensitivity.48

A previous article ‘Norman Lindsay at Work,’ published in the same magazine in December 1922 again connects Lindsay to great master artists Rembrandt and Dürer.

Experts state that it takes a period of twenty years for the sufficient development of the muscles necessary for fine engraving on wood. Norman Lindsay has the natural hand of the wood engraver, and the muscles already are in a perfect stage of development for this class of work. His hands are 20th century reproductions of 16th century Dürer’s – tireless, flexible, accurate. Is this intention or accident?49

Linking these two artists allows The Home, aside from re-using copy, to raise Lindsay’s profile as an artist to that of a great master without examining his artwork at all. He is physically suited to his work as an etcher, and this assumption of a genetic predisposition to art would have suited Lindsay’s own philosophies regarding the few true artists being connected through time with the gods of Olympus. The rhetorical question concluding the paragraph leads the reader to infer that the likeness cannot be coincidental, therefore Norman Lindsay is a master of arts descended from past masters by predisposition if not by blood. As a strut in the scaffolding of mythology, it is a powerful link to make.

Holt further notes that

Rayner Hoff, who designed the Neo-Classical statuary and decorations for the War Memorial in Sydney’s Hyde Park, also made a portrait bust of Norman in the 1920’s. Hoff then found that ‘Although Norman’s head does not look like the head of an ancient

48 Patricia Mary Holt, Norman Lindsay’s Modern Art: Pictures and Novels with Spirit, p 213
49 Patricia Mary Holt, Norman Lindsay’s Modern Art: Pictures and Novels with Spirit, p 212
Greek, measurements have proved that it has a striking resemblance.\textsuperscript{50}

By making plain the deliberate and considered construction of the mythopoeic Norman Lindsay, the place his writing holds in the larger context of his creative production can be examined and understood.

**Norman Lindsay and Gender**

As this thesis demonstrates, investigating Norman Lindsay’s writing and encompassing mythology becomes, necessarily, the study of a project in gender reconstruction. Lindsay’s representation of the feminine is an integral part of his mythologised narrative; less obvious is his endeavour to reconstruct hegemonic masculinity.

As R W Connell notes, gender is an unstable state; ‘It is a becoming, a condition actively under construction’.

The pioneering French feminist Simone de Beauvoir put this in a classic phrase: ‘One is not born, but becomes, a woman.’ Though the positions of women and men are not simply parallel, the principle is also true for men: one is not born masculine, but acquires and enacts masculinity, and so becomes a man.\textsuperscript{51}

Lindsay’s fiction writing engages with gender constantly. For Lindsay, the ‘female form image’ in art is the primary motivation, asserting that a youthful experience of the female body ‘stamped on my mind an image of feminine desirability which has endured to this day’ and that his art is a constant attempt to reclaim in adulthood his young sexual co-experimenter. ‘Girls, to perform their function on the male ego, must be viewed from an exclusively male earth’, he concluded in his autobiography, and this binary view of gender, and its vital role in art and literature, continually defined his work.

\textsuperscript{50} Patricia Mary Holt, *Norman Lindsay’s Modern Art: Pictures and Novels with Spirit*, p 214

Lindsay’s artistic and literary production was both an attempt to reframe masculinity, and a method through which that re-imagining could be reproduced. As Edley and Wetherall note:

any adequate theory of men and masculinity has to reflect the fact that masculinities are both ‘structured’ in dominance and, in turn, help maintain or reproduce that dominance.\(^52\)

In relation to Lindsay’s writing, the internal narrative and structural processes, and the intended outcomes for readers, are formed within a dominant hegemonic masculinity that both reinforces contemporary binary gender performance while attempting to disrupt normative Australian cultural expressions of masculinity with an idealised artistic masculinity performed as dominant against normative femininity.

In taking the literary biographical approach to Lindsay’s enactment of masculinity, his experience of childhood illness and restriction of activity while enviously observing his active, handsome, intelligent and physically capable brother Lionel can be argued to have had a profound impact on Lindsay’s construction of his own masculinity, and following from that, a masculine ideal. Lionel’s change of focus from astronomy to art allowed Lindsay to maintain his emulation of his brother’s artistic example, further cemented when Lionel arranged for Norman’s escape from the family home to an artistic bohemian idyll (in Norman’s eyes) in inner-urban Melbourne. Connell notes:

People construct themselves as masculine or feminine. We claim a place in the gender order – or respond to the place we have been given – by the way we conduct ourselves in everyday life.\(^53\)

In the late 19th and early 20th century Australia was struggling with a painful shift in hegemonic masculinity under pressure from world events and colonial industrialisation and urbanisation. The Australian ideal of the bushman, the independent, capable, working man who tamed the wide-
open spaces but still felt a British connection was making way for a nationalistic male who felt patriotic towards both the Empire and Australia, was militarily skilled and prepared to become part of a team that would defend Australia (the Empire) from perceived threats. This shift echoed the change in Australia’s global position from untamed colonies to a Federation with national responsibilities.

For the purposes of this thesis the focus is on the ambition to construct a divergent hegemonic masculinity not as posited against the hegemonic feminine but as a separate ‘ideal’ fashioned against the prevailing hegemonic masculinity it sought to usurp. Martin Crotty explains this as an exploration ‘of what it means to be ‘manly’.

‘Manliness’ is the ideal that, through various social, cultural and legal practices, oppresses all those whom it excludes.

For Lindsay, the prevailing masculine ideal was of physical capability, laconic individualism, the ‘bushman’; ‘the average bush type today…covered by the mentality of Henry Lawson’54 and, latterly, the ‘larrikin’. Through his writing, Lindsay attempted to establish a counter-masculinity, not necessarily as a replacement ideal, but certainly in a position of equal significance in the ongoing gender construction project being undertaken in Australia.

Laura Mulvey’s Freudian theory of the ‘controlling male gaze’ provides a supportive plank to the analysis of Lindsay’s reconstructive masculinity project; as an artist, he elevates the male gaze to a level of supreme understanding, relegating any feminine participation in the process to an objectified position. As Mulvey writes in her seminal article ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’

Woman then stands in patriarchal culture as a signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing

54 Norman Lindsay, Rocks and Mud and Novels, in Norman Lindsay: On Art, Life and Literature, p 78
them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer, not maker, of meaning.\textsuperscript{55}

As both a writer and artist Lindsay exerted a controlling masculine gaze, manipulating figures and characters to create meaning while also maintaining for his audience an assumed masculine gaze. In his writing, Lindsay ensures through his narrative positioning that his authorial male gaze is extended to his readers - he assumes a masculine gaze on their behalf. So, by doubling the control exerted upon the feminine within his texts, Lindsay is attempting to position his own ideal masculinity as controller of both the written word and the interpretation of the word. Mulvey again

The man controls the film fantasy and also emerges as the representative of power in a further sense: as the bearer of the look of the spectator, transferring it behind the screen to neutralise the extra-diegetic tendencies represented by woman as spectacle.\textsuperscript{56}

Lindsay’s controlling male gaze can be extended to his female protagonists, as explored further in Chapter 2. Through appropriation of the feminine, Lindsay’s controlling male gaze is assumed for his female characters, who are not permitted a view outside the male authorial perspective. While there has been much theoretical discussion surrounding male writers writing the feminine, Lindsay’s writing was not of sufficient sophistication to allow him to truly inhabit a feminine, or feminist, perspective through his writing, nor do I think he would have wished to. Lindsay always wrote as an omnipotent narrator; he was not able to relinquish his authorial, male controlling gaze.

For Mulvey, the controlling male gaze is linked to Freud’s concept of scopophilia, or pleasure in the look. As an active desire, scopophilia requires a passive object.

\textsuperscript{55} Laura Mulvey, \textit{Visual and Other Pleasures}, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1989, p 15

\textsuperscript{56} Laura Mulvey, \textit{Visual and Other Pleasures}, p 20
In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly.\textsuperscript{57}

For the purposes of this thesis, the phrase ‘which is styled accordingly’ has the most significance. The passivity inherent in the object being ‘styled’ requires of the subject the active, projected fantasy role. If Lindsay’s masculinity project is his determining fantasy, then his refusal to relinquish his controlling masculine gaze by giving agency to his object becomes understandable; to do so would have destroyed the ideals of artistic hegemonic masculinity he was attempting to establish.

\textbf{Lindsay as Artist}

The critical reception of Lindsay’s art has been significantly inconsistent and often focussed on controversy rather than the work itself. Print collections of Lindsay’s work date back to 1918 with \textit{The Pen Drawings of Norman Lindsay} and extend across all his mediums, including pen and ink, etching (\textit{The Etchings of Norman Lindsay}, 1927, \textit{Pen Drawings}, 1924, \textit{Norman Lindsay’s Pen Drawings}, 1931, \textit{Selected Pen Drawings}, 1968), water colour (\textit{Norman Lindsay Water Colour Book}, 1939), oil painting (\textit{Paintings in Oil}, 1945), his ship models (\textit{Norman Lindsay’s Ship Models}, 1966, and pencil drawings (\textit{Pencil Drawings}, 1969).

In \textit{The Australian Companion to Australian Art}, Norman Lindsay is mentioned twice; once as one of the artists represented by Gayfield Shaw’s gallery and once as a negative responder to George Lambert’s claim that Australia was ‘out of touch with contemporary trends in Australian art’ following the First World War.

\begin{quote}
…he received a rapid counterattack from the stay-at-home Norman Lindsay, who had travelled to London before the War but returned without success, his response to successful expatriates coloured.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{57} Laura Mulvey, \textit{Visual and Other Pleasures}, p 19
Lindsay rejected the idea that an artist could gain anything by studying abroad, and tartly suggested that those who needed to look at other’s artists’ work in order to learn how to paint lacked artistry.\(^58\)

The *Cambridge Companion* references an article, ‘The Transplanted Artist’, that Lindsay published in *The Home* (1921), to condemn Lindsay as being both narrow in his artistic understanding and bitter regarding international views of his art. While Lindsay abhorred modernism, he had significant artistic knowledge and was well-read. Lindsay found his international reception, particularly in London, disappointing, although his art was shown in many Artist Society exhibitions in London. His 1909-10 trip to England was successful in securing the publication of his *Satyricon* illustrations by Ralph Straus, which sold out; however, the publication of his illustrations to the *Memoirs of Casanova* fell through, and, according to his biographer John Hetherington ‘recognition on the scale he had hoped for was slow in coming’.\(^59\) However, while London and Paris did not immediately take to Lindsay, the feeling was mutual. Rather than finding that Europe held the key to enhancing his art, Lindsay felt ‘benumbed and strangulate[ed]’\(^60\).

Norman liked Paris no better than London. He believed that, artistically, both cities were degenerate. The weight of the Post-Impressionist movement was being felt, and the names of Cézanne, Van Gogh and Gauguin were being spoken in the hushed tones hitherto reserved for Norman’s artistic gods such as Rubens, Titian and Rembrandt. It made him splutter curses.

As an artist, Lindsay held that Europe smothered his creative impulse. Moreover, he found the increasing inclusion of women in the art world disturbing. The Academy, to whose training he was commended, was full of ‘modern Hottentots’. Hetherington argues that if Lindsay had

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\(^{59}\) John Hetherington, *Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian*, p 92

\(^{60}\) John Hetherington, *Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian*, p 93
persevered his reception in Europe may have improved, but it is possible Lindsay did not wish it to improve. When Lindsay returned to Australia he felt no nostalgia for European art, which is borne out by his consistent dismissal of European-based modernism.

The slightly more recent *Australian Art: A History* provides a lengthier analysis of Lindsay’s role in the progression of Australian art, and discerns connections between his art and that of art nouveau painter and printmaker Sydney Long:

> While Sydney Long may not have had any direct disciples, his image of Australia as a classicised Arcadia did find reflection in the work of Norman Lindsay…Norman Lindsay fully embraced the image of Australia as a site for classical mythology; he was prolific, quick to court controversy and was a brilliant and evocative draughtsman who absorbed the linear flourishes of art nouveau to create a highly personal style, which was often given to erotic content.\(^6^1\)

Rather than dismissing Lindsay’s art, *Australian Art: A History* engages in a critical dialogue with his motivation, technique and style. Part of the treatment of Lindsay in *The Australian Companion to Australian Art* is due to its agenda to ‘focus international attention on the ways Australia has contributed to a paradigm shift in world art history’. *Australian Art: A History* situates him within the Australian artistic milieu rather than standing outside it. Discussions of his innovative dot etching technique addressing both his style and impact, (‘through his obsessive imagery and his own improvised technical strategies he certainly attained greater notoriety than any of the other painter-etchers’), give a more balanced view of his position and influence on Australian art.

His *Bulletin* cartoon work gained him an appreciative and wide audience from 1901 when he began and for a lot of his career. According to Lindsay biographer John Hetherington he had ‘the gift of reaching men’s hearts and minds and bellies through their eyes,’ a potent phrase to describe an

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artist who, as well as an acclaimed cartoonist became, on the advent of World War I, a highly effective propagandist. His images of Germans as apes standing on piles of skulls formed a dominant part of the pro-war dialogue in Australia, and mention of them in contemporary circles still brings nods of understanding. It is interesting to note that governmental bureaucracies had no compunction about utilising Lindsay’s artistic skills when circumstances required, and had just as little compunction about destroying his artistic reputation through censorship and litigation.

In *Australian Art* Andrew Sayers links Lindsay’s early popularity to the rise of black-and-white art as a medium as a result of photographic reproduction superseding wood-engraving from the late 1880’s.

The adulation of the pen-and-ink technique of Norman Lindsay was a manifestation of the idea, put forward by A.G. Stephens in 1912, that it was now possible ‘to defend a preference for black-and-white to painting’.  

Sayers judges the comment of British artist William Orpen that ‘Lindsay was not so much a scandalous artist, but simply a bad artist’, as ‘completely just’. Yet he also describes Lindsay’s art as ‘virtuoso’ and ‘elaborately finished’, producing a complex and contradictory engagement with Lindsay’s work. His argument that Norman’s art differed from his brother Lionel’s due to his ‘more complete’ fantasy world is seen as detrimental to the standing of his art. Sayers notes

…there has never been an artist in Australia whose work has been more obsessively devoted to the repetitious depiction of a completely imaginary world.  

In summation, Sayers suggests that the Lindsays ‘were to have a profound impact on the history of Australian art’ and demonstrate ‘the diversity of the Australian art-world in the early twentieth century, and the variety of its means of expression’.

63 Andrew Sayers, *Australian Art*, p 110  
64 Andrew Sayers, *Australian Art*, p 106
Lindsay’s younger brother Daryl was an artist who held the position of director of the National Gallery of Victoria from 1942 to 1956, and was knighted in 1956 for ‘services to art’. In his autobiography *The Leafy Tree: My Family*, he wrote of Norman’s art, while stressing the importance of Norman’s ‘large pen drawings, etchings and drypoints’ and Lionel’s similar work, that they ‘were essentially black and white artists, and it is on their work in these mediums, judging it by the highest standards, that their reputations were made,’. However, he further details his brother’s weakness in oils and watercolours, finding that

These large watercolours, with over-stylized, slant-eyed amazons with gigantic thighs, high-heeled shoes and ostrich feather headdresses straight from the Folies Bergère were pictorially vulgar and the colour undistinguished. These pictures satisfy a hungry public tickled by the subject matter and blinded by the brilliance of execution. It comes down to the fact that a man with such a wide range of knowledge on so many things lacked aesthetic taste and had little critical judgement about his own work.65

Patricia Holt, in her unpublished thesis *Norman Lindsay’s Modern Art: Pictures and Novels with Spirit*, identifies the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites and the European Symbolists on Lindsay’s art, writing

Like the Pre-Raphaelites and the European Symbolists, Lindsay adopted the fashion of depicting antithetical values, for example, purity and wantonness, and the forces of good and evil.66

By situating Lindsay as part of an artistic continuum of image and values Holt argues for Lindsay’s significance as an Australian and an international artist.

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66 Patricia Mary Holt, *Norman Lindsay’s Modern Art: Pictures and Novels with Spirit*, p 12
Method

Approaching Norman Lindsay from the direction of mythopoeic construction was done deliberately; the multiple narratives surrounding his life and the often-oblique sources of these narratives meant that forming a clear picture of Lindsay as a writer is problematic. The disconnect between his high-profile artistic career and his largely forgotten writing career is significant as, although similar themes were explored in both media, one aspect of his work has almost completely overshadowed the other, raising questions of cultural assimilation and rejection. By attempting to make plain the conscious creation of a ‘Lindsay myth’, the intent is to gain a clearer understanding of the impact and significance of Lindsay’s writing to the larger Australian literary and cultural context.

Lindsay’s biographer John Hetherington wrote of Lindsay’s transmutation from man to myth as occurring at the time Redheap was banned and the Norman Lindsay Number of Art in Australia was prosecuted for obscenity. While it is important to remain sceptical of such subjective judgements, in this case obviously made with reference to discussions with the biographical subject, allows for their inclusion with reservations.

In the mass mind he became a sensationalist who drew and painted sexy pictures with the object of shocking the public into taking notice of him. He raged against the injustice of this judgement but to no purpose: time lessened but never wholly dispelled it.67

Lindsay not only championed Australian identity in his writing, he actively promoted it in the writing of others. In 1932 he told Bulletin editor Sam Prior that he was ‘sure’ that ‘Australians wanted to read novels about Australia’.68 This aspect of his literary significance, that of literary patron, can easily be missed as the image of his artistic work looms large and overshadows his other creative roles. As previously noted, his literary judgement was not necessarily faultless; as reader for the newly formed

67 John Hetherington, Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian, p 188
68 John Hetherington, Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian, p 198
Endeavour Press (Lindsay formed the press as an offshoot of the *Bulletin* with P R Stephensen) Lindsay read ‘an avalanche’ of manuscripts but found ‘Nothing we could even print.’69 Although much of it had been previously rejected by English publishers, Lindsay eventually decided to publish his own writing as the first product of the virgin press; Stephensen agreed because, in 1933 the censorship of *Redheap* was still fresh and ‘any book bearing Norman’s name was assured of a healthy sale.’70

However, to approach Lindsay’s writing from a purely historical-biographical perspective would also provide a skewed view of his intentions in writing and publishing his work. As David Ellis argues in *Literary Lives*, any attempt to definitively link events in an author’s life to events in their works is ‘perilous’ as

…there is then more chance of ignoring how subtle are the alterations which personal experience undergoes when it enters (as it were) the autonomous world of literary creation.71

Laurence Coupe notes in *Myth* that narratives may become ‘mythopoeic’, ‘tending to create or re-create certain narratives which human beings take to be crucial to their understanding of their world’.72 Writing what she called a ‘reconsideration of the relationship between a literary persona, a biographical person, and a cultural personage’, Svetlana Boym outlines a strategy for ‘reading “life”, “text” and “culture” together without subordinating one to the other’74, a model that informs my scrutiny of Lindsay’s writing. While Lindsay consistently mixed life, text and culture, my aim is to tease out the strands underlying this fusion of experience, word and art to provide a coherent narrative of his writing incentives and rationales.

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69 John Hetherington, *Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian*, p 201
70 Ibid.
Balancing this focus is the contradictory perspective of Norman’s brother Lionel, who wrote in a foreword to a 1931 Ure Smith publication of Norman’s pen drawings that

You cannot separate Norman Lindsay from his work – that is a triumph – for mind and work are one. “The Bacchanals”, the much be-laboured “Norman Lindsay Woman”, the rascally children, dogs, bears and unspeakable, humorous fowls; the “Crucified Venus” and the marching multitude of “Pollice Verso” – all are one. The same ecstasy produced the drunken rooster and the Dionysus. For Norman Lindsay believes in life – la sacre vie.75

Inclusion of aspects of literary biography is not without its own complications; connecting an author to their work and drawing direct and sure parallels is never certain, even in a case such as Lindsay’s where the parallels are not oblique. As David Ellis points out, Roland Barthes’ ‘death of the author’ severed, at least for a while, any links that had been established by past literary biographers between a lived life and authorial output. However, as Ellis notes

For the great mass of literary biographers, scrupulously regarding the work of their subjects as irrelevant to their lives would be too great a sacrifice; and they have in any case been able to argue with a fair show of reason that, however complex the relation between art and life might be, the separation between the two can never be absolute…76

The consideration of Lindsay’s writings in relation to his life allows for the development of a more complete picture not only of Lindsay’s work, but of his thoughts and ideas as he participated in events and actions; a parallel and yet interwoven understanding of the process of his philosophical and authorial development. Overlying this tentative picture, however, is the difficulty of literary interpretation; to assume possession of all pertinent facts is to fall victim to the entrancing nature of literary analysis, that of

75 Lionel Lindsay, Foreword, in Norman Lindsay: Pen Drawings, Ure Smith, Sydney, 1974
76 David Ellis, Literary Lives, p 11
knowing the subject better than they know themselves. Mendelssohn writes of Norman’s sister Mary’s influence on the body of Lindsay knowledge that

It is Mary’s recollections of Norman’s childhood, her assertions as to position within the family hierarchy, and her analysis of childhood achievements that have become central to the Lindsay myth, and have coloured all previous non-family biographical accounts of the Lindsays.\(^{77}\)

Exact verisimilitude in representation is not possible with Lindsay’s writing; Joanna Mendelssohn wrote of Norman’s autobiography in her biography of Norman’s brother Lionel that ‘…as with so much of My Mask, the evidence contradicts the author’s opinion.’\(^{78}\) This assessment of Norman’s recollections as unreliable and directly refutable is helpful when attempting to align Lindsay’s writing with his life and values; however, Mendelssohn’s own position regarding Norman needs to be examined. As a Lionel Lindsay researcher, examining the close and then fractured relationship of the brothers, artistic comrades and competitors that these two men were, developing a clear view of Norman would be difficult. An awareness of the inevitable skew inherent in focussing on the view of a particular subject does not diminish its impact; however, this constant awareness has informed this project as many views in direct contrast or contradiction with Norman’s have been, as they must be, considered and included.

In writing of Norman Lindsay, and writing of his writing, the interconnections and representations become vast and, in many ways, myth, fiction and biography join so seamlessly that to write of one is to unconsciously write of the other. In referencing a biography considered ‘reverential’ by another source, loading any theories with unconsciously utilised misinformation is a constant danger, but one that is almost impossible to avoid. Therefore, in utilising varied sources, and referencing his literary production as a mix of secondary and primary source material,

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\(^{77}\) Joanna Mendelssohn, *Lionel Lindsay: An Artist and his Family*, p 31

\(^{78}\) Joanna Mendelssohn, *Lionel Lindsay: An Artist and his Family*, p 54
a concerted effort has been made to make plain the mythologising of the subject while considering it as part of the studied field.

Lindsay himself intertwined fiction and biography; if, as a writer, he could find no line between what he wrote and his lived experience, it becomes almost impossible for any serious consideration of his writing to draw that line arbitrarily. To analyse Lindsay’s writing, then, one must include elements of literary biography, and take the risk that the biography being considered is fractured and misrepresented. However, in understanding that this is true of all biographies, the previously mentioned public family stoushes over biographical fact can be seen as a gift rather than a curse. While it is occasionally possible to find the requisite two eye-witnesses required, the subjective nature and differing motivations of all Lindsays involved in recording their family’s history makes even two eye-witnesses an unreliable source.

The difficulty with Lindsay biography, not only Norman’s but those of his family, has been well explored by Joanna Mendelssohn, who found many internal inconsistencies within the Lindsays archived material in numerous institutions, as well as many letters and written evidence kept by family members outside the archive that directly influenced possible interpretations of events. The tit-for-tat use of memoir and autobiography to ensure certain versions of history became canonical, as well as considered placement of letters and documents into archives and destruction of other material makes reliance on them problematic. Mendelssohn wrote that Norman and his sister Mary wrote letters ‘to history’, ‘with the obvious intention of informing a future historian’. She also quotes a ‘posterity’ letter from Norman’s second wife Rose to Lindsay collector Keith Wingrove, which she copied and placed into the Mitchell archives

Norman is better again after a bad few days. I despair of getting anything done that I want to do with these constant tray carrying periods – He is scribbling at something - and writing long letters particularly to Mary, letters written with an eye to passing them on to Professor Burke [Joseph Burke, Professor of Fine Arts,
Melbourne University], who is a keen collector. And Mary writes just as false, fulsome ones.\textsuperscript{79}

The Lindsay family themselves, with Norman as enthusiastic participant, elevated the importance of their own autobiographies and memoirs, and indeed used them as public weapons in private disagreements. By shifting their life experiences into the public domain, and suggesting that public support for one individual’s story over another’s was important, they have ensured that biography would hold an important place in any future consideration of their artistic works. The desire to ensure public support, even after death, demonstrates an implied significance of that support to the subjects and, therefore, to any consideration of the subjects themselves.

**Utilising the archive**

It was the feeling that published material on Lindsay would not allow me to find the ‘deeper insight’ that I desired that led me to seek enlightenment in the archives. Spread over three libraries, my archival search began at the Mitchell Library, where a catalogue search led to ‘restricted’ and unclassified documents. If the edited and scrubbed-clean published versions of Lindsay’s letters and reproductions of selected published articles in collections that felt too cohesive did not hold the key to Lindsay’s authorial motivations, perhaps it was to be found here.

As Joanna Mendelssohn found, the Lindsay family archive is a many-headed monster, both secreting and exposing tantalising titbits of ephemera that, when seen together, can be interpreted or misinterpreted to produce varied conclusions. The possible deliberate nature of this oblique obstruction where there appears to be perfect frankness and, if anything, too much information can be considered part of both the value and the misleading nature of the archive. By choosing to extend my study

\textsuperscript{79} Joanna Mendelssohn, *Letters and Liars: Norman Lindsay and the Lindsay family*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1996, p 88
of Lindsay to include archival material, I have tacitly given them both value and credence within a larger framework of published Lindsay material.

The archives themselves are, by their nature, a shifting quagmire of hope and despondency; what can be accessed and what has been excluded, as in any archive, shape the image produced as much as subjective scholarly interpretation of available material. Dever, Newman and Vickery note that

As with any form of text, meaning does not simply flow from these documents, it is always actively produced through engaged reading, which is always provisional inasmuch as it remains open to challenge and contestation.⁸₀

Through five journeys to the Mitchell Library, one to the National Library of Australia and countless forays to the La Trobe Library the oblique unreliability of the Lindsay fonds became apparent. Multiple versions of one event, told by the same person to either family or friends, often through the simple variation of repetition, sometimes obviously with the fog of hindsight, and occasionally maliciously, coalesce to form an uncertain record through which to attempt to link Norman Lindsay’s writings, some of which he claims have autobiographical status, with his privately expressed views. An analysis of his purpose in writing and publishing his works, as I have attempted, requires a calculating assessment of the value to be found in the archival material available.

However, while this task may appear ridiculously complex, its value has been made evident through the wealth of material available. If not exhaustive, or inert, it is remarkable for the insight it can unwittingly provide. Ephemera, such as publisher’s pamphlets, photographs, unpublished jottings and writing not intended for publication have given insight into the role writing played in the life of the constant artist, as well as providing depth to analysis of published texts. Biographical and autobiographical works on and about the Lindsay family artists abound

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and, excluding Ruby and Percy, provide detail in all their voices concerning their lives and artistic endeavours.

In seeking to understand Norman Lindsay’s literary purpose, an exploration of archival material led to several unpublished manuscripts, most significantly *La Revanché - or Les Traditiones vive le l’irror Gate, A Romance by Marie Corelli* and *Tabonga Road*, and became a significant and illustrative addition to his published works. *La Revanché* demonstrates the connection between Lindsay’s lived experience, his artistic production, and the importance he placed on expressing ideas through text.

A satiric play on the melodramatic novels of English writer Marie Corelli, *La Revanché* can be dated to the period in early 1903 when Lindsay was living in Northwood with his brother Lionel and friend and future brother-in-law Bill Dyson. A photographic copy of the manuscript can be found in Appendix A; including both photographs and text, the narrative focuses on the exploits of Alonzo Bong Pracy de Linzi and the Le Compt de Grange Operà, and is a scatological, melodramatic farce. Created for the amusement of the artists involved and by its form unintended for publication, *La Revanché* allows analysis of Lindsay’s writing when he was ‘unmasked’, or writing purely for entertainment. As I note in the chapter dedicated to *La Revanché*, the photographer of the scenes acted by Norman and Bill Dyson is unknown; while I surmise that it is either Rose Lindsay (then Rose Soady) or Lionel Lindsay, it could conceivably be several other people including musician Herman Khur who stayed at the Northwood house and was interested in photography.\(^81\)

By providing an ephemeral link between Lindsay’s early writing, which he destroyed before leaving Creswick in 1896, and his later published work, *La Revanché* demonstrates both a continued interest in prose writing as well as an interest in writing for entertainment that continued into his later works.

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\(^{81}\) Norman Lindsay, *My Mask: for what little I know of the man behind it*, p 176-178
*La Revanché* is significant to the understanding of Lindsay’s masculinity project as it highlights the interest in writing from a masculine perspective; the author being satirised is female, and the satire is both knowledgeable and vicious. In the introduction, ostensibly by the ‘author’, Lindsay writes ‘

> It has been said of a certain *demoiselle de literature*, I need mention no names when I say that a very *high* personage in the upper ten has described her as the *Bellissimo Marvalloso*, and by others as *la Contrabelle amoroso Lacromoso* – that she is *not tres la grand authoress de la monde*.

Having the author address her own critics in a satirised version of her dramatic style positions the author, at this stage unpublished, as considering himself superior to the writer he is imitating. As a male reader, Lindsay considers himself able to perform Marie Corelli for an audience similarly aware of her literary style, and does so for their mutual amusement.

*La Revanché* illustrates the homosociality of Lindsay’s literary production. The effort involved in costuming, props and photography, as well as the amateur developing of the photographs and construction of the manuscript suggest a project undertaken by at least three people (most probably men) over a period of days; the photographs are taken at a number of different sites and while it is possible they were taken in the garden of a residence it is more likely that at least some of them were taken on public land, necessitating the transport of costume and props from one location to another.

As Lindsay writes in the explanatory dedication of *At the Garter Tavern in Utopia*, another illustrated unpublished manuscript (dedicated it to Joe Lionel, at the sign of the Little House of the Iron Gate)

> Here is a humour of conceit, if you like, but I am fair gone mad about these fellows in Utopia, and so have written you this book, come midnight and the late hours. But do not wonder at it, for here I have no company but that of the jolly Utopians.
So bless you, may you coming back from wenching find herein somewhat to pass a mumping hour withal, but for aught else there is little virtue in it.

Given at the Garter Tavern from your ole pal Peter the Tapster

Lindsay identifies the motivation behind the production of *A Garter Tavern in Utopia*, a manuscript similar to *La Revanché* in its homosocial context, as loneliness and nostalgia, as well as a desire for continued connection with a homosocial group. He also places little literary value on the work, although the effort involved must have been considerable.

**Chapter Overview**

The structure of this thesis contains a combination of cultural critique, archival analysis, and close readings of Norman Lindsay’s novels as primary texts. By making plain the consciously fabricated nature of the ubiquitous Lindsay mythology, both its role in the current understanding of his written work, and the lesser profile that it holds in the study of Australian literature overall, become clear.

Masculinity has been approached from several different angles, allowing for a deep analysis of the part gender plays in Lindsay’s writing and the philosophy that underpins it. Varied aspects of masculinity construction are investigated here, including homosociality and the role it plays in early twentieth century Australian bohemia, the appropriation of the feminine in Lindsay’s fiction, and the multi-faceted nature of the Australian ‘larrkin’ in Lindsay’s work.

The mythology surrounding Lindsay’s focus on the female nude, and the translation of these images into a muse relationship with his models is explored in Chapter 1. Mythopoeic construction is investigated to inform both the chapter and the thesis. Both classical Muses and human muses are explored to find a deeper understanding of Lindsay’s artistic reliance on the feminine form, and whether that relationship can usefully be

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82 Norman Lindsay, *At the Garter Tavern in Utopia*, MS 8171, Box 546/1, LaTrobe Library
considered as a co-dependent artist-muse conjunction. While considering Lindsay’s own views, independent analysis signifies an unexpected outcome, in the acknowledgement of the muse as part of Lindsay’s artistic practice as well as including Norman’s brother Lionel in an unconventional muse role.

In Chapter 2, Reimagining the Dominant Masculine, I investigate the underlying intent of Lindsay’s gendered writing, and explore his long-term project to reconstruct Australian hegemonic masculinity by elevating the masculine artist to the position of hegemonic masculine ideal. Lindsay’s ‘exclusive male earth’ was not an earth peopled only by men, but rather an earth where women served the values and desires of men, or as ‘the feminine image’.

Chapter 3, Appropriating the Feminine: Norman Lindsay’s female protagonists, investigates, from the perspective of Laura Mulvey’s theory of the controlling male gaze, Lindsay’s two novels which feature a female protagonist, The Cousin from Fiji and Dust or Polish? By utilising Lindsay’s own analysis of the novels as well as close readings of both texts, Lindsay’s refusal to allow his female protagonists agency outside their service to the male gaze is explored.

Moving further towards mythopoeic production, in Chapter 4 Lindsay’s reputation as a bohemian artist is addressed, connected to the homosociality found in early twentieth century bohemian circles. Employing Lindsay’s semi-autobiographical and autobiographical writing, I argue that Lindsay’s bohemianism was a consciously-constructed myth; while his life contained periods of what can be traditionally considered ‘bohemian’ artistic lifestyle, it was his philosophies and artistic subject-matter that promulgated this myth. While he always considered himself a rebel outside of society’s strictures, his life at Springwood was distinctly settled and abstemious. The nature of bohemian itself, and why the glamour of bohemianism was attractive to Lindsay, are also explored in this chapter.
In a logical extension of analysis of Lindsay’s masculinity project, Chapter 5 explores Lindsay’s engagement with the Australian concept of the ‘larrikin’ and its place and purpose within his written work. By situating his writing featuring pre-teen and adolescent boys within a written larrikin tradition, I argue that Lindsay’s focus on these groups allowed him to create an idealised masculine standing outside both society’s norms and the feminised domestic sphere. The chapter also engages with Lindsay’s mythologised larrikin identity; the censorship of Lindsay’s writing as well as the popular linking of larrikinism to a disrespect for the law further enhanced Lindsay’s larrikin mythology established with the publication of *A Curate in Bohemia* and his use of anthropomorphised animals to satirise those in power.

In Chapter 6 the connection between Lindsay’s unpublished manuscripts and his published work is explored, taking as an example an archival document that has not been previously considered for analysis. *La Revanché* - or *Les Traditiones vive le l’irror Gate, A Romance by Marie Corelli* is a handwritten and assembled rough manuscript containing both original narrative and photographs of Norman Lindsay and his friend and future brother-in-law Bill Dyson acting out the scenes. As an example of Lindsay’s uncensored writing it is significant, as is its scatological subject matter, which opens up discussion of humour and satire in Lindsay’s writing. The significance of *La Revanché* as a new addition to Lindsay’s documented works is explored, addressing issues of archival veracity, the value of ephemera, and the possible implications of unpublished as opposed to published works when assessing literary consequence.

Chapter 7 places Lindsay in a transnational literary field, linking the masculinity explored in D.H. Lawrence’s *Kangaroo* with Lindsay’s masculinity project. Identifying their concerns regarding Australian constructed and contested masculinity allows for a deeper understanding of the relevance of Lindsay’s project to discussions of masculinity in their contemporary global context. Lawrence, a modernist writer in direct conflict with Lindsay’s narrative realism, positions Lindsay as both internal
and external to global masculinity, highlighting his relevance while giving space to his difference and Australian nationalism.
Chapter 1

The Myth of the Muse

The muse provides a mythopoeic framework to the otherwise inexplicable creative process. It circulates as a cultural myth which, as Svetlana Boym suggests,

largely relies on unwritten but widely accepted, naturalized non-verbal discourse, on the power of the image and its semivisible, heavily codified iconography, as well as on the cultural fashioning and social masks used in the ‘theatre of everyday life’.83

Particularly by his biographer John Hetherington and by others, there has been a presumption that the female models Norman Lindsay used for his art were muses. This presumption replicates a traditionally gendered paradigm between creator and object. The implication that the women Lindsay painted played a role in the inspiration for his art and writing is an easy and direct line to draw. As a myth, it has been popularised in film twice (Age of Consent directed by Michael Powell and starring James Mason and Helen Mirren, and Sirens written and directed by John Duigan and starring Sam Neill, Hugh Grant, Elle MacPherson and Portia de Rossi). This chapter considers the mythologies surrounding the role of the muse in Norman Lindsay’s creative process. As I argue, his literary representation of women is closely aligned to his artistic representations of the feminine and their place in his vitalist philosophy. Yet Lindsay’s conceptualisation of inspiration is ambivalently aligned with his utilisation of a muse. As this chapter demonstrates, the revision of cultural masculinity goes hand in hand with a troubling of the role of the muse in Lindsay’s creative production.

The Etymology of the Muse

The Muse/muse construct has been prevalent in the construction of artistic mythologies, dating back to the ancient Greek Nine Muses and Dionysus, Dante and Beatrice, the Pre-Raphaelite model-muses, and into the twentieth century with Surrealists Salvador Dali and Gala. The Greeks saw the muse as a means to express the ‘exuberance of mythological imagery’. Inspiration, or enthousiasmos, the literal translation of which is to be ‘breathed into by the gods’ was understood to indicate a form of ‘possession’, whereby the artist-writer was taken over by an external ‘divine force’. Importantly, this process arose from ‘ecstasy’, or ‘stepping outside of oneself’. In its highest form, this could result in the ‘transcendental union of the soul with divinity, or One (Plato’s Nous or Nietzsche’s Einheit)’. The Greek principle of divine inspiration and its link to ‘ecstasy’ aligns the process with Dionysus, or Bacchus, the Greek god of wine and ecstasy. The act of creation was understood to be an act that required, as Norman Lindsay put it, an ‘impact from without to jerk [them] into action’. Moffitt argues the ‘Dionysiac metaphor of “ecstatic” even “intoxicated” Inspiration’ as a trope might be considered ‘a persuasive creation-myth in its own right’.

The mythology that art is constructed through the muse and Dionysian inspirational breath was written about by Hesiod, who wrote in 750 BC in Theogony that

...while he was tending his flocks on Mt Helicon, the Muses had ‘breathed’ into him (or inspired him with) the art of divine music.

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85 Norman Lindsay *My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it*, Angus and Robertson Publishers, Australia, 1973, p 226
87 John F Moffitt, *Inspiration: Bacchus and the Cultural History of a Creation Myth*. p 83
The inherent value of a creation that is ‘breathed’ into one by goddesses is emphasised by Germaine Greer when she notes that ‘anyone may versify...but only the poet can utter poetry’. She continues

The correlative used for the condition in which the poet eclipsed the versifier was the image of the poet in mystic union with the muse who entered him, as it were, fertilizing his imagination and making possible the development of the living poem.88

There is an understanding that the gods have chosen the artist to pass on their vision and the creation thus made has a higher artistic value than anything made without such inspiration. A ‘muse’ and Dionysian ecstasy or ‘inspiration’ is 'a uniquely privileged psychological condition accepted to be almost obligatory in order to gain any measure of creative excellence in the Fine Arts'.89

The muse process as it has morphed from mythic beings into human form has remained a constant yet continually reinvented theme in discussions surrounding Western artistic inspiration. In ancient Greek mythology, it was multiplied: nine muses were given areas of responsibility, although four, Euterpe, Erato, Calliope and Polyhymnia inspired different types of poetry. The other five, Thalia, Melpomene, Terpsichore, Urania and Clio were responsible for inspiring comedy, tragedy, dance, astronomy and history respectively.90 Conceptualisations of the female Muse from the Romantic onwards view her as an idealised, pliable, contextually beautiful construct. While her presence is required for male creativity to exist, she has a famed fickle nature; if her back is turned even while she is present, inspiration is not forthcoming. This can be seen as the Muse exercising power over the subservient artist.

88 Germaine Greer, Slipshod Sibyls: Recognition, Reflection and the Woman Poet, Viking, London, 1995, p xiv-xv
89 John F Moffitt, Inspiration: Bacchus and the Cultural History of a Creation Myth, p 1
Mythopoeic muse construction

Nietzsche linked an understanding of art, especially music, to an understanding of the different natures of the Greek gods Apollo and Dionysus. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, he states that

> the continuous evolution of art is bound up with the duality of the *Apolline* and the *Dionysiac* in much the same way as reproduction depends on there being two sexes which co-exist in a state of perpetual conflict interrupted only occasionally by periods of reconciliation. We have borrowed these names from the Greeks who reveal the profound mysteries of their view of art to those with insight, not in concepts, admittedly, but through the penetratingly vivid figures of their gods. Their two deities of art, Apollo and Dionysios, provide the starting point for our recognition that there exists in the world of the Greeks an enormous opposition, both in origin and in goals, between the Apolline art of the image-maker or sculptor, and the imageless art of music, which is that of Dionysios.\(^91\)

This narrative that the god of art is in conflict with the god of wine and ecstasy creates tragedy is core to a mythic narrative around artistic creation. Nietzsche also states in his introduction to the 1886 edition of *The Birth of Tragedy* that he was questioning the ‘*tragic myth*’, and ‘tragedy, born from the Dionysiac’.\(^92\)

A further development of the Dionysiac can be found in the concept of ‘divine frenzy’ first represented in Plato’s *Phaedrus*.

> The third type of possession and madness was possession by the Muses. When this seizes upon the gentle and virgin soul [of a poet] it rouses it to inspired expression in lyric and other sorts of poetry, and it glorifies countless deeds of the heroes of old for the instruction of posterity. But if a man comes to the door of poetry

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\(^92\) Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, p 4
quite untouched by madness of the Muses, believing that technique alone will make him a good poet, he and his sane compositions never reach perfection. They are instead utterly eclipsed by the performances of the inspired madman.\textsuperscript{93}

Russell King interprets Nietzsche as describing a ‘concept of art as a temporary reconciliation of the Dionysian and Apollonian tendencies’, and goes on to link it to Mussett’s poem \textit{La Nuit de Mai}, stating

\textit{La Nuit de Mai} takes the form of a dialogue between the ‘Muse’ and the ‘Poet’. The Apollonian Muse urges the Dionysian Poet to transform his negative nihilism into positive will and thereby create ‘harmonious’ images out of chaotic existence.\textsuperscript{94}

Ascribing ‘inspiration’ to an external, god-like, intervention in the usual thoughts of a creative person allows creation to remain mysterious and Other. That the conduits for these ideas are also linked to gods elevates them further into the realm of the extraordinary.

The Otherness of artists can also be recognised in the trope of the ‘egocentric, temperamental, rebellious, unreliable, licentious, obsessed’ artist that is ‘accepted by the general public’.\textsuperscript{95} This concept, that (almost always male) artists could be the focus of artistic inspiration from a god/goddess-type figure, elevated artists above the merely pedestrian or practical and into the realms of the gods themselves. To claim attention from a goddess allows some of that goddess’ glow to extend to the artist.

It has been argued that in seeking the Muse male artists are searching for completion of the female in themselves. Raymond Stephenson, for instance, describes the myth of the Muses’ origin as one of male-female sexual excess:

\begin{itemize}
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Zeus and Mnemosyne copulate for nine successive nights, giving rise to the nine female Muses who in turn, through a quasi-sexual conjunction with Apollo, create or bring into being the figure of the male poet who is himself (in subsequent versions of the poet/Muse relationship) frequently subject to quasi-sexual impregnation by either of his parents in order that he might give birth to poetic utterance.\footnote{Raymond Stephanson, \textit{The Symbolic Structure of Eighteenth Century Male Creativity: Pregnant Men, Brain-Wombs, and Female Muses (with some comments on Pope's Dunciad)}, Studies in Eighteenth Century Culture, Volume 27, 1998, p 103 – 130, page 108}

This encounter provides two ‘convenient narratives’ for how creativity comes about; either the male brain is ‘visited by something Other from outside himself’, or creation is a ‘knowable, intentional act of the creative will which confirmed his mental prowess and the power of his own creativity’.\footnote{Raymond Stephanson, \textit{The Symbolic Structure of Eighteenth Century Male Creativity: Pregnant Men, Brain-Wombs, and Female Muses (with some comments on Pope’s Dunciad)}, p 109-110} In both narratives, however, the act of creation is male and the male is credited with it; the muse, if she appears as Other, is merely the cue that allows creativity to take place.

According to Francine Prose, the Muse’s change from deity to mortal occurred with the rise of Christianity, when the concept of Muses as minor deities was no longer sustainable. Mortal love, the artist inspired by passion for a human Other, replaced the immortal deity as the creative source. She argues that the concept of the muse is fluid, and that the muse is constantly recreated to fit comfortably in each historical period. Each historical period ‘endows the muse with the qualities, virtues and flaws that the epoch and its artists need and deserve’.\footnote{Francine Prose, \textit{The Lives of the Muses: Nine Women and the Artists They Inspired}, p 7}

One of the issues with a mortal muse is that she has agency; a mortal may refuse to provide the service the artist needs. Medieval and Renaissance artists found that the ‘absent, distant or unattainable muse’ provided a valuable solution to the conundrum faced when a muse morphed into a mortal. Prose notes that this was particularly problematic for misogynistic artists, as a mortal was generally ‘so much more difficult...
than a Greek water sprite, dancing into one’s studio with her lyre or laurel wreath’.  

Female poets have questioned this exclusive relationship, and turned within to find the internal muse exists within themselves. Suzanne Matson writes of being in a poetry workshop where female students were asked if they had a

...model for the Muse that corresponded to the traditional inspirational/erotic union of the male artist and female Muse. As I remember, none of us did. While some women described listening for ‘voices’ there was no sense that the voice was a divinely erotic other, a fickle or petulant seducer.

She then follows this idea through to Adrienne Rich, who argued that the ‘he’ found in certain poems by Emily Dickinson ‘corresponds to the darker elements that emerge when the relation shifts to woman artist-male Muse. As the ‘woman artist is already self-identified with the mother figure’, which she has previously argued male artists are trying to contact via their female Muses, ‘being birthed and giving birth are links in the same creative chain’. She also notes that Hélène Cixous writes in Coming to Writing

It’s all there: where separation doesn’t separate; where absence is animated, taken back from silence and stillness. ... My voice repels death; my death; your death; my voice is my other. I write and you are not dead. The other is safe if I write.

Here, the muse concept is brought forward into the future, and given agency as Other within woman herself; in contrast, the male Muse is seen as an externalised Other.

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99 Francine Prose, The Lives of the Muses: Nine Women and the Artists They Inspired, p 14
101 Suzanne Matson, Disquieting Muses: Mnemosyne, p 21
The Greek development of the Muses as explanation for mysterious inspiration has been echoed in a post-Freudian world through linking madness to creativity. However, clinical psychologist Albert Rothenburg contends in Creativity and Madness that such links are a ‘fallacy’ and that the idea of inspiration can also be an ‘unconscious creative well-spring’.

Invoked more frequently in connection with creativity than with almost any other human actions or experience, the unconscious is considered responsible for mysterious bolts from the blue, flashes of insight, waking from sleep with ideas already formed, and energy-releasing altered states of consciousness...The belief in the unconscious roots of creativity is a mystique... A mythic image has arisen of the highly eccentric, if not deeply disturbed, “mad creator” [and] mental suffering is considered both the generator and the price of creativity.103

For Rothenburg, it is not the average unconscious that is producing major works of art, it is the extraordinary unconscious suffering, possibly ‘mad’ who experiences these ‘flashes of insight’. The eccentric artist is certainly a trope (and a trope, or myth, that Lindsay evoked) that has currency in twentieth century Western culture; however, even with this new Freudian explanation for inspiration, the mythological charge of the muse has not lessened.

The twentieth century saw a rethinking of the inspiration/muse paradigm. Francine Prose argues that there are many differing muse-artist relationships in the twentieth century, including those where the muse produces art in her own right, significantly altering the original Greek muse as vision conduit. Prose further suggests that the twentieth century muse can take many forms and take on many tasks, including that of ‘publicist and agent’, and ‘various subsidiary activities included in the muse’s job description – nurturing, sustaining, supporting, encouraging.’ Prose describes themes that can be drawn from looking at artists and their

muses *en masse*: many muses were disliked by their contemporaries; the artist/muse relationship attracted the ‘curiosity’ of others; and they often had a ‘cultural and personal mythology – the sense of themselves as heroic, as larger-than-life ...[that] sustained their love and inspired the artist.’ 104

According to Penny Murray, classical Muses were not passive, and that the few instances where they were active have little to do with gender, and more to do with their position as deities. She posits a difference of interpretation between the recent invocations of the Muse-as-mistress and the function of the muses in ancient Greece as a ‘far more ambivalent and multi-layered figure than the ubiquitous modern [Muse] paradigm...suggests’. The power of the Muses in classical mythology is emphasised by Germaine Greer, who lists their accomplishments as beings rather than agents of creativity (including collecting and burying Orpheus’s limbs, singing more sweetly than the sirens, teaching Aristaeus the arts of healing and prophecy and the Sphinx the riddle which Orpheus answered and stabling Pegasus):

> In them doing and being would appear to be fused; though they may be descendants of the White Goddess, they traffic, not in ‘dark wisdom’ but in intelligence and expertise. The classic concept of the muse enables the female poet; the twentieth century distortion of the classic scheme silences her. 105

The Muse in more recent times is becoming slipperier than ever. She may be passive angel or powerful deity, eroticised mistress or a cipher through which male artists see themselves and their creative world.

**Alternatives to muse-based theories of creativity**

There are a number of alternative explanatory frameworks for creative inspiration. Indeed, in John F. Moffitt’s *Inspiration: Bacchus and the* ...

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Cultural History of a Creation Myth there are only sixteen references to muses within 356 pages, indicating how many approaches to inspiration can found outside the muse concept. Moffitt quotes Clement Greenberg's essay, *After Abstract Expressionism*

*Inspiration* alone belongs altogether to the individual [or ‘self’, as in ‘self-expression’]; everything else, including skill, can now be acquired by anyone. Inspiration remains the only factor in the creation of a successful work of art that cannot be copied or imitated. \(^{106}\)

While Moffitt suggests that variations of this idea had been linked to Italian art and literature since the 15th century, he concludes that

By way of the Surrealists, such as they were particularly influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche, with complementary conclusions further amplified by the Symbolists in France, who then opportunely wedged the whole Bacchic syndrome into a context of ‘art theory’, the ancient Dionysian phenomenon was re-situated once again within a uniquely inspired, twentieth-century phenomenon, ‘Orthodox Modernism’. \(^{107}\)

Lindsay both admired Nietzschean philosophy and occupies an ambivalent positioning within the early twentieth century Symbolist movement. John Hawke, for instance, notes that, ‘Although *Creative Effort* must be viewed as a dubious simplification of Symbolist theories, it does coincide with [Christopher] Brennan on many points and can be located alongside the Symbolist movement in general.’ \(^{108}\) Symbolists, according to Moffitt, rebuilt the connection between ‘inspiration and art-making, Dionysus and ecstasy’, re-establishing the idea of divine intervention and creation as an act of transcendence in the lexicon of artists. \(^{109}\)

Lindsayan Vitalism, especially as expressed in *Creative Effort*, derives many

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\(^{107}\) John F Moffitt, *Inspiration: Bacchus and the Cultural History of a Creation Myth*, p 325-326


\(^{109}\) John F Moffitt, *Inspiration: Bacchus and the Cultural History of a Creation Myth*, p 84
concepts from Symbolism. Lindsayan vitalism is defined by Karen Barker as ‘a hierarchical and bio-political notion of life – the possibility of a more vital or intense life.’\\(^{110}\)

In many respects, vitalism has a connection to the concept of genius where ‘genius’ is linked to internalised inspiration. This modern definition of genius is articulated by Bob Perelman in *The Trouble with Genius: Reading Pound, Joyce, Stein and Zukofsky*:

> The notion of genius in its modernist incarnation is bound up with this strain between presence and obscurity. The modernist genius is not the classic spirit of place, or the producer of a universal simplicity, or the Romantic recluse, or the anticipatory figure of national unification. Rather, in a split affirmation of specialization and centrality, an aura of illegible authority surrounds the modernist genius... \\(^{111}\)

According to Perelman, it is the ‘illegible authority’ of the modern genius that supplies inspiration, either as a ‘guiding light’ or ‘stroke of lightning’ to the naturally receptive mind.\\(^{112}\) Between this ‘illegibility’ and the Romantic notion of a ‘genius recluse’ lies something of the Lindsay myth. As Perelman notes, ‘Being difficult to follow is central to genius.’\\(^{113}\) Lindsay’s geographic isolation and his development of impenetrable aggrandising philosophies bolstered his own self-identification as a genius.

**Lindsay and his ‘muses’**

For Joanna Mendelssohn, Lindsay’s second wife, Rose Soady, was his muse. Mendelssohn declares in the first chapter ‘Legend’:

> A Real Artist must have a Muse, and Norman’s muse was Rose. By the time she was the subject of frequent photographs in the Sydney

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\\(^{111}\) Bob Perelman, *The Trouble with Genius: Reading Pound, Joyce, Stein and Zukofsky*, University of California Press, Berkely, 1994, p 1

\\(^{112}\) Bob Perelman, *The Trouble with Genius: Reading Pound, Joyce, Stein and Zukofsky*, p 1

\\(^{113}\) Bob Perelman, *The Trouble with Genius: Reading Pound, Joyce, Stein and Zukofsky*, p 3
society papers she was well into her thirties, beautiful and imperious, a large, full-breasted woman.\textsuperscript{114}

Rose certainly visually inspired Lindsay, posing for many of his best artworks. Yet she also did the manual labour of etching (which damaged her physically), administered his art sales, and managed his needs. All these secondary roles in artistic production are ones that muses have traditionally shouldered. This assessment is reinforced in Rose Lindsay’s own autobiography \textit{A Model Life}.

The women who modelled for Lindsay most were Rose, Rita Lee (later Rita Young), who posed for many of his oil paintings, and the artist Margaret Coen, with whom he had an affair during his tenancy of 12 Bridge St in Sydney in the mid-1930s to 40s. Significantly, Lindsay referred to none of them as ‘muses’. Neither does he refer to his first wife, Katie Parkinson, in this way, although he attributes his obsession with illustrating Boccaccio’s \textit{Decameron} to the excitement generated by their initial sexual relationship.

Norman’s brother Lionel is not typically thought of as a potential muse, given that the muse is predominantly thought of as a feminine conduit for the artist. Yet he is referred to as ‘Norman’s best and most thoughtful critic and the source for many of his ideas’, \textsuperscript{115} and also as his ‘intellectual inspiration...his admiration of Norman’s art was greatly appreciated’\textsuperscript{116} Norman himself saw inspiration as an ‘impact from without’, acknowledging influences from novels, music, family, friends, and perhaps most significantly from Lionel.

While not acknowledging them as such, it is still possible that Lindsay drew inspiration from people who would traditionally be viewed as ‘muses’: his two wives Katie and Rose and his lover Margaret Coen. This raises the question of whether it is possible for an artist to have an unacknowledged muse, and whether this lack of acknowledgment negates the outside

\textsuperscript{114} Joanna Mendelssohn, \textit{Letters and Liars: Norman Lindsay and the Lindsay Family}, Angus and Robertson, Australia, 1996, p 3
\textsuperscript{115} Joanna Mendelssohn, \textit{Lionel Lindsay: an artist and his family}, p 117-118
\textsuperscript{116} Joanna Mendelssohn, \textit{Lionel Lindsay: an artist and his family}, p 77
appearance of an artist/muse relationship. Lindsay had an excellent, practical and emulative relationship with Greek mythology, from whence the concept of the Muse originally sprang. If the muse concept is an interpretive framework for understanding the nature of creativity, it can be applied both internally by the artist and/or muse, or externally by critics, historians and scholars.

Lindsay believed in the Artist as the human closest to the gods, and in communion with Life rather than Existence, as expounded in Creative Effort. The ego-driven focus on himself as an artist-leader in an Olympus-like realm connects his approach to philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who stated that any notion of 'immediate inspiration' that 'might seem to result from a miracle' was actually the 'accumulation' of creative capital:

...we broadly see how the concept of Inspiration had evolved since the time of the Renaissance. Overall, the pattern inexorably shifted from an external, typically ‘divine’, passive infusion of energy towards an internal, wholly subjective, active chain-reaction of intense creativity. Another way of expressing the shift is by a metaphor; the Mirror versus the Lamp. [Nietzsche notes the genesis of this metaphor in M H Abrams’s The Mirror and the Lamp]. The earlier bias was for mimesis, by which the artist passively ‘mirrors’ Nature; in the alternative version, expressionism, the artist actively ‘illuminates’ the nature of Nature by means of the incandescent ‘inner light’ of his innate Genius.117

For an artist who believed in his ‘innate Genius’, it could certainly have been more attractive to believe in his creativity flowing from an ‘incandescent inner light’, centring the artistic role within himself and discounting the roles of those around him in fostering his creative ‘inspiration’. In such a circumstance, even an artist as familiar with the traditional role of Muses in artistic creative endeavour would dismiss it in favour of proclaiming himself the source of all his own creative energy and inspiration.

117 John F. Moffitt. Inspiration: Bacchus and the Cultural History of a Creation Myth, p 218
Lindsay’s aesthetic influences range from the Pre-Raphaelites, Rubens, Titian, and Solomon J. Solomon, specifically Solomon’s *Ajax and Cassandra*, which he saw with his maternal grandfather at the Ballarat Art Gallery as a child. Bernard Smith also notes influences including Charles Conder, the English Decadents, ‘Rabelais, Pepys, Balzac, Boccaccio, [and] Casanova’. The Pre-Raphaelites, especially, were known for their depictions of the feminine and the muses that inspired them.

In novels like *Age of Consent*, Lindsay replicates traditional gendering and the power relationship between the muse and the artist. With the first appearance of Cora, the artist Bradly had begun to sweat, and mumble curses, and make experimental dabs at the canvas, wondering why the hell it looked so like its subject matter, yet conveyed nothing of the brilliant sparkle, its illusion of mass suspended in atmospheric space.

Cora’s body comes as the inspirational revelation that allows Bradly to successfully complete his painting:

> In a flash, Bradly saw what was wrong with his painting. It was revealed to him by a tonal analysis too swift for words...What he had got in that brief flash of vision was merely a lifting of tonal values in his trees by a sudden concentration of vision on the vivid figure of the girl. The golden nimbus round her tawny hair and the violet edge of light to her warmly tinted arms and legs forced a translucence on all other values.

When Bradly sees Cora, it is described as being ‘revealed’ to him ‘swift[ly]’, and as a ‘flash’ of ‘vision’. This language allows this scenario to be read as an artist receiving inspirational messages from his muse, in the unwitting form of Cora. The unknowing nature of the muse figure is also

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118 Bernard Smith, *Taste, Place and Tradition: A Study of Australian Art since 1788*, p 168
120 Norman Lindsay, *Age of Consent*, Ure Smith Pty Ltd, North Sydney, 1969, p 44
121 Norman Lindsay, *Age of Consent*, p 44-45
telling; the muse is the conduit alone, and does not understand or even feel the divine ‘revelation’ for which she is conduit.

Cora is portrayed as a Muse for Bradly throughout the rest of the novel, and Lindsay’s portrayal of her further presents her as a sexualised object for the male reader. She is described as ‘childish’, and yet with ‘maturity in her resolute breasts, pushing nipples to left and right under her frock, in her strongly modelled legs, brown as bush honey.’  

Lindsay illustrated Casanova, and Petronius’ Satyricon, but it is his illustrations to Boccaccio’s Decameron that reveal most about the inspiration he drew from literature.

But with the lamp trimmed, tobacco and materials at hand, and my legs wrapped up in a blanket, I settled down to work in a state of exultation which puzzles me to account for. I’ve never had it before or since over my work. It was not due to any laudation of the illustrations, which I knew were in a hard and inflexible technique, but I was sustained by an ardour which kept me impatient for the day to end so that I could get back to work. Delight is the most inscrutable of all emotions. I have had it over music and poetry, and sometimes over plastic art, but never over my own works in the spirit which begot those Decameron drawings.

This ‘exultation’, ‘ardour’ and ‘delight’ could, in this context, be read as artistic inspiration and in similar language to that which has been used to describe human muses. Lindsay then goes on to link the beginning of his relationship with Katie Parkinson, who later became his first wife, to his ‘ardour’ for the Decameron illustrations.

My affair with Katie Parkinson began shortly before I set about the Decameron drawings, and had a good deal to do with the ardour that inspired them. Blood and spirit are one thing. It has long been my conviction that when spirit is seeking release from mental stultification, a love affair will give it wings. It is the impact from

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122 Norman Lindsay, Age of Consent, p 45-47
123 Norman Lindsay, My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it, p 145
without which frees the image within. A study of the lives of all those who have given themselves to creative self-expression will make that mechanism of cause and effect starkly apparent. Casual love affairs have not enough weight to release emotional intensity. They are a prime essential to the early adventure of life; they bestow self-assurance and self-esteem on the male ego, and they rid it of the belittling and sterilizing effect of celibacy. But as an emotional dynamic, a love affair must be dramatized by compact and conflict; by as much internal and external disturbance as possible; and brought to a crisis in action. My affair with Katie had all the necessary ingredients to eject me out of a pleasant enough state of inertia into a ferment of activity, physical and mental.\textsuperscript{124}

Although not described explicitly as such, Katie’s influence on Lindsay’s art could conceivably project her into the role of his muse; his affair with her brought him ‘into a ferment of activity’. Lindsay’s description of inspiration clearly links artistic drive to ‘the impact without which frees the image within’.

The Daemonic

Lindsay reiterates his belief that inspiration was ‘an impact from without’ by directly addressing his concept of ‘inspiration’ through explaining his use of ‘daemonic’ when referring to destiny, fate and his life.

Every mind which has given itself to self-expression in art is aware of a directing agency outside its conscious control which it has agreed to label ‘inspiration’\textsuperscript{1}. The Greeks had no doubt about its being an Entity as distinct from the ego...An image is picked up from space and the poet does not know where the devil it arrived from. If I may contribute my experience of this perplexing problem, it is that I never produced a picture worth doing where the form-image did not arrive before the concept. I have worked on a picture for a fortnight before discovering what its imagery meant. That, of

\textsuperscript{124} Norman Lindsay, \textit{My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it}, p 147
course, refers only to works which are evolved by that process which we are driven by desperation to call inspiration. The major mass of one’s work is essentially aesthetic in its values, good or bad in what qualities of craftsmanship it may exhibit.\textsuperscript{125}

In discussing his writing, Lindsay believed that ‘daemonic agency, whether internal or external, was violently opposed to my exercises in the novel.’ He describes them as ‘conscious exercises of the will’ and that as such he found them gratifying; how gratifying is further demonstrated by his labelling his ‘daemon’ as ‘that bitch’, a term he repeats later when referring to the massive loss of his work in a train fire in America.\textsuperscript{126}

Lindsay may have, consciously or unconsciously, been echoing Goethe, who wrote on

\begin{quote}
...the daemonic as a mysterious force akin to fate...[or] a vitalist creative principle that presided over Goethe’s existence.\textsuperscript{127}
\end{quote}

Lindsay’s use of the concept is very much the idea of the daemonic as a ‘mysterious force akin to fate’. He writes as if the daemon had an entity and aims independent to his own and might also be considered a contrary ‘fate’:

\begin{quote}
I suspect my daemonic bitch had a hand in that [the train fire in America], but it broke Rose up pretty badly. If the daemonic objective was to settle me back at Springwood, it has succeeded.\textsuperscript{128}
\end{quote}

This further description of the daemonic as a ‘vitalist creative principle’ ties in with Lindsay’s views on the links between ‘vital life’ and art as its highest achievement. That Lindsay considers this daemon an immortal entity with desires and goals is evident. It is similar to the role of the mythic muse and in Heraclitus’s original concept, it is a fickle element both within and without character. For Lindsay, it morphs between spirit and human, both enabling and hindering his creativity. He also calls it

\textsuperscript{125} Norman Lindsay, \textit{My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it}, p. 231
\textsuperscript{126} Norman Lindsay, \textit{My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it}, p. 231
\textsuperscript{127} Angus Nicholls, \textit{The Philosophical Concept of the Daemonic in Goethe’s ‘Mächtiges Überraschen’}, Goethe Yearbook, Volume 14, 2006, p.147
\textsuperscript{128} Norman Lindsay, \textit{My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it}, p. 242
'daemonic possession'. The use of the term ‘daemon’ certainly arises when there is conflict experienced in either the making of his writing or art, but also in the failure of his artistic endeavours. He writes that he felt his ‘daemon’ did not want him writing novels; declaring in belligerent resistance:

“To hell with you, I’ll do what I please about lolling at my ease in a comfortable chair and scribbling novels. Get on with your own dirty work and knock hell out of me with your blasted whip.”

Time spent sketching rather than attending school as an adolescent is also viewed as resistance to his daemon:

...I can’t think what my daemonic bitch was doing not having me detected and denounced as one who had forged credentials to escape for a time the essential malice of destiny.

This transition of inspiration as an external force to a feminised daemon that is a ‘bitch’ counters his more official theoretical takes of the creative process. In concluding his discussion of inspiration in My Mask, he writes

For that other thing, the creative urge, is a driven compulsion. There may be a certain pleasure in exercising a special faculty, but none in an obsession which takes possession of one’s mind to the exclusion of all else in quest of an achievement always dangled provocatively beyond one’s reach.

In this instance, a debilitating experience of mental block is imaginatively transferred to the body. Lindsay frames his ‘black depression over the crash of inspiration’ as ‘the phase of the hunchback’. However,

...I had at least the stimulus of a technical problem in oil painting to restore interest in work. And that interest restored my moribund

129 Norman Lindsay, My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it, p 37
130 Norman Lindsay, My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it, p 231
131 Norman Lindsay, My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it, p 64
132 Norman Lindsay, My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it, p 231
133 Norman Lindsay, My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it, p 237
sense for form-imagery also. I was able to pick pictures out of the air again.\textsuperscript{134}

‘Pick[ing] pictures out of the air’ is a phrase that affirms Lindsay’s concept of inspiration to Hesiod’s ‘breath of the Gods’, but the ‘stimulus of a technical problem in oil painting’ connects more with Greenberg’s assertion that inspiration comes from the artist’s media.

\textbf{‘Late love’ and artistic inspiration}

John Hetherington insinuates in his biography \textit{Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian} that ‘late love’ may have played a role in Lindsay’s restored creative powers. Johanna Mendelssohn goes further in \textit{Letters and Liars: Norman Lindsay and the Lindsay Family} in exploring the creative implications of his affair with Margaret Coen. Coen modelled for Lindsay, became his lover, and later married his close friend Douglas Stewart. With its strong roots in Nietzschean philosophy, transcendentalism, and Symbolism, Lindsay vitalism proposed that the creative impetus to beget Life was male. Judith Wright sums this up in \textit{Preoccupations in Australian Poetry}

The Lindsays replaced it [the ‘mateship’ aspect of Australian tradition] with an equally one-sided exaggeration of the sexual relation, but still wholly from the male point of view. Woman in the \textit{Vision} hierarchy...is no more than the foil to the man’s physical robustness, the object, rather than the partner, in a sexual act which is seen as creative only from the male point of view. Woman, as in the Nietzschean philosophy, is no more than the ‘soil’ in which creation and renewal take place.\textsuperscript{135}

She notes that Jack Lindsay emphasised this point in his autobiography \textit{Life Rarely Tells}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{134} Norman Lindsay, \textit{My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it}, p 241
\bibitem{135} Judith Wright, \textit{Preoccupations in Australian Poetry}, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1966, p 139
\end{thebibliography}
With *Creative Effort* we cut the umbilical cord of the *ubermensch* with earth. Earth, the woman, became only a passive material or object for the plastic and vivifying embrace of the hero.¹³⁶

Lindsay expands this in the second section of *Creative Effort, The Hidden Symbol*

Let us pause here a moment before confusing life with the common process which produces life. We see that the mind which expresses life, the Creative mind, is that which leads us to love life.

For Lindsay, vitalism lauds the value of life, a ‘more vital life’ and the idea that intellect can be transferred by ‘birth’ to continue through earth’s ages. It promotes the role of the male who knows ‘life’ and demotes the role of women in ‘the common process which produces life’. Such ideas would not mesh well with a concept of a female muse who controlled creative inspiration, thus leading Lindsay to prefer ‘self-expression’ as a creative theory. It would also tie in with the concept of an adversarial ‘daemon’ from whom creative control must be wrestled by the dominant ‘Creative mind’.

The concept of woman as passive material can either place a female muse at the centre of Lindsay’s art, or read conversely, as the necessary but ignored ‘soil’ which allows the artist to create. It is aligned with Prose’s conclusion that artists would be uncomfortable with the concept of the muse if they found that, while they needed women for the creation of art, they found them less attractive as human beings.

Problems would naturally arise when an artist didn’t much like women – so much more difficult, wilful and stubborn than a Greek water sprite, dancing into one’s studio with her lyre or laurel wreath.¹³⁷

Lindsay was always more comfortable with the feminine as a ‘form image’ or ‘symbol’ of the Life he lauded in his vitalism

...the one assurance of continuity was the re-creation of life which drives it on into the future, over all obstacles and through all infernos. For the central symbol of that conflict I chose the image of femininity.\textsuperscript{138}

Alternatively, Lionel Lindsay, in the ‘august authority of the elder brother’, both orchestrated and inspired his younger brother Norman’s artistic career; he was

...the perfect prototype of the big brother, a dominant figure among his fellows and a competent exponent of the life crudely masculine.\textsuperscript{139}

The support Norman received from his brother Lionel included managing his financial affairs, writing positive criticism of his work, finding him his first job as a cartoonist on the \emph{Hawklet}, and teaching him to etch. However, Lionel was also instrumental in guiding his younger brother to literary sources for art. Norman’s use of Lionel’s diary and remembered adolescent exploits was one of the many reasons for their relationship breakdown.

Lionel emerges as the major source for both Norman’s art and his fiction: he was a library of a man just waiting to be opened and plundered. In about 1915, when Norman started his series of pen and ink drawings based on the life of Francois Villon, Lionel provided more than the original idea and the literary source. He wrote:

\textit{I take it you will illuminate the text by any suggestion in it that illustrates the life and character of Francois. The thing will be to cram the book with dissolute pranks, lawlessness, the fear and attraction of black death, the pangs of hunger and love, Gothic architecture; I have some great photographs to help you there!}\textsuperscript{140}

\textsuperscript{138} Norman Lindsay, \textit{My Mask: for what little I know of the man behind it}, p 234
\textsuperscript{139} Norman Lindsay, \textit{My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it}, p 33
\textsuperscript{140} Joanna Mendelssohn, \textit{Letters and Liars: Norman Lindsay and the Lindsay Family}, p 72
In his autobiography Lindsay admits that he has already written ‘anything I could have to say’ about Lionel in his Creswick trilogy of masculine adolescence *Saturdee, Halfway to Anywhere,* and *Redheap*. Rather than being passed over as a muse, the break between Norman and Lionel was mutual. Lionel, tired of having his life mined for his brother’s writing, resented the way he was depicted, while Norman found his brother’s rejection of his spiritualism after World War I difficult to understand.

The muse relationship between Margaret Coen (later Margaret Stewart) has only recently been explored. Their affair is hinted at in John Hetherington’s *Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian,* but it wasn’t until Joanna Mendelssohn found his notes in the LaTrobe Library and letters referring to the relationship in Rose’s papers in the Mitchell Library that her influence on Norman’s artistic resurgence in the 1930s became clear.

In his biography Hetherington points to the possibility of a new relationship while Lindsay was living at 12 Bridge Street in Sydney, learning to paint in oils to overcome his mental block:

> Then, for no logical reason, his lost creativeness came back. In his own words, he found ‘the old mechanism of form imagery working as well as, if not better than, before’. His own theory – that the merciless ritual of hard work which he set himself affected the cure by acting on his mental being and nervous system until the sleeping cells woke – is unsatisfying but as good as any other...What part if any late love played in restoring Norman’s nervous balance and his mastery over himself is conjectural. If he had an affair of the heart at that time he never spoke of it. This proves nothing; he was as reticent in such matters as men like Hugh McCrae were unguarded. Some of his close friends supposed that the views he often expounded on the value of a new love in stimulating the creative powers of an aging man reflected personal experience.  

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141 Norman Lindsay, *My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it,* p 33  
142 John Hetherington, *Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian,* p 207
Mendelssohn charts the development of the relationship between Lindsay and Margaret Coen from the first letter she sent him after reading *Redheap* to copies of letters written by Margaret to Lindsay. These letters were placed by Rose in her Mitchell Library papers and annotated: “Feb 1942. Very amusing example of the ‘Puss Puss period.’ The ‘Puss puss’ refers to mutual pet names Margaret and Norman used, which had aroused her scorn. The quoted letter begins ‘Dearest Puss’ and ends ‘Love to dearest Puss, Puss’. Mendelssohn also notes that ‘there are no letters extant between Norman and Margaret for the period 1934 to 1939 when he lived at 12 Bridge Street, two doors from her studio’. According to Mendelssohn, ‘descendants’ of Rose believed that Norman and Rose’s trip to America had ‘less to do with the [banning of *Redheap*] and rather more to do with Norman’s interest in the beautiful young artist who was appearing as a model in some of his paintings.’\(^{143}\)

She continues

> Well into the 1940s Margaret arranged for models for Norman, did his banking and fretted over his eating habits, all in a way that, after Rose’s brittle independence, must have been comforting for a man who always demanded the services of others.\(^{144}\)

The relationship between Margaret Coen and Lindsay happened in the same time-period as Lindsay’s artistic re-invigoration after an almost ten-year mental block; Hetherington quotes him as mentioning the ‘stimulating’ effects of a love-affair on middle-aged creativity. Margaret’s daughter Meg Stewart also wrote of the relationship between her mother and Norman Lindsay, adding a chapter on the affair to the second edition of the book. Called ‘What my mother didn’t tell me’, she writes of learning of the affair in Mendelssohn’s book, then finding letters between her mother and Norman that support its existence, and the effect of the affair on Norman’s art.

\(^{143}\) Joanna Mendelssohn, *Letters and Liars: Norman Lindsay and the Lindsay Family*, p 84-85

\(^{144}\) Joanna Mendelssohn, *Letters and Liars: Norman Lindsay and the Lindsay Family*, p 85
She quotes a letter found in the Norman Lindsay papers in the Mitchell Library

Dear Margaret, I've had the charm and stimulus of you and your work beside me all the while, and I know without a doubt, that but for you, and all that you have done for me in those evil years when I had to fight back to work, I would long ago have been in my coffin. So if this country has gained anything by my work since that time, it is in your debt, not mine. It was the stimulus, quite apart from my affection for you, of seeing you make such a brave fight to conquer the problem of watercolour, that brought me back to attack it once again from a new outlook.145

Lindsay’s description of Margaret as a ‘stimulus’ that brought him out of mentally blocked period is a clear sign that he realised her value to his art apart from his ‘affection’ for her; in fact, he is telling her that she saved him from artistic and physical death. Such a bond can clearly be labelled a traditional ‘muse/artist’ relationship, and Stewart does so, writing

In the end, you come away thinking if my mother succeeded in being close to two such creative men as Norman and my father [Douglas Stewart] – and my father did have his difficult moments – and was a muse to them as well as continuing undistracted, for the most part, with her own painting, it’s all the more kudos to her.146

Margaret, as well as being model and watercolour painting student, does seem to have played the role of muse to the stultified Norman, allowing him to paint again.

Katie, Rose, Lionel, and Margaret can all be seen to have inspired Lindsay. Being married to Norman’s closest friend, Douglas Stewart, for the last thirty years of Norman’s life, Margaret would continue to visit Lindsay regularly until his death. Yet his relationship with Katie, Rose, and Lionel would disintegrate as his artistic needs, or other needs, changed.

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146 Meg Stewart, Autobiography of my Mother, p 344
Lindsay’s absorption in his work, and his constant exploitation of those around him to undertake ordinary tasks that he found onerous (Lionel, for example, was responsible for booking Rose’s berth to England and organised the house rentals when Norman needed to relocate Katie and the children) could lead to the supposition that Norman Lindsay used his muses and then discarded them when they no longer suited his purpose. This may be especially true of a muse who became difficult to manage or whose attention became divided. This would occur when Rose held parties at Springwood that Norman didn’t enjoy or found uninteresting, and when children were born and began to take up Katie’s attention. The muse-artist dynamic would also disintegrate due to competition, such as when Lionel’s artistic success began to gain momentum, or dissipate due to impracticality, as when Norman moved back to Springwood after his extended stay in Sydney with Margaret. Lionel believed Rose’s initial relationship with Norman ‘was to be encouraged only as long as she helped Norman in his work’\textsuperscript{147}.

By making plain the consciously constructed nature of the mythology surrounding Lindsay’s utilisation of a muse paradigm in his artistic production, the frailty of its veracity becomes apparent. The relationships he had with those labelled muse were varied and complex, and in some ways ran counter to understood muse/artist relationships; here particularly my identification of Lionel as a form of muse contradicts the heteronormative muse model.

While these relationships might all be viewed through the dominant cultural myths surrounding the muse and artist, this chapter demonstrates that their actual nature may be more complex or contrary to such myths. At the same time, an understanding of Lindsay’s creative impetus might be viewed through alternative conceptualisations of creative inspiration that are grounded on self-expression, genius, the daemonic, or the role of the art medium.

\textsuperscript{147} Joanna Mendelssohn, \textit{Lionel Lindsay: An Artist and His Family}, p 113
Chapter 2

Reimagining Australian Masculinity

In this chapter, I argue that through his writing and art, Norman Lindsay reconstructs hierarchies of Australian masculinity to reinforce the supremacy of art and artists. This project was not attempting to derail the dominant patriarchal system. Indeed, the role of women was not in dispute and normative heterosexuality was not challenged. Lindsay’s ideal masculinity was constructed in the context of an almost exclusively male social and professional group, whereby close homosocial bonds created a supportive aesthetic network.

The ideal masculinity to which Lindsay was attempting to bring currency can be found in all his creative endeavours; his fiction and non-fiction writing, his published cartoons and his personal artwork, including paintings, pen-and-ink drawings, watercolours and etchings. Through this work, Lindsay attempted to subvert the growing prevalence of the ideal of the strong, sportsmanlike, military male and replace it with his own ideal of the male artist/philosopher. It is this version of masculinity that he embodied and which would provide the touchstone to his Vitalist philosophy. If the artist (necessarily and, to Lindsay, obviously, male) is to be considered as the highest form of life, as detailed in Creative Effort, then the masculinity embodied in that ideal must also be the highest form.

Lindsay's masculinity project; one piece of art at a time

A prevailing myth surrounding the work of Norman Lindsay is the influence of a dominating female figure. Many of his larger works in pen-and-ink, oil and watercolour feature this figure, as do many of his etchings. It is through his artwork that he is most well-known and, aside from his drawings of anthropomorphised Australian native animals and political cartoons, his artwork typically features tall, strongly modelled, buxom
women. While these female figures are often used as metaphorical representations of ideas or nations, they are just as often used as objects of unattainable desire, sexually alluring but not always sexually interested in the smaller males with whom they are situated. Donald Williams notes:

In his art, unlike his contemporaries, Lindsay drew his subject matter from past myths and legends and chose not to respond to local subject matter such as landscape. His work was typified by Rubenesque naked women...¹⁴⁸

While his paintings identify the female as the larger, more powerful and influential heterosexual sexual partner, his writing often inverts this trope, and has sexually desirable women initially withholding their bodies from men until they succumb to an all-powerful need. However, this pattern does not always hold true; Lindsay’s writing is inconsistent and, as he was writing and publishing over a period of over fifty years, his emphasis on gendered sexual dominance fluctuated.

While Lindsay was born firmly into the Australian middle-class, his artistic focus and philosophy, as well as his bohemian lifestyle in Melbourne, Sydney and the Blue Mountains separated him from more mainstream or middle-class performances of masculinity. Yet, the value he placed on the construction of masculinity was very high, and from his reading of Nietzsche he found the terminology that allowed him to frame a ‘revaluing of values’. Having also read Freud, Lindsay wished to raise the value of the ‘male ego.’ In Creative Effort, he states:

For mind, we see clearly, is not a universal quality common to all men, but the individual development of a few exceptional men.¹⁴⁹

and

Art, where it touches the most vital of all issues, which is sex, the stimulus of Life’s rebirth, will be frank, licentious, shameless, seeking every image which may emphasise the gesture of desire,

¹⁴⁹ Lindsay, Norman, Creative Effort: An Essay in Affirmation, p 23
adoring the naked body, surrounding it with emblems of happiness, strength, courage – in short, will impose on the mind that embrace in passion which may be transferred to the embrace of the body.¹⁵⁰

To further demonstrate this, Lindsay has a character in *A Curate in Bohemia* appeal to his fellows' masculinity when requesting them to ante up for beer

“Cover that and show what you’re made of. Be men if you can’t be artists!”¹⁵¹

For Lindsay, the mind of the artist is culturally superior. The male artist holds primacy over the female, which is paradoxically reduced to an object of beauty for male appreciation and exalted for her ability to produce in the male the desire to create life. The feminine is always necessary for male artistic achievement, but not necessary when separate from male observation and needs.

By positing the construction of ‘artist’ above the construction of ‘man’ Lindsay is both supporting his ideal of the supreme artist and creating his own gender hierarchy; male artist, male, female. It is unclear where a female artist would be placed in this rank, as female artists are absent from his writing if not from his life.

The *Bulletin*, Lindsay’s employer for most of his adult life, was engaged in the construction of nationalistic masculinity, and used its pages to promote a specifically Australian masculinity against the ‘dour and depressing customs illogically imported from chilly distant regions to our warm and radiant fatherland.’¹⁵² This ideal of masculinity was ‘constructed against a range of ‘others’, including Asians, city-dwellers, recent immigrants, non-Caucasian males, and the English.’ It also promoted masculinity as a

counter to ‘the assault by feminism, the suffragette movement and bodies such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union on male privilege.’\textsuperscript{153}

Lindsay reversed the construction of the Australian bushman as the ‘ideal man’ and both urbanised him and made him into an avid, erotically-driven artist. His writing disseminates this ideal. Set in urban Melbourne, \textit{A Curate in Bohemia} draws attention to the bohemian male lifestyle; \textit{Age of Consent}, which is set in a rural township, demonises every aspect of rural life. Indeed, the rural is a feminised, restrictive space where masculinity is regulated and controlled.

Decadence, and the role of the feminine within it, is a site of both formative masculinity and masculine anxiety against which Lindsay was attempting to construct his artistic masculinity. His reading of Nietzsche, which his son Jack maintained he did not understand, formed a supportive plank for his masculinity project. The artist as ideal masculine would be underpinned by Nietzsche’s concept of ‘an art for artists’ and his questioning of decadence as an aesthetic force. According to Nietzsche, resistance against decadence is important ‘for the sake of health and ascending vitality’.\textsuperscript{154}

Labelling masculine or feminine traits or behaviours as either ‘dominant masculine’ or ‘dominant feminine’ is a feature of Norman Lindsay’s writing. The focus on the interplay between the often-conflicted desires of masculine and feminine is present throughout all his novels and much of his philosophical and autobiographical writing.

**Constructing masculinity through fiction**

Lindsay’s conceptualisation of ‘dominant’ masculinities and femininities propagated some masculinities as inherently superior and naturally ascendant over both subservient masculinities and femininities. It then

\textsuperscript{153} Martin Crotty, \textit{Making the Australian Male: Middle-class masculinity 1870-1920}, p 22

remains to identify which parts make a particular kind of masculinity ‘dominant’ over another, and indeed over femininity, although there are fewer dominant femininities in his writing than there are dominant masculinities. Lindsay’s dominant masculinities have many features in common: they are most often referred to in sexual situations; they are most often part of a binary where the masculine is dominant and the feminine is submissive; and they often refer to ideals of hegemonic masculinity presented as ideal by the author.

Connell states

There are differences and tensions between hegemonic and complicit masculinities; oppositions between hegemonic masculinity and subordinated and marginalised masculinities. Each of these configurations of practice is internally divided, not least by the layering of personality described by psychoanalysis, the contradictions in gender at the level of personality.\(^\text{155}\)

Lindsay’s construction of a masculinity that lionised the male artist was an inconsistent project, possibly linked to his own relationship status at the time a particular novel was written. Lindsay wrote fiction, but it is possible to note parallels of feeling or ideology relevant to his circumstances and philosophies of that time. For example, his first published novel, \textit{A Curate in Bohemia}, was written about the time of Lindsay’s period as a jobbing, penniless, bohemian artist in Melbourne, and many of the characters are thinly disguised versions of people he associated with at that time.

The ideas expressed about art and relationships in \textit{A Curate in Bohemia} can also be traced to his developing artistic ideals and the burgeoning of his relationship with his first wife Katie Parkinson. Published in 1913, it was probably written in the period after he moved to Sydney but before his move to Springwood, in 1904 or 1905.\(^\text{156}\) In the dedication/preface of the original publication of \textit{A Curate in Bohemia}, Lindsay acknowledged the

\(^{155}\) R W Connell, \textit{Masculinities}, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2005, p 24

\(^{156}\) John Hetherington, \textit{Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian}, p 106
debt he owed his friends, while attempting to forestall any feelings of ill-usage they might have had at being included in his novel;

It is not, in fact, to the reader that I address myself here, but to certain friends. They may, of course, not read this story; but there is always a danger that, in an unguarded moment, they may, and I should be sorry if they were annoyed at finding themselves included in it. For, if the confession must be made, some of the story has the disadvantage of being true, and some of the characters have the disadvantage of being friends. So, on the verge of publication I am forced to assume hastily a smirk of conscious deprecation and disarm unkindness by dedicating this story to the friends included in it. It is a mean way of dodging the consequence of tampering with the sacred name of friendship; but I do it on the assumption that the friends in question are still, as they used to be, such awfully decent chaps.  

Whether this half-hearted apology was effective or not, it does indicate to what degree Lindsay used those around him as templates for his characters, and the extent to which he was aware of his usage. *Pan in the Parlour*, for example, has a disclaimer at its beginning stating that ‘no scene in this story is taken from life, and all the characters are purely imaginary’.

**Homosocial Vitalism**

Significantly, Lindsay’s project to reconstruct masculinity was not a lone crusade; he was part of a constellation of writers and poets with similar ideas. Ever present yet invisible, the concept of vitalism in Australian art and letters emphasised the male role in the recreation of life and the omission of consideration of the female role. Karen Barker notes

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157 Norman Lindsay, *A Curate in Bohemia*, p v
...Lindsay’s position was that if his naked ladies turned men’s thoughts toward sex – the ‘stimulus of Life’s rebirth’ – he was merely acting as the servant of life.¹⁵⁸

Lindsay found his vitalism in a philosophy that linked Life (for him, also inextricably linked to Art) and the force of life with unconstrained (especially for the male) sexual activity. All social convention, which was the needless trappings of Existence, must make way for the vital needs of Life and its rebirth through sex and although gender was not specifically nominated, the dual foci of life-affirming vitalism and the elevation of male artists to leaders of society necessarily required a reformation of previously established concepts of gender.

Accepting that gender is culturally built through societal influences on a ‘sexed body’, rather than being a biologically determined absolute, there are many aspects of development that play a key role in its formation¹⁵⁹. Feminist theory has critiqued masculinity as being constructed as the universal state of humanity and the role of woman as ‘other’.¹⁶⁰ The construction of gender has been described as ‘historically changing and politically fraught’, - ‘everyday life is an arena of gender politics’.¹⁶⁰ R W Connell states that Sigmund Freud through his ‘Rat Man’ and ‘Little Hans’ case studies in 1909, and Karl Jung through his ideas of the persona, anima and archetypal images in the collective unconscious, were among the first to analyse masculinity,¹⁶¹ and it was through psychiatry and psychology that much of the initial discourse around masculinity was conducted.

Second wave feminism of the 1960s and 70s reclaimed the female and feminine as valued constructs and was critical of patriarchal society (a project still under construction at the time of writing), however masculinity remained largely unquestioned. Miriam Dixson wrote in 1976 in *The Real Matilda: Woman and Identity in Australia 1788 to the Present* that ‘women

¹⁵⁸ Karen Barker, *Life and more Life: the strategic hierarchies of Australian literary vitalism*, p 2, referencing *Creative Effort*, p 50
are only beginning to define themselves as culturally authentic existents'.

What constitutes gender can be contingent on society’s needs and values. What traits might be thought ideal in regards to either gender are constantly under pressure and debate, meaning that terms such as ‘male’, ‘masculine’ and ‘masculinity’ are by no means easily or concretely defined. How gender is demonstrated, and whether that demonstration is hegemonic, is constantly in flux.

The study of masculinity might also be viewed as gendered. Connell states that

The guiding metaphors of scientific research, the impersonality of its discourse, the structures of power and communication in science, the reproduction of its internal culture, all stem from the social position of dominant men in a gendered world. The dominance of science in discussions of masculinity thus reflects the position of masculinity (or specific masculinities) in the social relations of gender. In that case, what can be expected from a science of masculinity, being a form of knowledge created by the very power it claims to study?

While Connell refers specifically to science as a field of endeavour, the parameters that are established for this field can be transferred to art as a field of endeavour. The ‘social position of dominant men in a gendered world’ applies to the discourse around art and its structures of power and communication. Any investigation of the constructions of masculinity in an artistic cultural context would be subject to these same limitations.

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Artist as idealised masculine

Lindsay says that he began drawing at about age four\textsuperscript{164}. An affliction (which caused him to become covered in itchy red welts if he became overheated) gave him the quiet time to develop his artistic interest and skill. At this stage, he focussed on the technical and mnemonic skills required to reproduce accurate representations of animals. His artistic focus changed as he moved into adolescence, possibly influenced by his grandfather the Rev. Thomas Williams, who regularly took him to the Ballarat Art Gallery. In particular, Solomon J. Solomon’s \textit{Ajax and Cassandra} had great influence on his artistic ideals. This painting depicts Cassandra about to be raped. A young Lindsay created a personal bookplate featuring his own image, and a series of naked women floating and tumbling upwards. He also took and displayed Royal Academy nudes from journals in the local library. While his mother was unimpressed, their provenance and Lindsay’s independent attitude saved them from removal. They proved invaluable source material when he began to be commissioned by fellow male schoolmates to draw nudes in their pocket notebooks. He notes

I could put up a bold defence of my academic nudes to my mother, nor would I endorse censorship over my illustrations to \textit{Antony and Cleopatra}, or \textit{Venus and Adonis}, as culled from Shakespeare, but I was extremely furtive in keeping under cover from her certain other experiments in the feminine nude that bordered on the pornographic. Not that I’m going to deplore an immature exercise in bawdry; any art that lacks it loses its vitalizing content.\textsuperscript{165}

He also exercised his artistic skill in his school newspaper, the \textit{Boomerang}, which published stories, correspondence, local football news and poetry. ‘[A] striking piece of work’ is how Lindsay’s biographer describes the illustration he did of a stanza by Byron when still only sixteen years old, and it is certainly a precursor to the illustration of novels and poetry that he engaged in for the rest of his career. This period also

\textsuperscript{164} Norman Lindsay, \textit{My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it}, p 36

\textsuperscript{165} Norman Lindsay, \textit{My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it}, p 50
saw the production of many ‘abortive small novels I was always starting and never completing beyond a chapter or two’, and ‘pictorial ribaldries’ for the entertainment of his friends of both genders.¹⁶⁶

These early endeavours demonstrate Lindsay’s interests and influences before his liberating move to Melbourne, and indicate that while his interest in redefining masculinity began to take form in Melbourne, its scaffolding had begun in adolescence.

As Crotty notes, “The study of masculinity in Australia has tended to concentrate on convicts, diggers, bushmen, larrikins and the working classes rather than ruling class men.”¹⁶⁷ Lindsay focussed on an urban construction of masculinity that moved away from this tradition. The homosocial bonds between young, single, urban men is described in much of his writing. One of the reasons he gives for the emergence of this distinctly different masculinity is the economic circumstances of early twentieth century Australia.

Ejectment was a trifle in those post-Land Boom days, when half the buildings in Melbourne were empty and rooms were let everywhere for anything the agents could or could not get for them.¹⁶⁸

**Construction of masculinity in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Australia**

Lindsay attempted to provoke change in the concept of Australian masculinity at a time when it was undergoing particular scrutiny and change. As Martin Crotty discerns in *Making the Australian Male: Middle-class masculinity 1870-1920*;

If in 1870 the boy was judged by the standard of his aesthetic religious morality and his worthiness for the kingdom of God, by 1920 he was judged by physical strength, patriotism, military usefulness, and ultimately, his worthiness as a member of the

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.
¹⁶⁷ Martin Crotty, *Making the Australian Male: Middle-Class Masculinity 1870-1920*, p 3
¹⁶⁸ Norman Lindsay, *Bohemians of the Bulletin*, p 123
nation and empire. Over the period from 1870 to 1920 discussion of the problem of boyhood shifted from a fear of moral degeneration to the fear that the rising generation would be unable to protect the new Australian nation.\footnote{Martin Crotty, \textit{Making the Australian Male: Middle-class masculinity 1870-1920}, p 11}

An understanding of the concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity, as described by R W Connell in \textit{Masculinities}, is helpful in understanding Lindsay’s version of masculinity. Connell states that:

\begin{quote}
The concept of ‘hegemony’, deriving from Antonio Gramsci’s analysis of class relations, refers to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life. At any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted. Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.\footnote{R W Connell, \textit{Masculinities, Second Edition}, p 77}
\end{quote}

More specific to Australia, however, is the connection of masculinity to the bush, the outback, strength, and independence. This ideal of the bushman is linked to cultural separation from Britain and the British Empire; the manly Australian bushman would be contrasted with the ‘effeminate’ Englishman. Crotty, again, notes:

\begin{quote}
For much of the nineteenth century the city was identified as a dangerous space that indicated ‘womanhood out of control, lost nature, loss of identity’. As a counter, and in searching for models of rejuvenated masculinity, Europeans looked towards the new world and the empire, where men were risking their lives in pushing civilisation onwards.\footnote{Martin Crotty, \textit{Making the Australian Male: Middle-class masculinity 1870-1920}, p 20}
\end{quote}

The archetypes that were constructed to embody the ideals of the newly-formed Australia featured masculinities in tune with a nation already
idealising its past and tentatively feeling towards a future independent of colonialism: ‘the convict shaking his shackled fist; the heroic explorer facing inland; the bushman plodding down a dusty track; the digger scrambling up the slopes at Gallipoli; Bradman and McCabe facing down the bodyline attack’.172 While all these images portray a strong, capable, autonomous masculinity, they leave little room for a masculinity that focussed on strength in artistic or intellectual endeavours. Australian hegemonic masculinity favoured physical action rather than intellectual, aesthetic, or spiritual pursuits. Lindsay’s idea of masculinity was composed against a context favouring supreme physicality.

Lindsay published cartoons from around 1901. However, his first novel A Curate in Bohemia was published in 1913, a period characterised by rising fear over the need to defend the empire of which Australia still formed a part. This fear was realised in the declaration of war in 1914. The hegemonic masculinity that valued strength and nationalistic values would increasingly be linked to militarism and ‘doing one’s bit’ for one’s country, in contrast to the masculinity Lindsay was describing idealising the male artist.

While adapting hegemonic masculinity was adapting to suit the needs of a newly formed nation and a nation at a war, Lindsay was trying to redefine the ideal of masculinity away from the strong, capable cog in the machine of nation or Empire, as described by Crotty, and towards the heterosexually ascendant male artist who would figure as the nation’s saviour.

Lindsay utilised the developing sense of a strong, military masculinity in his recruitment cartoons during World War I, as well as his Bulletin cartoons of the same period. They mixed a ‘spirit of uncomplicated patriotism conspicuously well suited to the rather artless outlook of most Australians’173 with a desire to ‘stir up the slack to a sense of what this war

173 John Hetherington, Norman Lindsay: An Embattled Olympian, p 132
means’. Although Jack Lindsay characteristically places a negative spin on Lindsay’s efforts (arguing that Lindsay had little understanding of the ideas he was supporting through his art), others have argued that Lindsay had a sophisticated understanding of how his cartoons could, and should, be interpreted, that he used metaphor, allegory and symbols quite deliberately, and so skilfully that the signifier or symbol often became the signified:

This blurring suited Lindsay’s themes because it permitted him to reinforce visually particular and recurring associations; Germans became synonymous with the ‘Hun-ape’ which he used to represent them; spectres of death and destruction, skulls and corpses, became the Kaiser incarnate; babies spiked on bayonets, rape and slaughter came incontestably to mean Prussianism.

Peter Fullerton analyses two of Lindsay’s war cartoon character staples, Billjim and Sergeant Bill Anzac, noting that these characters were created

...not only to personify what were thought to be qualities characteristic of Australian men – and the point should not be lost that these images are invariably concerned with masculinity and maleness – but also to celebrate the Christian and humane virtues of the allies.

This analysis of the masculine in Lindsay’s war cartoons finds that he contrasted an ideal masculinity as the ‘honourable’ man, who enlists and defends his country, against the ‘dishonourable and cowardly’ man, who does not enlist. For men, self-preservation or the need to provide for family were secondary to the larger good of the country; nationalism was presented as a foundation of ‘honourable masculinity’.

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175 ‘With the war, his unconscious Australianism came strongly to the fore, and for the one and only time he found himself in full accord with the ruling powers, without the least sense of the real political and social issues involved.’ Peter Fullerton, (ed) Norman Lindsay: War Cartoons 1914-1918, Foreword by Jack Lindsay
176 Peter Fullerton, (ed) Norman Lindsay: War Cartoons 1914-1918, p 4
177 Peter Fullerton, (ed), Norman Lindsay: War Cartoons 1914-1918, p 5
As seen in 1915 *The Bulletin* cartoon ‘Australia answers the War God’s Call’, Australia is represented as a strong and vital man. He is active, moving towards a challenge rather than away from it, and, although smaller than his challenger, is undeterred in his righteous conviction. Lindsay plays on the David and Goliath narrative of battle to emphasise the possibility of success of the small against the large. He then extends the scope of the narrative through a backdrop of feminine vulnerability and weakness. Defeated Belgium would be depicted as a woman being dragged by the hair by a Hun-ape, while the abstract Civilisation is a woman dressed in Greco-Roman robes. When trying to elicit the most possible emotion, he also uses figures of women and children among the dead, often pictured in piles or, on at least one occasion, as crucified on a cross alongside a male Jesus-figure.
Australia Answers the War God's Call, *The Bulletin*, Sept 9, 1915

Peter Fullerton, (ed) *Norman Lindsay: War Cartoons 1914-1918*
However, the death of his brother Reginald in 1916 challenged this view of Australian masculinity. He later stated:

> War is not needed as a test of courage and manhood and man, it is only an aimless and added tax on those virtues. Courage has been made the one excuse for the nobility of war, and remains the final proof of its utter vileness; for why should the finest quality in man be made to endure the most brutal penalty.\(^{178}\)

While the masculinity depicted in Lindsay's war cartoons is deeply patriotic, Lindsay's views changed as he focused more on a nationalist masculinity developed through specifically Australian literary and artistic themes, separate from those he considered European. He would seek to construct an Australian national identity that moved away from both the religious aesthete of the nineteenth century and the capable bushman or strong soldier of the early twentieth century.

**Other influences**

Australian art was in flux in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with artists such as Sydney Long and English expatriate Abraham (Aby) Alston as well as Norman's brother Lionel moving away from the Heidelberg School of *plein air* bush and settler themes towards a mythical, fantasy-based imagery. The image of Pan, the mythic piper, featured in artworks including Sydney Long’s *The Spirit of the Plains* (1897), and *Pan* (1898), as well as Lionel Lindsay’s *Pan* (1910), although the context of the figures is distinctively Australian.

> The particularity of the mythological painting that sprung up at this time lies in its continued concern for the habitation of the new land. The ancient gods are to be acclimatized among the gum trees, but they do not inhabit the bush as the settler did, by struggling with it – they *dance* among the trees. They invite us to a similar familiarity,

\(^{178}\) Norman Lindsay, *Creative Effort*, Cecil Palmer, London, 1924, p 28
not born of conquest but of harmony, in which nature is to be the mirror not of our will, but of desire, dreams and imagination.\(^\text{179}\)

As Norman Lindsay’s art developed, he developed what Christopher Allen terms ‘neo-paganism.’ As Allen suggests:

...Lindsay’s work was not merely the product of personal obsession, nor was it simply the negation of the Heidelberg School; his conception of an Australia populated by a new ideal race, healthy, pagan and fearless, is potentially complimentary to the vision of Heidelberg. A new openness about the body and sexuality, without Lindsay’s overheated visual rhetoric, is expressed in Cecil Bostock’s *Nude Study (1913-1917)*...\(^\text{180}\)

Lindsay’s friend and poet Hugh McCrae was exploring similar concepts and Lindsay would write in *Bohemians of the Bulletin* that

> I know that [McCrae’s] *Satyrs and Sunlight* [1909] vastly inspired the sort of imagery I was seeking to define pictorially.\(^\text{181}\)

Other major writers of the time, including Henry Lawson, Joseph Furphy, Henry Handel Richardson and Miles Franklin, were still exploring the bush, or the relationship of the rural to Australian urban development, but McCrae’s transference of classic Greek and Roman mythological fantasies onto Australian place dovetailed with Lindsay’s artistic motivation and values. While Lindsay’s creative philosophy was primarily inspired by his reading of Rabelais and Nietzsche, he felt a connection with Australian writers keenly, and his views on the importance of McCrae’s poetry to his artistic development are significant:

> Putting aside all personal affection and friendship for Hugh McCrae, I find it impossible to conceive of my early years in this country without his poetry. One would have to have existed in the Australia of the nineties to realize its significance to me.

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\(^{179}\) Christopher Allen, *Art in Australia: From colonization to Postmodernism*, p 86

\(^{180}\) Christopher Allen, *Art in Australia: From colonization to Postmodernism*, p 87

\(^{181}\) Norman Lindsay, *Bohemians of the Bulletin*, Angus and Robertson Ltd, Sydney, 1965, p 125
If ever there was a moribund limbo in all cultural values, it was this country in that era. It was given over to the skull-duggery of politicians, to bucolics plucking the wool off sheep, to a press with an intellectual status little above that of the Bogwallah Banner, edited mainly by parsons, and to the domination of all moral, social, aesthetic, and intellectual values by a virulent mob of wowsers, extracted from English Nonconformists, Scotch Presbyterians and Irish Catholics – all this plus a lingering flavour of the convict system...

Very well, then, that was the sort of earth in which Hugh McCrae and his poetry arrived to me. I was only eighteen at the time, but from my early schooldays I had my values in poetry fairly soundly established, for the poets I read mostly then – Shakespeare, Burns, Byron and Browning – are still my Olympians of poetry today... No matter for that, the first poem by Hugh that I read – ‘We Dreamed’ – staggered me with a conviction that real poetry had arrived in this country at last – not merely poetry which puts bright fancies into easily flowing rhymes and rhythms, but poetry which extracts from words an imagery that startles into being forms and emotions and transferences of thought which touch the profundities of life itself. It is not a procedure which can be defined in words, this power of common words to become exquisite mysteries through the mental images they arouse.  

McCrae’s literary imagery ties in with the classical mythology being used by Sydney Long and Lionel Lindsay, and can be seen to exert a major influence over Norman Lindsay’s artistic development. It would assist Norman Lindsay separate himself from the major Australian artistic movements of his time and focus on an urban rather than rural lens. He began isolating both his art as well as his writing from dominant constructions of masculinity.

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182 Norman Lindsay, *Bohemians of the Bulletin*, p 121-123
In conjunction with the development of his ideas around the dynamic between ‘life and art’, his concept of masculinity necessarily placed the artist as the fulcrum and exemplar. This becomes problematic when juxtaposed against his views of what constituted art: a focus on the figure, and particularly the female figure, made an artist a ‘real’ artist. Therefore, any masculinity with a ‘real artist’ as exemplar of manhood must appreciate and value the female form and be strictly heterosexual.

An effect of this was that social morality and religion came under scrutiny and would be endlessly lampooned. The bumbling curate, who is attracted to women but unable to seduce them through shy ineptitude and religious doubt about sex is a constant in Lindsay’s writing, most often juxtaposed against the sexually capable, confident male artist successful in seduction. The curate’s descent from religious moral uprightness to boozier and consorter with women is joyfully detailed in *A Curate in Bohemia*. Written from curate Jimmy Bowles (‘Spuds’) perspective, the novel is a comic exploration of the ineptitude foisted on one by, what are framed as feminine, temperance ideals and religious life. No matter how he tries, Bowles, once in the company of his school-friend Cripps and his friends Limpet, MacQuibble and Partridge (based on Lindsay himself), is unable to resist the free and easy life of the boozing artist consorting with ‘the most beautiful woman he has ever seen’.

If you are seeing life, a mirror is a vastly exhilarating accessory, especially if you are squeezed up close to a charming girl and are gifted with sufficient courage to squeeze her hand beneath the table.183

That Bowles has the ‘courage’ to squeeze Miss Gimblet’s hand is contrasted to Cripp’s relationship with Miss Gimblet, who is most comfortable when she is sitting on his lap. While Cripp’s masculinity is constructed through his control of circumstances that include seducing women, extorting food from sixpenny restaurants, mastery of the city, and artistic fervour if not practice, the curate’s masculinity is constantly in

183 Lindsay, Norman, *A Curate in Bohemia*, p 95
question; he is unable to maintain his religious morality, he is unable to converse unless under the influence of alcohol (which renders him both incomprehensibly voluble and violent, while leaving Cripps unaffected, adding holding one’s drink to the list of ideal masculine traits), and even his curate’s clothing is seen to render him less masculine:

The curate had an uneasy sensation that his scruples had lowered him considerably in the opinion of the company. He regretted now that he had been betrayed into such an evidence of weakness, especially in the presence of Limpet, who he felt vaguely must be a man of particularly dissolve and abandoned life, and consequently to be respected.184

In Lindsay’s gender hierarchy, the religious male was downgraded to be positioned even below the ‘common man’. In almost all his writing the religious man is a figure of humour, except in The Cousin from Fiji, where he becomes a heterosexual predator to unattractive (to the author, and therefore the reader) women.

Published in London in 1934, Pan in the Parlour shows a more developed and mature construction of artistic masculinity. The construction of a dominant masculinity is diversified between male characters; the Pan in the parlour of the title is a womanising dandy and the two main male characters are in denial about their sexual appetites until they can no longer control themselves.

Andrew remained for a long time staring at his plans, but all he saw of their cogwheels were so many sections of a vile delicious detestable adorable girl’s body. So that was how it was done, eh? A glimpse of legs and arms and eyes brilliant with cosmetics of desire, and the whole concrete world of the male blown to a wisp of smoke. No escape. One was condemned to go on craving for that painted body; never sure of possessing it, never secure from its threat of dispossession.185

184 Lindsay, Norman, A Curate in Bohemia, p 13
185 Lindsay, Norman, Pan in the Parlour, T Werner Laurie Ltd, London, 1940, p 151
Lindsay’s use of imagery to develop effective World War I propaganda suggests that Lindsay was very aware of the effect his artwork had on the emotions of his viewers and readers. Transferring this knowledge and understanding from his art to his writing, it becomes clear that Lindsay’s written exploration of masculinity, and the idealised artistic masculinity represented in his novels, was done with an understanding of the effect such representations could have on an audience.

His art and writing were engaged in a concerted, deliberate effort to reframe masculinity as he felt others understood it, altering its parameters to fulfil his desire to see the male artist lauded as the supreme form of masculinity and cultural dominance.
Chapter 3.

Appropriating the Feminine

While the majority of Lindsay’s artwork (outside his journalism) featured the feminine form, his novels also utilised the feminine as a narrative counter to his male protagonists. With two notable exceptions, Lindsay wrote from a position of male narrator, protagonist, and assumed a male reader. The weight of the masculine perspective is ponderous and in being so pervasive becomes normalised and universalising. Lindsay himself would write of his novel Dust or Polish? to Douglas Stewart:

…I think it a readable short novel. I mean the sort that holds a readers [sic] attention, by climax and anti-climax, and it has something pertinent to say about the psychology of the modern intelligent woman of affairs who has to find a balance somehow between her intellectual and her sex life.186

While acknowledging the intelligence of his female protagonist (which is unusual for Lindsay), this self-analysis illustrates his clear appropriation of the feminine in order to promote a higher masculine understanding. Lindsay wishes to present his position as that of a gender radical through representing a ‘modern intelligent woman.’ He views the balancing of feminine sexuality with an intellectual life as a struggle, whereas his male protagonists are typically assumed to possess both intelligence and sexual drives without a corresponding internal struggle.

Lindsay’s choice to appropriate the feminine voice can be seen as an attempt to reinstate the authority of the masculine over all areas of writing. The exertion of masculine authorial control allows the anxiety around writing as an act of emasculation to be assuaged, reasserting the controlling gaze of the masculine subject (as evinced in the author/reader gaze) over the feminine object. This creates tension between the subliminal acts of the author and the conscious writing; Lindsay’s stated

186 MLMSS 3331 (1) Box 1, Douglas Stewart, Letters received from Norman Lindsay ca. 1922-1969
intention is to allow a feminine voice within his text, but the internal anxiety that this creates means that he is constantly foiling his own authorial intention. As a masculine author claiming the feminine voice, Lindsay’s need to express his masculinity mutes the feminine voice of his characters to give them a ventriloquist’s masculine voice instead. This ventriloquist’s voice is performed so unconsciously that the author is unaware of both his remaining grip on the masculine and the disempowered perspective of the objectified feminine.

In appropriating the feminine, Lindsay was attempting to masculinise his protagonist but succeeded only to a limited degree. He still required his character to please the male gaze. The assumption that Lindsay makes is that he is able to write from the position of an omniscient narrator with more understanding than the character has herself. As a key character in *Dust of Polish?* Rita Anson is intelligent but she is also ruthless and exploitative, characteristics that Lindsay tends to attach to the antagonists (often female) in his novels with central male protagonists. That the subject of Rita’s exploitation is also female and demonstrates all the traits Lindsay despises in women (age, physical ugliness, deterioration, alcoholism, and stupidity) suggests a gender hierarchy around the feminine: the woman demonstrating a combination of masculine and feminine traits such as smartness and beauty is perhaps as good as the ideal feminine structured around beauty, with women who do not exhibit either idealised traits of femininity or masculinity being at the very bottom.

Both *The Cousin from Fiji* and *Dust or Polish?* were written towards the end of Lindsay’s writing career, which spanned the first half of the twentieth century. It can be argued that in being his last published fictional work, as separate from the memoir, autobiography, or fictionalised autobiography, *Dust or Polish?* represents Lindsay’s mature views of the feminine. However, its publication date is not necessarily indicative of its date of writing, for Lindsay kept manuscripts in drawers and would publish them when requested by publishers or when the need arose. As he states in a letter to Douglas Stewart in 1945:
In desperation to keep my mind occupied I’ve started to rewrite that slight half novel about the secondhand furniture shop, having got rid of Tabonga Road, which I’ve posted to Brian James, as I’d like his reaction to it.\(^{187}\)

He would write to Stewart about the completed novel in 1947, marking its final writing as being somewhere between 1945 and 1947. He writes that ‘I hope I have managed to draw a sympathetic figure of a woman without any stress on sentiment.’ While this is written in 1947, it is likely to refer to *Dust or Polish?* but is not entirely clear. His suggestion that lack of sentiment is important when writing a female character is significant, underscoring his dislike of over-drawn emotion in female characters. The lack of emotion in many of his male characters can be seen as a healthy counterpoint to the negative excesses of ‘emotional women’.

### Appropriation and Objectification

When male authors write in the feminine it raises a number of issues, including sites of contestation around ‘desire and power.’\(^{188}\) As Jerry Aline Flieger writes, ‘literature involves a triangle of gazes between author, character and reader’.\(^{189}\) He posits that

> As a result of “the reader’s identification with the writer’s desire” which itself is “‘misrecognized’ as that of the novel’s protagonist”… we ourselves are always implicated in the complex vectors of desire and power, gender identification and gender crossing, which are mobilised when male authors write the feminine.\(^{190}\)

If we consider that Lindsay’s choice to write in the feminine stems from an urge to exert control over a feminine subject, then we find that the

\(^{187}\) MLMSS 3331 (1) Box 1, Douglas Stewart, Letters received from Norman Lindsay ca. 1922-1969


\(^{190}\) Ibid.
scopophilic series of looks that he sets up in his fiction position the reader in a concurrent position of pleasurable observation with the author. That Lindsay expresses the scopophilic desire of his characters (both Rita and Sadie in *Dust or Polish*? are showgirls, while Cecelia Belairs in *The Cousin from Fiji* displays constant awareness and manipulation of the gazes of male characters) adds a more complex aspect to the theory of the triangulation of the gaze.

In *Men Writing the Feminine: Literature, Theory, and the Question of Genders*, Thaïs Morgan contends that the appropriation of a voice from the opposite sex emphasises the fictionality of sex and gender. Both ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’ become sites of contestation. Freud, who influenced much of early twentieth century thinking about gender (and with whose work Lindsay was familiar, if not entirely conversant; his use of the word ‘ego’ is constant, but often misapplied) stated in his 1933 lecture *Femininity*, that ‘throughout history people have knocked their heads against the riddle of the nature of femininity’, continuing

Nor will *you* have escaped worrying over this problem – those of you who are men; to those of you who are women this will not apply – you are yourselves the problem.

Norman Lindsay felt no conflict in identifying both his sex and his gender as biologically determined. He was a conscious marker and maker of gender, frequently using the terms ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ throughout his writing (for example, in *Halfway to Anywhere* when describing Bill’s co-ed classroom Lindsay writes ‘An exponent of the life crudely masculine, he had not yet discovered that the male ego reaches its supreme awareness of masculinity by contact with a feminine earth’).

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Lindsay, overtly invested in masculinity, writes the feminine in order to exert control over it. In *Women and the Bush* Kay Schaffer argues that objectification and/or appropriation of the feminine is an act of mastery.

…when one reads a text or interprets the meaning of a landscape or woman as object/other, one takes up the position that it is possible to know it, to master it – …This knowledge of the other must be read into the object, then taken away from it and appropriated by the speaker. In a critical gesture, its difference is denied. The otherness of the land/woman, or of a text, the multiplicity of meanings, the infinite referentiality of signs are reduced, censored and suppressed in the act of interpretation…To know the other is to control it by purging the plurality of meanings into a singular representation of ‘truth’.194

Lindsay can be seen to take up the position of the feminine in order to master it; in his writing of Rita and Sadie in *Dust or Polish?* and Ella and Cecelia in *The Cousin from Fiji*, Lindsay is effectively ‘reading’ their feminine discourse in order to allow his authorial masculinity to appropriate and ‘master’ it.

In Lindsay’s writing, all characters, even if they question the performance of gender, do not wish to change it. Even Rita in *Dust or Polish?* works to maintain her physical appearance of femininity while actively moving into the active/masculine world of business.

While his explicit language use reinforces characters as masculine or feminine, gender is a site of anxiety in his fiction that required constant re-marking. He uses the term ‘ultra-masculine’ to describe a youth on the prowl for women, ‘aware of girls, but conceding no more to them than the lighter moments of a strong man’s fancy’.195 Lindsay’s definition of the ‘ultra-masculine’ tends towards the hegemonically ‘strong, independent’ model and the character maintains this illusion to fend off possible failure in achieving his goal of attracting female attention. The performative

195 Norman Lindsay, *The Cousin from Fiji*, Angus and Robertson Publishers, Sydney, 1974, p 51
nature of masculinity, couched in defensive terms by Lindsay’s narration, creates a more contradictory presentation of masculinity than appears at first glance.

**A Triangulation of Gazes**

Analysing the production of gender in Lindsay’s fiction makes visible his reification of masculinity as normal and everything else as ‘Other’ and strange. As an author Lindsay establishes a triangulation of gazes whereby the author controls the gaze of the characters and directs the gaze of the reader. The characters find pleasure in looking both at themselves and at other characters within the text. Which gazes have control within his novels changes but the characters often express pleasure in being seen, seeing, and narcissistically seeing themselves. This internal textual observation adds a level of magnification to the influence exerted by the gaze.

This complexity can be analysed through an investigation of which gazes are given legitimacy and which are dismissed, both intra- and extra-textually. In *Dust or Polish?* Sadie’s narcissism is both criticised and enjoyed by the author and by extension the reader, who is placed in a position of voyeur in relation to the narrator. The characters in the text who experience Sadie’s obsession with her reflection express exasperation and ‘impatience’ with her absorption in her own image.

…the blonde Sadie, who moved automatically to the mirror to take off her hat and make caressive pats at her finely spun hair, while examining her smoothly modelled face with care, a ritual imposed on her by the presence of any mirror. The mirror assured Sadie that her face was well worth this precise examination…Satisfied that her face had retained its perfections since she last saw it, which was in the theatre dressing room half an hour before, she said…

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196 Norman Lindsay, *Dust or Polish?* Angus and Robertson Publishers Pty Ltd, Sydney, 1972, p 2
This description of Sadie’s narcissism is refracted to the reader by the comments of another character, Rita:

“Oh, let your face off the chain for ten minutes and sit down! I can’t talk to you when you’re in a daze of admiration over your own sex appeal.”

This exclamation is further explored when Sadie negates any implication that she is conceited.

“I never said you were. But you get a hell of a lot of satisfaction out of inspecting yourself, from the feet upwards.”

Sadie pondered over that and nodded agreement. “I consider it important.”

“What? Your satisfaction over yourself?”

“No, our looks, our figures. In our work appearance is everything.”

Sadie’s scopophilic, narcissistic gaze creates an alignment in the text between the pleasure that the narrator and reader find in their own scopophilic, voyeuristic gaze over the embodied Sadie and Rita, and the narrator’s indulging, paternal exploration of Sadie’s self-appreciation. It is the gaze of the external and masculine eye that is credited with proper scopophilic pleasure, while Sadie’s gaze is humoured and reduced to the position of a child learning to appreciate art through a guiding parental eye.

Lindsay’s language makes the connection between observation and pleasure clear. He writes that Sadie takes ‘calm pleasure’ in a glance at her ‘milky legs’, that she ‘turn[s] one arm gently about to admire its supple curves’, that she ‘meditated for a space over her carefully manicured nails’, and ‘caressed her satin-smooth legs…aroused herself

197 Norman Lindsay, Dust or Polish? p 2-3
198 Norman Lindsay, Dust or Polish? p 3
199 Ibid.
200 Norman Lindsay, Dust or Polish? p 4
201 Norman Lindsay, Dust or Polish? p 6
to nod, confirming her meditations. Rita also watches Sadie watching herself, and reinforces pleasure at Sadie’s femininity:

…watching Sadie at her bedtime toilet, which for Sadie was a prolonged cold-creaming of her face and arms, and a careful brushing out of her hair, which she wore in shoulder-length curls – a ritual performed with an absorbed gaze at herself in the mirror. Reluctant to leave that adored image of a Narcissus reverie, Sadie…

As Laura Mulvey notes in her psychoanalytic exploration of the gaze in cinema

Traditionally, the woman displayed has functioned on two levels: as erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator within the auditorium, with a shifting tension between the looks on either side of the screen. For instance, the device of the show-girl allows the two looks to be unified technically without any apparent break in the diegesis. A woman performs within the narrative; the gaze of the spectator and that of the male characters of the film are neatly combined without breaking narrative verisimilitude.

Extending this point to include fictional texts explains how Lindsay manages to exert a controlling gaze onto his female characters. To provide them with alternative agency would mean disrupting the performative embodied nature of the feminine for both the reader and the author.

Mulvey argues that ‘women in representation can signify castration, and activate voyeuristic or fetishistic mechanisms to circumvent this threat.’ Extending this to Lindsay’s attempts to write in the feminine, it can be seen that while he writes the internal feminine, he needs to maintain a

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202 Ibid.
203 Norman Lindsay, Dust or Polish? p 7
204 Laura Mulvey, Visual and Other Pleasures, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1989, p 19
205 Laura Mulvey, Visual and Other Pleasures, p 25
voyeuristic control of the external feminine form, preventing his representation from fully signifying either castration or an agency separate from the male gaze. Moreover, Sadie’s ‘absorbed gaze’ is a form of ‘Narcissus reverie’\(^\text{206}\), placing Sadie firmly in the realm of the scopophilic and supporting Mulvey’s theories.

The integrity of the text as an object for the controlling gaze of the author and the reader is supplemented by the internal gazes of the characters. Rita reinforces this later in the same conversation when she states that Sadie ‘like[s] being cocked up in front of an audience with nothing much on and getting a thrill out of being what those idiotic newspapers call a Lovely or a Glamour Girl.’\(^\text{207}\) As a protagonist, Rita fulfils Lindsay’s need for both a character with a problem to resolve as well as still being an appealing object for the male reader’s (and writer’s) gaze. As Rachel Blau DuPlessis notes, ‘a centralising cultural masculinity appropriated many of these positions [heterosexual maleness, femaleness, gayness] into “patriarchal poetry” as an imperial claim over all deployable subject positions.’\(^\text{208}\) If “patriarchal poetry” can be extended to “patriarchal fiction” then I argue that Lindsay’s representation of female protagonists and femininity is an ‘imperial claim’ over their subjectivity. DuPlessis adds

\[\ldots\]many male poets had difficulty accepting female artists (and sometimes conventionally “feminised” men like gays and Jews) as coequal – in their difference – and coeval, difficulty living in a multigendered world of practice. They showed considerable ambivalence to any non-hierarchical sex-gender artistic universe. This outcome is an artefact, constructed and reconstructed, neither a natural inevitability nor the result of permanent, essentialist attitudes.\(^\text{209}\)

\(^{206}\) Norman Lindsay, *Dust or Polish?* p 7

\(^{207}\) Norman Lindsay, *Dust or Polish?* p 6


Changing Attitudes towards Gender in Australia

The first three decades of the twentieth century saw a great deal of change in Australian attitudes towards gender. As has been previously noted, World War I created a new ideal of masculinity; during the same period, femininity was also undergoing rapid change. There was a new awareness of gender that was heightened for men by the military needs of Empire, and for women by the suffragette movements which advocated for electoral and civic rights for women in the new nation.

Kay Schaffer positions the ‘feminine’ in the construction of Australian identity as an ‘other’ against which Australian masculinity is formed.

In the relationship between the native son and the old-world father, she can stand in the place of parental authority. In the relationship of the Australian character to the bush, her presence is registered through metaphors of landscape.210

This is particularly pertinent to Lindsay’s characters of Ella and Cecilia Belairs in *The Cousin from Fiji*. They also reflect the emergence of the New Woman, ‘the figure of feminist rebellion who emerged in the 1880s and 1890s in English fiction and social commentary’211. While anxiety around the New Woman is notably absent from Lindsay’s writing, he does explore the concept of the independent woman as separate from family and male societal influences, ostensibly from a feminine view. That Lindsay also writes of the New Woman in 1892 in this text, well before the concerns regarding feminism and Empire became prevalent, is significant. The ‘New Woman’ as Lindsay writes her claims behavioural freedoms (such as smoking and unchaperoned gatherings) but does not campaign to work outside the home or eschews marriage. In fact, as I note later, marriage is seen as an escape from the restricting bonds of family by the end of both novels. His inclusion of New Woman-styled attitudes foregrounds the conflict Lindsay saw between economic and behavioural freedoms; his writing does not deliberately critique pre-20th century

feminism, rather it seeks to use the trappings of New Woman attitudes such as smoking to illuminate aspects of his female characters.

It is interesting to consider that Norman Lindsay lived with an example of the ‘intelligent woman of affairs’ who had no ‘difficulty’ being both intellectually capable and pleasurably sexual, his second wife Rose. Lindsay relegated all his financial and legal business to Rose, and she managed his catalogue, copyrights, income, assets, exhibitions and all other matters efficiently for most of their relationship. Perhaps to counter this living existence of an intellectual and sexual synthesis of femininity, Lindsay delimits feminine capabilities via his novel-writing, with fiction providing a vehicle or outlet of control.

In early twentieth-century Australia, women were beginning to realise their own capabilities, and that limitations were socially applied rather than intrinsic to their nature. Michael Kimmel, in The History of Men, found that there were four ‘patterns’ of responses to the ‘crisis’ in manhood instituted by nineteenth and twentieth-century feminism.

If masculinity no longer meant unchallenged monopoly of positions of power, what did it mean?... And finally, others have simply run away, escaping to some pristine homosocial world, whether mythic or real, as an all-male solace against encroaching dissolution.212

As a response to cultural challenges to masculinity, the escape ‘to some pristine homosocial world’ sums up Lindsay’s experiences well. The homosocial world of bohemian Melbourne and Sydney, and later his splendid isolation at Springwood in the Blue Mountains enabled him to find ‘solace’ against the confronting expansion of feminine agency. By painting women nude and exposed for the male viewer’s benefit he maintained his masculine power and superior position. By writing the feminine, he declares his universality and the inferior, controllable otherness of the feminine.

Lindsay appears to grant agency through voice and perspective to a female protagonist, while having it maintained or controlled by the masculine author and, by extension, reader. As this chapter demonstrates, Lindsay’s attempt at a female perspective might have placed his own masculinity under stress yet his desire to be in control of the gaze resists any challenge to gender power relations even when it was ostensibly described as such in his narrative.

Anne Cranny-Francis argues that ‘paternalism’ is an element of patriarchal masculinity and this might be found in Lindsay’s appropriation of the feminine. In *Engendered Fictions: Analysing gender in the production and reception of texts*, she notes that

>The constantly embattled, mistrusting and self-doubting patriarchal male cannot risk engagement with any other person for fear that it may make him vulnerable to the exploitation he himself has learned to practise. So his emotional responses are tempered by his insecurity and fear and ultimately become self-directed. They are expressed either as paternalism or sentimentality…This is the realm of the possessive, patriarchal father, the god-father – a familiar image of successful patriarchal masculinity. Those under his protection prosper; everyone else is in danger. He gathers his supporters around him to ward off his own fear and insecurity. Equal Employment Opportunity policy-makers have a name for this practice of a man gathering younger men around him to act out his wishes, agree with his decisions and be his watch-dogs: ‘homosocial reproduction’.213

While Lindsay engaged in homosociality on a fraternal, mutually supportive level during his early life, his ‘homosocial reproduction’ became more ‘paternal’ as his career progressed. This included his retreat to Springwood and his gathering of ‘disciples.’ Indeed, the pervasive nature

of homosocial reproduction short-circuits any critique of the binary of gender that a creative exploration of textual femininity may have enabled.

It is significant that Cranny-Francis links ‘fear and insecurity’ to paternal homosocial reproduction. She later notes that ‘this patriarch’s caring is a function of his role, not of interpersonal engagement’.214 It is possible that Lindsay wrote his female protagonists to assuage a sense of masculine insecurity engendered both by the changing cultural landscape and by anxiety about the potential non-hegemonic lens being brought on a creative and artistic masculinity. That representation of creative masculinity was a site of anxiety for Lindsay can be seen in a letter to Douglas Stewart where he discusses the writing of DH Lawrence.

I agree with you about the femininity of Lawrence’s mentality. No normally sexed male, for instance, could think of likening his penis to a crumpled rose. Our conscious reaction to that member is rather in a spirit of ribald humour. The fact is, having a special function to perform on earth, it is a bit over weighted as an aesthetic section of the male body. Art has always had a difficulty over making a gracious presentation of it. The Greeks merely made a boy’s size decoration of it…Lawrence was not a homosexual, but he thinks of men as women think of them. Hence the strong appeal his novels have for women.215

Lindsay here equates a ‘feminised’ mind, as opposed to the mind of a ‘normally sexed male, with the only one that can write ‘of men as women think of them’. So, to write of men ‘as women think of them’, with a feminine and feminised perspective, would be to destabilise his own masculine identity. Lindsay’s classification of Lawrence’s novels as having a ‘strong appeal’ for female readers is a negative one, linked to Lawrence’s ability to both think and write in a feminised voice. Lindsay’s resistance to Lawrence’s perceived feminised mind, and his use of the term ‘conscious’ to differentiate how a real man, with his manhood in the

214 Ibid.
215 MLMSS 3331, Box 1 Folder 2, Norman Lindsay to Douglas Stewart 1950-1968, Springwood 1950
forefront of his mind, would feel about his penis demonstrates the anxiety that Lindsay feels regarding the possible ‘subconscious’ or ‘unconscious’ reactions to ‘that member’.

A proper, conscious response to the penis is found in sexually charged humour. It is deliberate distraction and deprecation. Lindsay contrasts Lawrence’s ‘feminised’ mentality with his own masculinity, thereby giving his masculinity precedence. That Lindsay’s relationship with the letter’s recipient, Douglas Stewart, was one of homosociality and mentorship (with an aspect of idolatry on the part of Stewart) further illuminates why Lindsay felt the need to maintain his masculinity and deprecate that of Lawrence.

**Positioning the Woman Artist and Writer**

While discussing Lindsay’s masculinity project I noted that part of Lindsay’s design was to reform masculinity so that the creative male artist was the hegemonic ideal. For this restructure of hegemonic masculinity to occur, women must remain bearers of an idealised and objectified female form in order to enable great male artists to create art. They would be positioned as both subservient and submissive to male desires and the controlling masculine gaze. A woman who stepped outside the objectification of the male and became her own subject had no place in Lindsay’s philosophy.

In this task, Lindsay was reactive to the contemporary context of gender reform. His philosophy required the elevation of the male artist and, as a necessary adjunct, required that women remain objects. He actively resisted the recognition of women as artists. In a letter to Sydney Ure Smith regarding an upcoming London exhibition, he forcefully discouraged the inclusion of artist Thea Proctor’s ‘flat, primitive coloured things,’ stating
that she was ‘all right’ for *Home* covers but that her art did not possess any ‘serious virtues’.\(^{216}\)

Mary Mackay notes that

Lindsay’s portrayal of the female body in his many lascivious images of women suggest that rather than worrying about art, his anxieties about the ‘modern woman’ were displaced onto an artist who seemed to be crusading for the cause of women.\(^{217}\)

Thea Proctor was prominent in Australian art in the 1920s and 30s. Her covers for *Home* magazine were distinctly modern and Art Deco, and displayed women in positions of stylish independence. According to Mackay, when Lindsay wrote to Ure Smith regarding Proctor’s inclusion in the exhibition,

Proctor had already exhibited her work at the Royal Academy, at the International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers, at the New English Art Club and at centres such as Berlin, Frankfurt, and the International Exhibition at Venice. Examples of her art had been purchased by the state galleries of Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.\(^{218}\)

While Lindsay cartooned for the *Bulletin*, this workplace facilitated his awareness that many female writers and artists were working in the public sphere. The writer Miles Franklin was an ardent feminist, whose politics found their first public expression in *My Brilliant Career*. That Lindsay read it as a novel of a young girl’s sexual awakening reveals more about Lindsay’s values than it does about the novel. His ability to wilfully apply his own lascivious interpretations to early writings of female independence such as *My Brilliant Career* extended to interactions with the author herself. Besides her ‘lively writing,’ Franklin was both simultaneously

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\(^{217}\) Mary Mackay, *Almost dancing: Thea Proctor and the Modern Woman*, p 36

\(^{218}\) Mary Mackay, *Almost dancing: Thea Proctor and the Modern Woman*, p 27, data re her art purchases found in “V.R-I”, “Miss Thea Proctor” *Art in Australia*, 1919, p 19
admired for and reduced to a pair of ‘alluring lips,’ ‘pleasingly plump’ figure, and a ‘pert rump.’\textsuperscript{219}

He wrote of Franklin in his memoir \textit{Bohemians of the Bulletin} (and she is the only woman written about in that volume). He notes that their initial meeting just after the publication of \textit{My Brilliant Career} in 1901-02 was brief but that his memory of \textit{My Brilliant Career} was that ‘we were all reading it, and lavishing appreciation on it.’ Upon seeing Franklin, ‘I went straight up in the air, babbling an extravagant tribute to that work.’\textsuperscript{220} He saw her as the epitome of his ideal femininity:

Miles was something more than a girl. She was a symbol of the free feminine, seeking self-expression in the Word, as I was striving to do with the Form. It would have been fascinating to have exchanged impressions of self-expression with her.

I never saw Miles again till she returned to Australia, and we were both middle-aged. She came and stayed a while with us at Springwood, and I told her of how A. G. (Stephens, then editor of the \textit{Bulletin}) had sternly quelled any intimacy between us in our youth, which might have followed our meeting at the \textit{Bulletin}. “The wretch! We might have had a love affair,” said Miles. \textsuperscript{221}

He writes that he had liked \textit{My Brilliant Career} ‘not only for its virtues as a lively piece of writing, but because it was written by a young girl who frankly revealed the frustrations and aspirations of her being.’ He goes on to liken her to the recently published diarist Marie Baskertshef who ‘openly declare[d] her desire for a lover.’\textsuperscript{222} His admiration is simultaneously paternalistic and patronising; Miles Franklin’s writing is admirable because she is writing about subjects usually reserved for men. It is the extraordinary writing of a ‘young girl’, and her desire for self-expression and exploration outside marriage and children is lauded, but as an

\textsuperscript{219} Norman Lindsay, \textit{Bohemians of the Bulletin}, Angus and Robertson Publishers, Sydney, 1973, p 144
\textsuperscript{220} Norman Lindsay, \textit{Bohemians of the Bulletin}, p 143-144
\textsuperscript{221} Norman Lindsay, \textit{Bohemians of the Bulletin}, p 144-145
\textsuperscript{222} Norman Lindsay, \textit{Bohemians of the Bulletin}, p 143
aberration rather than a realisation that many women may hold similar ‘frustrations and aspirations’. Lindsay writes that Franklin told him at this second meeting that she had asked AG Stephens to introduce her to Lindsay, but he dismisses this as a ‘piece of post-dated flattery’. And he may very well be right; the worldly Franklin whom he met at Springwood would have been very different from the twenty-two-year-old woman who had just published her first book.

Lindsay’s use of the term ‘free feminine’ is interesting for several reasons, not least of which is that it assumes that any woman who did not fit Lindsay’s mould was an ‘imprisoned’ feminine. He does not consider that the controlling masculine ideals propounded by men like himself might lead to this imprisoning. Instead, he attributes Franklin’s freedom to the time she has spent overseas and her use of a pseudonym for much of her later work to counter ‘stuffy, scandalized Victorian relations, who came down on [her] for violating its holy cult of secrecy over that abominated word sex’.

Lindsay views Franklin’s victimisation as similar to his own. This alignment also connects with his ideas concerning the restrictive impact of religion, morality, and wowserism on sexual expression. That Franklin spent time abroad in active feminist work is either overlooked or ignored. Although Franklin and Lindsay meet on a more equal footing later in life, he chooses to speculate on a possible sexual encounter rather than any exchange about writing, art, politics, or other current issues. Furthermore, he assigns the speculation of this encounter to Franklin rather than himself, making himself into a sexually desirable figure. In this way Lindsay both elevates Franklin above the usual feminine by approvingly declaring her ‘free’, while reducing her to a sexual fantasy scenario. Franklin is certainly not ‘free’ from masculine objectification or patriarchal restrictions (she would write under the pseudonym of Brent of Bin Bin) but Lindsay’s label ‘free’ means freedom from sexual censorship.

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223 Norman Lindsay, *Bohemians of the Bulletin*, p 145
Franklin would represent the desire for a very different freedom in her protagonist Sybylla, who discerns:

A woman is but the helpless tool of man – a creature of circumstances. Seeing my father beside me, and thinking of his infant with its mother, eating her heart out with anxiety at home, this was the reasoning which took possession of me. Among other such inexpressible thoughts I got lost, grew dizzy, and drew back appalled at the spirit which was maturing within me.225

While *My Brilliant Career* received excellent reviews, Marjorie Barnard points out in her biography of Miles Franklin that many critiqued the novel on grounds other than literary; the focus was often on the age, gender, and experience of the author. A.G. Stephens, for instance, wrote in *The Bulletin*:

It is the sunlight dancing through the veins of the author that makes *My Brilliant Career* interesting. “Miles Franklin” (of Goulburn, New South Wales) admits to being “a little bush girl” and her book is memorable for this: that it is the very first Australian novel to be published.226

Stephens did not mean that no other novels had been published in Australia by 1901; he meant that ‘the author has an Australian mind, she speaks Australian language’. He, and many other reviewers, found it difficult to separate the work from the novelty of a young, female author. The possibility that women of intelligence lived in the Australian bush generated a new threat to hegemonic masculinity. They are represented as abnormal, although their aberrancy is feared as being numerous:

All over this country, brooding on squatters’ verandahs or mooning in selectors’ huts, there are scattered here and there hundreds of lively, dreamy, Australian girls whose queer, uncomprehended ambitions are the despair of the household.227

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225 Miles Franklin, *My Brilliant Career*, Angus and Robertson Publishers, Australia, 1979, p 15
227 Marjorie Barnard, *Miles Franklin*, p 46-47
One can argue that women themselves are constant sites of anxiety for Lindsay; he both wishes them to be as sexually free as men, while concurrently desiring to control them. Female writers themselves write from a position within the patriarchal system; their own position as writers of the feminine is curtailed by masculine expectations of the feminine. In much of her writing, but especially in *My Brilliant Career*, Franklin was struggling to find a female voice outside the constraints of patriarchal society.

While exercising the cultural dominance of the masculine and an instrumentally sexual feminine in his interactions with Franklin, Lindsay elided Franklin’s representation of an alternative intellectual feminine. In his fiction, he continues to frame the feminine through his character’s attitudes towards sex. As he narrates in *The Cousin from Fiji*:

> Gilbert lit his pipe, not so much at ease for small talk as he liked to think himself. He carried that sort of thing off better before an audience; moreover, to be sure of himself, he required to know whether a girl was willing to let herself be seduced. His era simplified sex adventure by dividing girls sharply into two classes; those who were frankly licentious and those who were rigidly chaste. And the queer thing was that girls did more or less range themselves into those two classifications, in unconscious subjection to the economic tradition that for centuries had offered women marriage and prostitution as the only two methods of making a living.228

The comment that it is ‘queer’ that women were either ‘good girls’ or ‘bad girls’ demonstrates the narrator as ignorant of the multiple subjective positions available to women at the *fin de siècle*. Female agency extends only so far as choosing to be available or unavailable for sex. Lindsay’s narrator does understand that a broader sexual economy informs such limited choice, but there is no critique of a society that places women in such positions.

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228 Norman Lindsay, *The Cousin from Fiji*, p 80
The Fictional Feminine

As Rachel Blau DuPlessis states, masculinity can be written and experienced in multiple ways:

Consistent from romanticisms through modernisms (as one historical “unit” of modes of maleness) is an male-imperial potential for ranging across and deploying a variety of sex-gender stances: liberated sexuality, machine masculinity, homosociality, heterosexuality, hypermasculinity, feminine-poeticalness, queerness of one sort or another, antibourgeois transgressive maleness, dandyish indifference – freely ranging among and appropriating from these conflicting stances but not always interrogating them.229

Experiencing multiple forms of masculinity, as DuPlessis suggests, allows for the construction of individual and personally satisfying masculinity. Lindsay’s vitally connected homosocial experience can be closely allied to his concepts of hyper-heterosexuality and sexual freedom. Claiming access to femininity was simply a further performance of culturally dominant masculinity. Both DuPlessis and Barbara Johnson link this evocation of male privilege to “‘the right to play femininity,’ separating the feminine from women’ and ‘extend[ing] [it] to male claims on any and all possible sex-gender positions’230. DuPlessis continues

This does not mean that men necessarily support females in their literary careers or view females as having an equal possibility of deploying such multiple subject positions – sometimes quite the opposite. This literary stance can go hand in hand with misogynistic attitudes as well as with male-affirmative frankness: the imperative to “dance the dance of the phallus”…not only is joyously self-

229 Rachel Blau DuPlessis, Purple Passages: Pound, Eliot, Zukofsky, Olson, Creeley, and the Ends of Patriarchal Poetry, p 6
assertive but can also be a naturalising claim of political hegemony.231

Claiming ‘any and all possible sex-gender positions’ is an extension of the male-gendered ‘normal’ position; the masculine has the power to engulf all gender permutations.

While writing both Ella and Rita, the male writer appropriates the feminine for the appreciation of the male reader; the heterosexual appreciation in the descriptions of the female protagonists makes this clear. The female body is always observed both from inside and outside the text. The inherent message here is that masculinity is inescapable, and powerful in all gender realms and experiences, while femininity is under total thrall and control of the masculine. Although women experience their own bodies in isolation and without consideration of the male gaze as part of their everyday existence, the denial of this separate existence is integral to Lindsay’s appropriation of the feminine.

**The Cousin from Fiji**

In the novels where a central protagonist is female, *The Cousin from Fiji* and *Dust or Polish?* Lindsay’s narrator and presumed reader remain male. Finding the feminine viewpoint outside the masculine gaze is impossible; Lindsay’s attempts to write a female viewpoint are stymied by his inability to imagine a subjective feminine experience. For example, one of the female characters possesses ‘insolent lips’; this description assigns a power dynamic to them as seen from a male viewer’s perspective and this is then extended as a characteristic of the woman herself. Her ‘insolent lips’ are insolent because they refute any male claim on them, a trait then read to encompass the insolence of a woman who withholds her body.

*The Cousin from Fiji* has a patchily executed female protagonist and aligns sex with economics. The financial and social position of the characters is of prime importance in progressing the narrative: who has

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money, invested it, lost it, or needs it runs parallel with who is involved with whom, to what degree and with whose approval or disapproval. That the novel concludes with both female protagonists (I am including Cecelia Belairs as a protagonist here) marrying is unique among Lindsay’s works. That the marriages of both appear to set them free is doubly unusual, as sexual activity rather than matrimony is Lindsay's usual narrative goal. Matrimony is generally portrayed as limiting rather than freeing, so for Cecelia, Ella and Hilary Shadlet (Cecelia’s husband) to find a neat nuptial solution to all problems is curious.

At the conclusion of The Cousin from Fiji there are three weddings and the promise of an illegitimate birth (Ella’s cousin Florence is pregnant to the preacher Slithersole, who refuses to marry her). For Ella, marriage is perfectly satisfactory and heralds her advent to the freedom of adult life and escape from the restrictions of a Ballarat home. The same could be said for Cecilia, who is seen to be perfectly capable of managing men but not business affairs. For George Domkin, marriage to shop assistant Gussie Maguire is a decline in circumstances that sees him reduced from king of his domain to moving away from his own furniture and possibly even doing his own cooking. Sarah Polwiddle needs to manage her daughter’s pregnancy in the usual manner of the day, which is to organise a secret birth and subsequent adoption.

For Lindsay to write with matrimony as the resolution for his protagonists suggests that he was writing for an audience whom he thought would appreciate such a conclusion; traditionally, but not necessarily, women. If this is so, it is significant for he typically assumed his reader to be male. There is certainly a presumption of the patriarchal reader in The Cousin from Fiji. The novel’s title focuses on how the central protagonist, Ella, is known, through familial relation. Against the proliferation of female characters introduced in the first chapter (Ella, her mother Cecilia, her aunt Sarah and her cousin Florence), the person in charge is Uncle George, who uses both his cane, his beard, and his finger to wordlessly communicate and command action. As Lindsay writes, Uncle George
...carried a gold-headed Malacca cane, which for George was not only an insignia of leisured power, but a wand for compelling service from lesser beings. Ella, who was bundling luggage out on the platform and saying breathlessly “Hullo, Uncle George – hullo, Florence,” received a slight tap with the wand, which was then pointed precisely at a porter. By this Ella was relieved of porterage and the porter committed to it.

In George’s charge the party straggled out to the cab rank, where George’s wand indicated a cab, pointed the ladies into it, hooked the cabman off his seat to help the porter stow the luggage on top of the ladies. For himself he reserved the front seat, where his beard made for them a royal progress through the town. To those citizens permitted to know him, George raised a forefinger. His face did not know them, only his finger did.232

George Domkin is a comical character, his behaviour designed to demonstrate his pompous and slightly ridiculous nature. Yet the description of his silent control over his female relations and lower ranked men clearly marks his patriarchal and class control. While the reader is first introduced to Ella and Cecilia Belairs and follows them as protagonists through the novel to their final ‘nuptial bliss’, it is George Domkin, brother and uncle, who maintains dominance. Though we laugh, and continue to laugh, at George and his beard obsession, at no time do we question that he has the masculine prerogative of authority. His beard denotes status, power and control, as well as placing him in the leisured class (where productive time can be devoted to extremes of grooming). Lindsay has George’s perfect composure indicate an attractive dominance. This can be seen when Annette Bunthorpe, the ‘respectable’ lady he has designs on, visits for afternoon tea.

His manner now of handing Annette her cup, presenting the sugar basin, holding cakes or scones for her selection, was almost a declaration of emotion in its complete reserve. He did not eat – that

232 Norman Lindsay, *The Cousin from Fiji*, p 3
would have deranged the perfect composure of his beard, for chewing will waggle beards, though the chewing is ever so dainty. He drank, but that was to show how precisely a pair of large, soft, white hands may toy with a cup and saucer. No crude moustache suckings thereafter for George; one flick of a silk handkerchief from his breast pocket, two delicate touches to right and left of the moustache, and the beard was again restored to perfect composure. George made no vulgar display of complacence over his beard, stroking it down in front or up from under, or fiddling with its fringe. He left it severely alone; a masterpiece that required no showmanship to call attention to its perfection.233

George is intended to appear to the reader here as a slightly ridiculous dandy, with a feminised ‘soft, white hand.’ His patriarchal dominance is maintained through the subtly applied ‘perfect’ nature of his facial hair. He, and his beard, are described throughout as ‘perfect’, ‘precise’, ‘delicate’ and ‘a masterpiece’. He is definitely not ‘crude’ or ‘vulgar’. In this particular scene George’s control is set against the rudeness of Grandma Domkin in the subsequent scene, where George’s dignified demonstration of his singing voice is disrupted by Grandma’s snoring. Again, the comedy of the scene does not detract from George’s assertive masculinity.

Grandma was already nodding before George began his song. It was her custom to slumber after meals and music had a soporific effect on her. At the first verse she was breathing heavily and at the second, began to snore. Her organ was a fine one, and rose to a deep bass drone that almost drowned George’s baritone. George did not leap at Grandma and throttle her; he stopped singing and held his breath for twenty seconds while he looked at her. The suspense of this reproof by silence, imposed as it was on an act of lese-majesty to George, was almost more than Gussie could bear. With other sounds subdued, Grandma really showed what she could do as a nasal soloist, zooming and tromboning at a pitch that

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233 Norman Lindsay, *The Cousin from Fiji*, p 38
rattled the senses. Science has not yet divulged why, of all noises, that of snoring should be most maddening to the auditory nerves. But once again George showed what a gentleman may endure. With a faintly hissing release of breath, he said “I think, Sarah, you had better put your mother to bed.”

George takes the cause of his irritation and delegates her removal, demonstrating his ability to ‘endure’ horror and humiliation as well as dominate his sister and mother.

Lindsay has more difficulty when he writes scenes involving only female characters. He will use the word feminine as an othering term rather than as purely a gender description. An example is Ella’s entry into the socially dominant female circle, a circle dependent on theatricals, tennis parties and picnic races for entertainment. When she is offered a cigarette it is noted that ‘cigarettes in that era were an accepted symbol of feminine emancipation’.

The use of the term ‘emancipation’ attempts to establish a narrative connection to the feminine. It is followed by a scene where the female characters tell rude stories and sex is hidden as a Great Mystery mixed up in ‘spiritual debauch’. Lindsay is unable to decide whether the female characters he is depicting are emancipated from the ‘male-inspired cult of reticence about things which women were not supposed to know’ or whether they are knowledgeable regarding sex and procreation. The rude stories are followed by gossip about their pregnant female servant who managed to get pregnant even though her employers ‘locked her up at night’.

Lindsay’s uncertainty mirrors societal uncertainty about the possible impact of the ‘New Woman’, was her independence damaging to the British Empire, or was it intended to strengthen the British ‘race’ in its imperial ambitions?

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234 Norman Lindsay, *The Cousin from Fiji*, p 56
235 Norman Lindsay, *The Cousin from Fiji*, p 104
236 Norman Lindsay, *The Cousin from Fiji*, p 104-105
That most of the female characters in *The Cousin from Fiji* find a solution to their problems by getting married argues that he saw marriage as a method to contain their desire for freedom from social restrictions, which he explores in depth in the novel. This friction between wishing to recognise the freedom of women from societal expectations and arguing for the benefits of their institutional constraint (through marriage) reinforces a sense of the quandary Lindsay found himself in.

Lindsay’s characters oscillate between apparent ‘feminine emancipation’ and ‘reticence’, and Ella is presented as finding this difficult to understand. The contradictions between professed feminine freedom in one area where he finds current gender restrictions ridiculous, such as smoking, is then retracted when women try to talk about sex and fall back on euphemism and silence. When Lettie Jobson, in whose home the servant is employed, blurts “Oh, those fools of girls never think of making a man take proper precautions,’ Ella expresses confusion about these women’s level of actual sexual experience in contrast to professed knowledge.

Ella was dying to ask what those might be, but was ashamed to confess ignorance. She wondered if Lettie and Doris demanded those precautions before condescending to a lover, and had to suppress a passionate itch to ask them straight out if they really did let boys go to what they called the ‘limit’. But Doris and Lettie, while flaunting an academic familiarity with the Great Mystery, maintained a strict reserve over their own affairs and admitted no personal tampering with its ritual.238

While the woman ‘condescend[s] to a lover,’ the sex act is assumed to occur in a circumstance where the woman ‘gives in to’ the male. In this respect, the narrative replicates an attitude that envisions women withholding sex for power over men rather than ignorance and anxieties around precautions. That this follows a discussion of illegitimate pregnancy further demonstrates Lindsay’s disconnect between masculine and feminine perspectives. The caprice of women withholding sex is

238 Ibid.
considered just that, even when the consequences, an ‘illegim…in the Foundling Asylum’ have been made plain only the paragraph before.

An overlay of class distinction is also evident here, particularly in Lettie and Doris’ expectations that they hold authority over the body of a female servant to the extent of detaining her in the house and removing her children. While elevating artists to the highest level of society, Lindsay championed class systems as a necessary infrastructure that allowed artists to live as they needed. A servant, grubbing along in mere ‘existence’, was necessary to perform the tasks that created an environment conducive to art. Class, in Lindsay’s novels, is not questioned or even made contentious; his versions of the human world suggest a natural and correct class hierarchy. This acceptance extends to and is transposed on racial stereotypes, as in the Chinese gardeners and miners in his Redheap semiautobiographical trilogy, and the Jewish musical theatre entrepreneurs in Dust or Polish?

Throughout the novel Lindsay is concerned with the economic as well as the libidinal motivations for marriage. George’s love life receives a large amount of attention for a minor character, as does the relationship between Cecilia Belairs and the Domkin’s neighbour, Hilary Shadlet. While both these male characters are written as slightly ridiculous, their agency in gaining their desires (sexually and financially) is reduced by dependent relatives. George lives with and protects his mother, sister and nieces by his presence and gains service from them (although the finances of the Domkin household are oblique and under constant tension) while Hilary Shadlet is financially responsible for his two sisters. The obligation placed upon these men is imposed upon them through gender; it is their responsibility to look after unmarried female siblings (although George’s embezzlement of Cecelia’s money clouds his fulfilment of his understood obligations). The inescapable nature of this scenario is deplored by Hilary Shadlet and Cecelia Belairs, but the only possibly solutions explored in the novel are marriage and death.
The economic implications of these gendered spheres are clearly delineated in Sarah Domkin’s internal monologue detailing the financial stresses placed on her as a dependent female child and sibling:

Sarah had to hold her lips tight on a sudden and furious impulse to let her tongue loose on all the services and expenses forced on her by George’s exacting presence in that house. He contributed no more than fifteen shillings a week to its upkeep, which did not keep him. It was Grandma Domkin’s money that kept the house going, and Sarah had to administer it with the utmost care to meet all expenses and George’s fastidious requirements, and to squeeze small sums out of it for Florence and herself. Spleen almost overran her tongue in the desire to tell George what she really thought of him and his underhand affairs with women, but the eternal threat of an unknown future arrested her. If George really did leave the house he might still need a housekeeper elsewhere.

Sarah’s concerns refer to both the financial and the libidinal economies practised when society provides limited appropriate employment for women. The value placed by George on Sarah as a housekeeper is low, while he values Annette Bunthorpe (daughter of the local minister) highly as an erotic being. He creates a triangle of feminine relationships, with himself as the centre and primary concern. Gussie Macguire, for instance, is required to provide both sexual and financial benefit to George to maintain their relationship.

The constant frisson between conflicting sexual and financial needs provides the narrative impetus; that the only successfully resolved scenarios occur through marriage counters a view that Lindsay was critical of marriage as an appropriate institution for women.

Dust or Polish?

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239 Norman Lindsay, *The Cousin from Fiji*, p 148
Lindsay’s own assessment of *Dust or Polish?* is that it is ‘readable’ and that it engages with how a woman can ‘find a balance between her intellectual and her sex life’. Whether Lindsay believes that a woman can be both intelligent and sexually satisfied may be found in the double meaning of the novel’s title. In the antiques trade where the novel is set, stock can be sold either by dust, or by polish. Is the item for sale desirable because it is an undiscovered bargain (selling by ‘dust’), or is the item for sale desirable because its value has been enhanced through care and attention (selling by ‘polish’)? The question also applies to its central protagonist Rita Anson: is she selling herself by dust, or by polish?

Rita is on a dual track of enlightenment in the novel. She progresses from a dissatisfied chorus dancer facing retirement to becoming a successful antiques dealer, and from a celibate, sexually cynical woman into a woman sure of her sexual allure in a relationship that does not impinge on her intellectual or financial independence. At the novel’s conclusion, it could be argued that Rita is sure of her ‘polish’ and has no need to bargain. She has, as the narrator notes, ‘made a period piece of her own femininity’.

However, the novel explores many other facets of heterosexual relationships; ‘how to find a compatible mate and stay happy’ could be an alternative title. Throughout the novel both Rita and Sadie commiserate about the accepted procedure for spending time with men. The public ‘pick-up’ is something that Rita abhors but which Sadie feels is acceptable although not always comfortable. The ‘dinner and drive’ is again acceptable to Sadie (who is not given to questioning standard procedures in any case) but unacceptable to Rita, who finds the expected sex in exchange for food a poor bargain. Their suitors are two doctors: Dr Robert Grimsby who approaches Rita through a mutual interest in antiques, and Dr Teddy Quintal, who dates both Rita and Sadie impartially and is ‘only interested in one thing’.

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240 MLMSS 3331 (1) Box 1, Douglas Stewart, Letters received from Norman Lindsay ca. 1922-1969
241 Norman Lindsay, *Dust or Polish?* p 169
Let’s talk about sex…

Sex is constantly referred to both visually and emotionally and Lindsay frames sexual encounters through the masculine view. The narrator predominantly follows the views of Dr Grimsby, who declares male entitlement to the female body in blatant terms:

> It is surely an obligation for male arms to take over a woman's body when its lax limbs confess that they need such support.\(^{242}\)

Any rights the woman may have over her own body is overridden by male judgement. Her 'lax limbs' are said to grant tacit permission to an observing male that countermands any desires or agency on her own behalf. In fact, this statement implies that the male judgement is so all-powerful that a woman can relax her body and invite a man to rape her, and that this attack on female physical integrity is obligatory. Not only is Lindsay appropriating the female view for masculine empowerment here, he is, extraordinarily, also appropriating all rights to the female body.

Dr Quintal's studied seduction and attempted rape of Rita is another example of masculine appropriation of the feminine, with Rita represented as complicit in the assault, both actually and implicitly. Her 'pleasantly lax mood' means that she allows Dr Quintal to lead her to his flat without questioning premeditation on his behalf, and the verbal and physical tussle doesn't upset either of them until Rita clearly refuses him

> “Come to bed with me.”
> “No, Teddy, I won’t.”
> “Oh, hell!”

Forced to reduce the situation to a simpler solution still, he slipped a hand under Rita's legs and tossed her adroitly over on the couch. Off her balance, Rita for some moments found the conflict getting beyond her control. Possibly she wished to relax control, and throw

\(^{242}\) Ibid.
over all decisions to her body. But at that crisis the crude mechanism of events intruded with a sudden resolute ring at the front door of the flat. It arrested action in Dr Quintal and restored it to Rita, who tossed him off the couch with such a release of muscular violence that he landed on all fours on the floor.\textsuperscript{243}

That Lindsay attempts to represent the feminine view is apparent in the discussion prior to this attack, where Rita tells Dr Quintal that women keep their feelings to themselves when ‘they know men are building up all sorts of impossible expectations about them.’\textsuperscript{244} However, the masculine view is so pre-eminent that the feminine is always subject to it.

Lindsay’s assumption of the veracity of his representation drastically limits his likelihood of successfully rendering the feminine. The building of Mrs Dibble’s junk-shop into a successful antiques business occurs concurrently with building a relationship between Rita and Dr Grimsby. While this relationship does not culminate in marriage like the relationships in \textit{The Cousin from Fiji}, it is marked throughout the text by the gendered differences of the developing intimacy. As Dr Grimsby becomes more interested and attached to Rita, she holds him to a platonic relationship, focussing on his knowledge of medicine and antiques, both areas useful to her burgeoning financial independence. Lindsay writes:

\begin{quote}
Dr Grimsby had been an interested spectator of Rita’s adventure into secondhand furniture dealing, and called at odd times for a perfunctory glance over Mrs Dibble and a chat with Rita in the shop, and at least the idiom of intimacy was established between them by the way Rita took him into her confidence over her affairs. He appeared to be a man without social contacts, and was possibly a little bored with a middle-aged life based on the routine of his profession. And Rita, so engrossed over the quandary of her position as a parasite on Mrs Dibble’s business, permitted him an
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{243} Norman Lindsay, \textit{Dust or Polish?} p 179

\textsuperscript{244} Norman Lindsay, \textit{Dust or Polish?} p 178
intimacy with an attractive woman that involved no emotional complexities.\textsuperscript{245}

Dr Grimsby can be permitted an interest in sex as well as a successful profession, while Rita can only be ‘engrossed’ by one area of life at a time. That the ‘intimacy’ is not an affair is clear, the unresolved tension dissipates when the relationship becomes sexual and Rita’s business begins to thrive. Prior to this, even on a date with Dr Grimsby she has a ‘preoccupation with affairs’\textsuperscript{246} and cannot be diverted to discussions. Rita’s apparent ability to think only of one aspect of life at a time is highlighted during a date where Dr Grimsby desires a relaxed after dinner conversation in ‘the company of an attractive woman’ but it again circles around antiques at Rita’s initiative:

It was the moment, of course, when autobiographical exchanges slip gently into the conversation, and self-revelation, with discretion, is indulged in, or exploited. But Rita possibly took Dr Grimsby’s reticent middle age too much for granted, for she kept perversely bringing the conversation back to her own preoccupations over an assault on the trade in quality furniture.\textsuperscript{247}

Rita is unable to focus on both her ‘intellectual and her sex life’ at the same time, a limitation that does not affect Dr Grimsby. Prior to this, the narrator notes that Dr Grimsby was distracted from his post-meal relaxation by his ‘glances […] stray[ing] over the dominant femininity of Rita’s breasts and thighs, and the mobile ease of her body in a lounge chair…’\textsuperscript{248} He appreciates Rita’s sexuality while still performing as a medical professional. The two discuss this at the end of their conversation, with Dr Grimsby confessing that while his work requires managing the emotions of his patients,

\textsuperscript{245} Norman Lindsay, \textit{Dust or Polish?} p 76
\textsuperscript{246} Norman Lindsay, \textit{Dust or Polish?} p 82
\textsuperscript{247} Norman Lindsay, \textit{Dust or Polish?} p 83
\textsuperscript{248} Ibid.
…probing into the emotional complexities of others can leave one’s own pretty flat. And the mechanism of an active life can leave a man strangely obtuse to the fact that he’s getting nothing out of it.

Rita brings the focus back to vocations by noting that he has an ‘interesting profession’ and that he appears to make a ‘good living at it.’ He follows that up by stating in a ‘disgruntled tone’ due to Rita’s refusal to discuss sexual desire that

A man’s life, summed up on his deathbed, will be concerned mainly with the emotional adventure of his ego. In other words, how much he’s gained, lost, paid for, and been awarded in his affairs with women.249

When he asks a slightly shocked Rita whether she thinks dealing in second-hand furniture will ‘give her a fully satisfactory existence’, Rita temporises with

I haven’t been dealing in it long enough to find out. For a start, you’ve got to remember that I have to make a living somehow, and this is a way that really interests me. Of course, I’m not such a fool as to think that one can dispense with one’s emotional life merely to make a living. All the same, it can be a pretty distracting affair, at times, that emotional life. I can’t see myself concentrating on a love affair and a bargain in period furniture at the same time.250

Rita’s ambition, as well as her physical appeal, is highlighted throughout the novel, as is her desire to be successful without being beholden to a man. Both Dr Grimsby, the doctor who attends to Rita’s landlady, and Dr Quintal, his partner, vie for Rita’s attention, although the younger Quintal is shown to merely require a warm female body, while the more mature Dr Grimsby is after a more equal companionship. The issues surrounding the desire for independence when expressed by a woman belatedly reflect debates around the New Woman and feminist expression.

249 Norman Lindsay, Dust or Polish? p 85
250 Norman Lindsay, Dust or Polish? p 86
Rita’s roommate Sadie is the more traditionally attractive of the two women, but is presented as manipulative and mercenary when it comes to heterosexual relationships. In the first chapter Rita views Sadie as the origin of troubles in her life, however the impact of her unrest is tempered by Lindsay’s focus on her ‘vital body’:

Darkness, and possibly the unrests of a vital body, imposed a confessional urge on her.

“I haven’t had plenty of affairs with men. You don’t count the few casual affairs you slide in and out of when you’re young, which are mainly curiosity and excitement and getting a bit moonstruck on some noodle of a lad for the moment. I’ve had only two affairs that lasted any time these later years, and neither was satisfactory. What I got out of them didn’t pay for what I didn’t get. I don’t quite know what that was, but I didn’t get it. I don’t mean a home and security and having kids – I’m not built that way. I’m pretty sure I could have married either of those men, but the fact that I didn’t seems to prove I didn’t want to. Anyway, marriage isn’t a career, or a vocation, or whatever special ability you may have for some sort of business or occupation that keeps you interested in building it up and making money out of it. That’s the main thing – something you can make money out of. Being paid a regular wage isn’t making money but a mere living.”

That both women have healthy heterosexual libidos is established in the first chapter, where Sadie confesses “But after all, Rita, a girl really needs to have an affair with a man now and again. Well, I mean to say, she needs to…” It is possible Lindsay thought himself very sexually liberated to refer, even obliquely, to female orgasm. Yet even here the possible agency given to female characters to express themselves is negated by the narrator, who pipes up that ‘Women don’t break a universal conspiracy of silence on certain reservations.’ That the omniscient male narrator

\[251 \text{ Norman Lindsay, } \textit{Dust or Polish?} \text{ p 8} \]
knows what the female characters will not privately discuss gives him the power in the exchange.

The dominance of the male writer narrator over female points of view is also found in the deployment of language that objectifies the bodies of the female characters. After being fired from her job as a chorus dancer, Rita impulsively decides to nurse her injured landlady, Mrs Dibble. After her first experience of caring for a woman whom she ‘doesn’t believe has had a bath for years’, Rita hastens to clean herself from any residue of ‘Mrs Dibble’s dirty old carcass, which shocked the self-esteem of her own shapely body.’

This is more the narrator than Rita who is evaluating the ‘shapeliness’ of Rita’s body. Rita’s embodied value is high whereas Mrs Dibble’s far less attractive ‘dirty old carcass’ is much lower.

Lindsay’s desire to exert a controlling masculine gaze over his female protagonists can be evinced in most of his writing, but most clearly in The Cousin from Fiji and Dust or Polish? As this chapter demonstrates, the novels both promote and curtail female sexual freedom while advocating sexual freedom in men as part of their vitalist entitlement. At times, he exhibits a conservatism that reifies marriage as a suitable institution for women. Rather than provide space in his novel for exploring female subjectivities, the feminine is instead appropriated as another vehicle through which masculine viewpoints are disseminated.

252 Norman Lindsay, Dust or Polish? p 31
Chapter 4.

The Myth of the Bohemian Artist

In *Australia’s Bohemian Tradition*, Tony Moore argues that ‘The bohemian twin peaks of avant-gardism and nostalgia have meant that young cultural rebels disregard those who have gone before [while] older [ones] fail to see those who come after them.’ Lindsay counters this tendency as he was part of the artistic counter-culture in Melbourne and Sydney at the turn of the twentieth century and then for decades after. The belief in Lindsay as a kind of prototypic bohemian artist endured after his death and would be portrayed in films like *Sirens*. The myth that accumulated promulgated Lindsay as a free-thinking, free-loving artist living outside the accepted strictures of society. His art predominantly featured the female nude and its eroticism was also aligned to the idea of the sexually permissive bohemian. Two of Lindsay’s novels, *A Curate in Bohemia* and the semi-autobiographical *Rooms and Houses*, published at the beginning and end of his life, cement this myth of the broad-minded bohemian artist who stood against ‘wowsers’ and any who sought to limit freedoms of expression and creativity. As this chapter demonstrates, the myth was promoted by Lindsay himself to allow him to live and create as he chose, and only became problematic as his values shifted away from the bohemian ideal over time.

The mythology of the bohemian artist lies along the fault-lines between public performance and private artist, for it encompassed much of Lindsay’s artistic production as well as his lived experience. Distinctions between the performed self and the lived self are always blurred; the motivation for fashioning a mythologised self are complex. Paul de Man suggests that ‘the autobiographical project may itself produce and

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determine the life, and that whatever the writer does is in fact governed by the technical demands of self-portraiture.\textsuperscript{254}

Svetlana Boym states in \textit{Death in Quotation Marks} that

\begin{quote}
Cultural myth…is an unwritten law shared by the community, a law that is difficult to repudiate because it seems to be natural, unauthorised, given. It transforms culture into nature and aims to mask its ideological implications by erasing its historicity.\textsuperscript{255}
\end{quote}

Poststructural theorists have critiqued the relationship between the artist as a person/persona, and the art they produce. Separating the text, or the art, from the creator has been seen to give depth of understanding to the work itself and make it more effective artistically. Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault explore the modernist removal of the author from the field and focus on the text. However, Barthes also found that cultural myth ‘constitutes a kind of anonymous politicized discourse which pretends to be nonideological and transparent’.\textsuperscript{256} In investigating Norman Lindsay as an artist and author whose popularity, or notoriety, was connected to the performance of a bohemian persona or personality, this illusion of transparency is important to consider.

The sheer mass of his work which promoted the cultural mythology of the bohemian artist is staggering. Standout pieces include his allegedly anti-Christian painting \textit{Pollice Verso} and his banned novel \textit{Redheap}, which featured premarital sex and abortion. Lindsay also relied on his peers to create and recreate his mythology of the artist living outside the conventional structures of society.

Aspects of late nineteenth century Australian bohemian urban life can be divided into binaries of ‘culture over commerce…imagination over realism…pleasure over utility’,\textsuperscript{257} however this only partially covers the nature of bohemia. To be a bohemian is to

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{256} Svetlana Boym, \textit{Death in Quotation Marks}, p 27
\end{thebibliography}
exist outside of the norms of civilised, domestic society. It is to carouse and imbibe alcohol and drugs. It is to challenge social taboos around relationships, dress, sexuality, and career while relying on that same society to make a living. Bohemianism is a challenging space in which to live, most of all because being bohemian, almost by definition, means surviving hunger and deprivation and positing oneself as artist outside social norms.

Part of the frisson of the mythology is the presumed connection between the work, its cultural impact, and the creator. While it can be argued that it is ‘a perpetual flux of discourse and boundaries of discourses that shapes literary texts, literary personalities, and literary ideology,’\(^{258}\) this is countered by the self-consciously performed nature of Lindsay’s myth through his memoirs, autobiography, and semi-autobiography. It was boosted by Lindsay’s novels such as *Age of Consent* and *Redheap*, which were banned by the censors. The taboo subject matter and possible similarities between characters and people Lindsay knew in his hometown of Creswick have been cited as reasons to ban *Redheap*.\(^{259}\) The strength of the established mythology was such that it endured even when Lindsay lived quite differently in Springwood.

Lindsay’s investment in the interrelation between ‘life and art’ can be linked back to Romanticism; Svetlana Boym notes that ‘Romanticism creates a new iconography, a new repertoire of images, the indispensable element of which is the connection between art and life – making life poetic while making art autobiographical’.\(^{260}\) This exploration of the inextricable tangles exposed when the life of the author is considered to inform their work, rather than the work existing independent of the producer, leads to the knotty issue of performative ‘reality’.

Boym again notes that

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\(^{258}\) Svetlana Boym, *Death in Quotation Marks*, p 23


\(^{260}\) Svetlana Boym, *Death in Quotation Marks*, p 4
The artist as a cultural figure is much more important in countries fighting for national independence; in such countries as Poland, Italy, Spain, Greece, and others, Romantic myths surrounding the poet usually survive longer.\textsuperscript{261}

As a formative nation, this concept can be applied to Australia, and Lindsay constantly engaged with notions of nationalism. His writing is predominantly set in an Australian context, and the one novel not situated in Australia is set on the no-man’s land of an unnamed ‘desert island’. Conversely, his art borrows from Greek and Roman mythology rather than responding to Australian landscape as did many other artists attempting to form a creative national identity.\textsuperscript{262}

\textbf{Lindsay and Bohemia}

The bohemian art world that Lindsay inhabited in Melbourne was constructed around a male homosociality. Lindsay writes of sharing rooms with artists that included his brother Lionel, Hugh McLean and Jack Castieau, while the artists, writers and musicians he grouped with included Ernest Moffitt, Hugh McCrae, Ted, Bill and Ambrose Dyson, Randolph Bedford (the last four members of the Ishmael Club, a bohemian club which also included Norman’s brothers-in-law John Elkington and Ray Parkinson) and John ‘Ruff’ Tremearne. This separation of rooms from the domestic, feminised sphere of the house with its social proprieties (a distinction Lindsay makes clearly in his semi-autobiographical novel \textit{Rooms and Houses}) form the beginning of an ideal masculinity that was outside feminised spaces but within a highly urban, metropolitan milieu.

While this list is by no means exhaustive, it gives an indication of the ‘male earth’ that was Lindsay’s Melbourne. Rooms were easily obtained and, when one was evicted, usually for rent arrears, another room was found almost instantaneously and all goods moved there in a bottle-oh’s cart. It was common for artists to be seen moving their furniture from one studio

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{261} Svetlana Boym, \textit{Death in Quotation Marks}, p 10
\textsuperscript{262} Donald Williams, \textit{In Our Own Image: The Story of Australian Art}, p 75
\end{flushright}
to another and Lindsay wrote that during his three years in Melbourne he lived in ten rooms. The reduction of care regarding personal hygiene is noted by Lindsay in an 1896 letter to his mother where he writes that he and Lionel are ‘getting along pretty well, dodeing (sic) creditors and makeing (sic) a shirt last two weeks’. The separation of the ‘rooms’ from the main living area of the house where higher standards were imposed created an environment where the intellectual, artistic, and homosocial energies of men could continue. Lindsay writes in his autobiography that his room with Lionel was

...a bare room with two stretcher beds, a straw palliass on the floor, and an immense heap of rubbish piled up three feet high at one end. It was composed of old socks, boots, cast-off clothes, papers, wrecked materials of a craft, food fragments, and the dust and dirt of two years spasmodic sweepings. A gentle buzz of insect life hovered over it. In short, slovenly youth’s heaven...(Hugh McLean’s) pillow was stuffed with old socks, which he insisted had a soporific effect...All blankets had long foregone immersion in soap and water, and acquired a rich tint of raw umber.

The poverty, dirt and use of the ‘room’ as mix of house and studio, often with theatre thrown in for good measure, was a link to the tropes of urban bohemian artists in Europe; but, as with most other parts of colonial Australian society, artists had to construct their own character and setting. The ‘artist starving in a garret’ trope began in Europe, but was transplanted into Australian bohemian life, with furniture, heating, cleanliness, and any other comfort being considered a trap of the middle-class system they wished to avoid. Bernard Smith quotes Somerset Maugham’s Of Human Bondage, where Athelny cries “Sanitation be damned, give me art!”

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263 Norman Lindsay, My Mask: for what little I know of the man behind it, p 93-94; Smith, Bernard, Perils of the Studio: Inside the artistic affairs of bohemian Melbourne, p 31
264 RG Howarth and AW Barker, (eds), Letters of Norman Lindsay Angus and Robertson Publishers, Australia, 1979, p 20 Norman Lindsay to Jane Lindsay, 1896?
265 Norman Lindsay, My Mask: for what little I know of the man behind it, p 81
Smith argues that the ‘mythology’ of the ‘grubby and austere’ studio is a popular one, but also that it ‘suggests that poverty for artists is inherently truthful in a way that the ostentatious performance of public bohemia is not’. Lindsay and his Melbourne artistic coterie knew what an artist’s life ought to be, and lived it to demonstrate both their devotion to art at the expense of comfort, health and security, and ‘as the stage on which artistic identity was performed’.267

According to Lindsay, such an environment was ‘heaven’, spending time with like-minded men who also lived in ‘rooms’ and 'loafed' through Melbourne streets during the day and ‘sat about...smoking and talking till all hours of the night’. It was an insulated environment away from those who worked regular jobs. It would be contained to wine bars, rooms, hash-houses and tobacconist shops which excluded most women. Lindsay’s sister Ruby, who published under the name Ruby Lind, required the ruse of being her brother Percy’s ‘housekeeper’ to live in Melbourne and pursue an artistic career in a similar way to her brothers. As an ‘unaccompanied’ woman, she would have otherwise been barred from such an environment. The domestic nature of the role that allowed Ruby the same freedom that was taken for granted by her brothers is symptomatic of the gender disparities in early twentieth-century Australia.

Even the en plein air artists such as Tom Roberts, Charles Conder and Arthur Streeton had studios in central Melbourne. Such studios served the purpose of providing a private space to complete work, as well as storage, and sometimes living space. It also fed into the romantic mythology surrounding the life and processes of art and artists.268 At the fin de siecle, even while some artists were still celebrating a bush life that was, in many ways, mythological and imagined, others, such as Lindsay, were creating a different vision of Australia, a landscape that was overtly peopled with mythical beings. While his Pans, centaurs and satyrs would be imported from a classic European culture, Lindsay would find a comfortable and reciprocal relationship for them in imagery in the Australian landscape.

267 Bernard Smith, Perils of the Studio: Inside the artistic affairs of bohemian Melbourne, p 37
268 Bernard Smith, Perils of the Studio: Inside the artistic affairs of bohemian Melbourne, p 9
The period when Lindsay lived in Melbourne, about 1897 to 1901, saw the beginnings of his Vitalist philosophy that made its first public appearance in *A Curate in Bohemia* in 1913. In this novel, he idealises the domestically independent artist who, through hard work and vital endowment, establishes freedom. This was grounded in his own desire for freedom from the home in Creswick, an environment he felt to be overly restrictive and unappreciative of his creativity. That *A Curate in Bohemia* lionises the bohemian urban lifestyle and depicts country life as a purgatory is no coincidence. As Lindsay states:

> Life has its purely beatific moments. These were mine as on the night of my departure from Creswick, and on the night of settling down at Lionel’s studio in St James Buildings, Little Collins Street.²⁶⁹

There are parallels between Lindsay’s ideal life as he describes it and a colonial trope of masculinity: the fearless great white hunter. The independence from scrutiny, the anonymity that the urban environment provided can also be found in the jungle or desert, where a man needs his wits to survive but not flourish. Where the great white hunter needed waterholes, Lindsay and the homosocial artistic group with whom he associated needed to know the hash-houses where a filling meal could be had for sixpence, the wine bars and pubs where friends with cash could be found, the corners where the prostitutes solicited, and the buildings where rooms could be had extremely cheap and with very little notice. At that time, it was also important to know who was in a ‘push’ and likely to be dangerous.

This knowledge led to both a collective understanding of the environment, and to the development of a support network to enable survival. Lindsay recalls that when he was evicted from his room for rent arrears, it was taken over by Hugh McCrae, also part of the Melbourne bohemian group. Some of this group resettled in Sydney and isolated itself from the Melbourne literary circle that began to be led by Vance and Nettie Palmer.

²⁶⁹ Norman Lindsay, *My Mask: for what little I know of the man behind it*, p 81
In Sydney, they and a number of young local Sydney bohemians created what was known as the Vision group, an all-male literary circle with a focus on literary nationalism and vitalism. This group included Norman Lindsay, his son Jack Lindsay, Kenneth Slessor, Douglas Stewart, Hugh McCrae and Leon Gellert among others. The constellation of artists and writers who espoused vitalist philosophy in the first half of the twentieth century is difficult to define, as is the term ‘vitalist’ itself. As Karen Barker notes:

Even in its heyday in the 1930s literary vitalism was both more comprehensive and more diffuse than any school or movement, and more obscure.\(^{270}\)

Literary vitalism asked; what is a more vital life? Many Australian artists and writers were attempting, in the first half of twentieth-century Australia, to live a life where only the truly important was acknowledged. The bohemian artist’s life, through identifying art as the only important aspect of life, separated itself from the complexities and mundane routine of suburban living. The Vision group turned to the European bohemian example of living for art’s sake (found most popularly in the George de Maurier novel *Trilby* (1894) and Henri Murger’s *Scenes de la vie Boheme* (translated in 1887\(^{271}\))) and created its own version of bohemia in both Melbourne and Sydney.

**Cracks in the Bohemian Canvas**

While on the one hand, bohemian homosociality would be liberating for Lindsay, it would also begin to conflict with the mythology he was seeking to create. Lindsay’s Vitalist philosophy culminated in an ‘artist-as-god’ ethos that clashed with the permissive, anything goes attitude of bohemia. His ruthless categorisation of people into those who merely exist and those who experience Life, as dictated in his philosophical treatise *Creative Effort*, separated him from society as a whole and, indeed, much


\(^{271}\) Bernard Smith, *Perils of the Studio: inside the artistic affairs of bohemian Melbourne*, p 38-39
of bohemian society. Lindsay’s strictures did not allow many of his artistic colleagues into the higher realms, thereby creating a distinction between his ‘Life’ and their lesser artistic ‘Existence’.

Moreover, while consistently living outside conventional society, Lindsay supported many mainstream views; his propaganda cartoons during World War I are indicative of Lindsay using his art to reproduce and strengthen a nationalist model usually set in opposition to bohemian freedom. He was, however, careful to distinguish them as a form, stating that he did not consider his propaganda work ‘art’ and noting that ‘its sole intention is to stir up the slack to a sense of what this war means…’272 That the ‘slack’ he refers to could be interpreted as those bohemians still living outside the national interest as dictated by war on a world scale demonstrates the complexity of Lindsay in relation to the mythology of the bohemian artist.

Dulcie Deamer, self-styled ‘Queen of Bohemia’, noted in her autobiography that Norman had the ‘Lindsay’s quick, stimulating talking style, and their leaping out towards life’, but labelled him ‘the hermit-genius in his Blue Mountains eyrie’. While acknowledging the longevity of the Lindsay myth and how amazingly ‘little, how slightly, true bohemians age,’ she astutely noted that Lindsay’s separation from urban Sydney indicated a departure from a ‘true’ bohemian life.273

Lin Bloomfield, an art dealer who knew Lindsay and who sold his work as well as publishing several books on his art, stated in 2004 that Lindsay ‘wasn’t a bohemian’:

One has to remember that he was born in 1879. By the time he was at his most controversial, in the 1920’s and 30’s, he was no chicken. He wasn’t a heavy drinker. He didn’t hold wild parties. This myth has grown up about Lindsay which is completely untrue. Yes, he was considered salacious. And yes, there were court cases and

272 John Hetherington, Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian, p 132
controversies. He was always an anti-wowser, always against the 
strict moral and religious teachings of his time.\textsuperscript{274}

The complication of Lindsay's bohemian mythology would be further 
emphasised by the controversy surrounding a 2000 exhibit of 
rediscovered model photographs that Lindsay took as source material for 
his art. Featuring both nude and partially clothed models (wearing 
headpieces and draped in material), the exhibition prompted Sydney 
gallery director Josef Lebovic to express concern that the photographs 
would label Lindsay a ‘dirty old man’, and that the massively enlarged 
photographs became, in their larger state, simply ‘pin-up girls out of 
Playboy’.\textsuperscript{275}

‘Seeing the photos takes you back in time and, in a way, takes 
away some of the mythology,’ says Jane Clark, Sotheby’s director 
of paintings, and a Lindsay specialist. ‘These were just ordinary 
girls who came to model for him. The photos, she says, reveal the 
“transforming power” of Lindsay’s imagination.’\textsuperscript{276}

These articles demonstrate the currency and continuity of Lindsay’s 
bohemian mythology, even while deconstructing it. Exhibitions of his 
(rediscovered) art, and films purporting to represent his life also need 
reiteration of the myth to sell their product, and the ‘Wag. Wowser-baiter. 
Pornographer. Pervert. High-priest of eroticism,’\textsuperscript{277} list of supposed 
Lindsay traits does nothing to dispel the myth but everything to prolong it.

\textbf{The Creation of Bohemia: a ‘country of the mind’}

Bohemia, a term coined by Henri Murger in his late 1840’s serialised 
\textit{Scènes de la Vie de Bohème} about the ‘unconventional and impoverished

\textsuperscript{274} Steve Meacham, \textit{Myths Paint a fanciful figure}, The Sydney Morning Herald, 30/01/2004, 
accessed online on 25/10/2015
\textsuperscript{275} Gabriela Coslovich, \textit{The naked truth about Norman}, The Age, 10/07/2000, accessed online on 
25/10/2015
\textsuperscript{276} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{277} Ibid.
artists of the Latin Quarter"²⁷⁸, flourished in nineteenth century and early twentieth century Melbourne and Sydney due in large part to the artists who travelled to Australia from Europe. While, as Peter Kirkpatrick points out in *The Sea Coast of Bohemia*, Bohemia was originally a country, it is also ‘another, less clearly defined country: a country of the mind.’²⁷⁹ Murger, as Kirkpatrick notes, did not ‘invent’ Bohemia. Rather he wrote about an artistic Latin Quarter that had existed for at least two decades, and he ‘define[d], quite persuasively, the boundaries of Bohemia in terms of a particular lifestyle’:²⁸⁰

Despite its wretched poverty and the very real prospect of early death for its inhabitants, Murger’s Bohemia seemed an attractive adventure of the spirit, one experienced well away from the frowning gazes of church and family. He romanticised its vicissitudes, making life imitate art, and in so doing constructed or, rather, consecrated a new social form. In his fanciful depiction Bohemia became a radical ghetto with an internal economy based on sharing – a kind of primitive communism. It was also an exclusively youthful place, sustained by irrepressible high spirits, and pledged to a different set of moral values and sexual freedoms that could well be described as Arcadian.²⁸¹

In middle-to-late nineteenth century France, amid both excessive prosperity and excessive corruption as evinced by the Dreyfus case, artists banded together in Paris in groups centring on cafes and cabarets, the most well-known of which was the Chat Noir, described by Roger Shattuck as an ‘organized yet authentic Bohemia’.²⁸² Artists, attracted by the ferment of anarchism, and motivated by constant artistic challenge (Victor Hugo died in 1885, the date Shattuck claims Modernism began) in

²⁷⁸ Tony Moore, *Dancing with Empty Pockets: Australia’s Bohemians since 1860*, Murdoch Books Australia, Millers Point, 2012, p 1
²⁷⁹ Peter Kirkpatrick, *The Sea Coast of Bohemia: Literary Life in Sydney’s Roaring Twenties*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1992, p 9
²⁸⁰ Peter Kirkpatrick, *The Sea Coast of Bohemia: Literary Life in Sydney’s Roaring Twenties*, p 13
²⁸¹ Peter Kirkpatrick, *The Sea Coast of Bohemia: Literary Life in Sydney’s Roaring Twenties*, p 13-14
visual and literary art, ‘strained forward into the future [and] found that their fresh trail was rarely being followed in a prosperous and complacent France’.

In response they did what was only natural: they banded together for support. They constituted what we have come to know as the ‘avant garde’, a ‘tradition’ of heterodoxy and opposition which defied civilized values in the name of individual consciousness. They developed a systematic technique of scandal in order to keep their ideas before the public. It amounted to an artistic underground…The avant garde was not radically new, for it grew out of the nonconformist tendencies of the romantic movement. The lucid frenzy of Gerard de Nerval and the sentimental Bohemia of Murger crystallised into a determined group of artists who maintained a belligerent attitude toward the world and a genuine sympathy for each other. 283

This ‘genuine sympathy’ is the beginnings of homosociality which defined the concept of ‘Bohemia’ both in Europe and then in Australia. In transplanting the concept of an artistic ‘bohemia’ to Australia, artists and writers attempted their own form of colonisation, recreating the ‘romantic strategy for dealing with the intrusion of market relations into the making of culture’.284 As the colonies expanded in the post-Gold Rush era, journalism became professional, ‘driven by the desire for culture by the growth in a literate, cashed-up market’.285 Similar to the Parisian market forces that provided the initial impetus for bohemians there, Australia was fast-tracking its development of European market capitalist structures including ‘urbanisation, mechanisation and bureaucratic regulations’.286

The concept of bohemia allowed artists to separate themselves from society while still relying on that same society for sustenance, and it is in the slippage between romantic notions of the bohemian and the lived

283 Roger Shattuck, The Banquet Years: The Origins of the Avant Garde in France 1885 to World War I, p 24
284 Tony Moore, Dancing with Empty Pockets: Australia’s Bohemians since 1860, p 5
285 Tony Moore, Dancing with Empty Pockets: Australia’s Bohemians since 1860, p 9
286 Ibid.
experience of ‘Bohemia’ that conscious performance resides. Even Murger described bohemia as a ‘stage’ for artists, which led to ‘the Academy, the Hospital or the Morgue’. The surrounding homosocial community assuaged the personal danger of living on the poverty-line.

The market for journalism, including artistic journalism, expanded rapidly in Australia; in Victoria between 1881 and 1891 the number of people employed as journalists or reporters rose from 461 to 1292, and artists rose from 734 to 1502. This rise continued steadily into the twentieth century although, as Richard White notes, changes in census categories instituted after 1891 make comparisons problematic. Henry Lawson and Henry Kendall expressed concern about maintaining creativity while trying to make a living, highlighting the differences felt between Australian writers and artists and their European compatriots. Indeed, Lawson claimed that, ‘if a young Australian writer could not escape overseas, he should shoot himself’. While dramatic, this statement highlights the discomfort bohemians often felt in eking out a living through artistic endeavour.

Tony Moore notes the elision between the artists’ performance of a romanticised bohemia and the realities they experienced. He further states that critical engagement has tended to favour the memoir as evidence, which makes commentators complicit with the artists’ own mythmaking. Norman Lindsay was not only complicit but central to his own mythmaking. In his memoirs, he writes that ‘to function as a writer would have confused the public identification of me as an artist.’ This outlook not only positions his writing as secondary to his visual art but demonstrates the conscious shaping of his mythology. His early novel A Curate in Bohemia (1913) was self-consciously based on his experiences, and he makes this clear by apologising in advance to friends that he has put into the novel under pseudonyms. His later novel Rooms and Houses uses friends as source

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287 Ibid.
289 Richard White, Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980, p 90
290 Tony Moore, Dancing with Empty Pockets: Australia’s Bohemians since 1860, p 4
material and is a mildly fictionalised account of his life in Melbourne and the start and end of his first marriage. That he is Partridge, the protagonist, is made apparent by the novel’s subtitle, labelling it an ‘autobiographical novel’, regardless of the difficulties that description entails. Norman’s brother Lionel made a similar distinction in his autobiography *Comedy of Life*, noting ‘Our Bohemia was one of necessity, and there was a natural partition between the free birds who lived in rooms, and the tame, better-dressed, and circumspect, who went home at night to a cleaner bed.’

Noted Australian author Marcus Clarke lived and wrote in Melbourne in the 1860s and 70s. Andrew McCann notes that Clarke ‘liked to imagine Melbourne as if it were London or Paris, and to present his own writing as similar in tone to that of Balzac, Hugo and Dickens.’ However, the colonial bohemianism of the mid-to-late nineteenth century was a precarious place, due largely to the insecurity of the middle and upper classes who were still establishing society and their own position within it. If Bohemia exists outside of societal norms, but relies on those norms to motivate action and rebellion, the stability of those norms becomes essential to its very existence. Moore writes that Clarke set ‘up a string of underground literary clubs, mocking respectable society and keeping one step ahead of his creditors.’ He also credits Clarke with establishing a ‘new Australian character to challenge the bushman – the urban bohemian writer.’ However, Clarke’s descent into bankruptcy and early death exposed the restrictions colonial society placed on its acceptance of bohemia:

As long as bohemia was confined to the spirited antics of the gentlemanly bohemia clubs [the Yorick Club and then the Cave of Adullam, both established by Clarke] it was easily comprehensible

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291 Lionel Lindsay, *Comedy of Life: An Autobiography*, Angus and Robertson Ltd, Sydney, 1967, p 50
293 Tony Moore, *Dancing with Empty Pockets: Australia’s Bohemians since 1860*, p 1
294 Ibid.
as entertaining, if at times disrespectful, but in venturing outside class and other boundaries – such as solvency and sobriety – that distinguished a gentleman, Clarke’s bohemianism became offensive to the rules of social intercourse.295

While the urban bohemian writer is arguably not as key a national type as the bushman or the larrikin, Clarke’s exploits in bohemian Melbourne demonstrate the early existence of, and Australia’s familiarity with, the lived bohemian experience. As he wrote in his first Argus column, ‘I, myself am only a shoeless vagabond…and associate only with Bohemians.’296 Already the Bohemian is identified as a form of existence. The Bulletin and its contemporary Melbourne publication, the Bull-Ant would argue that bohemian life separated the ‘Domestic Man’ from the ‘Independent Man.’ Marilyn Lake writes that the imported concept of the idealised ‘Domestic Man’ was linked to the rise of Evangelicalism which ‘champion[ed]…married life and the joys of domesticity.’ It would be directly refuted in the ‘emergent men’s press’ which saw a ‘home influence’ as ‘emasculating’. The Bulletin editorialised men’s struggle against domesticity, believing it ‘trammelled a man’s spirit and sapped his masculinity’ as well as ‘robbing him of his independence.’297 Sarah Stephen notes that ‘the values and economic necessities of marriage were the antithesis of the bohemian creed of ‘wine, women and song’ and ‘art for art’s sake’298.

Many bohemians were in fact married, but their relationships with their families was strained…In Melbourne the thrice-married E J Brady and Louis Esson designed a community farm scheme where artists would have ‘free sunsets, and none of the cruel distractions

295 Tony Moore, Dancing with Empty Pockets: Australia’s Bohemians since 1860, p 41
296 Tony Moore, Dancing with Empty Pockets: Australia’s Bohemians since 1860, p 1
ordinary honest men have to face such as rent, firing, butcher’s bills, complaining wives and squalling children.\textsuperscript{299}

The ‘independence’ of the bohemian life from bourgeois domestic life is a major focus of Lindsay’s writing. However Lake notes that while Bohemians ‘regarded their sexual attitudes as libertarian [they] failed to notice that women’s experience of the (male) “sex act” was often anything but pleasurable and frequently fraught with danger.’\textsuperscript{300} The separation of free-living men in ‘rooms’ did not support celibacy; both \textit{A Curate in Bohemia} and \textit{Rooms and Houses} feature the pursuit and enjoyment of female company and sex. Sex was as much a male right as the freedom to express oneself artistically and carouse with all-male homosocial groups in wine-bars and pubs. Women had no intellectual or artistic rights in that environment. There was a well-known belief that ‘certain penury’ would occur when men were tied to women and children through marriage.\textsuperscript{301} The ‘freedom’ bohemians insisted on often came at the expense of their families as the partial documentation of their desertion shows.\textsuperscript{302}

\textbf{Escape to Bohemia}

The Lindsay brothers left the Creswick they found so creatively stifling to head towards a city where, according to Moore, the bohemian artist was experiencing a heyday.

The late nineteenth century was the golden age for Australian bohemia, stimulating art, journalism and nascent national visions. New variants on romanticism were gathering young converts but pulling in contrary directions, towards an elite ‘art for art’s sake’ of the sort championed by Conder, and a more egalitarian folk nationalism that [Henry] Lawson made his own. The playful literary bohemia evolving from the 1870’s was joined by a visual arts

\textsuperscript{299} Marilyn Lake,  \textit{The Politics of Respectability: Identifying the Masculinist Context}, p 119

\textsuperscript{300} Marilyn Lake,  \textit{The Politics of Respectability: Identifying the Masculinist Context}, p 121

\textsuperscript{301} Marilyn Lake,  \textit{The Politics of Respectability: Identifying the Masculinist Context}, p 119

\textsuperscript{302} Marilyn Lake,  \textit{The Politics of Respectability: Identifying the Masculinist Context}, p 123
bohemia that overlapped with journalists and writers, but also charted a different course, concerned with the painter as a new type of modern hero.\footnote{Tony Moore, Dancing with Empty Pockets: Australia’s Bohemians since 1860, p 45}

In exploring the myth surrounding Norman Lindsay’s bohemian status, it is interesting to note that Moore refers to Lindsay as an ‘all-round multi-media libertine.’ He highlights the role played by the Bulletin in supporting artists and writers like Lindsay, and that its ‘spirit of “topsy-turvy” and “misrule” underpinned the Bulletin’s “cheeky larrikinism and…the Rabelaisian spirit of Norman Lindsay’s nymphs and satyrs”.’\footnote{Tony Moore, Dancing with Empty Pockets: Australia’s Bohemians since 1860, p 55} Lindsay’s centrality in this ‘carnivalesque’ formation is not questioned, nor is his enthusiastic participation in the ‘accentuated feasting, inebriation, spirited talk, earthy humour, sexual licence, wit, practical jokes, fancy dress and dancing’\footnote{Ibid.} which were considered essential to its bohemian lifestyle.

However, Lindsay’s engagement with the bohemian lifestyle were sporadic, linked, as they were for his brother Lionel, to financial constraint. It is easy to carouse as a bohemian with a little bit of money in your pocket, but it is more difficult when one had to take a job in order to pay for one’s art practices. Lindsay found the loafing and all-night booze-and-talk sessions stimulating but these were countered by journeyman jobbing for Lionel at the Hawklet and unengaging design jobs.

The passion he developed for drawing while illustrating Boccaccio would run parallel with his affair with Katie Parkinson and would alter his focus from the ‘capacity for art’ to art itself. In Rooms and Houses Lindsay writes of the effort he put into the Boccaccio drawings while also denigrating them as works of art.

And Partridge and his dirty room were the insurgent symbols of two generations about to meet in conflict. Its slogan was announced by a large pen and ink drawing tacked to the wall above Partridge’s bed. It was a Bacchanal, and its inspiration was begotten between Durer and the woodblocks of the sixties, its motif was a passionate
adoration of hoydens and scoundrels, whose wharflumpers’ bodies gambolled in a technique of tin...With all its insufficiencies, its fantasies of a robust and violent earth bestowed an ironic benediction on Partridge’s skinny figure, with his disordered fringe of hair to the eyebrows, and his narrow face vaguely tortured under the anaesthetic of sleep...³⁰⁶

Lindsay clearly identifies Partridge as himself here, with his ‘disordered fringe...to the eyebrows’ and ‘narrow face’, and later in the novel gives another character a different assessment of the drawings; Flack states that “If I could do a drawing like that I’d give ten years of my life.”³⁰⁷

Studios, Rooms and Houses

In positing the studio as ‘the chief location of Bohemian mythology’, Alex Taylor lays the groundwork for the form of bohemia that Norman Lindsay would come to inhabit for the majority of his adult, working life.³⁰⁸ Taylor notes

We might see art in museums and galleries, but it is under the angled skylights of studios – among the drapery, stacked canvases, easels and kidney-shaped palettes – that we imagine the drama of art unfolding. The appearance of such bohemian interiors is no less familiar than the artistic plots for which they are a stage. With its heady mixture of cheerful poverty and inspired creativity, the resonance of the studio is as powerful today as it was in the early twentieth century.³⁰⁹

Lindsay’s immersion in the largely male world of bohemian artists, writers and journalists became for him the ideal working environment, one he replicated even when he removed himself from its urban centre. When he was able to establish a house, as he did at Springwood, he chose to live

³⁰⁶ Norman Lindsay, Rooms and Houses: An Autobiographical Novel, Ure Smith Pty. Ltd, Sydney, 1968, p 2
³⁰⁷ Norman Lindsay, Rooms and Houses: An Autobiographical Novel, p 14
³⁰⁸ Alex Taylor, The Perils of the Studio: Inside the artistic affairs of Bohemian Melbourne, p 1
³⁰⁹ Ibid.
mainly in his studio, sleeping on the verandah and occasionally in his studio, and maintaining a distance between himself and the logistics and society of the main house.

However, a mid-life artist’s block that Lindsay called ‘The Phase of the Hunchback’ and strained relations with his wife Rose led to a move away from Springwood and the isolated artist-hero scenario and a return to the city, to ‘rooms’ in Bridge Street, Sydney. While this move, and a relationship with the artist Margaret Coen, eventually led to a re-invigoration of his art, for Lindsay one of the main problems with the Springwood he left was Rose’s socialising. His daughter Jane Lindsay writes in her memoir Portrait of Pa that when he needed to return to Springwood after Rose went to America, he was ‘delighted with the plan.’

‘I’ve been wanting to get back there to work,” he admitted. “But quite impossible with those fearful people your Ma encouraged all over the place.’

Socialising and carousing had, by this time, come into conflict with Lindsay’s work ethic as well as his artistic passion. The contrast between the youthful joy in the constant social circle described in My Mask and the focussed and driven artist who found excessive social interaction an unwelcome distraction rather than a delightful interlude demonstrates the values shift that had occurred for Lindsay as his career, and life, progressed. Of the decade after World War I, which Lindsay spent at Springwood in a relatively harmonious relationship with Rose, he wrote

I stalled off visits from friends and the legend got about that I had gone slightly mad, which was undoubtedly the case…I could not very well refuse his (Sydney Ure Smith’s) proposal to make me and my Springwood home a sort of exhibit…though these car-loads of notables deflected concentration on work, and physically exhausted me.311

310 Jane Lindsay, Portrait of Pa, Angus and Robertson Publishers, Sydney, 1994, p 9
311 Norman Lindsay, My Mask: for what little I know of the man behind it, p 235
Rose Lindsay writes that Norman ‘preferred coffee to spirits’, and that he insisted that the telephone be installed in the pantry as it was ‘an ugly contraption’. ‘Make one rule that no one rings me up,’ he said; this desire for privacy also led to his suggestion that a piece of ground noted as a good place for helicopter landings be planted with prickly pear ‘…that will stop visitors in helicopters dropping in on me.’

The helipad never eventuated, but its suggestion demonstrates the contrast between the Lindsay’s homosociality of his early life in urban rooms and, by his own description, the god-like isolation where his work could continue without outside interference.

Jane Lindsay wrote in her memoir that ‘Pa did not like alcohol.’

It was all ‘booze’ to him and anything in a bottle was suspect. Beer, wine and spirits were equally obnoxious and he shuddered convincingly whenever anyone produced a bottle. He did not like the taste of it and it disagreed with his digestion. Visitors who were unaware of the Rechabite lurking beneath the free-thinker would arrive with an attractive bottle. Pa never received this graciously, but would say ‘Never touch the stuff, old man. Take it away.’

Part of the free-wheeling lifestyle of the bohemian is the excess consumption of substances. Jane Lindsay explodes the myth further, tying her father’s social isolation to a dislike of drunkenness:

When he used to appear on his week-end visits from Sydney and found Ma and her friends enjoying life and drinks, he would scurry away to the studio, saying ‘Impossible to deal with it. Booze!’

For Lindsay, bohemianism was both a lifestyle and an embodiment of idealised creativity. It is in the performed nature of the bohemian lifestyle that Lindsay excels; bohemianism as a lived experience that is both performed for other bohemians and performed in opposition to society outside of the insular artistic and social bohemian structures. The

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312 Rose Lindsay, *Model Wife: My Life with Norman Lindsay*, Ure Smith Pty Ltd, Sydney, 1967, p 240-241
313 Jane Lindsay, *Portrait of Pa*, p 114
314 Ibid.
performativity of the bohemian experience lies in its inherent homosociality and the communal nature of its lived experience. Lindsay writes in *My Mask* of ‘a community where all are equally hard up a communal sharing of money becomes an economic necessity’.315

**The Space of Bohemia**

The ‘room’ which doubles as living space and studio, is a necessary aspect of lived bohemia; throughout his adult life Lindsay lionised the studio apartment, or ‘room’ as the environment most suited to artists, even naming his autobiographical novel about a young artist in Melbourne *Rooms and Houses*.

Alex Taylor notes that the studio itself ‘becomes the stuff of mass-media fantasy’.

In Australia, the eighties and nineties saw the development of an industry around the mythic (and mythologised) studio life of Norman Lindsay at Springwood – a steady stream of facsimile prints and reprinted biographies culminating in John Duigan’s film *Sirens* starring Sam Neill as Lindsay, alongside his nubile muses, played by Elle Macpherson, Kate Fischer and Portia de Rossi.316

For Lindsay, the separation of those who lived in rooms and those who lived in houses was insuperable. The introductory paragraph of his autobiographical novel *Rooms and Houses* describes the artist’s room, in this case in Melbourne, where an ‘endless debauch of talk’ or ‘the grand exhilaration of liquor’ could be experienced.

The dawn of any slovenly youth had seen that sort of room often enough, with its dingy bed to sleep in, its table to work at, and its few battered chairs for sitting about on when friends gathered for an endless debauch of talk, or, when funds permitted, the grand exhilaration of liquor. On a model stand, roughly knocked together

315 Norman Lindsay, *My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it*, p 83, p 81
316 Alex Taylor, *Perils of the Studio: Inside the artistic affairs of Bohemian Melbourne*, p 2
of packing case boards, were a number of empty bottles; sardonic ministrants to Partridge’s comatose slumbers. A few battered chairs were grouped about it and an old cane lounge sprouting tendrils like an uncut creeper. For the rest, candle boxes, crammed with bottles, books, papers, old socks and the used materials of a craft. The system of existence which vegetated outside the domestic utilities merely allowed rubbish to accumulate. Like the tents of the Arab, these boxes were the expedients of a nomadic existence, when a notice to quit required one to move one’s hoard of rubbish elsewhere.  

Partridge, the protagonist, is introduced as ‘vegetating outside the domestic utilities’, but by the end of the novel Partridge declares that

No artist should live in a house. It’s a mad business, muddling yourself up with all the complications you must put up with in a house when you can live a perfectly simple existence in a room. A room with a girl in it,’ he added, leaning across to kiss Julia.  

The inclusion of a ‘girl’ is very much separated from the concept of ‘wife’ which attaches to houses. The novel, which explores Lindsay’s life in Melbourne from 1899 until he has his first show and plans his trip to London with Rose Soady to follow him, explores the distinction that Lindsay managed for most of his life; artists live in studios and rooms, wives and children live in houses.  

By situating the ‘room’ as a particular masculine space, existing for the male artist but providing the entertainment and pleasure of having a woman ‘in it’, as much a piece of furniture as the battered chairs, Lindsay carves out an urbanity separate from commerce and administration that also functioned in the urban centrality. While the buildings have names (Lindsay joined Lionel in St James Buildings, Little Collins Street) that

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317 Norman Lindsay, Rooms and Houses, p 1  
318 Norman Lindsay, Rooms and Houses, p 318  
319 Norman Lindsay, My Mask, p 81
denote professionalism and prosperity, the use of the buildings as rooms-for-rent situates them in the realm of Bohemia.

The lifestyle of the artist living in rooms was a vital component of its pleasure; Lindsay reminisces about the ‘scallywag existence of drifting about the streets of Melbourne’ that accompanied those who lived in rooms and therefore outside limiting domestic routines.

We, as social pariahs, living outside codes of deportment and morals, were free of it all. Wearing deboshed hats, dirty shirts, and slop suits procured from dealers in secondhand clothes, and strolling about the streets at all hours of the day or night, we were accepted by other street lurchers as being of their genera, since we did no work yet appeared to have some mysterious source of income.\(^{320}\)

**The idealised ‘starving artist’**

The ‘mysterious’ nature of the bohemian income, money for creativity, is a vital feature of the lifestyle that Lindsay appears to support. Living from pay to pay, and often taking advances on future pay and therefore being forced to live with less down the track, is a constant theme. Lindsay writes in both his memoirs and autobiographical fiction of using tobacco to quell hunger pangs, labelling it an ‘economic’, where a ‘couple of pipefuls’ made the stomach a ‘torpid void’, and eating cheap stodgy food to fill the stomach but then suffering for the surfeit afterwards.

When one had stultified the belly with a plate of kidney soup, a ploughman’s helping of steak and kidney pudding, and a slice of boiled jam roll, one could only totter forth, feebly panting, with just enough motive power left to reach the Treasury Gardens, and there collapse on the grass, till one’s overworked gastric juices restored one to partial animation.\(^{321}\)

\(^{320}\) Norman Lindsay, *My Mask*, p 83  
\(^{321}\) Norman Lindsay, *My Mask*, p 82
The use of public space as a performance of bohemian existence is notable here; when one is limited in personal space the use of public space becomes an important site of leisure. Lindsay’s use of the Treasury Gardens as a place to regain equilibrium after gorging also highlights the bohemian’s dismissal of the stricture that relaxation is gained in private spaces. He writes that much of his time was spent ‘loafing about the streets’, ‘sitting about in wine shops and pub back parlours’ or visiting second-hand bookshops. The visibility of the bohemian, often drunk, added to the myth regarding the debauched lifestyle of artists, as did his rhapsodising about the use of tobacco as a hunger-suppressant.

However, as Richard White notes, it is in the close reading of a bohemians’ memoirs that the contrast between the romantic notion of bohemia and its lived experience becomes apparent. The ability to exist without food, romantic as the notion of the pipe-smoking bohemian is, is rebuffed when Lindsay writes that

I am one of those people to whom breakfast is not merely food, but a substance which fills a hollow void between my physical process and my mental faculties. A slice of toast or a boiled egg is sufficient to fill that void, but I must have it, else I am the creature of a craving emptiness which gives me no ease.\(^\text{322}\)

Lindsay further denigrates the near-starvation of the bohemian lifestyle by describing the ‘idyllic’ country experience of living in Heidelberg with Lionel and Ernest Moffitt, describing the

Milk, eggs, butter and cream could be had at the farm, which also took in bread for us, and we could have all the fruit we liked from the orchard for the trouble of picking it…In that excellent interlude, I recovered the health I had mislaid through malnutrition in the city.\(^\text{323}\)

That this passage was written to indict Lionel of selfishness in denying his brother food while exploiting him for artistic services is also fundamental to

\(^{322}\) Norman Lindsay, *My Mask*, p 96-97
\(^{323}\) Norman Lindsay, *My Mask*, p 108
understanding the nature of Lindsay’s memoirs; he idealises the slow waking and leisurely morning tobacco smoking, however, the flip-side of the hunger and deprivation of a life in bohemian rooms is also recollected when it suits his purpose. Understanding that life writing is always an exercise in the fallibility of memory, the accuracy of both these reminiscences is probable. However, the multi-faceted nature of the bohemian experience becomes identifiable in Lindsay’s glorified versus criticised versions of the same experience.

It is here, in the romanticisation of bohemia, that Lindsay’s conscious myth construction becomes clear. In the presentation of himself as a ‘bohemian’ Lindsay is demonstrating the required artistic experience, wishing to revel in the ‘economics’ required by near starvation and existing in spaces defiantly separate from the domestic sphere. The credibility forged by, as Shattuck describes it, a ‘genuine sympathy’ between artists allowed Lindsay to comfortably dismiss the values of society that he found inconsistent with his idealisation of the artist as god. In establishing his bona fides as a struggling artist, he maintained his stance on the link between ‘life and art’ with his peers while adding cachet with the society he disliked but needed economically.

Lindsay’s conscious separation of the domestic from the artistic allowed him to both exploit and denounce the image of bohemians as sexually wanton; sexual freedoms, even within the bohemian circle, were not universally supported. In Rooms and Houses Lindsay writes of being caught in bed with ‘Cora’, representing his first wife Katie Parkinson, and the effect such exposure had on his friends; they were bohemians also, but were concerned not for Partridge, but for Cora’s reputation.

Herbert’s sallow face was taut under an intense repression of emotion, and speech was only ejected from him through clenched teeth. It got as far as ‘Your friend – ‘ and was stultified by spleen for utterance.

‘What friend?’
Herbert took a gulp of poisoned air and got it out. ‘The one who was here. Last night. She left something behind her. If you respect her reputation, don’t let it happen again.’

Flouting the conventions of society while considering the strictures placed on valid behaviour between the sexes creates a problematic performative relationship. Having a premarital sexual relationship falls under the auspices of ‘bohemia’, and Cora, whose sexuality is described as ‘more the creature of honeymoon ardours than Partridge’, identifies the difficulty in bohemian relationships;

‘I might have known what I was in for, trusting myself to an artist…I’ve always known they weren’t to be trusted, living rackety lives and talking mad rot and taking insane risks no sensible person would think of taking.’

Partridge and Cora have just been thrown out of a Coffee Palace for indulging in sex unsanctioned by marriage, and Cora, feeling the predicament between desirable action and undesirable societal condemnation of that action, feels that it is the ‘artist’ aspect of Partridge which is culpable, the ‘insane risks’ that lead, naturally, to Cora’s pregnancy and eventual marriage to Partridge.

It is in both the acceptance and rejection of accepted behaviour that the difficulty with Lindsay as Bohemian lies. While desiring to live outside some of society’s norms, he unquestioningly accepts others of society’s strictures, leading to slippage between the represented, ‘performed’ life and the lived experience. As Partridge, he is forced to accept this when their attempted chemical abortion fails.

He was going through the Gardens at a pace set by all the furies when he stopped with a jerk, as though an invisible force had arrested him in full stride. A thought had done it, flashed on him as though from a source outside himself.

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324 Norman Lindsay, *Rooms and Houses*, p 156
325 Norman Lindsay, *Rooms and Houses*, p 158
‘If it doesn’t come right you’ll have to marry her.’

For fully five minutes he stood there with his mind a complete blank. So many eventualities were rushed on him by that presumption that he could not grapple with them, and let them stream away into a vacuum unuttered. If he had an emotion it was one of complete futility. And on that, another thought arrived to him from unknown sources.326

The non-fiction account of this event written in Lindsay’s memoir My Mask adds another layer of complexity to Lindsay’s adoption and dismissal of convention, as befits a ‘bohemian’.

If the decorums were to be kept in countenance, Katie must be a respectable married woman before the signs began to show…With the problem imposed so suddenly on the vagabond inertia of my student days, when I had no money in hand and very little prospect of raising any, I take some credit for the way I grappled with its urgent complexities…to arrange for the ritual of marriage, abduct Katie from the home, marry her, and explode the dramatic crisis of our union on her home circle.327

Bohemianism obviously did not extend to resisting the ‘decorums’ of society in relation to unwed mothers; Katie’s will, however, does not seem to be considered in these arrangements. He goes on to note that the financial issues of being married were more pressing than the emotional ones, for ‘that was over with its lyrical prelude’. ‘Lyricism’ being Lindsay’s euphemism for sexual attraction and eroticism, his reinforcement of the conventions regarding premarital pregnancies stands in contrast to his refusal to engage with the domestic sphere after marriage. Bohemianism here seemed to be a matter of preference where engagement with the family and the domestic sphere started and finished with material provisions.

326 Norman Lindsay, Rooms and Houses, p 176
327 Norman Lindsay, My Mask, p 154
It is in the shifting context from gregarious Bohemian youth to the established, ‘Olympian’ self-isolation of middle and older age that the mythology of Lindsay’s bohemianism finds its slippage. Cultural understanding of the concept of ‘Bohemia’ is also at play, for, as Tony Moore discusses, Bohemia is a mode of existence rather than simply the production of artistic works outside the accepted cultural mores. The subject matter of Lindsay’s artwork, novels and semi-autobiographical writing would keep cultivating the mythology of Lindsay’s bohemianism long after that bohemianism had morphed into a self-aggrandising, artistic preference for solitude.
Chapter 5.
The Myth of the Larrikin: Lindsay and Male Adolescence

While Lindsay’s reconstruction of traditional masculinity reframes the hierarchy of hegemonic masculinity to enhance the role of the artist, his views on male adolescence demonstrate a pre-adult version of the ideal masculinity he would explore in depth. Lindsay writes the young male as embedded in a masculinity that is inseparable from the masculinity of the age group and social strata to which he belongs. Lindsay’s depiction of adolescent rebellion against domestic and scholarly authority, petty pranks against other races or the aged, and the pursuit of women as sexualised objects for conquest position Lindsay’s texts within a particularly Australian masculine narrative of the larrikin. This narrative is not part of the idealised masculine narrative of the Lone Bushman stereotype favoured by the Bulletin; rather, its focus on male adolescence makes it part of another narrative focused on the larrikin and which includes characters like Ginger Meggs and Bill ‘The Sentimental Bloke’. As I have demonstrated previously, Lindsay was mythologised as a larrikin and anti-establishment rebel yet his Vitalist philosophy of the supreme role of the artist and his adherence to class hierarchies bring such mythology into question.

The Redheap trilogy is a boy’s own bildungsroman, focussing entirely on the motivations of the adolescent male in conflict with the domestic home and school, and his declaration of independence through sexual conquest. Although the characters do not achieve enlightenment in the traditional sense of a bildungsroman, the male protagonists achieve understanding of the importance of the feminine to their own masculine identity, and how their sense of self can be enhanced through contact with women. For Lindsay, the journey into manhood focuses on the development of a liberated masculine ego, which utilises the feminine but maintains its inherent agency.
Development of the Larrikin

In *Larrikins: A History*, Melissa Bellanta writes that

For a little less than a century now, larrikinism has played a key role in myths about what it means to be an Australian. Few immigrants or visitors to the country arrive having heard the word. When they do, they are made to understand that it unlocks the secret to Australian national identity. It is because of their ‘larrikin streak’ that Australians refuse to stand on ceremony, they are told. To be a larrikin is to be sceptical and irreverent, to knock authority and mock pomposity, engaging in a practice known as ‘taking the mickey’ – or more often, ‘taking the piss’. To call someone a larrikin is also to excuse their bad behaviour, offering an affectionate slant on their disrespect for social niceties and raucous drunkenness with mates. Often, too, it is a reference to someone’s ockerness: the broadness of their Australian accent and facility with crude slang.\(^{328}\)

The concept of the ‘larrikin’ has been developing in Australia since the mid-1800’s, although definitions of the term have been in constant flux. Described as ‘the scourge of urban colonial society’ in the 1880s, larrikins were poor adolescents or young adults who earned their living through menial labour or were on the street. Bellanta describes the genesis of the term ‘larrikin’ coming from their ‘leariness’, or ‘flamboyant street credibility’. As their numbers grew and the social aspect of larrikinism developed into ‘pushes’, ‘talents’ or ‘forties’, more respectable members of urban society began to feel threatened by their behaviour, both morally and physically.\(^{329}\) While Bellanta points out that early larrikins could be female, Lindsay’s writing positions the larrikin firmly as a male. The feminine is always associated with the conforming norms, and the larrikin adolescent is in a state of constant conflict with these norms, seen by him as restrictive to his masculine need to express his identity as well as entertain himself and his homosocial group.

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\(^{328}\) Melissa Bellanta, *Larrikins: A History*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2012, p xii

\(^{329}\) Melissa Bellanta, *Larrikins: A History*, p xiv
Through his novels of male adolescence and young adulthood Norman Lindsay contributes to the mythology of the larrikin. His disgust with ‘wowserism’, again a particularly Australian concept, further cemented his association with a larrikin culture that embraced irreverence, nudity, sexual adventure, and disrespect for authority in almost any form. Lindsay promotes larrikinism as a more authentic form of national identity and positions wowserism as a cultural anomaly.

The term ‘wowser’ may be defined as a term ‘used to express healthy contempt for those who attempt to force their own morality on everyone.’ C.J. Dennis defined the term as ‘an ineffably pious person who mistakes this world for a penitentiary and himself for a warder.’ The Truth in 1904 linked wowsers with larrikins, describing ‘the warrigal wowsers of Waine’ as ‘lewd larrikin louts’.330 That Dennis also wrote about a larrikin male, Bill of The Sentimental Bloke, places the mythopoeic Lindsay larrikin within a burgeoning tradition.

When Lindsay was writing Redheap and then Saturdee, the term ‘larrikin’ had morphed considerably, becoming closer to its current usage. This was partially due to deployment of the ANZAC military force, where the Australian male was celebrated for his mischievous and irreverent attitude but also resilience, doggedness, and loyalty (‘diggers’ sticking by their ‘mates’). Bellanta notes that while female larrikins played a part in larrikin culture before World War I, the move to viewing the larrikin as a ‘digger’ lowered the profile of female larrikins and entrenched the ideal of the larrikin as an ‘emphatically masculine affair’.331

Lindsay’s Redheap trilogy, Saturdee, Halfway to Anywhere and Redheap links the larrikin with childhood, particularly concepts of adolescence that had been developing since the middle of the nineteenth century. The male characters in these novels display traits such as irreverence to authority, antagonism towards cultural stability and the domestic, use of

331 Melissa Bellanta, Larrikins: A History, p 179
Australianised slang and an advanced homosociality. It is the loosely autobiographical nature of the novels that associate Lindsay as author with the larrikin characters of all three novels. Youngest son Peter in *Saturdee* is in constant conflict with the home, represented by his mother, who regards his extra-domestic activities with both male and female friends as unacceptable. Whereas the male circle is largely homosocial, women are objects of sexual conquest. In *Halfway to Anywhere*, Bill struggles to find self-identity acceptable both to himself and the domestic sphere, and Robert Piper, as an older adolescent in *Redheap* avoids the home as much as possible.

Lindsay’s adolescent male characters idealised larrikin masculinity. The idyllic world they inhabit beyond the restrictive domestic sphere is the natural world where the male is supreme. This open environment contrasts with the rooms of bohemia for Lindsay’s adult male characters. Unlike his urban writing where masculinity is still contained, his larrikin masculinity is tied to an affinity with and control over the natural landscape.

**Adolescence and Larrikinism**

Victorian concepts of childhood changed dramatically in the last half of the nineteenth century. This was due to a range of social changes, including the introduction of compulsory schooling in 1870 and prohibition of full-time employment for urban children under the age of 10 from 1876. Deborah Gorham notes that modern thinkers like Rousseau created a romantic vision of childhood and children, portraying them as innocent and linked to nature in contrast to Calvinist views of children as naturally wicked and requiring adult guidance.

The attempt to combine these two views gave rise to two powerful but opposed images of the child, the child as redeemer and the

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child as evil incarnate. These images reached the height of their importance in the mid-Victorian period, when they were a major feature of art and literature, but in the late-Victorian period they still played an important part in shaping ideology about childhood, as indeed they do even in the twentieth century.  

The introduction of universal education influenced the development of theories of childhood and adolescence. The English Education Act of 1880 made schooling compulsory there for children up to the age of ten, and in Australia the NSW Public Instruction Act of 1880 made education compulsory for children aged between 7 and 14. The development and expansion of compulsory education in Australia created two ‘turning points’ in the life of youth; that of 12-14 and the move from school to employment, and then 17-18 and the transition from ‘boy’s’ work to ‘man’s’ work.

John Gillis also links the rise of the military-style public school education in England throughout the nineteenth century with the widening of the binary gap between genders, and the shift in the definition of ‘weakness, emotion and unreliability’ as “feminine traits”. Physical displays of emotion were so strongly linked with the feminine that by 1860 ‘men no longer dared embrace in public and tears were shed only in private’.

In the development of adolescence as a period distinct from childhood and adulthood, class played an important role. By middle to late nineteenth century the upper and middle classes were better able to support and educate their children, extending their period of familial dependence and allowing for recognition of late childhood to develop into modern adolescence. The idea of adolescence as a separate developmental period, especially in the lives of boys and men, fostered the concept of

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335 John Gillis, Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations 1770-Present, p 111
masculine dependence on the home with which Lindsay’s characters struggle. These concepts provide the possibilities for rebellion and independence from the domestic sphere that categorise Lindsay’s masculine ideal.

**Lindsay as mythic larrikin**

The genesis of the mythology of Lindsay as larrikin began with his vision of a bohemian, knockabout life in Melbourne in *A Curate in Bohemia* (1913), although the public outcry over his pen-and-ink *Pollice Verso* in the 1904 Royal Art Society of New South Wales exhibition also initiated his public profile as a risqué artist rather than just a *Bulletin* cartoonist. It was, however, with the publication of *Redheap* in 1930, a book subsequently banned, and *Saturdee* in 1933 that Lindsay’s reputation as a larrikin reached mythological status. It was further enhanced by the publication of *Halfway to Anywhere* (1947), which, while not as successful as *Saturdee*, was reprinted in 1970.

Larrikinism was linked to disrespect for the law. Writing a novel that was censored for indecency, especially if the author was referencing their own experiences in their writing, can easily be seen as an act of larrikinism. His own art, specifically animals that he drew as anthropomorphised humans, would satirise those in power and give further weight to the public’s view of him as anti-establishment, cheeky and humorous. Such pictures appeared in the *Bulletin* as early as 1904. He also created the characters Billjm and Sergeant Bill Anzac during World War I ‘…to personify what were thought to be qualities characteristic of Australian men – and the point should not be lost that these images are invariably concerned with masculinity and maleness...’

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337 John Hetherington, *Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian*, p 57-58
339 Peter Fullerton, (ed), *Norman Lindsay: War Cartoons 1914-1918*, p 5

Peter Fullerton, (ed) *Norman Lindsay War Cartoons, 1914-1918*, p 117
There was much publicity surrounding the censoring of *Redheap*. Nicole Moore writes in *The Censor’s Library* that

As the first Australian book banned, *Redheap*’s treatment prompted extensive press reports with sustained protest in the *Daily Guardian*, *Smith’s Weekly* and the *Bulletin*, including Cecil Mann’s ‘Australia remains a joke’ Red Page discussion. In London members of the Fanfrolico group protested, including the young Brian Penton, who had orchestrated the book’s publication there.340

In support of the ban, Frederick Howard wrote in *Stead’s Review* that the novel was ‘adolescent and without craft’, adding

*Redheap* is not a daring novel, or an immoral one. It concerns itself with bumpkins ringing firebells and furtively gauging the bust measurements of servant girls...The author intrudes himself at every turn, like a spoilt child, and he has nothing important to say.341

While Joanna Mendelssohn links the import ban on *Redheap* to Lindsay’s obvious borrowing from the lives of Creswick local people and experiences including those of his sisters Mary and Pearl342, Nicole Moore analyses the censorship process that labelled sections of the book ‘indecent in terms of Section 52(c).’343 Lindsay’s reckless borrowing in *Redheap* connects with a larrikin attitude but also foregrounds a territorial distinction between life and art that he was keen to collapse.

The stories that made their way into *Saturdee* were previously published as short stories in *The Lone Hand* and the *Bulletin* and then revised. Sam Prior, chairman and director of the *Bulletin*, opened a publishing arm in 1932 (which became Endeavour Press) and solicited the Australian writing community for manuscripts. Lindsay, as volunteer reader and company director, said to P.R. ‘Inky’ Stephensen, the manager of Endeavour Press,
that there was “Nothing we could even print” among the huge number of manuscripts they received. However, his own stories of small boys, might, with a little reworking, might make a publishable book.

So *Saturdee* was recast from a series of short stories into a novel and praised on publication. John Dalley wrote in his review on the Red Page of the *Bulletin* that

Mark Twain himself never recaptured the idioms of his childhood as completely, and no-one has penetrated as far into certain murky recesses of the small boy’s soul.\(^{344}\)

Endeavour Press labelled the book, in its promotional material, as ‘A Comic Masterpiece,’ and the blurb extolled its virtues as a book filled with ‘pranks’ that would ‘give merriment to every Australian who can remember the tadpole phase of his own career.’\(^{345}\)

This understanding of, and affinity with, the small boy has made Lindsay’s novel popular and, unlike the contentious *Redheap*, there were no censorship issues. Whether Lindsay’s judgement about the quality of writing the Endeavour Press received was sound, and his pronouncements about the quality of writing in Australia are certainly open to question, *Saturdee* was an effective choice to launch the new Australian publisher.

It also emphasised Lindsay in the minds of the Australian reading public as an author whose writing reflected the mischievous nature of the Australian country child: the pranks, the us-and-them attitude to adults, the acts of casual racism (throwing rocks at ‘Chinks’), and pastimes like cow-dung fights. This was the uncensored world. The ‘small boy,’ along with the adolescent boys explored in the *Redheap* trilogy, create a basis for Lindsay’s larrikin.

The Australian larrikin image developed alongside psychological and educational ideals relating to appropriate masculinity and fear of

\(^{344}\) John Hetherington, *Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian*, p 202

\(^{345}\) MLMSS 1284/Box 29 PR Stephensen Papers, Mitchell Library, letter from Norman Lindsay to PR Stephensen, undated but possibly Nov 1932
weakness, or ‘inversion.’ Julia Grant identifies the separation of ‘sissies’ from ‘real boys,’ and notes that

The sissy embodied a cluster of attributes that were endemic to the architects of modern child psychology. In the literature of the normal child the ‘real’ or ‘regular’ boy emerged as the psychological ideal, while sissies were frequently characterized as sickly, timid children who were overly dependent on their mothers...As the peer group loomed ever larger as a means of socialization of children, conforming to the code of boyhood became increasingly central to establishing the normalcy of boy’s personalities and behaviours.\footnote{Julia Grant, A “Real Boy” and not a Sissy: Gender, Childhood and Masculinity, 1890 – 1940, \textit{Journal of Social History}, Summer 2004, p 829, quoting from Kathleen Jones, \textit{Taming the Troublesome Child: American Families, Child Guidance, and the Limits of Psychiatric Authority}, Cambridge, 1999}

Lindsay’s writing fully embodies this separation, with Peter’s cousin Oswald featuring as a nemesis to Peter’s desire to enjoy a Saturday with Conkey Menders:

He [Oswald] had a noble brow and a dome of flaxen curls and a corpulent stomach set up on spindle legs; one of those stomachs by which small boys arrive at life with the portly consequence of old gentlemen. A mother had done fell work on him, for his eye was aldermanic with the consciousness of moral worth...\footnote{Norman Lindsay, \textit{Saturdee}, Ure Smith, Sydney, 1963, p 153}

Oswald continues to be a ‘sissie’ around mothers, commenting that, “I never disobey my mother, because I think boys ought to always obey their mothers."

For Lindsay, mothers represent the domineering domestic sphere and the worst aspect of femininity. Subjugation to them, whether voluntary or involuntary, is unthinkable. The idealised masculine adolescent is free to maintain homosocial networks and participate in homosocial pursuits. The domestic is always cast in direct opposition to full expression of the idealised masculine, and, by its very existence, registers as a threat.
A key aspect of understanding the construction of masculinity is how the markers of masculinity are read in the homosocial context. Lindsay places his construction of masculinity under tension with the introduction of sexualised femininity. The ability to relate successfully to girls and women is seen by characters, and relayed to readers, as both a positive and negative phenomenon. The sexualised feminine, on the other hand, is represented as existing purely for its visual attractions or as a reflection of male sexual prowess. The tension between the idealised masculine adolescent who resists the feminine and the adolescent who attempts relations with the feminine often provides narrative impetus.

By contrast with Lindsay’s development of the ideal masculine larrikin, the two most popular writers for Australian children in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were women. Ethel Turner and Mary Grant Bruce wrote books about idealised Australian children, but very different versions from European contemporaries such as Frances Hodgson Burnett. Bruce’s protagonist Norah of the Billabong novels is presented as a ‘mate’ to her father and brother and aspires to be as boyish as possible without losing her essential femininity as displayed by cooking, darning socks and knitting. Turner’s Judy Woolcot has great capacity for mischief, but is seen to redeem herself with her self-sacrifice to save her younger brother. In Seven Little Billabongs Brenda Niall points out that Turner was also building the larrikin tradition with her 1896 novel The Little Larrikin, about a six-year old urban boy who is presented as the antithesis of Cedric Errol of Little Lord Fauntleroy, in behaviour if not appearance:

He was very little, and had sweet eyes, darkly blue, and strangely gentle and winning; his hair curled in fair, soft little rings...He was head of a small-boy ‘push’ he had organised and recruited lately with several lads of nine and ten. They were the frequent terror and permanent mortification of the whole neighbourhood, and followed as closely and carefully as such small feet could in all the ways of the adult larrikin...348

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348 Brenda Niall, Seven Little Billabongs, Penguin Books Australia, Ringwood, 1979, p 99-100
In these texts Lindsay constructs complementary masculine structures: characters as ideal masculine ‘larrikins’ and the structure of himself as a past mythological ‘larrikin’. In doing so, he promotes a contemporary understanding of an essentialist masculine ideal. As R W Connell states: ‘Essentialist definitions of masculinity usually pick a feature that defines the core of the masculine, and hang an account of men’s lives on that.’

Lindsay’s construction of a ‘masculine earth’ posits independence, creativity, outdoor activities, attraction to the feminine and a sympathetic homosocial group as the essential definitions of masculinity. He also constructs an anti-masculine, in his male characters’ antipathy for the domestic as controlled by women, as well as an anti-authoritarian nature, mostly against the strictures of school and scholars.

One of the lynchpins in the celebration of larrikinism is C.J. Dennis’s *Sentimental Bloke*, first published in the *Bulletin* in 1908. The larrikin hero, Bill, speaks in a vernacular specific to the street, written phonetically so that none of the twang and savour of the voice was lost on the reader. The intended source of this vernacular can have little doubt, especially considering such lines as these from ‘The Play’, when Bill takes his ‘girl’ Doreen to see Romeo and Juliet;

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Wot’s in a name? Wot’s in a string o’ words?
They scraps in ole Verona wiv the’r swords,
An’ never give a bloke a stray dog’s chance,
An’ that’s Romance,
But when they deals it out wiv bricks and boots
In Little Lon., they’re low, degraded broots.
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Both Dennis and Lindsay use language and phrasing particular to a national and gendered cultural group where language solidifies adherence to a code of both behaviour and understanding. The first line uttered by

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Saturdee’s protagonist, Peter, establishes a language and stylistic link between the urban larrikins of *The Sentimental Bloke* and Lindsay’s rural larrikins;

‘Will I?’ he was muttering ferociously. ‘By cripes, will I bloomin’ well go to Gran’ma’s grave on a Saturdee?’

Lindsay also establishes the gang mentality for his assorted boys through their language use:

“Outer the game!” he roared, pointing Peter off the earth.

“Will I?”

“Yer will!”

“I won’t”

Bufflehead then pronounced sentence on this insolence to his sovereign will.

“Yer won’t have me ball!”

“Keep yer ball!” sneered Peter.

Amazed at such presumption, Bufflehead said to the company, “Yer won’t have me ball.”

“Keep yer old ball!” chanted the company.

“Hoot him!” added Peter.

“Hoot him!” roared the company.

Lindsay’s sojourn in Melbourne from 1896 to 1901 would have brought him into contact with larrikin characters much like Bill and Ginger Mick from *The Sentimental Bloke*. His work on the *Bulletin* from 1901 meant that the popularity of the larrikin aspect of the male Australian personality would have been well known to him. Bellanta links growing awareness of the term ‘larrikin’ with press usage, as well as cartoons depicting larrikins. Such cartoons start in *Melbourne Punch* and move onto the *Bulletin* in the

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352 Norman Lindsay, *Saturdee*, p 5
353 Norman Lindsay, *Saturdee*, p 12
1890s, with cartoons by Tom Durkin and Ambrose Dyson. The latter was a friend of Lindsay in his bohemian Melbourne period. The milieu in which Lindsay published *Saturdee*, and to a lesser extent *Redheap*, was therefore one in which the larrikin was an understood type.

Masculinity studies seeks to demonstrate that the ‘traditional invisibility of masculinity’ is in fact a social construct and to both destabilise and open up the term.354 Todd Reeser notes that

> By virtue of their consistent and unavoidable repetition throughout culture, these tools of ideology are eventually made to seem natural and thus keep themselves from being questioned or interrogated, and they each have their own specific function in the large-scale process of constructing masculinity as an ideology.355

Both the ascension of education into the middle to late teens, and the development of masculine ideology that embraced traits of strength, lack of emotion, and autonomy as masculine ‘norms’ supported larrikinism and its separation from a sexualised feminine.

While aligning Lindsay’s male characters with Ginger Meggs and the Sentimental Bloke might be viewed as consolidating a stereotype promoted in Australian cultural production, it is worth noting that this was only just developing. Bill and Peter Gimble, and Robert Piper of *Redheap* as a lesser model, are at the beginning of the development of the larrikin ‘type.’ György Lukács explores the idea of type, the ‘peculiar synthesis which organically binds together the general and the particular both in characters and situations’. He goes on to add

> ...what makes it a type is that in at all the humanly and socially essential determinants are present on their highest level of development, in the ultimate unfolding of possibilities latent in them, in extreme presentation of their extremes...356

355 Todd W Reeser, *Masculinities in Theory*, p 21
Lindsay’s novels are part of the development of the adolescent male larrikin ‘type’, but they are also, as Lukács describes, the ‘ultimate unfolding of the possibilities latent in them.’ They are the extreme masculinist versions of adolescents, with the possibilities of the adolescent male explored as fully as morals will allow. The utilisation of euphemisms for sex, as well as the term ‘lyricism’ to denote attraction, arousal, affection, desire and lust place the texts firmly within their moral and historical context. However these limits do not detract from the role these novels played in the development of the masculinist adolescent larrikin ‘type.’

**Celebrating the larrikin in *Saturdee, Halfway to Anywhere* and *Redheap***

It is in the homosocial activities of the main characters in all three texts that their adherence to a larrikin model becomes most apparent: throwing rocks at the homes of the elderly; gambling with ‘Chows’ in the market gardens; drinking beer on the sly; shooting birds; playing the ‘needle trick’ in class; playing games ‘down the diggings’; and, at the end, either blaming another for deeds committed or ‘manning up’ and taking a belting. These examples are indicative of the many that flood *Saturdee, Halfway to Anywhere*, and *Redheap*. The enjoyment of these activities is in the sharing, or often the encouragement, of the peer group to witness their daring or impressive nature. Peter crows ‘What price me doin’ a knock with Dolly Trimmer up the creek this after?’ a phrase designed to extort wonder at his prowess with girls, or, as *Saturdee*’s narrator puts it ‘blow off self-esteem at somebody’s expense.’357

In the text, the ‘somebody’ is the Gimbles’ groom, who is unimpressed, but another reading could see the ‘somebody’ as Dolly Trimmer. The process of ‘doin’ a knock’, (have some sort of intimate relation with, limited to snuggling and ‘smacks of kisses’ here) elevates Peter’s positioning within the homosocial group. Conversely, this elevation within his circle deflates

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357 Norman Lindsay, *Saturdee*, p 133, p 135
Dolly’s understood position from unassailable to conquered. This is demonstrated when Snowey Critchet begins to court Dolly and a competition for her favour commences.

Representations of masculinity in these novels encompass an idealised adolescent homosocial culture that is isolated from both accepted social norms and domesticity. This isolation is celebrated; those who do succumb to the demands of the social or domestic spheres are labelled ‘mugs’. When Bill and Waldo plan to spend a Saturday swimming, shooting game, fishing for and eating yabbies, and ‘lolling naked in the sun’, their enjoyment is stymied when younger boys and ‘tennis club snobs’ set up picnic around them:

Invidious comparisons with their masculine world were forced on them. To left and right of them, males gracefully escorting ladies insisted on attention, reducing fair discourse on sport to resentful mumblings about mugs like Jobags Parkin and his blinkin’ cousin sticking on dog in front of girls, and stinkin’ young skites like Peter and Conkey Menders requiring a kick in the pants for a bumptious parade of the same thing, when if it came to the point the blinkin’ kids didn’t know a blinkin’ stinkin’ thing about what going with girls really meant.358

Establishing Peter and Bill Gimble as adolescent larrikins allows Lindsay to explore a world he sees as vital and vitally important; as he details in Creative Effort, this is a world of Life and Art separate from mere Existence where the mundane populate. The masculine reaches the pinnacles of possible human experience in this world. In Lindsay’s novels, it is the masculine who strives, needs, creates, feels; the feminine controls, rejects, inspires but then denies. The masculine need for a vital life, if restricted by the domestic, is limited to mere Existence.

In fashioning this world, Lindsay imagines outlets of escape. His narratives are often fictionalised from childhood events, with reference to Lionel’s diaries and experiences. The character of Conkey Menders, shortened to

358 Norman Lindsay, Halfway to Anywhere, Pacific Books, 1970, p 40-41
'Conk', is based on Lindsay himself as a child, and in including himself in the narrative Lindsay is participating in his own mythmaking. The desire to create an ideal masculine childhood may have been due to Lindsay viewing his own as feminised and less than ideal due to a debilitating skin condition. Keeping him indoors and at ‘quiet’ pursuits, it allowed his drawing talent to develop. He notes in his autobiography that he was constantly warned, ‘Don’t you run about,’ and that the major ‘infliction’ of this skin condition ‘was that it barred me from the sportive activities always going on in our back premises, or in the church paddock next door, under stage management by my brother Lionel.’ These outdoor ‘sportive activities,’ along with Lionel’s sexual success, contributed to a masculinist, larrikin image that Norman wished to reproduce.

The introduction to Peter Gimble in *Saturdee* is through a power struggle with his mother:

‘Pet-er!’ called a voice, in that rising inflection which commands and also threatens. Ma’s voice. In such time as Peter, crouching past garden shrubs, could reach the front gate, he burst through it and dived instantly under the small footbridge crossing the gutter, where there was just room enough for him to curl up like a woodbug.

‘Will I?’ he was muttering ferociously. ‘By cripes, will I? Will I bloomin’ well go to Gran’ma’s grave on a Saturdee?’

He listened with care, detecting no sounds of pursuit, and the expression of an outraged woodbug was effaced from his nubbly features, which now registered a pardonable exultation. With a remarkable contortion, he produced a cap from his trouser pocket and put it on.

‘Narks yer, don’t it?’ he said to Ma. ‘You think you hid me cap, so that’s one up agen your duckhouse.’

The power shifts between Ma, whose voice has the power to both ‘command’ and ‘threaten’, and Peter, who escapes the commands of his

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359 Norman Lindsay, *My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it*, p 37
360 Norman Lindsay, *Saturdee*, p 5
mother that he go with her to ‘Gran’ma’s grave.’ His muttered asides indicate that he has circumvented Ma’s preventative by finding a hidden hat. He knows this will anger her and is glad about it. The conflict between masculine autonomy and the domestic is established as one of constant angling for supremacy.

This template is one often followed by Lindsay and clearly establishes the restrictive influence of the domestic sphere on the larrikin young adult. The schoolroom and schoolyard are also sites of adolescent rebellion, and Peter and Bill both use school as an excuse for leaving the home. In an incident on the same night, illustrative of the differing levels of control exerted on different age groups, Peter wheedles his way out of the home and Bill, with more independence as the older son, escapes when he finds the home intolerable.

‘But cripes, I’m only going ‘round to Conk’s place for half a minute. Black Sammy gives a bloke five cuts for not doing his sums. By cripes, you get five cuts from Black Sammy and see how you like it.’

A long pause, which Bill’s experience of conflict in the home might reconstruct as Peter slumping resignation to cuts while being inspected by Ma’s soul-boring eye. Then came a reluctant concession by Ma to the fantasy picture of Black Sammy dealing her five cuts with the cane.

‘Very well, then, I will allow you five minutes to reach Menders’ place and five minutes to return. If you are not back within ten minutes you will know what to expect.’

To that, Peter’s voice, meek with servility and rectitude, replied ‘All right Ma, I bet I’m back in less’n ten minutes.’

Bill dismissed Peter’s tadpole policies, scowling blankly at the now blank space of window from which the last light was fading.  

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361 Norman Lindsay, *Halfway to Anywhere*, p 25-26
Bill has less conflict with the domestic sphere if he wishes to leave it, but it is still a covert operation;

The creature of a drab routine, he emptied his schoolbag on the table, slapped open his exercise book and Latin grammar, dipped his pen, and in the same act hurled it down to snatch up his hat and snake out at the window – a sudden reverse of intention imposed on him by a conviction of the intolerable.\textsuperscript{362}

The ‘intolerable’ restrictions of the home and school (Peter’s excuse to leave the home at night is to copy down sums, which he will be punished if he doesn’t complete) are either manipulated or evaded. Throughout these texts, the ‘unreasonable’ expectations placed on the male adolescent by the domestic sphere and the correlating need for freedom are constant themes in the novels.

While some of his adult life approached larrikinism, his actual childhood experiences and later life would not. While the outward appearance of bohemian life and parties at Springwood (organised and attended by Rose and her friends, but ignored by Lindsay, who would often disappear into his studio muttering in disgust ‘Booze!’\textsuperscript{363}) seemed to support the larrikin myth, Lindsay spent most of his time in his studio, hard at work. Douglas Stewart recalls that evenings at Springwood, when Lindsay was in his sixties, were spent reading Conrad and Dickens, and occasionally Lindsay’s own writing, out loud; certainly not a typically larrikin pastime. It would be his textual output that reinforced a concept of the Australian larrikin as a mischievous boy or anti-authoritarian young adult and it would be highly successful and enduring.

\textsuperscript{362} Norman Lindsay, \textit{Halfway to Anywhere}, p 27
\textsuperscript{363} Jane Lindsay, \textit{Portrait of Pa}, p 114
Chapter 6.

Myths of the Archive: Working with Smoke and Mirrors

When conducting literary archival research, the researcher often searches for a connection between the writer's practice and its traces. As Catherine Hobbs notes, ‘a writer’s fonds capture important aspects of the creative process’\textsuperscript{364}, and ‘archives are the chrysalis of the final work.’\textsuperscript{365} Archival research gives a sense of gaining insight and closeness to one’s subject. As Hobbs states:

> What has lent the literary manuscript page its rarity and value in market terms is its proximity to the act of creation, its closeness to the spark or intention of the creative author.\textsuperscript{366}

In this chapter, I investigate the archive as another site in which the authorial self is performed and manipulated. I also consider the nature of archival discovery, firstly in what the archive can tell us in relation to Lindsay’s creative process and secondly in considering the life of “La Revanché,” an unpublished manuscript, which gives insight into the development of Lindsay’s humorous writing, the role of male homosociality to Vitalism, and his views on female authorship.

Archival Power

Archives are not produced and maintained without the editing of an archivist; Michael Lynch writes of the construction of the archive

> An ‘institutional passage from the private to the public’ precedes the formation of an archive, and this passage can be a site of struggle, occasionally resulting in breach, abortion, or miscarriage of the nascent archive. Consequently, we can appreciate that archives


\textsuperscript{365} Catherine Hobbs, \textit{New Approach to Canadian Literary Archives}, p 110

\textsuperscript{366} Ibid.
are as much products of historical struggle as they are primary sources for writing histories.\textsuperscript{367}

When researchers delve into the archives, they are engaging with ‘a crucial site for national memory’ and working in a place that is instrumental in ‘the forging of the nation into the people, into an ‘imagined community’’.\textsuperscript{368} The archive as a place where hidden meaning is waiting to be uncovered is a tantalising concept; however, it is both inaccurate and problematic. The Lindsay archives in the Mitchell Library provide an excellent example of the possible issues involved in archival research.

The selective nature of the documents deposited in archives make them a difficult source on which to base clear arguments. As Lynch notes,

\ldots the archive is never ‘raw’ or ‘primary’, not only because the paper trail is the product of a selective sorting operation, but also because it is originally laid down to create a trail of evidence that leads future investigations along a carefully chosen path.\textsuperscript{369}

It is the nature of the ‘carefully chosen path’ that is of particular concern when considering the Norman Lindsay fonds. It is thought that Norman and his sister Mary wrote letters specifically with archiving in mind so that they could present their version of events regarding their mother Jane Lindsay, and their brother Robert Lindsay, as well as others in the family, \textit{for the record}.\textsuperscript{370} Joanna Mendelssohn notes that Mary’s ‘letters of the 1950s read like de facto family histories, as they create myths out of memories and imaginings.’

\ldots as well as glorifying Norman and damning other siblings, Mary was determined to change Robert’s reputation as a family failure who hated his mother.\textsuperscript{371}

\textsuperscript{368} Mike Featherstone, \textit{Archive}, in \textit{Theory, Culture and Society}, Issue 23, Vol 2-3, p 592
\textsuperscript{369} Michael Lynch, \textit{Archives in Formation: privileged spaces, popular archives and paper trails}, p 69
\textsuperscript{370} Joanna Mendelssohn, \textit{Letters and Liars: Norman Lindsay and the Lindsay Family}, p 119
\textsuperscript{371} Ibid.
In reading the Lindsay archive, the feeling that the path has been intentionally constructed is notable. Yet it is countered by the sheer weight of material, which suggests that nothing has been excluded and that the ‘truth’ of Norman Lindsay exists within the many letters, sketches, small manuscripts, photographs, catalogues, and other library holdings. While Joanna Mendelssohn has used the archives in the Mitchell Library extensively, her research has focused on the collective biographies of the Lindsay family as a whole.

The obsessive nature of Lindsay’s artistic endeavours is well known and has certainly been much explored. Descriptions of Lindsay constantly at work on artistic projects create the image of a man whose need to create art was compulsive and necessary to his existence. His daughter Jane Lindsay wrote in her memoir *Portrait of Pa* that

> We had grown up with him operating like a one-man picture factory in the studio across the garden. Etchings, pen drawings, watercolours, oil paintings, novels, ship models, statues, articles, essays and letters were turned out with demoniac abandon.372

His other outlet for creativity - eleven published novels, two novels for children, three books of philosophy and numerous essays - tends to be critically overlooked. The archives hold many letters referring to his writing in its developmental stages. Highlighting the development of his writing alongside his visual art allows a more comprehensive and complex image of Lindsay as a creator to emerge.

It is in the large amount of material in both the Lindsay Papers and in various other manuscript collections containing letters, documents, manuscripts, pictures and photographs pertaining to Norman Lindsay that an understanding of these fonds as a form of unpublished performance is important. Mireille Bossis and Karen McPherson write

> ...the problem becomes more complicated as we turn to the correspondences of ‘famous people’, those known for their actions, especially their literary or artistic productions. The *real weight of*

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372 Jane Lindsay, *Portrait of Pa*, Angus and Robertson, Pymble, 1994, p 4
their letters obscures all other aspects, especially the process of the writing itself. An author’s correspondence is then treated as a gold mine of biographical information, the correspondence taking on a fixed and univocal referential value which does not necessarily contribute to a better understanding of the author’s work although that work was responsible for drawing attention to the correspondence in the first place.373

For example, during my first foray into Lindsay’s archive, what remained in my mind was that he smoked a lot of tobacco. Throughout his letters written in relative isolation in the Blue Mountains to those in Sydney who may come visiting, there is in almost every letter a request by Lindsay for tobacco to be brought to him on visits. Payment for the same, as well as for any art supplies which he also requested be brought to him, are also found in almost every letter, even if it is a postscript or written in the margins. I calculated that he must have smoked about an ounce a fortnight.

While this fact might seem peripheral to the proper scope of archival research, the more I thought about it the more I considered the role of Lindsay’s nicotine addiction in the creative process. Besides the astounding fact that such a heavy smoker lived to be ninety, I wondered whether his mind would have been as consistently active as he aged without the dual stimulations of tobacco and tea, which he drank in large quantities. Lindsay’s prolific production of plastic art, prose and philosophy, sculpture and ship models can be seen as an effort to explore his creative mind’s potential. Stimulants such as tea and tobacco would have heightened the physical energy needed to keep up with the demands of his artistic mind.

The example of Lindsay’s tobacco habit suggests that what is considered peripheral or ‘ephemeral’ in the archive is shaped by what is thought to be of little literary scholarly value. However, it is precisely through examining

these marginal or overlooked elements that unexpected insights can be gained. My discovery of *La Revanché - or Les Traditiones vive le l’irror Gate*, *A Romance by Marie Corelli* adds an important facet to the current understanding of how and when Lindsay started writing humorously, and how such peripheral, casual entertainment may have influenced his future writing.

How this manuscript came to be in the archives, in the smaller, less prominent fonds of his ex-brother-in-law Dr John SC Elkington (Dr Elkington married Lindsay’s first wife Katie’s sister Mary Parkinson, the matriarch of the Parkinson family) is unknown. I am unaware of any evidence placing Dr Elkington at the Northwood Lindsay abode, other than to note that while he lived in Melbourne with his wife, he travelled regularly to Sydney for business. Norman Lindsay’s estrangement, separation and later divorce from Dr Elkington’s sister-in-law further argue that contact between them after about 1905 would have been more restricted by family issues.

In 1901 Lindsay moved to Sydney following his employment at *The Bulletin*. So integral was this employment to his future artistic development that Elkington took great pains to preserve his role in securing the position for his brother-in-law and friend. The file he deposited at the Mitchell Library contains letters between himself and J.F. Archibald (long-time editor of *The Bulletin*) regarding Lindsay’s art, and a telegram from Lindsay instructing Dr Elkington to ‘Do entirely as you please will send drawings Monday’. 374

Elkington writes that he is aware of ‘various accounts of how Norman Lindsay first came to be associated with the BULLETIN’, but that his account is the ‘true story’:

> Recognising his genius and also realising the necessity for some more assured livelihood for a new brother-in-law than the Hawklet and odd illustration jobs, I took a selection of his work including

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374 MLMSS 6025 1 (1) JSC Elkington, Papers re Norman Lindsay 1880-1955 Folder 1
especially his Boccaccio drawings to Sydney, to ask my friend J.F. Archibald whether he would give Norman a job on the staff. Archibald’s first reaction was to abuse me roundly for not having made such work known to him before. The next was to take me and the drawings round to Julian Ashton. Ashton listened wearily to Archibald’s encomiums, made a blistering remark about these infernal young Australian geniuses, and flipped open the Boccaccio volume. Minutes later he shot an accusing finger at us across the table.

“It’s a fraud – a damned fake!” he said. “No young untravelled Australian could have done that work.” I explained that if he cared to pay expenses Norman would come along and do more of it in his presence. “But look at those cobblestones” he exploded. “Real cobblestones! He couldn’t have the knowledge.”

A student, mistaking the purport of the roar, came in and looked over Ashton’s shoulder. “Look at that – and that – and that –” he went on to the newcomer turning over pages. “You’ll never draw like that! An Australian! Why haven’t I heard of him before?” From his savage glare I realised that he regarded the matter as a personal grievance against me.375

While Dr Elkington had a high profile in his own right as a skilled medical bureaucrat (he would become Queensland’s Commissioner of Public Health), he obviously perceived his role in the artistic career of his brother-in-law important enough to leave his own typed version in the Mitchell Library, to ensure that it would not be omitted from accounts of Lindsay’s life. Dr Elkington’s version of events is echoed in Lindsay’s autobiographical My Mask, but his role is reduced in John Hetherington’s official biography, The Embattled Olympian. In the box containing this letter are photographs of the Ishmael Club with names of members written on the back which have been published as well as photographs of Norman

375 Ibid.
Lindsay and his son Jack. There is also a photograph of Lionel Lindsay, John Elkington and Ruff Tremearne taken in Sydney in about 1906.

Documenting his inclusion in the artistic bohemian Ishmaels and the continuation of that association to Sydney was important to Dr Elkington, as it demonstrated his participation in this bohemian, artistic group and therefore secured his place in Australian cultural history. Bearing in mind Walter Benjamin’s concept of ‘the trace’ as ‘the appearance of nearness, however far removed the thing behind may be,’ Dr Elkington uses these ‘traces’ of Norman Lindsay to establish his proximity to the well-known man and his importance to someone quickly becoming a cultural legend.\(^{376}\) Indeed, Hetherington’s biography *Norman Lindsay: Embattled Olympian* makes no mention of Elkington’s role in Lindsay’s Sydney connection and may have provided the motivation for Elkington to ‘correct’ the record. Lindsay writes in *My Mask*:

> Jack Elkington carried the Boccaccio drawings with him on a visit to Sydney and showed them to Archibald and Ashton. From Archibald they evoked a commission and the hint of a position on the staff of the *Bulletin*, and from Ashton a proposal to raise three hundred pounds wherewith I might go forth to study art in some European centre.\(^{377}\)

*Norman Lindsay: Embattled Olympian* describes Norman’s introduction to Sydney and the *Bulletin* as a result of the *Bulletin* ‘publishing an appreciative notice of the Decameron drawings’:

> The envelope held a note from JF Archibald, the editor of the *Bulletin*, inviting Norman to illustrate two attached items; these were a short poem about a larrikin in love, and a clipping of a newspaper paragraph lamenting that while superannuated jockeys had some kind of provident fund superannuated poets had nothing of the kind...Norman worked hard on the drawings, putting aside other commitments to put his best into them. Then he posted them off to

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\(^{376}\) Maryanne Dever, *Great Garbo’s Foot, or, Sex, Socks and Letters*, Australian Feminist Studies, June 1, 2010, p 167  

\(^{377}\) Norman Lindsay, *My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it*, p 156
Archibald. A reply came within a few days. It brought a cheque for five pounds – five pounds for two drawings which Norman had expected to net him fifteen shillings at most! The accompanying note was short. It merely said that Archibald would like to see him if he were ever in Sydney.\textsuperscript{378}

Given that Lindsay collaborated with Hetherington on the biography, the conflicting accounts are puzzling.

The inclusion of the manuscript of \textit{La Revanché} in Elkington’s archive folder demonstrates that the friendship between Elkington and Lindsay continued even after Lindsay’s relationship with his wife and Dr Elkington’s sister-in-law became strained. Norman Lindsay may well have forgotten its existence. It may have been archived to demonstrate intimacy and even involvement in the production of the manuscript; Dr Elkington may have been the photographer.

\textbf{Situating \textit{La Revanché}}

\textit{La Revanché} was written and constructed with no intent of publication, or even for dissemination to a readership wider than its creators. The value of such a document lies precisely in revealing a side to its authors when they believe themselves to be otherwise unobserved. That is, there is the sense that \textit{La Revanché} allows us to see Norman Lindsay, with his ‘mask’ seemingly off.

The lack of intent to publish places \textit{La Revanché} in the category of ephemera; ‘occasional publications and paper documents, material objects, or items that fall into the miscellaneous category when catalogued’.\textsuperscript{379} The value of ephemera is that it tests traditional categories of literary value.\textsuperscript{380} The National Library of Australia has a dedicated ‘ephemera’ collection, digitised and available on their website, ‘...as a

\textsuperscript{378} John Hetherington, \textit{Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian}, p 44-45
\textsuperscript{379} Ann Cvetkovich, \textit{In the Archives of Lesbian Feelings: Documentary and Popular Culture}, Camera Obscura, 1 January, 2002, p 111
\textsuperscript{380} Ann Vickery, \textit{Leaving Lines of Gender}, University Press of New England, Hanover, 2000, p 68
record of Australian life and social customs, popular culture, national
events and issues of national concern’. The value of the less-than-
literary publication (which may include postcards, calling cards,
advertisements, playbills, and invitations) may provide insight into
processes and networks of cultural production.

Work produced without the idea of publication, which may include working
manuscripts and notebooks, can give insight into the creative process. La
Revanché was produced by Lindsay and his friends for their own
entertainment. Its ribaldry (or what one could call ‘potty humour’) represents the writer’s sense of a directed humour among close friends
rather than the humour in his published works, which is directed to the
anonymous reader. Certainly, Lindsay’s writing intended for publication is
far more subdued than what is found in La Revanché.

While Lindsay was loath to admit to self-censorship, the levels of editing
required of a published novel, and the societal strictures and moral codes informing Australian book publishing, can limit the writer’s style and
values. The lack of authorial regulation allows for an alternative
understanding of the author’s creative scope and in relation to La
Revanché, this would include Norman Lindsay’s humour and choice of
subject-matter. It might be as important to understand the kind of writing
that was not valued by either Lindsay or his publishers as much as the
kind of writing that was regarded highly.

Archival material carries weight in that it has been archived; it was
considered important for someone who may not be the author, the
author’s family or executors. It would also be considered important by the
archivists themselves although much work that is deposited in archives is
not processed with a fine-tooth comb and certainly not by a literary
historian or critic. The lack of knowledge surrounding the archived
documents defies their capture or fixedness, as Bossis and McPherson
discern:

We who read these letters can never forget that we are not their destined recipients; what means do we have to detect the illusion, the fiction, since the reality must forever elude us?\textsuperscript{382}

The idea of the unknowable rather than hidden truth of the archive can be applied to the manuscript of \textit{La Revanché}. As a manuscript, it appears independent of any other documentary material about it and is dated using other sources regarding geographic location, living arrangements, household composition, and activities the parties were involved in. Yet details about how it came to be produced remain open to conjecture. The ‘truth’ of the manuscript is unlikely to be discovered.

What \textit{La Revanché} can do is add to the sum of the understanding about Lindsay’s writing and remind the researcher that any work of literary biography is limited, even as new discoveries are made. By adding \textit{La Revanché} and another of Lindsay’s unpublished works, \textit{Tabonga Road}, to Lindsay’s literary corpus, we gain a sense of its morphic quality and its range of performances to different audiences. \textit{Tabonga Road} is a complete unpublished novel held in the Douglas Stewart fonds in the Mitchell Library; while a deeper analysis is not included here, the novel’s focus on suburban masculine dissatisfaction and attempts at sexual conquest (both in person and voyeuristically through a peeping-Tom character) demonstrate further Lindsay’s self-censorship between public and private production.

Norman Lindsay has a demonstrable history of writing both humorously and satirically; \textit{The Magic Pudding} and \textit{The Flyaway Highway}, both children’s narratives, demonstrate a sense of humour that pokes fun at authority figures and revels in a sense of the ridiculous. While \textit{The Magic Pudding} was born of a belief that children are more interested in books about food than fairies, and a need for Lindsay to distract his mind from the horrors of World War I, the humour in his later stories published together as \textit{Saturdee} is more sophisticated. The ridiculous, however, still played a major role in his humour; characters are always being bopped on

\textsuperscript{382} Mireille Bossis and Karen McPherson, \textit{Methodological Journeys Through Archives}, p 69
the head, dropped down mineshafts, or running away from the threat of adult retribution.

This sense of the ridiculous is clearly present in *La Revanché*, emphasised by the placement of the chamber-pot as its centrepiece and even more so by various characters wearing the chamber-pot as millinery. Satirising the concept of revenge (the reader is never sure what original act is being revenged) would feature in Lindsay’s much later work *The Magic Pudding*. There, the Puddin’ Owners exist in a circle of action and revenge with the Puddin’ Thieves, with Albert the Puddin’ playing a humorous and complicit role in both groups’ exploits.

The Lindsay family had a history of acting out scenes from their favourite novels and myths. There are many photos of them (including Norman, Lionel, Percy, Ruby, Reg, Pearl and their friends including Will Dyson) dressed in togas and other improvised period costume acting out tableaux from various myths. These frolics extended to Norman and Lionel’s Melbourne days. Photographs of them fooling around on the roofs of buildings where they rented rooms demonstrate a history of dress-up and playacting. They also took photographs of themselves dressed as pirates with Ray Parkinson (later his brother-in-law) during their ‘pirate phase’. These were to provide aids in the production of a pirate novel which was never completed. Providing entertainment for themselves and their friends in this way was neither new nor unusual; that it continued when Norman Lindsay moved to Sydney and lived with two other protagonists in the revels is not unexpected.

Lindsay wrote about the many unfinished novels that he wrote as an adolescent. These volumes of ‘one or two chapters’ were burned before he left his hometown of Creswick for Melbourne when he was seventeen. *La Revanché* demonstrates that his desire to write continued unabated and that he began to develop his writing skills further. It is also a

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383 Joanna Mendelssohn, *Letters and Liars: Norman Lindsay and the Lindsay Family*, reproduced photographs
384 Ibid; also John Hetherington, *Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian*, p 31-32
continuation of the dress-ups he played with Lionel and others while living in rooms in Melbourne. The use of photographs in *La Revanché* is an important element, not only suggesting continuity with Lindsay’s ‘pirate phase’ but demonstrating a more informal, less pompous version of Lindsayan Vitalism: men who are simultaneously enjoying life and the creative impulse.

In Lindsay’s biography, Hetherington notes that, when Norman, Lionel and Will Dyson were living in Northwood on the North Shore of Sydney, Norman introduced Rose to Will to ‘cheer his Sydney stay’. Rose visited the house regularly after the introduction:

They laughed and frolicked and played the fool but nothing could have been more innocent. She tricked herself out in improvised costumes and joined with the others in acting out scenes, as Norman and Lionel and their friends had done in the kitchen garden of ‘Lisnacrieve’. Norman took scores of photographs and developed them in the kitchen, splashing around in dishes of chemicals by the light of ruby lamp and chirping with enthusiasm when a plate came out well.  

*La Revanché* could well be a product of those ‘frolics’; an extended joke where the fun was in the creation of the manuscript. It is most probable that the manuscript was produced in 1903, when Lindsay was living in Northwood with his brother Lionel after Norman’s wife Katie went to stay in Melbourne with her family to give birth to their second child, Ray. While Katie was in Melbourne Will Dyson moved to Sydney and, as the house was large, the Lindsay brothers offered him a room.

This confluence of events provides the perfect environment to produce a joke manuscript; three creative men living together with time on their hands. Norman was feeling footloose with Katie and his son Jack in Melbourne, Will had just moved to Sydney, and Lionel had just returned from Spain engaged and keen to find work. Dyson’s biography also

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386 John Hetherington, *Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian*, p 62
387 Ibid.
mentions ‘the usual crazy impromptu plays and photography sessions on the rare occasions when Lionel could be deflected from his industry’ during this period, further making it very probable that La Revanché was a ‘frolic’ for the Lindsay brothers, Will Dyson and possibly Rose Soady.

This bohemian, bachelor existence was ideally suited to the production of stories for entertainment, and the carefree attitude in a household dedicated to art seems to have prioritised artistic expression over domestic chores or even eating (Rose Lindsay notes in her autobiography Model Wife that the main food she remembers eating at the Northwood house was ‘cheese omelettes – a mixture of grated cheese and breadcrumbs fried in the pan, and Sao biscuits with honey and butter.’) Rose recollects the playacting, noting that ‘Lionel would play the reluctant virgin, Norman the wicked seducer, and Bill the rescuing hero.’ She also writes that Norman ‘did not appear to concern himself’ with the lives of others living in the house: ‘He was busy with photos and his work.’

It is interesting to note that Rose mentions a chest of drawers ‘full of papers and the photos taken at Northwood’ that was stored in King Street, Sydney, separate to the remainder of the furniture after the Lindsay brothers vacated the Northwood house for ‘diplomatic reasons.’ However, the ploy to keep it secret was unsuccessful. When Lionel, Norman and Rose went to collect the chest

...we were met with a small man with a large moustache, in a white apron and carrying an enormous hammer. And there was the chest – all skew-whiff with photos oozing out of it and looking as if a cyclone had struck it...Norman said the whole thing seemed suspicious to him, which infuriated the little man.

“Suspicious be blowed! Look at it, it's a gingerbread thing!”

389 Rose Lindsay, Model Wife: My life with Norman Lindsay, p 28
390 Rose Lindsay, Model Wife: My life with Norman Lindsay, p 30
391 Ibid.
Norman gathered up all the contents, made them into a parcel, and left the place indignant, abandoning the broken chest for good.

At once he wrote a full description of the outrage and illustrated it to send to Bill [Dyson]. He wrote ‘I found him standing with the very hammer that he did the dirty deed with, and unblinkingly calling it a gingerbread thing.’

An equally indignant reply came from Bill. ‘No doubt the whole thing was an excuse to go through the nude photos,’ he said.

Knowing the wobbly nature of those pieces of home-made furniture, I’ve no doubt that the jolting trip from Northwood to King Street was the cause.\textsuperscript{392}

It is not hard to imagine that the manuscript of \textit{La Revanché} was part of this amusing episode, but there is no evidence to support it. While Rose mentions that there were ‘papers’ in the chest, it is only photographs that Bill mentions when diagnosing the chest’s attraction for the store owner. However, this anecdote does give us an insight into the machinations to which the Lindsay brothers went to protect the art they considered might be too risqué. While the photographs in \textit{La Revanché} are not nudes, the scatological subject matter would certainly have pushed the boundaries of acceptability, and may have led to being assigned to the chest of drawers with other perceived unacceptable productions.

Relocating from Melbourne to Sydney in 1901 was pivotal in allowing Lindsay the wider audience via \textit{The Bulletin} than he had in Melbourne via the \textit{Hawklet}, and was the beginning of many of the characters Australians came to associate with him, including his anthropomorphised koalas. The urge to create, always Lindsay’s primary motivation, extended to learning how to develop photographs.

Understanding that Lindsay continued to write, even if that writing was not intended for publication, following his cathartic and symbolic bonfire of all his childhood and early adolescent writing, permits the categorisation of

\textsuperscript{392} Rose Lindsay, \textit{Model Wife: My life with Norman Lindsay}, p 31
La Revanché as ‘juvenilia’. Analysis of juvenilia, as scholarship on the work of the Bronte sisters and Jane Austen demonstrates, can lead to an understanding of the development of a writer’s particular style, as well as influences and progressions through different genres. B.C Southam writes of Austen’s juvenilia that:

They reveal Jane Austen’s response to her reading, the influence of an intimate and sympathetic audience, and, most valuably for our purpose, they record the gradual change as the young writer began to turn from burlesque entertainment to experiment in the techniques of fiction.\(^{393}\)

The existence of La Revanché further demonstrates what Lindsay always contended; that writing, for him, was a relaxing pursuit in contrast to his art, which was an obsession. The photographs pasted into the manuscript show two men clearly enjoying playing out the ridiculous scenarios described in the manuscript. Their costumes are home-made or possibly re-used from other similar projects, but match the descriptions of the characters in the manuscript quite closely\(^{394}\).

The unknown photographer was also committed to the enterprise. From the small changes in scenery and costume over the course of the manuscript, it is clear that the photographs were taken on more than one day and over more than one session per day. Due to the extended nature of the timeframe, my guess is that the photographer was Lionel Lindsay. The close proximity required during the extensive estimated period in which the manuscript was produced indicates a housemate or live-in guest. However, as previously noted, having the manuscript in his possession to be archived indicates that the photographer may well have

\(^{393}\) B.C Southam, Jane Austen’s Literary Manuscripts: A study of the novelist’s development through the surviving papers, The Athlone Press, Great Britain, 2001, p 2

\(^{394}\) Many of the costumes in the photos of La Revanche appear handmade. One of the top hats worn by Dyson appears to be made of cardboard with a decoration of drawings of penises and testicles around the brim, tying in with the manuscript’s themes. The coats, pants and shoes worn by both men appear to be their own, or possibly borrowed, but clothes that would have been worn everyday rather than costumes designed to suit a particular character or period. At one point Norman Lindsay wears a chamberpot as a hat.
been Dr John Elkington or even possibly Rose Soady, whose presence at this time has also been established. Either way, it demonstrates the extent to which Norman Lindsay and his associates would commit to a frolic even at a time when they were working and, in the case of Norman Lindsay, supporting a family. The time taken to construct the manuscript, write the story, shoot the photographic illustrations, develop the photographs and insert them into the manuscript would have taken time, certainly not less than a week.

The various costumes and the use of common household items such as an axe and an enamel chamber-pot are vital clues to dating the manuscript. Transporting these items would have been onerous to do often, so my estimation that the manuscript was produced over about a week can be extended to guess that the photo shoot must have taken place near a readily accessible house. Carrying an axe, chamberpot and costumes, as well as a camera, would have made travel difficult. Doing without an axe for firewood and a chamberpot for any length of time would also have been uncomfortable. Accordingly, the photo shoot would probably have taken place close to one of the participant’s houses.

The suburb of Northwood lies on the Lane Cove River, on the North Shore of Sydney. A study of maps of the area in conjunction with the photographs leads to the conclusion that the photo shoot was either on the Wallace Street side of Greenwich Point facing towards Onions Point reserve, or in Northwood facing Onions Point. Greenwich Wharf, while possible geographically, has less parkland available, and the photo site is very close to water in either a grassed or fenced area.

The use of the chamberpot is significant; the manuscript constantly references ‘la urinal’ in various ways. It can be ‘crouched behind’, ‘Linzi’ falls fainting into it, it can be carried, a head can be bowed over it, it can be swooned onto, sobbed into and its contents can be poured over the swooned. Just after this event the Compt ‘dashed hot salt urine from his hair’, definitely linking the traditional use for the chamberpot with the less traditional uses found in the manuscript.
Creswick tableau c. 1900, reproduced from Joanna Mendelssohn’s *Letters and Liars*, featuring l-r Ruby, Norman, Pearl, Percy (partly hidden), Reg, Bill Dyson, Mary in foreground.
Reading *La Revanché*

*La Revanché* is clearly not intended for publication; it is handwritten and unrevised, and the photographs pasted into it indicate that it was functionally complete. This manuscript is an extended joke, making use of in-jokes, name-plays, and the modern equivalent of the ‘fart joke’ or toilet humour (literally and symbolically signified by the chamberpot). The writer of this manuscript was not trying to entertain anyone who was not ‘in’ on the jokes. This was an entertainment piece insofar as the entertainment was in its very production and illustration.

A parody of the melodramatic, sentimental writing of English novelist Marie Corelli, *La Revanché* continued the well-established tradition of parody in Australian arts and letters that begins, according to Elizabeth Webby, soon after the founding of colonial New South Wales with the ‘satirical “pipe”, rolled up sheets of libellous verses attacking government officials that were dropped in public places’:

> This tradition soon transferred itself to newspapers once a free press was established...Even when illustrations became more widespread in the second half of the nineteenth century, satirical magazines such as *Melbourne Punch* still often published a poem as well as a cartoon on a particular topic.396

Webby notes in the conclusion of her article that ‘no-one ever got rich writing parodies’, and this comment on the value of parody may provide a clue as to why *La Revanché* remained an entertainment rather than directed to the marketplace.

In their introduction to *Serious Frolic*, editors Fran De Groen and Peter Kirkpatrick state that ‘humour that accompanied the emergence in the 1890s of a self-conscious “bush-bred” nationalist literary tradition associated with the *Bulletin* magazine’ was linked to ‘attempts to construct a unified national type of “Aussie” humour based on the anti-authoritarian

396 Elizabeth Webbe, ‘To write or not to write’: Some Australian literary parodies in eds De Groen, Fran and Kirkpatrick, Peter, *Serious Frolic: Essays on Australian Humour*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2009, p 144
larrkin and his later ocker incarnation.' While La Revanché, as a parody of a European writer, seems to fall outside this definition, the subject-matter brings it back into line with the establishment of an Australian ‘larrkin’ humour tradition.

La Revanché is a tale of revenge, betrayal and love played out between two men, one of whom, Alonzo Bong Pracy de Linzi, (a wordplay on the name Lindsay) could be described as a melodramatic larrkin. The other, Le Compt de Grange Operâ, is a melancholic aristocrat who, at the end of the piece, sails off into the sunset with much fanfare and many tears. It is in the acts of revenge, interspersed with acts of stepping in euphemistically labelled faeces, that the larrkin element is brought into play. Alonzo avenges his honour against an unknown insult at the expense of the poor ‘petite postman,’ who is ambushed on his rounds:

He sang as he came his way, in a voice of such exquisite modulanté allegro so much the admire de lâ bong ton of the Gay City, with such sweetness mat(?) melt(?); noblesse oblige, I felt that ére I had perforce clutched my aggots (?) with an icey (sic) hand that had indeed swooned with the voluptuous poison of his note – “So”, I muttered as I crouched behind la urinal (?) watching with fiendish enragemong (enragement?) his approach.

“You little know that I – I Alonzo_Bong_Pracy de Linzi have waited all these years pour la grong (grand?) passion cursa dam la bloody Jesus Christ” And I laughed bitterly at my own fancy, as I gripped tighter the Swedish hunting axe I had almost unconsciously snatched from m u u g (mon?)(smudged) peres baronial hatstand on passing.

“Saptristi(3 rather than S?)” I muttered as I immouecantly (?) dropped the iron weapon on my aggots, eliciting an anguished scream from the furious creatures, as though they too, craved for vengeance. “Toujours Possible he will stop.” But no, - he passed

397 Fran de Groen and Peter Kirkpatrick (eds), Serious Frolic: Essays on Australian Humour, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 2009, p xviii
swinging, and it was as though an angel’s wing had swept my hair, leaving feathers in it. “So” I hissed, stepping swiftly out of a smouldering dollop of wet wax dropped by some heedless garçon in childish glee. “I am foiled again, Mon God – ha ha foiled, trodden on, mocked, scorned, and gobbed at – I – I Alonzo Bong Pray (could be Percy, most iterations look like Pray) de Linzi – the once famous abandon chasseur de la bongvivre – But think not, Wilfred de Bagnio and thou percé la Trina that the hand of a Bong Pray will falter before the puny scum of a morale and efete civilissimong” And as I spoke one panther like spring and I had gripped his aggots with (one word crossed out and smudged) a grip of iron, while it was but the work of a moment to whirl la glittering blade in the air and bury it in his crumpet hole to the hilt. “And this” I hissed as I hastily wiped stray bovel (blood?) from the weapon with his bag du missalt “is Ra denoomong (?) (demonstration?) of a Bong Pray’s rage. Thus has a blasé and bong tong civitisomong (?) caused la graney passion de la Bong Pray’s avec une act of fiendish crime – curse you” I shrieked as I fell fainting into la urinal. “Curse you, cursed you, La Bong Pray est Revanché”

As can be seen from the text, all emotions are linked to the ‘aggots’, a euphemism for balls or testicles. The aggots are given agency for humorous purpose when Linzi casually drops his ‘Swedish hunting axe’ on them, which ‘elicit[s] an anguished scream from the furious creatures.’ He also grabs the postman’s aggots ‘in a grip of iron’ before ‘bury[ing] it [the axe] into his crumpet hole to the hilt.’ Crumpet hole is a euphemism for

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398 MLMSS 6025 1 (1), JSC Elkington, Papers re Norman Lindsay, 1880-1955, Folder 3, La Revanche, or Les Traditions vive L’irror Gate, p 2-6
399 Frequent references are made to a character’s ‘aggots’; while this word seems to have little meaning, ‘agate’ is a word for a ‘variegated chalcedony showing curved, coloured bands or other markings’, or a playing marble made of chalcedony or glass. Once this interpretation is made, the meaning of ‘aggots’ as ‘marbles’, or ‘balls’ clarifies the humorous intent of the manuscript. When the character M. Le Compt de la Grong Opera ‘flung himself carelessly into La Portere, rising swiftly with a muttered curse, for he had not noticed that his aggots were already reposing there’, the comic intent is apparent. This continues in the next paragraph when the narrator, Alonzo Bong Percy de Linzi, ‘striding swiftly to his side I clutched him tightly by la ballas’. This actually caused me to laugh aloud; the linking of ‘aggots’ as a detachable feature to be placed in chairs and accidentally sat on, and then further described as ‘ballas’ to be clutched tightly to cause pain for dramatic effect is such an effective humorous technique.
vagina, although whether it refers to anus in *La Revanché* due to its masculine pronoun is unclear. Linzi steps out of, but not into, ‘a smouldering dollop of wet wax dropped by some heedless garcon in childish glee’ and falls ‘fainting into la urinal’.

From the other subject matter and context, it is probable that ‘wet wax’ means faeces and, again, the appearance of the urinal, literalises the potty humour. Indeed, *La Revanché*’s pastiche of melodramatic revenge is set in Europe and filled with toilets and piles of shit. The ‘childish glee’ of the poo dropper can be aligned with the glee that Lindsay and his collaborators took in imaginatively *shitting all over Europe and its texts*. It is precisely this glee and subversion that characterises an emergent Australian larrakinism. The jokes are at the expense of European languages, practices, and perceived pretensions.

There are connections between the development of a very masculine ‘larrkin’ humour through such characters as Ginger Meggs and The Sentimental Bloke and *La Revanché*, although the latter is more risqué and cheekier. There is a stronger connection between the establishment of this humour at the *Bulletin* and *La Revanché*, a connection that is strengthened by Norman Lindsay’s connection to the *Bulletin* when *La Revanché* was produced. Placing the manuscript within a developing continuum of Australian humour allows the manuscript to rise above its ephemeral status as unpublished writing and become a vital link between Lindsay’s adolescent writing and his published humorous writing, including *A Curate in Bohemia*, *The Cautious Amorist*, *Age of Consent* and *The Cousin from Fiji*.

The unstructured nature of *La Revanché*, its risqué scatological subject matter and unedited production place it in the realms of juvenilia. As juvenilia it represents a literary progression from the pure juvenilia Lindsay produced in his younger years at Creswick to his editorship of the *Boomerang*, which was produced for publication, to his future published writings. While we know of the existence of his adolescent writings none are existent, his bonfire of them indicating the degree to which Lindsay was intent on shaping and controlling his output from an early age.
Just as it was a lampooning of European culture, La Revanché can be seen as a lampoon of female authorship and success. Marie Corelli was a highly popular and commercially successful woman writer both in England and Australia who was seen to be a ‘favourite of the common multitude’.

Brian Masters notes that:

> While Queen Victoria was alive, Miss Corelli was the second-most famous English-woman in the world; afterwards, there was no one to approach her.\textsuperscript{400}

Masters notes of her works’ circulation:

> At her death in 1924, The Sorrows of Satan was in its sixtieth edition, Barabbas in its fifty-fourth, and Thelma in its fifty-sixth. They were translated into every European language, and Barabbas had even been issued in Hindustani and Gujarati.\textsuperscript{401}

Corelli’s florid and overblown style makes it an easy target for satire and dismissal. Canadian-born British scientist and novelist Grant Allen wrote in The Spectator that she was ‘a woman of deplorable talent who imagined that she was a genius, and was accepted as a genius by a public to whose commonplace sentimentalities and prejudices she gave a glamorous setting’.\textsuperscript{402} Contemporary writer and critic James Agate described her writing as blending ‘the imagination of a Poe with the style of a Ouida and the mentality of a nursemaid.’\textsuperscript{403} This vicious criticism finds echo in Lindsay’s parody of her writing, setting his Australian sense of the ridiculous against her popularised, European melodrama.

The preface of La Revanché, written in Corelli’s florid style, makes its satirical intent clear to those familiar with Corelli’s writing.

> It has been said of a certain demoiselle de literature, I need mention no names when I say that a very high personage in the upper ton has described her as the Bellissimo Marvalloso, and by

\textsuperscript{400} Brian Masters, \textit{Now Barabas was a Rotter: The Extraordinary Life of Marie Corelli}, Hamish Hamilton Ltd, London, 1978, p 6

\textsuperscript{401} Brian Masters, \textit{Now Barabas was a Rotter: The Extraordinary Life of Marie Corelli}, p 8-9


\textsuperscript{403} William Stuart Scott, \textit{Marie Corelli: the story of a friendship}, p 263
others as la Contbelle amoroso Lacromoso — that she is not tres la grand authoress de la monde. So be it, doubtless les maladictiones of les petites monsiours de la pen are a great grief to her. O yes, but let me remind them when next may lift their vile vagnoso dull (?) putrico voices against one whose purity is les subject of dans la upper circles of the world of one perhaps the greatest politician of the today — Wunderschon Herr Jesus kom und onson gast Taryournes il preneig tres borg — I have done - MC

Corelli’s love of adverbs, in particular, is exploited to hilarious effect in La Revanché. Brian Masters lists some examples of her adverb use, including

...in Vendetta (1886) we have a hero who answers ‘huskily’, and ‘watches her narrowly’. She ‘laughed musically’ and he ‘glanced at her quietly’. In Ardath (1889) we have a character who ‘murmured indolently with a touch of cold amusement in her accents’ (oh yes, everyone has ‘accents’, sometimes they are ‘low thrilling accents’), while in The Murder of Delicia there is a heroine who ‘fainted quietly’.404

La Revanché sees the protagonist, Alonzo Bong Pracy de Linzi say ‘and I laughed bitterly at my own fancy’, a flowery line designed to echo Marie Corelli’s adverb use. The first paragraph of Le Revanché has the dramatic tone of the opening paragraph of Ardath

It was a beautiful afternoon that June so many years ago and the Plaza Bumclutchi was as though the glorie of Gods on sunlight had come to speed la petite postman as he sped swiftly up the road swinging his bag de littre with a penchong (?) purely Parisienne.

Ardath begins:

Deep in the heart of the Caucasus mountains a wild storm was gathering. Drear shadows drooped and thickened above the Pass

404 Brian Masters, Now Barabas was a Rotter: The Extraordinary Life of Marie Corelli, p 14
of Dariel, - that terrific gorge which like a mere thread seems to hang between the toppling frost-bound heights above and the black abysmal depths below, - clouds, fringed ominously with lurid green and white, drifted heavily yet swiftly across the jagged peaks where, looming largely out of the mist, the snow-capped crest of Mount Kazbek rose coldly white against the darkness of the threatening sky.405

Brian Masters also notes Corelli’s use, or misuse, of French and Italian words, writing that she was ‘untroubled by insufficient knowledge of either’.406 La Revanché uses correct French gendering of nouns (such as in ‘la petite’) but applies it to the opposite gendered subject (‘la petite postman’) in order to foreground its ridiculousness. It also incorrectly uses phonetically spelt French (‘penchong’ for ‘penchant’, for example). The ‘Plaza Bumclutchi’, while the possible name of an urban Italian square, can also be translated as a ‘place to grab bottoms’. Moreover, La Revanché attaches Marie Corelli’s ‘compulsive effusiveness, overloaded with adjectives and adverbs, with the simplest event heralded by trumpets and drums’407 onto the scatological. Another example from La Revanché features inaccurate and phonetic French

“Nong, mongsour” I said with an affectation of lightness as I flung myself with assumed gaiety into the heavy Poetriere du Putplants that framed the Embrasure de la roomá.

Lindsay’s biographer John Hetherington suggests that in his reading Lindsay was ‘devoid of intellectual or social snobbery.’ He cites Lindsay’s spirited defence of True Detective as an example:

‘Going highbrow, I see, Norman!’ one remarked sarcastically, as he contemptuously flicked through the pages of True Detective.

‘You talk like a bloody fool,’ snapped Norman. ‘You’ve never read the magazine so you’re not qualified to pass an opinion. As a

405 Marie Corelli, Ardath: The Story of the Dead Self, Methuen, 1929, p 3
406 Brian Masters, Now Barabas was a Rotter: The Extraordinary Life of Marie Corelli, p 11
407 Brian Masters, Now Barabas was a Rotter: The Extraordinary Life of Marie Corelli, p 13
matter of fact every story is a valuable study of criminal psychology, and if you don’t find the subject interesting I’m sorry for you.’

Lindsay would read ‘Dorothy Sayers, Philip MacDonald, H.C. Bailey, G.K. Chesterton, (for his Father Brown stories, not for his novels which Norman thought pretentious rubbish). In attacking Corelli’s novels, Lindsay reveals a sexist anxiety over the capacity of women to flood the literary marketplace and was at pains to distinguish Corelli’s energies from the vitalist philosophies around creativity. Another reason La Revanché was not intended for publication is its overtly libellous attack on Corelli.

While La Revanché can be described as ‘ephemeral’ in the archival sense, it is important in understanding the development of Norman Lindsay’s humorous writing. The manuscript, held in his brother-in-law’s archival fonds, provides a missing link between Lindsay’s early destroyed juvenilia and his later published writing. It also gives insights into Lindsay’s views on women’s writing, for whereas he wilfully misreads My Brilliant Career, he uses Corelli’s work as the butt of his jokes (or perhaps, it becomes a symbolic chamberpot for him to piss in). Due to its circulation within only his closest, most intimate circle, it is far less constrained than his attacks on women writers and artists like Zora Cross and Thea Proctor. La Revanché is both a shining example of Lindsay’s Vitalism but also a vehicle through which we see Lindsay regulating its national and cultural limit-points (it is not coincidental that Franklin, as an Australian writer, is commended for her ‘lively writing,’ whereas Corelli, the populist import, is cut down). Highly performative, La Revanché is a mirror of Lindsay’s views on gender and Europe. Yet it is also an over-the-top example of the smoke and mirrors which surround literary production, what ‘lives’ literature is allowed to have and who polices them.

408 John Hetherington, Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian, p 210
409 Ibid.
Chapter 7.

Australian Masculinity Take Two: Norman Lindsay and D.H. Lawrence

While this thesis has been predominantly concerned with Lindsay’s writing, masculinity and mythopoeia in an Australian context, a comparison with his British contemporary, D.H. Lawrence, allows for a transnational perspective. Lindsay’s exploration of masculinity was deliberately parochial, linked to his belief in an Australian Renaissance that would be developed partly in contrast to Europe’s descent into modernism and partly in response to Federation and the First World War. Besides Creative Effort (1920) and his fiction, Lindsay’s engagement with vitalism and exploration of masculine creative freedom would find further expression through Vision: A Literary Quarterly, which began publication the year after Lawrence’s Australian sojourn. Parallels can be drawn between the two writers through their conscious efforts to reframe masculinity through a Vitalist framework and in the Australian context.

Lindsay’s self-positioning as an artist outside the bounds of society, and thus able to accurately critique society, finds an echo in Lawrence’s Richard Lovat Somers, who ‘clearly plays the part of the transgressive artist in this novel [Kangaroo] and envisions himself as the enemy of convention’. His failure to set himself outside of, and untouched by, convention, instead allows the novel to ‘ponder…what happens when an artist leaves his own culture and is paralysed by gender melancholy and despair.’

Lawrence’s Kangaroo and Lindsay’s A Curate in Bohemia use starkly different literary tools to explore anxieties around masculinity. In Kangaroo, Lawrence focuses on Richard Lovat Somers’ interior discourse, considering the internal conflict between conscious and subconscious

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masculinity in conjunction with other ideological constructs such as class. This intellectual discourse is posited as integral to Somers’ human interactions and sense of self. Somers is a character of deep reflection and self-reflection; his internal discourse is constantly questioning and responding to both inter-personal engagement and his lived environment with an unrelenting seriousness.

By contrast, Lindsay utilises social satire in *A Curate in Bohemia* to explore urban bohemia, a farcical overlay partially masking the serious critical presentation of an idealised masculinity. This obfuscation is a deliberate literary sleight of hand; Lindsay’s use of caricature that is most effective in drawing attention from the significance of the attempted rejuvenation of Australian masculinity while ensuring the effective communication of this project. By focussing on the exteriority of urban bohemian homosocial experience Lindsay elevates the joy found outside societally sanctioned domestic environments to a creed, and masculinity founded on a vitally lived artistic experience is elevated concurrently.

During Lawrence’s brief visit to Australia in 1922, the country that he saw and the people he met around Sydney and the southern New South Wales town of Thirroul inspired him to write *Kangaroo*, the novel which explores ideas of colonial Australian masculinity as well as the displaced masculinity of its main character Richard Lovat Somers. Somers finds Australia an attraction and a challenge to his own masculinity. That *Kangaroo* is based to a large degree on Lawrence and his wife Frieda’s experiences in Australia is generally understood; in fact, much effort has been expended mapping Lawrence’s travels in Australia to his writing of *Kangaroo*.411

Both Lindsay and Lawrence express a variant version of Australian life to the accepted bush tradition of Lawson, Joseph Furphy and Paterson. Much of *Kangaroo* is embedded in the urban fringe of Sydney or Mullumbimby. Lindsay, writing of the despairing smallness of small-town life, also rejected the tradition of the bush as an ‘Australian’ setting. Both

Lindsay’s novel *Redheap* and *Kangaroo* feature the suburban life of unromantic houses on adjacent small blocks, rather than the romantic isolation and sturdy independence of the bush. In *A Curate in Bohemia* the bush is not merely dismissed but actively mocked through Cripps’ drunken train journey. During this journey, the bush is represented as dangerous and unsophisticated, in contrast to inner city urbanity and artistic reassurance.

From his first novel *A Curate in Bohemia* in 1913, Lindsay had actively resisted the Australian bush as a setting, seeking to establish instead an urban *mise-en-scene*. Lawrence actively engages with the bush but it is in his attitudes towards the urban environment that his ideas coincide with Lindsay. Lindsay and Lawrence approach their subjective characterisations with deep-seated ambivalence around masculinity.

While Lawrence wrote to be published, Lindsay had no expectation of publication when writing *A Curate in Bohemia*. While Lindsay utilises his own milieu, Lawrence depicts a milieu he observes as an outsider. The similar period of production and free availability of both novels in Australia, brings the two novels together in a valuable critical relationship more readily than any of Lindsay’s other novels, including *Redheap*, which was published in 1930 but banned in Australia until 1958.412 Addressing Lawrence and Lindsay concurrently is a transnational experiment that Lawrence may have found intriguing but that Lindsay would almost certainly dismiss; his own embedded Australian perspective and rejection of global artistic movements and interference in Australian art would not have valued the comparison.

Lawrence was motivated by a utopian vision that took him from England to Europe, Australia, India, and eventually to the United States, eventually returning to Europe as his tubercular illness became terminal. Lindsay’s transnationalism is less well known, as it lies hidden beneath a strident vision of Australia as the site of a global artistic renaissance. Dismissive of almost all other contemporary global art movements, his travels to

412 Nicole Moore, *The Censor’s Library*, p 122
England, Europe and America had more ‘push’ than ‘pull’ factors. He left Australia in 1910 to escape a disintegrating marriage and to cement his next burgeoning relationship. In 1930, removal from Australia would become attractive once more due to concerns he would be arrested for obscenity following the publication of *Redheap*.

Lawrence found inspiration in difference, while Lindsay found travel either inconvenient or, occasionally, useful for his illustration of Roman classics. He wrote of his 1910 ocean voyage to England ‘Italy demonstrated to me that I am no traveller’\(^{413}\), and while he observed that a visit to Pompeii provided ‘all that was essential in recording a Roman background, and the decision to illustrate Petronius was made on the spot’\(^{414}\), he otherwise did not engage with Italian culture nor show any interest in the history of the sites he visited. In fact, the only sites he saw were ones that ‘happened to be in the way’; his only interest in the past was as an impetus or model for future artworks. His publishing success in America with *Redheap*, published as *Every Mother’s Son*, *Pan in the Parlour* and *A Cautious Amorist*, as well as his involvement in the Fanfrolico Press and the publication of *Redheap*, *Age of Consent*, *Madam Life’s Lovers* and *Miracles by Arrangement* in London, however, brings him reluctantly into the transnational arena.

While Lindsay and Lawrence’s expressions of vitalism differ greatly, both viewed life and creativity as of foremost concern and interrelated. Lawrence voices his views in *Kangaroo* through Somers:

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\text{...I want if possible to send out a new shoot in the life of mankind – the effort man makes forever, to grow into new forms.}^{415}
\]

In *A Curate in Bohemia*, Lindsay pre-empts Lawrence in a less philosophically literate manner by placing curate James Bowles’ (Spuds) bohemian experiences squarely in the realm of masculine vitalist philosophies.

\(^{413}\) Norman Lindsay, *My Mask: For what little I know of the man behind it*, p 204

\(^{414}\) Ibid.

It was a good thing to have seen life, necessary, in fact, to one whose business was to morally dilate upon its sinfulness. Well, he could now honestly say that he had seen life. He had seen it through the bottom of a tumbler, vastly magnified and prismatically coloured. He had seen it in the company of men to whom seeing life was a mere everyday affair, and his efforts as an amateur of life he could not but regard with secret approval.416

‘Life’, a vital life freely lived and expressed, is what Lindsay shows both his repressed religious character Spuds, as well as the reader. The curate has spent much of his life being rebellious enough to ‘wear a camellia in his buttonhole’ as a sexually engaged dandy, drinking illicit cooking sherry in the kitchen, and, when found out, swearing off drink for good and repressing sexual interest. His entry into religious orders is portrayed as ‘the line of least resistance’ and his moral standing is part of ‘a natural facility in following where others led’417. Cripps, Limpet and friends are posited as initiates into ‘Life’, the highest elevation possible, and their ability to connect with a vitalism previously unknown to Bowles defines their masculinity as well as their experience as exceptional.

In both *Creative Effort* and the foreword to the inaugural issue of the periodical *Vision*, echoes and templates can be found for the vitalist ‘effort’ needed to ‘grow into new forms’.

If there is a belief stated here, it is offered to the few – to those who address themselves to the highest achievement – to the creative effort. For this aristocratic ideal makes no claim to dominate other souls. Its effort is dominion only over self. It vindicates the individual achievement; the creative effort of the One that may embrace in its effort the higher effort of mankind.418

And in *Vision* we find:

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416 Norman Lindsay, *A Curate in Bohemia*, p 83-84
417 Norman Lindsay, *A Curate in Bohemia*, p 81
418 Norman Lindsay, *Creative Effort: An Essay in Affirmation*, p 5
Considering the depths of devitalisation the world touched in the War – for hatred is a febrile thing, the expression of spiritual inertia, not of strength – considering that now for the first time in history Primitivism in the Arts has been expressed by a deliberate intellectual choice, it is clear that unless consciousness soon takes an upward turn, vitality will sink too low ever to recover.\textsuperscript{419}

John Hawke writes in \textit{Australian Literature and the Symbolist Movement} that ‘1923 was a watershed year in the evolution of Lindsayan Vitalism’, as the publication of \textit{Vision} allowed Norman and Jack to fully expound Norman’s vitalist views and to ‘force the policy’ of their vitalist ethos\textsuperscript{420}. He highlights Norman’s article in this issue ‘The Sex Synonym in Art’ as ‘offer[ing] a further definition of the vitalist creed…whereby ‘vitality in a work of art becomes a communicable element in mind, and so fulfils its function of stimulating vitality in life’\textsuperscript{421}. While the likelihood of DH Lawrence reading \textit{Vision} is slim, Lawrence and Lindsay were working in the same timeframe.

Both Lindsay and Lawrence are concerned with the ‘effort' made to ‘embrace…the higher effort of mankind’ into ‘new forms’, and the vital spark necessary to extend the highest ideals into unexplored areas waiting for ‘the few'. If Lindsay is writing to ‘the few' from an acknowledged position of higher privilege, and Lawrence, as Aldous Huxley said in a 1961 BBC interview, ‘sees more than a human being ought to see’\textsuperscript{422}, we have two men who both considered themselves, and are considered by others, to be trying to push humanity towards a higher understanding.

The creative lives of both Lindsay and Lawrence functioned effectively as part of larger bohemian social groups. Lawrence’s Vitalist-oriented bohemia was expressed socially and ideologically, through tumultuous friendships with Katherine Mansfield and John Middleton Murry, among

\textsuperscript{419} \textit{Vision: A Literary Quarterly}, The Vision Press, Sydney, 1923, Foreword  
\textsuperscript{420} John Hawke, \textit{Australian Literature and the Symbolist Movement}, p 69  
\textsuperscript{421} John Hawke, \textit{Australian Literature and the Symbolist Movement}. P 70  
\textsuperscript{422} Dolores LaChapelle, \textit{DH Lawrence: Future Primitive}, University of North Texas Press, Denton, 1996, p xi
others. as well as through his writing. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, Lindsay's Vitalist bohemianism was linked to an artist's inner urban lifestyle. Lindsay and Lawrence shared a philosophic disregard for societal structures, formed strong, lasting relationships outside marriage, and considered sex as needing to be free from moral limitations. Their art, both written and visual, expressed their outlook.

Both novelists were seen in their own countries as sexually explicit writers who flouted the restrictions on sex in novels; both Lawrence's *The Rainbow* and Lindsay's *Redheap* were censored. It is also this vitalism in their philosophies that ties them together; they both wished to Live, not merely Exist. While Lawrence took a modernist approach to his written vitalism and Lindsay's found expression in realism, the vitalist approach underpins both novels. “How does one Live as a man in Australia?” seems to both a serious and absorbing dilemma, deserving of constant analysis and reaching towards a recast understanding.

Lawrence’s exploration of masculinity is at once personal and abstract. In writing *Kangaroo*, he oscillates between exploring what it means to be masculine for Australians and a more reflective masculinity through his character Somers. Of Australians, he would state: ‘[T]hey’re awfully nice, but they’ve got no inside to them…They’re marvellous and manly and independent and all that, outside. But inside, they are not. When they’re alone, they don’t exist,’ Alternatively, he writes that Somers could 'imagine himself a unique male. He *wanted* to be male and unique, like a freak of a phoenix.' While Lawrence places Australian masculinity as overly externalised and therefore unsupportable, he also posits Somers' internalised and repressed masculinity as unsupportable. This creates a conundrum that he spends the novel attempting to unravel.

Robert Darroch notes that Lawrence planned to write a 'romance' novel while in Australia, but in fact ‘the work he did undertake while in Sydney

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424 DH Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, p 146
425 DH Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, p 195
and Thirroul was some form of fictionalised diary’. Both the ideas expressed in *Kangaroo* and its format as ‘fictionalised diary’ align it with Lindsay’s *Redheap*, a novel also concerned with the expression of masculinity and including a loose diary format (it was based partially, and controversially at the time, on his brother Lionel’s youthful diaries).

**Constellations**

Norman Lindsay and DH Lawrence very likely did not meet. While it is impossible to say this with absolute certainty, Lawrence’s stay in Australia was brief, and during a period when Lindsay was ensconced in Springwood preparing, among other things, for the publication of *Vision*. Whether Lawrence was aware of Lindsay as an artist and cartoonist for the *Bulletin* is unknown, as none of Lindsay’s cartoons appeared in the *Bulletin* while Lawrence was in Australia. However, the periodical is mentioned in some depth in *Kangaroo*, and Lawrence is said to have read the paper avidly (in his introduction to *Study of Thomas Hardy and Other Essays*, Bruce Steele notes that Lawrence was a ‘keen’ reader of the *Bulletin*). The chapter ‘Bits’ dissects an edition of the periodical in depth, with Somers finding some entertainment in its pages.

> And he looked at the big pink spread of his Sydney *Bulletin* viciously. The *Bulletin* was the only periodical in the world that really amused him…But the ‘Bully’, even if it was made up all of bits, and had neither head or tail nor feet nor wings, was still a lively creature.

Most of the major cartoons printed in the *Bulletin* in 1922 were by Dennis Connelly or Percy Leason, although Norman’s brother Percy published two cartoons in June and July that year. Lawrence writes in *Kangaroo* of

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426 Robert Darroch, *Looking over Lawrence’s Shoulder: Lawrence in Australia and the Creation of Kangaroo*, in *DH Lawrence Review*, 38:1, 2013, p 86
428 DH Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, p 297
the Bulletin’s illustrations that ‘Sometimes the drawings were good, and sometimes they weren’t’.429

Norman Lindsay’s son Jack, who moved in similar literary circles with Lawrence in England, wrote that they would have disagreed430. Indeed, while both men saw free sexual expression as a necessary expression of a vital life, they each approached it from a very different perspective. According to Jack, his father Norman placed Lawrence on an ‘index of art villains’ due to his modernist approach to literature. Jack writes that he ‘just missed’ meeting DH Lawrence in the Sydney Dymocks bookshop, and refused an offer to arrange a meeting.

For D.H.L was one of the writers on N.L [Norman Lindsay]’s index of art villains…Later I was sorry I did not snatch at Frank’s offer. A confrontation of D.H.L and N.L, if it could have been managed, would have been a remarkable event. For N.L, faced with a living person, was always infinitely more supple and responsive than his absolutes on paper would suggest. And in much the same way D.H.L, who would have felt an ineffable scorn for N.L’s paper-ideas, would have found much of himself in the discoursing man, or at least something against which to explode brilliantly.431

Jack Lindsay and DH Lawrence would, however, correspond over Fanfrolico Press’s interest in publishing a book of Lawrence’s paintings towards the end of 1929. Addressing Jack directly as ‘Mr Lindsay’, DH writes that he thinks ‘the idea is fun, if you’d really care to do it’ and that he ‘would write a little introductory essay on painting, modern painting if you wished.’432

Further connections between the two creatives also exist; Percy Reginald (known as PR, and Inky) Stephensen was a friend of Jack’s and started the Fanfrolico Press with him in London using many of Norman’s illustrations. Stephensen was also a close friend of DH Lawrence, and

429 DH Lawrence, Kangaroo, p 299
430 Jack Lindsay, Life Rarely Tells, Penguin Books Australia Ltd, Ringwood, 1982, p 322
431 Ibid.
432 Jack Lindsay, Life Rarely Tells, p xiv
was involved in the original publication of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* and in publishing a book on Lawrence’s paintings. This connection, while tenuous and ephemeral, is still valuable in illustrating that they did move in intersecting, if not entirely similar, literary and transnational circles. That the link is Norman’s son adds further weight to the association, as for a decade Jack promulgated his father’s vitalist and anti-modern values through his journalism and other writing.

Lindsay’s attitude towards Europe is found in *Rooms and Houses*, where a male artist, recently returned from Europe, denounces its approach towards art:

> Paris is a stage-managed fake, living on a shop-worn tradition that it’s the world centre of culture. The artists are all bum actors. Damn it, they *pose* as artists. You can’t go into a café without seeing some goat putting on an act with a tart, ostentatiously mugging her or slapping her face and then looking around for applause. Every lousy little group of intellectuals thinks that it is making literary history, and there’s a new movement every ten minutes. Great masters are two a penny. There’s something rotten in Europe, anyway, you can smell it in the air. I couldn’t place what it was, but it’s got something to do with having overplayed its capacity for sensation. Too much tradition. They’ve used up a response to it. That’s why any new movement, however looney, sets the mob off following it. They think it’s evidence of vitality but it’s really the evidence of nervous exhaustion. They have to have a mental hyperdermic [sic] to get any kick out of life.433

Lindsay would likely have included Lawrence as one of the ‘lousy little intellectuals’ who thought they were ‘making literary history’. As he wrote of modernism in *Art in Australia* in 1916:

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433 Norman Lindsay, *Rooms and Houses*, Ure Smith Pty Ltd, North Sydney, 1968, p 35
The modern novel is as shapeless as the modern picture. It sprawls from page to page with the gabble of a man too tired to articulate clearly, or to choose his words with care.\textsuperscript{434}

As both *Kangaroo* and *A Curate in Bohemia* intimately explore notions of masculinity and how masculinity is performed in Australian culture, a meaningful evaluation of the relationship between the dialogues engaged in by both writers with ideals and constructions of masculinity must further inform our understanding of Lindsay’s masculinity project.

In the execution and the complexity of expression Lawrence’s writing is much more skilful and affecting than Lindsay’s, however Lindsay possessed many traits that Lawrence struggled to achieve, humour being the most significant.

Lawrence writes feminine protagonists and characters with a subtler understanding of their subjectivity, and a clear wish to identify the conflict inherent between the genders in close relationships. Lawrence also struggled with Australian masculinity in his novel *Kangaroo*, written about his time in Australia in 1922. As a ‘thinly described autobiography which draws attention to the fact that it is thinly disguised autobiography’\textsuperscript{435}, protagonist Somers’ reactions to the colonised class-less-ness of Australia is directly linked to a performance of masculinity. Kochis notes:

One of the first conversations that Somers has with Harriet when they arrive in Australia is about national and masculine authority: ‘in a free country, it’s the man who makes you pay who is free – free to charge you what he likes, and you’re forced to pay it. That’s what freedom amounts to. They’re free to charge, and you are forced to pay.’\textsuperscript{436}

\textsuperscript{434} Norman Lindsay, ‘Modern Malady’ originally published in *Art in Australia*, No. 1, 1916, reproduced in Wingrove, Keith, ed. *Norman Lindsay on Art, Life and Literature*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1990, p 76


In a constant subliminal power-play between himself as coloniser, British, and class-established, Somers ‘carefully preserved the distance between himself and the Australians.’ In Kangaroo the colonised are feminised, or posited as damaged or displaying ‘lack’, even while their ‘freedom’ would generally be considered to place them within the framework of hegemonic masculinity.

If the truly masculine are ‘free to charge’, and the feminine are ‘forced to pay’, then Somers is likewise ‘free’ to emasculate and the Australians are ‘forced’ to be emasculated.\(^{437}\)

In Sons and Lovers Lawrence writes the internal frustrated dialogue of Mrs Morel with a subjectivity embedded in the feminine, which Lindsay, in both The Cousin from Fiji and Dust or Polish? could not.

Mrs Morel was alone, but she was used to it. Her son and her little girl slept upstairs; so, it seemed, her home was there behind her, fixed and stable. But she felt wretched with the coming child. The world seemed a dreary place, where nothing else would happen for her – at least until William grew up. But for herself, nothing but this dreary endurance – till the children grew up. And the children! She could not afford to have this third. She did not want it. The father was serving beer in a public-house, swilling himself drunk. She despised him, and was tied to him. This coming child was too much for her. If it were not for William and Annie, she was sick of it, the struggle with poverty and ugliness and meanness.\(^{438}\)

What becomes apparent when reading The Cousin from Fiji is that Lindsay is attempting to write from a position of femininity while maintaining his masculinity; while he is unaware of his overarching masculine gaze, his appropriation of the feminine oscillates between the masculine and feminine voices. Lawrence, when writing Mrs Morel, writes no overlay of masculine perspective and rather than appropriating femininity to do masculinity’s work, allows femininity to exist as itself and

\(^{437}\) Ibid.

\(^{438}\) David Herbert Lawrence, Sons and Lovers, Penguin Books Ltd, Middlesex, 1975, p 12
empowers Mrs Morel’s feminine perspective. ‘She despised him, and was tied to him,’ gives Mrs Morel’s internal subjectivity more agency to feel the complexities of maternity, marriage and financial dependence as well as quietly raising herself above her ‘swilling’ husband in her own estimation than Lindsay allows any of his female protagonists.

**Kangaroo and A Curate in Bohemia**

Defining and interrogating masculinity is at the forefront of *Kangaroo*. Lawrence views the production of masculinity in a colony as different from its Empire centre because of the different functions masculinity is asked to perform. The opening of *Kangaroo* described ‘workmen…taxi-drivers, a group of builders who were putting a new inside into one of the big houses opposite, and then two men in blue overalls, some sort of mechanics’ who ‘…they had that air of owning the city which belongs to any good Australian’.439 The embedded ownership of the urban landscape is configured as masculine within the first sentences of the novel, prefacing the debates the novel develops further with Jack Callcott and Ben Cooley.

*Kangaroo* has been characterised as ‘probably Lawrence’s most thoroughly disliked novel’440 and ‘one of the most delightful of Lawrence’s books’441 highlighting its problematic position in relation to Lawrence’s other works. In his introduction to the 1997 Penguin edition of *Kangaroo*, Macdonald Daly writes that ‘the dominant trend’ of academic writing exploring *Kangaroo* has ‘not only been overly critical in analysing the book’s inadequacies but also limited in terms of interpreting the text’.442

Lawrence constructs his major protagonist Jack Callcott as displaying a hegemonic Australian masculinity, and then questions and picks at it until

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439 DH Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, p 11
441 Izabel FO Brandão, *Kangaroo: Lawrence’s homeless hero in search of a place*, DH Lawrence Review 36:1 (Spring 2011), p 14
it unravels both through Somers’ perspective and a critical omniscient narrator. The man that first meets Somers in the city wears blue overalls and has ‘an air of owning the city’. He grins ‘instinctively’ at the ‘strange, foreign-looking little man’ and judges him ‘perhaps a Bolshy’. Callcott is presented as comfortable in his masculinity and well able to find casual, harmless amusement in lesser forms of masculinity. The taxi incident reinforces the superior position of the men lounging on the grass in contrast to Somers, who ‘cried’ that the ‘tariff is threepence’, but is refused and so must make do with lesser transport in the form of a hansom cab. If technology and modernity can be seen to assert masculine influence here, it is the influence of the automobile taxi that ‘curves’ smoothly to assess him and then summarily rejects him with ‘no harm done’. As a mechanic Jack partakes of this knowledge of machinery that denotes power in this scenario, and ridicules both Richard Somers and his wife Harriet as they accept the out-of-date transport of a hansom-cab with a ‘beery and henpecked’ driver.

This position is later reversed when Jack stops to watch a football match and Somers ridicules the masculinity of the players as well as Jack’s response to the game; while describing them as ‘like strange bird-creatures rather than men’ he can lower them to the role of fauna ‘dart[ing] about’. Jack watches with an impassive ‘long, naked Australian face’. The players ‘…were mostly blond, with hefty legs, and with prominent round buttocks that worked madly inside the little white cotton shorts.’

The use of the word ‘madly’ adds to the image of ridiculous bird-men running in frantic but pointless frenzy. Jack’s response, to occasionally remove his pipe from his mouth and say ‘See that!’, is posited as an inexplicable response rather than a form of jargon for a game from which Somers is excluded. Further on, he notes that Jack was a ‘queer sight…when he was in this brightly vacant mood, not a man at all, but a chance thing, gazing spellbound on the evolutions of chance.’

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443 DH Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, p 13
444 DH Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, p 11-15
445 DH Lawrence, *Kangaroo*, p 200
446 Ibid.
frailty of fate in the game where, in the final moments, ‘one of the chaps got a kick on the jaw and was knocked out’ is juxtaposed with Somers solid sensibility in ridiculing the game, elevating his masculinity and understanding while lowering Jack’s.

Nancy Paxton notes that:

Lawrence frequently used gendered terms to describe the tantalising appeal of crossing the border between the old world and the new, proclaiming in Fantasia of the Unconscious for example: ‘You’ve got to know you’re a man, and being a man, means you must go on alone, ahead of the woman, to break a way through the old world into the new.’ Kangaroo presents Lawrence’s first sustained attempt to respond to this call.

Paxton identifies colonial borderlines as both a gendered site and a site of attraction for Lawrence, who used Kangaroo to explore his emotional disquiet and masculine displacement. While Lindsay promotes a proudly Australian masculinity, Lawrence travels an uncertain masculinity where ‘he describes his protagonist’s increasingly more disorienting confrontations with Australian men who embody alternative ideas about male identity.’

David Game writes that

Significantly, Lawrence in Kangaroo depicts a modern Australia existing in a global context. The novel engages the political, social and racial anxieties of the day – the rise of communism and fascism, gender relations, and the future of Britain and its empire in the post-war period…With the publication of Kangaroo, readers in England, America and Australia, notwithstanding the novel’s celebration of the Australian landscape, were presented with an Australian society characterised as urban, which contrasted sharply

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447 Ibid.
449 Ibid.
with the ‘bush’ locales and themes which had hitherto dominated Australian literature.450

Lawrence depicts characters that are returned soldiers, but there is very little of the happy-go-lucky larrikin about Jack Callcott and Ben Cooley (the ‘Kangaroo’ of the title). Instead, they represent a politically unstable, and yet politically engaged population of returned soldiers who are not content to accept their postwar country. They have learned that State organisation could wreak negative change. For Lawrence, it is the ordinary relationships between men that are vital, and the way to social strength. While one entire chapter (‘Harriet and Lovat at Sea in Marriage’) is devoted to the nature of marital love, the novel primarily explores the homosocial and homoerotic contacts between men.

Following a tense exchange with Jack Callcott regarding Somer’s essays and whether Jack would understand and learn from them, Lawrence writes that ‘when these Colonials do speak seriously, they speak like men, not like babies’451. Matthew Kochis notes that

his rationale denies the Australian colonist a masculine identity. He never says that ‘men are speaking’, but instead things that the colonialists are verbalising ‘like men’. From an imperialist’s point of view, Australia’s colonial experience robs it of any authoritative – and therefore masculine – identity.452

Extending that argument, Lawrence is likening colonial Australia to an infant, a land of immaturity without purpose or control. By contrasting the capable masculine with the incapable, dependant infant, Lawrence reduces Australian masculinity to a developing, incomplete construct, still in its formative stages. He also thereby strips the Australian male of authority and agency, while noting that while they can speak ‘like men’, they generally remain mute, like ‘babies’. In all these observations he

450 David Game, DH Lawrence’s Australia: Anxiety at the Edge of Empire, Routledge, 2016, p 105
451 Matthew Kochis, ‘Lawrence’s Kangaroo: de-establishing the double-bind of masculinity’, p 1-13, p 3
452 Ibid.
elevates himself as a representative of Imperial Britain above all forms of colonial masculinity.

Paxton contends that Butler’s refinement of Freud’s theory of heterosexual melancholia provides useful insight into the sexual anxiety Somers experiences with both Callcott and Cooley. Butler notes

… if we accept the notion that heterosexuality naturalises itself by insisting on the radical otherness of homosexuality, then heterosexual identity is purchased through a melancholic incorporation of the love that it disavows.\(^\text{453}\)

Callcott and Cooley challenge Somers to accept his ‘disavowed’, unacknowledged sexual anxiety. Cooley asks Somers to declare his love for him which Somers refuses to do, a refusal that prompts Callcott to say that he ‘thinks there is something wrong’ with a man who couldn’t declare such love. Colonial masculinity is strong and healthy enough to be open in its emotions, Callcott declaring:

‘I do love him myself, so I can say so without exaggerating the fact. But if I hated the poor man like hell, and saw him lying there in that state – why, I’d swear on red-hot iron that I loved him, I would.’\(^\text{454}\)

By putting the nature of hegemonic masculinity under strain, Lawrence allows Somers to explore his heterosexual melancholy, eventually made more dramatic because his refusal to declare love is made at a deathbed. Lawrence writes this scene for melodrama as well as melancholy, enhancing Somers’ resistance to homosexual exploration.

“Say you love me, Lovat,’ came the hoarse, penetrating whisper, seeming even more audible that a loud sound.

And again Lovat’s face tightened with torture.

“I don’t understand what you mean,’ he said with his lips.

\(^{453}\) Nancy L Paxton, Male Sexuality on the Frontier in DH Lawrence’s Kangaroo, in Windows to the Sun: DH Lawrence’s Thought-adventures, eds Ingersoll, Earl and Hyde, Virginia, p 141

\(^{454}\) DH Lawrence, Kangaroo, p 372
“Say you love me.” The pleading, penetrating whisper seemed to sound inside Somers’ brain. He opened his mouth to say it. The sound ‘I’ came out. Then he turned his face aside and remained open-mouthed, blank.

Kangaroo’s fingers were clutching his wrist, the corpse-face was eagerly upturned to his. Somers was brought-to by a sudden convulsive gripping of the fingers around his wrist. He looked down. And when he saw the eager, alert face, yellow, long, Jewish, and somehow ghoulisht, he knew he could not say it. He didn’t love Kangaroo.455

It is in this denial of ‘love’ as Kangaroo demands it that Somers finds the strength to deny love entirely: ‘I love nobody and I like nobody, and there’s an end of it’. Lawrence contrasts Somers feeding the male kangaroo at the Zoo (the male ‘gently nibbled the sweet from Richard’s fingers’) with the ‘corpse’ Kangaroo ‘clutching’. Significantly in this scene, the female kangaroo also avoided Somers, making ‘the blood in Richard’s veins all gone with a sort of sad tenderness’.456

The philosophical engagement between Somers and Callcott might be viewed as an internal contest between two aspects of Lawrence himself. That is, Lawrence uses the device of the ‘double’, a device that Michael Kane notes can be linked to a ‘fundamental scepticism about the notion of ‘identity’.

The image of the ‘double’ seems to illustrate graphically how all those qualities traditionally deemed to belong to ‘another world’ - another social class (the proletariat), another race (foreigners), another gender (feminine) – are discovered to be a repressed part of the self which has been projected onto others, but which has come back to haunt that self.457

455 DH Lawrence, Kangaroo, p 370
456 DH Lawrence, Kangaroo, p 373-74
457 Michael Kane, Modern Men: Mapping Masculinity in English and German Literature, 1880-1930, Continuum, 1999, p vii
Kochis argues that England/Somers, and Australia/Jack act as doubles throughout *Kangaroo*, but the doubling of Somers/Jack is a vital aspect of Lawrence’s call and response argument on masculinity. Somers and Jack both attempt to assert a dominant masculinity over the other; Jack through a fresh and clean-shaven masculinity engaged with an independent selfhood and Somers through an old-world, well-established masculinity that relies on ideas rather than strength to gain primacy. Jack tells Somers that ‘My job is Australia,’ highlighting the unfinished state of Australia while empowering himself, as a masculine representative of the new world, to complete it. David Game observes that:

Like many modernists, Lawrence was disillusioned with contemporary industrial society, however, rather than advocating political, social and economic remedies for regenerating society, Lawrence saw regeneration of the individual, and his or her immediate relationships, as the starting point for broader societal solutions. For Lawrence, Australia was one of many destinations that held the possibility of social renewal.  

Lindsay would have agreed with this analysis of Australia. In 1922 Lindsay was heavily involved with the production of the vitalist periodical *Vision: A Literary Quarterly* with his son Jack and Kenneth Slessor. It would run for four editions before folding. The foreword of the first edition, released in 1923, a manifesto for vitalist, anti-modern art and letters, declared that

We would vindicate the youthfulness of Australia, not by being modern, but by being alive. Physical tiredness, jaded nerves, and a complex superficiality are the stigmata of Modernism. We prefer to find Youth by responding to the image of beauty, to vitality of emotion.

The editors of *Vision* felt that a Renaissance in art to fight Primitivism was occurring in 1923, and that the journal would add impetus and voice. Lindsay’s views on Australia as a site for global artistic renewal may have

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458 David Game, *DH Lawrence’s Australia: Anxiety at the Edge of Empire*, p 23
aligned with Lawrence’s, who also held that Australia ‘held possibilities of social renewal’:

If Australia alone in the world is doing this – and we see no evidence for any other conclusion – then the Renaissance must begin from here, and both the onslaught of expression and the analytic attack must begin from here also.\textsuperscript{460}

Lawrence writes of Mullumbimby, just prior to leaving Australia, as having a dream-like quality. He notes that houses are ‘like ghosts’ and cows ‘sleep’ on the footpath. It is in this dreamy state that Richard thinks, when coming across a pony ‘with a snake-like head stretched out,’ of the ‘snaky Praxiteles horses outside the Quirinal in Rome.’

Very, very nearly those old, snaky horses were born again here in Australia: or the same vision come back.\textsuperscript{461}

Through this equine vision Lawrence’s vision of Australia becomes linked with Lindsay’s classical Renaissance that he believed to be possible only in Australia. By likening the stubborn pony to the sculpture of Praxiteles, (one of Lindsay’s most admired artists), Lawrence unites classic Greek style with wild Australian bush aesthetics. That Lawrence saw similarities between classical European culture and the Australian landscape aligns him with Lindsay’s oft-cited Olympian artistic Renaissance in a country isolated from the modernism and primitivism he despised so heartily. Again, the mutual concerns regarding the strength of colonial masculinity when merged with an aesthetic sense of European classicism expressed by Lindsay and Lawrence demonstrate that their anxiety around constructions of masculinity are linked.

Published a decade before Vision, A Curate in Bohemia follows the experiences of a country Victorian curate who becomes drawn into an old school friend’s bohemian Melbourne life, replete with ridiculously bumptious caretakers, absurd arguments about ‘Art’, and attractive models. For Lindsay, this oeuvre idealises his own Melbourne bohemian

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{460} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{461} DH Lawrence, Kangaroo, p 379}
experience while exploring his philosophies against religious practitioners and wowsers. By presenting the artistic male in what Lindsay considered his natural environment he wished to demonstrate the idyllic yet principled nature of the artistic male when outside the bounds of society’s hegemonic gender structures.

The friction between the curate’s differing value systems comes under pressure from exposure to a more liberated masculinity, where engagement between the genders is normalised rather than fraught with societal tension. James Bowles, as the eventually fallen curate, demonstrates that constraining masculinity to a traditional hegemonic model reins in natural masculine expression, both through an experience of vital ‘life’ and an artistic expression of life.

Lindsay writes with great respect for art as the highest principle, but also affectionately jibes at the artistic milieu that stops short of actually producing art. Living a life reflecting artistic values is idealised, but the serious nature of artistic expression is presented for humour. This can be seen when Cripps drunkenly describes his idea of a masterpiece to the ignorant but politely enthusiastic curate. Lindsay describes himself, in the guise of the character Partridge, as an artist so dedicated to the visual that he draws pictures on any available surface to illustrate his ideas when words fail him ‘which they frequently did, and gesticulations were powerless to express the nature of his thought’.

Partridge’s mind, in fact, appeared to be in a state of eruption, in which all sorts of half-baked ideas were constantly coming to the surface, and disappearing again before he, or anybody else, had time to grasp their significance.462

Lindsay pokes fun at the artistic arguments and aspirations of the bohemian group, but manages to do so without lowering them to becoming jokes themselves. The scenes depicting artistic conversation are in the nature of gods debating aesthetics; the arguments themselves

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462 Norman Lindsay, *A Curate in Bohemia*, p 106
are facile, but the passionate debate posits them as adherents to a higher creed.

The subject of discussion, it appeared, was the atmospheric colouring of the far distance, which Cripps said was hot, and which the MacQuibble said was cold, and which Limpet had painted in what appeared to the curate’s untrained eyesight as alternate streaks of red and purple. Limpet said the effect of this method was to give “Vibration”, an explanation which left the curate hopelessly befogged. Partridge, without joining in the discussion, sat down by a small shrub and commenced to make a pencil study of it with extreme accuracy. He informed the curate that he preferred to treat nature decoratively, a statement that at once called down on him the contempt of the MacQuibble.

“There are no lines in Natur – r –re,” was his war cry…

Lindsay described *A Curate in Bohemia* to his publisher, AC Rowlandson of the New South Wales Bookstall Company, as a ‘farcical tale around the exploits of art students and their cronies and girls in Melbourne’. In his biography John Hetherington writes that

...*A Curate in Bohemia* became a best seller at the start and, holding its popularity over the years, ran through edition after edition. The outright sale [Lindsay sold the copyright outright for £100] was one of the worst business deals Norman ever made. He realised it when sales went on mounting and passed 10,000, then 20,000 then 25,000.

The book’s popularity argues for the entertaining nature of the narrative, as well as the persuasiveness of Lindsay’s construction of masculinity. The effective positing of Cripps, Limpet et al as the epitome of free male experience can be seen to attract readers similarly disenfranchised from the prevailing hegemonic masculinity. Hetherington also notes that ‘while

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463 Norman Lindsay, *A Curate in Bohemia*, p 109-111 (illustration on p 110)
465 Ibid.
tens of thousands of Australians had read and chuckled over *A Curate in Bohemia*, that little farce about long-ago Melbourne was not known abroad'. While Lindsay’s and Lawrence’s ideas on reframing and questioning masculinity often dovetailed, it could not be due to reading each other’s works.

By positioning *A Curate in Bohemia* as a ‘farce’ Lindsay was able to pass his ideologically loaded work under the radar. In their in-depth analysis of how humour functions, Fran De Groen and Peter Kirkpatrick note:

> the sociological dimensions of laughter (its context, audience and target/s), especially the ways jokes operate to include and exclude particular groups, reinforcing social bonds and differentiating the teller of the joke (‘ourselves’) from its target (‘others’).

Much of *A Curate in Bohemia* operates through humour, although the humour is intended, as De Groen and Kirkpatrick indicate, to both include and exclude readers based on criteria of gender, knowledge and social position. While bohemians Cripps, Limpet, the MacQuibble, Partridge (representing Lindsay), Melons, Bunson and Quin are portrayed as careless, alcoholic vagabonds, part of a supportive community with a shared passion, the humour ascribed to their interactions places them in a position of attraction for the reader. The humour brings them ‘inside’ with the artists and establishes an inclusive narrative aligning freedom and thought with bohemian urbanity. While these characters also appear to be targets of the humour in the text, it is the inclusive humour of the ‘in-joke’ that brings the outsider in and allows them to feel the glow of acceptance through joint amusement that excludes those deemed unworthy.

The common enemy of bohemians is ‘religion’ as personified by the original curate before his descent into bohemianism, and the hilariously vicious Uncle Tinfish, the curate’s uncle and sponsor into the religious life. His hunched, looming physique and long nose and beard as illustrated make Uncle Tinfish a figure of masculine sexual repression and a powerful...

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466 John Hetherington, *Norman Lindsay: The Embattled Olympian*, p 182
467 Fran De Groen and Peter Kirkpatrick, (eds) *Serious Frolic: Essays on Australian Humour*, p xvii
representative of both religious morals and societal restrictions. His work as ‘an upright and God-fearing printer, who gained some pecuniary assistance from the Almighty by publishing the Christian Banner’ places him in conflict with the artistic values and communal morals of the bohemian protagonists. That he is drawn for humour is plain in his one appearance in the novel, where he discovers and denounces the curate for his fall from grace.

‘So this is where you are hiding, James Bowles?’ he said.

The curate seemed to admit the truth of this deduction by a feeble sound. Whatever inferences Uncle Tinfish managed to draw from Cripps’s apartment appeared suddenly to stir him to majestic anger.

‘Explain yourself, sir!’ he thundered. ‘How come you to be hiding here in lay garments?’

Doubtless with the best of intentions, the curate seemed to find the mandate utterly impossible to comply with. Cripps and Limpet could hear him making futile sounds, but nothing sufficiently articulate to be called an explanation was forthcoming. In fact, the curate’s incoherency merely served to confirm Uncle Tinfish’s worst suspicions.

‘You are a disgraceful fellow, sir,’ he said in hollow tones. ‘You have deceived your mother, sir – you have deceived me!’

For a moment Uncle Tinfish appeared almost overpowered by such a stupendous piece of deception. His emotion under it must have been singularly impressive, for the listeners could only conjecture that a loud groan from the curate at this stage was a tribute to the drama expressed in Uncle Tinfish’s countenance.468

468 Norman Lindsay, A Curate in Bohemia, p 237-38
Uncle Tinfish, *A Curate in Bohemia*, p 239
Much of the narrative is farcical, often with the curate as the blushing butt of bohemian humour. The power in the exchanges remains constantly with the bohemian artists through their use of nick-names, in-jokes, street-smarts and artistic jargon. After admitting to Cripps and Limpet that he does not drink, Bowles the Curate (known to Cripps as Spuds) divvies up his scorned liquor between himself and Limpet, setting up a conundrum for Bowles:

The curate had an uneasy sensation that his scruples had lowered him considerably in the opinion of the company. He regretted now that he had been betrayed into such an evidence of weakness, especially in the presence of Limpet, who he felt vaguely must be a man of particularly dissolute and abandoned life, and consequently to be respected.469

The obvious reading here is that the curate himself wishes to lead a ‘particularly dissolute and abandoned life’, however the author’s own position must be taken into consideration. His positioning of Limpet is ironic, ensuring that of the two men the one who does not drink feels himself ‘weak’ and therefore feminine, while the man who appreciates his liquor demonstrates an admirable masculine trait. Here is the double-bind of masculinity writ into fin de siècle Melbourne; to be masculine is to evince hegemonically masculine strength, but strength here is produced through resistance to society’s strictures against ‘drink’ as posited by the curate. The reader is also in the double-bind of laughing at Cripps and Limpet for superimposing positive and negative masculinities on themselves simultaneously, ultimately enhancing the status of their implied masculinity.

By disarming his reader through social satire and farce, Lindsay positions his hegemonic masculine artist heroes as naturally superior, and both normalises and elevates their values against the conflicting larger urban Australian milieu. While Lawrence wrote Kangaroo as an outsider driving himself to understand an alien culture and landscape, Lindsay’s

469 Norman Lindsay, A Curate in Bohemia, p 13
experience of the bohemian homosocial environment he celebrates allows him to celebrate it with humour, and subtly joke with his readers until they, too, wish to align themselves with the passionate, idealised masculine artists. By situating both writers as part of an Australian literary culture exploring representations of its own masculinity both the parochial and global nature of this discussion becomes clear. Lindsay’s connectedness with transnational masculine anxiety before and after World War I becomes apparent, and Lawrence’s differencing of Australian masculinity runs parallel with Lindsay’s ongoing masculinity project.
Conclusion: Norman Lindsay; repositioning the modern Australian masculine

Writing in a newly formed Australia, Norman Lindsay’s writing aligns myths of nation, myths of masculinity, myths of the artist, and myths of bohemia. As Lawrence Coupe notes in *Myth*, ‘literary works may be regarded as “mythopoeic”, tending to create or recreate certain narratives which human beings take to be crucial to their understanding of their world.’ Lindsay’s fiction, through its representation of an idealised artistic masculinity, written and published as a new national identity was being moulded, was attempting to align his male artist ideal alongside the Bushman, the Larrikin and the Digger within the developing national consciousness. His writing attempted to merge this idealised masculinity with the larrikin as a preferred, specifically national type. His imagined homosocial worlds saw artistic ‘genius’ promoting and defending the new nation aesthetically and intellectually, elevating the male artist to cultural instigator and arbiter.

For Lindsay, the formation of a new masculine identity was crucial to the formation of a national identity, countering first wave feminism and the hegemonic masculinity inherited from England and its Empire. Lindsay viewed the artist as a masculine cultural elite who could exist alongside Martin Crotty’s identified militarism and sportsmanship; Robert Piper in *Redheap* and Bill Gimble in *Halfway to Anywhere* write poetry and have gendered, sexual and intellectual ideals alongside shooting, exploration and independence from the domestic sphere. As this thesis demonstrates, his heterosexual artistic masculinity ‘othered’ and objectified the feminine while placing the economically struggling artist in an ambivalent position to the working and the middle classes. By aligning homosocial bohemianism with artistic integrity and cultural value he attempted to posit the male artist above all socio-economic groups.

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470 Laurence Coupe, *Myth*, p 4
Attitudes to masculinities are always already wrapped up in representation. For Lindsay, his project of literary masculinity construction was overtaken by contemporary and different ideas of gender as the effect of women’s suffrage, the New Woman, the Depression and World War II all had an impact on representations of masculinity. His appropriation of the feminine to demonstrate mastery over it can be seen as a reaction to gender identities in flux and an attempt to exert mastery through representation.

Lindsay’s adventures in masculinity and fiction were not an isolated endeavour. Most of his writing was published into a burgeoning tradition of women’s writing. Drusilla Modjeska notes that women writers produced the ‘best fiction’ of the 1930s, and this suggests something of the contested nature of the landscape and the gender of authorship⁴⁷¹. In a non-exhaustive list, Christina Stead published four novels including Seven Poor Men of Sydney, Eleanor Dark published five novels, Dymphna Cusack published her first novel Jungfrau and Kylie Tennant published Tiburon with the Endeavour Press in 1935 after it was serialised in the Bulletin⁴⁷². Richard Nile notes in The Making of the Australian Literary Imagination that

The novel was written for the mass market but its development within an Australian context was closely related to a nation-building project that conceptualised the writer not only as creator of fiction but as a public intellectual.⁴⁷³

Vance Palmer published six novels in this period, Martin Boyd published The Montforts, Frank Dalby Davison produced Forever Morning and Manshy, and Xavier Herbert published Capricornia.⁴⁷⁴ Within this milieu of energetic novel production Lindsay can be seen as emblematic of the new energy given to the novel but also of the desire to soothe anxieties around masculine identity and worth. Lindsay’s writing makes plain that Australian

⁴⁷¹ Drusilla Modjeska, Exiles at Home, p 1
⁴⁷² Drusilla Modjeska, Exiles at Home, p 2 and 229
⁴⁷⁴ Drusilla Modjeska, Exiles at Home, p 4
masculinity is in flux. John McLaren notes in *Writing in Hope and Fear: Literature as Politics in Postwar Australia*, that the Jindyworobak group ‘in their impulse to reject the present and to find a purer form of mythology…resembled Hugh McCrae and Norman Lindsay before them’\textsuperscript{475}, but Lindsay’s concern with hegemonic gender construction and anti-modernist stance separates him from this coterie.

Lindsay’s attempt to reposition the male artist as a hegemonic masculine ideal has its parallel in current debates about the role of the arts in national culture and questions about the suitability of artists and writers to speak for the broader populace. Lindsay’s focus on the need to navigate the interrelated complexities of masculinity and nationalism still has value today. While his work was limited by heterosexual and sexist biases, his emphasis on sexual freedom remains relevant when Australia still does not recognise sexual equality. The myths surrounding Norman Lindsay remain larger, colourful, and more extreme than Lindsay the man. In deconstructing some of these myths, this thesis adds to an understanding of Lindsay’s literary biography and expands our understanding of Lindsay the artist, the larrikin, and the bohemian into a more nuanced picture that recuperates Lindsay the effervescent, highly satirical writer.

Appendix 1

Transcript of “La Revanché “ – or Les Traditiones vivé L'irror Gate”

MLMSS 6025 1 (1)

JSC Elkington,

Papers re Norman Lindsay, 1880-1955

Folder 3

La Revanché

Notes on appearance of manuscript :-

At the bottom of the pile of manuscript is an envelope with JSC Elkington, Mooloolahbah VIA WOOMBYE on it.

On the corner, X-RAY FILMS ONLY

In pencil in the centre is F. Manuscript

A pencil written note marker in the centre of the manuscript booklet is another note saying

MS by Norman Lindsay

A (skit or shit?) on Marie Corelli (probably skit, but considering subject matter it could well be shit)

Photo of NL and Bill Dyson

** my note, I believe this places the manuscript production at the house NL and Bill Dyson rented in Northwood in 1903. Lionel Lindsay also rented the house with them. Lindsay was known (see Rose Lindsay’s autobiography) to be experimenting with photography at this time. The photographs appear to be amateur printing.

People in the photographs are Norman Lindsay and Bill Dyson. Who was the photographer? Possibly Lionel Lindsay?
Book is A4 paper halved (folded or cut) into A5, and sewn together. Plain, lined and watermarked writing paper is used. Finer, more hand-made looking paper is used to bind the folded edges.

**Text of La Revanché**

“La Revanché “ – or Les Traditiones vivé L’irror Gate"

A Romance by Marie Corelli

It has been said of a certain demeselle de literature, I need mention no names when I say that a very high personage in the ipper ten has described her as the Bellissimo Marvalloso, and by others as la Contrabelle amoroso Lacromoso – that she is not tres la grand authoress de la monde. So be it, doubtless les maladictiones of le petit monsiours de la pen are a great grief to her. O yes, but let me remind them when next may left(?), their vile vagnoso dull(?) delle(?) putrico voices against one whose purity is les subject of dans la upper circles of the word of one perhaps the greatest politician of the today – Wunderschon Herr Jesus kom und onson gast torgournes (?) il preneig tres borg – I have done. MC

** my note. Making fun of Marie Corelli’s style, use of French words and phrases and weird Italian names, underlining for emphasis overused. Is crossing out of words with =- and overwriting spelling – not meant to be read by others? Certainly original draft, possibly the only draft. A joke, for fun.

Page 2, numbered 1 Chapter 1 Les Manti de Postilaro

It was a beautiful afternoon that June so many years ago and the Plaza Bumclutchi was as though the glorie of Gods on sunlight had come to speed la petite postman as he sped swiftly up the road swinging his bag de littre with a penchong (?) purely Parisienne.

He sang as he came his way, in a voice of such exquisite modulaté allegro so much the admire de lá bong ton of the Gay City, with such sweetness mat(?) melt(?); noblesse oblige, I felt that ére I had perforce clutched my aggots (?) with an icy (sic) hand that had indeed swooned with the voluptuous poison of his note – “So", I muttered as I crouched
behind la urinal (?) watching with fiendish enragemong (enragement?) his approach.

“You little know that I – I Alonzo_Bong_Pracy de Linzi have waited all these years pour la grong (?)grand passion cursa dam la bloody Jesus Christ” And I laughed bitterly at my own fancy, as I gripped tighter the Page 3, Blank Page, different to page 2, lined writing paper.

Page 4, Photograph pasted in the middle of the page.

Norman Lindsay, dressed in dark baggy pants, baggy dirty light-coloured shirt, dark jacket with handkerchief of shiny material in the pocket. He is leaning back as if preparing to throw something. One hand is reaching (left hand) in the front of him clenched in a claw, the other arm is behind his body (right arm) holding an axe close to the head. His face is screwed up as though in effort or with a bright light, his mouth is puffed up with air. He wears a brimmed, shapeless kind of hat. He is standing on a lawn that is slopes slightly downwards behind him (not recently mowed) with bushes close behind him. This garden must be very near a large body of water, as there is a paddle-wheeled ferry behind him. The other side of the body of water is visible, with some open space, a large house and some other buildings, possibly a church, behind him.

The photograph itself is damaged, a few tears on the edge, and some scratches that go down to the paper and fully removed that small section of the printed image. There are imperfections in the colour of the sky, clouds or process issues I can’t be sure. There is some light spotting on the figure of Lindsay in the photograph.

The photograph is captioned – Grasping the Swedish hunting axe.

Page 5, numbered 2,

the Swedish hunting axe I had almost unconsciously snatched from m u u g (mon?) (smudged) peres baronial hatstand on passing.

“Saptristi(3 rather than S?)” I muttered as I immouecantingly (?) dropped the iron weapon on my aggots, eliciting an anguished scream from the furious creatures, as though they too, craved for vengeance. “Toujours
Possible he will stop.” But no, - he passed swinging, and it was as though
an angels wing had swept my hair, leaving feathers in it. “So” I hissed,
stepping swiftly out of a smouldering dollop of wet wax dropped by some
heedless garcon in childish glee. “I am foiled again, Mon God – ha ha
foiled, trodden on, mocked, scorned, and gobbed at – I – I Alonzo Bong
Pray (could be Percy, most iterations look like Pray) de Linzi – the once
famous abandon chasseur de la bongvivre – But think not, Wilfred de
Bagnio and thou percé la Trina that the hand of a Bong Pray will falter
before the puny scum of a morale and efete civilissimong” And as I spoke
one panther like spring and I had gripped his aggots with (one word
crossed out and smudged)

Page 6, numbered 3,
a grip of iron, while it was but the work of a moment to whirl la glittering
blade in the air and bury it in his crumpet hole to the hilt. “And this” I
hissed as I hastily wiped stray bovel (blood?) from the weapon with his
bag du missalt “is Ra denoomong (?) (demonstration?) of a Bong Pray’s
rage. Thus has a blasé and bong tong civitisomong (?) caused la graney
passion de la Bong Pray’s avec une act of fiendish crime – curse you” I
shrieked as I fell fainting into la urinal, “Curse you, cursed you, La Bong
Pray est Revanché”

Page 7, Blank paper watermarked with lines, different to plain paper of
page 6

Page 8, numbered 4, Photograph.

Paper lined for writing on the front side. Photograph pasted to the middle
of the page. Same or similar body of water in the background. Buildings
further out of focus. There is a fence behind the figures not present in the
first photograph. Figures are Norman Lindsay dressed as before (tie-up
canvas shoes not previously mentioned). Dark hat exchanged for an
enamel chamber pot on his head. His is on the right of the photograph,
face on. To the left of him is another figure, identified further in the MS as
Bill Dyson (also known as Will Dyson). Dyson is wearing dark pants, a
thick overcoat almost down to his knees, and a brimmed hat with the brim
turned up. He is holding a cigarette in one hand and looking very cheerful. He holds a long stick in his other hand by thumb and forefinger. Norman Lindsay has the chamberpot rakishly over one ear, and is also pulling a pleased kind of expression.

Caption is – “Ah mon Ami:” said le compt.

Page 9, numbered 4, Chapter II

“Ah, mon Ami” said le compt de Grange Operà – as some hours later I entered the conservatoire carrying la Urinal with a bitter smile in my head. “You are trieste, mon Camarad – You have la savoir(?) come, you will tell me, bong sivore (?), over a glass of sparkling Vang Ordinaire – “

“Nong, mongsour” I said with an affectation of lightness as I flung myself with assumed gaiety into the heavy Poertiere du Putplants that framed the Embrasure de la roomá. “I have already this morning had mong fill a la Revanché.” And as the full significance of my words filtered through my brain I laughed bitterly, muttering with almost devilish sang froid – “La Revanché a la doweldees – death.” “Ha, mong enfin,” said la compt, slapping his aggots with that bizarre movement dans la arse that had made him such a feature

Page 10, numbered 5,

On the Boulevards of La Continong. “Mon Dieu, you are weary, perhaps, mong ami, you have been ong closet again at la pud pulling eh?” “Ah nong mong – mong chez bong ami!” i replied as I carelessly dusted a stray crab or two from mong aggots with la silken banderillo de la portier” and I sighed bitterly. “Come, mong ami” said la count, playfully gobbing in mong aggots with that quaint Parisienné gaiety of his – “We will then take a turn on la bridge – eh – mong ched (?) where la glittering chasseum de la pouffearr revels in la reckless gaity de la monde “Saysusti (?), there is nothing so exquisite to la triest and Blasi as la gaie world of fashion and joy de vivre?!"

Though he spoke with that reckless gaiety that so often he chose to disguise his stern and relentless
Page 12. Photograph pasted in the middle of the page. Some damage to photograph, parts of picture have peeled away. Edges of photograph very dirty. Background of similar body of water, with land to the far background. No grass or bushes, but further fences as in photograph number 2. Dirt, bark and sticks on the ground. Norman Lindsay is on the right again, in same clothes but without the headwear. He is cringing away from something in fear; the apparition or person seems to be behind and above the photographer.

Bill Dyson is again on the left, this time wearing a top hat made out of shiny cardboard (or metal, as in the top hat worn by the Joss of the Ishmael Club, possibly same manufacturer?) (the hat looks ridiculous) with a tall but thin top and a brim that only just extends over his head. He is holding the stick in his right hand at about shoulder height; it doesn’t touch the ground and he is slightly risen onto his tip toes. He is smiling widely and almost laughing.

Caption reads: I felt that all disguise was useless.

Page 13, numbered 6,

soul within, I felt that underneath his words there was that keen thought and deductive power of observation that characterised his as one of the keenest observers of men. Before this man of almost superhuman power and determination I felt that all disguise useless, and with a few incoherent words of apology I fell fainting to the floor.

Chapter III. When I came to myself all was dark, and as I struggled to my feet I dashed the cold perspiration from my brow with a hollow groan. Then I remembered all, and in that moment of anguish I could have screamed like a castrated tomcat in the throes of grief over his detached barnacles – “What”, I muttered, “shall I – I – Alonzo Bong Pray, erst while la dashing Bong Vivre de la Bagnio, suffer the degradation of allowing a mere woman” a hack writer, I called her, with a bitter laugh of envy – to
triumph thus. What right” I asked myself had this mere woman to write with

Page 14, numbered 7,
such translucent purity of diction. Such bong tong brilliancy of style that she should force me by the magic of her pen, to writhe like a tortured worm at the feet of her divine Genius – Yes Genius. I will say it again – word crossed out – let critics cast their venomous hate at the priceless and consummate perfection de la belle authoress, their black rage and poisoned spite did but add a greater and more exalted degree of brilliancy to the divine brightness of her – but no more – no more – staggering blindly to la Portere I had just strength to drain a bumper of the compt’s priceless Vong Ordinaire, when, with one cry to heaven for mercy I fell prostrate to the ground – I had recognised that Mavis (? Marie, Maria?) Claire was the greatest Genius of the age.

Page 15, numbered 8

Chapter IV

As M. Le Compt de la Grong Opera entered la rooma I saw that though his habitual sardonic smile still played on his chin he was inwardly struggling with strong fierce emotions, and there was something in the way flung his aggots carelessly insh (?) la Portere de Putplants that warned me all was not well.

“Ah, mong ami” he said satirically (?) as he lit an expensive Egyptian stinkarré_cigarette which he selected with fastidious care from a jewelled case ong la asketrore – “So you are still ong regale – Eh” and he flung himself carelessly into La Portere, rising swiftly with a muttered curse, for he had not noticed that his aggots were already reposing there. –

I saw that the moment had arrived when all must be disclosed, and striding swiftly to his side I clutched him tightly by la ballas. (I laughed! La ballas!) “Sapristi” was all he said, as he struggled like a madman in my

Page 16, numbered 9,
herculean grasp “cet est la garçon de clam bloody hell” he said kicking me with sardonic accuracy ong la arse.

“Listen”, I hissed, heedless of his sardonic shrieks of anguish as I gripped them tighter – “think not that I am now la petite butterfly of la bong long monde de vivre le Roy – No No – too long have I been but a trifler on la world stage de la grong Passion – Ha – ha – laugh, revel, fuller (?) away in la tuuoules (?) gaiety de la Pom de terre – the world has yet to feel the iron heel of a Bong Pray vengeance – stamped on its quivering ballos.

“Listen” I hissed with devilish innuendo in his ear “Les photographs est non arrivé – “ And as I uttered the awful words – Le Compt – his face convulsed with le grand passion, fell on his knees and

Slip of paper inserted here – reads

MS by Norman Lindsay

A skit (shit?) on Marie Corelli

Photos of Norman and Bill Dyson

Page 17. Photograph in centre of the page.

Similar body of water in the background. Can see the point of a headland and picket fence to the left, bushes to the right directly behind figures. Norman Lindsay and Bill Dyson standing on the grass again.

Norman Lindsay is crouched over Bill Dyson who is kneeling on the ground with the stick in his left hand and a cigarette in his raised right hand, cursing the sky. His face is screwed up in a grimace and he is wearing the brimmed, possibly straw hat from a previous photograph, not the top hat. NL is leering into Bill Dyson’s face, and has a lit cigar in his right hand.

This photograph is in better condition, and is printed more clearly, than the last two photographs.

Caption reads: “Listen” I hissed with devilish innuendo.........

Page 18, Blank.

Page 19, numbered 10,
clenching his fist at heaven, he shrieked “Mong Pére, mong pere – “
Miserire ell Barlano est la Mort” and fell fainting at my feet.

“Ha ha” I said with devilish sang froid as I kicked his aggots to the side
“You little thought, mong camarade, that even now le Maison Dinére est
cherchery la femmé

But tremble, Grafton Lyle – “I cried hoarsely as I clenched my fist with
allmost (sic) superhuman rage – “For ére the wrathe of a Bong Pray the
satiated, blood will flow like beer on the boulevards de la demimonde –
Curse you” I cried as with one convulsive movement I staggered
backwards into la closet – “Curse you – Sapristi – le Bong Pray est pullet
tompours dans la bum” and then all was dark.

Chapter V. As la Compt de Grong Operà stepped swiftly from la seat de
closet I saw that he was a changed

Page 20, numbered 11

man. The man of fashion, la vivour de la gaie inner (?), le butterfly de la
demimondaire, the frank light hearted gallante squire de la grong dames
had vanished, and as though by the touch of some magicians hand, stood
transformed into the man of iron – the stern and embittered emblem of the
world’s vengeance – strange, I thought, that the velvet mask of the Blaše
rove de la toile apartamong should have so long hidden behind its
polished sheen this man of iron will and almost superhuman tour de force.
And as his piercing eye bored holes in my very brain I felt I was indeed in
the presence of one who had drained the bitter cup of human suffering to
the dregs – “Come, Alonzo” was all he said, and as I cast my eyes up to
heaven I muttered almost involuntarily “La toune de notre Dame de
Page 21. Photograph pasted slightly to the right (my right) and up of
centre.

There is again damage to the photograph in the area of the figures face. It
is probable that the lone figure in this photograph is Bill Dyson, but a large
part of the face is in the shadow of the hatbrim. The figure seems to be
wearing similar clothes and boots but the coat is changed. It is a light
coast with a possible stripe. He is leaning slightly to the right, looking
down and possibly yelling with his tongue out. He grips an axe in both hands, the blade facing up. He is standing on grass with part of a path, picket fence and bushes in the background.

Caption: I saw that he was a changed man......

Page 22. Photograph pasted in almost the centre of the page. It is a longer, thinner photograph that those previously, which have mostly been rectangular in established photograph proportions. Norman Lindsay is on the left, sneering and holding his hand in the shape of a gun with the pointer finger pointed at the sky. Bill Dyson, back in his coat, looks shocked, sad and wounded with his fingers laced across his chest like he has been shot. The photograph has some fold marks that were possibly on the negative, as they are not on the paper.

No caption.

Page 23, numbered 12,

"la bong mere est pope de Romà"

- For I felt that la home de la grong denuemong was at hand.

Chapter VI.

It was indeed a bitter moment as she stood there, her proud head bowed over la urinal with that petite ravishemong so common to those used to the bong tong foibles of la upper circles – and I though, with a bitter laugh, that perhaps I had never seen a more perfect picture –

“Ah, mam’selle” I said, stopping with that easy grace so characteristic of a Bong Prays, to her side “Parlé vous la game de garr (or m?) a rouche” and I held a shilling before her tear stained eyes – but with a haughty movement of her queenly bum she said – “Never, never – you little think, Alonzo, that poor though I may be my Art is more to me than life itself – “Come, come le petite demoiselle” I said, with assumed gaiety –

Page 24
“Margaret Fustin (?) (Fuster? Foster? Pasta?) is too pure a star for the coarse febrile carrot de venalé of a Bong Pray – come, mong enfin – I did but jest – Ha Ha – But stop” I said “I hear footsteps – swear to me, Margaret Foster (this one looks like Foster) that when next we chance to meet, you will think more kindly of one who is perhaps – even now – lost to hope shame, humour and the arms of the woman he loves – O Delia, O how I love you, O my God – how I love you” And as I plunged swiftly through la portal de la crapoise I muttered “At last, at last – Grafton Lyle, your sin has found you out. But ére I list (?) she had swooned heavily onto la urinal – then I knew no more.

Page 25

Chapter VII

And now little more remains to be told ére our story draws to a close. So we stood together sobbing silently on the beetling cliffs of La Monte Pete de Café Dena(?) we felt we had little to say for the cast Addios had been spoken and Le Compt’s Private Steam Ferry La Santa Barnacle: lay in the offing under full sail. At last he spoke and the low sick meaty accents of his suppressed (?) contralto voice trembled slightly as he said – “Adios, mong ami – perhaps when I am gone this slight token will serve as la souvenir de la Compt de Grong Opera” and he breathed a kiss upon my brow.

At first I thought I was poisoned, but his sad sweet smile recalled me from the swoon I had momentarily fallen into and I sobbed quietly into la urinal.

“Listen” I said – “Before we part forever – I paused a moment before I spoke, for I felt that my words must come gently to one

Page 26

already doomed – Then, lifting my head to heaven I said in slow quiet accents – “Éré that sun has set Mavis Clare has sworn to be your bride – “
I caught him as he fell fainting into my arms, - “I will pray for you, was all I said, as I poured la urinal over his sallow (?) palid (?) features.

“Pray” he said, in a hard bitter voice “Of what use are prayers to one who has lost all hope humour and aggots –

“Ha – Ha, mong ami, toujours tres magnifique – when next Le Compt de Grong Operà est ongerdence (?) le world will have known the vengeance of a ruined and desperate man

Farewell, farewell – Est (?) ell buggered est hempriere de up le arse”

And in (as?) the last bitter accents of his voice had died away he had dashed hot salt urine from his hair, and hurried swiftly to the boat.

He paused only a moment on the quarter deck of La Santa Barnacle to shout a last farewell – then, clenching his fist to good green heaven, he surveyed (?) seized (?) a blue eyed Italiano cabin boy that stood over (?) aneer (?) and hurried him swiftly below –
his neck with the ends falling below his knees. He has a chamber pot hooked over the little finger of his left hand, with a cigarette between the pointer and the third finger of the same hand. In his right hand he carries a leather suitcase. He is wearing a costume top hat, but this one appears to be light coloured cardboard with a drawn-on black band and a small brim. A drawing of one large penis and testicles with two smaller penis and testicles on one side and possibly the other side decorate the crown part of the hat. He has his eyes closed.

SEE ILLUSTRATION (insert scanned drawing of hat penis decoration)

Norman Lindsay is pulling a melodramatic sad face, pointing his right hand with pointer finger outstretched to the sky and holding a towel (?) handkerchief (?) rag (?) in his left hand so it appears he has been mopping up tears.

Caption – “I will pray for you” I said. (It is very smudged.)

Page 30. Blank

Page 31.

Photograph with same picket fence and dirt ground background. Headland in far background, then same body of water.

Bill Dyson is on his knees with the long stick and a cigarette held in his right hand. He is wearing the shiny top hat again, and has a shocked expression on his face. His left arm is raised to shoulder height and is bent at the elbow, the hand, with palm facing forward and fingers slightly curled, to the front. The hand is pretty well hidden by Norman Lindsay’s head.

Norman Lindsay is to the right (my perspective) of Bill Dyson, bent over from the waist, with his left hand on Bill Dyson’s shoulder. His knees are slightly bent and he appears to be crouching. He has the enamel chamber pot on his head, but because his head is parallel with the ground it appear
to be all on the other side of his head. His right arm is raised to the sky and the hand is in a claw shape, making an appeal.

Caption – Lifting my hand to heaven, I said....slowly in (unclear)

Page 32  Blank

Page 33. Chapter VIII

I never saw him again. Whether the bones of the two miscreants who had turned him – la dashing cavilier de la joie de vivre to a cankered misanthrope or (?) now whiten on the dungheaps of a distant land, I know not, suffice to say _ he was === (something crossed out) man of strong uncomfortable passions, and, when once roused, would follow his purpose to the bitter end, though all hell stood between him and his bum de garçon.

The crafty and dark souled Cardinal Fucklioni di Castions has long since retired from the stage of subtle intrigue and Political Economy, and supplements a life of Machiavellian cunning by one of ease and retirement at his beautiful manshion (sic) at Le Lavier (?) Benda – where he may still be seen on warm afternoons – taking his charming blue and magenta aggots out for an airing in a small hand cart specifically made for the purpose.

Of Sir Aldohand (?) Aldkohand (?) Goldbug I have never heard definitely, but it was rumoured in company

Page 34

La charming and décolleté Marquise de Carstieus (Jack Castieau, Melbourne?) he was keeping open house at his private estate at La Roosal Streeta (Russell Street, Melbourne?) where all the gaie coterie des le Bong tong of fashion and beauty of the elite reveled in glittering circle around the refined and intellectual Sir Sedobrand (?) and his beautiful and interesting mistress.
Old Lord Cannon de la Bowlà Greenà may still be seen ong la Boulevards de la gay (underlined twice) Paréé, where has of late been noted for his penchant for secreting small red haired girls of tender age wrapped fancifully in the the (authors repeat) folds of his bag des aggots. And now I will write no more. The false and Perjured world that refuses me love humour, de bauchery and mad chase of pleasure round the scarlet lamp of sin – shall know me no more. Yes, scorned, despised, forgotten I linger awhile among the Phantoms of a dead world, once the brightest of them all – for – tremble – I

Page 35

Long thin photograph of Norman Lindsay in the long dark coat on grass with bushes and a little bit of the picket fence in the near ground, the body of water and land in the background. He has a dark brimmed hat on at a rakish angle, and he is pulling a swashbuckling leer. He has one arm bent in front of him as if he was swishing a cloak. Meant to look like a dashing man who got away with it.

Caption – Alonzo Bong Pray de Linzi the once famous and dashing Bong Sivore de la Vivre le Roy – I – I say again Alonzo Bong Pray – have gone and joined the Roming Carthlick Church –

Page 36 Blank

End of manuscript.

Notes on construction of MS

Although the booklet has fallen into two parts, it was constructed with some skill and effort. Soft paper strips were used as a binder, and each page was stuck to it, from front page to back page, and inwards. It was then sewn in a large central stitch and tied.
APPENDIX 2 – La Revanché photographed manuscript

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Barbara Mobbs

Page 1
Page 6 and 7

Page 8 and 9
Page 10 and 11

Page 12 and 13
CHAPTER IV

Mr. Le Campi de la Cannes Opera entered the room. I saw him through his fatalized window. With smiles he still played on his chair, he was morose, struggling with章程 peace something and there was something in the way he played his figures exuberantly into the Picture de Put Pharo that warmed me all was not well.

"Ah mon ami," he said, "entreving as he lit an expensive Egyptian Constantin Cigarets where he then selected with prodigious care from a jewelled case very la taste to increase - " So you are still my acquaintance," and he flung himself carelessly into the affair, having learnt with a malicious counsel, so he had not noticed his agency we already respecting them - I saw that the moment had arrived when all must be done and that would come to his side so solutions from Tallyho by Tallyho. "Suppose," in all he said, as he struggled it in a melodramatic way.
Page 20 and 21
Chapter VII. And a little more

Margot Foster is too damn fine to break you in. How do you think she became famous? She became famous with a bang! She became famous in the modeling business. She became famous in the modeling business with a bang! She became famous in the modeling business with a bang!

Chapter VII. And a little more

Margot Foster is too damn fine to break you in. How do you think she became famous? She became famous with a bang! She became famous in the modeling business. She became famous in the modeling business with a bang! She became famous in the modeling business with a bang!

Chapter VII. And a little more

Margot Foster is too damn fine to break you in. How do you think she became famous? She became famous with a bang! She became famous in the modeling business. She became famous in the modeling business with a bang! She became famous in the modeling business with a bang!
...and so on. Then I could see her, her...
Chapter VIII.

I have some sound again. Whether the cause of this first weariness was due to my first meeting the Asiatics, or the Indian one, or the fatigue of the Hindus, I know not. But it was more urgent to be up and at work in the morning than ever I had been before. The winter was now passed, and it was time to look beyond the immediate distress of the moment. The weather was clear and mild, and the work of the day was not to be delayed. I determined to make the most of the opportunity, and set to work with a will.

It was now the time of the year when the crops were being harvested. The fields were filled with men and women, working hard to bring in the grain. The air was filled with the sound of the scythes and the chatter of the harvesters. It was a busy time, but also a joyous one. The people were happy to be able to provide for their families and to look forward to the next harvest.

I worked with the others, helping to bind the sheaves and stack them in the barn. It was hard work, but I enjoyed it. I had never worked in a field before, and it was a new experience for me. I found that I was good at it, and I took pride in my work.

As the days passed, I grew more and more used to the work. I found that I could do it for hours on end without getting tired. I enjoyed the challenge, and I was glad that I had come to this country to learn new things.

I learned a lot from the people here. They were friendly and helpful, and they taught me many new things. I learned how to work in a field, how to make a fire, and how to tell the time by the position of the sun.

I also learned a lot about myself. I found that I was stronger and more capable than I had ever thought. I had never realized that I could do so much, but I had learned that I could.

I am glad that I came to this country. It has been a good experience, and I am grateful for all that I have learned. I look forward to the future, and I hope to be able to share what I have learned with others.
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