

(continued from previous page)

which could exclude the occurrence of aesthetic values . . ."

H. M. GREEN (Librarian, Fisher Library, Sydney, critic, author):

"Sting them, sting them, my Anopheles," wrote Messrs. McAuley and Stewart in their 'serious frolic.' And they have been stung, not only the Penguins but the whole group, overseas as well as Australian . . . Even if one were disposed to accept the rather thin contention that the hoaxers somehow composed great poetry unconsciously and in spite of themselves, that contention is exploded by their detailed account of the deliberate way in which the whole business was carried out. What is more, the stinging was justified and timely, as an attack upon a perversion of poetry that has spread to three continents . . ."

DOROTHY GREEN (literary critic, wife of H. M. Green, above):

"The Ern Malley debacle was the logical result of a long-standing failure of critical responsibility: the failure that enabled Angry Penguins to despise those who did not see completely eye to eye with them . . . to reserve to themselves the last word on all matters of criticism of the arts, while neglecting often to make their criticisms even grammatical."

HARRY ROSKOLENKO (American poet, contributor to "Angry Penguins"):

"The poems themselves are not a true hoax, for too many of them are too good in themselves."

MAX HARRIS (one of the editors of "Angry Penguins," writer of the introduction to the original publication of the Malley poems):

"The boys are confronted with a nasty ogre—the works of Ern Malley have taken in people much more diverse than devotees of Angry Penguins . . . The ugly doubt must be raising its head that Ern Malley has succeeded far too well for their comfort, and the cheap shoddy applause is a pretty hollow kind of triumph . . ."

NOEL COUNIHAN (in the Communist Weekly "Guardian"):

"This hoax has confirmed the view, expressed months ago by Marxist writers in critical articles to Angry Penguins, that the publication reflected the complete cultural bankruptcy of the decadent Right Wing of the Contemporary Art Society . . . Each issue has revealed that wealthy John Reed (married to a Bailieu), self-acclaimed genius Max Harris . . . (and others) . . . have adopted a more and more anti-working class, anti-Soviet position. The bulk of their journal, available for 'red'-baiting, remains strangely unaware of the menace of fascism . . . While this hoax has been widely welcomed, it is as well to indicate that the aims of the perpetrators cannot be accepted without reservation. Why does the Malley nonsense contain the cynicism at the expense of the Popular Front, for which so many intellectuals and workers gave their lives? Why is Lenin dragged in with a fictitious and absurd quote? What are the targets here?"

Indecent Penguins

SO much for the debate, as far as it remained "out of court." This is what L. E. Clarke, the magistrate who heard the police prosecution, had to say about other aspects of Angry Penguins than the genuineness of Ern Malley:

"It cannot be said that Angry Penguins is necessary for the pursuit of literature or art (Mr. Clarke had said that to prove this point in respect of the passages under consideration would have been a defence and justification) and, although the publication as a whole may be advantageous to the pursuit of literature or art, it certainly cannot in my opinion be said that the passages . . . complained of come within this category. Angry Penguins would not in my opinion be even a work of literary merit within the meaning of the Victorian Act. In my opinion the passages complained of are of an indecent nature."

Max Harris was fined £5.

Birdsong at Eventide

Here is an extract from the evidence of the sole Crown witness, Detective Vogelsang:

"In 'Night Piece' I think there is a suggestion of indecency about it. The whole thing is

indecent. Apparently someone is shining a torch in the dark, visiting through the park gates. To my mind they were going there for some disapproved motive. I think . . . there is a suggestion of indecency in it, in the way I mentioned, in that they were visiting there for some purpose, an immoral purpose. I have found that people who go into parks at night go there for immoral purposes. My experience as a police officer might under certain circumstances tinge my appreciation of literature. The word 'incestuous' I regard as indecent. I do not know what 'incestuous' means. I think there is a suggestion of indecency about it."

And finally, by way of envoi, we reprint from the "Stop Press" on the back cover this news item from the Adelaide News, November 29, 1944:

"The Commissioner of Police (Mr. Johns) has awarded a special mention to Detective J. Vogelsang for 'zealousness and competency in securing evidence for the prosecution of an indecent publication.'"

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