

Literature and Journalism: The Fiction of Robert Drewe

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THE *dailiness* of journalism has often worried those with pretensions to the “higher” forms of art, whether authors or critics. Hence the profession of writing for newspapers or magazines has been presented as at best a prelude or apprenticeship in the literary procession; as Tom Wolfe put it, “a motel you checked into overnight on the road to the final triumph (the novel)” (Wolfe, *Journalism*, Introduction). In his book *The New Journalism*, Wolfe documented a counter-revolution by imaginative journalists in America in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Metropolitan literary journalism was also becoming more assertive during these years in England, where Peter Porter hit back on behalf of the habitués of Grub Street at the Leavisite condescension of the Academies, which were alleged to be burying their heads in the sand and failing to respond to the challenges of contemporary literature and life (Porter 47). In Australia, some imaginative journalism was being written and published, chiefly in Sydney and Melbourne, but was generally disregarded in the universities. Australia too, like the U.S.A. and Canada, had its “neo-fabulist” fiction writers in the 1970s and 1980s, who have generally appealed more to university critics (for reasons which deserve investigation) than an alternative tradition of authors, often with professional interests in journalism, who have renegotiated and revised the social realist tradition in accord with modern concerns.¹

In any literate society there is a continual battle among different forms and modes of discourse for the high cultural ground. Just as literary theory (especially deconstruction) currently presents itself in Australia as an avant garde position and has a high status in some university literature departments, while “literary journalism” is derided, so too is “fabulism” generally presented as superior

to any form of realism in fiction.² Tom Wolfe's image of fiction writers "running backward, skipping and screaming, into a begonia patch" called "Neo-Fabulism" (Wolfe, *Journalism*, Introduction) has a comic appropriateness for some of these authors; but the journalist/fiction writers, the experimenters in fiction/faction, have still not taken, or been granted access to, the high ground. Realism and the mimetic factor in fiction are currently unfashionable beside the literary critical claims for inventive lying, and a scepticism prevails about truth-telling as an object of fiction. In Australia, this is evident in Helen Daniel's recent book on contemporary Australian novelists called *Liars*, which contains chapters on Peter Mathers, David Foster, David Ireland, Peter Carey, Murray Bail, Nicholas Hasluck, Elizabeth Jolley and Gerald Murnane. These are writers who, in Daniel's words, "play on our disbelief . . . celebrating the artifice of fiction . . . flaunting the Lie" (Daniel 4). If, as some critics have noted, the label of "Liars" does not apply equally or equally well to Daniel's chosen authors, there is an additional problem for those *omitted* from her magic circle, who seem condemned by her dichotomy to an allegedly outdated adherence to realism, conventionality and the past.

Yet there are writers other than those in Daniel's book on the contemporary Australian literary scene who are renegotiating the tenets of realism in exciting and inventive ways. Often less self-consciously drawing attention to their methods (though such self-scrutiny is sometimes an element in their "truth-telling"), such writers nevertheless seem impelled to "fix" upon subjects of public concern rather than restricting themselves to private fantasy. Journalism has been an important training ground for many such writers and has been a launching pad for their concerns. In American literature, as Shelley Fisher Fishkin has shown, there is an honourable tradition of imaginative writers with significant experience in journalism, which includes Whitman, Twain, Dreiser, Hemingway, Dos Passos and, more recently, Vidal and Wolfe. Australia too can boast a number of outstanding journalism and fiction writers which includes Marcus Clarke, Katharine Susannah Prichard, and, more recently, George Johnston, C. J. Koch, Olga Masters, Jean Bedford, Helen Garner, Frank Moorhouse and Robert Drewe.

The relative critical neglect of some of these writers in Australia has been caused in part by slighting references to their journalism experience. Patrick White's phrase "the dreary dun-coloured offshoots of journalistic realism" ("Prodigal Son" 37) to describe the writing he met in post-war Australia still has a condemnatory force. White has repeated his disdain for journalists and their influence on Australian cultural life more recently. Artists, he has said, require "natural sustenance" but journalists have mere "air roots"; they put down nowhere ("Factual Writing" 99). Unfortunately, though (and this may be a source of envy among some critics), the journalists have an audience. White claims that "Australians are taught to revere the pragmatic, documentary approach" ("Factual Writing" 100). Such claims for the ascendancy of a certain notion of the artist's role above that of the working journalist, and an implied lack of discernment and intelligence in the Australian reading public, have a distinctly aristocratic air, which is not dissimilar in some respects to the dandyism displayed by certain literary theorists of our time. In this paper, I wish to challenge such presuppositions by reference to some very positive literary outcomes of the relationship between journalism and literature in contemporary Australia, with special reference to the work of Robert Drewe.

Robert Drewe is the author of three novels, *The Savage Crows* (1976), *A Cry in the Jungle Bar* (1979), and *Fortune* (1986), together with a book of stories *The Bodysurfers* (1983) and a forthcoming collection to be called *The Bay of Contented Men*. Drewe was a journalist for ten years between the ages of 18 and 28 before he determined to be a full-time fiction writer. He had started to write a novel when he was 26, parts of which found their way into *The Savage Crows*, but for Drewe the major career change occurred when he was 29. Since the early 1970s Drewe has returned to journalism only briefly in order to earn money to keep himself and his family going. Yet he had built a successful career in journalism in a number of newspapers and magazines including the *West Australian* (1961-64), the *Age* (1964-70), the *Australian* (1970-74) and the *Bulletin* (1975-76 and 1980-83). Drewe won three major national awards including the Walkley Award (twice), Australia's version of the Pulitzer Prize. His ex-

perience ranged from investigative reporter to literary editor and columnist. From his period with the *Australian* on, Drewe set his sights on becoming a fiction writer (a first abortive novel had been written while he was with the *Age*). His occasional returns to journalism in the 1970s and 1980s were increasingly difficult and, in his words, "soul-destroying."

In making the transition from journalist to full-time writer Drewe encountered some resentment. In an interview with Candida Baker, he has commented:

The tradition in Australia has largely been that novelists come from the School of Hard Knocks — an outback dingo trapping background, say, or from teaching the Academy. . . . For some reason it was resented that urban people who had actually written for a living should attempt to bring their tacky Grub Street ways to the noble art of Anglo-Australian letters. To a degree I think that pathetic snobbery still exists in some University English departments.

The international group upon which Drewe draws to affirm the value of the nexus between journalism and fiction is certainly distinguished. It includes Camus, Hemingway, Garcia Marquez and Vonnegut. Drewe continues:

I don't want to make great potential-novelist claims for newspaper reporters, although most of them talk about (writing novels). It was a good training ground for me. It brought me out of a middle-class background, pushed me into murder trials and inquests and incest cases and politics and showed me something of what went on in the world. It also taught me how to write simple declarative sentences. It gave me a reasonable living and enabled me to support a family from a very young age.

But there were limitations:

I found ideas were not necessarily welcomed. By its nature journalism is essentially repetitive and parasitic. The other person was always *doing* and I was simply reacting.

Drewe's experience as a journalist across a range of newspapers and magazines led him to conclude that the media in Australia generally distrust intellectual claims and retreat to certain prejudices:

There is a very strong strain of philistinism and male chauvinism in the people who run the Australian press, regardless of whether

they are afternoon tabloids or quality magazines. Perhaps that just represents society here.

David Williamson's recent play, *Sons of Cain* (1987) reinforces Drewe's perception of a commercially driven newspaper world with besetting problems for the genuinely independent investigator and analyst. This tension which Drewe has identified between the challenges and constraints for the writer of journalism becomes a leitmotiv in his fiction, as author and alter ego search for the "real stories" of Australia and the barriers to their expression. This search has led Drewe to debunk certain myths such as the pre-eminence of the Outback in the contemporary Australian consciousness and, in his collection of linked stories *The Bodysurfers*, to posit instead the beach as a principal site of the contestation of values and modes of behaviour. As a short-fiction writer and novelist, Drewe is perceptive, inventive and thoughtful, concerned with exploring the psychological needs of individuals, and exposing prevalent myths of Australian society.

It would be a mistake to claim a simple deterministic force for journalism in the fiction writing of former, or continuing, journalists. (This assumption is an occasional problem in Shelley Fisher Fishkin's otherwise excellent book on American fiction and journalism, *From Fact to Fiction*.) Robert Drewe's view of himself in interviews and correspondence as having a way of approaching things, a style, and then trying to force it onto what he was doing at the time is a corrective to facile determinism of this kind. His frustration with journalism's limitations upon his style, and the amplitude of what he had to say, were the reasons he chose another, fuller form of expression. Drewe did not turn from journalism to fiction in order to turn journalism into fiction. On the contrary, he was having trouble in keeping the fiction out of his journalism — to the extent of occasionally including totally made-up stories into his "Perspective" column in the *Australian* newspaper and the "So it Goes" column in the *Bulletin*. A decade earlier, in the 1960s, Drewe may not have succeeded in publishing material with the degree of subjectivity and experimentation which he *did* manage to bring to his mainstream journalism in the 1970s and 1980s. As he has pointed out in a letter to the present writer, one ploy which enabled him to walk a fine line on the *Bulletin* was

a strong narrative thrust, which was designed in part to sweep the editor along and get the story approved for publication. Drewe's prize-winning pieces of journalism all have a strong narrative line, together with a psychological dimension and hints of mystery. Most are radically anti-authoritarian, with sympathy for the underdog, but with powerful insights into how authoritarian individuals and institutions operate. For instance, one of these *Bulletin* stories relates how the author got into the Morrisset Asylum for the Criminally Insane near Sydney and wrote about Peter Kocan, the man who shot Arthur Calwell, leader of the Australian Labour Party and an aspirant for the Prime Ministership. The second Walkley was for a story on a businessman who died mysteriously on Hayman Island and whose autopsy samples "disappeared" before they could embarrass the Queensland Government and the island's owners. The other prize was for a story on a Perth Chinese doctor who suicided after he was hounded by the Health Department bureaucracy. All of these stories were of a kind that don't often get published in Australian newspapers. All of them appealed to Drewe even before he wrote them as having the sorts of requirements of short stories. To an extent then, literary form was a built-in component, perhaps even a determining element in his journalism.

Drewe's three novels to date testify to more sustained quests after truths about contemporary Australia. They are based upon conflicts of value and behaviour which the author has discerned at a variety of sites, both geographic and psychic. First, in *The Savage Crows*, he explores the relationship between the guilt of some groups of urban Australians in the 1970s about the fate of Aborigines and the real consequences for Aboriginal people of the European invasion of Australia almost two centuries previously. Drewe's second and third novels spread outward from the Australian settings of the first to include Asia (in *A Cry in the Jungle Bar*) and America (in *Fortune*). In an early conceptualization of this linked project (in 1978), Drewe suggested that the pattern of these novels might parallel changes in Australians' place in the scheme of things:

If [*The Savage Crows*] could be said to represent its Australian characters as self-absorbed, materialistic (albeit guilty) conquer-

ors, the second . . . sees them as aliens, exotics in a different environment. Continuing that pattern, the third features the Australian as would-be American; as a frantic participant in the Master Culture.

Although this plan was not carried through in its entirety (especially in relation to *Fortune*, where the American connection is important but not dominant), Drewe's early outline of his three-phase project does indicate his abiding interest in the socio-political and human directions of contemporary Australian society. The international concerns in Drewe's novels are firmly anchored in his knowledge of pressures and tensions in Australian society; and it is interesting that his forthcoming collection of stories will focus upon immigrants and the question of immigration, which has been a major "news" item in Australia in recent times.

While Patrick White's characters, and those of another major Australian "symbolic" novelist, Randolph Stow, seldom read newspapers or magazines, Robert Drewe's often do. Furthermore, a number of his major characters in the novels are reporters of news for journals, newspapers, periodicals, radio or television. Stephen Crisp in *The Savage Crows* has resigned from his position as a TV reporter on the (Broadcasting) Commission, where his political radicalism has made him suspect, and a neater, more reliable colleague has been promoted to head of Current Affairs. Coping with his own mid-life crisis of a broken marriage, guilt and premonitions of death he becomes imaginatively and emotionally preoccupied with his "genocide" thesis of the Australian Aborigines in Tasmania. He resigns from his job at the Commission and reads with a deep vicarious interest in the journals of George Augustus Robinson from 1829 to 1834. This process involves him in re-adjusting his sense of guilt as he reconstructs an image of this man known as "the Conciliator." As Drewe described it in his synopsis for the publishers, Robinson's role (partly unconscious) was to "tranquillise 'the savage crows', the last vestiges of the Tasmanian race." Crisp adopts the dual role of social historian and investigative reporter, as well as a troubled individual of his times, as he is shown searching, in the final chapter of his novel, for the remnants of a virtually extinct people.

One of the qualities of the brilliantly executed final chapter in *The Savage Crows* is the author's refusal to sentimentalize the mutton-birders, descendants of the original Aborigines. The truth for which Crisp searches must take him beyond the *Reader's Digest* in the old guest house where he stays, the sensationalizing newspaper headlines and even the vague and careless tombstone captions, such as the one erected by the Junior Farmers of Flinders Island, "To commemorate approximately 100 Tasmanian Aborigines buried in this vicinity 1833-47" (*Crows* 243). Crisp's discovery of the Mutton Bird King, known as the Blue Plum, provides him with an image of the link between the past he has researched and the future, and with a problem of distinguishing surface images from "the real story." Yet such a truth remains elusive, a mirage of refractory images. For the Blue Plum is no pure symbol, but a bewildering hybrid. For one thing, he has assumed the discourse of visiting anthropologists: "We're a whole new race. . . . What I mean is we're a whole new human population brought into being by hybridization" (a word which he pronounces with great care) (*Crows* 252). A fourth generation cross, from Tasmanian Aborigine on both sides, American negro (from the whaling ships), Irish and Scottish, this spokesman for the remnants of the Aboriginal race in the southernmost parts of Australia consciously knows that his trade is guilt. As Crisp leaves the island the Blue Plum says:

"You could do us a favour, sport. . . . Know anyone in the media?"
 "Sure."

"Tell them about us. It'd make a good programme. Approached from the right angle." (*Crows* 263)

For he too has discerned the power of the popular media in propounding images and ideologies, bargaining for advantage. In this respect, his commerce with the descendant of the white invaders, and his requests for government grants, involve political bargaining, and an approach towards social parity which still seems some way off in Australia. As an outcome of the novel's various conflicts, this ending is a worldly revelation; not a flash of pure light but an ironic recognition offered to the reader of the mixed economies of contemporary life, which must qualify any nostalgic hankering for pure solutions.

Robert Drewe's work is concerned on a number of fronts with public policy and its impact upon the individual consciousness. Like the question of Aboriginal rights, the issue of Australia's role in the Asia-Pacific region is a matter of public debate, policy formation and change in Australia. (As an instance of this, Australia moved from the European voting bloc in UNESCO to the Asia-Pacific bloc in the mid-1980s.) Yet the rhetoric of international forums and changing patterns of international trade are as yet well ahead of cultural understanding in this area. Drewe's second novel, *A Cry in the Jungle Bar*, shows this. Set mainly in the Philippines, which the author visited three times on journalism assignments — the first, as Tom Krause has pointed out ("Writing Novels" 10), in 1965 before martial law and Marcos's New Society — the narrative shifts to Bangkok, Dacca and Colombo. The central figure in Drewe's second novel is Richard Cullen, who works for a UN agency and is an expert on the water buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*). Drewe's ironic but sympathetic characterization of this Australian misfit in Asia is marked by a number of clever parallels between the character and his subject of study; he is identified by others, as well as in his own mind, with the buffaloes he studies. Out of his element, Cullen feels uncomfortable both at the parties of his Filipino neighbour Ted Oroso and the "national scrum of mateship" of his fellow Australians in the hotel's Jungle Bar. Trailing his heavy Australianness as he jogs the streets of Asian cities, he becomes a "stateless person," an exile. The novel's conclusion is marked by an insistent, nightmarish logic as Cullen, having resisted an animal solution to his lust, meets an end not unlike that of the animals he studies.

At one level then, *A Cry in the Jungle Bar* is a "news" story. It contains graphic observations of idiom, manners, furniture, architecture, smells and sounds; places come alive in a bristling economy of signals and cues. Newspapers, and their attempt to access the truth and then publish it, are entwined with the novel's subject matter; and they appear also as tropes of communication, or excommunication. Cullen's neighbour in Manila, Ted Oroso, for instance, achieves temporary local fame through his newspaper column and his alleged closeness to the President, but writes an article which touches the tyrant's sensitivity, and is removed. Be-

yond such individual cases, the novel shows that characters live in a symbolic environment created by the powerful media of TV and newspapers. Headlines, phrases or images remain in characters' minds and niggle away. The printed text is especially potent as an agent of consciousness. Cullen recalls a phrase used about him in his school magazine in Perth in more innocent years, which seems to taunt his mid-life confusion: "The Everest of a Himalayan career . . ." Nearer to hand, his troubled wife Margaret recalls a violent incident from the tabloids: "Toleng Rampage . . . Twins Killed 8, Wounded 18." Such "news" becomes incorporated in the way individuals perceive themselves and their surroundings, and hence act.

In Drewe's latest novel *Fortune*, journalism as a profession and as a mode of representing the world is questioned most intensively. By choosing the device of a journalist as first-person narrator, Drewe is able to show how access to certain kinds of reality and truth may be obtained and how other kinds are denied. The problems are raised early in the novel:

Journalism couldn't begin to tell the story. It couldn't cope with the subject, let alone the links between characters and their ramifications.

In my experience journalism has enough trouble with the libelous, the abstract and the subjective. Its attention span is too short. Anyway, its space limitations prevent the true and continuous tracking of connections. Journalism shies away from psychology. For all its nosy reputation it mostly ignores the private life and rarely sees the larger truth. (*Fortune* 18)

The narrator, an experienced journalist, is aware too of other restrictions: the reduction of stories to political considerations, the temptations of moralizing, the intrusion of personalities in small provincial societies such as Perth represented in the 1950s and 1960s. What motivates the younger self is a largely unexamined desire to expose "corrupt authority and inept bureaucracy" (*Fortune* 18). But this outsider (vicarious reporter, Western Australian) is drawn into deeper narrative waters when he realizes that he is searching for "the doomed hero, the thwarted genius, the top seed put down by cruel circumstance" (*Fortune* 19). There are hints here of another westerner: Nick Carraway in *The Great Gatsby*. But Drewe's protagonist has few social pretensions and

epitomizes on the other hand some distinctively Australian "larrikin" characteristics.³

The novel *Fortune* has stimulated some critical discussion in Australia about its use of an actual person, Alan Robinson, on whom the protagonist of this novel, Don Spargo, is based.⁴ In the early 1960s Robinson reported that he had discovered a sunken treasure ship off the Western Australian coast, a notorious coast of reefs and wrecks for seventeenth-century Dutch explorers. Later, in the company of others, Robinson claimed to rediscover the wreck and its treasures, a claim which was vigorously contested in the courts. Some years after this he approached Robert Drewe, who had written several magazine pieces on him in the *Bulletin*, to appear as a witness on his behalf at his trial for conspiracy-to-murder his common-law wife. On the last day of this trial he was found hanged in his cell. Most of the criticism of Drewe's use of this material has been ill-informed and simplistic, suggesting that because certain details correspond between the "real" figure of Robinson and Drewe's character Spargo in his novel the author has somehow cheated. The charge is surprisingly naïve on many fronts, not least because it betrays an ignorance about the sources of most characters in fiction, which are created from the direct or indirect experience of authors. Secondly, the charge ignores the personal signature of Robert Drewe in the use and development of this figure within the framework of his narrator's inherently romanticizing and heroizing imagination in the restrictive small-town milieu which he inhabits.

Fortune is a novel which exhibits elements of post-modernist experiment, including a foregrounding of the artifice involved in its making, discontinuities in narration and scepticism about the finality of single versions of the truth. However, its self-consciousness does not suffer the debility of certain other novels in this genre. The chief reason for this is that Drewe's characters' inner lives are related to wider public affairs. His abiding interest is in the ways in which the mini-narratives of individual lives interact with the surrounding society and culture; how, for instance, a tale-spinning adventurer like Don Spargo could become a legend through press and TV reports, his story grafting itself onto a deep Australian

desire for devil-may-care heroes, whose egotistical audacity breaks the bounds of the polite decorum of provincial society.

This magnified image of the figure of Don Spargo links the legends of Australian and American Wests, but also expresses some of their salient differences. When Robert Drewe commented in an interview with the present writer that he likes the adventurousness of Tom Wolfe's writing but objects to his "onslaught of exclamation marks" he revealed a more generally Australian (and perhaps Canadian?) suspicion of hyperbole and a preference for understated irony. This irony derives in part from the legends of failure in Australia's West — of explorers whose bleached bones haunt the outback rather than of individuals riding to triumphant discovery and individual fulfilment. The American who chiefly influences Drewe's narrator is not however a stock Westerner: he is a worldly wise cartoonist, Leon Levinson, who visits Perth for *Life* magazine and NASA in 1962 after Western Australia was "put on the map" by an American astronaut noticing the lights of Perth city, which had been left on all night for this purpose. Americans like Levinson bring a sense of authority and experience to an innocent, remote community. "Bluff and subterfuge are behind everything," Levinson tells the young journalist-narrator, who is deeply impressed (*Fortune* 44). In his turn, the sophisticated American seems fascinated with the fortunes of Don Spargo, partly because it opens a new West to him. This new frontier offers him an apprehension of an older America of adventure and extremity. By contrast, the older West of Californian America, as Levinson's friend, the journalist-turned-private-investigator Linda Silver perceives it, has become a "traditional refuge for the wounded" (*Fortune* 95).

The metaphor of the cartoon in *Fortune* suggests an important link between the visual arts and prose fiction. Like the cartoon, the novel requires a simplification, a reduction of complexity. But whereas Patrick White, for instance, uses fable as a "universalising alternative to realism" which proposes, in Graeme Turner's words, "the lack of cultural differences between human societies in order to focus on those common, metaphysical principles which are seen to be immanent in all human existence" — a process which in White's hands, he claims, may be "almost reactionary" (Turner

135) — Robert Drewe rejects such simplifying alternatives. While showing the appeal of the fantasy, the fable, the cartoon, the news item and other forms of non-realism, Drewe's fiction insists upon a referential dimension which links private and public realms and moves at times to a kind of enhanced or hyper-realism. His three novels and his short stories are characterized by a recurrent dialectic of innocence and experience, in which the option of metaphysical transcendence is never seriously offered. Deeply embedded in public events in the history of an emergent nation, Drewe's novels continually seek to render and explain individual and group behaviour against what he calls, in *Fortune*, "the larger truth of a chaotic universe" (234).

The contained worlds of Drewe's characters continually split open to reveal further worlds of energy and dislocation. In another writer's hands, this vision might lead to a poetry of dissolution or despair. But Drewe's work is more buoyant than this. In the face of blighted hopes, failed or failing relationships, injury and injustice, the reader is continually confronted by an inquisitive, curious, unresting intelligence in search of "true" stories, which insists on interrogating not just *what* happens but how and why. This element of the quest motif in Drewe's fiction resists reduction to allegory: there are no good or bad angels in his work. The realistic fiction writer, who has served an apprenticeship in the "real" world of journalism, knows the perilous pleasure of pursuing the truth, but is sobered by the realization that all stories are hints and approximation. If discoveries are only ever partial, and mysteries remain, this does not diminish the adventure of the search; a search which Robert Drewe as novelist and short story writer extends well beyond the boundaries of journalism without denying the motivating power of that profession's most persistent ideal, the "push for truth."

NOTES

An earlier version of this paper was delivered at the Modern Language Association Conference, New Orleans, in December 1988.

All of Robert Drewe's books cited in this article will be published by Salem House in North America, commencing in Spring 1989.

The Robert Drewe papers (manuscripts and correspondence) are held at the Reid Library, University of Western Australia.

- ¹ A discussion of some of these writers (Carey, Bail, Wilding, Moorhouse) may be found in Bruce Bennett, "Australian Experiments in Short Fiction," *World Literature Written in English* 15:2 (1976): 359-66.
- ² Such prejudices, whether emanating from the "high" or "popular" side of the cultural divide often contain reductive simplifications. I support the view of Mark Edmundson, who argues that "a fusion of journalistic urgency and acumen with academic speculation could probably still produce a potent cultural criticism" (*Harper's Magazine* July 1988: 67-74). Similarly, neither the literature of "lying" nor that of "truth-telling" is inherently superior in intellectual or imaginative terms. My argument is that the traditional realist's goal of truth-telling should not be relegated to the status of a forgotten art in the present critical climate.
- ³ The "larrikin" is a recurrent figure in Australian literary and social discourse. The term refers to characteristics of non-conformism, irreverence and impudence. See G. A. Wilkes, *A Dictionary of Australian Colloquialisms* (1978).
- ⁴ The critical comments came chiefly from Penny Sutherland in an ABC radio program "Books and Writing" in 1987. These criticisms were shallow in their failure to take into account the extent to which the figure of Robinson was a creation of journalists, especially of Robert Drewe himself. Characters are never entirely "given," but are to an extent creations of journalists and fiction writers.

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