

ative: they draw largely upon their native environment for reference, imagery, idiom, metaphor, simile; their concepts are distinctly Australian—while their imaginative horizons are not confined by national borders. We want to see more of that adult, unfettered, vigorous expression in our national literature."

C. B. Christesen, in *Meanjin Papers*, Winter, 1943.

A MESSAGE FROM MR. J. K. MOIR.

Congratulations. Your record of service is enviable. Many societies start with enthusiasm which soon evaporates. Others struggle on aimlessly. Your Movement has achieved much. One aspect that interests and pleases me is that you have provided the means for young writers to present their work to the reading public. Another is that you are blatantly Australian in your outlook. All good wishes.

J. K. MOIR.

A MESSAGE FROM MR. ION L. IDRIESS.

Good luck to you, for you are one of the pioneer forces of Australia's thought and progress.

ION L. IDRIESS.



'T WAS EVER THUS.

Salute to Jindyworobak in its tenth year!

Survival of a publication of this nature during difficult and disturbed times suggests that it expresses ardent and purposeful writers. Literature, Australian in essence, is not yet past that incipient stage when inevitably it assumes the character of a movement as well as of art-cum-business. Literary path-making attracts people of determination, who, aware of their opportunities in a new environment, set about turning mere potentiality into achievement.

Imaginative writers are free to be either parochial or cosmopolitan in presenting any places or subjects that stir them, and some of the most enchanting literature is the outcome of writers' success in communicating their ecstasy in their own, their native lands. A great provincial literature of England has enabled many who have never seen that sceptred isle to revel in her ivied towers, her hedgerows, coppices, spinneys, wolds and woods, her brooks and rooks, cuckoos and owls, her every crocus, fritillary or daffodil. A similar desire to express an equivalent joy accumulating in this unsung continent would seem to be the non-self-seeking but sturdily self-expressing inspiration of Jindyworobak—Jindyism, as it is termed by those whom it irritates.

Why should Jindyworobak chortles about our land irritate, unless a reproach to the conformers to the conventional or outside commercial compulsions with regard to subject matter, or by arousing subconscious envy in those still suffering the nostalgic vapours of the exiled. The continuing power and significance of works of literature as manifestations of man's inner life depend on the unceasing mutation and extension, if not subversion, of established forms and overworked themes.

In kangarooing through the six Jindyworobak anthologies I possess, beginning with 1941, I recall disapproval, much of it recent:

"That going back to Abos is silly. It's not even intelligible."
And the blacks are gone, and we are not more than they,
Tonight as I make my camp by the rain-stilled sea.

And:

Didjeridoo—didjeridoo!
A blackfellow blows through a length of bamboo
To the regular beat of an ironwood stick,
Click-click, click-click-click

Didjeridoo—didjeridoo!
A nursery-rhyme and a history too.

Exactly! A delightful interpretation, seductively intelligible.

"But surely you don't encourage that restriction to Australian themes?"

"That is a misconception. Here is a humorous plea for Martha by one who expresses what has simmered in me since childhood about the one-sidedness of that Biblical story. Also the index to the anthologies lacks few of the names of our practising poets, major or minor. Jindyism, instead of confining writers to long-exploited fields, seeks to add something new and rich to literature in our tongue."

"Perhaps . . . but put that stuff against the classics and where would it be?"

Well,

It is a long time now
since Homer was a boy,
and Helen has forgotten
ancient Troy

In the beauty of this land there are subjects enough
to last a poet a lifetime . . .

Here is the expression of much wholesome and vigorous emotion which is not out of harmony with reverence for the classics.

"Admittedly you can pick out decent bits, but there's so much stuff—just stuff."

In standard collected works there is often more chaff than grain.

"I'm sick of this mouldy bleating about the gums and open spaces! It's time we got away from that now. Literature must be universal!"

"Isn't it snobbish or obtuse to exult 'universally' through generations when an Englishman, homesick in Italy, longs

to be in England now that April's there, while the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough; and to lack of understanding of an Australian in Palestine suffering from a similar 'universal' nostalgia, when he aches to "hear the butcher chortle, and the jackass laugh again, in springtime on the Clarence when there's feather on the cane?"

"Surely you don't compare those two poems?!!!!!!?"

For the moment concern is merely with the 'universal' emotion evoked in both, and the aid its expression gives to psychological satisfaction in the soil of one's birth or permanent residence.

We are a great land's lovers, a land's wardens,
for whom her beauty is all her fame,
lights for us a vision that breaks and broadens,
burns to fiery wonder at her name.

Salvage of ancient artistry, the tattered
tapestry weave with a skilful thread and strong,
the broken melody, the notes far scattered
gather and fashion to enduring song.

Yet still the test of drought will come again,
and come the age-long blessing of the rain.

And in our hearts the singing swagman's song
shall echo from his ghostly billabong.

Thousands of miles of stern Australian coast
will front the main when it is angered most,
smash moving mountains when they thunder in,
and stand the sunlit conquerors of the din.

"That's merely rhetoric: it couldn't be called pure poetry."
"But such lines as these have the effect of poetry on me:"

And in the Bight
rollers will bring the stars ashore at night

And:

Love's parting is the black swan dying.

It is conceded that the spirit of Jindyworobak is fine, and in serious assessment the spirit of Australian—of any—poetry is vital. The responsibility of defining where verse or rhetoric merges into pure poetry, with other points of acceptable form, can be left to critical argument, so long as it is clearly remembered that the glorious ancient classics were written by persons once crudely alive, writing of

barbaric and tragic passions and activities in a robust and primitive environment, and that in later generations many a pundit and pedagogue has tried to break or ban poets whose work today is embalmed in dominies' textbooks and become the critics' measuring stick to exclude and condemn the concern of even later poets with scenes and themes, locutions and localities too raw and new for the anaemic or unadventurous.

Australia will be expressed:

She speaks in the surge of age-old song
from creek-bed firelight half-night long,
and, the camp all still, in a glint of spears
and the dream that is hers of a million years.

Jindyism, so long as it does not serve the menacing politics of isolationism or sovereign-state nationalism, is a focus for a fresh contribution to world literature, working from a new core outward to international recognition. That is Jindyworobak's justification. From attention to Australian themes has come its influence and original flavour.

In any case the battle is almost won for Australian writers to be as Australian as their inner urge dictates. Signs are that the noisiest "practising Australians," now that profit and renown can be won that way, will be those who so lately, in criticising or lecturing on Australian literature, denied its existence, or deprecated its quality, ridiculed its aspirations and derided its "drum-beaters."

'Twas ever thus, Jindyworobaks! 'Twas ever thus!

MILES FRANKLIN.

SALUTE TO JINDYWOROBAK.

The Jindyworobak Club has been in existence ten years; during that time it has achieved an impressive list of publications.

The fact of its survival alone would make it remarkable in a country notorious for the speedy decay of mushroom national movements and literary cults, but survival is not enough to prove significance. "Movements" can go on existing long after they have ceased to move; and literary cliques continue to publish long after their publications have either value or life.

Why then has Jindyworobak not only survived but thriven?

Its avowed aim when it was first founded was "the linking up of Australian white culture with its own environment."

The puzzled observer from other lands might ask: why should it be necessary to form a society with such aims in a community which had been developing in its environment for 149 years? That had produced an indigenous Literature—small but authentic. Whose painters had learned to re-create its landscape in terms of its own light and colour; and whose people had long ago asserted their right to their own form of political democracy?

Why, in 1937, should the literary heirs of Henry Lawson, Joseph Furphy, "Banjo" Paterson, Miles Franklin, Katharine Prichard, Louis Esson, Bernard O'Dowd, have considered it necessary to make an explicit re-statement of something that had been implicit in the living Australian tradition from the first? Why should it be necessary to emphasise what all other national cultures have always taken for granted?

But it was necessary. Those of us who had grown to maturity in Australia between the two World Wars, did so in an atmosphere of spiritual colonialism. Whatever the reason for this regression from the strong spirit of national self-consciousness that produced the literary and political outburst in the '90's, the fact was that all the cultural influences conditioning the Australian mind in the '20's and early 1930's were tainted with the pernicious anaemia of chronic expatriatism.

The Australian writer was faced with a solid wall of prejudice from publishers and public alike, and met with deep-seated distrust from academic critics who had cut their critical stencils from a pattern that had served well in other lands and times. Of course writers had kept writing, an occasional publisher occasionally brought out an Australian book in small editions, and a rare critic still more occasionally reviewed it. But, all the time underneath something was going on. Our unique physical environment, our geographical isolation, the challenge of a new hemisphere, the rumours of old civilisations crumbling; all these had their effect. So, when Jindyworobak erupted in 1937, I feel it was a small fiery symbol of what was going on within the nation as a whole. And its significance was—not that it said anything new, or revealed any secrets but that it made articulate what for many Australians were inarticulate stirrings that needed concrete expressions to give them power.

There can be no going back in any living culture. But every culture must carry within it the riches of its past to draw nourishment from it and be fertilised again by the interaction of past and present.

For me, "Jindyworobak" has always carried that significance. Through its turning to the strange old continent in which we—the youngest white people—were developing—it gave us a new awareness. Its beliefs were an aesthetic application of the discoveries of modern anthropology and psychology, of sociologists seeking the secret of modern man's rootlessness and of the break-up of the modern communities' culture-patterns. It made explicit what great artists had always known—namely that great art never set out to be "universal." It was "universal" by accident: because the artist—whatever the medium in which he created—was first of all so completely one with his own small community that its problems mirrored the whole world in microcosm; so deeply rooted in his own soil that, imaginatively, all people shared with him the wonder of growth or the tragedy of death.

The early Australian writers knew it and expressed it in evolving their work: the evolving Australian people felt it in their growing pains; but their salty homespun wisdom was in danger of being smothered, under a spate of importations—both cultural and political—with which the garrison-mentality of our pseudo-intellectuals sought to bolster their spiritual homelessness.

This was not an atmosphere in which the writer could flourish; it intensified the problems which had faced Australian writers from the beginning: the problem of translating an unpatterned and formless life-in-the-making in terms of old rich and polished traditions of English Literature; of depicting backgrounds that possessed nothing of conventional romantic beauty to which their eyes or imaginations felt attracted of interpreting in conventional literary terms a country with no literary conventions. Only a few dared attempt the task of interpreting a people in the making with all the crudities of creation still upon them—an unfinished people in an uncharted country and in the 1920's and '30's all the scientific achievements that brought nations into closer contact, conspired with our spiritual expatriatism to defeat our indigenous culture.

Ten years after the formation of the Jindyworobak movement we are seeing a resurgence of that awareness of our own time and place for which "Jindy" has always

fought. The Australian scene, the Australian idiom, Australian problems are assuming significance—not only for the artist—but for his audience. History has re-oriented us and event is proving true in 1947 what in 1937 seemed only the impassioned crying in the wilderness of a new forerunner.

DYMPHNA CUSACK.

ON THE BIRTHDAY OF JINDYWOROBAK.

Jindy is having a 10th birthday. Congratulations Jindy.

First on your surviving until you are ten years old and secondly on the work you have done. You are really a very fortunate magazine as the average life of an infant of your description is about six copies, but it is you and your defunct relatives that spread culture for the nation. These magazines are generally written for and published by young people who have more brains than money. They distribute new ideas, new morals and expend their brains spreading these, generally to a deaf public, but perhaps not so deaf as these works seem to cling to the most unexpected places and so the good work goes on. Now in your case Jindy you have survived although you have chosen the most difficult matter for a public to assimilate, which is Poetry. How many people read poetry? Perhaps not so many as seem indifferent to it. But without it where would England be?

Her greatest claim to culture lies with her poets, Milton, Shakespeare, Shelly, Keats and her living writers of today. So now you see what you are doing, you are giving to Australia an advance idea that she also with her Australian Poets is developing a culture that will stand by her for ever. Your purse is generally empty Jindy but this is an affliction that most small magazines have in common, and alas it is a disease that seems to become aggravated with each edition. But keep bravely working on if you can as without you and your like where could young poets plant their seeds and the world learn of dreams and such things as dreams are made of? Our heartiest congratulations and a sincere wish for a long life and healthy finances.

MARGARET PRESTON.