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 deemed in dominion's text-
books and become the critics' measuring stick to exclude
and condemn the concern of every later poet with scenes
and themes, locations and localities too raw and new for
the ascertain or unavailing.

Australia will be expressed:

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

Jindyworabah, so long as it does not serve the measuring
politics of isolationism or sovereign-state nationalism, is
a focus for a fresh contribution to world literature, work-
ing from a new era outward to international recognition.
That is Jindyworabah’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 criticism or lecturing on Australian
literature, denied its existence, or deprecated its quality,
nullified its aspirations and derided its “dem-heaters.”

‘Twas ever thus, Jindyworabah! ‘Twas ever thus!

MILKS FRANKLIN

SALUTE
TO
JINDYWORABAK.

The Jindyworabah 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 remark-
able in a country notorious for the speedy decay of mush-
room 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 chieftains continue to publish long after their publi-
cations have either value or life.

Why, then has Jindyworabah not only survived but
driven?

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 environ-
ment for 149 years? That had produced an indigenous-
literature—small but authentic. Whose painters had
learned to recreate 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, “Bang” Patterson, Miles Franklin, Kathar-
ine Peichard, Louis Esson, Bernard O’Dowd, have con-
sidered 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 rational 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 colonisation. Whatever
the reason for this regression from the strong spirit of national
self-consciousness that produced the literary and political
outburst in the 1910'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 expatriation.

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 put
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 physi-
cal environment, our geographical isolation, the challenge
of a new hemisphere, the runnings of old civilisations
crumbling; all these had their effect. So, when Jindy-
worabah started 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 had been inarticulate stirrings that needed
concrete expressions to give them power.
There can be no going back in any living culture. Every culture must carry within it the riches of its past to draw nourishment from it and be fertilized again by the intuition 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 lootlessness and of the breakdown of the modern communities’ culture-patterns. It made explicit what great artists had always known—namely that great art never sets 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 racial 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 pain; but their salty home spun wisdom was in danger of being smothered, under a spate of importations—both cultural and political—with which the garrison mentality of one pseudo-intellectuals sought to bolster their spiritual homelessness.

This was not a atmosphere in which the writer could flourish; it introduced the problems which had faced Australian writers from the beginning: the problem of translating an unpatterned and formless life into the making in terms of old rich and polished traditions of English literature of deriving 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 unfenced people in an uncharted country and in the 1960’s and ‘70s all the scientific achievements that brought nations into closer contact, accompanied with our spiritual exploitation 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.

DEMPHLA CUSACK.