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Islands of Multilingual Literature: Community Magazines and Australia's Many Languages

Abstract

Australian literary studies has for some decades recognised the significance and contribution of multicultural writers to the national literary landscape; however, it has shown less interest in the multilingual nature of much of this writing. This article brings into focus a number of Australian magazines in which multilingual literature has been promoted, from the 1920s Brisbane publication *The Muses Magazine*, to the 1990s multicultural, multilingual women's magazine *Ambitious Friends*, which featured creative work in Arabic, Lao, Spanish and Vietnamese. Further illustrations, specific to Vietnamese Australian writing, will be provided from *Integration: The Magazine for Vietnamese and Multicultural Issues*, published in Bankstown from 1993 to 2003. Underpinning this discussion of multilingual magazines is the argument that writing and reading across languages can move readers to new perspectives on culture, identity and language itself.

Keywords

australia, magazines, community, literature, multilingual, islands, languages, many

Disciplines

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*Islands of Multilingual Literature:
Community Magazines and Australia's Many Languages*

Australia is and has always been multilingual. This is a claim made by linguist Michael Clyne throughout his career, in his many books, articles, reports and speeches. Clyne frequently began this argument by pointing to the linguistic complexity of Aboriginal Australia, in which an estimated 250 languages were spoken prior to European contact. Many Aboriginal people were fluent in at least two and often three or more languages owing to familial relations that crossed language groups, as well as networks of trade and travel. Clyne also notes that although the arrival of the First Fleet introduced the norm of monolingualism, multilingualism has also been an aspect of non-Aboriginal Australian society from its earliest days. Many of the convicts and later settlers spoke Irish, Gaelic or Welsh along with English. Later in the nineteenth century, the gold rush period which drew migrants from Europe and Asia saw not only an increase in the number of non-Aboriginal languages spoken but also a burgeoning multilingual print culture, with significant numbers of community language newspapers. The same period saw a rapid growth in bilingual education, with bilingual schools operating in each of the five colonies, teaching in German, French, Gaelic, Polish and Hebrew.

With the lead up to Federation, however, the nation-building discourse which gathered force through the end of the nineteenth century and continued into the twentieth century created an environment in which multilingualism became increasingly suspect and monolingualism more deeply entrenched. The First World War exacerbated this, and in the century since, Clyne says, Australia has experienced an ongoing tension between monolingualism and multilingualism. Although Australian society has continued to be shaped by migration, becoming one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse nations

on the planet, Clyne argues that a monolingual mindset has dominated, and that this continues to influence many aspects of public policy and much of our national discourse (*Australia's Language Potential*, 1–2).

This same tension between monolingual and multilingual assumptions and practices can be found in Australian literature and the discipline of Australian literary studies. The acknowledgement of multicultural writers and writing as an integral aspect of Australian literature began in the 1970s and gained momentum in the 1980s, following closely upon the political shift which occurred as state and federal governments introduced policies in recognition of the significant demographic changes resulting from post-war migration. However, as an indication of the lag in Australian literary infrastructure with regard to multicultural writing, it is worth noting that when the first bibliographies of multicultural or 'ethnic' writing were being compiled, the Mitchell Library in Sydney listed in its catalogue only two writers under the heading "Migrant Authors" (Houbein, cited in Gunew *et al.* 1992, vii). In the catalogues of some Australian libraries in the mid-1970s, then, it appears that multicultural or migrant writers and writing were barely acknowledged as a category within Australian literature, which presumably continued to be literature written in English by Australians of Anglo-Celtic descent. The work of Loló Houbein, Alexandra Karakostas-Seda, Sneja Gunew and many others challenged, and ultimately changed, this perception with groundbreaking work through the 1980s and 1990s on not only multicultural authors writing in English, but also those authors who, after migrating to Australia, continued to write and publish in their first language. Gaetano Rando's research in the area of Italian-Australian writing, for example, demonstrates the wealth and diversity of literary work from migrants of this cultural/linguistic background, with most of the literature written and published in Italian. Similarly, the work of Con Castan, George Kanarakis and Helen Nikas has documented and analysed the contributions of Greek Australian writers, in both Greek and English, to Australian literature.

Yet, while it appears that these researchers challenged and changed the monocultural, monolingual perception of Australian literature,

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this is true only to a certain extent. The potential shift from a monolingual to a multilingual framework, which this research in the 1980s and 1990s initiated, has – with a few notable exceptions – not been built upon or expanded to other linguistic groups. Italian and Greek remain the most thoroughly documented and studied groups. Chinese is beginning to attract a similar degree of scholarship.¹ But in the nearly two decades since the publication of *A Bibliography of Australian Multicultural Writers* (1992), surprisingly little research on the literary activities of other cultural/linguistic groups in Australia has taken place. Perhaps this has been symptomatic of the general decline in attention given to multicultural issues in Australian public discourse that occurred following the 1996 change in federal government.² For whatever reasons, Australian literature in languages other than English has not attracted the scholarship or research which the sheer quantity of publications in other languages would warrant. Sonia Mycak, in her research on Ukrainian Australian literary activities has reached a similar conclusion. “Neither library catalogues nor academic journals nor anthologies published by commercial presses are true indicators of the wealth of multicultural publishing in Australia,” she writes. The bulk of this material “remains hidden within the many and diverse ethnic communities” (244). When I began my research with the Australian Multicultural Writers subset of the AustLit database in 2007,³ I found significant gaps relating to literatures in languages other than English. Writing in Spanish, I found, remained poorly covered. Documentation of writing in Vietnamese was practically non-existent, as was writing in Arabic. The same could be said for any number of other cultural/linguistic groups, despite evidence of significant and ongoing literary production in languages including Polish, Latvian, Croatian, Turkish, Lao and Filipino, to list only a few. This lack of documentation across languages is being addressed; however, it suggests that a multilingual understanding of Australian literature has yet to be fully embraced. As a researcher for AustLit, I have tried to identify and locate points of entry through which even a monolingual researcher might access and build awareness of Australia’s multilingual literatures. Community language newspapers – which, as indicated above, have existed in Australian since the

nineteenth century, and which continue with substantial circulations in the twenty-first century – are excellent resources if one is fluent in the respective language. Bilingual or multilingual magazines or newspapers are not as common, but can provide an English reading researcher with documentation of community literary activities that would otherwise remain inaccessible. These magazines are like islands – multilingual islands in the midst of the dominant monolingual literary culture. I borrow the notion of language islands from linguistic studies, where it has been used to conceptualise language use in migrant communities – for example, the use of German dialects amongst migrant communities in Iowa, Pennsylvania and Texas in the United States.⁴ The phrase points to situations in which the use of one language is maintained while its community is surrounded by the use of another language. It might be appropriate, then, in the Australian literary context to think of the production of literature in other languages as islands of literary activity where multiple languages are maintained amidst the surrounding English writing. In this essay I'll discuss a number of literary journals that provide access to Australia's multilingual literary activities. Two of these are indeed multilingual, carrying articles and creative writing in a number of languages. The third is bilingual, publishing content in English and Vietnamese only, but will be included here as an indication of the breadth and significance of writing in Australia in languages other than English, writing that is diasporic and transnational as well as multilingual.⁵

An early example of an Australian periodical promoting an interest in literature from a wide variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds is *The Muses' Magazine*. Although short-lived, this magazine from Brisbane published fifteen issues from November 1927 to January 1929, and identified itself as "A monthly review of the Musical, Artistic, Literary, Scientific and Intellectual Life of Queensland." The front cover of the first issue of the magazine states:

This publication interests itself in the following Societies:
The Brisbane Repertory Theatre Society, The Queensland
Authors' and Artists' Association, The Alliance Française de
Brisbane, The Goethe Bund, The Societa Dante, The Centro

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Español de Queensland, The Hellenic Club, The House of Israel, The Hall of the Muses Conservatorium of Music.

Above this appeared a list of the Greek muses inspiring the publication: Polyhymnia [muse of sacred poetry and hymn], Thalia [muse of comedy], Urania [muse of astronomy and astrology], Clio [muse of history], Erato [muse of lyric and erotic poetry], Calliope [muse of epic poetry], Euterpe [muse of lyric poetry, and later music], Terpsichore [muse of choral song and dance], Melpomene [muse of tragedy].

Each issue carried reports from the various literary, cultural and linguistic societies identified on the cover, along with articles written by their members relating to literature, the arts and, occasionally, current events in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Greece, and Palestine. The third issue saw the Polish Page join those listed above and the fifth issue [March 1928] carried an article on Sweden with a brief survey of its literature and music, followed a few pages later with an article on Islamic Art, Literature and Science. Also in the fifth issue, content in languages other than English began to appear, with the poem "*Che Cosa e Dio*" by Italian poet Aleardo Aleardi. In the issues that followed, poems in German, French, Italian and Spanish were published, though most (if not all) were reprints of classics of those literatures, rather than new creative work from Australia. The seventh issue [May 1928] carried an article in German by a visiting German editor and lecturer in Economics, Christian Stoehr, titled "*Das Heutige Deutschland*" [Modern Germany]. And in the second issue of the magazine's second year [December 1928] an article in Spanish appeared, titled "*Situacion Economica de España*" [Spain's Economic Situation].

The Muses' Magazine, then, featured a range of content in other languages. And although the majority of its articles were in English, the magazine's focus and its stated aim was to bring to the attention of Queensland readers the artistic and intellectual achievement of other cultures – cultures represented by significant numbers of migrants who had settled in Queensland. The editor and proprietor of *The Muses' Magazine* was Luis Amadeo Pares, who was born in Queensland, but whose father had migrated to Australia from Spain. Pares was a musician and something of an entrepreneur and it seems

that *The Muses' Magazine* was more than an idealistic investment in literature and culture; it was an integral part of his business dealings. In his autobiography, *I Fiddled the Years Away* (1946), Pares explains that he financed the magazine from the profits of a series of performances that he had organised and staged in August 1927 in Brisbane, billed as "A Thousand Violins", at which over three nights, more than a thousand violin students from Brisbane's State schools took part (89–95). Several issues of *The Muses' Magazine* feature photographs of the event and extracts from reviews of the performance from Australian, American and European periodicals. Pares was also the lease-holder for The Hall of Muses in Brisbane, a set of rooms in a building in George Street which housed many of the literary and cultural organisations that were promoted in *The Muses' Magazine* and listed on the front cover. Pares writes of the opening of the Hall of Muses:

An Evening with the Muses in the presence of Vice-Royalty, at which nine talented ladies represented the Parnassian sisters made an auspicious opening to the rooms. Later, in an effort to unite the cultivated people of the various races residing in Brisbane, I arranged an evening at which polished addresses were delivered in thirteen respective languages and afterwards redelivered in English. Here, too, as time went on, art displays were held, recitals were given, and Spanish, French, Italian and German literary clubs were domiciled (80).

It is in a way challenging to reconcile this description of such multi-lingual social and cultural events in Brisbane in the 1920s with the racial prejudices that circulated openly at the time and that underlay legislation including the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901. Through this legislation, in fact, language became the means of excluding undesirable (non-European or non-white) migrants. The dictation test, in which potential migrants were required to correctly transcribe a passage of 50 words dictated to them, in any language, became an effective means of denying entry to Australia to anyone deemed unacceptable. The Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1902 meant that in Queensland more than 7000 Pacific Islanders who had worked

on plantations were deported, creating a demand for labour that was eventually met by European migrants from Italy and Spain. Yet relations between British-heritage migrants and newly arrived European migrants could also be tense. In 1930, the *Cairns Post* carried the headlines “Serious Riot at Feluga” and “Racial Clash” above a report on violence resulting from an altercation amongst British and Italian workers. Multilingualism and multiculturalism were certainly a feature of Queensland society in the 1920s and 1930s, yet tensions between the English-speaking British-heritage Australians and those newer migrants speaking other languages no less certainly existed.

The Muses' Magazine, however, presented an almost utopian impression of linguistic harmony and universal appreciation of culture. Swiss-born Queenslander Henri Alexis Tardent wrote articles on German, Swiss and Spanish literature as well as a regular column on horticulture. The Rabbi of the Brisbane Synagogue, Reverend Nathan Levine, who had recently arrived from South Africa, contributed a monthly column titled “Leaves from the House of Israel” and in the second issue his wife Evelyn Levine wrote an article on “Bialik: The Jewish National Poet”. Beginning in the third issue, Stefan de Polotynski wrote on Polish history and culture. The readership of *The Muses' Magazine* may also have reflected this cultural and linguistic diversity, as the announcements and advertisements that appeared through the magazine were often addressed to specific groups. The Polish Association advertised its library as open to members each evening between 6 and 7pm; it also advertised a competition sponsored by the Polish government open to young Polish composers of music, implying that Polish migrants were among the magazine's readers [May 1928, p. 15]. In the December 1928 of the magazine, an announcement titled “A Todos Los Españoles Residente en Esa” [To All Spanish Residents] states in Spanish that the editor of *The Muses' Magazine* wishes to offer all assistance possible to Spanish residents of Queensland and asks that they reciprocate by subscribing to the publication (24). This message in Spanish may have been a sign of the financial troubles experienced by Pares, as this turned out to be the penultimate issue, with *The Muses' Magazine* folding in 1929 when Pares is forced to declare bankruptcy (*I Fiddled the Years Away*, 96).

Though *The Muses' Magazine* is separated by more than six decades from *Ambitious Friends*, a second multilingual magazine of some interest, the two publications have a number of similarities. As *The Muses' Magazine* provides a lens through which something of the multicultural, multilingual composition of 1920s Queensland appears, *Ambitious Friends* reflects the cultural and linguistic diversity of 1990s western Sydney. The quarterly magazine began in 1994, published by the Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre, and ran to 2001. In its first issue it announced itself as "a multilingual, multicultural women's magazine" that had developed out of a number of community writing projects held in western Sydney, including: "the Indo-Chinese writing and Cabramatta book project, the Spanish speaking women's writing workshops and Spanish bilingual playwriting workshops in Fairfield," bilingual (Spanish/Arabic) community writing workshops in the Campbelltown area, the Blacktown "Mosaics writing project", and others (3). Like *The Muses' Magazine*, *Ambitious Friends* carried articles in English on the culture and history of countries from which its writers and readers had migrated. It also published short stories, autobiographical narratives and poetry in community languages including Spanish, Arabic, Lao, Filipino and Vietnamese.

Like *The Muses' Magazine*, *Ambitious Friends* depended upon the regular contributions of a number of writers. Although there are several whose contributions were substantial over the seven years of its publication, one writer can be highlighted. Marisa Cano, a migrant from Spain, was a member of the magazine's editorial board as well as a contributor of short stories, columns and articles. Importantly, she was the co-ordinator of many of the community writing projects acknowledged in the opening issue of the magazine as providing the foundation and the incentive to begin this multilingual magazine. These writing projects were organised and funded within a community cultural development framework: writing was seen as a means of empowerment, providing women from western Sydney with opportunities for self expression both in English and their own language, allowing them to share their experiences of migration and settlement, learn of the cultures of other migrant women, and improve their English language skills. *Ambitious Friends* provided these same opportunities, along with expe-

rience in publishing. Cano was one of a number of contributors whose work appeared not only in *Ambitious Friends*, but also in numerous other publications. She contributed regularly to the Spanish language periodicals publishing in Sydney through the 1990s. She edited and organised publication for at least nine anthologies of poetry and prose resulting from the writing workshops mentioned above. As well, she has translated and edited several single-author collections of poetry and autobiography by writers from Spain, Uruguay and Chile.

Literary work with migrants from Spanish-speaking backgrounds, such as that coordinated by Cano, was but one component of the active and diverse multilingual writing cultures which surrounded and supported *Ambitious Friends*. The magazine also carried a number of articles and poems in Arabic, reflecting the growing significance of that language in terms of both population in western Sydney and literary production. Although most of the Arabic poetry appearing in *Ambitious Friends* appears to be by women writers with few other publications before or since, an interview in Arabic provides information on one writer committed to a continuing engagement with literature. In this interview, Jihad Chehab El-Atrache talks about her writing experience in Lebanon prior to migration and her work in Australia with an Arabic creative writing group. Three years later in *Ambitious Friends* this same author had a poem published in Arabic, **المفقود الوليف** [The Missing Dear] and a search of the AustLit database reveals that Jihad Chehab El-Atrache has also had three short stories published in English, two of them quite recently. Whether her writing in Arabic continues or how many works in Arabic she may have published in Australia or overseas is, for this researcher, still an unknown. However, my point with this example is that multilingual magazines such as *Ambitious Friends* allow the process of tracing and documenting literary work in Australia's many languages other than English to begin.

An article appearing in the seventh volume of the magazine, in April 2000, can serve as an indication of the diversity of writing, and the narratives behind the writing, to be found in these multilingual publications. "New Beginnings for a Writer" relates the experiences of Teklemariam Birbirsa, an Ethiopian writer of political journalism, fiction and poetry with many publications in Ethiopia in his native

language Amharic. Birbirsa came to Australia as a refugee in 1998 and continued to write, completing a novel in Amharic set in both Ethiopia and Australia. The article explains the difficulties he faces in continuing his writing, especially the lack of funds needed to have his work translated for publication in English. The article is followed by an extract from the novel, appearing in both Amharic and English translation. The article closes by expressing the magazine's best wishes for this newly arrived migrant writer. In the ten years since, however, his work appears to have remained unpublished in Australia, as there are no further records under this name in any Australian catalogue.

Most migrant authors are familiar with the challenge of continuing to write and be published in Australia, either in their first language or in English. A final example from *Ambitious Friends* will illustrate that following the traces of multilingual writing produced in its pages can produce fortuitous results. In research related to the magazines discussed here, I have had opportunity to read through numerous issues of Spanish-language magazines published in Sydney from the 1970s through to the 1990s.⁶ One magazine that I found references to but could not locate was titled *El Faro*, published in the mid-1990s. The NSW State Library holds a microfilm copy of a newspaper with this title from the 1970s, but nothing for a magazine. In a 1996 issue of *Ambitious Friends*, however, I came upon an article in Spanish titled "Bibliografía de un Autobiografía" by A. J. Laskar. In this article Laskar introduced himself as a migrant from Chile and announced a new literary magazine that he and two academics were about to launch called *El Faro*. Learning that the editor was Chilean-born, I checked the online catalogue of the National Library of Chile and found that, indeed, it holds two issues of a magazine titled *El Faro*, published in Sydney in 1996 and 1997. This is just one example of the unexpected trajectories of Australian multilingual literature. It turns out that a number of Chilean-born migrants to Australia have lodged their books with Chilean libraries. Similarly, a book by at least one Uruguayan-born migrant to Australia can be found at libraries in Uruguay, but not in Australia.⁷

These transnational dimensions of Australian writing are again apparent in *Integration: The Magazine for Vietnamese and Multicultural Issues*.

A bilingual, rather than a multilingual publication, *Integration* featured content in English and Vietnamese. Like the previously discussed two publications, it carried a significant amount of literary material and its bilingual content provides an English-speaking researcher a valuable point of entry into the very active and prolific Vietnamese-Australian writing community. In terms of literary content, this magazine is, I believe, an important resource. Established and edited by Xuân Dương, who came to Australia in 1978 as a refugee from Vietnam, *Integration* was published for ten years, from 1993 to 2003, in seventeen issues, some of more than 200 pages. Its literary coverage began in its third issue, with previous issues focusing on current affairs and social, health or economic matters. The third issue carried poems in both Vietnamese and English; in issues four and five short stories and biographies began to appear and the sixth issue saw the first instalment of the novella “The Tamarind Tree” by the editor, Xuân Dương. As the magazine grew it began to publish reviews of books by Vietnamese-Australian writers, and reports of book launches and cultural events. Amongst these reviews, coverage can be found of titles in Vietnamese by writers who are widely known and read across the Vietnamese diaspora, including novels by Lê Hằng, an important woman writer who had published twelve novels in Vietnam prior 1975 but who gave up her literary career as she remained in Vietnam following the end of the war. Only after joining her family in Australia in 1989 did she returned to writing, publishing novels and short story collections with Vietnamese-language publishers in the United States. *Integration* provides a synopsis of her novel *Bên Kia Là Núi* (1998), relating the story of a refugee family in a Sydney suburb. It also published a translation into English of one of her short stories “Murmur to Rocks”. Again, for an English-speaking researcher interested in how Australian writing intersects with diasporic and transnational literatures, a magazine such as *Integration* provides unique access into a literary culture that has remained for the most part unrecognised within Australian literary studies.

This same point can be demonstrated with the first poem to appear in the magazine. “Năm Mười” [Fifty] by Trần Đĩnh Lương appears in both Vietnamese and English and is striking in the elegance and simplicity of its dual settings – Saigon and Sydney superimposed as a

traffic light changes from red to green. The poem is a beautiful meditation on the passing of time, of ageing in a land far from one's upbringing. Although nostalgic, the poem with its reference to the story of Trương Chi, a traditional Vietnamese narrative of an ugly boatman's unrequited love for the daughter of a mandarin, conveys an acknowledgement that the rupture of migration and the longing for the homeland one has left can never be assuaged. At the same time the poem asserts, through its expression in Vietnamese, that cultural and linguistic identity can provide the means of understanding that rupture and coming to terms with longing. The poem's publication in *Integration* is also significant as an indication of the many circuits of cultural activity and literary production that have been neglected by Australian literary studies. I would argue that the poem "Năm Mười" is as Australian as it is Vietnamese: imagine how many similar experiences of temporal and spatial slippage occur in Australian cities each day. Since its appearance in *Integration* this poem has been republished twice. Four years after its publication in the magazine it appeared in the first Vietnamese-language anthology *Tuyển Tập Những Cây Bút Úc Châu. 1* (1997) published in Australia. More recently it appeared, in dual-language format again, in the author's collection *Hải Đảo* (2005), published in Ho Chi Minh City. The anthology just cited, *Tuyển Tập Những Cây Bút Úc Châu. 1*, includes 140 works by 54 different writers, many of whom had been published first in *Integration* and in the Vietnamese-Australian weekly newspapers, which regularly carry poetry. This again is an indication of the scale of literary activity taking place in Vietnamese in Australia. The publication in 2005 of Trần Đĩnh Lương's book *Hải Đảo* is another indication of the complexity of the circuits of literary production of Vietnamese-Australian writing. Following the Vietnamese government's policy of Đổi Mới and the easing of relations with western countries, some Vietnamese-Australians have been able to return to Vietnam to reunite with family, to travel for business, or to visit as tourists. Trần Đĩnh Lương is not the only Vietnamese-Australian to publish in Vietnam works that first appeared in magazines in Australia such as *Integration*. The point I wish to make is that writing produced in magazines or community publications in any one of Australia's many languages now circulates transnationally

in ways that would have been difficult to predict two decades ago and it is interesting to think about readers across the globe encountering Australian literature in dozens of languages besides English.

This is not new – Rosa Cappiello’s *Paese Fortunato* [*Oh Lucky Country*] (1981) is an important precursor of this type of transnational writing – but it is a phenomenon that has become increasingly common in the Australian context. Vietnamese-Australian writer Phùng Nhân, for example, has published novels in Vietnamese in America and Canada, as well as Australia, and in the 1990s he was the best-known Vietnamese-Australian writer amongst the Vietnamese diaspora. There are similar cases of authors who write in Latvian, or others who write in Arabic, and are well-known and widely read in their first language overseas. I know of a Peruvian-born writer who has recently published, in Bogotá, a crime novel set in Sydney.⁸ Again, my point is a simple one: Australian writing is not limited to writing in English. And the magazines discussed in this article give an indication that multilingualism in Australian literature has been around for some time; that this multilingual writing travels widely, but is also produced very locally; and that Australian literary studies needs to broaden its understanding of, and interest in, this important aspect of the nation’s literary culture.

Perhaps this widening of interest in literature written in languages other than English being produced in Australia is just around the corner, or indeed is happening now. A recent issue of *Kunapipi* is remarkable for its multilingual content. It features a translation into Spanish of a short story by Philippine-born Australian writer Merlinda Bobis, as well as poetry in bilingual format by a number of Vietnamese-Australians who have not previously been published in English. In this same issue of *Kunapipi*, Chi Vu, herself a generation 1.5 Vietnamese-Australian, cites Vietnamese-American writer Dinh Linh on the effects of growing up with two cultures and two languages. Dinh Linh says:

With regards to both English and Vietnamese, I feel like a “backpacker” to both languages, a tourist in the country of language. As a visitor, I am able to recognise things that a native can no longer perceive because he has remained in one place for so long (143–144).

This is Chi Vu's translation from Dinh Linh's response in Vietnamese to a question about being entangled by language. In important ways it echoes what Michael Clyne has often written about bilingualism and multilingualism. The benefits of plurilingualism, Clyne writes, begin in childhood and continue throughout life.

Because plurilingual children grow up with two (or more) sets of representational symbols, they develop thinking patterns different to those of monolingual children. Psycholinguistic studies have shown that young bilingual children are able to differentiate between form and content in a disciplined way ("Australia's Unrecognized").

Clyne gives an example from a study in which 4-6 year old children were asked whether a dog could be called a cow. Monolingual children tend to answer "That's stupid. When you look at a dog, you can tell it isn't a cow"; the multilingual children however are more likely to say, "well, there could be a language in which the word for 'dog' is 'cow'". Clyne uses this scenario to argue that multilingualism contributes to one's ability to distinguish form from content, and to recognise the arbitrary nature of language. He also suggests that the answer, "that's stupid" is indicative of the monolingual mindset that fails to acknowledge the possibilities of difference, or the potential for enriched thinking that an understanding of and interaction with a number of languages might bring ("Australia's Unrecognized").

Australian literature is multilingual. The examples provided through the pages of the multilingual Australian magazines discussed here give some indication of the possibilities for research that remain open, awaiting scholarship that will by necessity cross cultures and languages, research that will broaden our conception of Australian writing. Whether in Chile or Uruguay, Lebanon or Vietnam, or perhaps Ethiopia, it is interesting to think of how Australian writing makes its way to readers across the globe. I suggest that we should be thinking of Australian literature in these contexts, and in the many languages besides English in which it is written.

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NOTES

- 1 See, for example, Ommundsen, 2001; Shen.
- 2 See Ommundsen 2007.
- 3 AustLit (www.austlit.edu.au) is a web accessible eResearch environment for research into fields relating to Australian literature and storytelling in all forms. The database and associated resources have been developed in collaboration with scholars and librarians at many Australian universities with the involvement of the National Library of Australia.
- 4 See Putnam.
- 5 This essay was first written and presented as part of the University of Wollongong's Literature, Identity & Culture Research Group's seminar series "Moving Readers" in May 2011. I thank the participants in that seminar, especially Leigh Dale and Louise D'Arcens, for their productive comments and suggestions.
- 6 See Jacklin 2010.
- 7 See Abarca; Aguila; Fernández.
- 8 See Vavere; Ad-Deen; Moreno Casarrubios.

