

2002

Kunapipi 23(2) 2001

Anne Collett

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Collett, Anne, *Kunapipi* 23(2) 2001, *Kunapipi*, 24(1), 2002.
Available at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/kunapipi/vol24/iss1/25>

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Kunapipi 23(2) 2001

Abstract

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KUNAPIPI

Journal of Post-Colonial Writing



GENERAL ISSUE

KUNAPIPI

Journal of Post-Colonial Writing

VOLUME XXIII NUMBER 2
2001

Kunapipi is a bi-annual arts magazine with special but not exclusive emphasis on the new literatures written in English. It aims to fulfil the requirements T.S. Eliot believed a journal should have: to introduce the work of new or little known writers of talent, to provide critical evaluation of the work of living authors, both famous and unknown, and to be truly international. It publishes creative material and criticism. Articles and reviews on related historical and sociological topics plus film will also be included as well as graphics and photographs.

The editor invites creative and scholarly contributions. The editorial board does not necessarily endorse any political views expressed by its contributors. Manuscripts should be double-spaced with footnotes gathered at the end, should conform to the Harvard (author-date) system. Wherever possible the submission should be on disc (soft-ware preferably Microsoft Word) and should be accompanied by a hard copy. Please include a short biography, address and email contact if available.

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Individuals: 1 year AUD \$50.00
Institutions: 1 year AUD \$120.00

Please note that if payment is made in currencies other than AUD\$, the equivalent of \$10.00 must be added to cover banking costs. Cheques should be made payable to *Kunapipi Publishing*.

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ISSN 0106-5734

Kunapipi

VOLUME XXIII NUMBER 2, 2001.

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Acknowledgements

Kunapipi is published with assistance from the European branch and the parent organisation of the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies and the Institute for Social Change and Critical Inquiry (ISCCI) at the University of Wollongong.

EACLALS

European Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies

ACLALS

Front Cover: Contemporary Musqueam weaving by Debra and Robyn Sparrow, 1999 (1.8m x 3m), entrance hall, UBC Museum of Anthropology, Vancouver. (Photo: Stan Gielewski)

Kunapipi refers to the Australian Aboriginal myth of the Rainbow Serpent which is the symbol both of creativity and regeneration. The journal's emblem is to be found on an Aboriginal shield from the Roper River area of the Northern Territory of Australia.

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EDITORIAL

Reflecting on the events of September 11th and their aftermath it would seem that the need to maintain a journal of *Kunapipi*'s stated aims and founding ethos is greater than ever. It provides a space, indeed, a relatively protected (and indeed privileged) public place, within which to explore, expose and discuss our differing perspectives on and positions within histories that determine not merely probable futures but possible futures. Despite the obvious differences of subject matter and approach, material and methodology, all the contributions in this general issue would seem to share a political vision. This is not the vision of a single party or theoretical stance, but one that recognises the need to right imbalances of power whilst acknowledging the complexity of personal and social histories from which states of inequality and injustice arise. There are no simple solutions; but the symposium that *Kunapipi* keeps alive allows for ongoing reflection, adjustment and re-adjustment of our ideas and opinions in the light of new knowledges and new perspectives.

For me, an example of the way in which a different perspective can move you to 'think again' or to adjust and re-align an entrenched view, is offered by Debra Sparrow's response to the term 'half-breed' — a term for which I would assume negative connotation, given the history of its pejorative use. Yet when asked what she thought of the term, Debra replied: 'I think it's pretty positive because you get to look at things in different ways. I don't look 100% Native, but I don't look White either, so nobody knows what I am. I am left open for people to call down the Native people, or call down another culture, and I can sit in the middle of it'. This is (to me at least) a surprising response from a First Nations' woman who can also speak of hurtful experiences (felt on personal, familial and generational levels) that were 'responsible for my growth'. Hers is quite a remarkable story of strength and survival that is based upon imaginative energy and openness to possible futures. This is effectively demonstrated when, towards the end of the interview, Debra (whose work is featured on the cover) talks about the weaving that now hangs in the Vancouver International Airport as an emblem of *living* tradition: '... the weaving just shows you where the Musqueam community has gone, from tradition to technology, and that's why I did the work.... We were doing it for the whole coastline, and representing an open door to the world and to our land....' I read her words and feel a deep admiration and respect for a woman whose capacity to create and believe in better futures is born out of a history of cultural genocide. I too am left open.

On a more mundane note, I would like to point out to subscribers that although *Kunapipi* has gone from 3 to 2 issues annually, the actual value of 'words for dollars' remains the same. The issues will continue to be of this size. I would also like to apologise to Jennifer Strauss, whose poem 'Stains', published in an earlier issue, lost its last stanza. It is reprinted in full in this issue. Finally, thank you to Anna: her work and spirit lives on.

Anne Collett