Kunapipi is a tri-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. Articles in this journal are refereed. Manuscripts should be double-spaced with footnotes gathered at the end, should conform to the MHRA (Modern Humanities Research Association) Style Sheet. Wherever possible the submission should be on disc (soft-ware preferably Word for Windows, Wordperfect or Macwrite saved for PC on PC formatted disc) and should be accompanied by a hard copy, please include a short biography, address and email contact if available.

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SUBCRIPTION RATES FOR 1998:
Individuals: 1 year: £20
Institutions: 1 year: £40

Please note that if payment is made in currencies other than £ sterling, £5 must be added to cover banking costs. Cheques made payable to Kunapipi.

Please address all subscription enquiries to:
Kunapipi
P.O. Box 20, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire, HX7 5UZ, UK
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ISSN 0106-5734
Acknowledgements

*Kunapipi* is published with assistance from the European branch of the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies, the Faculty of Arts and the Centre for Research in Textual and Cultural Studies (CRITACS) at the University of Wollongong, and the Arts Council of England.

First of all I would like to thank Olive Senior for answering so promptly and arranging for Bloodaxe to grant permission to publish primarily published poems. In an issue as wide as this one, that covers so many areas and countries it is hard to thank everyone but some names should have a special mention – Anne Collett who dealt with the Southern Hemisphere for me; Derry Jeffares who drew my attention to *The Trail of Sorrow*; John Kinsella who helped with the poetry; Henrik Bodkaer, Lars Jensen, Ruth Jensen, for their help with my computer illiteracy; Gaye Shortland and Maura O’Sullivan who helped keep me up to date with the ‘Irish Question’; Susan Burns and Glenda Pattenden for keeping *Kunapipi* alive and Aarhus Hospital for keeping me alive.

We wish to thank all contributors to this journal and Shaun Levin extends a special thanks to Ms Rulumeni at South Africa House for her help with Xhosa words in his story.

Front cover: Celtic Cross, A.N. Jeffares 1998

*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 in Australia.
## Contents

**EDITORIAL**

*vi*

**FICTION**

*Elleke Boemher, 'Fatality'*

*Shaun Levin, 'A Year of Two Summers'*

*Kim Farleigh, 'So Fantastically Innocent'*

*Cónal Creedon, 'Dockets 'n' Dowels'*

**POETRY**

*Patrick Colm Hogan, 'Caribbean Dedalus'*

*A.K. Whitehead, 'Reflections on Some Ecclesial Aspects of Late Twentieth-Century Catholicism'*

*Martin Bennett, 'In Lagos Harbour', 'Roadside Reflection'*

*John Mateer, 'The Guide', 'My Mother's Memory'*

*Harjit Kaur Khaira, 'She's Lost the Knack Because They Stole Her Black'*

*Olive Senior, 'Plants', 'Gourd', 'Missing'*

*Taban Lo Liyong, 'A Shot in the Eye'
  'The Master Torturer's Complaint'*

*Ouyang Yu, 'The White Australian'*

*Alison Croggan, 'The Harbour'*

*Briar Wood, 'Between the Flags'*

*Steven Waling, 'Three Places in North-East Lancashire'*

*Peter E. Lugg, 'Sis', 'The Revenant'*

**ARTICLES**

*Saeed Ur-Rehman, 'Decolonizing Post-colonial Theory'*

*Harjit Kaur Khaira, 'Post-Colonial Theory: A Discussion of Directions and Tensions with Special Reference to the Work of Frida Kahlo'*

*Anne Collett, 'And Woman's Tongue Clatters Out of Turn': Olive Senior's Praise-Song for Woman-weed'*

*Mark Stein, 'Cultures of Hybridity: Reading Black British Literature'*

**STATEMENT**

*Danny Morrison, 'Dear Future'*

**NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS**

*103*
EDITORIAL

Everything is propaganda for what you believe in ... I don’t see that it could be otherwise. The harder and more deeply you believe in anything the more in a sense you’re a propagandist. Conviction fathers propaganda. I don’t know, I have never been able to reach the conclusion that that’s a bad word.

Dorothea Lange

There is no such things as an unpolitical book. Even the very thought that art could be unpolitical, is political.

F. A. Ajayi

In fact, as a woman, I have no country. As a woman I want no country.

Three Guineas, Virginia Woolf

As the cover indicates the dominant theme of this issue is the so-called ‘Irish Question’. Whilst not all the material is directly related to Ireland the issues raised in the literature, essays and statements all relate in one way or another: to colonialism, neo-colonialism, refugees, multiculturalism, dispossession, racism – all issues one expects to find in a journal of post-colonialism.

One could not for one moment write about Ireland and not expect conflict and I don’t expect this issue to be an exception. One of the aspects of Kunapipi has been the publication of articles bound to cause dissension. The policy has always been to allow those with another point of view to respond. That offer still stands.

Tony Blair has finally apologized to the Irish for the potato famine and admitted that it was not the purgatory which the Irish had to go through before they could reach the promised land – America. Actually, it was easy to see it as it really was, an example of a man-made disaster with which the peoples of the colonized countries are regularly afflicted to this day, and to see parallels between it and for example, the political and economic disasters which drive millions of migrants to Europe and the USA. And it is quite easy to see why one group of underdogs would side with another. Elleke Boehmer’s story illustrates this as does Patrick Colm Hogan’s poem, where one colonized group, the West-Indians, have drawn on another colonized island, both subjected to the loss of land and language to make a new literature of their own. It is not an accident that Walcott called Joyce ‘our age’s Omeros’. Nor is it surprising that the leader of Australia’s major revolt, ‘The Eureka Stockade’, was led by an Irishman and that our greatest folk hero is Ned Kelly.

Yet another interesting but little known example of lines between oppressed peoples occurred during the Irish potato famine in 1847 when a group of Native Americans, the Choctaws sent over American dollars to aid the starving Irish. This act of generosity, little known to most people, was commemorated in 1992 when seven Irishmen went to the United States to thank the Choctaws and organized a memorial walk following the trail taken by the Choctaws, who had been forcibly moved from Mississippi to Oklahoma. They set off from Oklahoma where they first met the Choctaws and participated in a Choctaw tribal ceremony. They were joined by eight more Irishmen and re-enacted what they called the Trail of Tears in reverse, eventually arriving at the Choctaw original homeland. The Choctaws made the
Irish honorary members of their tribe and the Irishmen donated their boots to the Choctaw memorial museum.

We have all seen the consequences of divide and rule, a policy to ensure power for the few who lust after it, and misery, chaos, destruction and a manipulated hatred for the majority, who, given the chance would live in peace with their neighbours, even when their culture may be different from their own. It's not only the politicians lusting after power. It's those other Empires as well. In A.K. Whitehead's case it is the Catholic Church. Some of the leaders seem completely unaware that the individual people have grasped the idea that it is not the clergy's church, it is everyone's. And of course, as usual, we have the serpent in the form of Eve peddling her apples. Pope John Paul II's recent remarks on for example contraception and women priests (see the Guardian, page 1, July 7, 1998) make the Council of Trent (1543-1563) look radical. Why did I join seventy thousand people to converge on Birmingham as a peaceful protest, when the Group of Seven met there, to beg them to break the Third World's chain of debt. This was to have been top of the agenda at the Lambeth Conference. Instead the agenda became hijacked by a hate campaign against gays and in some cases women priests. God loves us all we are assured but it would appear in the sight of some, as it did to Orwell, that He loves some more than others.

On the evening of September 12, 1993, I was lying in a hospitable bed in Denmark watching television. The feature film turned out to be The Way We Were (1973), which was a film discussing the nature of commitment, featuring Barbra Streisand and Robert Redford. It will surprise few of the readers of Kunapipi that my sympathy lay with Katie, whom we first meet as a young Jewish undergraduate, a member of the Communist Party addressing the group of young upper-class undergraduates on the evils of Franco, Hitler and Mussolini and urging them to do something about it. Her pleas fell on deaf ears, and although she became part of the group when she married Hubbell the marriage eventually ended in divorce. She is proved right, of course, and many suffered under the McCarthy era as she had predicted. In the final scene she accidentally meets Hubbell, they speak briefly then part. As they do so we see her on a busy corner handing out leaflets and shouting 'ban nuclear weapons'. 'You never give up do you?', Hubbell calls to her and I liked her answer. 'Never'.

To return finally to Ireland. Again, whilst in hospital, I watched Tim Sebastian interview Mary McAleese, who is now President of the Republic of Ireland. Her own background is very much tied up with the violence and troubles in Ireland. Being a Catholic and nationalist living in Belfast she knew only too well the horrors of the last thirty years. The family house was burned down, her handicapped brother was tortured by protestant youths and a woman was killed in a car bomb placed outside her father's pub in the Falls Road. She told how the whole family went to mass and never returned to their home. Asked if she was bitter her answer was 'No,' and in reply to the question how had her family not been, she answered that what had saved them was their belief in the gospel of love and forgiveness. The interview took place after Omagh. There is no denying the tragedy, but as she said, so much evil was visited on that small village that it created a global unity and showed the triumph of goodness and love. The fragile peace plant was made more robust, and united groups determined to look to the future not to the past.

Earlier on in the interview Mary McAleese had emphasized that Ireland's
greatest gift to the world had been her people – seventy million (Ireland today has a population of five million). 'We know,' she said, 'what it's like to be refugees, poor and unwanted and we can only hope that it has given us a greater tolerance of other cultures.' She insisted that there was an Irish culture and there were other cultures and in an increasingly multicultural world one must come to recognize and respect this fact. A good deal of hope and admiration may arise from the fact that such words of forgiveness and tolerance should come from an Irish woman at the end of the twentieth century, the 'Entrenchment, concentrated gunfire, the "efficient" heaping up of horrors' inaugurated by the Boer War which 'set the pattern for hostilities between man and man for years to come' as spoken by Kathleen in Elleke Boehmer’s novel extract, in this issue. Although hostility is by no means foreign to Danny Morrison, he too wants to point beyond to the future as the last paragraph in his statement shows:

I thought to myself: the days of intransigence, the days of bombast, the days of bombing are over. But it is shameful that we shall live on the backs of the dead. Not just one killed, not just three, not just four, but an unconscionable toll ... Hopefully, it will all look slightly different through the prism of time, and there will come a time when there will not be red, when there will not be black, the colours of blood and despair, but there will be blue, the blue skies of peace.
Dear Future ...

Anna Rutherford

Punch, London 8 April 1848. The character who is fully simianized with the fool's cap is John Mitchell, who because of his rhetoric about the famine in Ireland, was prosecuted under the new Treason Felony and sentenced to fourteen years transportation to Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania) in May 1848. See stanza one of the poem by Patrick Colm Hogan, ‘Caribbean Dedalus’.