Kunapipi 3(1) 1981, Contents, Editorial, Contributors

Anna Rutherford

University of Aarhus, Denmark

Follow this and additional works at: https://ro.uow.edu.au/kunapipi

Part of the Arts and Humanities Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at:https://ro.uow.edu.au/kunapipi/vol3/iss1/2

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au
Kunapipi
Kunapiipi is a continuation of Commonwealth Newsletter and is published twice a year, Summer and Winter, by Dangaroo Press, Department of English; University of Aarhus. It is a journal of creative and critical writing concerned with the new literatures written in English. The major concentration is on the present and former Commonwealth countries but this is in no way exclusive. Articles and reviews on related historical and sociological topics will also be included as well as graphics and photographs.

The journal is the bulletin for the European branch of the Association of Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies. As such it offers information about courses, conferences, visiting scholars and writers, scholarships, and literary competitions.

The editor invites creative and scholarly contributions. Manuscripts should be double-spaced with footnotes gathered at the end, should conform to the MHRA (Modern Humanities Research Association) Style Sheet and should be accompanied by a return envelope.

All correspondence — manuscripts, books for review, inquiries — should be sent to:

Anna Rutherford
Editor — KUNAPIPI
Department of English
University of Aarhus
8000 Aarhus C
Denmark

Printed and published by Dangaroo Press
Copyright 1981 by KUNAPIPI
ISSN 0106-5734
WE REGRET THE LATE APPEARANCE
OF THE SUMMER ISSUE OF KUNAPIPI.
THIS IS DUE TO A 10 WEEK
NATIONWIDE PRINTERS' STRIKE IN
DENMARK. THE WINTER ISSUE WILL
APPEAR IN DECEMBER.
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.

Kunapipi is published with the assistance of a grant from the Literature Board of the Australia Council.
CONTENTS

AUTOBIOGRAPHY
Nirad C. Chaudhuri, 'Why I Write in English' 1
Buchi Emechta, 'Head Above Water' 81

FICTION
Mihir Sinha, 'The Quest' 3
Cyril Dabydeen, 'Ritual of Fire' 137

POEMS
G.S. Sharat Chandra, 'Tamil Movie Box Office Hit' 18
'Indian Film Kiss Control'
'Hindu Pilgrimage'
Zulfikar Ghose, 'In Praise of Hot Weather' 25
'Among Other Things'
Chris Wallace-Crabbe, 'Landscape with Classic Figures' 42
Thomas Shapcott, 'Ficus Benjaminii' 43
B.R. Whiting, 'Sense' 44
'The First Morning'
Frank Mkalawile Chipasula, 'Warrior' 117
Kirsten Holst Petersen, 'Beethoven Strasse, Frankfurt' 134
'The Piano'

FILM
Susan Gardner, 'Can You Imagine Anything More Australian?: Bruce Beresford's »Breaker Morant«' 27

ART
Prabhu S. Guptara, 'Indian Art: Transforming Symbols' 21

ARTICLES
Mark O'Connor, 'Vernacular and Middle Styles in Australian Poetry' 47
Bruce Clunies Ross, 'Survival of the Jindyworobaks' 56
Sven Poulsen, 'African History: from a European to an African point of view' 75

Felix Mnthali, 'Continuity and Change in Conrad and Ngugi' 91

Blaise N. Machila, 'Ambiguity in Achebe's Arrow of God' 119

Henrik Mossin, 'The Existentialist Dimension in the Novels of Jean Rhys' 143

INTERVIEWS
David Ireland 64
Ngugi wa Thiong'o 110

THE YEAR THAT WAS 151

BOOK REVIEWS 172

JOURNALS 173

CONFERENCES 176

INDEX 1980 183

KUNAPIPI

Subscription rates:

Institutions: Dkr50 / $10 / £5 per annum

Individuals: Dkr30 / $6 / £3 per annum or Dkr80 / $16 / £8 for three years

Payment should preferably be made in Danish currency. If you wish to pay in another currency, you should add $4 or £1.50 to cover banking charges.
Why I Write in English

This question is often put to me in England because people see that I am an Indian and are told that I write in English. But it shows a complete ignorance, not unnatural in these days, of the place that the English language holds in India. Any Indian who has had an urge for literary expression during the last hundred years would have written as naturally in English as he would have done in his own mother tongue, and he would not have been conscious that he was making a deliberate choice.

This linguistic situation was the product of history, that is, of British rule in India. To speak of Bengal alone where I was born and brought up, since the sixties of the last century only English was used for the discussion of politics and public questions; it was also employed almost wholly in private correspondence even between sons and fathers; and in social life among men nearly half the conversation would be in English. In the administration of law, lawyers even in the lowest courts in small towns, addressing Bengali magistrates and judges would plead only in English.

English equally dominated our educational system. When I was at school in a small town of East Bengal, eighteen miles from the nearest railway station, and living in huts which had mud floors, walls of mat, and roofs of thatch or corrugated iron, I had the three following books as texts in English in 1908: Kipling's *Jungle Book*, Andrew Lang's *Animal Story Book*, and Palgrave's *Children's Treasury of English Lyrics*. From the age of ten, as I was in 1908, and in any case from the age of twelve we were not allowed to speak to our Bengali teachers in the class except in English. Bengali was permitted only in the Bengali and Sanskrit classes, but when I reached the university stage even Bengali and Sanskrit were taught in English. In our educational system our mother tongue was called 'the second language' or 'the vernacular'.

As a result, all our highest literary enjoyment was in English, not only through English literature, but also in translations of French and other literatures into English. I read Hugo's *Les Miserables* at the age of
fifteen, and Tolstoy the next year. I need not mention my reading of English literature. Of course, all this knowledge of English and absorption in the language was confined to a tiny minority. But in public and cultural life it was this minority which mattered.

So I might say that it would have been a matter of surprise if, having a sense of literary vocation, I did *not* write in English. In this field, however, a separation of functions had taken place even from the earliest days of modern Bengali literary effort. If a Bengali wanted to go in for what is known as ‘creative writing’, that is, for poetry or fiction, he generally wrote in Bengali. But in regard to other genres he would write only in English.

As for myself, the case was different. Although I did write some stories, I wrote them both in English and in Bengali. But I gave up fiction and never published anything in that line. What was more exceptional, I wrote both in English and Bengali on politics, cultural subjects, and history. My first pieces, one of literary criticism and the other on cultural history, were, however, written in English and published in English periodicals. That was in 1925 and 1926. I did not begin to write regularly in Bengali till two years later, but from 1927 to 1937 I wrote in both the languages.

In this I am an exception. No Indian writer divides his major literary effort between two languages. I have done that, and have been bilingual. This, however, calls for a severe discipline, because a writer who does this has to forget that he knows the other language when he is writing in one. This is made necessary, and almost obligatory, by the fact that English and Bengali stand in utterly different worlds, not only as languages, but as embodiments of the mind. They have to embody different thoughts and feelings. So, when addressing a literary conference in Delhi I said that when I write in English I am not an *Indian* writer, but a writer in *India*.

But I gave up writing in Bengali in 1937, and did not resume till thirty years later, i.e. in 1967. That was due, first, to the conviction that Bengali culture had reached a dead end, and there was no sense in getting into a blind alley. I wished to address all India, and beyond that the whole of the English-speaking world, and I knew that so far as anybody in India, including Bengal, was interested in my ideas he would read me in English. So by confining myself to English I did not lose any part of my readership.

I reverted to Bengali in 1967, at the age of seventy, because I began to feel that I had something to say to fellow-Bengalis on their past history
and present predicament which would gain greater force if I put that in Bengali. But I would make it clear that what can be written in English cannot be written in Bengali, and what can be written in Bengali cannot be put into English. The two mediums are as different as a piano and an orchestra are in music. English has greater range, colour, and depth, but Bengali can be equally subtle if not as massive or strong. But my life as lived — I have now lived for nearly forty years outside Bengal — has naturally had an effect on my literary output. I have at this moment ten books to my credit, and nine of them are in English. This ratio has, however, no relationship with my loyalty to both the languages. I do not consider English to be a foreign language: on the other hand, I have not become an expatriate in language by not writing in Bengali.