

Appendix D

KONDAMBI

2nd March 1964

My Very Dear Twofella,

Well all is right with the world again and without any private doubts I can preface my prayers with 'Thank you God for the gift of life because it is good'.

I think I told you how sick at heart I got at the wretched attacks in the South Pacific Post. It was my reference to 'boy scouts' that did it. This was headlined as if it had been meant to be jeering and critical, whereas I had no quarrel with the 'boy scouts' themselves. The correspondence columns of the Post were full of abuse and comment, the worst sample being a perfectly filthy libellous diatribe for which I think I could have claimed substantial damages if I had wished to remain in the public eye. I kept quiet, but it did make me sick. This unfortunately was happening concurrently with attempts to discredit my study of the group hysteria the Kuma associate with eating mushrooms. Don't think I am getting paranoid because I am alleging 'attacks' and 'attempts to discredit'. I was keeping an open mind on this aspect of things until people starting lining up very definitely FOR and AGAINST me and the FORS all warned me that certain persons were interested, mostly for professional reasons, in discrediting my study of the hysteria. It makes sense. But I must say that I had a somewhat lonely couple of weeks while the AGAINSTS were being distant and I had to alienate some of the FORS by telling them straight out that they were mistaken in thinking I was meaning to criticize the *kiaps*. My criticism is simply that the Administration, in the form of the central body based in Moresby, has really messed things up—despite the generally intelligent and well-intentioned attempts of the 'boy scouts'. When McCarthy, Director of Native Affairs, asked John to supply him with a transcript of my paper, and when John asked me to write to McCarthy, I really threw the ball back into McCarthy's own court by telling him straight that I was not criticizing his field officers but only the (his own) Administration. I stuck to my guns, though it made me sick to do it. After I had sent the letter off, I showed a copy to Brian Corrigan and he said that McCarthy, being a reasonable man, would appreciate the points I made and would be satisfied. I hope it is all over now.

Today I played hookey from the elections to follow a marriage dispute, really in the hope that I might get the picture Pat Croft wants of a girl being pulled over pig-fences and generally treated roughly because she is going against her men folk's wishes. I still may get the picture on Saturday, but I hope not. Thereby

hangs a story. My father Wamdi and my father's brother's son Kombuk were very concerned because Kombuk's young sister Omngar went off yesterday and was rumoured to be with the Ngeni-Muruka group. Going off without telling anyone could only mean that she had gone off to a man intending marriage against her relatives' wishes. We set off for Pugmail this morning, I with my cameras and Wamdi and Kombuk and some others with the intent to capture Omngar and bring her back. At Pugamil we found that she was supposed to be at Kobung, so we proceeded to Kobung. There we found that Omngar had slept with a married clan sister last night and that a Ngeni-Muruka leader Tagba had sent for her this morning and urged her to stay and marry a young man Tai. The Ngeni-Muruka councillor Mugap held a kind of court at which Omngar was asked what she wanted to do. She stated firmly that she intended to marry Tai and had no wish to return to her relatives. Mugap promised to bring her down to Kolya, where the Kugika councillor Mani lives, so that a fresh court could be held by Mugap in collaboration with Mani, Wamdi, and *Komisi* (Committee Man) Kaa. We waited at Kolya but the Ngeni-Muruka did not turn up. Late in the afternoon they came, but without Omngar, and expressed their firm intention of keeping her with them as the wife of Tai. The background of Wamdi and Kombuk's objections is complicated. For one thing they had been intending to give Omngar to a particular subclan of a different neighbouring clan. But their main objection is that Tai is really Ngeni-Muruka by long association, whereas he is Kugika Penkup by descent. His father Tabindam went to live with the Ngeni-Muruka, his mother's clansmen, many years ago taking his whole family with him. Wamdi and Kombuk are also Kugika Penkup, and a marriage between Tai and Omngar is like brother-sister incest. The only 'native custom' the *kiaps'* court recognizes is the payment of marriage payments: and they interpret this as payment for the woman (as if she were a sack of potatoes that can be haggled over), not (as in true native custom) a gift to reward the woman's group for the donation of her child-bearing capacities. The courts do not recognize marriage prohibitions, and a girl can marry whom she likes. The Ngeni-Murukas are well aware that so far as the courts are concerned they can retain Omngar just because it happens to be her fancy to marry Tai. If the Kugika attempt to capture Omngar against her will, a complaint to the court by the Ngeni-Muruka will land my father and brothers in goal. Poised on this dilemma, the resourceful Wamdi let the Ngeni-Murukas negotiate with him over the marriage payment required and he stuck out for a colossal payment which must be paid on Saturday. He intends to capture Omngar if the payment is not made on Saturday. This is really just staving off the dilemma, since I doubt very much whether the Ngeni-Muruka could rustle up the required payment in a few days. Then we shall see what happens and I shall have my cameras ready, but I certainly do not want to see Wamdi and Kombuk of all people in gaol. What I am tentatively hoping to do is to let them capture Omngar and when I have got the required photographs persuade them to let her go back to Tai. Wamdi says definitively

that if Omngar marries Tai she will never be welcome to visit Kondambi again. If she and Tai have children, these will be without the useful mothers' brothers all other people have.

Last night *Komisi* Kaa came to my house at midnight bursting with the news that Konga had killed his wife. We drove down to get her, as anyone described as killed is generally injured badly enough to need hospital treatment. She looked out to it, a bit bruised but nothing startling. She was breathing regularly but appeared to be unconscious. In fact she looked dead at first sight. Konga is the man I used to put in my notebooks as *Pithecanthropus* before I got used to his real name, because his profile looks so primitive, jutting in all the right places for a perfect illustration of Stone Age Man. He is big for a Kuma, at least 5'9" with bulging musculature and a great deal of strength. If a child or a dog were to get in the way of his great ham of a hand as he brushes a fly away it would be instantly killed. Konga is a simple man and would not hurt a fly deliberately, but he is quick-tempered and does not know his own strength. He was very concerned about his wife. He said they had quarrelled about a pig he had been searching for all night. I had private thoughts about this, particularly when I learned that she had already been off-colour with what might have been malaria. Dire giggled into my ear that a man and his wife only quarrel about one thing at that time of night, when the man wants to do something his wife does not want him to do, but of course Konga could not tell us that. My diagnosis (admittedly unskilled) was that she would recover easily but probably had a bit of concussion. All the lights in Minj were out when we went to the hospital and delivered the poor woman to the doctor boy. He made an examination but decided he needed the opinion of the European Medical Assistant, Frank, and he and Jimbin went to get him. By this time it was raining heavily. There is a nasty little bridge, far too narrow, over a ditch at the beginning of Frank's drive. When Jimbin drove on to it one plank was broken, another missing, and all the rest slippery from the rain. He landed the car in the ditch with a broken shock absorber and a bolt off a back spring. Poor Jimbin had to get the car out of the ditch single-handed while Frank returned to the hospital. When Frank arrived it was obvious that he had been on the Scotch all night; his eyes were blurred and his gait unsteady and his speech muffled. But he leaned against the bench the woman was lying on and straightened himself up immediately. Afterwards he was pretty hopeless again, but during the examination he was admirably controlled. Clearly he had his wits about him because, finding Konga's wife's temperature, pulse, and breathing normal he moved her head slightly to see whether it would flop right over, as the head of an unconscious woman must do, but there was muscular resistance and also a lamp held in her face made her eyes screw up a bit.

6th March

The next morning Konga's wife still appeared to be unconscious, but I would back Frank's judgment on this and obviously she has not died yet.

Councillor Mugap of the Ngeni-Muruka is Jimbin's maternal relative, so he has gone to visit him tonight to find out whether that clan intends to produce the payment for the girl Omngar tomorrow.

Just before Jimbin left, he told me how he had acquired his second wife. He had been visiting the Ngeni-Kuzilka up the Minj River at the time of their pig-killing and he was going home when a girl came up to him and held his wrist.

'Why do you grasp me?' he asked.

'I want to marry you,' she replied.

Jimbin was surprised, because he did not know the girl from a bar of soap, except for recognizing her as a Ngeni-Kuzilka girl. Nevertheless, he asked her, 'Will the Ngeniga bring a court case if you marry me?' 'No,' she answered. 'It is perfectly all right. There will be no court case.' He therefore slept with her that night and the next morning brought her home to Minj. But the same day the Ngeniga arrived and took him and the girl to the District Office.

The *kiap* (Phil Bow, a Papuan) asked Jimbin whether he wanted to marry the girl and Jimbin replied, 'We were not lovers until she followed me and told me she wanted to marry me. I am not fussy. If she wants to marry me she can.'

'Can you prepare a marriage payment by tomorrow?' Phil asked him.

'No,' said Jimbin. 'I have no money. It would take me a week to gather the money together.'

'Then the girl must go home and sleep with her parents until you have the pay ready,' Phil told him.

Jimbin went to Amban, a member of his subclan, who promptly gave him £40. He gave this to the Ngeni-Kuzilka and they took the lot, without returning part of the payment as has always been customary. Now he has two wives. He tells me two are quite enough and next time a girl approaches him with an 'offer' of marriage he would be strong and—not knock it back, because he could not shame the girl and himself, but tell her he could not afford the money to marry her.

7th March

Now it is Saturday, the day the Ngeni-Muruka are due to bring the fabulous pay for Omngar—£100 cash, 15 live pigs, 40 Princess of Stephanie Birds of Paradise (worth a fiver or so each), 15 goldlip shells. Wamdi has just called in to keep me up to date what is happening. ‘We’ll wait and learn whether they give the pay today’ he told me. ‘Then tomorrow we shall go and bring Omngar back.’

In the meantime the women of the Konumberga, mostly married women but the unmarried girls too, of the little Kumngakanim group to which an affianced bride of Tai’s belongs, have taken the initiative in an attempt to get rid of Omngar. It seems that Omngar flew off to Tai in order to beat the Konumberga Kumngakanim girl to him, and the Konumberga women are incensed. They went to Kobung at least two days running and gave Omngar a good thrashing. Dire (who is also Konumberga) gave me her opinion that if the Konumberga women are persistent enough and belt up Omngar enough she will come home of her own accord without the men having to pull her. I agree, and think that so long as the women just indulge in punching and hair-pulling and a bit of wrestling they are likely to win their point, but the women in fact are much more likely to lose their tempers and seize ‘sticks’ (anything from a hunk of wood to the ridge-pole of a house) and probably spill blood. Once blood is spilt the Ngeniga have a case for the Court of Native Affairs. The first day they went to Kobung they tore apart the house Omngar was sleeping in. This was the house belonging to Mau, the daughter of Kumbang, my neighbour who died last year. You may remember my mentioning that the Ngeniga gave a handsome payment for Mau when Kumbang was dying; she is now firmly married to the Ngeniga man. Now the Konumberga women have literally pulled the grass roof off Mau’s house.

You say that I am not observant, and I have to agree with you excepting in regard to things I have been trained to observe. Going up the Minj River the other day I suddenly noticed that some of the firewood stacked by the side of the road for the government to collect was in piles much larger than my own two piles of firewood. The system is to plant four sticks known as a ‘mark’ for the firewood and these enclose £1’s worth. The government has to check continually on the position of the ‘mark’ because the sticks gradually creep closer together until the natives are getting £1 for about ten bobs’ worth of firewood. I stopped the car and measured the ‘mark’ the Kondikas (our traditional enemies) had filled for the government, and found on returning home that I had been paying £1 for about 15/-’s worth. So we have had to change our ‘mark’ to conform with govt. practice and save myself a few bob here and there.

Nere, the semi-literate Kugika Koimamkup lad who has been helping me lately, is walking around very proudly this morning in brand-new khaki shorts and a nice blue-flecked sloppy joe I bought him. It would be easy (and perhaps

desirable) to pay one's helpers more and let them buy their own clothes, but their taste is unformed. Nere was with me in the trade store where I bought his sloppy joe, and it was plain that if he had been left to choose it himself he would have settled for a gaudy and relatively flimsy cardigan, zipped up the front and costing twice as much. He is very happy with the one I helped him choose, and he looks really nice in it. Last night he wrote a letter to his former teacher (who had to leave the district when scandal broke about his relations with his female pupils) telling him how happy he is at Kondambi.

The 'mushroom madness' has evidently received notice abroad. Yesterday I had a letter from a Dayak in Sarawak telling me about a somewhat comparable mushroom complex among his own people.

(Later) Dire and Jimbin and Nere have gone for a swim. I wanted to send a note to Minj to a Papuan girl dental assistant who is coming to lunch with me tomorrow so when Jimbin told me that we did not have enough water for him to wash the mud out of the floor of the car properly I jumped at the opportunity to tell him to take the car down to the Minj River and wash it, and incidentally take the note to the station. Soon afterwards Dire told me that she was going for a swim in the Minj River with Jimbin, just the two of them. That sounded all right, but two thoughts sprang to my mind. One was that it is a wretchedly cold day with a biting wind that would make it most uncomfortable for swimming. The other was that when Wau, Dire's husband, had written to her he had expressed slight concern that Dire and Jimbin were the only partners in the store venture besides myself and he advised her strongly to bring in someone else who could chaperone her, and when I read this out to her she blushed. So I asked Nere whether he would accompany them and chaperone them, and he has gladly gone off to do so. After they had all left Tunamp told me he felt rather out of things being left and I told him that it was really just Jimbin and Dire going for a swim and that I myself had sent Nere along to chaperone them because otherwise Wau might hear that Dire and Jimbin were walking about together and he would be cross. Tunamp nodded wisely and thought this was excellent. He told me that Wau had charged him and Tugu (and also Tuan whom I have discarded because he had no work to do) with the sacred duty of chaperoning Dire. So everyone is satisfied—perhaps with the exception of Dire and Jimbin themselves. Even I can see that Jimbin is jolly attractive, and though they both belong to the same clan, Konumberga, it is a very big clan indeed and secretive relations could easily take place between members of different subclans, as these two are.

Dire has made a perfect mess of herself lately. When I first knew her she had peroxidized hair which looked very attractive with her brown skin and gave it a golden glow. When I came back last year she still (or rather again) had peroxidized hair, but while I was here she dyed it black. It still looked good

when one got over the shock of seeing her change overnight. But this time she has experimented with red (sic) hair dye and I suddenly noticed that the top of her hair was bright auburn and the sides still black. It looked ghastly and I told her so. As a consequence of my comments (as I thought, but perhaps it was to attract Jimbin) she dyed her hair black again today. Generally Maria, her step-daughter, does it for her, but Maria is away visiting relatives for a few days so Dire did the dirty deed herself. As well as staining a blouse and laplap irreparably, she got mucky black dye on her neck, face, shoulders, and running down her back. When eventually I noticed what a mess she had got herself into I insisted on taking her to the bathhouse and scrubbing her myself. It was a bit like scrubbing a more docile Pippy, or an unprotesting baby. The excuse for the 'swim' is that I have ordered her to rinse her hair because it is matted with the black dye.

Dire has been dripping black dye all round Kondambi with a shocking lack of reticence. And this reminds me that when we were at Kobung on Monday we saw a truly shocking sight. You will never, of course, forget the sight of those old ladies dancing at night at Borroloola in their brassieres and pink bloomers, but at least they were apart from the men when they were wearing that horrible garb. But at Kobung I was shocked to see *one* woman walking around wearing an uplift brassiere in conjunction with her pubic strings and nothing else. It is the only case I have seen here of this ghastly use of female underclothes as public apparel. I wish now that I had spoken to the woman, as I nearly did, telling her plainly that brassieres are something hidden which should never be revealed in the presence of men. At the time I did not know quite how to phrase this, but it was an opportunity lost. At least I intend to give Dire a good talking to on the subject of dyeing her hair in public. On one occasion last year I had to tell her firmly to wear a slip under a semi-transparent shirt I had grown out of and given to her. Unlike the woman at Kobung, she has girlish breasts that point slightly upwards with the coloured parts around the nipples as big as chestnuts. I think you would find the physiognomy of the people here decidedly interesting. The breasts of the young girls have to be seen to be believed, and a well-built man almost invariably looks completely muscle-bound as if he had been taking body-building courses. When a woman has suckled a child for awhile she usually has one breast three or four inches longer than the other.

The conduct of the elections has shown that Native Affairs officers need some instruction in two spheres: estimation of age, and recording of vernacular names. A certain amount has been written here and there on the estimation of age among non-literate populations, and I am hoping to draw these sources together in a short article. Girls whose ages I would estimate as 16 or 17 have sometimes turned up to vote and often the electoral officer has found their names well and

truly on the roll. But the business of finding the names is a time-consuming one. It would help enormously if the names recorded were intelligible when read out. So that is meat for a further short article.

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Tai's son, Kombuk, has just come back from visiting the Konumberga, with his second wife, Waiya, in tow. You will remember that Kombuk has been concerned about his sister Omngar, who has eloped to the young man of Ngeni-Muruka who bears the same name as Kombuk's father and in fact is called after him. Kombuk's first wife, Mandigl, is the mother of Marie, the little girl who was born during my first visit and called after me. Mandigl's marriage to Kombuk was arranged according to traditional practice when Kombuk was an adolescent. It has been a happy marriage, though Mandigl has borne Kombuk only one daughter. (I am inclined to suspect that Marie is really the daughter of the virile old Tultul himself, though I have no firm evidence for thinking this. At the time of conception, Kombuk was still finding pleasure in sucking his old mother's breasts, though he was already 15. He told me at about that time that he was impotent, and certainly he behaved as an impotent man would. Tultul Tai despised his son for being unmanly and referred in my hearing to Kombuk still sleeping with his mother and leaving other men to sleep with his wife and making his father 'do things he himself should be doing'. Certainly the family resemblance between Tai, Kombuk, and Marie is very strong; and if it is true that Kombuk had to get someone else to impregnate Mandigl it MUST have been his father.) Early last year, or at least before August, this Konumberga girl Waiya came to Kombuk with marital intent and he rustled up the pay and formalized the union. When I arrived last August I was amazed to see the change in Kombuk. He is no longer ineffectual and somewhat effeminate. He has a 'muscle-bound' stature and is a young man of consequence. In really special sing-sings he proudly wears his father's Tultul badge on his forehead. His father died a couple of years ago and I would guess that Kombuk's development and maturity came with the decease of his father, who was a most important man and a good deal too directive for a boy like Kombuk to have as father and model. Ten years ago it seemed that Kombuk's younger brother Yuants might succeed his father. And certainly Yuants was Tai's favourite. But now that the old Tultul has departed this life, Kombuk's personality has come into full flower. He is no longer shy about attending *Garu-wiros* (the formal opening of brand-new women's houses at which the men have to wait in the ante-room until a girl sitting in one of the pig-stalls gets the crier to call his name to come and carry leg with her). On days when there are public gatherings he always (or nearly always) has to excuse himself to go and carry leg with some girl who has summoned him. He did not 'mark' (put down a betrothal payment for) Waiya. She carried leg with him until she could live without him no longer and she came, parked herself in his house

and said 'I am marrying you.' Now Waiya has been married long enough to know that she is no longer a free and easy young girl, but she has continued to associate more with her age-mates who are still unmarried than with the married women of Kombuk's clan, as her own group lives very close. When Omngar's elopement took place, Waiya had a row with Kombuk and packed up (i.e. put her empty string bag on her head) and went home to her family. Her grievance was that Kombuk had given his sisters Omngar and Komun to other groups instead of giving them to her own group and thus making exchange for the gift of herself. Kombuk objected that Komun herself had run away to Obo, a man belonging to a different division of Konumberga from Waiya herself, and that he himself had had no part in arranging Komun's marriage. Further, he argued, he himself had planned to give Omngar to the Konumberga but she herself had run away to the Ngeni-Muruka. Waiya was extremely angry and went home to her family. The Councillors' court was to hear the case this morning.

In the meantime, the elections have been going on and I have been deliberately getting to know Nopnop better. Nop is one of the three native candidates for the Minj Open Electorate and is also President of the Minj Local Government Council. At present he seems very likely indeed to win the election. He has a special interest in visiting the polling places, so I have encouraged him to come with me when I myself visit them. He and Jimbin and myself are planning to do a grand tour of the far western highlands when the election is over, whether Nop wins or not. We have become good friends, so when Kombuk (who is known to him to be the father of my namesake and like a brother to me) approached him about the court Waiya was getting up he lent a sympathetic ear and promised to be present himself.

This morning, before he went to the court, Kombuk called in to collect the £10 he had deposited in my care over the last few weeks. He said that he needed it to give pay to Waiya's family. Why? To bribe them to let Waiya come back to him, as he had already paid for her. He was certain that she would 'talk strong', i.e. be determined and persistent in her arguments, and that he would not be able to talk her out of her obsession about his falling down on the exchange of women. I suggested to him that the case of Omngar was not yet resolved and that it would be wise to wait until it was before throwing away £10, perhaps for nothing. Kombuk protested that it was Kuma fashion to use money in this way when a woman was so determined that the men could not persuade her to their viewpoint. I asked him whether this was native fashion before money had come and he said no in those days the women were not so determined and the men could control them. In a case like Waiya's he and some of his brothers would have simply gone and dragged her back. I said that he was throwing his money away to no good purpose. He could not agree, but when I suggested that

if he were to go with the money in his hot little hand the Konumberga would get it from him whereas they just might not if he left it behind. He was easily persuaded to leave his £10 in my care until he actually needed it.

Nop heard the court and told Waiya that she was acting as if she were still an unmarried girl. He ruled that *laik bilong meri* ('like belong mary', i.e. the wishes of a woman) prevails only when a girl is still unmarried and must be allowed to choose whether or not she wants to marry a particular man. Once she is married to the man of her choice she has no choice at all about staying with him or leaving him unless he does something very wrong to justify breaking the marriage. This had not happened in Kombuk's case. Nop is highly respected, and Waiya went back with Kombuk at Nop's bidding.

You may remember my discussion of suicide in *The Kuma*. At the time of my first visit the government was still trying to stamp out the custom of suiciding in various specific circumstances. Certainly suicide and attempted suicide seem to be very much rarer now; but an interesting development has been the modern use of the *threat* of suicide as a feminist weapon. The girl who waylaid Jimbin up the Minj River *forced* him to marry her by threatening that if he did not she would hang herself on a tree or throw herself into the river. This is not at all uncommon.

A case that cropped up last year when I was here is a delicious example. The precarious marriage of the girl called Minj to Paulus Mambugi is fraught with lively issues: she is the girl who belongs to the same subclan as the mother of the boy she chose. At the time she was cavorting with Mambugi, before the question of marriage arose, his mother and other people tried to discourage him from getting too involved. His father kept trying to find excuses for keeping Mambugi at home. But Minj proved to be hypochondriac and also threatening. Whenever Mambugi failed to visit her she developed headaches. The headaches she gets seem to be a kind of migraine; she gets them now whenever things do not go her way. But also she told Mambugi when he eventually did come to her that the next time he absented himself she would commit suicide. This really brought him to heel.

I have learned of yet another issue in the Minj-Mambugi alliance. Minj's father, ex-Luluai Timanga, has always been strongly allied with the Kugika, so strongly indeed that he has used his powerful war sorcery against the Kugika's traditional enemies the Kondiga, although his own clan, Konumberga, has friendly relations with the Kondika and intermarries with them. His war sorcery caused the death of a particular Kondika man, whose name eludes me, just about the time one of his own children married a Kondika against his wishes. A young son of his, an unmarried youth, visited Kondika territory for courting ceremonies the night after the Kondika had killed a pig in the burial ground in honour of the dead

man's spirit. The people in whose house the boy slept that night had a bundle of the cooked pork hanging up in a basket. They wanted to eat the pork but could not do so without offering some to him so they did not tell him that this was the pig they had killed in the burial ground. He ate it, and the very next day his stomach swelled up and he soon died. As a result of his son's death and the events that led up to it, Yimanga resolved that those of his daughters who were still unmarried must not get involved in this particular warfare complex but must marry into any other clan besides Kondika or Kugika. Mambuigi has prepared the marriage payment for Minj, but Yimanga refuses to accept it. Minj's brothers, including Mont, whom I know well, want very much to accept the marriage payment but they are afraid to do so because their father threatens that when the marriage payment is given he intends to kill a Kugika. He says they may accept the payment after he is dead but not in his lifetime if they wish to avoid death and disaster. He has forbidden his sons to visit Minj; Mont is the only one who sneaks down to visit her sometimes without his father knowing. An unmarried sister of Minj, a big strapping girl called Man, was one of the ring-leaders in the Konumberga women's forays to Kobung to destroy Mau's house and attack Omngar.

The psychologists in Moresby have found a projective (personality) test which they think is genuinely cross-cultural in application and suitable for New Guinea. I want to administer this test to all the Kugika who experienced the so-called 'mushroom madness' and an exactly matched control group of people of the same clan who did not. All told, about 60 people. The test takes about one hour to administer to one person. The psychologists want me to visit Moresby for a couple of days to familiarize myself with the test, which is a very good idea. If I am going to spend all this time on the test, I think I should also administer it to a sample of young women (perhaps also to young men, to get at sex-differentiation in personality here). But at the moment I cannot see myself getting to Moresby until the elections are over. They end on the 18th of this month, but then I am heavily committed to this projected tour of the far western highlands with Nop and Jimbin, which will take up to a week.

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I have bought a new transistor wireless and a record-playing pick-up. The latter is magnificent. The wireless is a National Transistor 8, not so powerful as the transistor 10 we have in Canberra but with a wonderfully big speaker which compensates a lot of the slight lessening of power. The speaker makes it superb for attaching the pick-up to it.

To go with the pick-up I bought a few records. Two are records of Maori music, partly to amuse the Kuma and partly to get myself into thinking in terms of Maoris and it does both beautifully. One is a Groucho Marx recording of *The Mikado*,

which is helping me with my comic opera or musical comedy or whatever it turns out to be. The Kuma adore *The Mikado* and the story of it makes real sense to them. Another is an omnibus record of Beautiful Melodies from the Operas or some such title, which includes many of my favourite operatic themes. The remaining record is a thing called *Seven Cities* (musical moods of Australia's capital cities) by Bruce Finlay, with your favourite theme for strings running through it. I think you will enjoy this little collection.

Well, I have so much work to do that I have written you much that I want you to keep since I have had no time to record it in my notebooks. It is 7.30 on Sunday morning. If the weather is like this in Canberra, you and Mine Boy will be up and out in the garden. It is a perfect morning. Last night I felt like an orgy of film so went to the European Club and saw *Rob Roy*: a pictorial demonstration that the Scottish Highlanders of a few centuries ago were pretty similar to the New Guinea Highlanders on the 20th century. Much fun, and all my love to you twofella.

Marie

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