

## Popular Perceptions of an Unpopular People, 1929-1945

### Abstract for chapter 2

When Katharine Susannah Prichard's *Coonardoo* was published in 1928, the different critical reception it received in Australia and England is instructive: it illustrated the fact that the perception of Aboriginal matters was often quite different overseas. Australian society did not become open to the interracial ideas *Coonardoo* espoused for at least another fifty years.

This chapter underlines several points. First, that there is a tendency to over-emphasise the importance of works such as *Coonardoo* as indicators of a supposedly new, enlightened view of the Aboriginal people. Second, by highlighting these so-called beacons of enlightenment, academic criticism has overlooked the significance of Ion L. Idriess' popular historical fiction on Aboriginal themes. Third, other popular works of pseudo-anthropological literature, for example, the writings of Daisy Bates, exerted some influence on Australian readers of the time. Finally, the achievements of the first Aboriginal author to write a full-length work – David Unaipon – were almost totally ignored until the 1980s.

#### *Keywords*

Aborigines' Friends' Association (AFA), Christian Scripture, David Unaipon, fables, legend(s)/legendary tales, social and political conditions

## *Popular Perceptions of an Unpopular People, 1929-1945*

When the results of the *Bulletin's* literary competition were announced in August 1928, Katharine Susannah Prichard was awarded joint first prize for her novel, *Coonardoo*. The judges said, 'Our first choice is *A House is Built*, an Australian prose epic of marked literary quality. We find, however, such great merit in *Coonardoo*, with its outstanding value for serial publication, that we recommend it also as worthy of a first prize'.<sup>1</sup> This official praise gave the impression that the judging party was unanimous in its approval of Prichard's work, but this was not the case. One of the judges, Cecil Mann wrote, 'With any other native, from fragrant Zulu girl to fly-kissed Arab maid, she could have done it. But the aboriginal, in Australia, anyway cannot excite any higher feeling than nauseated pity or comical contempt'.<sup>2</sup>

This dissension amongst the competition judges was reflected on a wider, public scale when *Coonardoo* was serialised in the *Bulletin* between September and December 1928. There were those readers who appreciated the book's insight into traditional Aboriginal culture, but the vast majority were outraged by the moral issues addressed in the novel – specifically the author's sanction of a love affair between a white man and an Aboriginal woman. As Healy has noted, the *Bulletin* subsequently refused to publish Vance Palmer's *Men are Human*, (which dealt with similar issues) following the public furore over Prichard's book: 'Our disastrous experience with *Coonardoo* shows us that the Australian public will not stand stories based on a white man's relations with an Australian Aborigine'.<sup>3</sup> Even when the moral implications of *Coonardoo* were not considered objectionable, the novel was criticised by some for its romantic idealisation of traditional Aboriginal life. For example, in the 'Red Page' of the *Bulletin*, one week after the

contest results were announced, Prichard's book was damned with ironic praise: 'Miss Prichard (Mrs. Throssell) paints a vivid picture of a woman's life and work on a remote run. There are fine incidental glimpses of the life of the aborigines of those parts – *easily the finest type of blacks in Australia*'.<sup>4</sup> Whether the slight undertone of incredulity is intentional or otherwise, the point is that Prichard has come under critical fire for the sentimentality and idealisation in *Coonardoo*.<sup>5</sup>

While the novel had a rather tempestuous reception in Australia in 1928–29, in Britain it was soundly praised upon its release by Jonathan Cape. In 1929, the reviewer for *The Times Literary Supplement* wrote:

The story is a vivid and moving study of the blacks in relation to the whites, and in particular of the lovely and faithful Coonardoo . . . Mrs. Prichard has the trick of making her characters come alive . . . The north-western life is pictured vividly in all its aspects and seasons with what seems to be an unexaggerated emphasis.<sup>6</sup>

The only criticism levelled at the book was that it contained too many native words which would tend to befuddle the English reader.

The different critical reception of *Coonardoo* in Australia and England is instructive. It once again illustrated the fact that the perception of Aboriginal matters was often quite different overseas. For this reason, one must not over-emphasise the impact of *Coonardoo* upon the Australian reading public at the time of the *Bulletin* serialisation. It is probably correct to say that most Australian readers of the story had a taste of the book in 1928–29 – and then promptly rejected it. When it was written, *Coonardoo* was undeniably ahead of its time. But Australian society did not become open to the interracial ideas it espoused for at least another twenty years. Certain 'classic' Australian works of literature – such as *Coonardoo* and Xavier Herbert's *Capricornia* – dealt with Aboriginal/white racial and sexual relations themes in an honest and incisive way which was welcomed, at first, only by a small minority of Australian readers.

It is in some ways unwise to deal with Prichard and Herbert in the same breath, for the two novels for which they are most famous are radically different, in style, tone, construction and content. But, their obvious sympathy for, and admiration of, the Aboriginal way of life requires one to evaluate them here together. In view of the socio-political events which determined the course of race relations in Australia, as outlined in the previous chapter, both books must be seen as precursors of more enlightened white views of Aboriginal Australians. It is interesting that, while Prichard's novel was viewed

with disfavour in this country for many years, Herbert's book was generally approved, in part because his black humour masked the seriousness of his racial critique for many readers. Those who did seriously consider the informing ideas of the book often found it a cosmic comment on the wastefulness, anarchy and violence of human existence as a whole, rather than a particular comment on Aboriginal existence.<sup>7</sup>

The social and political conditions which prevailed between 1929 and 1945 militated against either *Coonardoo* or *Capricornia* having a significant educative impact on racial prejudice and Aboriginal stereotypes, especially before World War II. Such books have more recently been ascribed greater importance as reflections of a changing public opinion of Black Australians than is warranted – even if their influence is still being felt to the present day. For example, in 1959 Vance Palmer enthused, 'If a change has come over our attitude to the aboriginals it is largely due to the way Katharine Prichard has brought them near to us. This is a great achievement.'<sup>8</sup> The great achievement is that the attitude has changed in many areas of the country, but to distort the case as Palmer does is to ignore a host of factors which have affected White Australian perceptions of Aborigines. Clearly, reading Prichard – or Herbert for that matter – was not a necessary precondition for, nor a definite indication of, increasing black/white racial tolerance.

This chapter underlines several points. First, that there is a tendency to over-emphasise the importance of such works as *Coonardoo* and *Capricornia* as indicators of a supposedly new, enlightened view of the Aboriginal people. Second, by highlighting these so-called beacons of enlightenment, academic criticism has cast into a shadow the significance of the extremely popular works of historical fiction dealing with Aboriginal themes written by Ion L. Idriess, who outsold both Prichard and Herbert in the 1930s with such books as *Flynn of the Inland* and *Lasseter's Last Ride*. Third, a number of other popular works of literature written and published in the 1929-1945 period still exerted some influence on Australian readers as late as the 1960s; for example, Daisy Bates's *The Passing of the Aborigines*. Finally, the achievements of the first Aboriginal writer in English, David Unaipon, who published in the 1929-1945 period, were almost totally ignored until the 1970s and still deserve far more study than they have received.

Until the past decade, very little research has focussed on the Aboriginal writers themselves. Very few White Australians would be

aware of the fact that the year 1929 saw the publication of the first book by an Aboriginal Australian: David Unaipon's *Native Legends*.<sup>9</sup> More properly termed a booklet, given its diminutive length of fifteen pages, *Native Legends* is a fascinating social and artistic document. One must know something of this singular man's background in order to appreciate the eclectic stylistic synthesis of his work.<sup>10</sup>

Unaipon was born in 1872 at the Point McLeay Mission in South Australia, administered by the interdenominational group, the Aborigines' Friends' Association. The AFA was to become the most important formative influence on his life and career: it made possible his education, it provided him with employment, it sponsored his travels and speaking engagements, and it financed most of his publications. It is little wonder that Unaipon's work is strongly marked by his Christian upbringing and career. But there were other more specific factors which affected his writing. For example, Unaipon had been trained in both Latin and Greek and was extremely fond of reading sermons, especially those of Thomas de Witt Talmage and Henry Drummond, the latter being his favourite.<sup>11</sup> Especially in his recounting of Aboriginal legends, Unaipon emulated the elevated, sermonic prose style which characterised the work of these men.

The analytical and synthetic approach of his more factual writing is indicative of a mind which was both questing and incisive. It therefore comes as no surprise to learn that Unaipon was fascinated by modern scientific books and journals, and himself experimented with many models in an attempt to solve the problem of perpetual motion. These scientific works inspired him to attempt numerous inventions. In 1909 Unaipon obtained a patent for a device which transformed the action of sheep-shears from curvilinear to straight-line motion. As he relates in *My Life Story*, scientific writings, especially those of Newton:

stimulated my mind and I decided to try and invent something too. I suffered a disadvantage in doing this for I lacked a training in mathematics, but I began by studying the machine used in sheep-shearing for an Adelaide firm with a view to bringing about an improvement in its working. This I succeeded in doing and I obtained a patent for the same, but not being properly protected I lost financially any material gain arising from this discovery, as this was passed to others who made use of my invention without giving me any compensation.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the brilliance of many of his ideas, which ranged from the field of ballistics to that of helicopter flight, Unaipon was unable to secure financial support to develop any of the nineteen patent

applications he obtained between 1909 and 1949; in itself, a comment on White Australian ignorance of Aboriginal talent at the time.<sup>13</sup>

As a writer, musician, inventor, and public speaker who was schooled in the classics, Unaipon must have seemed to the AFA a heaven-sent token of the worth of its policies, which were assimilationist many years before the concept became widely accepted throughout Australia. Unaipon became their star pupil and their mouthpiece. As Gordon Rowe enthused in his booklet, *Sketches of Outstanding Aborigines* (published in 1956 by the AFA), 'He [Unaipon] says that he is everywhere kindly received, and that the acceptance of the aborigine today depends mainly on the aborigine himself. He was among those who received the Coronation Medal'.<sup>14</sup> But the question remains: 'Was Unaipon so fully indoctrinated into the Western, Christian lifestyle that he renounced his independence and his Aboriginality?'

In the first critical analysis of Unaipon's work, which appeared in 1979, John Beston asserts that 'Unaipon was by no means a white man's puppet'.<sup>15</sup> Beston concentrates upon the symbolic Aboriginal development which he perceives in four of Unaipon's legends, which underlies the Christian idiom of expression. One can take issue with Beston's conclusion, both because it proceeds from false premises and because it is derived from research which was not comprehensive. In fact, Beston ignores the clear evidence of one of Unaipon's published addresses, 'An Aboriginal Pleads For His Race', which he cites in his bibliography but does not discuss in his article. The essence of Unaipon's brief speech is its implied endorsement of Aboriginal assimilation into White Australian society. He says:

The white man must not leave the aborigine alone. We cannot stand in the way of progress. The aborigines must not be left alone in the middle of civilization. That would be like an aborigine leaving a white man alone in the middle of the bush.

And he continues:

If some sort of reserve were possible, in which only the good influence of civilization could be felt, a new civilised race could be built up. With a gradual process of introducing Christianity and all the best civilization can give, the aborigine would come up fully developed. It might take two generations, perhaps more, but eventually we would be able to take our stand among the civilised peoples.<sup>16</sup>

As these quotations indicate, Unaipon may be a full-blooded Black Australian, but he does not view himself as being the same as other Aborigines. If anything, he comes across as something akin to a self-

professed black prophet or seer, who has managed to cast off his 'uncivilised nature' (read Aboriginality) and has adopted the lifestyle and attitudes of 'civilisation' (read Christian white society). In this light, Beston's contention that 'his Christianising of the legends somewhat obscures his strong underlying sense of Aboriginal identity and allegiance'<sup>17</sup> is difficult to accept. Beston implies that, at base, Unaipon was faithful to his Aboriginal heritage above all else, whereas the evidence seems to indicate that he was so fully indoctrinated by the AFA that an Aboriginal world view was encouraged and permitted only so long as it did not conflict with Christian religious tenets.

Unfortunately, Beston is even more misleading when he claims that 'Unaipon's output was not large . . . [he] recounted only four legends altogether'.<sup>18</sup> Obviously Beston had not consulted the substantial original manuscript and typescript of Unaipon's writing – held by the Mitchell Library – which includes some thirty Christianised legends, religious fables and anthropological notes, under the title, 'Legendary Tales of the Australian Aborigines',<sup>19</sup> let alone the five of these legends which were subsequently published in *Dawn* magazine. In turn, this leads Beston to his most unfortunate conclusion:

Perhaps that is why Unaipon told no more legends: within their small framework, his four legends encompass his view of the present situation and the ultimate role of the Aboriginal people.<sup>20</sup>

One cannot be overly critical of Beston's paper as it did serve a useful function: it was the first example of scholarship to draw serious attention to Unaipon's work; it describes salient aspects of his writing style accurately; it provides enlightening biographical information; and it helpfully reprints one of Unaipon's legends ('The Story of the Mungingee'). However, because the author has neglected to examine some of Unaipon's published work and all of his unpublished writings, many of his conclusions are either dubious or are simply incorrect.

One is left with the question: 'What does an examination of Unaipon's entire known corpus of literature tell us about the first Aboriginal writer and his work?' All of Unaipon's writing is fascinating, complex and almost defies classification, for he did not simply write one type of story nor did his style remain constant – even within the confines of one tale. In fact, the atmosphere of his stories occasionally borders upon the schizophrenic, for the Christian/Aboriginal synthesis which he repeatedly sought is not always achieved without considerable

effort and is sometimes realised at the expense of logic. Despite these difficulties and qualifications, it is possible to place Unaipon's writing broadly within four categories: the historical/mythological, the Christian/Aboriginal spiritual exempla, the practical/anthropological, and the fairy tale/fable.

A good example of the first is the short piece entitled 'Totemism', which appears in the pages of *Native Legends*. Unaipon initially sets out to explain the concept, writing in an academic and authoritative tone:

Totemism is one of the most ancient customs instituted by the Primitive Man. The practice of it among the Australian Aborigines and its adoption owes its origin to a Mythological conception during the Neolithic Age.

Gradually, the tone shifts until the author begins to recount his interpretation of the myth which led to Aboriginal totemic belief, complete with philosophical concepts which are striking:

And when the appointed period arrived Spirit Man made the Great Decision and adventure [sic] to be clothed with earthly body of flesh and blood, his Spirit Consciousness experienced a great change, for he was overshadowed by another self, the Subjective Consciousness, which entirely belongs to the Earth and not to the Sacred Realm of Spirit.<sup>21</sup>

Unaipon relates how the baser 'Subjective Consciousness' tied man to the torments of the earth and flesh and caused his corresponding 'Spirit Consciousness' to 'pine for its Heavenly Home'. This spiritual dichotomy is not resolved by the benign intervention of a deity nor by a sudden revelation but by the animals of the earth, who take pity on man and impart all their knowledge and instinct for survival to him. Unaipon concludes:

Thus the Aborigines of Australia have from time immemorial . . . selected these living creatures for companions and guides.<sup>22</sup>

The assumption is that when they have reached the stage described at the end of 'Totemism', the Aboriginal people are ripe for a reawakening of that spiritual consciousness which since time began had been yearning for its home – via Christianity.

The unpublished introduction to 'Legendary Tales of the Australian Aborigines', entitled 'Aboriginal Folk Lore', reflects once again an emphasis upon first causes in Unaipon's historical/mythological mode of writing. From a preliminary discussion of the value and longevity of Aboriginal myths and story-telling, the author proceeds to relate the

flight of the Aborigines ‘from a land in the Nor’-West, beyond the sea, into Australia’. In Unaipon’s retelling, the obvious aim is to achieve a synthesis with Christian – specifically Old Testament – narrative:

The traditions also relate that the aboriginals were driven into Australia by a plague of fierce ants, or by a prehistoric race as fierce and innumerable as ants . . . Like the Israelites, the aboriginals seem to have had a Moses, a law-giver, a leader, who guided them in their Exodus from Lemuria. His name is Nar-ran-darrie.

This Nar-ran-darrie is a being now living in the heavens who gave both laws and customs to the Aborigines (all that is lacking is the Ten Commandments). Equally important is the fact that Unaipon relates this tale from the point of view of a civilised European, as his idiom and his attitude illustrate:

Aboriginal myths, legends and stories were told to laughing and open-eyed children centuries before our present-day European culture began; stories that stand today as a link between the dawn of the world and *our latest civilisation*.<sup>23</sup>

This brief article leads to a number of important observations concerning Unaipon’s work. First, the story is clearly directed at a white audience – as were all of the author’s legendary tales. Second, it is implicit here and elsewhere in Unaipon’s work, that Aboriginal myth, while ancient and meaningful, is not of the same stature as Christian Scripture: the Aborigines, despite their good points, were a primitive people. Their spirituality and their mythology is accorded stature in retrospect by Unaipon because he sees these as being proto-Christian. Christian belief gives Aboriginal belief the grandeur of incipient enlightenment.

The scriptural influence upon Unaipon’s writing is even more evident in the second broad class of stories, which I have termed the Christian/Aboriginal spiritual exempla. The prose style of the historical/mythological tales is relatively plain and descriptive but the style of this second class of stories is unashamedly Biblical. For example, in ‘Release of the Dragon Flies, by the Fairy, Sun Beam’, published in *Native Legends*, frogs stand guard over imprisoned water grubs in a place which is so ‘beautiful and enchanting’ that it will:

arouse feelings and emotions of sacred fear, and in reverence [anyone intruding will] retrace their steps, lest they trespass upon holy ground.<sup>24</sup>

When the malicious frogs are finally conquered and the water grubs are liberated, the descriptive tone is derived directly from the Old Testament, complete with pyrotechnics:

Above the whirlwind there formed a cloud like mid-night, suddenly lightning flashed, then a terrible thunder peal that seemed to roll around the meadow a score of times.

This is immediately preceded by a cogent moral exemplum:

Then a guilty conscience smote them one and all; for the wrong they did unto the helpless, harmless water grubs who did need the help; the strong should give.<sup>25</sup>

Beston quite correctly describes Unaipon's style in such stories as 'seventeenth-century, suggestive of the King James Bible, Bunyan, and Milton'.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, his sample of Unaipon's writing was so small that he failed to appreciate the author's stylistic diversity. For Unaipon's mode of expression is, in contemporary Western terms, the most archaic when he is relating the speech of spirit characters in his stories. For example, in 'Youn Goona the Cockatoo' (also printed in *Native Legends*) the spirit bird Youn Goona asks his wife, 'Well, dear, what shall we do, are we to continue to exist in Spirit or shall we decide to take a body of flesh and blood? Choose ye, my dear'.<sup>27</sup> On other occasions, Unaipon abandons any pretence of paraphrasing Scripture and quotes from it directly. For example, in the unpublished 'Nhung e Umpie', a story concerning the universality of human nature (regardless of race and skin colour) he writes, exactly as follows:

At this stage, I would like to call your attention to the Christian faith: in one of the Gospels [Luke, Chapter 1, Verse 42] you will find these words: 'Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb'. Also in Verse 46, Mary said: 'My soul doth magnify the Lord', and in Verse 47: 'And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour,' and in Verse 48: 'For he hath regarded the low estate of his hand maiden: for, behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.'

Then, in the very next line Unaipon writes 'Now the gut, or part of the intestine of mother and child has a great significance to us'<sup>28</sup> – a fine example of the stylistic schizophrenia of some of the author's work. Yet another of Unaipon's experiments with style – in this case a successful one – is his emulation of the Biblical psalm, as in 'The Song of Hungarrda' (published in *Native Legends*), essentially a hymn to the potency of fire:

As I roam from place to place for enjoyment  
or search of food,  
My soul is filled with gratitude and love  
for thee.<sup>29</sup>

Whereas both the historical/mythological and Christian/Aboriginal

spiritual exempla stories of Unaipon are indebted to Scripture to some degree, the third general form, which I have termed the practical/anthropological, is not. To cite one example, his unpublished tale simply entitled 'Hunting' is solely concerned with techniques of tracking and taking various wild birds and animals: 'A few furs among the rocks leading to a hole indicates that Mr and Mrs Possum are having their daily nap'.<sup>30</sup> The only exception to this statement is Unaipon's preliminary overview of Aboriginal hunting talent:

I may say with confidence that in bushcraft and hunting the aborigines excel, and are undoubtedly second to no other of the primitive races in this respect.<sup>31</sup>

Other stories in 'Legendary Tales' written in this informative format include 'Sport' and 'Fishing', although this last is bolstered by a legend in the explanatory tradition concerning a huge fish which was responsible for excavating the Murray River basin.<sup>32</sup> Unaipon employs a plain style of expression here which avoids imagery and literary flourishes and is very like the concise explication in 'An Aboriginal Pleads For His Race'.

The final stylistic category which I have proposed, the fairy tale/fable, is typical of many of Unaipon's stories which explain how particular animals came to possess – or lose – certain physical characteristics, such as 'How the Tortoise Got His Shell'<sup>33</sup> and 'Why Frogs Jump Into the Water'.<sup>34</sup> Beston notes that the author occasionally writes in the 'mould of the Germanic *Maarchen* or fairy tale',<sup>35</sup> but Unaipon's more juvenile stories often owe as much to Aesop and Kipling's 'just so' stories as they do to the Brothers Grimm. His wide-ranging personification, his frequent targets of proud or foolish animal characters, and his propensity to indulge in moralising characterise many of the tales; for example, 'Why All The Animals Peck at the Selfish Owl'.<sup>36</sup> But, the classic example of Unaipon's fairy tale/fable mode is the final story in 'Legendary Tales', 'How Teddy Lost His Tail'.

The story begins with the customary fairy tale opening familiar to European readers:

Once upon a time, long, long ago, before the Animal, Bird, Reptile and Insect life came to Australia, they occupied the many islands that existed in the ocean Karramia, a place of the beginning of day, where all is peace and rest.

The story is definitely stamped in Unaipon's eccentric and – in this atypical case – humorous mould, for the islands are inhabited by Teddy Bears so wise that the elders take their young to mountain-tops to teach

them astronomy! During their astronomical observations the Elders note streaks of light on the distant horizon, which they ultimately realise are the fires of other species of life. The Philosopher Bear reports:

Children . . . there are other lands like ours all around us, which are occupied by strange and queer people I am not prepared to describe, as I have never seen them; but I do say that there are other forms of life.

This sets the stage for the bears' voyage to the land of these mysterious fires – Australia – and their exploration of precise geographical locations in New South Wales. It is after returning to their original islands to invite the other animals 'to come down and share this wonderful country', that the bear tribe comes to grief. Their canoes are swamped in heavy surf off the Australian coast on the journey back to their new home and, while swimming ashore, 'The hungry sharks followed them and bit their tails off, and that accident completely subdued the adventurous spirit of the Teddy Bears'.<sup>37</sup>

In many respects this is whimsical, humorous fantasy, but is Unaipon's work purely a curio – a rambling, inconsistent mixture of Christian and Aboriginal influences? Or is his work both talented and important? Is his *Native Legends*, as John Beston has claimed, the best collection of legends written by an Aborigine 'in its stylistic elegance, in the organisation of the material, and in its evenness and fullness of development'?<sup>38</sup>

Beston's assessment is limited and too forgiving. When one examines Unaipon's entire corpus of work, it becomes clear that his story-telling is uneven, inconsistent, and is frequently fraught with tension between the Aboriginal and white Christian worlds. One receives the impression that Unaipon did not have a very great knowledge of traditional Aboriginal matters, and this might partly explain why his legendary stories often take such a sanitised, European form. Second, the very marked stylistic variance which I have illustrated makes it impossible to consider many of his stories as 'legends': the term does not adequately embrace some of the eclectic elements which Unaipon incorporates into his narratives. This is not to dismiss his work. In fact, some of the author's more lyrical writing, such as 'The Song of Hungarrda' and 'The Voice of the Great Spirit',<sup>39</sup> impresses through its vivid imagery and fresh cadences.

It seems that Unaipon tried to tailor the Aboriginal traditions of which he was aware to his newly-acquired and fervent Christianity. The two do not always sit well together, but the confusion and incon-

sistency of much of his work is both intriguing and revealing. Especially in terms of the socio-political climate at the time he wrote, his work is important. It illustrates the honest response of a brilliant Aboriginal man to the pressures and expectations of the mission system. It portrays the paradox of a man moving away from traditional Aboriginal society while he ostensibly celebrates narrative and mythical elements of that society in his writing. It shows in a very clear and telling way the potential of the assimilation doctrine (especially when bolstered with the allure of Christianity), which was to be so comprehensively applied in Australia many years after Unaipon had written *Native Legends*. His literary shortcomings presage some of the successes and destructive consequences of assimilation. Finally, at the time when full-blooded Aborigines were commonly believed to be dying out, Unaipon's work exemplified an inventiveness, a vigour and a vibrancy which paralleled those qualities in his personal life. For all these reasons, the writings of David Unaipon deserve to be collected and re-published *in toto*.

Though Unaipon's literary works had a negligible impact during the 1929-1945 era, having been published so incompletely and obscurely, the writings of many white authors who dealt with Aboriginal themes were more influential during that same period – and for many years afterwards. One of the best-known of these was Daisy Bates's *The Passing of the Aborigines*,<sup>40</sup> often considered to be the crystallisation in print of the doctrine that Aboriginal people were irredeemably primitive and moribund.

There is little doubt that Bates's book, first published in 1938, had a significant impact upon the perception of Aborigines by European Australians and overseas readers. *The Passing of the Aborigines* is a prime example of a work published in the 1929-1945 period which still exerted some influence upon Australian readers as late as the 1970s. Despite the changes of the intervening years, *The Passing of the Aborigines* was reprinted five times up to 1948 and a second edition, issued in 1966, was reprinted three times to 1972. As recently as 1979, Virago Press of London was considering re-issuing the book as an example of feminist literature, until dissuaded by protests concerning its racial viewpoint!<sup>41</sup> The popularity of the book indicates the continuity and longevity of interest in Aboriginal themes and issues among both Australian and British readers. Unfortunately, it also illustrates the continuance of misinformation and Aboriginal stereotypes in Australian literature, even to the present day. The following passage is taken from a book,

published in 1980 and directed at primary school children, entitled *From Many Lands – Australians of the Past*:

Daisy went to Eucla on the edge of the Nullarbor Plain. The desert was hot and dry. At first Daisy stayed with friends, but later she lived in her tent. She again helped the Aborigines. She fed them, nursed the sick and looked after the babies.

Daisy learnt languages easily. She could talk to the Aborigines in 188 dialects. She collected legends, languages and customs. The Aborigines loved and trusted her and told her many tribal secrets.

Once she witnessed an initiation ceremony. This was when the young men were tested for their manhood and then taken into the tribe. Normally no women were allowed to watch the ceremony.<sup>42</sup>

What is implicit in this simply descriptive and approving treatment of the Daisy Bates myth is important, for it is aimed at probably the most impressionable and uncritical of all audiences. Yet it takes no account of many commentators' ambivalent – and openly critical – view of Bates's life and career. For example, Ken Hampton, a Black Australian working for the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in Adelaide, writes:

To say she was eccentric is to be ridiculously soft-hearted. She began camp life in the early 1900s and her book . . . has been described by the Professor of Australian Linguistics at the University of Adelaide as 'the most destructive book written on Aborigines. If anybody other than Daisy Bates had written that book they would have been condemned as a racist. White people regarded her as a heroine but she never was as she claimed to be a blood brother of the Aborigines. It is nonsense. There is no such thing. In her book she alleges the women killed their children and ate them. She sent the bones of these alleged dead children to the Adelaide University for investigation. The late Professor J.B. Cleland examined them and found them to be those of a wild cat. She claimed she could speak 188 Aboriginal dialects, but in fact, she couldn't even speak the language of the Aborigines at Ooldea where she spent 16 years'.

If possible, she was even more maternalistic than Mrs. Gunn and far more destructive of Aboriginal dignity. Poor little woman.<sup>43</sup>

Given the widespread criticism of the Bates fables it seems incredible that, as recently as 1980, a book could be published which blithely imparts the misinformation contained in Kohler and Kohn's *From Many Lands*. For the purposes of this study, what is noteworthy is that a popular book of the 1929-1945 era could still be exerting some influence on the Australian reading public of the present day. *The Passing of the Aborigines* is not alone in this regard. Certain classic examples of Australian black/white race relations

literature – such as *Coonardoo* and *Capricornia* – have been continuously available since World War II. Moreover, both have very frequently been chosen as set texts at the high school and university levels during those years.

With reference to *Coonardoo*, in 1980 the critic Kay Iseman wrote that ‘for its time the novel had immense significance, both literary and political’,<sup>44</sup> and she concludes ‘it paved the way for a complete reassessment of aboriginal culture’.<sup>45</sup> Such generalisations are open to question, and critics such as Vance Palmer and Kay Iseman overstate the case. Certainly, in artistic terms *Coonardoo* broke new ground. In stylistic terms, it evokes station life minutely and brilliantly, and the harshness and oppressiveness of the Australian environment are captured with imagistic precision:

The air, at a little distance, palpitated, thrown off from the stones in minute atoms, visible one moment, flown to invisibility the next. Weaving, with the sun for shuttle, the air spun heat which was suffocating. The sun, an incandescence somewhere above and beyond the earth, moved electric, annihilating. And stillness, a breathless heaviness, drowsed the senses, brain and body, as if that mythological great snake the blacks believed in, a rock python, silvery-grey, black and brown, sliding down from hills of the sky, were putting the opiate of his breath into the air, folding you round and round, squeezing the life out of you.<sup>46</sup>

But how can one state that a novel ‘paved the way for a complete reassessment of Aboriginal culture’? It appears that numerous commentators have fallen into the trap of mythologising in retrospect. In other words, novels like *Coonardoo* and *Capricornia* have been ascribed more importance than they deserve – especially when one is speaking of the time when they were written. As was demonstrated in the previous chapter, changes in Aboriginal policy in the 1929-1945 period came about as much because of the workings of international factors as in response to domestic forces. Novels such as *Coonardoo* and *Capricornia* are taken as evidence of greater sensitivity to the value of Aboriginal culture during that time. But, just as social reforms in race relations were advocated during these fifteen years only by and for an educated elite, so too did the revolutionary ideas imputed to these novels have an impact only upon a very select minority of Australian readers. One can contend that these books had a negligible impact upon the average Australian reader – in terms of altering ideas concerning the Aboriginal people – until the socio-political environment *facilitated* those changes.

What, then, did Prichard and Herbert achieve? In their written work both provided an honest and direct appraisal of interracial

sexual relations, which one can consider an accurate historical index of the state of affairs at the time. For example, in the following excerpt from *Capricornia* – which illustrates Herbert’s mastery of the vernacular – the aptly-named Andy McRandy tells Norman:

In the case of lubras it certainly aint [sic] a matter of mere taste that sends the boys after ‘em. I reckon any normal healthy man’ll fall for ‘em if he’ll expose himself to the risk. I don’t care what anybody says. Even parsons have done it; and they aint what you’d call normal and healthy. I’ve seen comboes of all sorts – as smart fellers as you’d wish to find, and dunces, and fine lookin’ fellers, and others with faces like fried grummets, and even married men. They’re all the same. It’s only a question of gettin’ used to the colour and the different kind of countenance.<sup>47</sup>

Both Prichard and Herbert captured the deep-seated prejudice and loathing which whites associated with ‘half-castes’ during the period. It is Hugh Watt’s inability to accept his love for the Aboriginal woman Coonardoo (at least in part because of the stigma surrounding the visible presence of his ‘half-caste’ son) which causes the tragic decline, banishment, and eventual death of the heroine. Similarly, it is the treatment of the part-Aboriginal Norman; his misconceptions concerning his ancestry and his futile attempts at disassociation from other ‘half-castes’ (including Tocky, the mother of his child) which are bleakly driven home in the pages of *Capricornia*. The final words of the novel present – in stark, spare, and powerful language – what seems to be a profoundly pessimistic view of the future for part-Aboriginal people. The only prospects are of disregard, neglect, and death:

Dry grass rattled against the iron. Dry wind moaned through rust-eaten holes. He stepped up to the tank and peeped through a hole. Nothing to see but the rusty wall beyond. He climbed the ladder, looked inside, saw a skull and a litter of bones. He gasped. A human skull – no – two – a small one and a tiny one. And human hair and rags of clothes and a pair of bone-filled boots. Two skulls, a small one and tiny one. Tocky and her baby!

The crows alighted in a gnarled dead coolibah near by and cried dismally, ‘Kah! – Kah! – Kaaaah!’<sup>48</sup>

It is vital to realise that, widely read as novels like *Capricornia* were during the 1929-1945 period, they were not the most popular works of fiction on Aboriginal themes sold during those sixteen years. Two individual award-winning novels have been exalted as literary signposts to interracial understanding when there were a number of other novels published during the same period, also dealing with Aboriginal/white relations, which offered diametrically-opposed

conclusions and attitudes. If these had been execrable pieces of writing which were ignored by the reading public the point would hardly be worth making, but they were not. They were best-sellers, promoted personally throughout country towns the length and breadth of Australia,<sup>49</sup> and they were written by a raconteur who is still the highest-selling author published by Angus and Robertson: Ion L. Idriess.<sup>50</sup>

To give some indication of Idriess's phenomenal popularity, 'by the time he finished, this bushman-turned author had his name on 55 books with total sales of more than three million copies'.<sup>51</sup> In comparison, *Capricornia*, first published in 1938, was reprinted in 1939, 1941, 1943 and 1945. By 1980 it was termed a 'best-selling epic novel' and had sold over 75 000 copies in Australia.<sup>52</sup> These are impressive figures, but they are easily eclipsed when one compares them with the sales totals of Idriess's earliest books, such as *Lasseter's Last Ride*, first published in 1931. It was reprinted every year until 1939, then again in 1941, 1942, 1943 and 1945. By 1980 it had sold some 120 000 copies and was 'still going strong'.<sup>53</sup>

What do these figures reveal? First, that the books of Idriess must be discussed when one is considering Australian literary perceptions by, and about, Aborigines. Yet in D.L.M. Jones's 1960 M.A. thesis, 'The Treatment of the Australian Aborigine in Australian Fiction' and J.J. Healy's 1978 study, *Literature and the Aborigine in Australia, 1770-1975*, Idriess does not rate a mention. This cannot be because some of his books are not strictly novels and involve adventure reportage; Healy, for example, devotes three pages to a discussion of Daisy Bates and her self-aggrandising pseudo-history.<sup>54</sup> The exclusion of an immensely popular writer like Idriess probably results from two factors. First, his writing is not considered by many to be artistically skilled. Second, the attitudes and honest prejudices both implicit and explicit in his writings are incompatible with the theory that the major Australian writers were beginning to understand Aboriginal people more sympathetically during the 1929-1945 period.

But what is a 'major writer'? Certainly talent is a crucial factor but it is arguable that popularity is an important consideration as well. One cannot argue that Idriess was a writer who enjoyed transient popularity, only to sink from sight a decade later. In fact, there are more of his books in print today than there were in 1976.<sup>55</sup> In addition, he has received numerous accolades for his work. For example, in the

May 1954 issue of *Fragment*, he was praised as follows: 'Among our contemporaries, no man has done more to make Australian literature genuinely popular than Idriess'.<sup>56</sup> In the same vein, Julian Croft has written:

Idriess's contribution to Australian publishing and literature was profound. His combination of the bush yarn and historical or geographical subjects brought a new vision of Australia to its city-bound readers . . . Idriess was no stylist, but his writing was immediate, colourful, well-paced and, despite the speed at which it was written, always well structured. The combination of an optimistic view of Australia's progress and the romance of the past with a style drawn from the spoken language ensured his popularity.<sup>57</sup>

Idriess is, then, an influential writer, and his attitudes towards the Aboriginal people must be taken into account.

*Lasseter's Last Ride* provides an excellent starting point. Subtitled 'An Epic of Central Australian Gold Discovery', the novel emphasises the thwarted explorations of white men, especially Lasseter, in the search for a mythical reef of Centralian gold. The Aboriginal people are everywhere in the novel, but they are never individualised as real characters. One encounters a number of stereotypes of Black Australians in the book: the 'jovial Aboriginal comic', the 'childlike father', the 'venerable tracker' and the 'evil witch doctor'. The first is clearly exemplified in the character of Micky, a tracker directing the explorers to water holes. For their own amusement, the whites put the wireless earphones on Micky in order to observe his reaction:

Seated on a box, he submitted with a grin, anticipating anything might happen. Something did. Statics! Micky bolted. When they caught him they held him down, patting him as they would a horse. They hung on until he got the music which 'soothes the savage beast'. The glare faded from his eyes; his breast heaved less riotously; the frightened gash that was his mouth expanded into a grin that spread from ear to ear; his eyes grew normal, then sparkled.<sup>58</sup>

The lowering of the character of Micky to the level of a simpleton – and a wild simpleton at that – is all too clear in this extract.

The stereotype of the malicious witch-doctor is equally obvious in the following:

With skinny claw the witch-doctor pulled out a dried lizard, laid it down and stared at it for minutes. Then his lips moved sibilantly and Lasseter could have sworn that the lizard hissed in reply . . . over each article he pored as if actually conversing with it, as if it possessed some power of evil.<sup>59</sup>

Though one may cringe to read these descriptions today, one might ask how many thousands of readers have accepted the implicit prejudices contained in these passages in the past, as merely a legitimate component of the adventure story-line. The distancing of Black Australian people in literature, either as mindless though amusing imbeciles, or as cunning animalistic savages, arguably reflects the condescension and disdain which many Australians of the 1929-1945 period felt for Aborigines.

Prichard and Herbert have both been praised for highlighting Aboriginal characters in their books. Idriess cannot be excluded from consideration by this criterion, for his 1941 novel *Nemarluk: King of the Wilds* (which had sold some 36000 copies by 1980)<sup>60</sup> highlights the exploits of this Northern Territory rebel. As is so often the case, the author reduces his Aboriginal characters to a brutal, bestial level. For example:

They caught Tiger and Wadawarry in their full war paint dancing in the madness of a war corroboree. Tiger fought like the tiger he was, but they bore him to earth and snapped the steel upon his wrists. Screaming his fury he bit up into the panting face of Bul-bul. Bul-bul held his throat just out of reach and laughed while Tiger writhed and spat up at him.<sup>61</sup>

The undertone of white supremacy is ever-present and surfaces in the most unlikely places. Even the incomparable Aboriginal trackers have to defer to their employers, as follows:

Again and again, however, some exceptionally clever native outlaw has beaten a persistent and clever tracker. What has then caught the outlaw has been the thinking power behind the tracker – the deduction of the policeman. His brain is constantly working far ahead of and many miles around his own tracker.<sup>62</sup>

The condescending conception of Aboriginal people which underlies Idriess's novels was one which was shared by the majority of Australians in the 1929-1945 period. His writings probably reflect the European view of Black Australians at the time far more accurately than the sentimental idealism of Prichard or the cosmic black humour of Herbert.

Moreover, reading the books of Idriess could be a painful and degrading experience for Black Australians during those years. Faith Bandler remembers their impact:

Bandler:                    Well, I can recall my days – I think still in primary school and we were reading Idriess's books then, and the terrible effect that those books had on me as a black child in a classroom.

- Interviewer: Really?  
Bandler: Devastating, devastating. Yes. And I think that if it were not for the fact that we – my family – had a pretty good friendship and relationship with teachers, perhaps I would have dropped out.
- Interviewer: Really?  
Bandler: And, yes. And *Drums of Mer*: practically every one of the thirteen books at that time were considered by – were felt by me as a child as – I can't explain it. It was just *so dreadful*, it . . .
- Interviewer: Were they actually taught as course books in school?  
Bandler: Yes, yes. And it made me feel that we had absolutely nothing. Absolutely nothing to give. All that was black was bad. You know: they were beggars and they were thieves in *Lasseter's Last Ride*.<sup>63</sup>

In view of Idriess's popularity, and given the potentially damaging impact of his work which Bandler has emphasised, it is remarkable that his writing has not been considered in the existing studies – both published and unpublished – of the Aboriginal theme in Australian literature. Without doubt, the novels of Idriess must be evaluated if one is to gain an accurate picture of the literary treatment of Aboriginal Australians yet, until now, there has been little research on either Idriess or Unaipon.

It is not only the work of Prichard and Herbert which has been over-emphasised in studies dealing with the Aboriginal theme in Australian literature. In my view, the poetry and prose of the Jindyworobak writers has also been ascribed too much significance, despite the claims of Brian Elliott in his comprehensive treatment of the movement.<sup>64</sup> Officially inaugurated in 1938 with the publication of Rex Ingamells's and Ian Tilbrook's *Conditional Culture*, the Jindyworobak group was described as 'probably the most important literary movement in Australia today'<sup>65</sup> – but it is noteworthy that this was by one of its members. D.L.M. Jones has perceptively illustrated how these men sought to develop a truly indigenous White Australian culture, using Aboriginal culture – or rather, their superficial understanding of it – as the theoretical key. And to what end? Primarily, to establish the autonomy of Australian culture from that of European countries, particularly England.<sup>66</sup> Without belittling the efforts of those White Australians who have subsequently attempted to explore the Aboriginal theme more sensitively, most of the original Jindyworobaks told their readers next to nothing about Aboriginal people. Rather, their usage of the ostensible trappings of Black Australian languages was indicative of a kind of souvenir mentality. As Judith Wright succinctly put it, 'The movement was a matter of white art theory'.<sup>67</sup>

Therefore, I believe that there is a clear and cogent case for de-emphasising certain forms of Australian literature of the 1929-1945

period which deal with the Black Australian theme. The novels of Prichard and Herbert were, indeed, ahead of their time, but it is wrong to suggest that they actually changed their times, or even the ideas of a sizeable number of Australian readers during those years. On the other hand the consistent and pervasive attempts of certain fringe missionary groups to control the lives (including the creative lives) of their Aboriginal charges deserve to be far more fully-researched. The life and work of Unaipon provides a particularly fascinating example of such control. Third, the popular literature of the 1929-1945 era must be rescued from the shadow of critical neglect which, up to now, has fallen across it: an analysis of the complete works of Idriess is long overdue.

Stanner's observation concerning socio-political attitudes embodied in the governmental Aboriginal policy of the 1929-1945 era applies equally accurately to the racial attitudes and ideas housed in its literature. He wrote:

The change of attitude and policy which we trace back to the 1930s was confined very largely to a rather small group of people who had special associations with their [Aborigines'] care, administration or study. Outside that group the changes made very little impact for a long time.<sup>68</sup>

In many ways, if it was anyone's, the 1929-1945 period was the age of Idriess. The coalescence of real sensitivity to the Aboriginal people – literary, social and political – had not really begun to occur during that era and did not crystallise for many years afterwards.

## Notes

- 1 'Judges' Report', *The Bulletin*, vol. 49, no. 2532, 22 August, 1928, p. 9.
- 2 Quoted in Ric Throssell, *Wild Weeds and Wind Flowers*, (Sydney, 1975), p. 54.
- 3 Letter from S.H. Prior to Vance Palmer, dated 9 June, 1929; Palmer Letters, National Library of Australia. (Quoted in Healy, *Literature and the Aborigine in Australia, 1770-1975*, (St. Lucia, 1978), p. 140.
- 4 'The Red Page', *The Bulletin*, vol. 49, no. 2533, 29 August, 1928, p. 5. The emphasis is mine.
- 5 See, for example, Dianne Schwerdt, 'A Changing Black Image in Australian Fiction', in W. Menary, ed., *Aborigines and Schooling: Essays in Honour of Max Hart*, (Adelaide, 1981), pp. 84-88.
- 6 'New Novels', *The Times Literary Supplement*, no. 1433, 18 July, 1929, p. 574.
- 7 The classic exposition of this viewpoint is Vincent Buckley's article 'Capricornia', *Meanjin*, vol. XIX, no. 1, 1960, pp. 13-30.
- 8 Vance Palmer's Foreword to *N'goola and Other Stories*, (Melbourne, 1959), p. 8.
- 9 David Unaipon, *Native Legends*, (Adelaide, 1929[?]). There is some uncertainty over the precise publication date of this booklet, but it definitely appears to be earlier than the National Library's estimate of 1932. I follow Beston's conclusion that 1929 is the most likely date.
- 10 Biographical details are taken from David Unaipon, *My Life Story*, (Adelaide, 1951), and from Gordon Rowe, *Sketches of Outstanding Aborigines*, (Adelaide, 1956).
- 11 Unaipon, *My Life Story*, p. 2.
- 12 *ibid.*, p. 3. (Quoted in John Beston, 'David Unaipon: The First Aboriginal Writer, [1873-1967]', *Southerly*, no. 3, 1979, pp. 335-336.)
- 13 Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, *40,000 Years of Technology*, (Canberra, 1982), p. 11.
- 14 Rowe, *Sketches*, p. 8.
- 15 Beston, 'David Unaipon', p. 345.
- 16 Unaipon, 'An Aboriginal Pleads for His Race', in *Australian Aborigines, Photographs of Natives and Address*, (Adelaide, 1928[?]), p. 9. Again, the National Library's

- publication estimate of 1930 appears to be slightly late.
- 17 Beston, 'David Unaipon', p. 345.
- 18 Beston, 'David Unaipon', p. 337.
- 19 David Unaipon, 'Legendary Tales of the Australian Aborigines', manuscript and typescript, (Sydney, 1924-1925). The Mitchell Library ms. nos A1929-A1930.
- 20 Beston, 'David Unaipon', p. 345.
- 21 Unaipon, 'Totemism', in *Native Legends*, p. 4.
- 22 *ibid.*, p. 5.
- 23 Unaipon, 'Aboriginal Folk Lore', in *Legendary Tales of the Australian Aborigines*, (Melbourne, 2001) p. 4. The emphasis is mine.
- 24 Unaipon, 'Release of the Dragon Flies, by the Fairy, Sun Beam', in *Native Legends*, p. 1.
- 25 *ibid.*, p. 3.
- 26 Beston, 'David Unaipon', p. 345.
- 27 Unaipon, 'Youn Goona the Cockatoo', in *Native Legends*, p. 8.
- 28 Unaipon, 'Nhung e Umpie', in *Legendary Tales*, p. 135.
- 29 Unaipon, 'The Song of Hungarrda', in *Native Legends*, p. 14.
- 30 Unaipon, 'Hunting', in *Legendary Tales*, p. 67.
- 31 *ibid.*, p. 60.
- 32 Unaipon, 'Fishing', in *Legendary Tales*, pp. 17-18.
- 33 Unaipon, 'How the Tortoise Got His Shell', in *Legendary Tales*, p. 69. Also published in *Dawn*, vol. 3, no. 11, November, 1954, p. 9.
- 34 Unaipon, 'Why Manparrie (Frogs) Jump Into the Water', in *Legendary Tales*, p. 164.
- 35 Beston, 'David Unaipon', p. 342.
- 36 Unaipon, 'Why All the Animals Peck at the Selfish Owl', in *Legendary Tales*, p. 159. Also published in *Dawn*, vol. 4, no. 4, 1955, pp. 16-17.
- 37 Unaipon, 'How Teddy Lost His Tail', in *Legendary Tales*, pp. 220-222.
- 38 Beston, 'David Unaipon', p. 338.

- 39 Unaipon, 'The Voice of the Great Spirit', in *Legendary Tales*, p. 150. Also published in *Dawn*, vol. 8, no. 7, 1959, p. 19.
- 40 Daisy Bates, *The Passing of the Aborigines*, (London, 1938).
- 41 This information provided by Dr. Isobel White during a seminar at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, Canberra, November, 1982.
- 42 Ann Kohler and Janette Kohn, eds, *From Many Lands: Australians of the Past*, (Richmond, 1980), p. 65.
- 43 Ken Hampton, 'The Aborigine in Australian Literature', unpublished DAA paper, (Adelaide, 1976), pp. 7-8.
- 44 Kay Iseman, 'Katharine Susannah Prichard, *Coonardoo* and the Aboriginal Presence in Australian Fiction', unpublished conference paper, (Sydney, 1980), p. 1.
- 45 *ibid.*, p. 15.
- 46 Katharine Susannah Prichard, *Coonardoo*, (Sydney, 1982), p. 116.
- 47 Xavier Herbert, *Capricornia*, (Sydney, 1979), p. 314.
- 48 Xavier Herbert, *Capricornia*, p. 510.
- 49 In a personal letter from Josie Hilliger, Editorial Administrator, Angus and Robertson Publishers, dated 8 September, 1982, she states, 'Ion Idriess . . . toured country towns selling [his] books and at the same time gathering background material. These personal tours helped tremendously to make . . . [Idriess] . . . and the books better known'.
- 50 Information provided in a telephone interview with Mr. R. Shankland, Royalties Department, Angus and Robertson Publishers, July, 1980.
- 51 'Empty Stomach Turned Bushman Into Great Author', *The Sydney Daily Mirror*, 22 August, 1979, p. 73.
- 52 Information quoted from the front cover of the 1979 paperback edition, published by Angus and Robertson.
- 53 Information provided by Mr. R. Shankland, July, 1980.
- 54 Healy, *Literature and the Aborigine in Australia*, pp. 132-135.
- 55 Information provided by Mr. R. Shankland, July, 1980.
- 56 C.R., Untitled tribute to Idriess, *Fragment*, (May, 1954), Unnumbered. Contained in the file of news clippings pertaining to Idriess held by the Mitchell Library, Sydney.

- 57 Julian Croft, Entry on Ion Llewellyn Idriess in *The Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 9, 1891-1939, (Melbourne, 1983), p. 426.
- 58 Ion L. Idriess, *Lasseter's Last Ride*, (Sydney, 1959), pp. 24-25.
- 59 *ibid.*, p. 142.
- 60 Information provided by Mr. R. Shankland, July, 1980.
- 61 Idriess, *Nemarluk: King of the Wilds*, (Sydney, 1941), p. 138.
- 62 *ibid.*, p. 9.
- 63 Personal interview with Faith Bandler, Perth, February, 1983.
- 64 Brian Elliott, ed., *The Jindyworobaks*, (St. Lucia, 1979).
- 65 Kenneth Gifford, *Jindyworobak; Towards An Australian Culture*, (Melbourne, 1944), p. 1. Quoted in D.L.M. Jones, 'The Treatment of the Aborigine in Australian Fiction', unpublished M.A. Thesis (Adelaide, 1960), p. 164.
- 66 Jones, 'The Treatment of the Aborigine', pp. 163-164.
- 67 Personal interview with Judith Wright, Canberra, July, 1982.
- 68 W.E.H. Stanner, 'After the Dreaming', *White Man Got No Dreaming*, (Canberra, 1979), p. 211.