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A JOURNAL OF
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
AFFAIRS, IDEAS
AND THE ARTS

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VOL. V NO. 2

BIKMAUS

A MAP OF PNG SHORT STORIES IN ENGLISH
Paul Sharrad

FOUR SHORT STORIES: 1983 LITERATURE COMPETITION
J Kadiba, J S Hareavila, H K Madiawo, H Apopo

A MELANESIAN BOY IN SYDNEY
Philip Julius

IMAGES
Students of the National Arts School

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POEMS
Peter Pena, Walter Darius

FILM AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN PNG
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WHITE WOMEN IN THE COLONIES: WERE THEY RESPONSIBLE FOR
SETTING UP RACIAL BARRIERS?
Susanna Hoe

WHAT IS HAPPENING TO OUR VERNACULARS?
Otto Manganau Nekitel



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BIKMAUNTEN, a very high mountain, a peak, a mountain chain.

BIKMAUS, (E. big mouth)

1. A twelve gauge shotgun.
tumaus-a double barrelled shotgun.
 2. The groper, a large salt water fish; also the cod.
 3. To shout, to bark, to yell, to talk loudly.
Dok i bikmaus long mipela-The dog barked at us.
 4. Shouting, yelling.
Yu harim bikmaus bilong ol?-Do you hear them yelling?
 5. To be impudent, saucy.
Yu no bikmaus long mi!-Don't be saucy.
 6. A loud speaker.
- BIKMAUSIM, to shout at someone, to yell at someone or something.
- BIKMONING, in the early morning, very early in the morning.

...Mihalic

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A MAP OF PNG SHORT STORIES ENGLISH

I

A survey of short-story writing in PNG. Writing, Kovave, Chakravati/Kais's *Bibliography of Writing from Papua New Guinea* (1974) reveals that the most have been Aloysius Aita Jawodimbari (5 each), Joseph Allain Jaria (4 each), with E Kadiba, Tawali and Soaba one each. Since then, the order slightly. Krauth's bibliography of the Soaba stories in *inprint* of bring the totals to: Soaba 11, 9, Saruva 9, Benjamin Um purposes of this study I have Australian-born, PNG native John Kolia.) Consistent choices have been Kerpi's "dimbari's" "The Bird Calls", "He Took the Broom from Soaba's" "A Portrait of the C John Waiko's "The Old Man appeared twice as well; once as an autobiography, and "Growing up in Mailu" is the gised piece, with three appearances immediately apparent from contributors' notes, is that all belong to a generation born (mostly 1949-52 with a few Waiko 1941, Kadiba and Tawali almost without exception began

A MAP OF PNG SHORT STORIES IN ENGLISH¹

by Paul Sharrad

I

A survey of short-story writing based on *PNG Writing*, *Kovave*, *Gigibori* and Chakravati/Kais's *Bibliography of New Writing from Papua New Guinea* (IPNGS 1974) reveals that the most prolific writers have been Aloysius Aita and Arthur Jawodimbari (5 each), Joseph Saruva and Allain Jaria (4 each), with Degoba, Umba, Kadiba, Tawali and Soaba on three stories each. Since then, the order has changed slightly. Krauth's bibliography of 1978 plus the Soaba stories in *inprint* of 1979 and 1983 bring the totals to: Soaba 11, Jawodimbari 9, Saruva 9, Benjamin Umba 6. (For the purposes of this study I have excluded the Australian-born, PNG naturalised writer, John Kolia.) Consistent choices for anthologies have been Kerpi's "Cargo", Jawodimbari's "The Bird Calls", Meakoro Opa's "He Took the Broom from Me", and Soaba's "A Portrait of the Odd Man Out". John Waiko's "The Old Man and the Balus" appeared twice as well; once as fiction, once as an autobiography, and John Kadiba's "Growing up in Mailu" is the most anthologised piece, with three appearances. What is immediately apparent from looking at contributors' notes, is that all of the writers belong to a generation born 1941 to 52 (mostly 1949-52 with a few older ones — Waiko 1941, Kadiba and Tawali 1946) and almost without exception began contributing

to magazines while students at UPNG or Goroka Teachers College. From this beginning they were obviously cultivated by certain whites as literary leaders of the future, with Eri, Kiki and Matane achieving instant status as 'grand old men of letters' and the odd one or two like Kasaipwalova or, later, Soaba, assuming the role of token rebellious youth. The *Kovave* editorship reflects something of this coterie of mutual esteem. Editors Beier, Kasaipwalova and Enos have been supported consistently by Soaba, Jawodimbari, Dus Mapun and Saunana with occasional support from Brash, Krauth, Hannet, Eri and Namaliu. *PNG Writing* was run by Don Maynard, whose interests seem to have been more directed towards theatre and verse. He has been assisted and eventually replaced by Kumalau Tawali, Jack Lahui and briefly, Russell Soaba. The *PNGW* prizes of 1970 seem to have set the 'orthodoxy' for the next decade. These were: Soaba for story, Jawodimbari for drama, Tawali and Lahui for poetry. Judges were Kiki, Matane, Beier, Maynard with Douglas Lockwood, Tom Shapcott and three others. The winners went on to become judges themselves of later competitions. I don't want to labour the point too much, but it does seem that such an 'inbred' system, while it obviously provides for stimulating intellectual exchange and creative criticism, must have something to do with shaping the product. Ulli Beier, for example, states that PNG writing is not to be likened to *negritude* because there is no imperial past to look back on and the writers are not reflecting on an idealised village life from a Parisian café. Certainly, there is a greater contact with roots in the present and many PNG writers have chosen to return to village life — Kasaipwalova and Waiko to lead cooperative grass-roots commercial and cultural revivals and Kerpi to business in the Highlands. Kama Kerpi not only writes about Highlands tribal wars but, as Beier is at pains to point out (*Voices of Independence*), he has intervened in several to negotiate peaceful settlements. All this notwithstanding, it seems to me quite possible that the consistently pro-village, pro-traditional values

stance we find in the stories has something to do with the fact that the writers belong to an educated elite and have spent a good deal of time together in the national capital and, in some cases, overseas. The inverse — that they are all too aware of the less satisfactory aspects of urban westernised living — may also account for the even more consistently critical fictional portraits of city life. Of course such attitudes are finally realistic ones, operating in accordance with the post-independence conception of the writer as public servant to national culture. A country whose population is still over 80% rural and whose economy is based on agriculture and mining must look to confirmation of the validity of village life or face severe social problems.

Any analysis of preoccupations and patterns in PNG short stories would have to find the fundamental axes to be town and village, present and past. In this, not the village, is the knot which ties it all together. Towns as yet have no history, and are an imposition on local culture and social patterns. (The only exception to this rule that I know of is the exploration by Soaba in poetic-drama and recently by Inglis in a historical reconstructed biography of the Anuki folk hero who was hung under the White Women's Protection Ordinance of 1926). Most of the stories set in the cities have nostalgia for the village or village values as a central point of reference.

The family is another focal point in stories. Usually the narrator is a young, often educated, person who has a 'guardian' figure against whom to try new experiences.² Frequently this is a father, often an uncle, though the woman's role is by no means unimportant, despite the fact that most writers are male and only one or two stories give central place to women.³ The other typical central figure is a man and wife duo, especially in the village setting. (Males usually travel alone to the city in search of work.⁴) Village stories as a general rule have the extended family or clan as an active, if secondary presence. Lolo Houbein's thesis extract "Theme of Love in PNG Literature" (*Bikmaus* Vol. III, No. 3, 1982) develops clearly the strong ties between child and

parent, individual and extended family.

It is clear from all this that the individual is thought of as one part of the community, and when a sense of individuality is felt, it is experienced in terms of conflict and loss. [Soaba's *lusman* figure; Kerpi's 'Kulpu's Daughter'; Saruva's 'City Lights'.] Success is related to communal expectations (education brings status to the clan and potential wealth to be shared around; prowess as a warrior is a way of focussing corporate pride and strengthening the clan: e.g. Degoba 'Wife Who Came Back' or Arnold 'The Arrival').

The key factor in both status and anomie is education. Schooling, as I have mentioned already, is the means of inducting the individual, and, indirectly, his society into contact with transport, with the need for money, with rice and tinned fish, with the understanding to break the power of the sorcerer or cargo cult demagogue (e.g. Hwekmarin: 'Man on the Moon' or Mararunga: 'The Load of Firewood'; Kerpi: 'Cargo') with awareness of racism (Soaba: 'The Victims') and so on. Schooling is also what separates a young man from his age-mates (Kerpi 'In the Next World They Avenge'), from his girlfriend (Mambura, 'The Vain Promise') or primary-school playmate (Sosoruo, 'Airport Boram'). It complicates marriage arrangements (Kerpi, 'Kulpu's Daughter'), questions the rule of the village pastor (Jawodimbari, 'The Execution of the False Witness'), breaks down respect for elders (Kuma, 'Jackasses Problem as Yet to be Solved'), institutionalises inter-tribal hostilities (Saunana 'Riotous Soccer') and ultimately leads to neurotic isolation and degradation (Soaba 'Portrait of the Odd Man Out').

The protections which these stories offer against such a tragic outcome are the affirmation of traditional values (ancestors: Koroma 'Surrender to the Spirit'; tabu: Jawodimbari 'The Bird Calls'; Kavani 'Night of the Flood Harvest'; hunting methods; Lobuai, 'The Young Hunters') or the discovery of ways of adapting old to new and *vice versa* (Jawali, 'Our Voice'; Kaugle, 'Midnight Attack on the Waghi Valley'; Aita 'The Arrow Points'). One of these

ways involves the material of status. Strength and material children, food and wealth (Kadiba and Degoba). The fascination with the cargo cults ('Cargo'; Labuoi 'Cargo'; 'Man on the Moon'; Mambura 'Man of Firewood'). John K. K. 'Attack on the Waghi Valley' can be seen as an attempt to turn students on holiday to a traditional initiation ritual as a substitute for raids. Their pilfering from the Highlands Highway is also to convert education into goods. And it is worth noting that Russell Soaba's criticism of urban life is that so much has turned learning to profit, politics and public service. A 'man' is a 'Chief Nangara'. Teloti Kaniku's 'The Love of Soaba's 'The Feast'.

This situation is made worse by the extension of the cargo cult groupings into the *wantoks*. These are the final barrier against Soaba's 'abyss'. When parents have gone, *wantoks* maintain a village spirit serves as a mutual support between the town and their corporate save individual 'face' and the village (Kasaip, Kalabus O Sori O). Shared in many of the stories (S. 'The Tainer'; Soaba 'The Village'; Kavani, 'The Rapist'; Mambura 'Grandfather's Testicles'; 'City Lights') and is to be avoided at all costs. The obligation of members of a *wantok* group to the continuance of village life into urban society and to the public service. 'Payback' also a major thematic in the stories (Aita 'The Tattoo'; 'He Took the Broom from the loma 'Bomana'; Degoba 'Warrior'; Saunana 'Riotous'; 'The Patrol'; Aita 'The Back', 'The Arrow Points').

ways involves the materialistic interpretation of status. Strength and mana = land, women, children, food and wealth to share around (Kadiba and Degoba). There is an obvious fascination with the cargo cult (Kerpi 'Cargo'; Labuoi 'Cargo King'; Hwekmarin 'Man on the Moon'; Mararunga, 'The Load of Firewood'). John Kaugle's 'Midnight Attack on the Waghi Valley' for example can be seen as an attempt by high school students on holiday to generate their own initiation ritual as a substitute for village raids. Their pilfering from trucks climbing the Highlands Highway is a radical attempt also to convert education into marketable goods. And it is worth remembering too that Russell Soaba's criticism of modern urban life is that so many have selfishly turned learning to profit in the fields of politics and public service. The modern 'big man' is a 'Chief Nanga' type depicted in Teloti Kaniku's 'The Lost Key Earns' and Soaba's 'The Feast'.

This situation is made more complex by the extension of the age-mate and clan groupings into the *wantok* system. *Wantoks* are the final barrier against falling into Soaba's 'abyss'. When village family and parents have gone, *wantoks* remain. Their maintenance of a village-style cooperative spirit serves as a mutual benefit society in the town and their corporate action can help save individual 'face' and uphold the pride of the village (Kasaipwalova, 'Bomana Kalabus O Sori O'). Shame is a key concept in many of the stories (Saruva, 'The Entertainer'; Soaba 'The Villager's Request'; Kavani, 'The Rapist'; Kasaipwalova, 'My Grandfather's Testicles'; Kavani, 'City Lights') and is to be avoided or expunged at all costs. The obligations this places on members of a *wantok* group, however, lead to the continuance of village payback feuds into urban society and to the corruption of the public service. 'Payback' as a concept is also a major thematic element in many stories (Aita 'The Tattooed Betel Nut'; Opa 'He Took the Broom from Me'; Kasaipwalova 'Bomana'; Degoba, 'The Night Warrior'; Saunana 'Riotous Soccer'; Joseph 'The Patrol'; Aita 'The Wife Who Came Back', 'The Arrow Points'; Kavani 'The

Rapist'; Kerpi 'Kulpu's Daughter'). *Wantoks* seem to be the bane of student living and can lead to entrapment in round after round of partying and general debauchery. (Saruva, 'Do We Really Receive the Same Pay?'; Jawodimbari 'Matuda's Departure'). Saruva discusses this issue in his story 'Wantoks'. A new arrival is "shown the ropes" of Moresby by his friends who take him to an exclusive Boroko saloon to escape low-class spongers from their village or work, and they lament the drawbacks of trying to extend village cooperative ethics to cover urban capitalist individualism. The debate is typically not adequately digested into a fictive framework for readers used to the Western well-turned story, but there is a redeeming and uncharacteristically neat ironic closure to the tale when the friends leave the saloon and are delighted to find the busdriver is a *wantok* who therefore will give them a free ride. By themselves young men can be led into 'rascal'-hood (Jawodimbari, 'Joe the Rascal'; Kasaipwalova, 'Bomana'), but may be redeemed by the presence of an authority figure such as Matuda's uncle who presides over food rituals transposed from village to town and who picks up the pieces when the cousins get repeatedly drunk.

Matuda's uncle is aided by the background presence of women in the family and many stories seem to imply that Woman is a source of great strength, even though the surface action suggests she is no more than an object against which to display ones callous and posturing machismo. In the naturalistic depiction of a slum family, "Painted Dreams of a Papuan Shanty Boat", the mother is the source of everyday practicality and spiritual strength. Soaba's *lusmen* are often chastised or sustained by patient and resilient women, and sisters, wives, mothers are the ones most often attracting strong feelings of love and protection. The headman in 'The Entertainers' for instance fails to heed his wife's advice and ends up lamenting the death of his sister.⁵ The general impression gained from the stories is that the PNG world abounds in young men of varying levels of education, who traditionally have been

permitted — even forced into — grandiose gestures of virility and violence, but who no longer have the social system to provide either acceptable outlet for such energies or recognised limits to their release. The only final authority is an elder or a woman, the latter ideally being a well-educated but village-raised girl of great beauty and virtue. For all their bravado, the young men of the stories seem basically 'soft' and, like the central character in Jawodimbari's "The Three Letters", or his Matuda, or Kasaipwalova's 'Bomana' *picaro*, they are frequently deflated by girls throwing them over.

There's no question that village girls are best, although the two issues which arouse consistently modern social-reformist sentiments, whether in village or town, are bride-price and arranged marriages. (Aita "Bride Price"; Kerpi, "Kulpu's Daughter"; Pipi "Reluctant Brides".) The village itself is the best of all worlds, even though it is seen as having its faults. There are many more stories with village settings than urban ones and the majority of stories, whatever the setting, opt for an affirmation of traditional village-based values: family/ancestors/land etc. The town is consistently shown as a place of sojourn, temptation, corruption and entrapment leading to despair, even while it is also seen as holding the passkeys to material success. Whereas the village carries a positive moral aura, the city appears not to attract correspondingly negative moral judgement. The harsh realities of robbery, prostitution, slum settlements, police corruption and so on are admitted, but are seen mostly as mere facts of urban life, even carrying with them a certain air of excitement and picaresque celebration. (See, for example, Soaba's 'A Glimpse of the Abyss'; Jaria 'Where Are These People Going?'; Saruva 'The Last Riot'; Jawodimbari 'Hell at the Backyard'. Even Kavani's 'City Lights', which details the fears and humiliations of an old man come to town from the village, ends on an optimistic note.) Moral criticism is generally reserved for hypocrites and corrupt government officials.⁶ So far, though, no damning denunciation or cogent satire has

been produced that is consistently powerful or funny, just as no story has emerged to do full justice to the mixed joys of city living.⁷ Some hope is held out for better relationships between the races (Saruva and Aita) but the overall response of the reader is a puzzled amazement that the student life so consistently — almost monotonously — portrayed is capable of producing anyone (apart from Russell Soaba, the self-appointed scapegoat) who has either read a book or escaped alcoholic brain-damage! My reaction is also that these stories are more lively as a whole than the ones set in the village. This may be the result of their being closer to the experience of the writers or mostly closer in time to the present-day. It may also be due to my own preference for stories where moral issues are not too clear-cut and the writer is not being moralistic, although there are city stories where this is the case as much as it is in those with village settings. Another factor is that the city stories as a rule have a livelier sense of language than village ones, which tend to be stilted.

Obviously, the stories overall give an accessible and generally clear picture of society, and this is often their central interest for the reader as is also the concern of the writer. Realism is the fundamental literary quality in these stories, finding expression in slices-of-life, ambling (if not rambling) narratives, anecdotal reconstructions of the past or highly autobiographical tales. The frequency of first-person narrators and implied 'voice over' narrators is noticeably high, and there is, overall, little experiment in form, fantasy or language. As several stories show, with their anthropological details ('Turning Head'; 'Carry Leg') or their discursive debate of social problems, they exist primarily to instruct and to generate a national composite image of the people, the culture and the current issues for PNG society.

II

This raises the issue of appropriateness of critical response. Elton Brash has observed that "New Guinea writers have not consciously adopted western standards of

literary excellence as the 6/2, 1973, p. 175) and consensus of comment as a whole to social responsibility. The primary goal of writers and of most writers to build a living culture at all levels of the people and to give them a sense of national identity. Writers and politicians pay attention to which these regionalism within the national and individual dissent in the community, and Soaba at their differing ways contribute against the tendency to Waiko manages to go beyond nationalist programme but roots literature and the village life. The involvement in the cultural process will be that self-understanding successful national development see any way of going ahead in the present situation the standing of the values (Kovave 4(1) 1972, p. 44

The result generally is a story that is public and open. Initially, stories took the shape of colonial and post-colonial (often powerful and interesting pieces as well), autobiographies of a "where am I now" kind, and the recent and folkloric tales to generate identity. The next phase is a general burst of national construction in a low place on a practical level. Some writers kept producing phases overlap, but the commentators see is towards a quest for identity, a moral focus, and a discussion rather than political issue. The next phase is to go along with and John Kasaipwalova. Writers Conference in lamented the loss of "a among younger writers move beyond "trial pieces"

literary excellence as their criteria" (*ALS* 62, 1973, p. 175) and the overwhelming consensus of comment relates PNG letters as a whole to social responsibility and oral tradition. The primary goal of politicians for writers and of most writers for themselves is to build a living culture that is accessible to all levels of the people and which instils in them a sense of national unity. Where writers and politicians part company is the extent to which these goals allow for regionalism within the national community and individual dissent at any level of community, and Soaba and Kasaipwalova in their differing ways continue to hold out against the tendency to conformity. John Waiko manages to go along with the nationalist programme by proposing grass-roots literature and the reconstruction of village life. The involvement of everyone in the cultural process will produce, he claims, that self-understanding which will allow successful national development: "I cannot see any way of going ahead without analysing the present situation through the understanding of the values of the people" (*Kovave* 4(1) 1972, p. 44).

The result generally has been a short story that is public and oral in its qualities. Initially, stories took the form of denunciations of colonial and racist phenomena (often powerful and successful literary pieces as well), autobiographical appraisals of a "where am I now and how did I get here" kind, and the recording of historical and folkloric tales to generate a corporate identity. The next phase seems to have been a general burst of post-independence national construction in which writing took a low place on a practical scale of priorities. Some writers kept producing and, of course, phases overlap, but the trend most commentators see is towards a more individual quest for identity, a more contemporary focus, and a discussion of social problems rather than political issues. My own inclination is to go along with Taban Lo Liyong and John Kasaipwalova who, at the 1976 Writers Conference in Port Moresby lamented the loss of "a sense of mission" among younger writers and the failure to move beyond "trial pieces" and "emasculated

stories for school readers". (See Goodwin's "Bulls and Prophets".) If Sally Ann Pipi's prize-winning story of 1975 or Benjamin Umba's second-placed 'The Saint' of 1976 are indicative, the short story has become the preserve of sentimentality and religious devotional fervour.

Perhaps this kind of writing fulfils a social need or expresses a cultural tendency (certainly Highlanders in the stories shed tears at the drop of a hat without any sense of social stigma attaching to the act). Before we draw conclusions about the existence of an indigenous aesthetic, however, I want to look at some of the other shaping forces on the PNG short story.

It is difficult to form definite theories about the 'artificial' or 'external' shaping of concerns and styles in the short story because of the little evidence there is available. Suffice to say that PNG art and writing has been largely in the hands of the Beiers. Ulli Beier began creative writing classes, 'coached' Eri and Kiki through their novel and autobiography, and prompted the collection of folktales and oral history. He helped form and edit *Kovave* and then *Gigibori*, he was involved in the early organisation and judging of writers' awards and has edited nearly all the anthologies of PNG English writing that are to be had:

<i>Hohao: Art of the Gulf</i>	1970
<i>Five New Guinea Plays</i>	1971
<i>The Night Warrior</i>	1972
<i>Words of Paradise</i> (poetry)	1972
<i>When the Moon was Big</i> (folk tales)	1972
<i>Black Writing from PNG</i>	1973
<i>New Guinea Lives</i>	1974
<i>Sun and Moon in PNG Folklore</i>	1974
<i>Voices of Independence</i>	1980
<i>Papua Pocket Poets</i> (series)	1980

When Albert Wendt produced *Lali*, the impression that an agreed canon of PNG fictional literature was emerging (Eri, Kerpi, Kadiba, Soaba, Jawodimbari) had to be offset against the fact that Wendt was selecting from *Black Writing* or *Kovave* and, indeed, with one or two stories in *B.W.* we find Beier selecting from Beier (*NW*) selecting from Beier (*KOV*) selecting from

source material. If there is a sacred literary canon, we know who its high priest is!

I am not denying here what is obviously a very real and positive contribution to an ongoing PNG culture. But it is interesting to note that in the period covered by Chakravarti/Kais' bibliography (up to 1974), of the 65 stories in *PNG Writing* and the 25 in *Kovave*, not one appeared in the other, only three writers appear in both (plus Eri who 'guests' a common performance extract of *Crocodile* in *PNG Writing*), — Jawodimbari, Tawali and Kadiba — and although three of the four most prolific contributors of the 106 entries (extras come from *Pacific Islands Monthly* and the special *Overland* 47) are out of the *PNG Writing* "stable" not one appears in any of Beier's anthologies. Jawodimbari is the only one who makes it, and before 1975 he only appears once in *PNGW*: writers like Degoba and Soaba are exclusively *Kovave* protégés. We cannot claim that Jaria, Saruva and Aita did not make the grade because they belong to the high school 'clientele' of *PNGW* as opposed to the UPNG coterie of Beier's group. Although their writing does have a certain gauche quality at times, both Jaria and Aita received tertiary training in Catholic Seminaries and Saruva went on to post-graduate work at UPNG after Goroka Teachers' College and high school in Melbourne.

Now it may be that Peter Simpson was right when he suggested at the poetry conference (CRNLE/SPACIALS, 1983) that all the *Lali* poems seem as though they've been turned out by the same anonymous person because critics in the early stages of a literature's life are looking for common qualities rather than individual talents (and — as Beier suggests is inevitable — at sociological content rather than literary style). But we are still faced with the question of evaluative artistic assumptions underlying selection processes. And when the selection is made by one person, the question becomes more important and less avoidable.

Having talked with Ulli, I think it fair to claim that he shares the benevolently optimistic liberal approach of his wife as set

out in her account of the "birth" of the naïf artist Kauage (*Kov* 3(2) 72). The ideal is to enable the Papua New Guinean to discover new ways of building upon indigenous tradition so that the future can be creatively assimilated. The method is to act as catalyst, supplying new media to work with and coaching on ways of dealing with the technical problems of the medium. Frankly, I found Georgina's article a little naïve in itself, self-congratulatory and founded upon some vague romantic notion of the 'noble savage'. Ulli in conversation is more self-effacing and realistic, perhaps, but there is no denying that his own 'shaping hand' has a head full of a vision of "transitional art" "hybrid and often baroque" modelled upon Tutuola in particular and the West African literary experience in general. It is, I suggest, no accident that Vincent Eri chose to talk about a projected sequel to his novel in terms of making school history lessons more enjoyable and enlightening (*PNGW* 6, 1972) because he, like other PNG writers, had Achebe at the back of his mind, just as the new government policy-making on culture and nationalism had Afro-Asian bloc examples going back to Tom Mboya's UN visit in the early sixties to draw upon. (Paulias Matane's prize-giving speech in *PNGW* Dec., 1977 mentions African writers and Kama Kerpi's "Kulpu's Daughter" mentions Okot o'Bitek's *Song of Lawino*. An example of Beier's Tutuola model and its PNG product is found in his IPNGS discussion paper "PNG folklore and the growth of Literature", 1978. The example, Iriye Diaya's "A Successful Marriage at Last!" is anthologised in *Voices of Independence*.) The historical reconstruction, the folktale preservation, the transcriptions of taped memoirs, the overwhelming autobiographical element in PNG stories is a function of this Beier model as much as it is of socio-political necessity or the pragmatist advice 'write what you know'. (Beier himself is unsure and possibly unconcerned about whether to classify 'The Old Man and the Balus' as fiction or autobiography, and Chakravarti and Wendt both use "stories" as a catch-all heading.)

In speaking of the visual arts and problems

of traditional indigenous by modern Western one of flux which, if left to the slum-dwellers of M viable indigenous art. end, the new culture will who don't know that the the end he is right, of meantime, and especial dilemma is there, as Waiko and Narakobi ha Language, audience, pr socio-cultural implicatio of a PNG literature n activity. The question guidelines?

In Beier's favour, hi and oral materials has many indigenous cult and he, like John Kasai ensure that collection a writing does not entail arts into a debased t commodity culture.* T happening is unfortuna attempts by many to o the service of national i we can see the results in and moralistic treatn question, the bride-p respect for elders and s lova, John Waiko and theatre and Raun Raun all demonstrated, the s in keeping the arts ac village life and vernacu franca expression. W emerge is a multi-lin literature which feeds culture through trans Motu and Pidgin.

The short-story, pe forms, is, however, the easy place in such a mo seriously literary than i seems to have demonst man out" is so for reas tribal origin and pe committed writer of fic is a marginal figure. necessarily wrong with have been made very a

of traditional indigenous ways being eroded by modern Western ones, Beier sees a state of flux which, if left to work itself out among the slum-dwellers of Moresby will create a viable indigenous art. As he says, "In the end, the new culture will be created by those who don't know that the dilemma exists." In the end he is right, of course. But in the meantime, and especially with writing, the dilemma is there, as Kasaipwalova and Waiko and Narakobi have clearly indicated. Language, audience, print medium: all have socio-cultural implications, and the creation of a PNG literature must be a conscious activity. The question is who is setting its guidelines?

In Beier's favour, his emphasis on local and oral materials has been approved by many indigenous cultural commentators, and he, like John Kasaipwalova, is eager to ensure that collection and the transition to writing does not entail a fossilisation of the arts into a debased tourist or museum-commodity culture.⁸ The danger of this happening is unfortunately inherent in the attempts by many to co-opt literature into the service of national identity-building, and we can see the results in the stiffly polemical and moralistic treatments of the race question, the bride-price, the need for respect for elders and so on. As Kasaipwalova, John Waiko and Kaniku's travelling theatre and Raun Raun Theatre group have all demonstrated, the solution seems to lie in keeping the arts actively in touch with village life and vernacular, or at least *lingua franca* expression. What may ultimately emerge is a multi-lingual, multi-cultural literature which feeds a common national culture through translation into English Motu and Pidgin.

The short-story, perhaps of all the art forms, is, however, the least likely to find an easy place in such a model in any form more seriously literary than it has already. Soaba seems to have demonstrated that he as "odd man out" is so for reasons beyond those of tribal origin and personality; that the committed writer of fiction in English prose is a marginal figure. There is nothing necessarily wrong with this situation, and I have been made very aware of the fact that

my reading has based many of its preferences for stories upon Western, 'New Critical' values, so that the well-constructed, imaginatively conceived story which can work on several levels through ironic point of view and sophisticated language-use is prized over others. This may well be totally inappropriate to the PNG context.

For instance, it is evident from a quick scanning of the published plays in English that they contain a far greater degree of linguistic experiment and show an increased facility with metaphor than the short story. (e.g. Waiko: 'Unexpected Hawk'; Kasaipwalova: 'Rooster in the Confessional'; Jawodimbari: 'The Sun'; Soaba: 'Scattered like the Wind'.)

I suggest that several things operate to make this the natural situation in PNG. Stories are written; plays are spoken. Writing means isolation from audience, doing it 'in your head' and in a school/business/government world. Plays are collective, participatory affairs which demand dialogue and require the playwright to be super-sensitive to the register and idiom of his characters. Although the influence of the radio, the theatre, traditional oral culture and the emphasis on collecting life-stories etc. have put the story into a framework wherein dialogue or first-person direct address are the most obvious common factors, the 'literary' mode of the English language and the context of written composition prevent a natural blend of register, tone, character and situation. The result is flat, discursive prose or has a 'schoolboy' stilted formality, such as John McLaren found for example in Eri's novel (review in *Overland* 47).

It may well be that English-language writing in PNG will put its aesthetic eggs into different baskets than those of received English Literature tradition, and that prose fiction will remain either a workhorse of language acquisition and dissemination of knowledge, or a means of light entertainment like the popular novel, say, in Nigeria or Kenya. There will be occasional exceptions of genius, and often happy blends of the main genre with original styles and ideas, but as a rule, perhaps we ought not to

seek for 'sophisticated' imaginative literature in the short story.

An indication that this 'secondary' role has already been assigned to English expression intended for a reading public may be found in the magazine *Papua New Guinea Writing* which, in order to reach a wide readership, has consistently kept its language simple and its sentences short until the impression one has of it is of those primary-school magazines in fifties Australia. The air of condescending do-gooding is appropriate to the earlier numbers perhaps, when it was produced through a department of the Territory Administration and all the budding writers wore long pants, white shirt and tie, and short hair. But Greg Murphy offers us an instance of how the editors of the seventies were conscientiously 'denaturing' poems by 'correcting' grammar, punctuation, diction and even making their own rather conventional additions and deletions to the imagery and ideas. (IPNGS discussion paper 18, 1976, 'How Not to Edit a Poem'.) It is from this unadventurous product that young writers obtained their models. The individual voice of the poet managed to survive such editing, but I wonder how much all that 'class-exercise' fiction succumbed to the pedantic and populist designs of the magazine and discouraged the writer who sought to get beyond into original imaginative vision.

Beyond such speculation, what can we say from the evidence we have concerning the possible nature of an indigenous aesthetic for the short story? With all the provisos on the artificial shaping of folklore that "scientific" investigation implies, and on the deliberate nexus between oral traditions and written fiction, I would like to see the folkloric studies of the IPNGS developed to the stage where enough analysis of narrative, mythic and sociological patterns existed to meaningfully make comparisons with the corpus of written imaginative literature. Until that is done systematically, any suggestions will be impressionistic and tentative — especially so when they come from someone outside of PNG.

To make comparisons with short stories from other Pacific regions it would also be

useful to look at school syllabuses in English 1955-75. (PNG on N.S.W. system; Fiji on Cambridge; Samoa on N.Z., PNG syllabus, I suspect, using more Australian content than a 'mainland' course. What proportion of stories; what kind; etc.? What modifications made by mission schools? (Some LMS, for example, *most* English, some Lutheran *most* German, and some UFM types *most* American).) J. Stoltz's paper "The State of Literature Teaching in PNG", for example, gives the 1972 School Certificate English syllabus for PNG: *Australian Short Stories*, *Cry the Beloved Country*, *We of the Never Never*, adventure stories, *A Pattern of Islands*, *A Tale of Two Cities* and *The Scarlet Pimpernel*!

Aspects of the short story which emerge as being common and likely to persist do, however, seem to include the following:

- sense of direct address to an audience and the evaluation of a story in terms of its effectiveness on that audience rather than the writer's sense of aesthetic satisfaction.
- the kind of 'natural romanticism' Krauth finds in poetry (unity of mind and landscape) doesn't exist. There's little description for either nature's sake alone or artistic atmospherics. Fictional focus is upon ideas and human actions.

(Kov 3/1 71)

- there is a possible cultural solution to the problems of transition the stories portray implicit in the adoption of polemic, satire, example and descriptive realism by writers. The sense of direct utterance to an audience which accompanies this suggests that the writer has found a way of taking over the role of village elder/poet whose function was to instruct, exhort, and criticise his social group. If this is so, the "desertion" of writing for posts in the government and civil service is merely a logical step within the same conceptual framework, and art, as it is for Achebe, is "applied art", and should be read as such.

— the lack of a well narrated, a sense of clichéd device indicate a sense of and continuity of the lack of myth original creation in the existence of worlds after d ancestral spirits communal sense tend to impose ended structures of an individual i be-all and en existence. (Apisi 72 — suggests perception" of fr moments within typical of the or

— ready display of acceptable in th sense of weakne is generally asso degree of senti regard to one's that would be white/Western t to be associated absorbed from (Male character apparently allow and are expect gestures of gene they do so as a and not becau: tened sensibilit that validates community a possible except *lusman/wanpis* associated with self-awareness, action. Here, t be little self-pi aggrandizemen care response t life.)

— what seems to perceiving on as physical ent

- the lack of a well-rounded closure to narratives, a sense of anti-climax, or clichéd device (sleep/suicide) may indicate a sense of the unending flux and continuity of life associated with the lack of myths about a radically original creation event and the beliefs in the existence of coterminous other worlds after death from whence ancestral spirits may visit. The communal sense of identity also may tend to impose unconscious open-ended structures since the rise and fall of an individual is not regarded as the be-all and end-all of corporate existence. (Apisai Enos — *Knov.* 4(1) 72 — suggests this “non-sequential perception” of fragments of significant moments within a shifting present is typical of the oral sensibility.)
- ready display of emotion is obviously acceptable in the characters with no sense of weakness attaching to it. This is generally associated with a greater degree of sentimentality (mostly in regard to one’s village and mother) that would be acceptable in modern white/Western fiction, and seems not to be associated with any conventions absorbed from Romantic literature. (Male characters for example are apparently allowed a certain egotism and are expected to make grandiose gestures of generosity or defiance, but they do so as a part of a social system and not because they have a heightened sensibility or a prophetic vision that validates their scorning of the community and its values. The possible exception is the figure of the *lusman/wanpis* a Byronic renegade associated with city life, an artistic self-awareness, and picaresque action. Here, though, there seems to be little self-pity or Promethean self-aggrandizement; rather a devil-may-care response to an absurdist view of life.)
- what seems to be a cultural mode of perceiving one’s body and emotions as physical entities possessed of their

own will reinforces the apparently picaresque opportunities for men in PNG society so that characters to the Western reader seem superficial and lacking in any form of integrity born of the exercise of will. Actions appear as hollow gestures. This may reflect a breakdown in traditional social patterns, or it may constitute an indigenous aesthetic pertaining to a view of life and conception of character. Until something different emerges (amongst city stories in particular) it will be difficult to judge.

III

Nobody writes only short stories and nobody to my knowledge — except for that lively curiosity, John Kolia — has published a *collection* of stories, whereas several writers have put out books of poetry, and three have now published novels. The story is, apparently, a part-time amusement that takes more thought than verse does, or it is an apprenticeship for either the novel (if one is dedicated to art) or government discussion papers (if not). The same seems to have been the case in other places: Mana for example is only just bringing out Epeli Hau’ofa’s collection and Ray Pillai’s book was their first venture into stories after several poetry collections. Fiji and New Zealand, though, seem to have had a healthy tradition of better-than-average short fiction compared to PNG, and there is, too, the steady output by Albert Wendt. One reason for this, perhaps is the emphasis on autobiography and retelling folktales in PNG. Maori folktales, for example, were extensively recorded in both English and Maori from the nineteenth century on and, as in most island cultures of the Pacific, form a relatively homogeneous and familiar corpus. (The Fijians apparently had not worried much about creation myths and such-like until the anthropologists began to ask questions.) New Guinea, on the other hand, offered a vast variety of social groups whose oral culture threatened to disappear with the death of each tribal elder, so it is understandable that the difference should occur.

The wonder is, of course, that in a country of only several millions at the most, and where there was only one high school until the mid-fifties, such a body of writing should have appeared at all. And, indeed, it has all appeared in the space of ten years. Whether this writing will prove to be of lasting literary value is another question.

The fact that only one (largely social science) journal, *Bikmaus*, now caters for PNG writing and that most of the fiction writers have gone into the woodwork of Waigani offices, businesses, and school-rooms seems to lead to two possible conclusions. Either the Beier charisma and Moresby coterie raised a hot-house product which bloomed prematurely and died when removed from the artificial environment (in which case the well-meaning and impressive efforts may prove to have been of long-term hindrance to steady, considered development of local literature), or this writing served a particular socio-cultural need at a stage in the nation's history which is now past. The movement by Waiko and Kasaipwalova into grass-roots community development seems to suggest this is possibly the case. Both interpretations may, of course, equally apply.

In any event, what we have overall and what we find anthologised, exists out of impulses primarily historical, anthropological, social and political. Elton Brash makes valid distinctions in the title of his article in *ALS*: "Creative Writing, Literature and Self-Expression". Whether some of it can ever be called 'writing', let alone 'literature' is problematical. If I sit down once a week with a microphone and record someone telling me his life story then edit it and have it printed, is it reasonable for critics and reviewers to judge it as a literary work of autobiography? Where does one draw the line between Amos Tutuola's fanciful blend of modernity and tradition which is partly his imagination and wholly his own written work, for all its oral style, and Iriye Diaya's "A Successful Marriage at Last!" (*Voices of Independence*, 1983), a similar blend of myth and popular media symbology, but told to someone who translates it to be collected by two others

and edited by a third? I am not trying to argue for a 'great tradition' or the exclusivity of Western genre and the print medium, but I think we do have to distinguish between modes of fictional creation before we can appropriately bring to bear critical expectations and literary judgements.

Obviously there is a continuum from Diaya to Tutuola to the student who writes down directly what he or she remembers of a myth/legend/historical event for a class essay or a research collection to the writer who consciously retells the traditional material within an imaginative artistic framework. The same applies to autobiography. Obviously, too, as Michael Wilding has noted, the eagerness to collect and encourage writing of all kinds that characterised the seventies in PNG encouraged "the hobbyists" and produced a good deal of dross for every ounce of gold. That is to be expected. What has survived in anthologies is in the most part the result of literary judgement working within the general sociological political assumptions behind the whole enterprise.

I want to suggest that, from this distance, and taking into account the kind of suggestions I have made regarding a possible indigenous aesthetic, a consideration of the PNG short story on purely literary grounds would produce a different canon — or at least a differing evaluation of its components — than the one current anthologies have generated. Nigel Krauth calls for such a literary evaluation in his paper for the Conference on Teaching Literature in PNG, 1972.

My criteria relate to evidence of the writer's awareness of shaping his material imaginatively, his working to some sense of form behind the story, and his ability to both discipline language and shape it so as to make the story real on its own terms and not those of the society depicted by it. That this is reasonable is supported by Brash and Apisai Enos. The latter says:

... There is a need for creating an acceptable Niuginian English, just as there is an American English and an Australian English, for instance. One

way of doing this — a going to be a difficulty incorporating local expressions and images to its place and identity.

The major source of promise in PNG short stories. If this was lively and original stories employing common ordinary forms would be impressive, but as Leo H. in relation to some e. (*Overland* 47, p. 45), there literary criticism and awards are published for reasons of merit. He identified the instead of local expression to match language registers speaking and the situation themselves. Similarly Jo Vincent Eri's language perfectly but unnaturally communication rather personal expression — diction such as 'excre introduced into inform Such a criticism could be the stories surveyed.

The reasons are several. Guineans are notably free and accepting it as an un everyday life, only Kav reflects this in its unre (This seems to apply short story and has been Houbein as well: *Bikma* 1982, p. 12.) It is no influence of the missions 'on show' in print and the bowdlerism that national imposes on its mouthpiece *Writing*. At the other end to appear educated looking-up those impr words his teachers are feeding him and is unable distinguish between collo contexts. Consequently, becomes stilted "schoolb

way of doing this — and I know that it is going to be a difficult task — is by incorporating local metaphors, expressions and images to give the language its place and identity.

(Kovave 4(1) 1972)

The major source of problem and promise in PNG short stories is the language. If this was lively and original many of the stories employing common themes and ordinary forms would be a good deal more impressive, but as Leo Hannett pointed out in relation to some early plays (review *Overland* 47, p. 45), there is a need for solid literary criticism and awareness that works are published for reasons other than literary merit. He identified the use of English slang instead of local expressions and the failure to match language register to the characters speaking and the situation in which they find themselves. Similarly John McLaren found Vincent Eri's language stilted — "acquired perfectly but unnaturally" as a means of communication rather than everyday personal expression — with over-formal diction such as 'excreta' and 'testicles' introduced into informal conversations. Such a criticism could be directed at 90% of the stories surveyed.

The reasons are several. While New Guineans are notably free in discussing sex and accepting it as an unremarkable facet of everyday life, only Kavani's 'The Rapist' reflects this in its unrestrained language. (This seems to apply particularly to the short story and has been noticed by Lolo Houbein as well: *Bikmaus* Vol. III, No. 3, 1982, p. 12.) It is no doubt due to the influence of the missions, the sense of being 'on show' in print and the kind of editorial bowdlerism that national education policy imposes on its mouthpieces such as *PNG Writing*. At the other end, the writer wishes to appear educated and is constantly looking-up those impressive polysyllabic words his teachers and textbooks are feeding him and is unable or unwilling to distinguish between colloquial and formal contexts. Consequently, standard English becomes stilted "schoolboy" prose.

"INVENTIVE" DICTION

- "Weariness too faltered my conscience . . . besmalling me." [Soaba: VR]
- "the next resort for the trouble-minded"
- "whistly gaspings which indicate that he is already suffering from phlegmatics" [Soaba: NR]
- "with his comrade, the huge fish" (captor/adversary)
- "they gazed sullenly at Bago and shook their heads" (silently/dispassionately)
- "she cried coarsely" [Jawodimbari: BC]
- "The pigs had grown very fat. Now they were delicious to kill." [Degoba: Wife]
- "He murmured agitatively to himself."
- "making Mr Natin's head ballooned off its cage" [Kaniku: LKE]

Occasionally these are the result of creative experiment. Soaba, for example, is trying to suggest the clumsy speech of an old village man in 'The Villager's Request', but since his story is being transcribed by a young man, the errors are not convincing. Kaniku's coinages are often intended to support his satiric tone, and almost succeed in their inventiveness. But the effect is extreme, if not clumsy and draws attention to the language itself rather than the purpose of the story: e.g. "He . . . picked up his bureaucratic briefcase impregnated with files."

FORMAL "SCHOOLBOY" DICTION AND SYNTAX

- "My mother had already *deserted* her food . . . because the smell of *waste matter* . . . was leaking in." [Jawodimbari: Hell]
- "celebrating . . . with *hymnal praises* of their war gods."
- "Truly he was the corner-stone of the tribe." [Degoba: Wife]
- "He think councillor should go smell Waitausi his shitting anus." [Kasaipwalo: Magistrate]
- "It's imperative that . . . He will elude and trap . . . surveyed the vicinity." [Kerpi: Cargo]
- "an illiterate domestic servant" [says]: "A lot of drunks come round here molesting me. I have to take precautions." [Aita: TBN]

In the case of the village 'action' narratives, the formal tone is increased by the use of short sentences, repetitive in form e.g.:

"The line got entangled with the knife.
The knife flew up in the air and landed
on Boga's head.
The blood was pumping out vigorously
...
The salt stung his wound and he fell on
the platform, ..."

[Jawodimbari: Bird Calls]

"He caught a little bird.
He collected some bush leaves.
He made himself a hook.
He collected some black ashes ...
He set out with a bamboo ...
He reached Mani."

[Degoba: Wife]

These appropriately suggest an oral narrative and fit the moments of crisis in creating a certain compression and intensity. In Degoba's case the 'Biblical' tone suits the attempt to dignify the village sorcerer's role and assumes the qualities of incantation suited to his magic ritual. Unfortunately this technique is used so relentlessly that it gives the impression of controlling the writer and not vice versa, and the story reads monotonously. In the case of Kerpi's 'Cargo' and the city dialogues of other stories such formality is jarring (especially as Kerpi mixes it with schoolboy slang). However, 'Kulpu's Daughter' manages to suggest the pretension and education of the young men while Saruva's 'Do We Really Receive the Same Pay?' not only relates the formal language to a university context but creates a studious character whose love of big words makes him the butt of his friends' humour. Kasaipwalova is one of the few writers who shows that he really knows what he is doing with language register when he can create and sustain convincing colloquial speech but shift into formal language when the situation is appropriate; e.g. when the student in 'Betel Nut is Bad Magic for Airplanes' wants to assert himself against the imposition of white colonial authority.

SIMILES

Emotions

"The chief thought he might let him
return after his stomach had cooled
down." [Kawani]
"faces wearing fear like a mask"
"anger: like a caged cassowary darting its
head against the bars of its cage" [Kerpi:
NW Avenue]
"as if a fire is burning her throat (anguish)
[Soaba: NR]
"one was afraid of the persistence and
determination in me" [Soaba: PP]
"anger made a big pumpkin inside his
throat"
"his face smoked"
"truly my chest wanted to run away"
[Kasaipwalova: Betel]
"all my intestines heart and everything
inside me climbed up into my neck and
waited there" [Waiko: Balus]
"councillor was talking with his anus
afraid" [Kasaipwalova: Magistrate]
"Everybody can see his anger buliding
up inside his throat ..."
"Iosepa stood there as though the core of
his heart like a ripe betelnut had dropped
to the ground." [Jaria: Magician]

Description

"wide red mouth like a crocodile's"
[Soaba: VR]
"round face like a cat" (white woman)
[Jawodimbari: Matuda]
"waiting like sleeping pigs"
"standing like bamboo all empty"
[Kasaipwalova: Betel]
"Doga yelled out like an owl crying in the
gloomy night."
"She yelled out as if she were the mes-
senger of death." [Jawodimbari: BC]
"It was like the noise of all the cockatoos
together plus *dunana* the thunder."
"Worries came to me like waves breaking
on a rock."
"The balus was like a madman who is
shaking his arms and legs." [Waiko:
Grandfather]
"Problems were biting him like fleas."

"He listened to the na
his mind playing short
problems moving ...
Where?]

"Iosepa slept like a ca
drawn up to his chest."

Kerpi's 'Cargo' contain
suited to the mission sett

PROVERBS

"the older women we
the type of fruit one
types one should spit
"You are walking blind
We say the ripe cu
This is the language
[Jaria: Magician]
"When a man dances
the wet season he is
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[Kerpi: Cargo]

Kerpi is the only one
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"He listened to the natural orchestra in his mind playing short strange pieces . . . problems moving . . . like frogs." [Jaria: Where?]

"Iosepa slept like a cassowary, his knees drawn up to his chest." [Jaria: Magician]

Kerpi's 'Cargo' contains religious similes suited to the mission setting.

PROVERBS

"the older women were commenting on the type of fruit one should eat and the types one should spit out" (sex) [Kavani]
"You are walking blindly over everything. We say the ripe cucumber will break. This is the language we use tonight."
[Jaria: Magician]

"When a man dances at the first rains of the wet season he is foolish because the storms that will be coming will kill him."
[Kerpi: Cargo]

Kerpi is the only one to have attempted Achebe-isms it seems. Nature imagery is very strongly present. Images are mostly in simile form. Waiko, Jaria, Kasaipwalova use metaphors but few writers build a symbol out of them. One (rather over-worked) symbol is the boil in Kerpi's 'Cargo'.

Most stories are conceived of as fragments of experience and, like Jawodimbari's 'A Man with no Soul', ramble from interest in a human event, to a social issue to anthropological curiosities with little sense of formal literary unity. Instances in which writers give evidence of their awareness of the formal possibilities of the short story as a literary artifact include Degoba's use of shifting tense in 'The Wife Who Came Back'; the neatly rounded takeoff and landing of Waiko's *balus* in which the old man fortifies his mind with a Biblical text, becomes fascinated in the experience itself and engrossed in his emotions, and then returns to a closing *nunc dimittis*; the detached narration of Taviri's naturalistic and Dalle's lyrical descriptions with their use of rhetorical address to their readers and Russell Soaba's "impersonal" manipulation of his story, 'The Victims', through the 'voice' of a stage director that fits with the author's view

of life:

"Applause! The curtains are thrown wide open. There they are! Ready to act. Each man to act his own part. For the world itself is the stage — as baldy Willy Shakespeare once said — and people, human beings, are actors on that stage. The stage is full of them. All acting different parts. There are many who like their parts given to them by time, nature, environment, and ultimately by man himself to his fellowmen . . . There are yet others who do not like their parts. And these are the victims . . . Then there is silence. The action must begin, as it did many a time before, since the beginning of humanity. It must begin!

"Dialogue!

" 'Your name?' asks the actress firmly, from behind the table. She is the Sinabada.

" 'Stephen,' calmly responds the actor who is standing directly in front of the Sinabada. He is Stephen, presumably the first native martyr."

Soaba is the only writer to put his work into a literary context with allusions to other writers and literary conventions.

The "localisation" of language progresses from the deployment of strong vernacular terms, either without notes (Waiko) or with (Paul Arnold's 'The Arrival'), to transliteration into English of local expressions. John Kadiba's 'Tax' is one example of a slightly artificial treatment, and Tawali's 'Our Voice' manages to suggest the use of vernacular or colloquial speech within the codes of Standard English. The most extreme example of experiment in transliterated vernacular occurs in Soaba's 'Ripples' where he tries to reproduce Anuki syntax. There is the possible influence of Okara's *The Voice* behind this, and it is not entirely successful; but it is a brave venture into creative blending of languages. The most successful blending, though, is that which has occurred naturally, and Kasaipwalova's creative shaping of colloquial speech patterns and idiom seems to me to be a major achievement matched only by John Waiko's more 'standard' version in 'The Old Men and the Balus'.

In drawing up a canon of PNG stories on literary criteria the results clearly bear no relation to the frequency with which writers have published. Benjamin Umba, for example, is for me one of Wilding's "hobbyists" and Jawodimbari's tales seem to grow progressively flatter, more shapeless and clichéd. 'The Bird Calls' is, I guess, interesting and competent, as long as one is prepared to make the suspension of disbelief necessary for the traditional message to be effective. Obviously this is easier for someone in touch with the culture, but I think some of Degoba's and Kerpi's stories convey a deeper sense of being a part of the traditional world. (Degoba's 'The Wife Who Came Back', for instance, seems to blend the creation of a village *weltanschauung* successfully with the crafted short story form; more so than 'The Night Warrior' perhaps.) Kerpi's stories are perhaps limited by their geographical and traditional scope. His 'Cargo' though, humorously plays off a modern "knowing" reader against the naive schoolboys, who are in turn more knowing than the village gossip and theorizing upon which they build their farcical adventure, but ultimately the story fails because of its inability to hit the right tonal notes. 'Kulpu's Daughter' is similarly worth our attention for what it attempts, but is spoilt by too much formal language and the sudden clichéd ending. Nonetheless, it achieves a seriousness and tragic intensity which gives it a higher place on my list than the more anthologised story, and it does so because the ending does not entirely destroy the sense of a troubled character or a language that is not inappropriate to the educated speakers and which stands in obvious contrast to the village world at the heart of the story. Jawodimbari's 'The Execution of the False Witness' is one of the few attempts at prophetic fantasy and widens his range of approach and theme to bring him close to Russell Soaba's fiction. He is one of the few who have bridged the gap between village and city, and his 'Hell at the Backyard' is a respectable fragment of realism with the clichéd device of the dream ending succeeding because of the thematic contrast between ideal and everyday life. 'Matuda's

Departure' is also worthwhile, and its failure to reach the tightness of controlled tension and climax suggests the living at half-pressure of aimless and circular city living. But once again, the too formal language doesn't inject the necessary vital thrust that would prevent the atmosphere from becoming dull as I think it does. Jawodimbari, for his output, his range, and his efforts in theatre will always be a figure in the PNG literary pantheon, but considered individually, his stories would not I think give him immortality. Of the village stories, Joseph Saruva's 'The Entertainers' is as good as Kerpi, Jawodimbari, or Degoba. The two that will always be classics are John Waiko's 'The Old Man and the Balus' for its convincing creation in English of the mind of an old villager confronting new experience and making sense of it in his own terms, and John Kasaipwalova's 'The Magistrate and My Grandfather's Testicles' both for its successful blend of narrator's ironic consciousness and satiric intent, and its evocation of a historical event through the eyes of a villager in language that is an imaginative venture into the Papua New Guinean colloquial English Apisai Enos was looking towards.

Some of Joseph Saruva's stories deserve more consideration than they have received. I've mentioned his successful ironic closure of 'Wantoks' and 'The Entertainers'; 'The Last Riot' is competent and his 'Do We Really Receive the Same Pay?' is one of the more successful and conscious matchings of language to character. Alain Jaria, another PNG Writing contributor, has also been overlooked despite his ability to create local images that fit naturally with his English prose and the context of the story. His 'Where are These People Going?', interesting for its reflective, non-judgemental mood and its attempt to incorporate folklore, would be an excellent piece with just a little tightening of the narration. R. Taviri's 'Painted Dreams of a Papuan Shanty Boat' is also worth a place in anthologies for its experiment with objective viewpoint and naturalistic description.

On the other hand, a good deal of attention, encouragement and praise has

been given to Russell Soaba. He cannot see that it has been given to him, nor can he see why he became the most successful writer in PNG. Krauth and, later, Kasaipwalova are a few who have remained in PNG, but he has an awareness of the fictional genres and of the language, and he has a vision that he struggles to express, and which projects into some modern context that will rescue it from despair, and connect PNG literature as a whole. No one else as much as he. *The Interpreters*, directed towards a prophetic, r

Examinations of his work, expressing it are, however, disappointing. The novel's loose structuring, its picaresque, epic qualities, contains the kinds of language that are lively and of interest. But on the whole, it does not reveal the artist's expectations from his reception. Indeed, his last output, a decline from anything, a decline from 'Odd Man Out' and the like 'The Victims'. It is jumbled together and contains fluorous allusions to Shakespeare. Similes tend to be clumsy. The form attempts a sophistication of poetry and prose in but manages only to be pretentious and miss the point. In extent, this style is anarchic and rather far from propounded by Soaba, but it is just not disciplined (nor for Lolo Houbeirane, whom I do not always consider a personal shibboleth). Certainly there, and his work comes closest to reaching either side of that date. The 1974 look like some of the language is poor, inconsistent, the development 'literary'; the 1983 'Po

been given to Russell Soaba, and frankly I cannot see that it has paid off. It is easy to see why he became the protégé of Beier, Krauth and, later, Kolia; he is one of the few who has remained dedicated to writing, he has an awareness of the possibilities of the fictional genres and of the English language, and he has a serious philosophical vision that he struggles relentlessly to express, and which promises to put city life into some modern conceptual framework that will rescue it from shallowness and despair, and connect PNG to the world of literature as a whole. Soaba reminds me of no one else as much as Sekoni in Soyinka's *The Interpreters*, desperately stuttering towards a prophetic, mystical revelation.

Examinations of his separate attempts at expressing it are, however, mostly disappointing. The novel *Wanpis* may succeed in its loose structuring, achieves a kind of picaresque, epic quality, and it certainly contains the kinds of experiments with language that are lively and of intrinsic interest. But on the whole his short stories do not reveal the artistic discipline we might expect from his received reputation or his output. Indeed, his later stories show, if anything, a decline from the "Portrait of the Odd Man Out" and the promise of something like 'The Victims'. Ideas continue to be jumbled together and larded with superfluous allusions to Sartre or Van Gogh. Similes tend to be overworked, and the form attempts a sophisticated interweaving of poetry and prose in discontinuous flashes, but manages only to appear unnecessarily pretentious and misshapen. To a certain extent, this style may fit the deraciné, anarchic and rather fatalistic outlook on life propounded by Soaba's central characters, but it is just not disciplined enough for me (nor for Lolo Houbein, with whose judgement I do not always concur — so this is not a personal shibboleth). The promise is certainly there, and his 1979 story 'Ripples' comes closest to realizing it, but stories either side of that date — that two in *Mana* of 1974 look like someone's first attempt; the language is poor, the viewpoint inconsistent, the devices self-consciously 'literary'; the 1983 'Portrait of a Parable' is

simpler in style, but rather flat — these do not give me any confidence that Soaba can sustain, control and develop his vision or his craft. One problem I think I detect is the unfortunate influence of John Kolia's larrikin archness and convoluted style. Soaba has not the ebullient attitude to life to bring such writing off and it will be interesting to see what comes out of his time in the U.S. where he is doing an M.A. in creative writing. I certainly wish him well, for his persistent efforts deserve some reward.

If I had to bestow a title on a PNG story writer as some Philippines organization bestowed a metal wreath on the autodidact poet, Allan Natachee, my vote would go to John Kasaipwalova. For narrative interest, serious social commitment, linguistic experiment, sense of humour, range of emotion and a lively, convincing sense of being at home with his material, he to my mind is by far the most impressive writer. It is a great pity that social action has kept him from writing more, for as his comments at the Writers' Conference of 1976 show, he has not lost his love of literary creation. The 'Bomana' story (c.1980) and a recent book of poems suggest a return to writing. Such an event would be a major boost for future PNG fiction.

NOTES

1. This article is taken from a personal and tentative seminar paper presented at Flinders University, August 1983. It is intended to stimulate discussion rather than to make authoritative pronouncements, especially as the author has no first-hand experience of post-independence PNG!
2. Jaria; 'Where are These People Going?'
3. Aita; 'Bride Price'.
4. Soaba, 'The Villager's Request'.
5. So does the male figure in Jawodimbari's 'The Bird Calls'.
6. Teloti Kaniku, 'The Lost Key Earns'; Soaba, 'The Feast'; Kasaipwalova, 'Betel Nut'; Jaria, 'Farewell Sun'.
7. John Kolia's anarchic romps show the way here.

8. See Kasaipwalova's, 'What is Cultural Renewal?'
9. See the reference to Taban Lo Liyong's criticisms in the introduction to the PNG issue of *Meanjin*, 34, 3, 1945.

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FOUR SHORT
STORIES.
LITERATURE

'AE GAIDI'

Taupou was waiting a board his Air Niugini flight. He wandered over to the gate, picked up a Post-Courier, and found an exact amount of money for the paper. He turned at the gate, as it had been closed, and flight was ready for departure.

When the plane was about to take off, he made himself relaxed and looked through the Post-Courier, where a refreshing orange juice hostess had brought. A viewpoint column of his eyes. The letter was his. 'Where is the memorial finished his drink, turned away at the back pocket of him and began reading.

It is high time that the people in his election their worries and you in to speak for other things needed and many more. But MPs have never for electorate, and I have from the MP.

FOUR SHORT STORIES: 1983 LITERATURE COMPETITION

'AE GAIDI'

by John Kadiba

Taupou was waiting at Rabaul Airport to board his Air Niugini flight to Port Moresby. He wandered over to the airport kiosk and picked up a Post-Courier and put down the exact amount of money on the counter for the paper. He turned and walked straight to the gate, as it had been announced that the flight was ready for departure.

When the plane was airborne, Taupou made himself relaxed and started skimming through the Post-Courier, while sipping the refreshing orange juice which the pretty hostess had brought. A letter heading at the viewpoint column of the paper caught his eyes. The letter was headed in bold letters: 'Where is the member for Abau?' He finished his drink, tucked the paper cup away at the back pocket of the seat in front of him and began reading the letter:

It is high time the MP for Abau visited the people in his electorate and found out their worries and needs. They voted you in to speak for their worries and other things needed in development wise and many more. Both former and present MPs have never fought for people in the electorate, and I have never heard a word from the MP.

Being an Abauan I write on behalf of the people in Abau District, to urge him to tour the electorate to discuss worries with the people and see for himself the road conditions and other developments.

The next election is going to be tough luck for Abau Open candidates.

The letter was signed 'Ae Gaidi'. It is amazing what the idea of 'free association' can do. Taupou himself being from the Abau electorate, the letter and especially the ending phrase triggered off ideas in his head, bringing to consciousness the memories of the eight months he spent in his village, Ilai, one of the Mailu speaking villages in the Abau electorate. His thoughts went into a whirl and he was carried away to his village in his imagination and as he engrossed himself in his thoughts, he almost forgot that he was flying thousands of feet up in the sky in the strange bird.

"When I returned to Ilai for my eight months holiday, I had been away for more than two decades from the village. And come to think of it that was my last holiday. I haven't been back since then. How time flies!" Taupou thought. "People who would read my thoughts would be misled to thinking that I hadn't been back to the village at all in those years," he continued his thinking. "I had been back for short breaks every now and then, of course, but that last holiday was my longest stay." He paused for a while and thought of his late parents. "How I missed my parents. And they would have been glad to see and nurse their grandchildren. It was a year after my dear mother passed away that I left the village and went away to attend the LMS Primary School at Iruna. And my last short visit to the village before the long stay was to see my old man dying. The good old man. He held on till the night of the day we arrived. I remembered asking him, 'Are you going to go or will you stay?' 'Going,' he whispered. Knowing that he would leave us soon, I offered a prayer committing him into the hands of the Great Spirit. I thought I heard him say 'amen', too. I was glad he saw his daughter-in-law and shook hands with her in his dying minute. She was carrying his first grandchild inside her then."

Taupou had gone away as a school child and had returned for his long break married to an outsider, with his first two children.

"How things had changed," he thought of his village. He tried to recall some events of his childhood days at the village. "I loved those hunting and fishing trips and the garden goings. What was exciting and joyful about those days was that we all did things together, like making gardens together in groups." Then he remembered a fishing trip. "And what a night that was! I went with cousin Karau and uncle Uru to camp on the bank of the Oibada river and fished the whole night with fishing lines. The night would have been pitch darkness if it wasn't for those fire-flies glowing on and off in huge numbers and in unison. With crickets and other insects making noises and an occasional night-bird sounding out cries, together with the glowing fire-flies, the atmosphere was quite eerie. I must admit I was scared. But with that first catch of a huge fish, I became excited and my fearful feelings disappeared into the unconscious. Good old uncle Uru! With his years of experience, he knew that high tide would carry sea fish from Orangerie Bay up the river as far as the tide would reach. In his younger days he was known as a good hunter and fisherman. And we struck our luck that night with a handsome catch of fish."

Taupou turned from the reminiscence of his childhood days to think of the conditions of the roads leading to Oibada, Baibara and Keakaro. How untidy and overgrown they looked. He pictured in his mind how immaculately tidy the roads were in the days when the Australian *kiaps* were around. He remembered how every Friday morning the village constable blew his shell-horn and summoned everybody in the village to work on the roads or to clean around the barracks where the *kiaps* and their policemen rested on their patrols. The roads and the village were kept particularly neat, if word was passed around that the patrol officer would come on such and such a day. Occasions such as these were times of great excitement accompanied by fear — fear of what might the patrol officer do should he appear

unexpectedly and found the village and parts of the roads in disorder. And means of communicating to villages in those days were no worse than today.

"But they were good old days," thought Taupou. "At least we knew who our leaders were and they told us exactly what to do. Not that we didn't take initiative or didn't know what to do. But in the whiteman's new ways, we felt insecure and uncertain and it was good for somebody to tell us what to do. The village constables were harsh sometimes but they knew what they were doing and they did the work well."

"Now things are different," Taupou continued his silent monologue. "Group spirit is gone. People are not sure of themselves and don't seem to know what to do. They live as if they have no leaders and they seem totally indifferent to what is happening around them. Each family is left to clear the part of the road allotted to the family by the village magistrates and councillors. There is no set day for the people to work. Each family works whenever it feels like doing some work on the road. I can't blame the people for letting the roads become overgrown by grass. The village magistrates and councillors only delight themselves in using their powers to take people to village courts for minor offences and charging them high fines unnecessarily. God only knows how they use the money they collect in fines. They are more concerned with taking people to courts than with the tidiness of the village and the roads."

Taupou took his thoughts back to the letter in the Post-Courier and thought how it had confirmed his experience in the village.

"How true that letter is. In the months I was in the village I didn't see the president of the local government council come around to the villages in the area, nor did I see the Abau MP visit the electorate. They only come around when they want something from the people, like getting them elected to political power and glory. They do not think of coming around just to find out what the people need and what their problems are. It is no wonder that what they say does not relate to people's needs and problems. Sometimes they preach excellent political

sermons on the so-called they do not put into preach."

The plane was halfw and Port Moresby. The cups of tea and coffee passengers. Taupou was own thoughts that he did hostess had come around

"Excuse me, Sir," Immersed in his own th not hear her. "Excuse me

"Oh, sorry," he look getically.

"Would you care fo coffee?"

"A cup of tea, please

"Black or white?" she

"White, please," Tau

her smile. "A good cup as he drank it and ate the was glad to pause for restless thoughts and l plane window to the w How pure and restful t few minutes of looking a his mind. But not for lo were soon turned again

"When was it that th tried to recall a visiting was the third month o village. Word had gon collectors from the local would be coming to co how the people complained when they want money. or show us the way to r tax. Where is the transp take our copra to be sold pay tax or you go to never do anything for u

"It was two days aft message, that the tax c Ilai. They arrived at mid remembered. "People house. I am glad I was meeting," he continued tion to himself. "The collectors introduced his explained the purpose o people did not already they had drawn up their

sermons on the so-called development, but they do not put into practice what they preach."

The plane was halfway between Rabaul and Port Moresby. The hostess was serving cups of tea and coffee with biscuits to the passengers. Taupou was so engrossed in his own thoughts that he did not notice that the hostess had come around to his row of seats.

"Excuse me, Sir," the hostess said. Immersed in his own thoughts, Taupou did not hear her. "Excuse me, Sir," she repeated.

"Oh, sorry," he looked up to her apologetically.

"Would you care for a cup of tea or coffee?"

"A cup of tea, please."

"Black or white?" she asked smiling.

"White, please," Taupou said returning her smile. "A good cup of tea," he thought as he drank it and ate the cream biscuits. He was glad to pause for a while from his restless thoughts and looked out of the plane window to the white clouds below. How pure and restful they seemed, and a few minutes of looking at the clouds relaxed his mind. But not for long, as his thoughts were soon turned again to the village.

"When was it that they came?" Taupou tried to recall a visiting group. "Ah yes, it was the third month of our stay in the village. Word had gone out that the tax collectors from the local government council would be coming to collect tax. And oh, how the people complained! 'They only come when they want money. They never tell us or show us the way to make money to pay tax. Where is the transport they give us to take our copra to be sold? All they tell us is pay tax or you go to *kalabus*!! But they never do anything for us.'"

"It was two days after we received the message, that the tax collectors arrived at Ilai. They arrived at mid-morning," Taupou remembered. "People gathered under a house. I am glad I was able to attend that meeting," he continued his silent conversation to himself. "The leader of the tax collectors introduced his four-men team and explained the purpose of their visit, as if the people did not already know. He said that they had drawn up their budget for the year

and that they needed tax money for this project and that project. Poor fellow! Before he finished talking, somebody shouted out, 'What happened to all the money that we have been giving you all these years?' "

"Before he could answer, another person put in, 'If we put money, are you still going to build us the aid post that you have been promising us for so long?' "

"Poor man! I felt sorry for him. He didn't have a chance. He was only a young man in his mid-twenties and the questions were asked by the oldies. He was about to address to the first two questions, when a third one was thrown at him without notice. 'Are you going to build us a primary school? We have been sending our children to attend school in other villages. You people promised to build us a school a long time ago but you have done nothing.' "

"This time the leader deliberately kept silent, perhaps expecting further questions. When he was sure there was no more questions, he made his speech. He didn't answer the queries one by one. He spoke generally."

" 'As you all are aware,' he began, 'our local government council did not function last year. The reason for this was that the council did not have any money left. The clerk from another province who was working in the office misused all the money and left,' he blamed the clerk and went on with his speech. 'You see that is what happens when you have somebody from another province working in the office. But we have found a person from our own district.' "

"Will the person from our own area be any better?" I asked myself.

"The leader continued, 'I hold the portfolio for finances. I will make sure that these promises will come true.' "

"One of those empty promises," I thought to myself.

"The meeting dragged on till well over lunch time. After they had eaten some food provided for them they left for another village. That was typical. They never spend more than half a day at any one village."

As far as Taupou could recall, none of

the Ilaï people paid tax that day. The amusing part of the story was that when the tax collectors returned to their base, they passed the word around that Taupou had stopped his people from paying tax to the council. As he remembered this, he almost laughed aloud. But he controlled himself for fear that he might startle and disturb his fellow travellers on the plane. Instead he gave a good smile at the thought of it. Although he did not say or do anything to stop his people from paying tax, he gladly accepted the blame because inside him he was all for the stand that his people had taken.

"Then there was that party from the central provincial government," Taupou continued his inner conversation. "They called themselves the central provincial government constitution reviewing committee. What a mouth-full, and very impressive, too!"

Taupou remembered that this group visited the area in the sixth month of his stay in the village. The party included two former national parliamentarians.

"The right place to call for a meeting would have been in one of the villages. But instead the team called for the meeting at the plantation which belongs to the Steamships Trading Company. They did not come for the plantation. They came for the villagers," Taupou was a bit irritated by the thought of this.

Ilaï is about eight kilometres from the plantation. On the day of the meeting, soon after the morning food was eaten, Taupou joined his people and they walked hurriedly to the meeting. It was a bright morning and the air was warm. By the time they reached the plantation, drops of sweat were dripping from the pores of their bodies. Taupou's shirt was stuck to his wet body.

When they arrived they were surprised that they were late. The meeting had finished. The people sat down under the shades of the rubber trees and chewed betel nut or smoked tobacco. Some people walked up the hill to the trade store owned by the plantation manager and his wife. The store is within walking distance from the manager's house. Taupou excused himself

and went to the manager and his wife, a couple from Holland originally.

Taupou thought back over the visit: "A nice couple, those pair. They always welcomed us. They made our stay in the village even more pleasant with their little kind deeds. I was in time for a morning cup of tea and I gladly accepted their invitation to join them."

"Did you come for that meeting, Taupou?" the manager asked me.

"Yes, but we were late," I replied lifting the refreshing cup of tea to my lips.

"You were in good time. But the meeting lasted anything from ten to fifteen minutes," the manager said.

"That's no exaggeration?" I asked.

"That's the story. I was there. The meeting was held near the rubber factory," the manager assured me.

"I can't believe it," I said.

"Typical. They're all the same. We've been here fifteen years and we've seen them all," said the manager's wife.

The Reviewing Committee had wanted to find out what the people thought about the Central Provincial Government Constitution. Taupou caught up with the visiting team after the cup of tea with the manager and his wife. He was given a copy of the document by the team. He had not seen it before. He also found out afterwards that the people had not seen the piece of paper before, and that it had not been explained to them.

"How did they expect people to understand the thing?" Taupou recalled asking this question to himself. "Most people cannot read and write. Even if they did, they would not have been able to understand the complicated way the document was written. They should at least spent time in that meeting explaining the things to the people. I am not surprised that the people who were at the meeting did not respond to their questions."

The pilot announced that the plane had just flown over the Owen Stanley Ranges and that it would be descending soon. Taupou looked out of the window and noticed that the plane had taken the Popondetta route.

He brought his thought in the Post-Courier which was in his head, bringing back the experiences he had in the village. He remembered four years since his home from the letter it seemed changed.

Taupou thought of how he struggled to find money for offerings to the church for their children's education. How indifferent people were to what was happening in the world.

"Was it indifference?" Taupou asked himself. They seemed to live as if they were not leaders.

"The much talked about 'development' means little or nothing. In fact everytime I turn to the village and listened to what was happening to the rest of the country or planet. Ilaï village and did not see connection with the rest of the world."

The more Taupou thought of the people, their problems, he became sorry for himself. The more he thought about the more he was irritated.

He brought his thoughts back to the letter in the Post-Courier which had shot off ideas in his head, bringing back to memory the experiences he had in his long stay at his village. He remembered that it was almost four years since his holiday at Ilai and that from the letter it seemed that nothing had changed.

Taupou thought of how his people struggled to find money to pay tax, to give offerings to the church, and to find money for their children's education. He thought of how indifferent people were to what was happening in the world around them.

"Was it indifference or ignorance?" Taupou asked himself. "Perhaps both. But they seemed to live almost an aimless life, living as if they were a people with no leaders."

"The much talked about word 'development' means little or nothing to the people. In fact everytime I turned my radio on in the village and listened to the news of what was happening to the rest of the country, it was like listening to the news from another country or planet. Ilai was just one isolated village and did not seem to have any real connection with the rest of the country."

The more Taupou thought about his people, their problems and needs, the more he became sorry for his people. And the more he thought about the elected leaders, the more he was irritated by them for their

inability to find out the problems and needs of the people to help them. But he took comfort in the thought that while in the village, he at least tried to help his people. His wife, who is a trained nursing sister, gave health care to the people at Ilai and nearby villages. He himself helped to start build a primary school with the people, although the project failed after he left the village. He attended the village people's meetings and helped them in explaining things, when they needed his help. As he comforted himself with these words, the plane touched down at Jackson's Airport.

When the plane came to a halt, Taupou removed his seat belt to get off the plane. As he stood up to leave, his thoughts went to the MP for the Abau electorate and whispered, "*Ae gaidi*, do something for our people."

NOTES

'Ae Gaidi' in Mailu language literally means 'sorry friend'. There are different feelings attached to this phrase and the emotions are determined by the context in which it is used. It could mean 'sorry friend I pity you' or it could mean 'friend have pity on me'. In the context of this letter it could mean both — having pity on the MP that he may not be re-elected, or pleading with the MP to have pity on the people of the Abau electorate and do something for them.

THE SECOND CLASS CITIZEN

by Joye Soloi Hareavila

THE SECOND CLASS CITIZEN

Jack Kaita Smith was bent low over the bench with his head between his hands, trying to hold back his tears and frustrations. He has been sent out of the classroom for fighting another student that had called him a half breed. This was one of those times he was provoked to think about his mixed parentage. He was not ashamed of his mixed parentage, but was confused and only lost his temper when his tormentors stated it as if it was something dirty or used it as an insult. No full-blooded Papuan, New Guinean or European understood the enigma of a mixed blooded person. This applied also to Jack's sympathizers. Only those that were in the same predicament as him understood it or the prejudice and persecution allotted to their lot by those egotistically deflated individuals who regarded themselves either pure-blooded black or white. This pure bloodedness was based on the hypothesis of having parentage of the same race whether it was black or white.

In mixed blood community or communities there existed two categories of people. Those who were trodden on by other people and those who were twisted with cynicism as a result of the pressures they were subjected to in their environment. From one of these two types of people, Jack had to pattern his life style if he was to fit in their environment. His loyalty was also torn between two stereotype identities. By wearing a *white mask* he would be white like his father, or wearing a *black mask* he would be black as his mother.

To best explain what was meant by black mask and white mask we have to look at Jack's parents who came from two vastly different backgrounds, culturally, socially and ethnically. To wear a white mask he had to be a stereotyped European, attain or acquire European level of civilization and embrace the European way of life, but to wear a black mask it was the opposite. He had to learn to be black, to grasp Papua New Guinean way of life and be a Papua New Guinean, instead of forging his own identity as an individual.

Jack Kaita Smith was half Koiari and half British. His father had been a roving soldier of fortune. He had a stretch of soldiering in the British Army in Calcutta, Singapore, Australia and finally in Papua New Guinea during the second world war (WW II) and had settled in the country after the war. He had married Heni, Jack's mother after setting up a rubber plantation on the Sogeri plateau. He had been a man of ideas, one was that he could scratch a living from his rubber plantation, the other was that one day his people, the European Community, would forget that he had married a local native, a hill tribeswoman at that, and accept him and his family into their midst, but that was not to be. He had died the previous year without seeing his dreams materialise.

Jack Kaita Smith was a half breed. It was made plain to him every time he had some difference with the other students. He was both ethnically and culturally a half breed, a man with divided loyalties.

As a result of this, most of the students in his class avoided him whenever possible, so as not to argue with him over their differences. The troublemakers were the only ones in the school who accepted him in their midst, as they thought he was one of them, a troublemaker. So in reality he had no genuine friends either in school or outside of school.

His chances of acceptance in his father's society or community was diminishing rapidly. He had been warned by his teacher to have a reign over his explosive temper in the future or be expelled from school. The teacher had issued him with this harsh

warning because of two was personally against whether the violence was His other reason and was his prejudice for mi. This was due to an old w love life. In his younger left him to marry a E result of this incident, towards a relationship o the issues of such a rela

Jack had been infor the previous day that d being invented from o which would replace so rubber has had in the p selling price of rubber would reach rock botton so. To remedy this the cc the plantation had to minimum.

She had said, "Son, y God rest his soul. Before will, and according to th owner of this plantati ought to be advised on most important facet of tion is its earning cap output. The buying an rubber has dropped an according to recent press stockbrokers of the Market. The drop in t prices is caused by the products to replace the u had in the past up until no market is found for the rubber products the pla bankrupt, due to this decided to ask you to mal whether we retain the pla

He had told her to give decide on what steps to t future of the plantation.

To understand the pr in, Jack had to analyse th his parents relationship a people's norms. This wou to grasp an understand predicament. His materna at a marriage of this nat They said that a female

warning because of two reasons. Firstly, he was personally against violence in his class, whether the violence was verbal or physical. His other reason and the most important was his prejudice for mixed blooded people. This was due to an old wound in the teacher's love life. In his younger days his fiancée had left him to marry a European, and as a result of this incident, he had turned bitter towards a relationship of this kind and hated the issues of such a relationship.

Jack had been informed by his mother the previous day that due to new products being invented from other raw materials which would replace some of the uses that rubber has had in the past, the buying and selling price of rubber had dropped and would reach rock bottom in the next year or so. To remedy this the cost of the running of the plantation had to be cut down to minimum.

She had said, "Son, your father is dead. God rest his soul. Before he died, he made a will, and according to that will, you are the owner of this plantation, therefore you ought to be advised on its operation. The most important facet of running the plantation is its earning capacity and annual output. The buying and selling price of rubber has dropped and is still dropping according to recent press releases from the stockbrokers of the World Economic Market. The drop in the World Market prices is caused by the invention of new products to replace the uses that rubber has had in the past up until now. If no alternative market is found for the clogged supply of rubber products the plantation would go bankrupt, due to this situation I have decided to ask you to make a decision as to whether we retain the plantation or sell it."

He had told her to give him more time to decide on what steps to take regarding the future of the plantation.

To understand the predicament he was in, Jack had to analyse the interpretation of his parents relationship according to their people's norms. This would necessitate him to grasp an understanding of his own predicament. His maternal relations looked at a marriage of this nature with distaste. They said that a female who married into

another race was either stupid or loose in her morality as there were more than enough young men in the village to be married to. To understand this type of reasoning one had to look at the motivation factor in the marriage of these people.

It was not based on romanticism. It was a sense of duty that compelled them to marry in this society. It was a duty to the community as a whole. The bigger the population the stronger the tribe was. Within the tribe population was a strong motivation factor in decision making amongst the clans. During the tribal warfare it was population which decided the difference between defeat and victory. It was also an important factor in other social activities and functions of the tribe.

His maternal relations had voiced their opinion on his mother marrying his father as having two reasons. The first was to have access to personal luxury that the natives cannot afford, but a white man can. The other was egotistical in nature. It was the egotistical attitude of the present western educated females and their reflections on status within their own villages, comparative to the other village girls. The village people would then say that she had done quite well for a Papua New Guinean in becoming the wife of an European. In doing so she had elevated her social status within her community.

They had also made an assumption as to the white man's reason for marrying their wantok. Firstly, it was sexually inclined, to keep his bed warm as his own kind was scarce in this wild country, where stoneage rites were performed side by side with Christian rites. Stoneage superstition and beliefs went side by side with knowledge of modern technology. The other reason was to strengthen his hold on the plantation and to have support in the event of grievances relation to the plantation from the locals. He would receive support from his in-laws. The overall reason for Jack's father marrying Jack's mother was selfishly inclined, for his own interest and benefit. Jack's mother's people assumed that his father married his mother for these reasons.

On the other hand Jack's father's people

had looked from a distance at the marriage with abhorrence. Many reacted differently, each according to their individual temperament. Some had even been heard to quote, "Jack Smith might be off his rocker in marrying that black trash." Others had added, "What do you expect from a person who has spent most of his time with those heathens at his plantation."

Some snobs have even turned up their noses at him and stayed out of his way. Despite this prejudice Jack's parents had tolerated it for seventeen years until the father's death.

Amongst all these problems there had been the recent press releases on the controversial issue of citizenship, which had discriminated against both mixed blood and European populations from applying for it.

The implication of the issue on the mixed blooded population within this country would affect Jack as he was also a mixed blooded person, therefore he had to find a way to stay in the country, otherwise he considered an outcast, a person without land and country to call home.

This discriminatory evidence was established through a survey of public opinion carried out by the newly established Parliament's Constitutional Planning Committee. The country had no room for any Judas who had betrayed her people. Because of such prejudice, the children of mixed marriages suffered the consequences.

Jack shook himself from these depressive thoughts and tried to think of a way to stay in the country. Then he had a brain wave. Why not, fight for his right. Was he not half

Koiari, and his mother's land and his people, his? His father was dead. His mother was running things until he came of age. According to his father's people's norms you came of age when you were twenty one years old, but with his mother's people, you came of age when you were sixteen. He was turning sixteen in a month's time.

Being half Koiari was the deciding factor in his decision to fight for his right and the right of the mixed blooded population within the country. His people (the mixed blooded people) were now disunited and integrated with the European community, therefore he had to organise and unite them into a group which would be strong enough to voice their grievances. He had to establish himself as a symbol or projection on which his people could focus for leadership in their fight for recognition and justice.

The real reason for their disunity was their belief that they were mutations. This belief was further reinforced by their present existence. They did not want to be recognised, however they would rather act as window dressing for the other societies. They had an inferiority complex about their mixed parentage. They assume that the others, either Papuans, New Guineans or Europeans considered them as freaks.

Jack rose from the bench a grown man with one purpose in mind, to fight for his people and his right. He entered the classroom with a confident look in his eyes, to collect his books and bag. It was portrayed in his mien, that he was ready for his self ordained duty.

THE TRAP

by Hawk

Madame Lahoapo had and since then the v living in a desperate father who leaves b after his death, Laho only five children and debts to his widow.

Even a man who children in a squatter Town, Gulf Province living is much higher. Maimuru, Ihu and M it an easy job, but m woman, and besides, kina's worth of debts

She was uneducated qualifications to enable What could she possibly surmised, she could not hawk like her husband daughter was only for the smallest child who would then take her? Besides, to be also some money to had none. She hesitated to do, then made her the poor is always and does not leave much. She had to make up her she started to take it make a living. Her eldest had to stop going to mother with the household monthly income of all sufficient to have prepared meals a day and son from starvation. The how to take care of the departed husband.

Lahoapo had been months before he passed

THE TRAP

by Hawkes Kingsley Madiawo

Madame Lahoapo had lost her husband, and since then the whole family had been living in a desperate condition. Unlike a father who leaves behind a good fortune after his death, Lahoapo a hawker, had left only five children and five hundred kina of debts to his widow.

Even a man who has to support five children in a squatter settlement in Kerema Town, Gulf Province, where the standard of living is much higher than that of Kikori, Maimuru, Ihu and Malalaua, does not find it an easy job, but madame Lahoapo was a woman, and besides, she had five hundred kina's worth of debts to pay up.

She was uneducated and had no special qualifications to enable her to earn money. What could she possibly do? Maybe, she surmised, she could work as a maid or as a hawker like her husband, but as her eldest daughter was only fourteen years old while the smallest child was not yet one year old, who would then take care of the family for her? Besides, to be a hawker, she needed also some money to make a start, and she had none. She hesitated, not knowing what to do, then made her decision, for life for the poor is always an urgent problem which does not leave much time for pondering. She had to make up her mind quickly and so she started to take in washing in order to make a living. Her eldest daughter, Morivei, had to stop going to school and helped her mother with the household. She had thus a monthly income of about fifty or sixty kina, sufficient to have porridge for the three meals a day and somehow save her family from starvation. The biggest problem was how to take care of the debts left over by her departed husband.

Lahoapo had been sick for about three months before he passed away. During his

illness the rent and the grocer's bill had gone unpaid. As soon as Lahoapo had passed away, both the landlord and the grocer came along. Madame Lahoapo was so overwhelmed with misery that she had collapsed — something she had never done before — and as she regained consciousness she saw the grim faces of the two creditors, together with two women, somewhat more sympathetic. Through her tears, she recognized that the two women were Ivasa, her own sister, and Auntie Lahio, a neighbour. Auntie Lahio's presence was a surprise to her, for though they lived nearby, they had not been in the habit of frequenting each other's houses. While she was still wondering, she heard her sister's voice.

"Take it easy poor sister, it won't help at all if you torture yourself with sorrow. The main thing now is what to do about the dead!"

"Yes Madame Lahoapo your sister is right. We all have to die and what you must do is to take care of your husband's body and you must look after yourself." That was Auntie Lahio's consoling advice.

Madame Lahoapo stopped crying, but when she saw again the body still on the bed and the two creditors on the doorstep, she could not help bursting into tears and wailing once more. Ivasa understood her sister's trouble. She strolled over to the two men at the doorstep.

"Help, help boss, the man has just passed away, the whole family are in mourning. If you come back after a few days, I think they'll settle the accounts."

"Yes boss, you'd better withdraw. They have relatives and friends in and around Kerema town who will help. You'll be paid somehow." Auntie Lahio had also taken the part of the bereaved.

Auntie Lahio's standing in the community was well known, and the creditors, hearing such reassuring words from her, felt content to leave the matter as it was for the time being and retired. In actual fact Auntie Lahio had been even better known when she was young, and now that she was older she lived with her adopted daughter making some money in organizing a 'mutual help fund' for the needy and lent money at

exorbitant interest. She made quite a small fortune. She had had her eyes on Morivei for sometime. The latter, although not exactly beautiful, was flirtatious with her apple-shaped face and charming eyes and eyebrows. Besides, she was well built, with a good bosom and round hips, and she was as attractive as a lily in blossom; young and enticing. When Lahoapo fell ill she surmised that the time had come for her to act and started then to pay visits to the house. Now, hearing the lusty cries from the Lahoapo family, she realized that God had come to her aid and, without wasting any time, she had been among the first to give her condolences. When the creditors agreed to leave, she said to Ivasa, "I'll be frank with you Ivasa, you are sisters, you have to do something for her."

"Of course I have," said Ivasa all red, "but we are poor people, what can I do?"

"There's no use stressing your poverty. You can't leave the dead body lying on the bed forever, can you?" Auntie Lahio looked coldly and piercingly at Ivasa. Such were her tactics she was compelling Ivasa to retreat into a corner disarmed and then surrender.

"I repeat, Auntie Lahio, we poor people have but poor relatives, we have nowhere to look for help." Ivasa tried her last card. "If I were as rich as you are then I'd be of some help."

Auntie Lahio was pleased at the last words. She smiled from the depth of her heart this time for she took it for granted now that she was going to win. She then made her proposition with feigned humbleness and compassion.

"I'm not your relative Ivasa, but you can take me as one of your friends since we have been neighbours for years. We need to help each other when we are really in difficulties."

Ivasa was surprised at the offer. Readily she answered earnestly, "How grateful we shall be, both my sister and I, Auntie Lahio, if you are generous enough to help us."

"Listen, Ivasa, I'm going for the time being. You talk it over with your sister and ask her how much money she needs for the funeral. Come to me tomorrow and we'll see to it together."

"Thanks, thanks, certainly I'll come, to

be sure."

Madame Lahoapo sat paralysed in her wornout pandanus mat listening to the conversation of the two women. Now as they were taking their leave, she could only utter helplessly, "I am grateful to you, Auntie Lahio."

"Don't mention it," said Auntie Lahio, then turned to Ivasa. "See you tomorrow, Ivasa, don't forget."

The next day Ivasa paid a visit to Auntie Lahio for the first time in her life. Auntie Lahio's home was a small newly built house. The front door opened into the sittingroom which was furnished with a set of new sofas. There was a glass-doored cabinet along the wall filled full up; not with books, of course, but with fine drinks, dolls, fake curios, brandy and whisky. On the top of the cabinet was a radio of a considerable size. On the walls were pictures of suggestive European film stars and local roadside girls; one of the latter being Auntie Lahio's adopted daughter Mary in European dress with a low neckline; so low that the top half of her firm breasts were clearly visible. The guest looked at everything with an envious eye and her hostess was curious also to display her possessions.

"Come this way Ivasa, it's the first time you've dropped in. I'll show you over the house."

There was a refrigerator and an electric stove in the kitchen; all neat and clean. In Mary's room there was a huge glass-doored wardrobe with a row of smart multi-coloured floral gowns and European dresses; on the shoe-stands, dozens of high-heeled shoes of every design and on the dressing-table, a heap of cosmetics of which Ivasa, to be frank, didn't even know the names. She was dazzled as if she was in a wonderland and could utter nothing but words of admiration.

"How beautiful! How nice indeed! It's like paradise."

Ivasa was not exaggerating at all, for in comparison with hers, this home was a paradise. Her own home consisted of a single room which had to serve as dining-room, bedroom and sittingroom together and was only the size of a box. The kitchen

was fortunately apart by all the occupants nine families together three times a day of smoke the whole drifted even to the li were only wooden pla separating them from other. The roof was c so that the air or s freely overhead. In t started to cry, nobod sleep. Those who lived could never in their w having a sofa, warc refrigerator or electric

When they returned the house girl brought drinks. Ivasa sipped t was Ovaltine made wi Then her hostess offered

"Make yourself at are Three Fives. Not go!"

"No thanks, Auntie poor families don't sn

Auntie Lahio helped She puffed slowly, nov a circle of smoke w disappeared. The ea woman spelt to Ivasa r life. She could not you're living in abs Lahio."

"Don't exaggerate, with you, I'm of the o all too short, there yourself and suffering spoil yourself."

She took another cigarette, turning her her daughter, and let sexy and romantic surmised, lay the emb glow of satisfaction st

"But we are helples What can we do?"

"You are right perh but have yourself also myself, for example. died, I was left with started thinking then a

was fortunately apart but it had to be used by all the occupants of the house, eight or nine families together; they each cooked there three times a day, so the room was full of smoke the whole day and the smell drifted even to the livingrooms since there were only wooden planks some ten feet high separating them from the kitchen and each other. The roof was common to every room so that the air or smoke could circulate freely overhead. In the evening, if a child started to cry, nobody in the house could sleep. Those who lived in such circumstances could never in their wildest dreams imagine having a sofa, wardrobe, dressing-table, refrigerator or electric stove.

When they returned to the livingroom, the house girl brought in cigarettes and drinks. Ivasa sipped the cup offered her; it was Ovaltine made with milk; she felt spoilt. Then her hostess offered her a cigarette.

"Make yourself at home, Ivasa. These are Three Fives. Not too bad as cigarettes go!"

"No thanks, Auntie Lahio. We women of poor families don't smoke at all."

Auntie Lahio helped herself to a cigarette. She puffed slowly, now and then puffing out a circle of smoke which rose gently and disappeared. The easy manners of the woman spelt to Ivasa nothing but a heavenly life. She could not help uttering, "But you're living in absolute luxury, Auntie Lahio."

"Don't exaggerate, Ivasa. But to be frank with you, I'm of the opinion that since life is all too short, there is no point starving yourself and suffering. You might as well spoil yourself."

She took another deep draw of her cigarette, turning her eyes to the picture of her daughter, and let her eyes dwell on that sexy and romantic bust, wherein, she surmised, lay the embodiment of life and a glow of satisfaction stole over her.

"But we are helpless, poverty is our fate. What can we do?"

"You are right perhaps in your own way, but have yourself also to look ahead. Take myself, for example. When my husband died, I was left without a single toca. I started thinking then about my own life and

future and thought there was no other way than to commit suicide! Then a friend of my neighbour gave me a hint. 'Why be discouraged sister?' she said, 'You're still young and beautiful, that's your capital. You can make money if you want.' Then she introduced me to a cabaret. I was reluctant at first thinking that it was a shameful profession but she said, 'In these developing countries, money comes above everything else. Once you've got money, you have everything, including reputation and social position. Nothing is shameful if you're making money. And if you have money, everybody will respect you.' So I became a cabaret girl, as my daughter is now."

Auntie Lahio stubbed out her cigarette, took another Three Fives and continued with her leisurely smoking, blowing smoke rings into the still air.

"I'm rather straight forward, Auntie Lahio. You told me that you want to help my sister. I have asked her what she needs and she said she would need some five hundred dollars for the funeral expenses."

By this time Ivasa was impatient and went straight to her point, having listened too long to her hostess without being able to catch the real meaning behind her words.

"Five hundred kina is really only a trifle, but . . ."

"But what?" Ivasa thought the woman had perhaps changed her mind.

"I mean I would like us to sign a paper. You will not misunderstand me and think I do not trust you, will you?"

"Of course not! We have to sign a receipt or something. That is natural." Ivasa felt reassured.

"The loan will only be for one year. I give you the privilege of paying only two and a half percent interest. I normally charge three percent. Your sister has a grown-up daughter, she can expect to get married next year. She will then have the brideprice from her husband-to-be according to Papua New Guinean custom and she should then be able to pay up the loan. But we have to put it clearly in the contract that if within one year she fails to pay, her daughter Morivei has to serve as a mortgage. I do not know if your sister will agree to this. It is up to her."

In case she does, I'll go and fetch somebody to draft the agreement and we'll sign it and I'll hand over the money tomorrow. But perhaps in the meantime she may have found some money from elsewhere."

Ivasa was in an awkward position. She hesitated a little, then said, "I think you can still prepare the agreement. I'll talk it over with my sister. If she agrees, we'll come over and sign it tomorrow."

She rose and was about to take her leave, when suddenly a big car stopped outside the door. Auntie Lahio's adopted daughter, Mary, jumped down from it in a flashy brocade dress and waved to a man in the car; a wealthy man without doubt from the National Capital District.

"Goodbye!" she called out.

"Bye!" The man waved to her in reply.

She was obviously just back from spending a night in a hotel, Ivasa dreamed, and that man must have been her client.

Tragedies are often due to poverty. The rich can buy whatever they want with money, while the poor have not only to sweat and shed blood in their struggle for existence, but even to accept humiliation and disgrace for a bowl of rice. In the case of Madame Lahoapo (as she had to pay her husband's funeral expenses and as creditors were already on her doorstep asking for settlement of their debts), she had no alternative but to agree and sign the agreement prepared by Auntie Lahio for the loan, even to the extent of pledging her own daughter as security. Life was hard for the widow and the orphans. But time passed quickly and soon the day of settlement for the loan came around. Auntie Lahio lost no time in coming over.

"Hello, Madame Lahoapo, you're growing thinner and thinner. Don't worry yourself so much." She turned then to the daughter. "And you, Morivei, you're quite grown up and how nice you look!"

She took one of the girl's hands and patted it fondly. But Morivei was shy. She pulled her hand away and offered Auntie Lahio a chair instead.

"Please sit down, Auntie Lahio."

"You really have grown up, Morivei. You have the looks of your mother, too.

She has been working too hard and getting old before her time. Look at those grey hairs! You ought to have thought of some way of releasing her from her toil."

Madame Lahoapo served her with a cup of black coffee.

"Have some coffee, Auntie Lahio. As a matter of fact, my daughter has done a lot for me since her father's death. She has stopped going to school and is helping with the washing and household work. She's a very good girl."

"But she has grown up. You have to find a mate for her. Once married, not only will she settle down herself, but you'll benefit from it too."

"Of course it's a good thing for her to get married now she is grown up. But it's not an easy matter to find a good match. We are poor people, but still we can't marry off our girl to anyone."

"Yes, that's a point," said Auntie Lahio. Then after a short pause, she came to the real point. She said smiling, "Do you remember what day it is today, Madame Laho?"

"Yes, of course. But look here, Auntie Lahio, I have been trying my best, but up to now I still can't make ends meet."

Auntie Lahio stopped smiling.

"So you understand now why I advised you to marry your daughter off, because that was in the agreement?"

"But still I cannot marry my daughter off just like that." Madame Lahoapo dropped her eyes.

"Well that is your business. But since you cannot marry your daughter off, I shall make you a proposition. What about sending her to the hotel to work? If she does well in the hotel, and that's not so difficult, she may be able to make a thousand kina a month."

"Well, I think in the first place Morivei does not know how to dance. We have to consider our reputation."

"Really you are wrong, Madame Lahoapo. Dancing is not difficult to learn and besides it isn't important whether she dances or not — well or otherwise. The point is whether she looks pretty and knows how to get along with people. Put aside

what you call 'reputation' cannot be sold by s therefore worthless. reputation as food w your guts. In this Guinea, money is e have money, you eve you're penniless, you

But Morivei was heard them talking ab

"No, mother, I'll r would prefer even to than that!"

"You said, Morivei hard? I know of just Yesterday a friend of from Port Moresby. I looking for a girl to I It's an easy job but w to pay two hundred k the right person. Wou

"But it is in Port away, isn't it?" M hesitating between t letting her grown-up faraway place.

"It isn't so far actual If you go there by you'll arrive in the motor to Lavare-Id called 'York City') a Port Moresby on th You'll arrive in the Morivei is grown up look after herself. Y come back home or worried about her. anyhow. Six hundred time and then you'll that you owe me."

"You mean there Auntie Lahio?" Mori

"Of course, my ch you?"

"Then, mother, Moresby."

"No, my dear, it's not rest with you out

"But, mother, I c myself and I'll come bring you the money

"Give me time and

what you call 'reputation', that sort of thing cannot be sold by so many kilos and is therefore worthless. You can't use your reputation as food when you feel hungry in your guts. In this country, Papua New Guinea, money is everything. When you have money, you even possess fame. When you're penniless, you're despised."

But Morivei was uneasy when she had heard them talking about working in a hotel.

"No, mother, I'll never be a hotel girl. I would prefer even to work as a slave rather than that!"

"You said, Morivei, you'd prefer to work hard? I know of just such a chance for you. Yesterday a friend of mine came down here from Port Moresby. He said a boss there is looking for a girl to look after his children. It's an easy job but well-paid — he's willing to pay two hundred kina a month if he finds the right person. Would you like that job?"

"But it is in Port Moresby. Pretty far away, isn't it?" Madame Lahoapo was hesitating between two hundred kina and letting her grown-up daughter go to such a faraway place.

"It isn't so far actually, Madame Lahoapo. If you go there by boat in the morning, you'll arrive in the evening; by outboard motor to Lavare-lokea (which is often called 'York City') and then get a PMV to Port Moresby on the Hiritano Highway. You'll arrive in the night, and besides, Morivei is grown up now, she is well able to look after herself. You can even ask her to come back home once a month if you're worried about her. It's two hundred kina anyhow. Six hundred kina in three months' time and then you'll be able to pay up all that you owe me."

"You mean there really is such a job, Aunt Lahio?" Morivei interrupted.

"Of course, my child, why should I lie to you?"

"Then, mother, let me go to Port Moresby."

"No, my dear, it's too far away. I could not rest with you out of my sight."

"But, mother, I can surely take care of myself and I'll come back every month to bring you the money."

"Give me time and let me think it over."

"You have a very nice daughter, Madame Lahoapo, she's most sensible and reasonable," said Aunt Lahio stepping out of the door. Then she turned back and added, "Do not forget my money, Madame Lahoapo. I've been fair with you but do not delay too long."

Morivei ran out after her and seized her by the arm.

"Aunt, I want that job! Please get it for me, you're so kind."

Aunt Lahio threw a sidelong glance at the mother who was deep in thought. She felt confident that she had won and was secretly elated.

"You're a good girl; very sensible and good to your mother. I will help you."

"But do not delay, Aunt. Go straight to your friend and tell her that I want the job, otherwise . . ."

Aunt Lahio smiled at her naivete.

"Don't worry, my girl, I'll see to that in no time and I'll inform you in one or two days."

"Thank you, Aunt."

"Bye."

Under Aunt Lahio's careful handling, everything went off smoothly. That is to say, the job was secured and Madame Lahoapo agreed finally to let her daughter leave for Port Moresby. In a couple of days, Aunt Lahio came over as promised.

"You're lucky, both of you, Madame Lahoapo and Morivei. The job has been confirmed."

Morivei was overjoyed by the news. She brought a chair for Aunt Lahio and went to prepare coffee for her.

"Sit down, please, Aunt Lahio."

The mother stopped her laundry and came into the room.

"The day before yesterday, I went to Kerema Town to find this friend of mine but she had gone back to Port Moresby two days before."

Morivei, with a cup of black coffee in her hand, was a little upset when she heard the last part.

"Oh, what a pity, so you missed her!"

"Yes, I did! But I put through a long distance call to her and asked her whether the job had been filled. She said no, but the

mistress, my friend's master's wife, was set on having a nice girl; not just anybody."

"Did she agree to accept me, Aunty?"

"Yes, of course. I used all my influence with my friend Ivasa, and she with her mistress."

"What about the salary or wage? Two hundred kina?" Morivei was eager for a confirmation.

"Yes, two hundred. They do not care about the money side. My friend is paid two hundred and fifty as a maid; the boss is a thousander. You know the thousander, when they gamble any sort of lucky game in the club, may lose two or three hundred kina a night and think nothing of it!"

"When shall I leave for Port Moresby then?"

"Sometime next week because you have to make some new clothes and buy new things. That will take about a week, I suppose."

"But Morivei has never been away from here before. How will she get on travelling?" Madame Lahoapo was uneasy.

"Don't worry, I'll accompany her there."

"But I don't like to trouble you so much."

"How can we afford to buy new clothes and new things?" Morivei interrupted.

"Here's fifty bucks you can have for that." Aunty Lahio handed the money to the girl. Morivei was shy and dared not accept it. "Come along, my child, you take it and pay me back later on."

"You are too kind to us, Aunty Lahio," the mother said, moved.

"We have an old proverb: when you want to help, you have to see it through to the end."

She turned to Morivei.

"Your mother will never be free, Morivei, so I'll accompany you shopping first thing tomorrow."

The girl nodded. She was most grateful to benevolent Aunty Lahio.

On the eve of Morivei's departure for Port Moresby, although it was late, both mother and daughter could not get to sleep. The mother was thinking about the risks involved in sending her daughter to work so far away, alone and out of sight, at an age when she still needed protecting. Aunty

Lahio had also been a whore once anyway and nobody could place confidence in that kind of person, especially where a young and attractive girl is concerned.

A neighbour's clock struck twelve. The girl could not sleep. She was upset about being separated from her mother but was also musing about her own future. Looking after kids was not a difficult job and she might have the chance to go to the Wards cinema or even a restaurant once in a while. With two hundred kina she would be able to pay her mother's debt within three months and thereafter she would keep only ten kina a month for herself and send the remaining one hundred and ninety kina to her mother. Poor mother, she would not have to work hard then! And there were still three younger brothers and a younger sister to bring up. They all needed schooling. She was fifteen herself, if she worked for five years, she'd only be twenty, that would not be too late for marriage anyhow. She saw her future bright before her and her eyes opened wide when she noticed her mother stir restlessly and heard her sigh.

"Mother, you're not sleeping?"

"No, I'm worried."

"Why, mother?"

"Don't go to Port Moresby. I'm afraid."

"Afraid of what, mother?"

"You're still too young to be separated from me and live alone. You know nobody there . . ."

The girl interrupted. "Don't worry, mother, I'll be a good girl."

"Don't be over confident. You may get trapped by those who bribe you with sweet words and things. That Aunty Lahio isn't exactly a reliable kind of person. She makes a living by lending money and I'm not sure what she's up to really."

"No, mother, you think too much. I'm not a child now. She won't be able to sell me as a slave."

"But I'm still afraid of her."

"She's not an enemy anyhow. What can she do with me if she does trap me? She wants money and we'll be able to pay her when I get the job. Besides, I've made the clothes and bought the things, again fifty kina in her debt. How can we hope to pay

up all we owe her if I earn some money? A younger sister, they all you don't have the money don't worry, mother, reality."

The mother thought of the neighbour's clock striking twelve and couldn't get to sleep again.

The next morning she got up early and over to help Morivei with her departure. She put on a new dress and her new high heels and used make-up for the first time in her life.

"Take a look at yourself," said Madame Lahoapo, she was looking at Lahio who was fully satisfied with her reflection and was privately calculating how much she could get for her. Madame Lahoapo was surprised also. She had never seen her own daughter work dressed up like that. She was like a flower in full bloom. She was lost in admiration of her reflection in the mirror.

They left by the motor car. Lahio noticed that there were some people who could hardly keep their eyes off her. She pretended to look at the scenery. She was as happy as a bird just out of the nest for the first time in her own youth and vitality. At the same time the beautiful day. Lahio was happy too, but with her new prey.

It was dark by the time they reached their destination. The car had driven to a hotel. On the way out of the hotel, they were met by an aged man.

"Hello, there you are. I'm waiting for you for a long time. Aunty Lahio, his girl, Morivei from head to toe."

"Don't do anything," he said, glancing at him mysteriously.

"Well, not bad," he said, took their luggage and reserved a room for you at the Davara Hotel."

The girl was thought

up all we owe her if I don't go to work to earn some money? And my brothers and younger sister, they all need education and you don't have the money. Let me go and don't worry, mother. We have to face reality."

The mother thought of that also. The neighbour's clock struck one but she couldn't get to sleep all night.

The next morning Auntie Lahio came over to help Morivei prepare for her departure. She put on her newly made dress and her new things and rouged her lips and used make-up for the first time in her life.

"Take a look at your daughter now, Madame Lahoapo, she's a beauty!" Auntie Lahio was fully satisfied with her creation and was privately calculating how much she could get for her. Madame Lahoapo was surprised also. She had never realized that her own daughter would look so beautiful dressed up like that. She looked like a flower in full bloom. Morivei herself was lost in admiration of her own picture in the mirror.

They left by the morning boat. The girl noticed that there were many passengers who could hardly keep their eyes off her but she pretended to look out of the boat at the scenery. She was as happy as a baby bird just out of the nest for the first time, enjoying her own youth and vitality and admiring at the same time the beauties of nature. Auntie Lahio was happy too, not with the scenery but with her new prey.

It was dark by the time they arrived at their destination. They hired a taxi and drove to a hotel. On crossing the threshold of the hotel, they were met by a tall middle-aged man.

"Hello, there you are. I've been waiting for you for a long time," the man said to Auntie Lahio, his glance travelling over Morivei from head to foot.

"Don't do anything silly." Auntie Lahio glanced at him mysteriously.

"Well, not bad," he commented as he took their luggage and strolled ahead. "I've reserved a room for you on the second floor of the Davara Hotel."

The girl was thoughtful and was asking

herself, "Who might that fellow be? What's his relationship to Auntie? How does he know about meeting us here?"

Auntie Lahio noticed the girl's suspicion. Once in the room, she introduced him to her.

"This is Mr Bala, a well-known man in Port Moresby city. This is Morivei, my adopted daughter."

"Am I her adopted daughter?" the girl thought, amazed now. "Is he going to be my master? Why should she call me her adopted daughter?" She could not utter a word but nodded meaninglessly to Mr Bala.

"Mr Bala is an old friend of mine, Morivei. He's always generous and helpful. You can count on him when you need any assistance in this city." Then she turned to him. "Go and arrange for dinner for us, tall man. We must change now."

"Okay then. I'll make sure you have a nice meal."

In half an hour they were in a restaurant together.

Auntie Lahio ordered several dishes of freshly fried meat and a whole bottle of brandy. The girl had never had such a sumptuous meal but she was scared and dared not eat too much. Auntie Lahio was most talkative, and as she had taken some drink with their host, she was in high spirits. She insisted on Morivei drinking, too.

"No, Auntie, I have never drunk in my life."

"There's always a first time for everyone, my child. If you won't drink, I'll force you to."

She rose and seized the girl by her shoulder, took up her glass and put it to her lips.

"Just one mouthful to please me."

Morivei could not resist any more and took a sip, then two. Then the tall man rose also to greet someone who had just come in.

"So here you are at last, brother."

Auntie Lahio stopped forcing the girl to drink. She turned to the man coming in and shouted, "Why are you so late, boss? We've been waiting for you."

"I'm sorry, I have so many things to do and so many places to go to. I am a busy man. This is Morivei, I suppose?"

He sat down beside the girl.
"Yes, sir, she is Morivei. Morivei, this is your boss. Like Mr Bala, he's also a famous man in Port Moresby."

The famous boss stared at her with predatory eyes, then took the bottle and topped up all the glasses.

"Everyone bottoms up," he commanded. "No exceptions allowed."

Both Auntie Lahio and the tall man obeyed him but Morivei was so scared and confused that she remained silent and motionless. The 'famous boss' was very gentle. Taking up the girl's glass, he raised it to her lips as Auntie Lahio had done.

"Do me a favour, Morivei. This shows the high regard I have for you!"

"He's going to be your boss. You must be courteous and accept the drink," said Auntie Lahio.

There were several similar toasts after that and in a daze the girl finished almost half a glass of brandy though she had never even as much as tasted a sip before. She began to feel dizzy and wanted Auntie Lahio to take her back to the Davara Hotel.

"I'm really tired, Auntie."

The famous boss looked at his wrist watch, then glanced at Auntie Lahio.

"But it's still so early. Only nine o'clock. If you'd like to go back now, I'll come over and see you later on."

After having travelled on the boat the whole of the day and having consumed almost a whole glass of brandy at dinner, the girl could hardly keep her eyes open. She went to bed as soon as she entered the room. But Auntie Lahio wanted to go out again.

"You sleep first if you're drowsy and tired. I'm going to the next room to talk with the tall man. I'll be back, don't lock the door, remember?"

Morivei nodded and lay down with her clothes on. She felt dizzy and scared but although she was very tired, she could not get to sleep. She got up, turned out the light, took off her clothes and as she was getting into bed again, she heard a queer noise. She listened. It came from the next room. As the rooms were but two compartments separated only by wooden planks

with gaps between them, she could not resist peeping into the next room and saw to her astonishment Auntie Lahio without a stitch of clothing on, laughing aloud in the arms of the tall man who was also naked; they were making love and quite oblivious of the noise they were making.

Hurriedly, she stepped back, her heart beating rapidly. She was still dizzy and felt also the blood pounding in her temple. She lay down quietly and tried to sleep but the noise in the next room became louder and louder and they were saying all kinds of silly things. "How awful!" she cried to herself. But she was mostly disturbed and could not get to sleep. The noise did not stop at all. She felt ashamed but there was also something stirring within her. It was the dormant desire of a young girl who, for the first time, had witnessed such an intimate scene and felt herself strangely restless under the influence of alcohol . . .

It was not until after midnight when, exhausted, she fell asleep. Then she had a dream. She dreamt that she was climbing a hill with some girlfriends of hers and suddenly there were gleaming lights shining from the ground; diamonds! At the sight of them, every girl hurried to pick these up and she herself also had her two hands full of the precious stones. Suddenly a giant python glided down from one of the trees. All the other girls fled but she was so terrified that her two feet seemed rooted to the spot and she couldn't move at all. The python seized her and rolled her up in its body. She felt terrified and wanted to shout but the animal caressed her with his huge mouth pressed to hers and silenced her completely.

She felt as if she was choking and woke up in terror. But the caressing was terrifyingly real; a naked man lay on top of her. She tried to pull herself away and shout but the man held her tightly in his arms, pressing his mouth on hers and squeezing her breasts simultaneously.

"Don't be scared, Morivei, I'm your boss. You're mine now and I'll pay you. You owe five hundred kina to Auntie Lahio, here's six hundred. You can pay her and keep the rest for yourself."

She understood now what the word rape

meant. She wanted to commit suicide but at of banknotes on the weakened by the floor the man, she became c She buried her face sobbed.

"No, no, don't do you." He covered he gently fondled her. S melted away.

When Auntie Lahio next morning, the girl shouted at her.

"You old witch! cheated me!"

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"You're an old bit money." She threw al "Take it, now you're p the IOU!"

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"You have cheated whole life. You'll pay death. I shall kill myself eyes!"

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meant. She wanted to fight with the man or commit suicide but at the sight of the heap of banknotes on the bedside table and weakened by the flood of soft words from the man, she became confused in her mind. She buried her face in her hands and sobbed.

"No, no, don't do that, Morivei. I love you." He covered her with caresses and gently fondled her. Slowly her reluctance melted away.

When Aunt Lahio entered her room the next morning, the girl burst into tears and shouted at her.

"You old witch! You whore! You've cheated me!"

"No, my dear Morivei, you're wrong. What I've done is for your own good. You wouldn't want your mother to wash clothes the whole of her life, would you? And how would you pay up all the debts and have the chance of living a better life?"

"You're an old bitch! All you want is money." She threw all the money at her. "Take it, now you're paid up. Give me back the IOU!"

Aunt Lahio smiled, picked up the money, counted it carefully, then opened her suitcase, put the money in and took out the agreement and handed it to her.

"That is settled now, my child. What do you want me to do for you now?"

"You have cheated me and ruined my whole life. You'll pay for it even after your death. I shall kill myself — before your very eyes!"

"Cool down, my dear child. If you want to go back to Kerema, I'll take you there to your mother but you won't kill yourself."

"Back to Kerema? I'm ashamed to see my mother. She warned me before I left and I didn't listen to her advice. I thought myself clever and now I have been trapped just as my mother said, and ruined!"

"So you wana stay? That's all right. Take it easy and you'll make more money. You'll save your mother from her slaving and the whole family, too. You're still very young, in four or five years you'll have sufficient money to find yourself a suitable husband. Don't be a fool and you'll pay me the interest later on, of course."

"No! But for my mother's sake, I can't go back right now. I have to stay at least for a couple of months. You've ruined me, you old hag!"

Aunt Lahio could not help being moved at the sight of her distress and she remembered then a similar day of misfortune and unhappiness in her own youth. She said to herself, "This is the last time. I'll wash my hands of it all." She patted Morivei on the shoulder.

"You're courageous, Morivei, I like you and will help you. I'll tell your mother that you're working here as a babysitter and she'll never suspect the truth."

The girl was appeased but not consoled. It seemed as if the whole world had suddenly crashed around her and she had fallen down, and down, to the bottom of an abyss.

LINDA'S SECRET

by Hoesa Apopo

"Linda, let's go out."

It was the thirteenth time that I had asked her. But she frowned, smiled and whispered in my ear, "No, I can't." Having her in my arms made my blood tingle. I was angry at her answer.

"Linda, either you think I am a foolish maniac and you don't like me or you simply want to torture me."

"Why should you think like that?"

"I am like a fly in a jar of honey. I know I'm drowning but still I like to struggle."

"But," she hesitated, "if I agree to go out with you, do you promise to let me go before midnight?"

"Certainly."

"Then okay!"

I felt on top of the world. We had a last waltz and went out together. I had made her acquaintance one month ago. With the first dance, I fell head over heels in love with her. She had just joined the cabaret and looked like a white lily in a pool of dirty water. The other girls seemed very vulgar before the simplicity of this novice. She had an oval-shaped face, clear eyes and thin eyebrows which seemed to be always frowning. She reminded me of that heroine of the "Dream of the Red Chamber". The ever-sick beauty who was typically fragile but much adored; except she was not quite so fragile and had very good breasts and altogether a sexy figure.

Everybody who frequents cabarets knows that mere money can do everything but Linda was an exception. She preferred to be

left alone and refused to go out with anybody. Once midnight struck, she insisted on going home. That was why she was seldom popular and her cabaret mates nicknamed her 'the picture beauty', meaning that she was worth contemplating but not worth getting to know.

At the beginning, I didn't believe it at all. But despite the money I lavished on her, her eternal answer to my request to go with me was "No!", and that reply I heard the twelve times that I asked her.

"I am sorry but I'm living with an awkward relative who refuses to open the door for me after twelve."

I was told that nobody at home knew that she worked in the cabaret at all. She had to pretend that she did not even have a boyfriend and therefore, she refused to allow anybody to accompany her home. But I thought I would be patient and with patience I should succeed. I was right, for finally she accepted my invitation to go out with me.

It was the first time and I was proud to have her on my arm as we walked out of the hall. She got into my Mazda 929 convertible and I drove along the West Coast to a night club at Boroko. We had some drinks and a snack, chatted and laughed. I tried to make her drink more but in vain. I tried to make her stay with me in a hotel but she pretended not to listen or else pretended not to understand what I meant. I then decided to try the direct method, signed a cheque for three hundred kina and put it into her handbag. She smiled, did not refuse but neither did she thank me. At last, it was midnight.

"Now I must go," she said.

"Linda," I begged, "you are a beauty without a heart. Why don't you try to understand me a little?"

"Selfish brute!"

She glanced at me and picked up her handbag.

"No," I seized her hand. "Please, Linda, I'm not selfish but nothing ever has any meaning when I'm not with you."

She seemed to be moved by my sincerity. I detected a faint glimmer of smile and her eyes tried to avoid mine. I tried to make her meet my gaze but she was staring out at the

sea.

"You still have to be

"You can't stay with

"No, I can't!"

"If my car suddenly

"I'll get a taxi."

"If my car breaks do
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sea.

"You still have to be patient."

"You can't stay with me, Linda?"

"No, I can't!"

"If my car suddenly breaks down?"

"I'll get a taxi."

"If my car breaks down somewhere and there aren't any taxis?"

"That won't do either!" She was cold and drew back her hand. "It's useless to insist, you will see!"

I saw it was useless to insist, so I followed her to the car. It was late in the night. The dark blue sky above was like a spider's web full of stars and the whole city of Port Moresby was drowned in the nocturnal silence. I was silent, too, harbouring any resentment and throwing sidelong glances at her while I was driving. She seemed quite impatient, looking at her watch from time to time and heaving an inner sigh. I was driving at ten miles an hour (deliberately, of course). She broke the ice at last.

"What is the matter? Why can't you hurry up?"

"The engine is not running well."

"That's a big lie! It was running perfectly just a moment ago."

"But I'm no good now, young lady. You gave me such a terrible disappointment."

"Oh, what a naughty boy! Forget about it now. Drive your car properly and hurry up."

"Well, well," I slowed down even more.

"Provided you give me a tip."

"A tip?" She was surprised.

"Yes, a caress."

She hesitated and looked around in despair. It was quiet all around the city of Port Moresby; there was nothing but dark trees and street lights alongside the streets and a rustling breeze from the sea. She turned to me, helplessly, almost in tears while I sat smiling maliciously. She sighed, laid her head against the seat and closed her eyes.

"May I?" I was teasing her.

"So!"

That was a reproach but it was meant also as a consent. I parked the car at the side of the street and like a hungry wolf seizing its prey, I seized her by the waist and began to

caress her. I held her breasts very tight. I thought of putting her down on the grass and getting myself lost in the small, wonderful world but suddenly . . . one, two, three . . . Aiyah! After a few seconds, she pushed me away.

"No more! That's enough!"

I could see her face under the dim light of the street lights of Gerehu with its expression of shyness mixed with anger. That strange expression flattened all my ardour. Suddenly I was seized by a feeling of jealousy. Was there someone at home waiting for her? I smiled to myself and started the car. Now I was doing sixty miles an hour.

"Where do you put up?"

She hesitated then said, "Gerehu stage six . . ."

I stopped at the entrance to the lane. She got out, said goodnight and rushed away without even looking back once. I drove away but stopped again not far off, got out and followed her. She entered a side lane and was walking towards a building. When I reached the house, the door shut in front of my face. I could not believe my eyes. There was no light but only the dim glow of an oil lamp shining out from the window. A baby was crying for a long time. I strolled closer to the window. I heard voices. There was Linda's voice.

"Oh, poor little darling. You are hungry!"

"I made the milk for him," a man's voice said. "Why are you so late?"

"What can I do?" sighed Linda. "That shameless idiot just wouldn't let me go."

I understood it now. She had not only a man but a baby as well! I had been foolish to be so kind to her and she had refused even to give me a caress. I pushed open the door which was not barred and said, "Hello, Linda!"

Under the dim light, I could see Linda's face was pale and her lips trembled with shock. She must have had the shock of her life. She held a baby in her arms. But I wanted revenge.

"So this is the house of your relative! And you call me a shameless idiot despite what I have done for you!"

"Damn you! She's my wife. What do you want?" A man's voice roared from a corner

of the room. "Get out! Get out!"

I was ready for a fight. But as he approached, I noticed that he was lame and was walking with difficulty. I could see his face now; a slim dark face with hollow eyes, dark thick eyebrows and disorderly hair. His appearance shocked me. The man laughed with contempt.

"Yes, you, my former boss' beloved son!"

His voice sounded like an owl screaming in a jungle on a wild night.

"Oh, it's you!"

I was quivering. I ran out of the house, into the car and drove off. I took out a handkerchief to wipe my forehead when I was quite sure I was far away from the spot.

Could it really be Mavala? Only five months ago, he had worked in my father's factory as an engineer but had broken one of his legs in an accident at the factory. He had seen my father at home once after that to claim some compensation but had had a dispute with him. He was thrown out into the street but Linda was his wife! What a secret! . . . What a small world! . . .

A MELANESIAN IN SYDNEY

At last, my trip from F Sydney was over. I was given second floor of the hotel, best I had stayed in, but curtains hanging from the made an attempt to improve that the five hundred bed recently bought by an A Millionaire.

It was the cheapest accommodation in the heart of the city attractive for high class people. The eleven storey hotel was it accepted anyone of any race situated at the centre of the famous city, making it so near around.

But the hotel room was than our old school curriculum impossible to invite more than a time. On humid occasions suffocating. Several nights more than once before the hot bed sheets. By the yellow rectangular hotel hung on the wall, at about hotel was like an institution. Whoever entered the premises bound with behaviour more

To me these were inhospitable

A MELANESIAN BOY IN SYDNEY

by Philip Julius

At last, my trip from Port Moresby to Sydney was over. I was given a room on the second floor of the hotel, which wasn't the best I had stayed in, but the fabricated curtains hanging from the window at least made an attempt to improve it. I understood that the five hundred bed hotel had been recently bought by an Australian Jewish Millionaire.

It was the cheapest accommodation right in the heart of the city, not artistically attractive for high class people. The name of the eleven storey hotel was simply 'CB' and it accepted anyone of any race. To me it was situated at the centre of happenings in this famous city, making it so much easier to get around.

But the hotel room was not much bigger than our old school cubicle, making it impossible to invite more than one friend at a time. On humid occasions, it was really suffocating. Several nights I had to bathe more than once before easing myself into the hot bed sheets. By the lounge door, a yellow rectangular hotel regulation board hung on the wall, at about my height. The hotel was like an institution or girls' convent. Whoever entered the premises was strictly bound with behaviour monitored rules.

To me these were inhuman, making the

situation almost unbearable to the guests. The punky, Jewish capitalists who were enjoying the revenue from the hotel didn't seem to care about the comfort of their guests.

In a modern city, going out for dance, having a few drinks or going to the cinema hopefully gets you a partner! Although these were good tricks because of the tension surrounding the hotel, it was pretty hard to invite a new friend. I am a person who likes to mix with people but my desire to socialise was almost extinguished like a candle flame.

Even the Europeans could not cope with the situation for very long. They were frustrated . . . they were embarrassed . . . and they were insulted. Nearly every traveller spent no more than one night under these conditions. Next morning they usually switched to another more reasonable hotel, but I stayed.

One day, between one and two in the afternoon, following a troubled hour's sleep, I looked at the small mirror hanging on the painted brick-wall. Oh boy, I appeared to be in a pretty bad shape. Over weight, the sign of a belly and on my face a mass of bush vines growing.

For nearly four weeks on holiday, eating good food, and without roadwork, it didn't take long for my body to react to that kind of treatment. I was getting out of shape without noticing it. I undressed, did a few muscle stretches and push-ups and sit-ups, before going in for a shower.

Outside, the busy, continuous traffic noise was hard to ignore. The weather was fine; 'Summer Season' as the Aussies called it.

Multitudes of street dwellers seemingly moved without a destination. Some were yelling, screaming and creating hooligan activities. It was impossible to have a quiet evening. The Christmas momentum was mixed with the street games. The joyful moment on earth was approaching closer and closer.

One night I couldn't sleep at all. A rowdy party in the Mandarin hotel, directly opposite ours, had been going on for hours. Finally, it seemed to be out of control and

the police called. I looked out of my window and had a grandstand view of the party and the police trying to break it up.

Most of the party goers were resolutely pushed out of the suite of rooms and the remainder, probably hotel guests, calmed down. Suddenly, there was a new interruption — a bomb scare — and it was our hotel. But before we were all herded out of the building, the culprit was found. He was one of the irate guests of the party in the Mandarin.

Eventually, trying to sleep, I thought about my situation. How many more parties could I bear . . . these people had different ideologies . . . there were so many races. They all seemed to be moving in a different time to mine. It was so fast here. What would they think of my village. I felt as if there was a heavy weight on me. Even I was respected at home, yet could I absorb the jargon of the people who seemed to be so mentally and physically advanced with the western lifestyle and modern western technology. Surely their behaviour should be advanced too . . . not like a bunch of rascals. Perhaps they needed an escape from their way of life. Perhaps their stupid parties were as essential here as betel nut was to a Papua New Guinean . . . or was it that I was lonely . . . ?

In the morning, I realised that I had slept after all. Perhaps for five or six hours. My stomach felt empty. Still, that was good. I looked through the window. It must be after ten, the summer sun seemed to be lazily moving through the clouds. But there was an unfamiliar bite to the breeze that unmercifully brushed my face. I breathed deeply, then sighed. I guess I felt isolated and lonely. Loneliness to me was impossible to overcome . . . or was it? But this environment with its modern lifestyle in a strange land was all that I could think about as I showered and made my way downwards for a late breakfast.

At least the waitress couldn't have cared if I was black, blue, white or green! She was one of these creatures who seemed only to think in a positive way and so smiled her way through life. If only I could move her with me in a split second to my Melanesian

land . . . where I led two lives. First I would take her to my village and introduce her to some of the precious customs and traditions. Then, in a flash, I would transport her to Port Moresby and show her my modern city.

'Palmolive', my favourite bathing soap with a one hour's warm shower put me in a refreshing mood. I wore my sports silk suit which I had bought at a George Street shop a week ago. Later I strolled down the street towards the bus stop. I was expecting a busy shopping morning, especially the mothers, but the streets were not so crowded, I was surprised because it was the day before Christmas. I guess most people had shopped enough and were at home preparing for the great day.

The lonely time, at the bus stop, sitting and being observed was embarrassing to me. There was no lively atmosphere or friendly approach. The younger set looked at me suspiciously, but the oldies passed with barely a glance. I sensed that none had ever seen a coloured person. By only my psychological assumption, I was probably right.

A young African girl, whom I later found out to be a disco fanatic, expressed her opinion of similar loneliness. Juanita, as she introduced herself in the bus, was from Tanzania. She was a university student, of medium height with afro hair, she sounded colourful. Our warm conversation brought us closer. We talked about our background, our politics and opposite sexes. Our meeting was not expected to happen this way. However, in most circumstances, coloured people have a reputation of having a sense of humour. I may be biased but we received each other as if we have met months ago.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"I'm going to Taronga Zoological Park," I said nervously. Would you like to come with me?"

She shook her head without saying a word. I wondered what she was going to say next. Probably she was still deciding whether to accompany me, or to go where she had planned.

The young lady from Tanzania was by herself, whether she accompanied me or not I felt excited at meeting her, it would not

make any difference friends. After a long me and said.

"I'm willing to go already made a date : date."

"I will be all right your willingness, per your some other time?"

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The zoo was situat overlooking Sydney h ranked amongst the mammals, reptiles, special attraction was and as I made my way I looked back at organised groups and loneliness was fadir thinking that I was so

make any difference as long as we made friends. After a long pause, she looked at me and said.

"I'm willing to go with you but I've already made a date and I cannot break this date."

"I will be all right, Juanita. I appreciate your willingness, perhaps we could make it some other time?"

"Oh yes! . . . why not," she said. "But not tomorrow, Christmas day, I'm sorry, I've been invited to a girl's house for dinner."

I took out my pen and a piece of paper from my brown handbag, I wrote my address and phone number and handed it to her. As the bus slowed towards the bus stop, I stood up, shook hands and said:

"It's nice meeting you. Please give me a call sometime. We can arrange to meet somewhere," I asked bravely.

"Sure, I will phone you. I'm so glad we met, I'll try to call you before Sunday."

As I moved out of my seat towards the exit, I turned and looked at her face, my heart thumping. She was very pretty. She smiled. I was joyful, then I was off but waving as the bus drove slowly away. I couldn't wait until she called. Suddenly, everything seemed wonderful. In my mind, all I could think of was one word — Juanita.

My journey now was not to visit the zoo but to fill in time until I could see that girl. Loneliness overpowered my emotions. If only Juanita had joined me but she had not and I had to be patient.

It had been five years since I had visited Taronga. As I joined the admission line to get in, I realised that a massive modernization programme was well underway. Once inside I was glad to see that the aim was to make the animal's habitats more like they were used to out of captivity.

The zoo was situated on a gentle decline overlooking Sydney harbour. The zoo now ranked amongst the best, with over 5,000 mammals, reptiles, birds and fish. My special attraction was the rain forest aviary and as I made my way towards the enclosure, I looked back at the staring families, organised groups and lovers. Although my loneliness was fading, I couldn't help thinking that I was something of an oddity

and some of the stares from curious visitors made me wonder if I should have a sign around my neck saying . . . the bearer of this sign is not an escaped inmate!

Once inside the rain forest aviary, I allowed myself the luxury of drifting back in time, listening to the many birds near my village. These birds were spectacular as well and their colours like those of Jacob's coat.

Later, with the echoes of the melody of their sounds still ringing in my head, I sat and drank a can of cool orange. It helped. I detected a pall of polluted air hanging over Sydney. I suppose it would have been worst without the sea breezes, but it reminded me that at least the atmosphere in my own home in Papua New Guinea was clean.

Energy restored, I wandered into the enclosure housing the reptiles and amphibians. The snakes intrigued me. Perhaps they were pets to some people and religious symbolic forms to people in other countries, but for me the snake was something to avoid. I thought back to the bus ride with Juanita, who had told me something about a cobra being used to help treat sick people . . . where did she say it was . . . suddenly the people moved in one direction . . . it was Open Air Theatre time!

I headed quickly for the shade of a rain tree and tried to look inconspicuous. The theatre filled with yelling kids and reprimanding parents. I hoped the dolphins, sea lions and whatever else would start performing soon. I sensed a girl approaching to sit close to me:

"Hello!" she said, "you look lonely, can I join you?"

"Please do," I said, smiling at the bubbly young thing dressed in jeans who sat close to me and led the conversation:

"My name is Lucy, what's yours?"

"Philip . . . Philip Julius," I stammered.

"I like Philip Julius, where are you from?"

"Papua New Guinea," I answered proudly.

"Wow, that's great, I've never met anyone from there. I'm originally from Greece . . . but now I'm an Aussie . . . can you tell from my accent!"

"No," I laughed, "I thought you were

from the States!"

She touched my arm, as if to signal that she approved of me and that we should watch the show. It was thrilling to watch the graceful dolphins and sea lions go through their act. They leapt out of the water squealing with delight at the crowd who clapped their hands in approval. When the exciting moments came, she clutched my arm, as if for safety. I fleetingly thought of the Sea Park at Ela Beach in Port Moresby, but it was all different.

After the show, as the spectators started to file out, Lucy held onto my arm. What kind of a girl was she? Why did she act as if we had known each other for years? I gently pulled her hand away. She turned to me looking bewildered, a tear fell slowly down her lovely cheek:

"What's the matter, don't you like me?" she asked very quietly.

It was her unusual approach which intrigued me. Her respect for a person such as me, made me feel at ease, but Lucy desperately needed company and her personal approach did not really impress me to any great extent. Although she insisted on accompanying me and offering her assistance, deep in my heart I did not accept her words. She sounded sympathetic but it was hard to believe, considering that we had just met.

She displayed good qualities of personal character which some women do not have, even Juanita. But Lucy avoided saying whether she wanted me or not. Our fifteen-minute ferry across the Sydney Harbour made me sure of my suspicion, answering questions properly. She was devious about telling me exactly when and where she would like to meet me again. Instead, she showed her disappointment at my lack of interest and left me at the bus stop without saying goodbye. I boarded another bus and went swimming at the down town pool.

I guess that Christmas day was the loneliest of my entire holiday and so it was for a young American staying at the hotel. Louis was about as homesick for Kansas as I was for Port Moresby.

Sydney, with its population as much as the entire country of Papua New Guinea,

seemed deserted. So Louis and I wondered about, even swimming at Bondi, and over at that beach it looked deserted. Later, we went to a hotel which was advertising a special Christmas Dinner.

The next few days seemed an eternity, nothing from Juanita. I went swimming again with Louis on Saturday. It was surprising for me to see hundreds of Australians surfing and sunbathing at this famous resort. In the air the chopper kept us alert of dangerous areas, whilst the lifesavers continued checking dangerous areas. On the well-cut lawns people sat about, some were petting or playing affectionately. Beach watchkeepers were making sure that no one was taking too many liberties!

Back home, beaches are, of course, mostly idle and undisturbed except for traditional fishing and for initiation ceremonies. But at Bondi, Australians of all ages who love swimming and being at the beach go as often as they can. They know just how much the beach plays a vital role in everyday life, cooling off the five days work burden — to lose frustration after a hard week in the "rat race" of Australia's largest and busiest city.

I was back in the hotel late in the afternoon, before seven, she was supposed to call at three last week! However, we have fixed that up! Juanita phoned and invited me to go to a disco down town! I was doubtful about accepting her invitation because I've never been to a disco in Sydney. But she had been living in Sydney longer than me and I had confidence in her.

We went to a club called 'A Pub With No Beer', a rather self-styled colonial building about hundred years old. Half of its roof had almost fallen apart. It was better known as 'Multi-Racial Club' because people of any race were allowed to use the premises as long as they identified themselves. Without Juanita informing me about the dress regulations, I wore a pair of blue jeans, a plain yellow 'T'-shirt, a pair of brown sandals, a green suit as my over coat and my dark sunglasses. I caught a cab and arrived before Juanita.

As I entered, a bearded man, about six feet tall, who I later found out was a club

official, stopped me.

"Hey boy!" I turned you from?" he demand

"Papua New Guinea
"Is this your first ti club?"

I nodded.

He took a deep breath for a second.

"Young man, I worry you are reasonably drunk must come in with a partner."

I walked out, my head thinking desperately. Should I go back home? I decided to wait, maybe together the club official would change his mind. I could go somewhere else.

Finally, a yellow cab, the bouncy little bird, was going to miss her friend.

"Oh, honey, I'm sorry."

I smiled.

"Darling! You don't see anything wrong?"

"Well, the club official because I wasn't dressed to have a partner."

"That's what he told me, looking astounded."

"Yes, Juanita!"

I could see that she had walked through the door in that situation to the club. Afterwards, she came out.

"Honey," she said, "everything is fine. It was my fault, I told you about the club."

"It's all right, next time, I'll laugh."

She held my hand and we occupied a table for two. Juanita ordered a glass of beer and a lemon squash. The lounge was empty, but music was coming. Juanita and I sat down. The sound of music was loud. I ordered our next drink. I saw a Samoan girl who asked me for a dance. I gave her approval.

official, stopped me.

"Hey boy!" I turned to him. "Where are you from?" he demanded.

"Papua New Guinea," I said nervously.

"Is this your first time to come to this club?"

I nodded.

He took a deep breath and stared at me for a second.

"Young man, I won't let you in unless you are reasonably dressed. Besides, you must come in with a partner."

I walked out, my head down, dejected, thinking desperately what to do next. Should I go back home or wait for Juanita. I decided to wait, maybe if we went in together the club official who threw me out would change his mind. Alternatively, we could go somewhere else.

Finally, a yellow cab pulled up, Juanita, the bouncy little bird, rushed out like she was going to miss her flight to Tanzania.

"Oh, honey, I'm sorry for coming late."

I smiled.

"Darling! You don't look too happy, is there anything wrong?"

"Well, the club official wouldn't let me in because I wasn't dressed right and I didn't have a partner."

"That's what he told you?" she queried, looking astounded.

"Yes, Juanita!"

I could see that she wasn't upset as she walked through the doorway to explain my situation to the club official. Not long afterwards, she came out, smiling.

"Honey," she said, hugging me, "everything is fine. It was my fault, I should have told you about the club's regulations."

"It's all right, next time I'll dress properly," I laughed.

She held my hand and we walked in. We occupied a table for two and to kick off, Juanita ordered a glass of whisky for herself and a lemon squash for me. Half of the lounge was empty, people were slowly coming. Juanita and I sat and talked, but the sound of music was already echoing. Before I ordered our next drink, I was surprised to see a Samoan girl who came to our table and asked me for a dance. Juanita nodded her approval.

"Hello! How are you?" she asked as we started dancing.

"I'm fine, thank you."

"Where are you from?" she asked.

"Papua New Guinea," I said.

"You look absolutely fresh tonight, what is your name?" she asked.

"Julius," I replied, somehow feeling wonderful.

"I am Tui," she told me, as the sharp group played 'Waikiki Tamure'.

I quickly glanced again at Juanita to make sure that she still approved Tui's invitation to dance with her. I did not want to create ill-feeling between the two girls.

"Is she your friend?" Tui asked.

"Just a friend," I said.

"Where is she from?"

"Tanzania," I replied. She looked uncertain.

"She is a bouncy little thing, isn't she?"

I laughed.

The famous Hawaiian theme 'Waikiki Tamure' which was always a favourite in Papua New Guinea, highlighted the evening. Oh, goodness me, the Samoan dancer was gorgeous! She turned in well with my movements. She moved her hips, waved her arms like palms in a breeze and she turned like a dolphin. This girl was unreal! Both of us danced until we became exhausted, and I steered her towards a corner to rest.

"Oh boy! You can really dance, can't you," Tui said.

"I'm still learning," I joked.

"Honestly I admire you!" she told me.

I knew that she liked me. She reminded me of Priscila, a charming girl from The Cook Islands I met in Raratonga two years ago, both girls had a way about them which made my heart beat faster. We sat without saying anything, but we looked at each other.

"Are you thinking of your friend Juanita?"

Tui asked.

"Oh no, I'm not thinking of her! I'm thinking about you."

"Really?"

I nodded, saying, "You remind me of a girl I met in Raratonga."

"That is very interesting."

"But it is absolutely true," I told her.

Our conversation was touchy and formal. Juanita was fading away from my head very fast as Tui continued to tantalise me. I felt a strong feeling growing about her. Considering the fact that both of us came from the Pacific with common traditions and interests, playing with the western way of life really made me feel close to her.

By now Juanita had probably realised that I had gone somewhere else after the dance. She looked physically heated and upset. Most likely she would blow me up if I didn't act quickly. Tui probably interpreted my situation and moved fast when I signalled her my problem. She did it right in time before Juanita spotted me.

"For goodness sake! . . . what are you doing here, I was looking for you?" she taunted.

"I'm sorry, Juanita," I said unconvincingly.

She gave me a curious stare, then said, "How about a dance with me?"

"Why not."

I quickly calmed her as we danced to the beat of the music. The hall was crowded, you could hardly move and the air was polluted. Juanita was a disco classic. I could not match her movements. She insisted on performing the 'Lady Bump'. Her fancy acts and movements were too fast for me and in any event my mind was on Tui.

As we danced, and some were wild and crazy, like nothing I had ever seen in Port Moresby, I saw in the half light some couples who were petting or kissing each other affectionately.

I glanced at Tui who was sitting looking lonely by herself. I looked at her again, she smiled . . . oh, dear me . . . she looked pretty . . . was she unreal, or was I dreaming. The way she smiled at me was really inviting. The Samoan girl presented herself as a true Melanesian symbol which made it hard to get my mind away from her.

Juanita and I went to the bar for a break. Both of us were exhausted. While Juanita was ordering the drinks, I excused myself and walked outside to get some fresh air. Unexpectedly, Tui appeared, handing me her address. She must have been following. Then she went back inside without a word, but turned and looked at me just before

closing the door.

As I stood outside, I was still thinking of Tui. I knew right away that if I stayed, I would most likely cause trouble between Juanita and Tui. What should I do. Then on impulse I caught a cab and went back to the hotel without informing either of them!

What would Juanita do when she grew tired of waiting for me. Would she look for me, or would she phone, but she probably wouldn't remember my hotel. She most likely would ask Tui, who wouldn't know where I had gone to.

The paper with Tui's address on it seemed to burn a hole in my pocket, but I resisted the temptation to call her for two long boring days. Then I couldn't wait anymore. I called her number, would she be at home, I wondered anxiously. What if the number was wrong? Oh, dear me, I had to see that lovely girl again.

She was home!

I had a date to meet Tui the next Saturday afternoon at the Nita Theatre which was about a ten minute bus ride. I jumped into a crowded bus and the passengers stared at me; not one said a word. The reaction I received was a few giggles and whispers. Some were looking curiously at me. Deep in my heart, I was proud to be a coloured person who was being looked at by these passengers as if I was from outer space!

Finally, I arrived at the theatre. Tui was already there. She looked pretty, wearing a coloured Pacific laplap and a 'T'-shirt. She smiled at me when I saw her.

"Hi, how long have you been waiting?" I asked quietly, as if to make sure no one heard me.

"Oh, only about fifteen minutes," she replied, smiling.

I led her through the entrance to see the advertisement wall, if there were any good movies, but there wasn't any. So we then decided to wonder about and later we would go to her place. Tui had a polite dignity about her which a lot of Melanesian girls just don't have. Her enthusiasm was delightful and she became the centre of attraction to me at every point. I felt good when she put her gentle warm arm around my waist. I guess she was trying to find out

how I would react, faster.

After we bought boarded a bus and we rented a one-bedroom Cross, overlooking Australian Navy's convenient accommodation like Tui, staying about having to worry about

"I'm sorry, Julius," said.

"Oh no, Tui, it's untidy, too."

"What would you or a soft drink? I because I don't drink

"Tea, please!" I said the demon spirits eat

Then I leaned back wondering whether truth about liking me facing each other conversation.

"Tui, what are you Sydney?"

"I'm on a scholarship studying to be a Nurse admitted."

"Wow, that's fantastic scholarship?"

"The Catholic Samoa," she said.

"That's really encouraged her. "Dear She scratched her forehead

"Oh yes. In fact, used to dream of being two more years to

I nodded, not quite next.

"And how about pointing her finger here on holidays?"

I assured her that

"What do you do

"I work for the Film Director."

"Really! I would have guessed or economist or scientist

Our delightful conversation

how I would react, my heart was beating faster.

After we bought some groceries, we boarded a bus and went to Tui's place. She rented a one-bedroom flat near Kings Cross, overlooking Garden Island, the Australian Navy's dockyard. It was a convenient accommodation for a young girl like Tui, staying all by herself without having to worry about inconveniences.

"I'm sorry, Julius, my flat is untidy," she said.

"Oh no, Tui, it's okay. My room's often untidy, too."

"What would you like to have; tea, coffee or a soft drink? I can't offer you alcohol because I don't drink."

"Tea, please!" I said, "and I don't drink the demon spirits either!"

Then I leaned back and looked at her . . . wondering whether she was telling me the truth about liking me. We sat in her lounge facing each other as we continued our conversation.

"Tui, what are you really doing here in Sydney?"

"I'm on a scholarship for three years . . . studying to be a Nursing Sister," she finally admitted.

"Wow, that's fantastic, who gave you the scholarship?"

"The Catholic Diocese of Western Samoa," she said.

"That's really very interesting," I encouraged her. "Do you like your work?" She scratched her forehead.

"Oh yes. In fact, during my school days I used to dream of becoming a nurse. I have two more years to complete."

I nodded, not quite knowing what to say next.

"And how about you!" she demanded, pointing her finger at me, "Are you really here on holidays?"

I assured her that I was.

"What do you do then?" she asked.

"I work for the Office of Information as a Film Director."

"Really! I would never have expected it. I would have guessed that you were a lawyer or economist or something like that!"

Our delightful conversation was drawing

us closer together. Both of us were beginning to take an interest in each other. This gorgeous Samoan girl presented herself in a lovely way. She was the right kind of girl that I was looking for in Melanesia.

"Are you married?" she asked hesitantly.

"No."

She giggled, "I'm not married either."

"That's really a good composition!" I said.

"Yes, you're probably right," she answered.

For the past week I had been desperate, frustrated, lonely and living in the teeming cosmopolitan capital of Australia, Sydney. My Melanesian background could not accept the foreign polluted environment and a majority of the people, even though cosmopolitan, were prejudice. Meeting Tui was a real coincidence. She had the kind of way about her which impressed me.

Then, one Sunday afternoon, I was back in the house with her. Once again, we were having coffee and talking. By now, we had seen each other at least six times.

"When did you say you are going back to Papua New Guinea?" Tui asked quietly as she handed me a cup of coffee.

"In two weeks' time," I replied emphatically, but previously, I had been devious when answering her questions about how long I was staying.

She looked as if I was joking . . . and stared . . . I sensed she must have been thinking about telling me something.

"Can't you stay for another month?" she said seriously.

"Why?" I queried.

"Oh," she looked away, scratching her head . . . "I thought . . ."

"Oh yes," I interrupted, "I know what you are trying to say."

She giggled.

"I'm interested in you, Tui."

"Oh, Julius!"

Then Tui jumped up, rushed forward and hugged me. I looked at her brown eyes . . . tears falling on her warm smooth cheeks. She couldn't help herself . . . I smiled . . . finally, she laughed . . . was this all part of a wonderful dream?

"Oh, Julius, you are the right kind of a

person that I was looking for," she said tearfully.

"Tui?"

"Yes, Julius . . ."

"I love you," I whispered.

"I love you too!" she said smiling.

"Listen, Tui, I can't stay here for another month, otherwise I would be dismissed," I explained, "but I would be happy if you could come to Port Moresby at Christmas and then we could plan for our future."

She seemed to be thinking about my suggestion for a few moments, then she nodded and stared at me with her big beautiful brown eyes.

I sighed, "My office may have been closed and if it has I don't know what I will do when I return. I could wait for you until you finish your studies, then we could go together to Western Samoa."

"Oh yes, I agree with you, Julius, and I know my parents will accept you, but do you think your parents will accept me?"

"Of course they will accept you," I assured her. "I will tell them about you, and that you are coming at Christmas. I'm sure they will love to see you."

She kissed me long and hard. I felt good.

"Yes, we are one!" she said laughing.

I embraced her. It was a sensational moment for a Melanesian boy who had treasured a lonely adventure . . . met three different girls and finally had decided to settle with Tui. Both of us walked out hand in hand to celebrate our engagement.

She cried at Sydney's Mascot International Airport, just before I boarded Air Niugini's Bird of Paradise, bound for Papua New Guinea and home!

As the plane roared into the atmosphere, Sydney, with its Opera House, harbour bridge and skyscrapers, were fading away from view from the window where I was sitting. I was downhearted, crestfallen . . . I felt like crying. It could be twelve months before we met again. Butterflies were in my stomach. Hours later, Port Moresby was

covered with a dull layer of cloud, just like my mood, without Tui.

The following morning, I reported at my Boss's Office, in the Department of Publicity.

"Ah, Julius, so it's you . . . welcome back."

"Thank you."

"How was your holiday?" he asked.

"Just fine," I replied.

"I've got good news for you!"

"Really! What's it all about . . ."

"Let's go to my office," he said, and led me into his room full of photographs from our past films, now hanging on the walls.

"See if you can find a place to sit, you will need to, when I tell you the news."

I settled in his visitor's chair, hard and uncomfortable, apprehensive that I would be posted to Madang, which had been rumoured before I went on leave.

"Julius, you have been given a scholarship for a year's study at the Film and Television School in Sydney."

"Really!" I asked excitedly.

"Yes, I'm serious."

"You've got to be joking!"

"No, I'm not joking, Julius, just a minute and I will show you the letter."

As he fiddled around the papers and folders, my mind was registering Tui . . . treasuring her image and thinking about our romantic days in Sydney . . . could this be true?

"Here you are!" he exclaimed, and handed me a letter. After a brief run through, I handed it back to him. My entire body was like it was electrically charged. I could hardly keep my thoughts straight.

"Now I believe you Boss!" I said, smiling.

"The scholarship is to broaden your talents in film directing," he said, and then he went on and on lecturing me. But all I could think of was boarding that Bird of Paradise back to Sydney to take me to the girl of my dreams! Wouldn't Tui be surprised when she saw me!