

Papua New Guinea Writing

No 16, December, 1974

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Editorial

The Literature Bureau is five years old. The Bureau's policy has been to encourage and foster the art of writing in Papua New Guinea.

In a country where the written word is relatively new it is not sufficient just to encourage writing. The reading habit must also be fostered and sufficient suitable reading material must be available for those who can read well and those who are not so proficient.

The Director of the Office of Information, Philip Bouraga, in his speech on Writer's Day in November said, "Writing has become part of us and is here to stay." He went on to say that the Literature Bureau, through its efforts in promoting creative writing, was also helping in the creation of a national consciousness in Papua New Guinea. (See Mr Bouraga's speech on page 12.)

By encouraging Papua New Guinea writers we have tried both these aims. Stories about Papua New Guinea, written by Papua New Guineans, provide the sort of reading that people here like. Because they are reading about themselves and their brothers and sisters in other parts of the country the national consciousness Philip Bouraga spoke about is being developed.

Great efforts have been made by our government and a handful of dedicated people to revive and strengthen our cultural heritage. The National Cultural Council has shown a lot of interest and is working steadily towards this aim.

Perhaps there has been a little too much emphasis on what is Cultural rather than what is Artistic. It is a small wonder that the emphasis has been placed on the performing and craftsman's arts.

Is the time not right to form a National Literary Board? With a membership made up of the nation's foremost writers and others dedicated to the promotion of literature in all its forms; given teeth in the form of grants from government and the private sector; such a board could be the driving force in assisting known writers towards publication of their work. It could also for fledgling writers to develop and expand their art.

The Annual Literary Competitions run by the Bureau have pointed the way. They have been largely financed by benevolent individuals who have wished to see the literary arts promoted in Papua New Guinea. To them we are truly grateful and hope they will continue to help us. It is largely through them that this year's prize money of \$750 was possible.

This issue brings you some of the best stories and poems from the competitions, together with a report on the Writers' Day Function and presentations at the University of Papua New Guinea. Complete results of the competitions can be found on pages 16 and 17.

We have published many new writers in 1974. I know that 1975 will produce a new and exciting crop of writing talent. With independence almost upon us here is a theme to stimulate the literary minds.

At this season the staff of the Literature Bureau send you greetings, and we hope you will get many more enjoyable hours of reading from these pages in the New Year.

JACK LAHUI,
Editor.

Contents

SHOULD WE LAUGH OR SHOULD WE CRY?

Siwid Gipey 2

BOBORO AND KOKOKOKO

Kone Tom 4

PROMIS LONG BIPO

Herman Taolam 5

SHARK FISHING

Thomas Palat 7

POET'S CORNER

PASIN BILONG MARITIM TUPELA

MERI

Kove Gaho 10

AN EDUCATED GIRL FACES A

PROBLEM

Magdalene Wagon 11

WRITERS' DAY REPORT

GOD BLESS YOU

Jeff Oamu 14

COMPETITION NEWS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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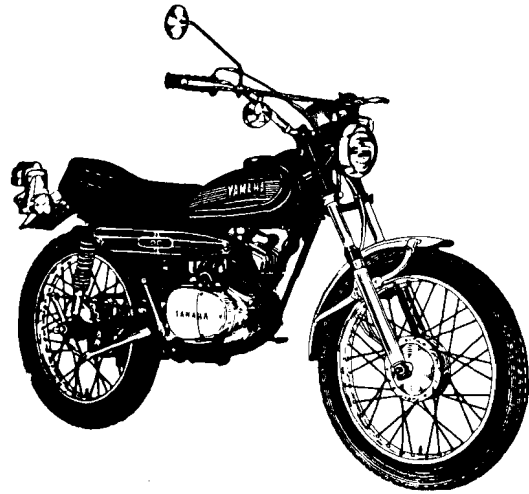
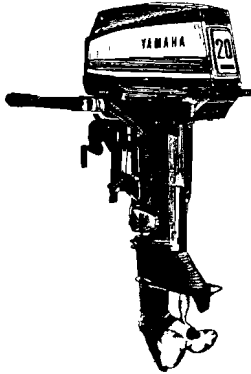
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CONTENTS

SIR ALBERT MAORI KIKI:

MARUPI, An Art Form
from the Papuan Gulf.

PRITHVINDRA CHAKRAVARTHI:

The Ogre killing child;
a major theme of Papua
New Guinea Folklore.

WILLIAM ONGLO:

Spirit Faces.

PETER KROS:

Tourist; does it help to
preserve our culture?

MICHAEL T. SOMARE: Initiation in Murik
lakes.

CECIL ABEL:

Suau Aesthetics.

ULLI BEIER:

Aesthetic concepts in
the Trobriand Islands.

BARRY ISON:

Motu Tattoos.

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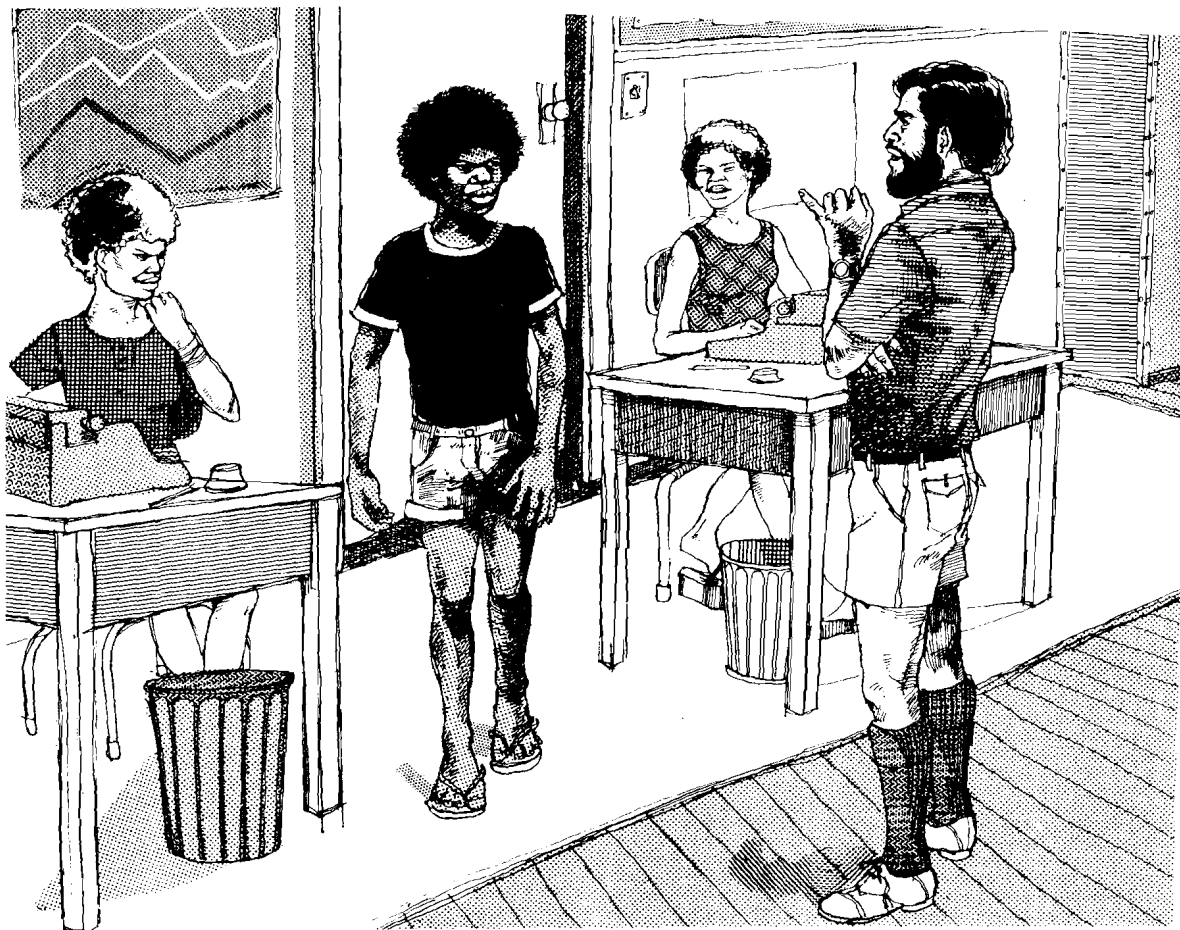
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account of research projects undertaken by
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IN MOTU: Rigo dala

Luksave costs 20c per copy and can be purchased
from the New Guinean Research Unit, P.O. Box
1238, Boroko, Papua New Guinea.



He entered the room and stood face to face with a local girl who could not help giggling. A burly white man too was staring at him from the table before him.

SHOULD WE LAUGH OR SHOULD WE CRY?

By Siwid Gipey

This Story won the \$50 Literature Bureau prize in the National Short Story Contest the year.

Old Samuna watched him go. Sadness flooded into his old heart and warm tears bathed his eyes. Why should he go? Why didn't he marry Sarome and cultivate the gardens? O God why? What was so precious in town?

From the distance the young man turned around reluctantly to wave goodbye. He was only a youth. His hair was untidy. The old school uniform flapped restlessly in the breeze, unbuttoned. The shorts were dirty and worn from continuous wearing.

Banada shaded his eyes and saw his old father sitting there, hunched near the hut, defeated, hopeless. With mixed emotions the boy raised his hand and visualised tears of sadness wetting his breast but it was too late; he had decided that he must go and this was the time.

"I'll be back," he whispered and turned his back to the setting sun.

Lae emerged out of the twilight waters, elegant & beautiful with lights shimmering in their full glow. Lae excited him very much and he longed to know her even more.

The M.V. Morobe had been sailing for eight hours. As the boat neared the city, lights lit up the sky miles around and shone with brilliance that dazzled his eyes. It was a wonderful sight, too glorious to his descriptions.

Lights played games — wonderful games on calm harbour waters. 'What could those myriad lights be?' he queried to himself. He was fascinated even more by a coloured light that flickered off on.

As the boat pulled alongside the wharf Banada felt he had made the right decision. He felt he belonged there. The city, he imagined, was calling him. He wanted to be part of the hurrying crowds, the rushing traffic, the blaring music and the screaming machines. His blood churned and churned in tune with all of them. He was a man of the city; not married to some village idiot back in the village. Let the villagers marry villagers, he nearly said aloud.

With his bag slung over his shoulder Banada took the direction given him by a friend and timidly walked down the street to the S.P.T. worker's residence, his only place of contact.

John was very pleased to see him. Banada told him everything that had happened to him, what his old father felt, and what his future plans were.

"Yu no ken wari," John assured him with sympathy, "Lusim ol i go long hai skul. Lusim ol kisim bikpela save na kilim ol yet long save biong ol. Ating save bilong yu inap; yu inap kisim gutpela wok. Yu lukim mi olsem yu. Mi pinisim skul long 1955 long standat three. Nau yu lukim mi i gat gutpela wok long South Pacific Timber Kampani. Na ol peim mi gut tru."

The following day, Banada rose early to go job seeking following John's instructions. He came to a well kept premises, which he imagined was an office. The door was closed. On it was written, 'Air Conditioned Please Enter.' Above the door were signs in colourful letters, 'A.B.C.O. Pty. Ltd.'

Banada walked up to the door then hesitated. Just before the door was a notice which read: 'SORI NO-GAT WOK'.

"Damned bastard," he cursed and then retreated in defeat.

For two weeks he saw the same sign everywhere. It was now the first day of the third week.

He had been everywhere, and was unconsciously walking the same streets twice or three times knocking at office doors. Alas, it was all a fruitless search. Nobody wanted his knowledge of seven long years of primary education. No one.

He remembered asking an elderly European woman for a job as a house boy, just to wash clothes, cut grass, clean the house, and mind the children. How she slammed the door on his face saying, "Go ask your mama for one."

This had denuded his pride and left him bewildered and disappointed. In social studies he had always thought white people were the nicest folks on earth but not those he had met.

This particular event nearly brought tears to his eyes. He felt self pity. 'Why, was he born anyway?' he asked himself repeatedly.

He thought of doing something that would end his life, worries and troubles. There were many live wires around. There were many fast moving cars too. He thought of his dead mother. He thought of joining her and forgetting about everything to do with these greedy people; their world, the money hungry beasts of this beautiful place he had for so long dreamed of. And here he was staring at another of their offices.

Banada gave a deep sigh and walked up timidly to the door. I'll make this the last, he thought, before I go back to mama.

He entered. A gush of cold air hit him on the face as he stepped in and stood there blankly, not knowing what to do next. He was standing face to face with a local girl, who could not help giggling. A burly white man too was staring at him from the table before him while another local girl was typing away on his right.

"Well, what do you want?" asked the man irritably. Banada gathered his confidence and went on to explain his problem in his best English. But somehow he felt his neck and his confidence dry out;

he became shaky, gulped once or twice and burst into tears. The three eyed each other in astonishment.

The girls giggled under their breath and the man's face remained inanimate.

"You think it's funny because you've got a job and you're happy," said Banada in between sobs. "You are lucky your mothers gave birth to you first."

The white man stood up and walked about the office. "So you're looking for a job, eh?"

"Sir," said Banada quite seriously, "for two long weeks I've been searching this big town for a job. The result of which you see in my tears. Sir, I humbly ask you for a job. I don't care if it's a man's job or if it's a woman's job; I don't care how difficult it is, or how dirty it may be; Sir, I'm ready to take it; yes with my spirit. I will do my best at all times. I will work hard and keep to it until death separates me." He paused and looked at the big man full in the face, expecting a blessed answer.

"Boy I understand how you feel. You must be very desperate. But you are not the only one. Now you stay here. I think we've got a job for you. I'll check the files."

Immediately Banada's heart leapt with joy. He felt his spirit returning to him. He stood straight and wiped his tears with his hands. At last I have found a job, he mused to himself. He would have liked to dance up and down in the office. At last I have found a job, he thought.

"Where do you come from?" questioned the girl to his left.

"Morobe."

"Which part of the Morobe District, stupid?"

"Oh, Morobe, part of Morobe," answered Banada proudly.

The girl was puzzled even more. "What do you mean?"

"Listen stupid girl," said Banada. "I'm from the Morobe Patrol Post area of the Morobe District."

The argument ended immediately when the two realised the approaching man. He was holding a piece of paper.

What was the news now? What was he going to tell him? Would he get a job? were the questions he held in his look.

"Sorry boy, the positions have already been filled," he said as he sat down. "Look at this paper. This morning nine boys of your age came to us and we had, as you see here, only two positions vacant. The best two got the job and we told the rest to go."

Young man this is a problem in your country at the moment. The Government is doing all it can to help you; and we, the employers, understand your problems, and some of us are doing all we can to help you, but boy, at this moment I can't help you, I'm sorry."

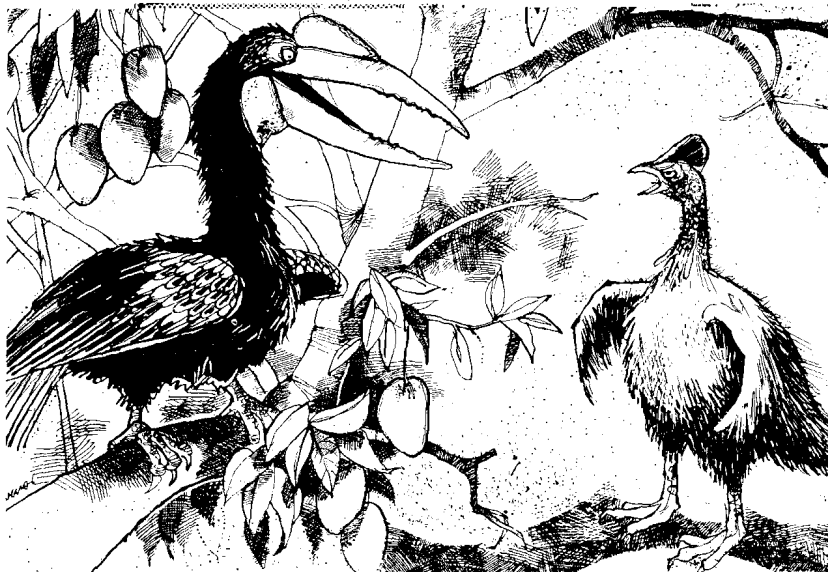
Banada's spirit sank right back to nought. His will to talk disappeared. Water filled his eyes and nose. His whole body seemed to be numbed and he thought his heart had stopped beating.

Death, oh where was death? Why didn't it release him from his prison? Lost in his misery and self pity Banada did not hear the man's efforts to catch his attention.

"However," came the now distant voice of the man, "if you are so desperate there's still a small chance of a job here. This will of course depend on you. A man became very ill and died last year. You can, if you want to, take his place, join the labour line and empty the buckets around the town."

Hissing air directed Banada's eyes to the girls. They were struggling to control their giggling or whatever it was.

Continued on Page (23)



BOBORO and KOKOKOKO

By Kone Tom



Kokokoko was furious and, looking up, he said, 'My relatives will kill you in their best laid traps.'

In the beginning of creation Boboro and Kokokoko were very good friends. They lived in the same place and went hunting and gathered food together. They wandered the huge forest as if they were a married couple.

One day Boboro and Kokokoko left their dwelling and went into the forest in search of ripe mangoes. Together they flew into a tall mango tree. They were very hungry.

Despite their harmonious relationship in the past, that day was to be very different, as it was a day when each was to find his own food to satisfy his own hunger.

Boboro and Kokokoko differed very much in their physical make-up. Kokokoko had a neck which was much longer than Boboro's. With his long neck Kokokoko was able to reach from where he sat and get all the mangoes within sight.

Boboro, who realised he could not do as well as Kokokoko, just sat and stared speculatively as Kokokoko ate all the mangoes. Boboro could not stand this so at last he spoke out.

"My friend," said Boboro, "we have been together for a long time and I have helped you in many ways. Above all I helped you during your sickness and difficulties. I have not done anything disappointing to you. I just cannot see why you are indifferent. Please be kind and give me even a small bit of mango to relieve my hunger."

Kokokoko ignored his friend and kept on eating.

Boboro was disappointed and humiliated by Kokokoko's deliberate selfishness.

On another day both went out to find mangoes. This time Boboro took with him some twigs which he placed under his arm-pit. When they had reached their destination Boboro turned to his friend with an expression of someone who had just awakened from a dream.

"Dear friend," said Boboro, "I was told last night in a dream that if we break our wings, we will have easy access to all the wealth in this land. This diety came to me in a dream. One of my ancestors assured me that we will rule over all the other creatures if we do what I have seen in the dream."

"Go on, tell me all about it," demanded Kokokoko.

When Boboro had finished his story Kokokoko said, "Yes, that is great! I've also had dreams about becoming king of all creatures one day!"

Boboro then told Kokokoko to keep still and watch while he broke his wings. He stretched his wings out with the twigs intact in his arm-pit and as he brought them down the twigs broke with a resounding noise.

Now it was Kokokoko's turn to break his wings. Without first considering whether his friend's dream was true or actually checking Boboro's wings, Kokokoko embarked on the painful ordeal. He placed his wings across the bough on which he was sitting and broke them with his immensely powerful legs.

Boboro was now certain he had achieved exactly what he wanted — to physically and mentally weaken Kokokoko.

As Kokokoko had broken their excellent friendship and more so had socially offended him, Boboro had secretly plotted to take revenge. So clever was Boboro in his plotting that he succeeded in mentally overpowering his friend, reducing him to total misery.

Tauntingly, Boboro told Kokokoko to watch while he flew to a bough and back again. He did so quite normally! He then ordered Kokokoko to do the same. Miserable, Kokokoko was enraged when he found he had been cunningly lured into completely destroying the most gifted part of himself. He realised it was too late now and that from then on he would live

a new way of life as a surface creature. Thus he lay on the ground in agony, a victim of Boboro's cunning and sharp mind.

As Kokokoko lay on the ground, he called up to Boboro saying, "My friend, why did you do this to me?"

Boboro, looking down at him answered, "My friend, don't you realise what harm you have done? You deliberately turned your back on me and ate everything yourself. I begged you kindly for a mango but you would not listen, although you were my best friend. You did not like me. You were selfish. That is why I became humiliated, and carefully I planned to punish you. You must realise now that this punishment will transform your life."

Boboro looked down again and continued, "When trees blossom and bear fruit, I will have the good ones. But only the remains of the ones eaten by other birds and insects will fall to the ground and enter your mouth!"

Kokokoko was furious at this and looking up he said, "My relatives will kill you in their best laid traps."

"My relatives will lay powerful nets and you will be caught and killed," replied Boboro looking down from the tree with pride.

From then on Boboro and Kokokoko became lasting enemies. They marked each other and indeed set taboos on each other which each had to observe throughout their lives.

"Boboro," said Kokokoko, "do not go out at night, for if you see a firefly you will die."

Kokokoko in return told Boboro to be careful of one thing — that was always to fly very high above the bushes, and never to fly low, for if he did he would be shot by hunters with bows and arrows.

Ever since that day Kokokoko has become associated with surface creatures and always remembers Boboro's warnings. Similar Boboro from that time on has never flown low.

PROMIS LONG BIPO

By Herman Taolam

Martha Emawe i wok olsem wampela stuakipa long wampela Sainaman i stap klostu long Mada-dang. Taim ol tisa long Hai Skul tok, Martha no inap bai i go long Haikul. Papa bilong Martha kisim em i go long Sainaman na putim em bai wok long stua.

Papa bilong Martha i save wok olsem mankimasta long Sainaman long taun. Em i kisim dispela Sainaman i kam long ples bilong em na putim stua.

Planti ol wanlain bilong Martha ol marit pinis na sampela i gat tupela o tripela pikinini pinis.

"Wanem taim bai yu marit," ol lain bilong Martha i askim. Martha save harim tok tasol. Em i save tu taim em bin stap long skul wampela tisa bilong em i bin tok long krismas bilong em. Nau Martha i gat wampela ten krismas tasol. Martha tokim wanlain bilong em. "Oh... planti taim bilong marit i stap."

Martha wok long dispela masta long stua bilong em long planti yia tru. Em i bin kamap bikpela na gutpela meri tru. Planti man i save kamap long dispela stua long trai long em. Ol arapela i kam lukluk long em taim em wok long stua. Sampela ol aigris long em, toktok swit na lap nabaut. Sampela lukluk strong long em na tok-tok long em.

"Sit, lukim wokabaut bilong em tasol! Man as bilong em i no pilaipilai." Ol toktok na tanim het. Sampela taim ol i kam tokim Martha long i go danis o i go raun em save tanim het tasol i go long arapela hap.

"Olgeta yangpela meri bilong dispela ples ol mekim olsem bai i go marit long arapela wanskin," ol man bin tok olsem na kros nogut tru.

Martha i save papa bilong em bai i no laik long man hia bai maritim em. Dispela em long kros

bilong em long bipo. Papa bilong Martha em wampela long ol man husait i no laikim kain man Martha i laik maritim. Tasol papa bilong em i no save. Em i bin lapun liklik nau na em laik ol gutpela samting bilong ol masta olsem ti, mit, suitpea kaikai, moni na bia.

Long taim em no bin lapun, em i bin save wok long masta na i no save usim moni, em i lapun na i laik kaikai bilong ol masta. Em laikim Martha maritim wampela man husait i wok na i gat mnei.

Wampela taim papa bilong em i bin singaut na tok "Martha yu lukim husait man i go long stua bilong Sainaman asde." Martha i no toktok tasol em tanim het i go arasait. "Yu save hamas moni em bin kamautim long trausis bilong em? Mi laik yu maritim dispela man."

Martha i save dispela man i kamda. Em i stap klostu tasol na i kam long Sepik. Martha i save tasol i no laik soim tingting bilong em.

Papa lukim Martha i no tok na em salim i go long rum bilong em na tingting gut bihain em bai tokim em.

Tarangu lapun i no save pikinini bilong em i gat tingting long maritim man long laik bilong em.

Pasin long ples bilong em olsem taim manmeri laik marit bai ol papamama tasol bai go wokabaut na painim meri bilong pikinini bilong ol.

Wampela apinum Martha i bin pinisim wok na wokabaut i kam long haus. Taim em wokabaut long rot dispela Sepik man bin painim long rot na i tok "Hay dalin yu wantaim mi? Lukim planti moni!" na em pulim aut ol ten dola not na soim long em.

Martha kirap nogut na i tok, "Nogat sem bilong yu. Lukim em husat i laikim moni bilong yu. Yu laik bai mi go ripotim yu."

Martha i save wanem taim em bai marit tasol man bilong em i stap longwe long bikpela taun long Mosbi.

Martha i tingting yet long promis em givim long dispela man long bipo tru. Toktok bilong tupela i stap gut long het bilong em. Planti yia i go pinis tasol piksa bilong man i stap gut long het bilong em.

Olgeta taim man salim pas i kam i soim i gat bikpela laik yet long em. Planti taim man i salim pas na tok "Honey, I am true to our promise of the past and will never set my eyes on educated women. There is nothing in them to feel and love and be rewarded with the thought that makes a man feel a whole being."

Long dispela toktok long pas em bin raitim i kam, i mekim Martha save olsem liklik promis bilong tupela long skul i no samting nating.

Sala em nem bilong dispela man i stap long Mosbi husat Martha i gat bikpela laik long maritim. Taim tupela i bin stap long vilis school i bin mekim dispela promis. Long dispela taim Martha emi liklik meri tasol. Sala i lukim pes, skin na wokabaut wantaim na i laikim tumas. Em ting taim Martha i kamap bikpela bai em narapela kain meri tru! Martha katim olgeta man na em i pilai wantaim Sala tasol na tokim em long wampela taim tupela bai marit. Sala ting i lus long dispela tok bilong em. Em i bin pas long exam na nau i stap long Univesiti. Nambawan pas long Martha i kam long Sala taim i stap long Univesiti long Mosbi.

I no long taim i go pinis na wampela man long ples bilong Martha i bin kam long Mosbi na em tokim ol man olsem Sala nau bai i kamap bikpela man. Em save

Continued overleaf

kaikai wantaim ol waitman na raun wantaim kar bilong ol. Em i wampela Loea, em man bilong harim bikipela kot long ol man i dai, ol kain pait long giraun, paulim meri long narapela man, na ol kain kain trabel. Em i wok bilong Sala na em kisim planti moni. Husat man i stap harim na ol tanim het tasol.

Taim Martha i harim dispela toktok em amamas tru. Em ting papa bilong em tu i bin harim dispela toktok nau em bai no kros. Martha i danis liklik. Dispela yia i go pinis mi baj meri tru. Ol planti man bin traim mi tasol nogat. Sala yet i kamap nau, Martha i ting.

Man husat i bin kamap long Mosbi tu bin tokim ol man long ples Sala bai i kam bek long ples dispela wik o wik bihain, em i no save tasol i tru bai em ken i kam long ples.

Taim man Sepik i harim olsem pren bilong Martha bai ikam klostu em i bin wari nogut tru, na long wampela apinun em i go long stua na baim

gutpela kaikai na sampela bia wantaim simok. Em karim i go long haus bilong Martha. Em i tokim papa bilong Martha long kukim dispela kaikai. Taim Martha i kukim kaikai tupela i stat dring. Lapun papa bilong Martha i amamas long dispela samting.

Lapun man i bin sipak nogut tru na Sepik man i sipak liklik tasol. Olgeta taim em dring em bin tingting long Martha olsem i toktok na lukluk long em. Em i wet long nait i kam.

Lapun man i silip na Sepik i laik hambak long Martha tasol Martha i singaut moa na Sepik man i pret tru na ronwe i go.

Long moningtaim Martha i bin go ripotim Sepik man long ofis bilong Kiap. Papa bilong Martha em i bin kros olsem em i laikim Sepik man wanem i gat planti moni na i mas maritim Martha. Em i go tokim Kiap long wanem em bai i no go long kot.

Long dispela de Sala i kamap. Martha i lukim Sala na i singaut

na ron i go holim Sala na karai i stap.

"Kiap dispela em man bilong mi" Martha i tok.

Kiap i tanim na askim papa gen, "Yu save long dispela man?"

"Yes em i man bilong harim kot, na em prenim bipo."

"Yu save olsem tupela bai marit?" Kiap i askim gen.

"Kiap mi no save long samting bilong ol yangpela." Papa bilong Martha i bekim tok long Kiap na daunim het bilong em.

"Na husat dispela man?" Kiap i askim ol na makim han i go long Sepik ia.

Martha i tok "Husait i save long em, olsem gutpela man." Em tanim gen na holim han bilong Sala na tokim Kiap, "dispela man tasol mi save long em. Mi tupela promis bipo tru taim mipela pikinini yet long vilis skul na taim mi no gat bikipela susu yet."

Kiap i no gat tok; em lukluk i go long polisman na mekim sain long het long kisim ol i kam harim kot.

I no longtaim em tokim Sala na Martha i go aut.

BELOW IS A SYNOPSIS OF 'PROMIS LONG BIPO'

"THE PROMISE" by Herman Taolam

Martha Emawe worked as a shop keeper for a Chinese businessman not far from Madang. She became a shop assistant when she realised she was unable to complete her high school. Most of her girlfriends and school-mates had married with one or two children, and had frequently asked Martha when she was getting married. Martha just shrugged away saying there was plenty of time for marriage because she was only eighteen.

She had worked in the Chinese shop for a number of years and had seen a lot of young and eager male customers, who either marvelled at her or even asked her for dates. She ignored them. Most complained that their village girls were no longer interested in the young men of their own locality and were marrying elsewhere.

Martha's father also had the same complaints, but he was more interested in seeing his daughter marry someone who had the money in hand. Yet when he was a young man working in a far off town as a domestic servant, he never fully understood the meaning of cash. Now, at old age and slowly becoming toothless, money to him meant eating soft food as well as enjoying other material luxuries.

One evening he called his daughter into the house for questioning. The con-

ference, Martha knew, was about a certain customer who had entered the shop the previous day so she did her best to sit quietly and listen. The man worked as a casual mechanic not far from the village. Her father asked her if she saw this Sepik man in the shop and if she had observed the amount of money he had produced from his trousers pocket. Martha said she did, but whatever her father had in mind, she reflected, she would have nothing to do with the man.

One evening, after Martha had finished work and was on her way home, she met the man. He held out a handful of cash enticingly, most of them ten and twenty dollar bills and asked if Martha liked him. Martha reeled back in agitation and warned the man that if he kept doing that she would take him to court.

She, however knew that she would eventually marry one day. She had her future husband studying at the University in Port Moresby. Sala was his name. She knew that Sala still kept the promise they had made while both were at the same village primary school. Sala was, of course, writing Martha regularly and each letter contained both words of encouragement and love. Martha knew that Sala was the man for her.

Not long after, a villager, who had been in Port Moresby, brought some fresh news that Sala was studying well; that he was so westernised he could eat and

live with Europeans naturally; and that he would, after a number of years, finish his course with a degree in Law. The things that he would perform after graduation, the villager explained, would be beyond the scope of any young village man's ability. He also spread the news that Sala was coming home, yet he could not tell exactly when. But all were satisfied that Sala was coming home. This news made Martha so overjoyed that at one stage she had to do a little dancing to herself in the quiet of her house.

The Sepik suitor, on the other hand, was worried. He had to think of something. He bought a carton of beer, some cigarettes and a lot of food and went to Martha's father. Martha's father was indeed happy and welcomed the man. This was exactly what he wanted.

Martha did the cooking while the two men drank beer. After dinner Martha went to sleep, while her father drank and drank with the man until he was drunk. The Sepik man had only pretended to be drunk and when the old man had fallen into a drunken slumber, he entered the house to seduce Martha. He was not successful and had to be taken to court the following day.

The court hearing between the District Patrol Officer, Martha and her father and the unlucky Sepik suitor was in progress when Sala made his sudden appearance, thus enabling the two to fulfil their promise of the past.

PIDGIN STORIES

We sincerely hope readers everywhere have liked the Pidgin stories we have published over the last two years.

If you have an unpublished Pidgin story which you would like us to consider for publication in "Papua New Guinea Writing", please write to the Editor, 'Papua New Guinea Writing', Box 2312, Konedobu.

Shark Fishing

By Thomas Palat

★ ★ ★

... My grandfather lifted his heavy wooden club and bashed the shark to death.

★ ★ ★



We had spent the better part of the morning fishing for bait and had caught a lot. The bait was mainly small fish which were then tied to the end of a five foot piece of bamboo about an inch in diameter. Our supper was prepared and served and the next moment I found myself sitting beside a fire with my grandfather, discussing ancestral techniques of catching sharks — we were preparing for our shark fishing expedition the following morning.

Grandfather told me all sorts of stories that night of how, when he was young, he had caught many sharks.

"It is a dangerous task to catch a six foot shark," he would say when one story had ended and was about to begin another.

Thinking of the task, I grew frightened. I feared to leave my village to die a sorrowful death in a shark's mouth. I love my people and place very much but grandfather, a hero of the past, comforted me with account after account of his catches and assured me that it was as easy as a child's game. I felt I was entitled to my doubt which would only be removed by seeing him catch one.

"Fear not," grandfather assured me between stories. "We have the knowledge and the skill to destroy any enemy that tries to intercept us on our journey."

The golden moon had appeared on the eastern horizon where we were to look for sharks. Realising I needed some rest I went to bed peacefully after telling my grandfather to wake me when he was ready.

We awoke long before sunrise and prepared our breakfast which we were to eat later on the ocean. Our fishing gear was already loaded in our sixteen foot canoe. It was still dark when we set out on our journey for, according to grandfather, it was better to start at night rather than in broad daylight because we had to paddle a fair distance.

During the journey, I discovered that grandfather, who appeared very old, was a fast and expert paddler, but still it took us three hours to complete a distance of about seventeen miles.

At the fishing spot we drifted with the tide until the ocean was brightened by the sun. After our

hearty breakfast we sat quietly in our canoe to see what was going to happen next.

I had confidence in my grandfather and firmly believed he was going to get through the task pretty well, despite his old age. He had shown great strength during paddling.

Then suddenly, out of the dark blue ocean, the glassy fin of a ten foot long shark was sighted by grandfather. It was nearing our canoe. Grandfather was prepared for the enemy and did not appear worried.

The shark leapt with an opened mouth to catch the bait tied to the small bamboo pole and I crouched low in our canoe. The shark could not catch the meat because it was held too high. The next instant, I noticed that my grandfather was again luring the shark to the bait.

The shark, watching the tempting bait, came close to our canoe, apparently unaware of our presence.

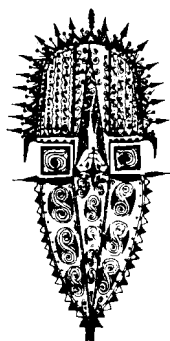
Suddenly my grandfather lifted the bait so high the hungry monster lifted nearly half its body out of the water to grab the bait and this gave my grandfather the chance to put a cane loop around its body, which he did skilfully.

We laughed in victory at the struggling shark and after a few minutes my grandfather lifted his heavy wooden club and bashed the shark to death. The task was over.

With the shark secure in the canoe, we started for home cheerfully singing together the traditional songs specially composed for this type of task. We were about half a mile from our village when grandfather took out his magical conch shell and blew it loudly. An enormous crowd soon gathered on the beach for the conch shell is blown only when a shark has been caught.

Our exciting adventure was over and I found myself back home, at the place I had feared I might not see again.

The shark was cut up and shared among the villagers and we each had a delicious dinner that night. I decided I would soon try to catch a shark by the technique I had learnt from my grandfather.



POET'S CORNER

with Jack Lahui

A poem of praise and encouragement specially written by the author for Writers' Day.

WRITERS OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA

by Allan Natachee

*This is you, you, you
You sons and daughters, you famous young writers
of Papua New Guinea
I love your poisons,
your smiles
and your tears that ooze
through your hands and flow through your pens
taking the shape of
past and present and future
upon your sheets of paper.*

Winner of \$50 PETER BECKETT Poetry Prize, Section One, Tertiary.

EMBITTERED X

by Siwid Gipey

*The atmosphere became tense
between the angered one the other behind the desk
and everyone belted while there was chance
as he asked the third time,
"What's the price of that axe?"
The bushman slammed six dollars forty cents
pushing the empty bank book into his sack,
arousing within the old bag a strong robust scent
and grabbing the axe from the sack.
Fear gripped the little country store
as the devil shook the axe, "Master be on your guard,
Today it is mine with cash,
Tomorrow it's yours with blood."*

Winner of \$25 First Prize in Section Two for Primary.

STRANGE CREATION

by Marlls Balim

*Papua New Guinea was created strangely in a hurry
I think,
New Britain sleeps like a newly born baby;
Trobriand Islands look like their own yams;
New Irelands seems shaped like a shot gun
making Manus look like bullets from its barrel;
Bougainville looks like the Buka Taro.
The Highlands region seems shaped like
the swollen head of a giant.
Some are shaped like beans, bananas or coconut.
You don't need to be angry
because it's one of
God's strangest creations.*

Winner of \$15 Second Prize, Section Two, for High Schools.

PAYDAY

by Arua Rin

*It's Thursday
The workers are chasing the hours
Hours seem
to be
shorter than
normal
It's 4.06
workers hurriedly signing off
then
Rush for
Palm Tavern, Kone Tavern
Papua Hotel,
Top Pub and the Snake Pit.
As they enter
they say "Only one Glass"
will do
BUT
more
because not satisfied.
Soon it's closing hour
you can hear
the
grunting, swearing,
mumbling, gossiping
of the workers
for more hours
and they
still hang around
till midnight.
. and slowly*

they march
home.
You can hear the
swearing, buzzing
spitting, vomiting
of the workers.
Now the worker
dips his head inside the house
then starts swearing,
the cries of
children, mothers
because of hunger
shyness of empty pots
spoons, plates,
dishes, forks —
then he starts
kicking, belting
knocking the household
till all are toothless
and bleeding and
there are no walls to the house
Morning comes
children cry
for breakfast
Mothers cry
and the worker?
Now watching his arse
for there's nothing to
eat
serve, save
NOTHING!
Not a single cent
in the
PAY ENVELOPE.

Mi go arasait
mi lukluk solowara gen
mi kamtaun long leda
mi bihainim arare bilong haus
mi lukluk lek bilong yu
istap antap long wasan
mi tingting
E! Nanse long ol
Lek tasol istap
Mi sore na mi karai.
Mi wokabaut long rot
mi lukim meri wantaim pikinini
mi lukim man wantem Lewa bilong em
mi lukim ol yanpela meri ikam
E! Nansa long ol
mi go antap long haus
mi paitim dua
Lewa Anges yu stap
Mi tingting — aswa
O, Lewa Agnes, yu go we
Mi sore tasol na mi karai.
Mi go long bet
mi silip na mi diriman
mi lukim wanpela smok
i karamapim gras olsem daiman
em i go na em i go
Em i go Ab!
Em wonem
Wanpela meri
Wanpela laplap
Wanpela hat bilong quin
O, Lewa Agnes
ii bilong mi op
mi tingting
O Lewa Agnes yu stap pinis long HEVEN.

Winner of \$50 Donald Maynard Pidgin Poetry Prize.

LEWA AGNES

by Joseph Paiya

Mi sindaun long dua bilong haus
mi lukluk igo long solowara
mi lukluk igo long mounten
mi tingting,
O, Lewa Agnes, yu go we
Mi sore na mi karai.
Mi go insait long haus
mi lukim bet
mi lukim klos wantaim siket
mi lukim naispela kalakala bilum
mi tingting
O, Lewa Agnes, yu go we
Mi sore na mi karai.
Naispela bilum you wokim
mi putim long het pilo
mi lukim poto bilong yu
na mi tingting,
Lewa sapos yu stap klostu
bai mi wanpela amamas man tru
Yu luk naispela olsem dispela bilum
O, Lewa Agnes, yu go we
Kilok bilong mi i bruk tu ap

Winner of \$25 Second Prize in Setion One, Tertiary

EXPERIENCE

by Gapi Iamo

The sun woke me.
I blinked rapidly and rolled away
from the offending bright light.
The bed was empty.
I yawned and slowly rolled on to my back
risking a look at the window.
The rain had stopped and watery sun beams
streamed warmly through the louvers
lighting up my lonely room.
I looked at my watch.
It was just after eight fifteen.
I reached for my wireless
and turned it on, lying back
against the pillow, listening to the music.
I was thinking of last night.

PASIN BILONG MARITIM TUPELA MERI

By Kove Gaho

Bifo bifo tru ol man bilong Hailans i no save maritim tupela meri.

Long dispela taim wanpela meri bilong Hailan i bin marit, na i karim tupela pikinini man long wanpela taim. Long dispela tupela pikinini man i bin givim nem Hamo na Seta. Hamo em i bin karim Pes na Seta em i bin karim namba tu.

Dispela tupela brata em i bin pait long olgeta taim long wanem mama bilong em i bin givim tupela hap kaikai i go long Seta na wanpela tasol i go long Hamo. Mama i tok, "Seta mi bin karim long namba tu na i mas kisim tupela hap kaikai." Dispela pasin bilong mama bilong em i mekim Hamo i bel hat moa.

Hamo i stap wantaim mama, na brata bilong em tasol i no hamamas long pasin bilong tupela. Nau Hamo i kamap strong na i olsem man pinis long painim meri bilong em.

Wanpela apinun, bihain i bin pait wantaim Seta, Hamo i ting long i go wokabaut long rot. Taim i bin wokabaut long rot, ren i pundaun na Hamo i ting long painim sampela ples long bai i ken go insait. Hamo i wokabaut liklik moa na i lukim wanpela liklik haus i stap. I bin go na lukluk insait na i no painim wanpela man o meri. Hamo i go insait tasol.

Taim i bin go insait i sindaun klostu we pipal bilong dispela haus i mekim paia na i stat mekim bikipela paia. Hamo i bin ting dispela haus em pipal i no save usim. Em tingting olsem na putim olgeta diwai long paia. I no long taim pinis i bin pinisim olgeta diwai paia.

Hamo i bin hatim skin pinis na i laik silip liklik tasol. Bihain bai i go bek long peles bilong en. Taim i bin pasim ai bilong en i bin silip gut tru.

Liklik taim tasol mama bilong dispela haus, wantaim tupela yampela meri bilong en, i bin kam. Tripela i bin kirap no gut tru taim i lukim Hamo i silip insait long haus bilong em. Tupela meri i pret tru long wanem i ting man i silip insait em i Masalai. Wanpela meri i bin go na traim long rausim na nara-

pela i stap lukluk i go tasol. Hamo i bin pilim kol long han bilong dispela meri na kirap na lukim tupela meri. Hamo i lukluk raun na painim san i bin kamap gen.

Kwik taim tru, tupela meri i bin laikim Hamo stret, long wanem Hamo em i no olsem arapela man em i bin save lukim bipo.

Dispela meri husat i no bin go na rausim Hamo long silip i bin tok, "Dispela man em i man bilong mi nau. Long taim tru mi no bin lukim wanpela gutpela man. Em i man bilong mi."

Meri husat i bin rausim Hamo long silip i bin bekim tok, "Em i no man bilong yu, em man bilong mi stret. Yu bin ting em i Masalai nogut na yu no go na rausim, na sanap long kona na lukluk tasol."

Hamo i bin sindaun long hap na harim tok bilong tupela meri na tingting tu na i kranki tru long harim em, na i kirap na tokim tupela.

"Mipela mi sore long harim yu tupela," Hamo i tok. "Mi no kam long maritim yu. Mi bin kam long painim abus na ren i pun daun na mi bin kam long haus bilong yupela."

Tupela meri i bin sanap na i no toktok moa. Hamo tu i no laik toktok long wanem i bin ting bek long laip bilong en wantaim mama na brata bilong em na i bel hat tru. Long olgeta taim mama bilong em i save givim Seta tupela hap kaikai olgeta taim na wanpela long em tasol. Hamo em i bin tingting bai sapos em i maritim tupela meri wantaim i ken mekim rong bilong mama bilong en stret. Taso Hamo i bin sanap na tokim tupela meri.

"Sapos mi maritim wanpela meri tasol mi ting bai yu tupela i no ken stap gut. Em i gutpela bai mi maritim yu tupela wantaim."

Hamo i bin givim liklik taim long tripela meri long tingim long toktok bilong em. Tupela meri i bin tingting kwiktaim. Dispela man i bin tokaut wanpela samting i gutpela long em yet.

"Tingting bilong yu em i gutpela," tupela meri i bin bekim Hamo "mi tupela bai mi ken maritim yu tasol. Mi tupela mi no bin painim wanpela man olsem yupela na klostu mi tupela lapun nau. Mi tupela hamamas long maritim yu tasol."

Taim Hamo i harim tok bilong tupela meri i bin sanap na i go long holim tupela meri na i kis long pes bilong tupela. Em bikipela taim long hamamas bilong Hamo na tupela meri.

Hamo i bin stap wantaim meri na mama bilong en. Sampela Krismas i go pinis na Hamo i tokim tupela meri i laik i go wantaim em long ples bilong en.

Long ples bilong Hamo ol man, taim i lukim Hamo, i stat tingting long maritim tupela meri olsem Hamo i bin mekim. Sampela man i go het na maritim tu, tri o moa. Dispela pasin bilong Hamo i bin kam down long tete long Hailans.

Meri husat i bin rausim Hamo long silip i bin bekim tok, "Em i stret." "Em i no man bilong yu, em man bilong mi stret." (The girl who had woken Hamo then said, "This is not your husband, he is mine.")



An Educated Girl Faces a Problem

By Magdalene Wagun

This Story won the \$50 Jim and Betty Legge prize in this year's National Short Story Contest conducted by the Literature Bureau.

Merelyn had gone successfully through her primary schooling, and was now attending a secondary school. She was a very bright student and a hard worker at school. She hoped by working hard at school, she would eventually be able to get a good job somewhere in the country. She liked visiting places and people and finding new ways of living.

Merelyn had been at high school for almost four years and was doing her Form Four. She felt confident that she would be successful in her exams and that she would be able to get the job she wanted. Teaching interested her very much.

Merelyn's parents back in her village liked a certain man very much because he worked hard as a labourer at the nearby coconut plantation and earned \$10 a fortnight. Every afternoon her parents invited the man to their house. Each time the man visited them they put to him a lot of 'grease talk' to get him to marry their daughter.

'You see, we are getting old and we have no one to replace us and to work in the gardens,' they would say. 'Also there is no one to feed us when we're hungry. We need a man like you to marry our daughter so that you can look after us.' The man agreed to marry Merelyn.

Merelyn finally did her exams and passed well. She then applied to go to a teachers' college. The application was successful and she was very happy indeed. However her happiness evaporated when she knew of the wishes of her parents.

Three weeks before she was to leave for Madang, Merelyn found herself facing a problem. One evening her parents asked her: 'Merelyn, what do you expect to do now and where do you intend to go?' Merelyn eagerly answered

her parents politely: 'I told you what my aim was in the first place. Surely you know all about it. Mama na papa, bai mi go long Madang long skul bilong ol tisa na bihain bai mi kamap tisa, bai mi laik skulim ol liklik skul manki'*

Her parents were still facing her silently tossing kindles into the glowing fire, pretending that they had not heard about it before.

'My daughter, you have enough knowledge about teaching already,' her father spoke with an angered voice. 'You have spent most of your time with the white men and now you have come back to us. You will do what I, your father, ask you to do. Will you obey me?'

'What do you mean, papa?' asked Merelyn, as if she hadn't a clue about it.

'I want you to marry the man I have marked for you. He gets quite a bit of money we know,' said her father.

'Yu longlong man!** What's the use of wasting my education and knowledge to stay at home', she cried.

Merelyn felt like weeping but she had to control herself. Her heart was heavy, and every time she tried to talk back to her father he cut her short.

'You must marry this man of my choice. If you don't obey me you're going to be in big trouble. I'll tell the man to make sorcery on you and you'll die. You marry this man and he'll look after us well. Everything will be yours and his, as we're getting so old that we'll be depending a lot on you young couple.'

Merelyn returned to her room. She sat down on the floor and thought hard about what her life would be like if she married the man her father had chosen. Tears began to wet her eyes. Her head

dropped and her heart grew miserable.

Merelyn was the only child of the family so she eventually decided to stay home, to marry the man and mind her parents. She knew the life would be boring for a girl of Form Four level and of such knowledge to marry a man like that. All the time such thoughts crept through her mind.

The marriage was soon arranged by her parents and the man's relatives. Men, women and children of the village and the neighbouring villages gathered for the wedding day. One hundred heads of rings and two hundred decorated shells were brought forth by the man's relatives as the bride price, together with \$400.00. Merelyn knew her parents were selling her like a priced pig.

The ceremony was held traditionally and Merelyn's parents divided the price equally among their relatives.

Two years passed and Merelyn and her husband had a little child to look after. The father did his usual job while Merelyn stayed at home with the child. Sometimes she worked in a new garden that she and her husband had started.

At the end of those two years a friend of Merelyn's returned home on holidays after her first year of study at the Papuan Medical College in Port Moresby. Merelyn heard the news, but did not like to visit her because she knew it would hurt her feelings very much if she did. She was a happy village woman as long as she remained undisturbed. ●

*Father and mother I will go to a teachers college in Madang then return as a teacher to teach the little children.

**You stupid man!



Philip Bouraga

PHILIP BOURAGA, Acting Director of Office of Information, spoke on the role of the Literature Bureau in the present Papua New Guinea society. His comments appear below.

THE ROLE OF THE LITERATURE BUREAU OF THE OFFICE OF INFORMATION —

By Philip Bouraga

I am pleased to be here today, to join you on this important occasion — Writers' Day, 1974 — staged by the Literature Bureau. I sincerely hope that this will become an annual event during the coming years.

Most of us who have received or read the National Magazine 'Papua New Guinea Writing' should know, I hope, the functions of the Bureau. All materials published are received from our readers and contributors. This is indeed a very gratifying achievement.

Since its inception, the Bureau has been primarily concerned with the encouragement and promotion of literature in our country — and this function is indicative of the work the Bureau has done over the past years. The existence of literature in our country is of course dependent on our writers of today and future recognising the importance of our country and its many different cultures, which you are and will be writing about. As writers you are able to translate into fiction many of our traditional cultures and values.

I believe that our literature has developed to a stage where writers are writing with definite objectives. Because you are writing with purpose, you are able to create a common feeling of national harmony and unity.

Sometime ago, Mr Johnson, the then Administrator, expressed the view that a writer should recognise his duties of creating national consciousness. I think that our task — you as writers and I as a non-writer — is to inject in our people's minds this concept of national consciousness during this period of transition. For you this is a competitive challenge. A challenge which you have accepted and will continue to accept in your particular field.

The other aspect of literature which we have tended to neglect is that of oral literature. This is an important area and every encouragement should be made to the upkeep of this traditional literature. To some extent, the Bureau has tried to encourage this through its annual literature competitions. The Bureau will continue to stage these annual competitions. The Bureau has, of course, been recording some of the items in both Pidgin and Hiri Motu since the competitions began.

Continued on Page (18)

Paulias Matane

PAULIAS MATANE, Secretary, Department of Business Development spoke on the need to correct the spoilt image of P.N.G. by very effective outside novel and travel writers.



RECORDING USE — AND — ABUSE —

By Paulias Matane

May I, for convenience sake, direct you to the past, say fifty years ago and beyond and ask you to picture and mentalise the objects which I consider most important in the world. These objects were highly colorful, articulate, skilful, proud, confident, brilliant in body and mind.

What were these objects? Well they were not pieces of wood or something because they had minds and souls. But who were they? They were our forefathers of course. They were people with searching minds, searching for the best weapons to kill with, the best songs and dances, the best magics to kill and cure, the best magics to attract fish and pigs to catch and kill for food and the best magic to attract girls for what they were worth, the best carving and designs and so on. They were fully occupied with gardening, fishing and hunting both animals and enemies, gathering food from the sea, rivers, bush and gardens.

When there were to be important ceremonies they spent hours, days and even months to make preparations. They wanted to show that such ceremonies must be the best. As such I admire them all the time.

How do we know some of the things they used to do? Some of us did not live more than sixty years ago to have seen them. As we are all aware, most of the things they did were not recorded in books.

It's true that anthropologists and historians and missionaries recorded some of the events and ceremonies they saw but it was usual that they, being white men, recorded half the truths. Why should our forefathers tell the truth to a foreigner when most of the things were secret and sacred? Not only that but that one has got to be a member of a clan or an organisation before he would be exposed to the unknown. An anthropologist may have written all sorts of things about our forefather's beliefs, ideas, values, actions, culture and so on; but I still believe they recorded only half the truths.

The real truth (as stated earlier to be secret and sacred) was always hidden from outsiders. Here I refer to non-memebrs.

Our forefathers did not record things in books as they were illiterate to modern writing but they recorded a lot in different recording systems which they could read. The forms of recording were on their beautiful carvings, paintings, drums, pots and magic dances, songs, stories, plants, rocks, mountains and rivers. I am not here to explain how, when and why the recordings were made because I, unfortunately, do not know.

What I know is the methods lived and were passed on from generation to generation. Naturally

Continued on Page (18)

Kirsty Powell



KIRSTY POWELL of University of Papua New Guinea spoke on the perspectives of Papua New Guinea writing. Her views may be accounted for in years to come.

SOME PERSPECTIVES ON PAPUA NEW GUINEA WRITING —

By Kirsty Powell

Christopher Okigbo, the African writer, refused on principle to accept the poetry prize at the 1966 Festival of Negro Arts, because he said there was no such thing as Negro art. Shortly before his death in the Nigerian Civil War, he said: "There is no such thing as African writing. There is good writing and bad writing — that's all." Is there such a thing as Papua New Guinean writing? In a time of nascent nationalism, some people are offended by such a question. It seems to me a fair question, and I think the answer to it is "Yes, there is such a thing as Papua New Guinean writing" — but I find the task of defining and describing Papua New Guinean writing as difficult as I would find defining and describing myself. It's not that I doubt my existence but I do not find it easy to define my own identity. To begin with, my existence, and I think, my identity, spans a certain period of time, and to understand myself it is necessary to take a historical view. The same is true of Papua New Guinean writing. Its time span is tiny compared with those literatures that go back hundreds of years — like Chinese, or Greek, or Hebrew, or English. We can set the beginning of Papua New Guinea writing (in the sense of written literature) somewhere in the 1960's, although we can put the advent of writing to this country a century back. Elton Brash, in an address to teachers of English in 1973, set the beginning in 1968 — perhaps because that was when the first publications appeared. He showed how, compressed into the short space of less than ten years, we have seen:

1. Anti-colonial writing like *Reluctant Flame*, *The Ungrateful Daughter*, and *The Bush Kanaka Speaks*.

2. Writing based on oral tradition: either direct translations like *Warbat* by Apisai Enos, or recreations like *The Sun* by Arthur Jawodimbari, and *D'ath of Muruk* by Bernard Narakobi, or *Sui Sui Mwanedi* by John Kaniku.

3. Works of self-appraisal: autobiographical like *Kiki* or Paulias Matane's *Growing Up in New Guinea*, or fictional, like Russell Soaba's *The Odd Man out* or *Scattered By the Wind*. In 1973, Elton Brash was of the opinion that Papua New Guinean writing was still essentially in its anti-colonial phase, despite its concurrent concern with other issues. We have not yet done with anti-colonial themes, as a play such as Jonbile Tokome's *O i Kam na Paulim Yumi*, and some poems by Siuras Kavani, like "The Boss" and

Continued on Page (19)

Godfrey Naboam



GODFREY NABOAM of the University of Papua New Guinea spoke on the need for co-ordination between cultural and art institutions. A Writers Guild might be just the thing.

THE AIMS OF THE NEWLY FORMED MELANESIAN WRITERS ASSOCIATION —

By Godfrey Naboam

I wish to give a brief background on the formation of the Association. The Association is at present functioning under a temporary executive made up of the president, Peter Kama Kerpi, a poet, the secretary Harvey Kail, a senior tutor in literature, U.P.N.G., assisted by Benjamin Umba and myself. The Association had its first meeting about three months ago and that was when the temporary executive was formed. Those who attended the meeting consisted mostly of University students. Also we had members of the public who were interested in writing and what goes on behind the writing and literature of Papua New Guinea as a whole. Also in attendance were some of Papua New Guinea's own writers like John Kaniku, Benjamin Umba and of course the temporary president, Peter Kama Kerpi.

At the meeting it was evident that there was a need for such an Association to help those who still need some encouragement to develop their abilities.

THE AIMS OF THE ASSOCIATION ARE AS FOLLOWS:—

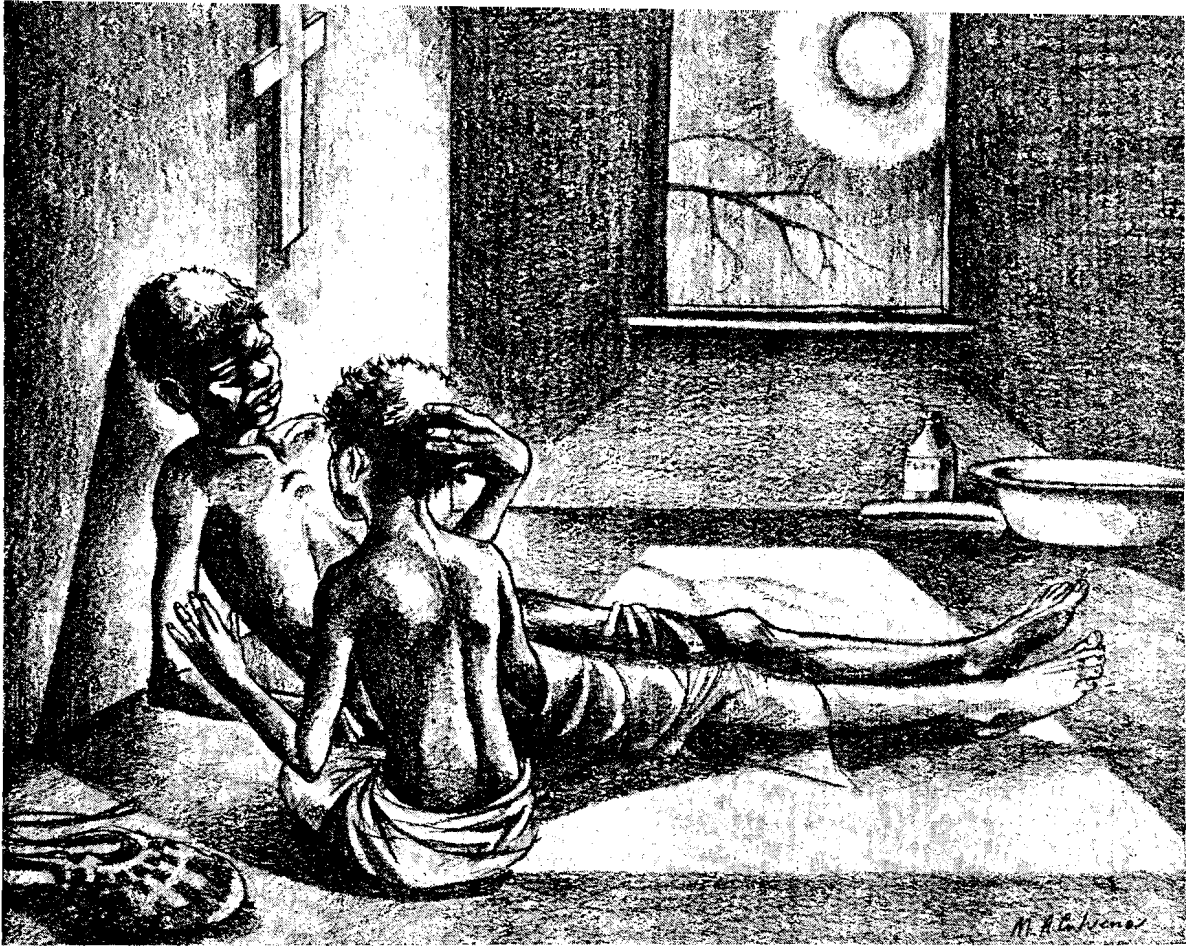
APPROPRIATE ENVIRONMENT First and foremost, the Association wishes to establish an appropriate environment in which writers can work. A writer cannot be shut out from society and be expected to produce good results. He needs to communicate, not only to his reader, but also to other writers. Here, the writers can discuss mutual problems that concern his writing or any form of literature. The Association hopes to offer that assistance by making members available for discussion at the various meetings.

CRITICISM There is a great need for writers in Papua New Guinea to criticise themselves. So far we have been getting quite a lot of criticism from overseas people, expatriates and such. Sometimes this criticism does not carry weight because they often see our literature from their outside point of view, rather than from the inside. We hope the Association will give criticisms which are both more valid to the situation and from the culture which the writer comes from.

SCREENING COMMITTEE There is also a need for providing possible sources of publication for material that is accepted by the screening committee, that is, the committee established within the Association to have a look at the work which has been produced and say what is suitable for publication and what is not.

COPYRIGHT And also there is a need for the writers to have their rights protected. The Association is offering protection.

Continued on Page (21)



He stopped for a while and stared at his mother who had closed her eyes. His heart was still beating, but in slow rhythm.

God Bless You

By Jeoffery Owamu

Alawari was an old woman who was suffering from T.B. so instead of living in the village she went with her adopted son, Amave, to live at Bagema Hospital, ten miles up the Kikori River.

Amave found life at the hospital boring. There were many children there who had made friends with him, but most of them only visited him in the ward once a day either in the afternoons or at weekends. This was because they were all attending a school which was half a mile away from the hospital. So he spent most of his time either helping his mother looking for old rags and bits of waste that would be useful to them or playing with his cat, Naime.

The year had barely begun when notices appeared all over Kikori Station asking parents to bring along their children to start school. One Sunday Amave saw

one of these notices in front of the ward. He stood there for half an hour admiring the writing. He was just about to pick it up to take it for his mother to roll her smoke with when suddenly a hand dropped on his head. It was Dr Solo who had been watching him from his office a hundred feet away. He came over to see what he was admiring.

Amave told him in Motu¹ that he was looking at the writing on the paper. Dr Solo explained to him what the writing meant and told him to go to school on Monday. He replied sharply to the doctor that he had no father to pay for his school fees. Besides he didn't have any good clothes to wear. After saying this Amave burst into tears and ran into the ward for his laplap².

His old mother asked him what happened but he only answered with tears. Half an hour

later Dr Solo came through the door holding a pair of new shorts and shirt in one hand and a letter in the other, while his little son of about eight followed closely behind with a packet of sweet biscuits and a bottle of orange drink for Amave.

Amave put on the shirt and shorts and turned to face his mother but she turned her face to the window sobbing. It was the first time she had seen her son in a pair of shorts and shirt. Dr Solo gave Amave the letter and told him to go up and see the Headmaster of the school in the morning.

He woke up early the next day and was the first to arrive at the school. He handed the letter to the Headmaster and an hour later found himself sitting in a class-

1. A language spoken on the Southern Coastal area of P.N.G.

2. A piece of cloth

room between Ume and Manu, his friends who used to visit him at the hospital. He went to school every day until the end of the first term. Of course he did not pay any school fees.

At the beginning of the second term there was a Parents and Citizens meeting which sat to decide what to do with children who had not paid their school fees. There were 25 children who still had not done so. Out of all of them only one was allowed to continue school. It was Amave. The Parents and Citizens Association had decided it would pay for his fees because he had no father and his mother was old and could not work to earn money.

Amave lived at the school from that day onwards as a boarder and his old mother visited him at the school every afternoon and at the weekends. She was glad Amave went to that school because the Administration supplied free food; mainly rice and fish, plus four yards of cloth each year. But the laplaps only lasted for a term because they were thin and wore out easily.

Amave continued schooling while his mother spent most of her days begging people for old rags, but only a handful of people gave her their old skirts, dresses or laplaps. They were mainly the wives of the Medical Orderlies who were themselves not well off. Out of those old rags she cut small laplaps for her son.

When Amave went to school in the old rags his school mates made fun of him. At times, overwhelmed by scorn, he ran home crying to his mother. But there was something in him that encouraged him to continue his schooling, and he was present the following days.

He completed Prep. Class that year. During the second term of Standard One in the following year he was transferred to Standard Two because he was a bright student. His old mother was very happy when she heard that, but she had no idea what 'standards' meant. She imagined there was a six-storey building and her son was climbing from the bottom floor upwards.

Years later Amave came to an important step in his education. He had reached the sixth and final year and was to sit for the examinations that would decide whether or not he would go on to a secondary school. One night in the classroom a boy whispered in his ear (for everyone was busy studying) to go down to the hospital immediately and hear what his mother had to say. He was cross. It wasn't important to go

down to hear what his mother had to say, or to see her just crying. But because his love for his mother was so great, he left quickly without telling the teacher who was supervising the night class.

He raced down to the hospital, into the ward and to his surprise saw his mother lying with her hands and feet stretched out while his cat, Naime, sat on the head of the bed. He walked slowly towards her and sat beside her. He looked around the ward. There were no Nurses or Medical Orderlies around. He turned around and saw only two patients looking at him.

He asked them where the other patients were. To his surprise one man shouted at him to get away from her. He asked them why but when they did not answer he told them he had the right to sit near his mother who, after all, was the only one who cared for him. The man who shouted at him somehow gathered enough courage to tell him that if he stayed close to her the evil spirit from her would get into him.

All the patients came from the mountain area and they believed that when a person was dying they should be left alone until dead, for they feared that evil spirits often passed from one person to another. That was why all the patients had left the ward.

He sat for five minutes without moving or talking. Then he turned around and asked his mother, "Mai (mother), why did you ask me to come down when I should be studying?"

"Pull me up so that I can lean against the wall and talk," his mother said. After making her comfortable against the wall she opened her mouth and spoke.

"Oromani, Gaemunumi, Everegau, Gensy." These were his secret names only his mother used. "The time has come for me to say my last words to you. Son, my words are my only wealth in this world; come closer and listen carefully. Since we came to this hospital not even one person from our clan has come to give us pig meat, fish or sago.

We have been alone for many years as if we had no relatives. I have always wondered who will take care of you when I leave you. I have not even a cent with me that I can leave with you. Under my bed are some of those old rags I've made into laplaps. You can take them with you when you go back to your dormitory. I wish I had the money to pay for your high school fees next year." She closed her eyes and remained still for a long time.

It was half past ten when she opened her eyes again. Amave sat like a piece of wood looking at her.

It was dark in that corner of the ward because the lights were not working well. He was just about to cry when his mother stirred and looked at him.

"Don't cry," she spoke quietly. "It is good that you haven't started, because I want to tell you that I will be alive until you go inside the classroom tomorrow morning so will you promise not to cry for me?"

"I can't promise you that, Mother," was Amave's reply. He was on the verge of letting out a trickle of tears from his eyes when his mother held his hands and told him again not to cry. Then she continued, "All right son, I have told you everything. When you go back to school walk around your dormitory twice before going to bed. That will clear me out of your mind and you'll have a good sleep."

A moment of silence followed. The old woman was watching the ceiling. She then said, "I'm sorry I have nothing to leave behind for you. Well, it seems I have nothing more to say, so . . . God bless you . . ."

With tears running down his face, Amave said, "God bless you? Mother, I haven't heard you say any English words before! How did you know those words? Oh Mother, why do you say 'God bless you'? I've never seen you go to Sunday services, Mother. Can you please tell me the name of the person who taught you those three words, or whom you heard them from? Why must God bless me? We've never known Jesus Christ! Oh Mother, please just let me hear again the three words."

He stopped for a while and stared at his mother who had closed her eyes. Her heart was still beating, but in slow rhythms. It was quite dark in the ward but the moon displayed all its glory outside. He was still staring at his mother when he heard footsteps behind him. He did not look around, but waited for his mother to speak. The footsteps came closer and he realised that it was a Medical Orderly on duty. The orderly switched on his two-celled battery torch, which was not bright, and looked at the dying woman. He turned and left without speaking.

When the clock in the ward struck twelve midnight she opened her eyes and to her surprise Amave was still sitting besides her. She opened her mouth and uttered four words: "God bless you, Solo." Amave now knew where those words came from. When Dr Solo was leaving Kikori, he shook hands with the old woman and said, "God bless you."

NEWS ABOUT THE COMPETITIONS

ANNOUNCING THE WINNERS OF THIS YEAR'S

THREE LITERARY COMPETITIONS

POETRY

Section One of the Poetry Competition this year was for poems in English by Tertiary students. The Annual Peter Bectt \$50 first prize went to Siwid Gipey of the University of Papua New Guinea for his poem 'Embittered X'.

In the second place was Gapi Iamo also of P.N.G. University who took the \$20 Literature Bureau prize for his poem "Experience".

The \$10 third prize donated by the Literature Bureau went to Horiawi Himugu also of the University for his poem "Background of Juvenile Crime".

In the High School Section, \$25 first prize donated by the Literature Bureau went to Edward Banige of Arawa Technical College for his poem "Thoughts of a Dying Culture".

The second prize of \$15 donated by the Literature Bureau went to Arua Riu of Kerevat Senior High School for his poem "Pay Day".

In the third place was Sumeo Kakarore who received \$10 donated by the Literature Bureau for his poem "Unfortunate Me".

In Section Three for poems by Primary students the first prize of \$25 donated by the Literature Bureau went to Marlls Balim of Bumsol Primary School, Karkar Island, for his poem "Strange Creation".

Second was Moni Yarti also of Bumsol Primary School who took the \$15 second prize donated by the Literature Bureau for his untitled poem.

In the third place was Marlls Balim again of Bumsol Primary for his poem "Joy and Sorrow".

He took the \$10 third prize donated by the Literature Bureau.

Section Four was for poems in Pidgin. The first prize of \$50 donated for the third successive year by Donald Maynard went to Joe Paiya of Saint Benedict's Teachers' College, Kaindi, Wewak for his poem "Lewa Agnes".

Second was Manmato Uvako of the Administrative College, Port Moresby, for his poem "Driman Tasol". He took \$15 donated by the Bureau.

In the third place was Ritsl Johi of Hutjena High School who took the \$10 third prize donated by the Literature Bureau for his poem "Bifo Waitman".

★ ★ ★

Siwid Gipey (right) winner of poetry, short story and play prizes in the 1974 literary competitions, receives his cheque and congratulation from the Acting Director of the Office of Information, PHILIP BOURAGA.

★ ★ ★



SHORT STORY

There were four sections in this competition. In the first section for stories by Tertiary Students the \$50 first prize went to Siwid Gipey of P.N.G. University for his story "Should we Laugh or Should we Cry".

In the second and the section for stories by High School students the \$50 best story prize went to Magdalene Wagun of Yarapos Girls' High School, Wewak for her story "An Educated Girl Faces a Problem". The prize money was donated by Jim and Betty Legge of Port Moresby.

In Section Three for stories written in Pidgin, the \$50 best story prize which for the third successive year has been donated by the Summer Institute of Linguistics. The prize went to Siwid Gipey of University.

This year a new Section for Primary students in the Short Story Section was created with three prizes all donated by the Literature Bureau.

The first prize of \$15 went to Moses Pobon of Tikorave Primary School, Kainantu, for his story "The Enemy Ogre".

The second Prize of \$10 went to Mana Somi for his story "When Mt Vulcan Blew Up".

The \$5 third prize went to Makai Kivalu of Kaporli Viviola Primary School, Cape Rodney, for his story "Rapuagutu and his Wife".



Bernard Narakobi, winner of the Mike Zahara two-act play prize for his play, "Strangers are my people". Bernard won the same prize last year.



Manmato Uvaka (right) winner of second prize in Pidgin Poetry Section, receiving his cheque from Philip Bouraga.

PLAYS

There were two sections in the Play Competitions with three prizes in each and two special prizes of \$50 donated by the Centre for Creative Arts and the Port Moresby Arts Council. The Arts Council prize was for the best producible play and the Arts Centre prize was for the best Pidgin play.

In Section One for plays of One Act the \$50 first prize went to Horiawi Himugu of University for his play "The Rugged Life Lovers". The prize was donated by Michael Zahara of Port Moresby.

The \$20 second prize donated by the Literature Bureau went to Mesia Novau of Goroka High School for his play "Gorugoru".

The \$10 third prize in this section went to Anaka Tipuwa of Awaba High School, Western District, for his play "The Widow and her Son Hakas".

In Section Two for plays of two or more Acts the \$50 first prize also donated by Michael Zahara of Port Moresby went to Bernard Narakobi of Public Solicitor's Office, Port Moresby, for his play "Strangers are my People".

The \$20 second prize donated by the Literature Bureau went to Siwid Gipey of P.N.G. University for his play "Father Here Comes my Education".

The \$10 third prize donated by the Literature Bureau went to Ais Pale Andite also of University for his play "The Guests".

SPECIAL PRIZES

The \$50 best Pidgin play prize donated by the Centre for Creative Arts went to Esleie Girimotu of Madang for her play "Sipak Man".

The other special prize offered by the Port Moresby Arts Council has not been decided yet due to late completion of the competition. The prize will be awarded at a later time.

LATE PRIZES

A \$50 best Pidgin poetry prize was donated by Robert McDonald of the Administrative College. At the time of the presentation of prizes it was agreed that the prize be shared in the proportion \$25 — \$15 — \$10 by the first, second and third prize winners in the Pidgin Poetry Section.

PASIN BILONG MARITIM TUPELA MERI

TOLD IN ENGLISH "BIGAMY"

Page (10)

Long, long ago, in the Highlands of New Guinea men were known to marry only one woman. At this time a certain woman bore twins and named them Hamo (one) and Seta (two).

These names were given by the woman and was symbolic of the order of delivery at birth.

As Hamo and Seta grew up they fought constantly because Hamo received one share of food while Seta received two, from their mother. This rule set down by the mother angered Hamo all the more.

Hamo had long been unhappy about this but remained calm until he had reached the age to court girls.

One afternoon, after Hamo and Seta had had a fight, Hamo decided to leave their home and the family and go for a walk on the road. During his walk it began to rain. Hamo became worried and began to look around.

In a little while he saw a little house near the road and walked to it. Hamo stood at the door and looked at the interior of the house. Finding nobody inside, Hamo entered the room.

When he had entered he sat near the hearth and built a huge fire. Hamo, thinking there was nobody living in this house, finished all the firewood in an

attempt to warm himself. Hamo finished warming himself and decided to lie down for a while before going home. Although he tried to close his eyes for a short rest, he finally fell into a deep sleep.

Not long afterwards the woman of the house returned with her two daughters. They were all surprised at seeing Hamo lying on the ground asleep. The two girls felt frightened thinking Hamo was an evil spirit. But one of the girls held his hand and turned him around. Feeling the cold touch of the girl's hand Hamo stirred and sat up in surprise only to find it was already daylight. The two girls immediately fell in love with Hamo. One of the girls told the other girl in time, "This boy is my husband. For so long I have not set eyes on a decent boy in our area until now when I feel old. So this boy is truly my husband."

The other girl protested, "No! He's not for you! He's mine! I was the one who woke him up. You thought he was an evil spirit, and you were frightened so just stood in the corner."

The two argued for a long time and Hamo who was listening all that time soon became tired so he got up and addressed them. "I am sorry for you two. I did not come to marry both of you, rather I was just out hunting but it began to rain in the afternoon so I came to your house for shelter."

The two girls remained silent while Hamo thought back to his family at home and how his mother used to give two bits of food to Seta and only one to him. To even things up he thought he could marry these two young girls so he stood up and said, "If only one marries me I'm afraid you two won't live at ease. It would be better if I married you two at once."

Hamo gave the two girls time to think it over and finally both came to an agreement. "That is alright. The two of us will marry you, because each of us has been looking for suitable boys but could not find one as good as you. We'll marry you only."

When Hamo heard this, he quickly kissed the two girls. It was the happiest moment in their lives to marry at last.

Some years later Hamo returned home. When the people saw Hamo with two wives they tried to do the same by marrying two, three, four or more women, and this practice of polygamy was thus passed down the generations in the Highlands.

BOURAGA—from Page (12)

In the past the people have regarded the Bureau as a vehicle through which the Government could get its aims and information across so that the public could be aware of the policies relating to the development of the nation. Today this is still relevant, although further attention is given to the creative aspect of the Bureau's activities. With our editors, who are local, we hope to let the public know of the Government's concern for them through its national magazine, 'Papua New Guinea Writing'.

It is my belief that, although the Literature Bureau exists as an integral part of the Office of Information it shall devote its resources, manpower and finance in supporting and encouraging all forms of creative writing. Presently it has the support of the Government and the co-operation of all sections of my Department. It has one of the most important roles to play in this rapidly advancing nation of ours.

While at the present moment the Bureau is seemingly encouraging creative writing, it will in the long run begin to encourage all forms of writing. One of the most important functions of a Literature Bureau in a developing nation should be to act as a clearing house for all literature that comes and goes out of the country.

It is my earnest hope that the Literature Bureau will continue to encourage writing in collaboration with the Universities, Centre for Creative Arts, the S.I.L. and with all other interested individuals. Writing has become part of our lives here and it is here to stay.

NABOAM—from Page (13)

MARKET The Association wishes to ensure that the work produced by the writer is available to the market in Papua New Guinea.

CO-ORDINATION There are various sources of support for literature in the country, like the Literature Bureau here in Port Moresby, and the Creative Arts Centre, but it seems there is very little communication between them. The Writer's Association aims to serve as a co-ordinator between these various agencies, especially when it comes to running various workshops.

FILLER There is also a long gap between each Writer's Day, like today and last year's and that gap needs to be filled by arranging meeting and activities in between.

A SOURCE FOR ENCOURAGEMENT Today we shall witness the presentation of the prizes to the Literature Competition winners. But surely, the judges could not have decided who were the winners and who were not without thinking very seriously about the writings they had received for the competition out of so many. And those who won, get a prize today and those who didn't, the Association would like to encourage them to continue writing and not just give up.

FAIR PROMOTION Papua New Guinea publications like 'Kovave' and 'Papua New Guinea Writing' seem to be stale in the sense that we are getting the same authors published. It is a fact that if we pick up one of these books and look at the authors, we will find the same authors in any of the others.

PRESSURE GROUP The Association also wants to act as a pressure group to make sure the literature of Papua New Guinea can be introduced into the Papua New Guinea schools curriculum and that will be of value to the students because they will be learning Papua New Guinean literature rather than literature from overseas.

MATANE—continued from Page (12)

there were variations but generally the messages were nearly all the same.

As I was brought up in a village where there were no foreign or formal schools I learnt a great deal through the usual media which I mentioned earlier eg. songs, dances, stories etc. about how our forefathers lived. I practised some of the things they did and eventually became very appreciative of our peoples' skills, beliefs, values and wisdom.

It was not until I was seventeen when I was forced by my elder brother to go to a primary school to become a frightened standard one pupil. That going to school to me was most unfortunate, because education has made me a foreigner to my own tradition, culture and beliefs. I would not be surprised that if I became an anthropologist and tried to study the way our old people lived I would be told half the truth.

Well then, where do I stand? Am I a proud village man, or a foreigner in my own village custom and beliefs. I am not sure, but I think I fit the latter, that is, a foreigner in my own village customs and traditions. I wish that my proud forefathers would come back to me now, take me into one of them so that I would be like them — colorful, articulate, skillful, proud, confident and brilliant men, but I have lost all these values because I went to school. That is my firm belief. Perhaps the educated young ones would think otherwise and I am almost certain that some expatriates will not agree with me here.

Thousands of books have been written about Papua New Guinea by outside writers. These cover a wide variety of topics on religion, history, anthropology, education, economics and travel. Some topics for example, religion, probably fit with our local spiritual belief but can be confusing. Others, like history, are factual. Some, for example anthropology, are very boring to general readers. Others are works of researchers in education and economics which are useful only to academics and writers.

Writings on travel in our country indicate to the outside world that we are still very primitive headhunters, and that we are not yet capable enough to look after ourselves. Further we to the travel and novel writers are interesting objects to be continually studied and researched and played around with.

What is our image in the outside world? To be factual many people do not know whether there is a country in the world called Papua New Guinea. For some its such a name like Timbuktu or Green River. For some it's somewhere in the Pacific Ocean, or for some we are a group of warring tribes and again primitive and headhunters living always in fear.

This may interest you and indicate to you what some outsiders think such as this American Home Science lecturer at the University of Khartoum, Sudan, knew about us.

While I was in Uganda in 1969, I went to a hostel dining room to have my breakfast. When I looked around I found all the seats were occupied except one. I crossed the room and found seated an elderly but still attractive American lady lecturer. After the usual greetings I said "Could I join you please?"

"Sure, sure", was the reply. Then she continued "Which part of Africa do you come from?"

"I'm not from Africa but from an island miles to the East of Africa. The name of the island is New Guinea."

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "New Guinea, the place where people still go naked."

I interrupted, "And there are Americans who go naked — like the Nude Beaches".

"Oh! Not that kind of nudity."

"But there is only one kind of nudity and that's when one does not have clothes on."

"That's right, that's right, and I understand they're still very primitive?"

"Hold on madam. Some Americans are still very primitive too," I commented.

"And that you're still cannibals?"

"That's right and I'm going to order a piece of you for my breakfast."

As quick as a flash with a red face, whether from fear or anger, I could not tell, she stood and raced out as fast as her legs could carry her. But she forget something — her bag and room keys. She soon found out but could not go back.

I picked up the bag and walked towards her. When she saw me she did not know what to do; whether to run or hit me so I called out, "Here's your bag and keys. Let's go back to the dining room and I won't have a piece of meat from you."

As we were walking back to the dining room I asked her, "Tell me, how did you get the idea that New Guineans are cannibals and very primitive?"

"Oh, from a book written by a Swedish author".

"Well I suggest you forget about him and his book. He is an outsider and has to write a sensational book in order to sell it and make money. He is not in my country to promote good things about it."

You and I know that although we have differences we are a developing people in a country full of beauty and splendour with twisted crocodile and mosquito infested rivers and swamps, sharp and proud erect mountains, attractive deep and wide valleys and sharp cliffs. Its resources are rich and far, its people are varied and equally rich in our beautiful culture and tradition. We are very colourful, friendly and warm.

You have undoubtedly seen the wide and varied performances by some of our people during the last few weeks of Papua New Guinea's Arts Festival.

Aren't Papua New Guineans glad and proud to be termed "Papua New Guinean". I know we are.

How do outsiders know things about Papua New Guinea? Obviously by bad publicity; by people who write to make money. They are not the people to promote the good image of our country. To write about the good things in Papua New Guinea would mean there would be no market for writers' books and lets face it — "WRITING IS MONEY MAKING", its a big business. Titles, Covers, Photos in Books which attract and indoctrinate people. They've got to be like that to attract customers, you and me. Good writers will always dominate the writing business whether for good or bad; we as customers will always be their victim.

Now ladies and gentlemen, let me turn to the promising Papua New Guinea writers. These are a special group, full of wealthy imagination, ideas and views. They are capable with their pen and paper. They are real artists coming to the use of writing as an effective tool but Papua New Guinean writers must remember that they use that tool for Papua New Guinea's development in all fields, be they political, social, economical, cultural or educational. They must be people who love this country, its people and traditions. They must be genuine in all their writing efforts and their writing should first be geared to the reader and the outsider. They must write as Papua New Guineans and their writing must be interesting. Their books should be simple for our people to understand, small and cheap for our people to afford to buy. I think that apart from many other things one of the aims of Papua New Guinean writers should be; to correct the already outside poor image of our beautiful country and its people created by very effective outside money-hungry writers.

I would like to leave this thought for our promising writers to pursue. I know very well that they are capable of doing it. ●

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR MUST BE GENUINE. WE ARE INTERESTED TO KNOW WHAT READERS THINK ABOUT THE CONTENT OF THE MAGAZINE IN ITS PRESENT FORM. PLEASE WRITE TO THE EDITOR.

Dear Editor,

I am very much impressed by the Poetry and Short Stories in the magazines "Papua New Guinea Writing."

I would like you to enrol me on your mailing list. I came to know of the magazine from a friend in Lae.

Enclosed is \$1.00 as subscription as mentioned in the magazine.

Miss Alice E. Robinson
RABAUL
East New Britain District.

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your reminder. However I have decided to cancel my subscription this year.

I have enjoyed very much reading your magazine and think it is good value for the money.

One thing I question is that the art of story telling must be inbred in the people, but when written down it becomes too English in form. Is this because English is difficult for their expression? Can the stories be taped or told in their own language and maybe translated?

With my best wishes.

Miss Lorna White
Box Hill
VICTORIA.

Dear Sir,

I wish to make a bulk order for twenty copies of "Papua New Guinea Writing" for all ensuing issues.

Please forward these copies to Boisen High School and charge all costs to the school.

T. J. QUINLAN
Head of English Department
Boisen High School
RABAUL.

Dear Sir,

We are currently trying to build up the New Guinea Section of our College Library and would be pleased if you would put us on your mailing list.

We are particularly interested in "Papua New Guinea Writing".

Thank you.

SANDRA SLATER
MADANG TECHNICAL COLLEGE
Madang District.

Dear Sir,

The Teaching Methods and Materials Centre is interested to acquire all new publications by Papua New Guinea writers. If you have a mailing list of this kind we would be pleased if you could add our name

Mrs. S. K. Randell
UNIVERSITY OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA.

Dear Sir,

Although a foreigner I do not quite agree with Mr. Pidik's opinion in the letter you published in "Papua New Guinea Writing" No. 13 of March last year. I think the whole of "Papua New Guinea Writing" should be written in English or in Pidgin.

For what happens when people can't read Pidgin? Like myself.

I think the stories in "Papua New Guinea Writing" are very interesting for I learn more about P.N.G.

I have been to Papua New Guinea once to see my sister in Port Moresby who was a teacher at Badihagwa High School and my father who was Chief Security Officer at Panguna in Bougainville. I enjoy reading "Papua New Guinea Writing" very much and wish you all the best for future issues.

JOYCE BRITTAIN
ADELAIDE
South Australia.

Dear Sir,

As a regular reader of "Papua New Guinea Writing", I find it very interesting, especially Poet's Corner and short stories written in Pidgin. I especially like reading Pidgin stories by Rex Okona. I hope he becomes a regular writer and am looking forward to more stories from him. Keep it up.

P. W. JOE
St. Benedict's Teachers' College,
WEWAK.

Dear Editor,

Would it be possible for me to receive the back issues of "Papua New Guinea Writing" for 1974. I would be very grateful if this could be arranged.

I have just arrived in Papua New Guinea and I am anxious to learn as much about your culture as is possible.

ANGELA KNOX
Wesley H.gh School
MILNE BAY DISTRICT.

Editors' note: Limited quantities of back issues are available. Please direct your enquiries to the Editor, P.O. Box 2312, KONE-DOBU, and enclose postal note or cheque of 20 cents for each you require.

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—EDITOR

POWELL—continued from Page (13)

"Discrimination", and Russell Soaba's description of the Sinabada in *The Victims* show. But if one reads the most recent PPP's, the latest *Kovave*, and the latest *PNG Writing* the preoccupation with anti-colonialism has gone. What we note is a concern with social themes, a reassertion of traditional values, and preoccupation with the question of national and personal identity.

"If Niugini is anything (says Dus Mapun) it is rich soil. Stick a stick into it and it sprouts into a tree . . . Niugini is that land flowing with milk and honey . . ."

But (and this "but" seems to me of the essence of PNG writing) modernised and individualised
Is Paradise Lost.

("The Biblical Land", in *Wicked Eye*, PPP, 1973)

The view of Papua New Guinea as "paradise lost" is explored elsewhere in PNG writing. It is implied in Paul Kup-Ogut's poem "Nupela Rot" (*Kovave*, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 26).

Boom! Ai ein wanem?
Samting i palrap,
Sikin tu i guria ya
Masin i karai.
Na maunten bilong tumbuna i pundaun,
Gayman i wokim rot ol i tok.
Lukim! Gaden i bagarap.
Bus bilong kilim magari i baparap tu
Na bun bilong tumbuna i wait olsem karanas.

John Kasaipwalova has written of Hanuabada as a paradise lost. In his imagination and in the glamorised stories of all those Trobriand Islanders who returned home after a stint of digging drains in Moresby in the 50's it had been "Hanuabada, my big and beautiful dream village", but when he sees the real Hanuabada, he can only cry: . . . "O Hanuabada! What have they done to you?"

Bada hanua answer me ! !
Who can name the sad song that runs through your heart
and mine
The song of killed yesterday
When Lakatois owned this you harbour
And the voice of Hiri conch shell danced in your vivid
sunsets
To make your people walk in dignified pride and to laugh
from their hearts.
Hanuabada I mourn with you now . . . your waters is
taken
You and I must crawl and beg in our own "claimed" land.

The romantic image of Papua New Guinea as "paradise lost" is but one of hundreds of possible images. It is an image born of a tension of opposites: in this case, the tension between the good past and the spoiled present. I think that a description of Papua New Guinea writing involves us constantly in a study of opposites in tension. To take a historical view is like making a longitudinal section. If we take a transverse section, then we can see the tensions that generate change, and growth, and flux. It is like my taking an inward look at my own self and becoming aware of the conflicts and tensions that explain my history.

If we look at our transverse section of PNG writing, there is for instance, the tension between traditional and modern, old and new. Sometimes this tension is the theme of a particular work, like Peter Kama Kerpi's play, *Voices from the Ridge* where the tension is personalised in the conflict between Boma and the Reverend Father.

BOMA:

I am a black man. Why shouldn't I respect the ways of my fathers? It is my pride to admire their ways.

REVEREND FATHER:

You mean those evil ways you denounced?

BOMA:

Yea, because you told me they were evil. Now I see no evil in them. You were in some way destroying it. It's my dream to revive it. I realise it's something I can identify myself with as a black man.

REVEREND FATHER:

The devil has possessed you. Lucifer's convert. (Sits down and then suddenly gets up.) You are a wolf among sheep. Dirty! Filthy! A devil's convert.

BOMA:

Aaaaaa . . . you! You are a boil in my black bottom!
Can't you leave me alone? I ask you to let me have my freedom . . . it's something God gave me, it's precious. Let me have my liberty. (Hits the table between them.) Liberty . . . man is born with it . . . it's a natural gift. Why do you defy it? What are the benefits of the civilisation that you claim to bring? (He shouts at the top of his voice, walking up and down the room.) Let the valley and its rivers, the hills and its creeks, the silent mountains and its ridges, let the birds, the rats: let the fish in the rivers and let my dead kins know I, Boma, love my people's ways. (The houseboy runs in just in time to support the Reverend Father from collapsing to the floor.)

Sometimes the tension is implicit. The mere act of translation introduces an element of tension; changing, for instance, this Imbougu song on the death of a husband, into a Papua New Guinea one.

Favoured and skillful hunter what shall I do?
I am tearing my new string bag in which
I intended to carry potatoes for you the first time
I am in pain and grief as I take off my bridal decorations.
My brother, my brother, to show you that I love you even
in death
I am pulling out my hair.

("Lament for Dead Husband", trans. Wiwa Moki Korowo,
Kovave, Vol. 4 Nov. 1972, p. 28)

A multi-lingual society generates its own tensions, and these are sometimes creative. Notice how Russell Soaba capitalises on the linguistic confusion of PNG in this speech by a drunken Sepik party-goer who speaks English mixed with Pidgin, and whose English shows the phonetic character of his own *piestok*. He uses 'r' for 'l' ('reg' for 'leg') and 'f' for 'p' ('fush' for 'push'):

Yu tink yu can full for my reg? Aha! Oho! ho! ho!
I don't care, you crever man! I don't care how mas hejuksin
yu got! If yu full for my reg, I fush it for your reg too!
If yu right for the me man! Yu pikinini tasol! I full yu
down like a schuld! Ei! Yu no save mi? Mi bilong Sepik?
(Waiting for Dawn, Sc. III, p. 8)

There are many other tensions that underlie PNG writing. There is the tension between Western and Melanesan that we see in Kumalau Tawali's poem, "The River Flows Back", with its mixture of Manus and Biblical references.

In my mother's womb
peace was mine
but I said "mapping"
I greeted the light
and came into the world.
saluting it with a cry.
I paddled downstream
drifting at ease
like Adam
before the fall.

Continued Page (23)

ABOUT THE WRITERS



Herman Taolam

HERMAN TAOLAM comes from Medebur village in the Madang District. He attended Malala Primary School from 1961 to 1966. In 1967 he began attending Tusbab High School gaining his School Certificate in 1971. Herman went on to do Local Government Training at Vunadidir near Rabaul. Herman quit local government studies in 1973 and in 1974 he did first year of Teacher Training at the Port Moresby Teachers' College.

Jeoffery Owamu

JEOFFERY OWOMU comes from Goro Village in the Kikori sub-district of the Gulf District. He attended Veiru United Church Primary School and later Kikori Area School where he completed his Standard Six in 1969. The following year Jeoffery attended Kerema High School where in 1973 he completed his form four. He is a first year student at the Madang Teachers' College.



Kone Tom

KONE TOM comes from Kapakapa village in the Rigo sub-district. He attended Kapakapa Primary School and later Kwikila High School. In 1970 he enrolled at the University of Papua New Guinea and completed three years towards an Arts Degree. Kone left the University in 1973.

Siwid Gihey

SIWID GIHEY comes from Sappa Village near Morobe Patrol Post, 80 miles south-west of Lae. He attended Morobe Primary School and entered Bugandi High School in 1969. He has just completed his First Year at the University of Papua New Guinea.

Kove Gaho

KOVE GAHO comes from Kase-na village in the Asaro Area of the Eastern Highlands District. Kone graduated at Form 3 level from Goroka High School in 1971. Kone is now employed by the Education Department and is presently based at Goroka, Eastern Highlands District.



Thomas Palat

THOMAS PALAT aged twenty comes from Kontu village in the New Ireland District. He attended Utu High School from 1967 to 1971 and completed his form four. In 1972 he enrolled at the University of Technology where this year he is doing his third year accountancy and business studies.

Magdalene Wagon

MAGDALENE WAGON comes from Kwakwie village in the Yangoru area of the East Sepik District. She took her six years of primary education at St. Thomas Primary School, Yangoru. Magdalene has just completed her Form Four at the Mercy College, Yarpas, a Catholic Girls' High School, near Wewak, East Sepik District.



SHOULD WE LAUGH—continued from Page (2)

"You must remember," the man went on, "that we normally don't advertise these positions, nor do we encourage men to do these jobs, let alone young children like you. It is a tough job. It is dirty. People will spit at you. Nobody will want to come close to you and you can easily catch diseases like diarrhoea, which can lead to death."

He stopped and looked at the boy. "Will you take it son?"

The question was like a trigger. Banada, recovering his attention, rushed up to the big man, and grabbed his huge hand, as if he were his old father.

"Yes, sir, I do not know exactly what to say . . . except that . . . that . . ."

The next moment he was hugging the big man and crying piteously. The girls began laughing at the strange development. It seemed so funny they laughed and laughed until they held their backs and sprawled onto the floor, with tears streaming down their cheeks.

But there was yet another thing. The man too was crying, not with tears of condescension, but of happiness. Something was drastically wrong and they stopped laughing.

"Why stop?" questioned the white man, blowing his nose. "Go on keep on laughing. Come on my beautiful young ladies — laugh — laugh! Laugh your heads off. If you had the heart you would be crying with him. You are nothing but scum, that stuff that floats on dirty water. You are just floating on the surface of life taking in things as they come. Think young ladies! I'm sure you have brothers or cousins like him attending primary schools. Pity him and look, he's only a kid; he . . ."

He stopped breathless and turned to Banada.

"We're sorry son; we're sorry for putting you where you are."

Banada wiped his tears and walked out of the office. He did not exactly know whether to laugh or cry. He knew, however, that on Monday, he would begin his job.

He did not care if people laughed or spat at him. But if they did they were ignorant. Papua New Guinea, he believed, needed his service as much as the professors in the universities; at least, until everybody was using flush toilets. ●

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POWELL—continued from Page (21)

The same tension underlies a piece like *Ruinmaker's Child* in which Leo Hannett views the traditional world of Nissan through the eyes of someone who has embraced much of western culture, and has also seen the process of westernisation destroy much of his traditional past.

Then there is the tension between *ples* and nation which I am coming to see as the central fact of PNG writing. Hoiri's experience in *The Crocodile* is illustrative of one man's movement out of his Gulf District village to Moresby, the war, New Guinea, and back — a journey in which we can see enshrined something of the history of the growth of nationalism. In John Kasapwalova's *Kanaka's Dream*, Dikodiko is unmistakably Trobriand Islander, but in his confrontation with his white master, he is representative of PNG. Enos Apisai finds a hopeful resolution of the tension between *ples* and nation in that wonderful image of the mother, who having delivered a diverse brood of children pulls them back one by one by their umbilicals, into the safety of her bilum.

Awake mother
from the coma of birth
and as your trembling hands steady
pull them back by their navel cords
into the warmth of your bilum
keep them safe under your tapa cloth

It is more positive than the image of a paradise lost. Perhaps it could find a place in the Constitution.¹

Another tension that is important in PNG literature is the tension between town and village. One work after another explores the problems, the tragedy, the humour caused by the opposition between these two poles. In Rabbie Namaliu's *The God Woman of Konedobu*, Burus, newly arrived in Moresby, sees Irea, the good time girl walking across the room in Kone Tavern. "Nanse!" he shouts across the room. She laughs at him and his companion, wise in the ways of Moresby, and women such as Irea, explains the setup to him:

"Yu lukim em i lap. Em kain bilong em olsem. Sapos em save planti man i wok long lukim em, baimbai em i sampong mo mo yet. Em i ken wokim ol kain pasin long skirapim bel tasol. Em i laik putim dres, em i laik danis, em i laik wokabaut na baimbai yu sek nogut tru olsem nau yu lukim."

(Kovave, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 44).

In John Kaniku's 'Cry of the Cassowary,' high school students engage in everlasting argument with their parents until their mother bursts out.

I don't care what happens. Let them go and live in the town and never come back. This place is no place for them. I am tired of arguing. I'd be happier if I'm left alone.

This conflict stems also from the generation gap and from the tension between the elite and the grass-roots. Ulli Beier said once, speaking of the Onitsha market novels — those lively, linguistically bizarre works in English written by ordinary Nigerians intent on making some money out of the ordinary Nigerian's appetite to read: "Grassroots literature creates an environment in which other writers can operate." There is a grassroots oral literature in this country — and this has been an important source of inspiration for writers — but there is no grassroots writing (apart from letters to Wantoks and with a national literacy

of 11% in English and 12% in Pidgin there is a very limited reading public. Writing is an elitist affair in this country, but there are some hopeful signs that bridges may be built between the grassroots and the elite. Bridges like radio; and village tours of drama groups like the National Theatre Workshop, Theatre Nemil, and the Goroka Players; and the contact which each individual writer has with his own *ples*. It is a notable fact that a number of the first generation of writers have chosen to go back to their own villages or provinces in order to engage in economic and social and political action alongside their own people: writers like John Kasaipwalova, Leo Hannett, John Waiko, Dus Mapun, Turuk Wa'bei. Will a new literature be born out of this experience? One of the costs of this experience has been that these people have stopped writing, or appear to have stopped. What of the writers like Arthur Jawodimbari, John Kaniku, Russell Soaba, who have chosen to concentrate on writing, to become professional writers? Will they be completely absorbed into the urban elite? Will they keep touch with the urban and rural grassroots?

The final tension which I wish to refer to is the tension between PNG and the world. It is a tension little explored. A writer like Russell Soaba writes with an awareness of the way in which his attitude of alienation gives him a link with Western existentialists like Sartre and Camus. Other writers like Leo Hannett and John Kasaipwalova write with a sense that the literature of the West is part of their own literary context. And many writers have found inspiration in Africa literature. A good many of the writers recently have been abroad to study or to travel, or attend conferences, but the dialogue between PNG and the world has hardly begun. There is in some quarters a nationalist desire to shut the door against the world. Perhaps that is necessary for a time. But ultimately both criticism and creativity can only benefit if this tension between PNG and the world is allowed to generate energy along with all those other tensions which maintain the vitality of PNG writing in these, its pioneering days. ●

YOU CAN HELP US . . .

Writers sending their contributions for publication in 'Papua New Guinea Writing' can help us by enclosing a short note about themselves. We like to know the name of the writer's village the names of the primary and secondary schools he has attended, and the school form or job he is in at present.

If the contribution is used this information will be used in the section called 'About the Writers'. It would also be helpful if story writers would enclose a photo of the type seen on Page 22.

The Editor.

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Next year's three annual literary competitions in short story, poetry and play will be launched on 1st May, 1975.

In 1974, over half the \$750 in prize money was financed by individuals who saw the need for the promotion of the literary arts in this country. Last year too saw the first lot of our expatriate donors leaving the country. It is anticipated that next year will see more of them go.

While the Literature Bureau, can, if felt necessary, finance all sections, it still requires voluntary participation by the PULIC in this, its important objective.

Willing donors this year must agree to pay their donations on notice and the moneys will be paid into a competitions trust fund with the Department of Finance. All donors and the donations will be announced in all news media and in 'Papua New Guinea Writing'.

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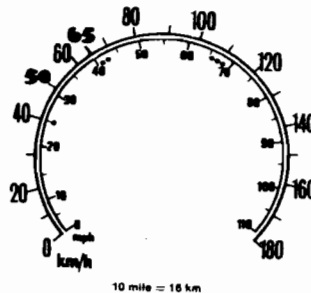
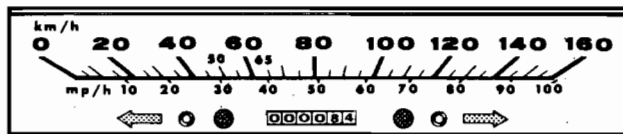
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