

# ‘THAT UMBRAGEOUS FOLIAGE’

## A Study of the Prose of the North Coast of N.S.W. to 1914

By Robert James Smith: Bachelor of Arts,  
Master of Letters, Master of Arts (Hons.),  
Graduate Diploma in Humanities  
(University of New England); Diploma in  
Teaching (Secondary English/History  
(Newcastle C.A.E.)

Submitted August 1999.

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor  
of Philosophy of the University of New  
England.

## CERTIFICATE

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

.....

Signature

Robert James Smith

15th August 1999

## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I came to this somewhat interdisciplinary topic as a result of my earlier university studies, which might be considered a long apprenticeship in English literature, Australian and American literature. My previous postgraduate research work had largely involved a study of traditional cultural documents and later responses to them, and this firmed my interest in the ways of written transmission of traditional culture. My interest in regionalism stems from twenty one years of teaching in several parts of the actual region under consideration. In those various locations I was exposed to their historical societies and available regional texts in an absorbing way, and came to the realisation that that body of writings required a much more exhaustive attention. This involved considerable time in accessing those early centrally held compilations, as well as the local historical societies' libraries and files, which, despite an unevenness in holdings and coverage, were important for that which had been deliberately preserved therein.

Following on from this, I saw a void in the customary methods of analysis after Paul Carter's *The Road to Botany Bay* (1987), which challenged the usual and accepted national constructions of historically canonical figures through a rigorous, informed and open-ended approach to the actual texts from and about them. There seemed a space in which one could apply similar analysis to regional texts—those of my area in particular—opening these new or often forgotten works at the same time as the national models were also being revealed as over-determined. My modest aim is to aid this designated general community in having access to informed and tested models of their own past, and, perhaps, in opening a discourse that could inform current debates.

To thank all those who gave support and generously shared their knowledge would exceed the space normally so allotted. From throughout the region much

specific assistance has come to me from fellow teachers, lecturers, the historical and literary societies' members, and librarians.

In commencing the project, exceptional help was provided to me by Billie Crawford (Macleay River Historical Society), and Jim Riley (Richmond River Historical Society). Continuing high-level support came from both the Dixson Library (U.N.E.), and the Southern Cross University Library, where many staff maintained a most supportive enthusiasm for my investigatory work. Other libraries/repositories of especial help have been: Mitchell Library (Sydney); University of Queensland Library; Queensland State Library; National Library of Australia; Fisher Library (Sydney University); Clarence River Historical Society Library in Schaeffer House, Grafton; West of the Range Historical Society files (Bonalbo); and the Royal Australian Historical Society, Sydney.

Well beyond this broadly 'regional' support, I remain deeply indebted to colleagues, too numerous to mention, and the many members of the virtual, but none the less very real, community of the Victoria Internet news-group.

The example of that prolific writer on North Coast topics, Maurie Ryan, is enough to daunt yet inspire any regional research, while his advice and encouragement has enabled this work to be far more ambitious and comprehensive than it would otherwise be. For the translation from the German (Appendix J) I must thank Dr Iris Bergman and Lyndall Smith for their generosity with their skills and time.

My debt to my supervisor Professor J.S. Ryan is of the sort that can perhaps only be comprehended by others amongst his vast number of former and current research students. Provision of his generous resources, friendship and, above all, a torrent of ideas to challenge and provoke were all offered in full measure. When considering the prodigious Australian research of such a regional scholar, one's present efforts can but seem an early following in my selected zone of northern N.S.W.

Finally, my thanks to my family whose tolerance and patience on so many occasions has been generously unbounded.

## CONVENTIONS AND LIST OF COMMON ABBREVIATIONS

Throughout the thesis the format is in accordance with that suggested by the Modern Humanities Research Association, *MHRA Style Book: Notes for Editors, and Writers of Theses*, 5th edn (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1996). In anticipation of this current study being used by those from varying disciplines or background experience, including non-specialists from the region, and possibly over the longer time period that is the life of many regional works, the detail on MSS and some other works has been expanded to enable easier identification of items.

Every quotation, by its very extraction from context, is at best a tampering with the text. For some closer fidelity to the original works, the various quotations and appendices have attempted to preserve any now non-standard spelling, punctuation and, as noted within for several items, also the original if aberrant lineation.

\* \* \*

<i>ADB</i>	<i>Australian Dictionary of Biography</i>
<i>ADHSJ&amp;P</i>	<i>Armidale and District Historical Society Journal and Proceedings</i>
AONSW	Archives Office of New South Wales
<i>DNB</i>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
<i>HRNSW</i>	<i>Historical Records of New South Wales</i>
<i>HRA</i>	<i>Historical Records of Australia</i>
JOL MSS	John Oxley Library Manuscripts
<i>JRAHS</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society</i>
<i>JRHSQ</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland</i>
ML MSS	Mitchell Library Manuscripts

## ABSTRACT

A survey of significant regional prose for the North Coast of New South Wales, Australia, up to 1914, this work draws together for close analysis a previously uncollected body of regional writing from disparate sources. Predominantly non-fiction, the types of text under consideration include explorers' logs, personal diaries, letters, memoirs, newspaper accounts, travel books, history, and scientific articles. The fiction portion also covers adventure writing and romance. These texts are examined for their construction of the region, including contemporary perceptions of its Indigenous inhabitants, and how this image, both general and personal, is mediated by interaction with other texts, or by the (necessary) publishing process. A general thematic grouping treats the texts progressively, in turn from navigation and voyages, to exploration and travel, to settlement, professional service, and then those written for the newly emerging mass readership.

Conclusions are then made as to the increasing role for regionalism, and for the insights to be gained from a close scrutiny of such hitherto overlooked texts when handled in a chronological fashion. Postmodernism's concerns assist greatly in enriching our notions as to the role of (all) serious writing.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Preface and Acknowledgements .....	iii
	Conventions and List of Common Abbreviations .....	v
	Abstract .....	vi
	Table of Contents .....	vii
	List of Illustrations .....	ix
<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>THE EARLY MARITIME PROSE</b> .....	<b>9</b>
	<b>Coastal Mapping</b> .....	<b>11</b>
	Lieut. James Cook .....	13
	Joseph Banks .....	18
	Lesser Texts of the <i>Endeavour</i> .....	23
	<b>Landings</b> .....	<b>27</b>
	Lieut. Matthew Flinders .....	28
	<i>Investigator</i> and After .....	37
<b>3</b>	<b>THE LATER MARITIME PROSE</b> .....	<b>42</b>
	<b>Later Landings</b> .....	<b>43</b>
	Thomas Whyte .....	43
	John Oxley .....	45
	John Uniacke .....	47
	Capt. Henry Rous .....	50
	<b>Brief Passages</b> .....	<b>53</b>
	Alfred Stephen .....	54
	Percy Clarke .....	56
	Hume Nisbet .....	58
	<b>Interruptions</b> .....	<b>59</b>
	James Watkin .....	59
	John McCulloch .....	63
<b>4</b>	<b>THE PROSE OF LAND EXPLORATION</b> .....	<b>65</b>
	Lieut. John Oxley .....	70
	Governor Lachlan Macquarie .....	97
<b>5</b>	<b>THE PROSE OF LAND JOURNEYS</b> .....	<b>104</b>
	<b>Pioneer Travels</b> .....	<b>105</b>
	Clement Hodgkinson .....	105
	Lt. Colonel Charles Mundy .....	119
	<b>Semi-Settled</b> .....	<b>126</b>
	George Theodore Blakers .....	127
	<b>Later Travellers</b> .....	<b>137</b>
	Tom Roberts .....	137
	Dr. A.B. Brockway .....	143

<b>6</b>	<b>SETTLERS' PROSE: PENAL AND PASTORAL .....</b>	<b>151</b>
	<b>Convict Period</b> .....	<b>153</b>
	James Tucker .....	153
	Annabella Boswell .....	158
	<b>Pastoral Society</b> .....	<b>164</b>
	H.G. Hamilton .....	165
	John Henderson .....	169
	Annie Baxter .....	179
	Edward Ogilvie .....	189
	Henry Croad .....	196
	<b>Non-British Voices</b> .....	<b>198</b>
	Theodore Müller .....	199
	Étienne Bordier-Roman .....	204
	<b>Later Pastoralism</b> .....	<b>210</b>
	E.W. Rudder .....	210
<b>7</b>	<b>THE PROSE OF THE SERVING PROFESSIONALS: DIVINE AND SCIENTIFIC .....</b>	<b>219</b>
	<b>Divines</b> .....	<b>220</b>
	Rev. Dr. John Dunmore Lang .....	220
	Rev. Arthur Selwyn .....	223
	Fr. John Sullivan .....	227
	Maggie Sullivan .....	229
	<b>Science</b> .....	<b>232</b>
	John MacGillivray .....	232
	J. Horbury Hunt .....	235
	H.M.R. Rupp .....	237
	R.H. Mathews .....	239
	Mary Bundock .....	243
<b>8</b>	<b>MASS READERSHIP PROSE .....</b>	<b>249</b>
	Henry Kendall .....	250
	'Our Travelling Correspondent' .....	255
	'Tommy Pipeful' .....	262
	Myra Felton .....	265
	'Louis' Becke .....	272
<b>9</b>	<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>280</b>
	APPENDICES (including Table) .....	284
	BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	316

**LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

	facing page
Map of North Coast for Travellers by Sea .....	54
Map of Oxley's Overland Journey .....	75
Map of Hodgkinson's North Coast .....	107
Aboriginal Group in Ceremonial Formation .....	114
Map of A.B. Brockway's North Coast (following).....	142
Henderson's Gunyas (following).....	172
Interior of Henderson's House at Elsineur .....	174