When Hope entered the Australian literary scene at the beginning of the 1940s, it was into a setting of considerable activity. Despite the outbreak of World War II, the limited avenues for publication which had been available to Australian poets in the pre-World War II years widened from 1939. Hope has recalled that, especially after Japan entered the war, the scarcity of imported books led to a boom in Australian publishing.  

There was a succession of magazines, some of which, for example the Number booklets, were ephemeral or sporadic in appearance. Southerly, to the foundation issue of which Hope contributed "Psycho-Analysis and Poetry," began publication in 1939. The following year Meanjin, as Meanjin Papers, presented its first issue and, in 1943, provided the somewhat curious place of publication of Hope's poem, "Australia". The avant-garde Angry Penguins magazine, which ran from 1941 to 1946, was an avenue of publication for Australian writers who were exploring internationalist and Modernist ideas. Between 1938 and 1946 a number of important Australian poets published volumes and anthologies provided further places of publication.

4. Southerly, 1, 1, 1939.
6. e.g. Slessor, FitzGerald, Douglas Stewart, Rex Ingamells, Mary Gilmore, Judith Wright (1946), James McAuley (1946).
Hope's entry into the Australian literary scene was the more readily noticeable from his critical reviews but the bulk of the poems which make up *The Wandering Islands* was first published during the 1940s. A few of Hope's poems appeared in the budding national-circulation journals, some in the underground sheets, *No.1 and Number Two*; others appeared in university papers, often in *Melbourne University Magazine*. Three major poems, not included in *The Wandering Islands*, attracted widespread attention when they were printed in H. M. Green's anthologies. "The Return from the Freudian Islands" (pp.18-21) was in the 1943 and 1946 volumes and "Australia" (p.13) and "The Damnation of Byron" (pp.2-6) were in the 1946 collection. There was private circulation of Hope's poems among his fellow-academics, including the 1950 mock-epic, "Dunciad Minimus." About half of Hope's reviews of ca 1940-1956, most of which were on Australian writing, appeared in literary journals such as *Meanjin* and *Southerly* and, in the 1950s, he reviewed fairly frequently for the *Sydney Morning Herald*. He contributed reviews to limited circulation publications of the Universities of Sydney and Melbourne. Vincent Buckley comments that Hope must have realized that his sending of poems to undergraduate journals 'aided the malicious to limit his reputation' but Buckley immediately adds, 'By the time his first book appeared in its beautiful edition, he was famous.'

Animadversion has more than once contributed to Hope's literary fame.

---


Hope has recorded that he began reviewing Australian literature with a sense of having a mission to raise standards of reviewing in Australia.9

In setting out to put to rights the neglected state of Australian literary criticism, Hope was aiming to do more than revive the tradition of criticism which had been established by A. G. Stephens in *The Bulletin*, ca 1896-1906. S.H. Lee noted similarities in critical style between the criticism which A.G. Stephens published in *The Bulletin*, ca 1896-1906, and Hope's reviews of the 1940s, and Lee points to Stephens' 'constant reference to the best in contemporary continental and English writing "as a measuring rod to beat those indulging in antics round the parish pump."'10 Hope's later comments on Stephens' lack of critical acumen11 suggest that the standard which Hope applied in reviewing, 'Smite and Spare Not!',12 was one of firmness in criticism where Stephens had failed to be firm. Hope perceived that reviewers, no doubt including Stephens, by his default, tended to assume that, because writers were Australian, 'there was some mysterious standard that applied to them but not to overseas writers.'13

Hope's critiques, ca 1940-55, usually do not engage closely with the works under review but provide opportunities for him to formulate his ideas on the practice of literature. This practice is continued in the essay, "Free Verse : A Post-Mortem", where he attacks Symbolist and

Imagist writing, without advancing evidence, and defends the formal techniques he uses. Hope uses a similar method in Dunciad Minor, about which Dorothy Green remarks, 'In moving from its opening in the Elysium of genius to its end in a mindless sleep the poem sweeps aside any temptation to state the real issues of the Classic-Romantic debate.'

By the age of fifty, Hope says, he had found the roles of Thersites and Rhadamanthus, 'into which I seemed to have drifted, equally distasteful and embarrassing' and, partly for that reason, gave up reviewing. The reader of the reviews is aware of the writer as dissatisfied with the literary climate, sure of his judgments and prepared to castigate his fellow-writers and point to the errors of their ways.

Even so, during the 1940s Hope's affinities with aspects of contemporary writing in Australia were ambiguous; and, for more than a decade, there was almost complete separation between some of his intellectual convictions and his attraction to facets of Modernism.

Whether there was an essentially Australian literature of quality was a question which underlay some literary discussion after the mid-1930s and Hope's participation in the debate by means of his reviews shows that his critical concern was with the quality of writing in Australia, which he


17. Hope, Native Companions, p.45. Hope, "Talking to the Void," Bulletin Literary Supplement, 30 June, 1981, p.4: 'I decided to give up reviewing in the early 1960s. It took up too much time and it was badly paid.'
saw as poor, and not with the issue of an essentially Australian literature. The validity of a national character in Australian writing is an issue on which Hope's stance has been ambiguous, although he has been unequivocal in his response to some aspects. The neo-national Jindyworobaks attracted him in some degree; in 1941 he discerned 'a core of sound common sense in the Jindyworobak case'. 18 What that was, he does not say, and Jindyworobak writers drew some of his strongest critical fire. 19 In what purports to be a review of James Devaney's Shaw Neilson, in 1945 Hope put his viewpoint on popular national-character verse:

> You will find no sunlit plains extended in Shaw Neilson, no stock-rails...You will find instead a small but constant source of pure poetry, which selects an occasional animal or tree or incident, not for itself, but as a symbol of the inner life of feeling....So much for the theory of the literary Antaeus, the theory that Australian poetry cannot be good unless it springs from the native soil and celebrates it.20

P.R. Stephensen's Foundations of Culture in Australia was published in 1936, in which Stephensen proposed, inter alia, that Australian literature ought to be studied in the schools and universities. 21 John Anderson replied with "Australian Culture" and noted that there was some bias in favour of works 'simply because they are local products'. 22 Anderson believed that insufficient time had elapsed for Australians to have developed the 'traditional background' 23 from which culture could

---

19. e.g. Hope, rev. of Cultural Cross-Section, ed. John Ingamells, Flaunted Banners, by Victor Kennedy, At a Boundary, by John and Rex Ingamells, in Native Companions, pp.44-7.
develop in Australia. Within a few years of Anderson's admonition that we should 'develop cultural studies' in order to 'develop culture in Australia', \(^{24}\) Hope had taken upon himself the task of contributing to the development of culture in Australia and of Australian culture by raising the standard of literary reviewing.

Brian Elliott wrote in 1940 that 'There is a strong feeling that Australian poetry must be national, but nobody knows quite what this means or how to achieve it'; \(^{25}\) that remark would have applied to Australian literature in general at the time. Neither Hope's interest in, nor estimate of the worth of, Australian writing was great by 1944, when he wrote to Clem Christesen that

> apart from my time as a lecturer or at A.B.C. - I'd always rather write poetry than write about poetry and I don't give a damn about culture really....But on the other hand my job is literary criticism - that's how I earn my living at any rate - and a certain time each year is devoted to Australian writers of whom I know so little and by whom for the most part I am profoundly bored or irritated.\(^{26}\)

Comparatively recently, Hope has written recollections of his 'experiences and the problems encountered' in the growth of the study of Australian writing: 'At a time in the nineteen thirties when I first began to interest myself in the problem, the very existence of a national literature was hardly recognised.' \(^{27}\) In late 1945 he planned a discussion course, "Some Typical Australian Books", \(^{28}\) which appears to have been arranged

---

25. Elliott, rev. of In the Wind's Teeth, by Flexmore Hudson, Australian Quarterly, 12, 1, 1940, p.111.
for use by groups of interested readers who met at intervals. That course could have some connection with the unsuccessful attempt he recalls of his efforts, and those of some younger lecturers, when he first went to Melbourne University, to have a course in Australian Literature introduced. Hope's recollections of his 1940s attitudes to the question of the introduction into universities of studies in Australian literature are confusing for the reader. That remark is based on readings of "Australian Literature and the Universities", 1954, and "Teaching Australian Literature", 1982. In each item Hope refers to a talk given to the Melbourne branch of the Fellowship of Australian Writers (which is the Victorian, not Melbourne, Branch of the Fellowship) though whether he gave one or two talks is unclear. The 1987 President of the Victorian Fellowship could not verify the point, as there are gaps in the records. The 1954 recollection is of a talk given 'About five years ago', which suggests 1948 or 1949. The 1982 article refers to a talk given in 1945. In the earlier recollection (of 1954), Hope records that a talk given by him in the late 1940s had been 'a defence of the attitude of at least one of our universities' for its neglect of our national literature. The 1982 recollection states that in 1945 Hope put the point of view: 'Even if Australian writing was as meagre and inferior as its opponents maintained, I said, it was the clear duty of each country to initiate and maintain the study of its own literature'. The unambiguous nature of his mid-1940s attitude which is recalled in Hope's 1982 article is at variance

with the reservations he recalls in the 1954 item.

Arguing that 'There is no more an Australian literature than an
Australian philosophy or mathematics', Anderson began his conclusion to
"Australian Culture" with the unequivocal statement, 'There is no question,
then, of artificial stimulation or setting apart Australian literature for
special studies'. 34 Seventeen years later, in 1954, Hope was establishing
the first separate university course in Australian literature, a move
which may be reflective of Hope's having recently arrived at a belief
that a national literature is uniquely important. 35 By 1954, Hope was
of the opinion that conservative estimates of the quality and quantity
of Australian literature were 'substantial and just', 36 but, looking further
than Anderson had, or had been able in 1937, he discerned other reasons
for the establishment of Australian literature courses in our universities.
The reasons were 'educational, intellectual and utilitarian'. 37
Universities have the function of preserving and developing cultural
traditions; Australian culture existed and Australian writing was worth
studying. Australian universities were bound in duty to promote the
study of local literature, as it is part of world literature, and also to
provide training for the necessary specialists in ancillary literary
fields. Although Hope concluded "Australian literature and the Universities"
with the statement, 'With such ideas in mind Canberra University College
is at present experimenting in the establishment, for the first time in
this country, of a complete course in Australian literature.' 38

Literature was taught at least from the early 1920s. Dorothy Green and Sandra Burchill have written that 'The vexed question of the role of the universities in that field cannot be discovered from handbooks and calendars, but must be settled by detailed research in each state'; they refer to documentary evidence of lectures on Australian Literature at the University of Sydney in 1930. Australian Literature was a component of English I at the University of Adelaide from 1940, when Brian Elliott was appointed to the staff. Hope, in his 1985 poem, "For Brian Elliott", acknowledges Elliott's pre-eminence in the field: 'You led the van'; but neither Adelaide University nor Elliott is mentioned by Hope in "Teaching Australian Literature". There Hope records that

The Commonwealth Literary Fund began the assault on the universities which still largely ignored local literature by instituting regular series of lectures on Australian writers and Australian literary history, given by academics and by writers themselves as public lectures within the universities. My own part in this assault was to institute in 1955 the first full and separate course in Australian Literature at what was then the Canberra University College, a branch of the University of Melbourne. By this time most universities included some books by Australian writers in their English courses and the collapse of the policy of ignoring the subject, or claiming that it was inferior, was a rapid one.

Despite Hope's involvement in the establishment of Australian Literature studies as a full course at Canberra University College, his attitudes at that time to Australian writing do not appear to have been of enthusiastic interest. They have remained ambiguous.

42. Hope, "For Brian Elliott," in Mapped But Not Known, p.xiii.
Hope notes, in his introductory remarks to the "Native Companions" section of Native Companions, that the value in the selection of re-printed reviews is mainly historical; in comparison with later criticism, they are likely to seem 'frivolously indifferent to fundamental issues', which is sometimes the case. A value of the items, not mentioned by Hope, is that they sketch part of the literary canon which he was to define in the "Considered Opinions" section of Native Companions and later works. The articles in the section include examples of heterodoxy for the sake of heterodoxy and of attack on individual writers. The prefatory notes added in Native Companions to the most trenchant of the critiques provide additional comment but the sting of the original judgments remains. By the republication of the articles the auto-da-fé claims, not Hope as heretic, but the same victims as twenty or thirty years earlier. When The New Cratylus came out five years after Native Companions, it included a confession by Hope that he shares the blame attaching to critics who have used poems by others 'for an exquisite display of their own sensibilities.' Writing about Hope and the poetry, but making points which could be applied to Hope's critiques of the 1940s and 1950s, Donald Horne has explained:

People are still innocently surprised when they meet Hope to find that in manner he does not repeat the savageries of his verse. It is only later that one realises that some unhappiness must have led to the throwing up of such a formidable and complicated earthworks and how limiting a defence system can be. When they criticise the themes of his verse people sometimes suggest Hope is still too concerned with fighting old battles; they may be right.

44. Native Companions, p.42.
But that is only to say that Hope is a man like others; when we are young we secrete the defences of external 'character' to protect ourselves from what may later seem to be quite trivial dangers; but when they harden these hastily thrown up defences largely decide for us what we 'are' and it is the devil's own job to chip one's way out of them.47

In the first four of the reviews in Native Companions Hope's target is the Jindyworobaks, a school of writers which, in a note in Native Companions, Hope says he did not at first take very seriously.48 The cutting edge of the comments which dismiss the Jindyworobaks as 'the Boy Scout School of Poetry',49 is still sarcastically sharp. Hope takes exception to the putting of a point of view which is a series of emotional outbursts pretending to be argument; he sees the main fault of Jindyworobak writing as incoherence resulting from lack of reasoned argument. Here is a showing of Hope's overall insistence in the reviews on intelligence and lucidity, stemming from craftsmanship allied to perception. There is also evidence of his objections, later more closely defined in The Cave and the Spring, to activist writing carried out as a cause dictates, rather than because of a writer's need to express a conviction. The Jindyworobak cause was to be 'pure Australian',50 even to the extent of rejecting as alien anything which stems from a culture other than the Aboriginal. Hope points to the absurdity of such a view, noting that for most Australians Aboriginal culture is even more remote than English culture. A poet who tries to imitate the poetry of another culture will be likely to produce insincere work; it is the integrity of the writer which is important. The thrust of Hope's remarks is as strongly directed

48. Hope, Comment, in Native Companions, p.44.
49. Hope, introductory remark to reviews of Jindyworobak books, in Native Companions, p.44.
50. Hope, introductory remark to reviews of Jindyworobak books, in Native Companions, p.44.
to the cultural argument as it is to the literary. In his review of Ian Mudie's *This is Australia*, Hope notes that the poems are all patriotic but Hope allows that the poetry has merit because Mudie uses 'the method of poetry'. Hope indicates that there is a distinction between 'the method of poetry' and Rex Ingamells' 'versified journalese' but some time was to elapse before he defined the distinction. The method of poetry, Hope later explains, is the creation of an imaginative experience for the reader by the use of images which work by suggestion rather than by depiction. The images convey the ideas and insights, rather than the emotions, of the poet; these are partly translated into terms of the reader's experience so that a new, mental experience is created which arouses the reader's emotional response. The method of versified journalese does not meet the requirements of the method of poetry because it relies on statement, rhetoric, abstract nouns, is verbose and, above all, is swamped by the emotion of the writer. Hope's early mature poetry is not free of some of those characteristics, despite his censure of them in the work of others; and his reviews often rely on statement rather than argument.

Hope's 1941 prose salvo against the Jindyworobaks was followed by "Jindyworobak Vista" in *Number Two, 1944* (unpaginated). The *Number* publications were designed, wrote Garry Lyle in his "In Explanation" to the unpaginated *No.1, 1943*, to afford its contributors the maximum in poetic freedom. That freedom was not similarly accorded to other poets

51. Hope, rev. of "The Gangrened People," by Rex Ingamells, and *This is Australia*, by Ian Mudie, in *Native Companions*, pp.47-8.

by some of the sheets' contributors; and, in 1948, in *Number Three* (to which Hope did not contribute), Harry Hooton gave the opinion that Hope, McAuley and Harold Stewart 'could not get past the negative critical attitude.... But they did not advance their aesthetic theories either, past a mere classical revival against romanticism.' Hope's "Jindyworobak Vista" is an eclectic adaptation of Keats' "Lamia" to Hope's purpose of showing that the Jindyworobaks' idealistic attitude to Australia was misguided. The 'I' of the poem, probably Hope, is a modern and intellectually clear-sighted Lycius who recognises the Australia in which he lives as a Lamia - serpent woman - behind whose city 'art. silk' costume is a droughty landscape and fly-blown sheep. Hope's likening of Australia to a serpent woman carries the overtone of Australia as Eve, the deceiving temptress. The continent, in its vastness and often savage beauty, tempts Europeans to probe its mysteries but it withholds its secrets. As a spiritual source it is unavailable to Western man and all he gets for his devotion are the realities of existence in a soul-destroying environment. It is the transfer to Australia of the idea of woman projected in some of Hope's poems of the 1940s, especially "Morning Coffee" (pp.24-5); the later period poem, "Botany Bay or The Rights of Woman", is a treatment of the theme that Australia provides the ideal social climate for tough woman. "Jindyworobak Vista" is imperfectly developed; Hope inexplicably presents the philosopher Apollonius as 'an old blow-fly' who can, with a grin, strip away illusion. An esoteric poem, it is also activist writing,

having its genesis in the tensions which existed among the various literary alliances. The Adelaide-centred Jindyworobaks were primarily the target of the Adelaide-based Angry Penguins but Hope's objections to them had, by 1944, become part of the censure meted out by the loosely-knit group of Sydney academics, Hope, McAuley and Donald Horne, all of whom were as opposed to the Angry Penguins as to the Jindyworobaks.

In a prefatory comment to the re-printing of the 1941 reviews of Jindyworobak publications, Hope notes that for some time after their first publication he had retained a suspicion that he had missed the point of what the Jindyworobaks were trying to say. He felt that he had righted the matter in a 1962 review of Roland Robinson's Deep Well. In the later review, the Jindyworobak writers in general get no concessions from Hope: 'I still think most of them had more enthusiasm than brains and none of them seemed to have any talent for writing, which made it easy to poke fun at them'. Hope does acknowledge that he had come to understand that the essential quality of the primitive Australian landscape cannot be rendered in poetry - he means poetry in the Western tradition - in the way pastoral or urban Australia can be treated. He offers the opinion that there is no language in which to write 'about or for' the primitive Australian landscape. He sees Robinson's achievement as unique in that he has allowed himself to be so completely absorbed by the wilderness that 'it speak[s] through him'. That view of the relationship which is possible between the Australian environment and poet is more Romantic since Hope allows that only Robinson has achieved it. It is supported by


reference to Wordsworth's poetic, 'that wise passiveness of which Wordsworth speaks', which, in context, signifies the poet's putting aside his consciousness of self so that his poetic subject can dominate his sensibilities. Reaffirmation of these revised attitudes to the Jindyworobaks was made by Hope in 1984 and, on that occasion, he added a regret that he had earlier failed to realize 'that here was the first instance, however crude, of a home-made theory of poetry, something not borrowed from theories and movements generated in America and Europe. Alas, it was also the last'.

In Hope's declaration that there is no language to fit our archaic bush and deserts is some indication of why Hope has written so little about Australia. Some poems in Antechinus are a late poetic engagement with the land but not with the outback. In an essay written later than the review of Deep Well, Hope applauds the vision of novelist Vance Palmer which is essentially a poet's response to place. There is a personal note in Hope's appreciation of Palmer's achievement in projecting the idea that a few can absorb the numinous quality of the Australian landscape. There is also the suggestion that only the poet, whose vision and concerns are wider and deeper than those of the novelist, can relieve the aridity of 'stunted Australian society'. The unexpected notion that the country could be a source of Hope's creativity begins to assert itself and is corroborated by Hope's statement of a few years later: 'When I write a poem I see it very much in specific Australian terms'.

58. Hope, Directions in Australian Poetry, p.117.
Comment is made above that Meanjin seemed a curious place for the first publication, in 1943, of Hope's "Australia". That remark is because in the early years of Meanjin a good deal of nationalist writing, especially by Jindyworobak writers, appeared in its pages. John Docker has remarked, "Australia" is a 1939 poem, and we could be excused for wondering if the "there are some like me" ["Australia"] was referring to the Jindyworobaks, who were going strongly at the time". Recently Hope has said that 1939 is the date when he finished the poem. It was begun 'when I came back from England in 1932'. Hope returned in 1930 and some of his other remarks suggest the poem was begun earlier, in 1930: 'I was out of a job. I hadn't done very well in my studies overseas, and it was a pretty miserable time anyway in the middle of the Great Depression. All that feeling remains in the original poem'. Hope adds that the optimistic twist of the end of the poem belongs to 1939. Thus, 1939 is likely to be correct insofar as the words 'there are some like me' are concerned. Whether or not Hope had the Jindyworobaks in mind he has not indicated but his later confession of unease at the time of his writing the 1941 review of works by Jindyworobaks, John and Rex Ingamells and Ian Mudie, was, he has said, because of a suspicion that he had overlooked 'something important in what they were trying to say'. The seeming volte-face of the ending of "Australia" reflects an awareness in Hope of that same 'something', the distinctively Australian quality in our culture which derives from the environment. The publication of Hope's poem in Meanjin no longer seems so curious. Hope's trouncing of the neo-nationalist Jindyworobaks as 'the Boy Scout School of Poetry' is not couched in anti-nationalism terms;

64. Hope, "Daytime Thoughts," p.229.
66. Hope, Comment, in Native Companions, p.44.
it is directed at the naivete of their poets and at their exaggerated ideas of 'pure Australian' culture. The first part of the review describes the movement in terms which make it sound like an Australian equivalent of Hitler's Strength-through-Joy movement, with Aboriginal culture replacing the Aryan myth. Hope's severity was occasioned by the misguided zeal of the Jindyworobaks, rather than by his lack of sympathy with their response to environment; as Vincent Buckley has observed, of what he sees as his own shortcomings as a critic of Australian poetry, 'One castigates where one's emotions are most deeply engaged'.

That the Jindyworobak Anthology, 1943, edited by Flexmore Hudson, is the place of the first reprinting of Hope's "Standardization" (pp.10-11) evidences the poet's willingness to appear in print under the aegis of the Jindyworobaks. Hope had a regard for Flexmore Hudson as 'a discerning editor' and, in 1945, he published "Necrophile" in the Quarterly which Hudson edited. In spite of Hope's mixed attitudes towards 'the Jindy tribe', he was tempted to repeat his 1941 attack on them. Invited by Clem Christesen to review Jindyworobak Anthology, 1943, Hope replied, 'Will do it if you don't mind my having a crack at the Oodnadatta gang but perhaps you'd better not. My poison tongue is apt to run away with me when I review anthologies'. In the event, the review, "Corroboree on Parnassus", covered several publications and is gentle in its comments on Jindyworobak Anthology; its greater part is given to other works by Rex Ingamells and Ian Mudie, where Hope asserts that 'Culture is not produced by writing about it', an odd dictum to come from Hope's pen.

68. Hope, "Corroboree on Parnassus," review of Content are the Quiet Ranges and Unknown Land, by Rex Ingamells, Their Seven Stars Unseen and The Australian Dream, by Ian Mudie, Jindyworobak Anthology, 1943, ed. Flexmore Hudson, First Harvest, by Arthur Murphy, Meanjin, 3, 2, 1944, p.111.
at that time and a relatively mild 'crack at the Oodnadatta gang'.

In 1954 Hope gave a radio broadcast, "A Second-Rate Literature?",\(^\text{73}\) in response to a request from the Australian Broadcasting Commission that he clarify an earlier broadcast comment 'that Australian literature was on the whole second-rate'.\(^\text{74}\) Hope writes, in *Native Companions*, that he reproduces it because 'in a summary form the talk embodies a thesis on which most of my reviews were then based'.\(^\text{75}\) The thesis is that a colonial literature goes through three phases: the first is when writers remove to a new country but continue to write in the tradition of their homelands; the provincial stage follows, when writers in the new land set out to create their own literary tradition; the third stage, which Hope felt Australia was then approaching, is marked by the production of writing free of either self-conscious imitation of literary fashions from abroad or self-conscious attempts to develop a native literature. Partly because of the need of publishers to meet consumers' demands, Australian writers had been required to be 'too consciously Australian' and so Australian literature was being held in the second phase. Hope's irritation at the prolonging of the situation he perceived broke out in print in the 1955 review, "Prolonging Our Literary Adolescence",\(^\text{76}\) a vehement and entertaining commentary on the publication of ballads of the 1890s in *Australian Bush Ballads*. None of the ballads is discussed in the review. As an index of Hope's views at that time on literary nationalism, it is to the point:

---

74. Hope, Comment, "A Second-rate Literature?" in *Native Companions*, p.73.
75. Hope, Comment, "A Second-rate Literature?" in *Native Companions*, p.73.
It is a popular modern delusion that literature can only be fostered by nationalist sentiment. Yet even if it were not a delusion, it would be a delusion to think Australia needs more nationalist sentiment than it has. On the contrary, our literature already suffers from too much of it. It is riddled and rotted with the obsession of being more and more Australian.

Hope's concern to promote the production and appreciation of literature of quality in Australia can be appreciated but his refusal to acknowledge the worth of the 1890s ballads as part of the indigenous literary heritage is an exercise in tilting at windmills; it is also in keeping with Hope's elitist views on literature as art. Hope was impatiently critical of the editors of Australian Bush Ballads for having devoted 'so many valuable hours of their lives [to] making a monument to a trivial and ephemeral literary cult'. Despite Hope's contrary views, future Australians will be grateful to Stewart and Keesing. As Alan Frost recently wrote, 'The study of ideas which inform the collective unconscious is an important part of that intricate process by which a nation comes to know its time and place, and realise its heritage'.

In the "Literary Adolescence" review, Hope labels the 1890s a period of 'journalism in verse'; Hope had elsewhere labelled Rex Ingamells' poem, "The Gangrened People", as 'a long piece of versified journalese'. Poets as journalists came in for some pointless pondering by Hope in another 1955 review, where he wondered why the 'average' Australian poet who decides to take work rather than starve chooses to become a journalist, whereas his English counterpart becomes a teacher. Stung by Hope's

---

77. Hope explains his elitist stance on art in the Graduation Address he delivered at Monash University, 19 May 1976 (typescript), pp.4-5: "Excellence in the arts is limited to a few with great natural gifts. They do not choose to be an élite. Nature does it for them."


79. Hope, rev. of At a Boundary, by John Ingamells and Rex Ingamells, in Native Companions, p.47.

charge that poets - who need to eat, as Hope acknowledged - now write brief laments and lyrics and are Esaus who have sold their birthrights, David Rowbotham replied:

The assumption persists that journalism is a wrecker of creative writing. But is it any more damaging than, say, professing at a university? It is certainly not altogether incompatible with poetry; "Five Bells" and "Fire on the Snow" were written by journalists.81

In 1975 Hope returned to the use of journalism as a perjorative term.82

From the 1940s the term has been for Hope a label for all verse of poor quality as poetry. It is a very elastic term, as it has been applied to Jindyworobak writing, the bush ballads of the 1890s and to the poetry of T. S. Eliot.83 When Hope uses the term in the 1975 article, "Poetry as Journalism" (the word order of the title seems to be wrong), it is to describe a piece of contemporary free verse:

I don't know what it is called now but forty years ago it was all the rage as 'surrealism'. In fact the so-called experimental poets have been simply marking time for the past fifty years.84

This easy, sleazy, gimmicky substitute for poetry is only one of the manifestations of what I call journalism as opposed to art. In fact the multifarious outward forms it can take are comparatively unimportant. It can equally well take quite traditional and conventional forms.85

In the late 1930s and into the 1940s influences of the international and intellectual Surrealist movement in art began to appear in Australia, first in painting and then in poetry. The essence of Surrealism seems not to have been generally well understood, either in Australia or overseas,

84. Hope, "Poetry as Journalism," p.60.
and the implications of the label 'Surrealist' were different for different people. Those interested shared an awareness that Surrealism was a revolutionary art movement but how widespread was the understanding that it purported to be a means of grappling with the spiritual ills of man in the twentieth century is difficult to assess. Some of Hope's poetry of the early middle period, such as "Flower Poem" (p.14), shows he shared some Freudian ideas with Surrealist artists. He had, however, a strong antipathy to the writing of Max Harris, the editor of Angry Penguins, and, in 1944, he listed Surrealism as one of 'the more fashionable literary enthusiasms of the last thirty years' which Harris wove into his writing: 'Surrealism has become a vogue. Mr Harris is painstakingly surrealistic'.

Of the first issue of Angry Penguins, Donald Horne wrote,

The poetry is 'difficult'; some of it is not 'worthwhile'. Most of it shows some prepossession with a vague kind of surrealism, that will probably disappear if the poets can set their minds to a serious study of Symbolism (the literary movement) and Psycho-Analytic doctrines.

It was not to the Angry Penguins as a group of writers but to the writings of Harris that Hope reacted, as exemplifying the indiscipline he associated with free verse. Hope was, for thirty years, consistent in his use of the label 'surrealism' as meaning free verse but, at least during the 1940s, underlying his use of the term there was also his distrust of the Surrealist method of employing material from the subconscious in literary composition (e.g. "Rawhead and Bloody Bones", p.41). The contributions which Hope made


87. Hope, "Confessions of a Zombi," review of The Vegetative Eye, by Max Harris, Meanjin, 3, 1, 1944, pp.44-8, rpt in Native Companions, without title, pp.49-54. 'Zombie' is given in Native Companions, p.54.

to literature in Australia, 1940-55, are partly because of his judgments on those aspects of Modernism. He, McAuley and Stewart helped to check the development of experimental poetry in Australia. The process drew attention to the necessity for discipline and coherence in writing but that awareness would have emerged without intervention. The results of the intervention are incalculable. Hope later announced that 'I am pleased to think that it was in Australia that the first and very important move towards sanity [the Malley hoax] began.'

Hope's criticism of works he has labelled as Surrealist have been of their style and methods, not of their meaning. When he used 'surrealist' in 1944 as a label for an unspecified aspect of Harris' style, Hope was exercising a critical function independently of the critical trap about to be set for Harris by Harold Stewart and James McAuley. "The Darkening Ecliptic", a suite of poems sent to Harris as the work of the putative Ern Malley, was composed by Stewart and McAuley. It appeared in the Autumn 1944 issue of Angry Penguins and, in a roundabout way, a few months later led to Harris' conviction of indecent publishing. Hope was preparing his own literary hoax to be aimed at Harris until he learned that Stewart and McAuley were engaged in a similar scheme. Hope later wrote that, in 1943, he had 'planned a mild hoax on my own account, under the pseudonym of an absurd advanced poetess invented by Stewart, called Nausea Bagwash.' As 'dear Nausea' was Stewart's invention, Hope decided...


90. Appendix, Ern Malley's Poems (Melbourne : Lansdowne Press, 1961), pp.42-56, has comment on the court case, assumedly by Harris, and gives part of the judgment by the magistrate.

to let Stewart know that 'she had taken up surrealism and was about to send her efforts to Angry Penguins.' Hope was asked to stay his hand and he was kept informed by McAuley and Stewart on the developments of their plot. 'I've been sitting on the bank for the last six months watching Maxie played for a sucker - but of course sworn to secrecy', Hope wrote to Clem Christesen, a few days after the Sydney tabloid, Fact, promised to clear up the Ern Malley mystery in its next issue. The next issue of Fact, 25 June 1944, under the heading, "Ern Malley, Poet of Debunk: Full Story from the two authors", carried a statement by McAuley and Stewart. Comment has been made by John Anderson and Max Harris on the contribution made to the untoward direction taken by the experiment because of the involvement of Fact, a popular tabloid; McAuley and Stewart's statement included the point that the matter 'became known to in an unforeseen manner'. Hope's account is that the authors' through the press allowed a rumour to spread that Ern Malley was a hoax. The authors'

93. "Ern Malley, the great poet or the greatest hoax?" Fact: The up-to-the minute Australian news-review, Supplement to the Sunday Sun, Sydney, 18 June 1944, pp.1 and 4.
statement revealed their 'method of composition':

1. There must be no coherent theme, at most, only confused and inconsistent hints at a meaning held out as a bait to the reader.

2. No care was taken with verse technique, except occasionally to accentuate its general sloppiness by deliberate crudities.

3. In style, the poems were to imitate, not Mr Harris in particular, but the whole literary fashion as we know it from the works of Dylan Thomas, Henry Treece, and others.

On 25 June Hope wrote to Christesen that 'The method of composition is surely a final test', adding that it was so superior to his own projected hoax that he gave up that scheme:

I had planned to send him a number of similar poems but poems constructed on the surrealist plan. It was true that I wrote the whole ten in two sittings of an hour each, approximately, and that they were deliberately phoney constructions but Max could simply have replied that it only proved his point about composition - whereas with Stewart and McAuley he seems to be left with no appeal to the unconscious. The Ern Malley poems are complete artefacts and it will be very difficult for Max to unsay what he has said about them.97

Hope's remark that Harris 'seems to be left with no appeal to the unconscious' was guarded, possibly because he recalled the idea put forward by Stephen in A Portrait of the Artist as to whether an artist, hacking in fury at a block of wood, might produce a work of art.98 McAuley and Stewart, poets, created something of lasting worth with the Malley experiment, perhaps even in the way that one writer has seen that Dada artists, a quarter of a century earlier in Europe, created in the spirit of nihilism:

But the things they then created represented a kind of Order. Looking at their works...one can detect the echo of a search for form and substance. Their nihilism was sincere but limited. The artistic temperament is obviously incapable of destroying anything without at the same time creating something else.99

Estimates of the literary worth of the Malley poems have been varied. Angry Penguins for December, 1944, has sixteen opinions. Under the heading, "The Protagonists", the Introduction to Ern Malley's Poems has comments, 'mainly interviews from John Thompson's radio documentary' on the ABC in 1960. What is incontestible is that the circumstances surrounding the making of "The Darkening Ecliptic" and what followed have added to the repository of myth, upon which art draws, an example of the workings of Providence. Dutton instances several artistic offspring of Ern Malley; an immediate product was Nolan's "The Arabian Tree", inspired by Malley's "Petit Testament", which appeared on the cover of the Ern Malley Special Issue of Angry Penguins.

Hope's direct part in the Ern Malley affair was confined to his being privy to the plans of McAuley and Stewart but a part corollary of the affair began with Hope's 1944 review of Harris' partly stream-of-consciousness novel, The Vegetative Eye, a review later referred to by Harris as Hope's 'famous Whelan-the-Wrecker job on myself'. The critique, "Confessions of a Zombi", by its title indicates Hope's intellectual distrust of the intrusion into writing of material from the subconscious. Hope's critique as a whole indicates the lateness of maturation of Hope's humane sensibilities and his proneness at that time to reveal publicly, in his writing, his psychological vulnerability. Harris was an aspiring writer of twenty-two when The Vegetative Eye was published in 1943.


102. Dutton, Snow on the Saltbush, p.162.


105. Max Harris, The Vegetative Eye (Melbourne : Reed and Harris, 1943).
Hope's review is an amusing but biting comment on a novel which he assesses as a compendium of the literary techniques in vogue in the preceding thirty years. He quotes to illustrate Harris' verbiage. He complains that Harris' characters are 'not observed people transformed. They are just made up.' The ridicule directed at Harris and his writing ability overshadows Hope's expressed appreciation of the concerns which engaged Harris. Hope's concluding criticism of the narrative is that 'Had the writer's ability matched his conception we should have had the picture of a living man'. Of the concerns of the author, Hope acknowledges that what Harris has to say is 'worth taking seriously' and identifies Harris' starting thesis as being that in the dream life we find revealed the nature of the problems of personality, but that only in the physical world of action and events can we solve those problems by the imagination which enables physical events to express the static dream life symbolically.

The Vegetative Eye is all that Hope says it is but in the 'little essays for the guidance of the reader' which make up a fair proportion of the book, and are more interesting than the narrative, Harris reveals his preoccupation with issues which have numbered among Hope's preoccupations. Hope's comments on those sections could be expected to be detailed. The nature of art and the problems of presenting artistic material objectively are expressed by the protagonist/author:

If, then, many artists are as self-conscious and dramatic in their emotions as I, how do they manage to produce that art in which genuine and profound emotional experiences take on a non-temporal and autonomous existence?

The emotional experiences an artist undergoes are false and histrionic because his attitude to them is analytical. That is his job.

106. Hope, rev. of The Vegetative Eye, in Native Companions, p.54.
107. Hope, rev. of The Vegetative Eye, in Native Companions, p.53.
108. Hope, rev. of The Vegetative Eye, in Native Companions, pp.50-1.
Those sentiments must have struck a responsive chord in the poet who had composed, for example, "Observation Car" (pp.22-3), an autonomous work but also personal and temporal, and in which the 'I' remembers how he had planned 'To live by the sole, insatiable influx of the eye./But something went wrong with the plan'. A number of other comments by Harris are in accord with Hope's writings in the 1940s, as when Harris remarks, 'How sardonically odd are the manifestations of love'.110 The question of what is art, the nature of love and the fact of death111 are of the common property of ideas with which artists engage but there is a striking commonality of specific concerns between Harris and Hope which are apparent in Harris' novel and Hope's writings. Art as the means to the growth of the spirit attracts some comment by Harris; he touches on the question of what is the good and notes the singularity of lovers; and he is concerned to understand the effects of the operation of the unconscious on the imagination.112 Frequently in his prose writing Hope has stressed the importance of Keats' observation that poets 'are endowed with that "negative capability" by which they are "capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason"'.113 In a contorted comment on goodness, egoism, self-consciousness and the Romantic poets, Harris says of Keats, 'above all, he was guided, and evaluated life, through his power of negative capability'.114 Baudelaire, Mme Aupick and M. Ancelle merge into or emerge out of Harris' story with sometimes confused effect. The protagonist frequently fantasises that his

110. Vegetative Eye, p.57.
111. Harris, Vegetative Eye, e.g. pp.47-8, 54-7, 34.
114. Vegetative Eye, p.93.
real or fantasy relationship with a partly coloured girl, Jeannie, is a repetition of Baudelaire's love affair with Jeanne Duval. He identifies his own creative, aesthetic and sexual dilemmas as repeating aspects of the experiences of Baudelaire and, at times, of Byron and Keats. Hope's poetry does not exhibit the sort of authorial identification with Baudelaire that Harris' does in his novel, but there is identification, as in "Sonnets to Baudelaire" I, where Hope writes of Baudelaire that 'we are fellow travellers in a land/Where few around us know they walk in hell' (p.234) and he regards himself as belonging to the anti-Romantic tradition he sees that Baudelaire established:

You, naked, the first Gardener under God,
Who tilled our rotting paradise, from its sod
Raised monstrous blooms and taught my tongue the craft.

Even so, Hope's comments on Baudelaire's being a poet at the start of the Romantic era ("Sonnets to Baudelaire" X, p.239) reproves Baudelaire for having enunciated 'The great Romantic theme : My heart laid bare'.

Harris' novel is an exercise in laying bare the heart, as are several of Hope's early mature poems and the 1967 sonnets, "The Planctus" (pp.214-9). Harris' adulation of Baudelaire, unlike Hope's in "Sonnets to Baudelaire", reflects nothing of an appreciation of the epigraph Baudelaire gave to the 1857 edition of Fleurs du Mal:

On dit qu'il faut couler les exécrables choses
Dans le puits de l'oubli et au sépulcre enclos,
Et que par les écrits la mal resuscité
Inféctera les moeurs de la postérité;
Mais le vice n'a point pour mère la science,
Et la vertu n'est pas fille de l'ignorance.

(Théodore Agrippa d'Aubigné, Les Tragiquest, liv.ii.)


Harris, lumping together Byron and Baudelaire, writes histrionically:

I am morally sick ... For I and my kind are creatures of moral sickness. I am no traitor. I owe my moral allegiance to my liege lord and sovereign, death. Therefore, with my friend Byron, with my friend Baudelaire, I shall be the prophet of death. I shall morally destroy others and be corrupt and dirty.117

The poet who wrote "Sonnets to Baudelaire" was about sixty, whereas Harris was very young when he wrote The Vegetative Eye. Harris' appreciation of Fleurs du Mal may have been defective in 1943 but Harris was to warn, a few pages after the excerpt above, that 'The emotional experiences an artist undergoes are false and histrionic because his attitude to them is analytical. That is his job.' 118 It is often difficult for the reader of The Vegetative Eye to distinguish between the author and the author who is posturing in the guise of his protagonist. Harris, in "The Pelvic Rose", 119 had shown his understanding of the flowering of art from the flesh and of sexuality as the negation of death because it ensures the continuity of self through generation. Those points, because they are interesting in themselves, make it more curious that none of them is taken up in Hope's review of The Vegetative Eye.

In the same year as the "Zombi" review, Hope's poem, "Rainbow Cake (For Max Harris's very last Birthday)," 120 appeared. The poem is a parody
of the free association of images and the random rhythms Harris at times used in his poems of the 1940s. As far as association of images, the deliberately nonsensical sequence of images in "Rainbow Cake" is not paralleled in the logically expressed Harris poem to which "Rainbow Cake" makes reference. Parody is unlikely to be the real point of Hope's poem. Richard Haese has seen, in a line from "Rainbow Cake", evidence of Hope's patriotism:

... in 1941, Harris played the role of conscientious objector, an attitude he celebrated in a poem published ... in 1943 entitled 'Love Story of the Bourgeoisie who got out of step with time' [sic]. This prompted the rather more patriotic A. D. Hope to reply with the line, 'Corporal Phyllis's tits are quite out of step with mine'.

Hope's poem does refer to Harris' "Love Song of the Bourgeoisie who got out of step/With the march of time" but Haese's comment is odd. Hope was not a member of the armed forces and his antipathetic views of war had been made clear in the previous Number booklet with "Call Up - 1943".

Pastiche though it is, "Rainbow Cake" has the line, 'Not to salute the wrong uniform is the test', which is a reference both to "Love Song" and to Harris' youthful predilection for the literary vogue. The ending, 'of course the marching's fine/Though Corporal Phyllis's tits are quite out of step with mine', is a tilt at Harris' literary allegiances, not an affirmation by Hope of either patriotic or anti-war sentiment. Donovan Clarke, reviewing Number Two in 1945, commented that Hope's continued

---

121. e.g. Harris, "Cathartic," Angry Penguins, September 1943. Of seven Harris poems which appear together in Angry Penguins, September 1943, n. pag., only "Cathartic" and a quatrain, "The Ocean," are free verse.


123. Harris, "Love Song of the Bourgeoisie who got out of step/With the march of time," Angry Penguins, September 1943, n. pag.


125. Donovan Clarke, "Corkscrews and Sledgehammers," review of Number Two, 1944, Southerly, 6, 1, 1945, pp.53-4.
attack on Harris 'is to suggest that his interest is more than literary and critical'. Clarke added that 'as things are with us' in poetry, it would have been better not to publish the booklet.126

Mention of the ten poems which Hope 'constructed on the Surrealist plan' but which Hope did not send to Max Harris raises the possibility that "Rainbow Cake" was one of them. "Rainbow Cake" is part of a trilogy labelled "Contemporaries" in Number Two, 1944, the others being "Jindyworobak Vista" and "Le Coucher du Soleil Romantique".127 Under the title of a sonnet by Baudelaire, Hope's "Le Coucher" announces, in six o'clock closing pub imagery, the demise of the Romantic Movement. It and "Jindyworobak Vista" work by sustained metaphors. "Rainbow Cake" is, appropriately, a series of dislocated images, as the opening lines illustrate: 'Palace has a high palate, the inguinal arch/Made for the wooden women's triumphal march'. The poem offers 'inconsistent hints at meaning' in line with Stewart and McAuley's guidelines for Modernist composition. The title metaphorically describes the method used, of layers of showy images resulting in artistic and intellectual discontinuity. The addition of '(For Max Harris's very last Birthday)' below the title hints at Hope's knowledge of Harris' impending disconfiture. The poem is in the manner which Hope has later identified as his conception of Surrealist method,128 which suggests that it could be one of the concocted ten pieces. There is the possibility that 'Not to salute the wrong uniform is the test' is a jibe at Harris in reference to the Ern Malley poems and that "Rainbow Cake" was a further exercise in the manner of the ten poems.

Although Hope planned to use the ten 'deliberately phoney constructions' to discredit Harris and his use of Surrealist techniques, other poems by Hope give evidence of his serious employment of the subconscious, as in "Ascent into Hell" (pp.33-4), written 1943-44, and of the technique of juxtaposing esoteric and heterogeneous images, in the 1942 poem, "Morning Coffee" (pp.24-5). Hope was positively influenced by some of the same ideas as were Surrealist writers in the period he demonstrated his opposition to what he labelled as Surrealist in Harris' writing.

In a comment added to the 1974 reprinting of his reviews of Harris' The Vegetative Eye, Hope claimed the long before burial of the Hope-Harris 'comic hatchet' and confessed that the review was partly to avenge a grudge occasioned by Harris' commenting unfavourably on Hope's poetry. Despite the openness of the later confession, it took thirty years for the admission to be forthcoming; meanwhile, critics as discerning as R. F. Brissenden accepted that 'Hope's quarrel with Harris is about purely literary values.'

That Hope selected the review of Harris' novel for republication suggests that he gained continuing satisfaction from it and that his psyche had been scarred by the old gossip. The personality of Hope, the writer, appears more frequently in his writings than he would allow. In 1976, he published "Invitation to a Resurrection", a resurrection of his Harris hatchet which includes the lines,

'Let's start an anthology, Max,  
-- with a cultural grant it's easy -  
We'll scratch one another's backs  
And publish sludge that's sleazy.'

The Australia Council has no record of a grant to Harris in the mid-1970s but *The Vital Decade*, edited by Dutton and Harris, received a grant from the Commonwealth Literary Fund in 1968, which may be the anthology of Hope's jibe.

It is worthwhile to repeat some of Harris' points from one of his evaluations of the Ern Malley affair. He does not, however, mention that "The Pelvic Rose" ends with an attack on Christianity and the call, 'Destroy the murdering churches and the strangling crucifix'. The charge of indecent publishing which was brought against Harris did not arise from any representation by Stewart or McCauley to a statutory body. The South Australian police 'decided to take action against the Ern Malley poems, and against other short stories and poems which had been published in the Ern Malley issue of *Angry Penguins*'. The charge arose, says Harris, from the existence of a social situation in Australia in which 'Modigliani nudes were as much prohibited imports as Port Said photographs'. Niall Brennan, in *The Catholic Advocate*, 'brought up the novel suggestion that they [the Ern Malley poems] were indecent and so added point to a coincident demand elsewhere in the same issue of the *Advocate* for more Catholic involvement in matters cultural. It is to 'intelligent ambush work of the Catholic Actionists' that Harris attributes the court case and he adds, 'The court case did the real damage by breaking up the components of the *Angry Penguins* movement, whereas the Ern Malley affair had tended to consolidate the ranks'.

134. Harris, "The Pelvic Rose," p.27.
Penguins in the context of Australian literature as being part of the necessary and necessarily transient 'self-conscious "modernism" of the 1940s' and he concedes, 'As with any experimental movement there were excesses, absurdities and intolerable posturings among the Angry Penguins ... We were open game for Professor McAuley's notable and complex just'.

Two ironies apropos Hope emerge from considerations of the Ern Malley affair. The 1944 court case against Harris was on the grounds of indecent publishing, not about literary quality. As a champion of the freedom of the artist Hope supported Anderson in 1941 in opposition to the re-banning of Ulysses but in 1944 neither Hope nor Anderson raised his voice in defence of Harris, either on the literary quality of the Malley poems or because of the nature of the obscenity charge; McAuley was unavailable. Hope was too closely involved to be objective. The following year Anderson evaluated the merit in the poems, in "Poetry and Society", and mildly ridiculed the prosecution's charge against Harris of indecent publishing. The other irony is that in the early 1950s Hope felt the moralistic pressures which had affected Modernism in Australia. The manuscript of The Wandering Islands was rejected, 'a few years' before 1955, by the Publications Board of Melbourne University Press because 'they had to consider the sort of thing it was suitable for a University to publish'.

141. Hope, "Childe Anderson Comes to the Dark Tower."
142. Harris, "Malley among the Angry Penguins," : 'Jim McAuley had gone to ground and couldn't be found to give the definitive evidence as to the obscene intentions supposedly written into the poems.'
that is, because the moral tone of some of the poems was questionable. By 1955, when a new Act regarding obscene publications had come into force, Hope had a personal as well as an aesthetic motive in joining protestors against implications of the Act. Two months after the appearance in the Sydney press of "Literature in Chains", a letter of protest against the Act jointly signed by A. D. Hope, P. K. Elkin, R. Milgate and H. Piper, McAuley's Brisbane CLF lectures on Hope's poetry took place and, in the Brisbane press, views were aired about Hope's poems. Views ranged from the guarded, "'Mr. McAuley had to face a difficult problem in lecturing on Professor Hope's work, which, I admit, might be embarrassing to some people'," to the forthright, 'Every meal implies a garbage tin, but that does not mean that the tin should be placed in the middle of the dinner table'. Criticism of Hope's poetry which followed the publication of The Wandering Islands was seldom as blunt as the 'garbage tin' item above or as some of the criticism Hope meted out on the work of others. The shock of some of Hope's poetry continues. Ruth Morse, who edited the 1986 A. D. Hope: Selected Poems, records that an editorial decision was made to exclude from Selected Poems some previously unpublished erotica because the publishers hope that schools will buy the book.

Radio broadcasting is a further avenue through which Hope has contributed to Australian literature. One outcome of his radio involvement

147. E. V. Marks, letter, "Why study 'such poetry'? " Courier Mail, 24 June 1955, p.2.
150. Hope, "Talking to the Void," pp.2-5, surveys forty years of talks on radio and television.
in the early mature period is the *Dunciad Minor* (originally "Minimus"), the mock-epic which resulted from a 1950 series of broadcasts called "Standard Works I'd Like to Burn". Hope's target-author was Arnold; A. A. Phillips attacked Pope. The original "Dunciad" confirmed Hope's reputation as an intellectual and wit but, except for some published excerpts, was not available to the reading public until *Dunciad Minor* was published in 1970. This is because it is libellous (the opinion is that of Peter Ryan, of Melbourne University Press). When *Dunciad Minor* was published, Elizabeth Riddell wrote that A. A. Phillips had undertaken not to sue anyone and had probably never intended to do so. Not only Phillips catches the sharp edge of Hope's wit in those books of the *Dunciad* which were originally written in 1950. We are promised 'a full and moving account of the inhabitants of New Holland, their history, manners, society, learning and literature'; in Book I, thirty succinct lines are given to Australians, whose arts are described as 'satire's paradisal dream'. It is a selective and funny account of aspects of the Australian scene and the humour is reinforced because the author is part of the society he describes. As critic and as satirist, by 1950 Hope was a veteran participant in the 'Grim civil wars' waged by Australia's 'hapless scribblers'; and users of heroic couplets, as well as bush balladists, can 'with elastic bounces thump the ground'. Ironically, in 1950 A. A. Phillips introduced 'The Cultural Cringe' as a description of the attitude to

151. The circumstances which gave rise to *Dunciad Minor* are given in the Preface, pp.v-vii.
153. Elizabeth Riddell, "Dunciad Minor comes out of hiding."
Australia which Hope exhibits in the *Dunciad*. Radio, too, draws Hope's fire, and the incomprehension with which turf-fanciers are credited suggests that Hope placed small value on the effects of programmes such as "Standard Works I'd Like to Burn". If he felt that his own broadcasts were pearls cast before swine, Hope was heroic in his persistence in use of radio.

Dorothy Green has given a critical and fair evaluation of *Dunciad Minor*, in part of which she notes the subjectivity of the portraits of Goddess Dullness, Australia and Australians, the Australian Broadcasting Commission and Melbourne. She allows that the subjectivity is balanced by the humour of the portraits. Wit and fun are saving graces of Hope's *Dunciad* - although 'the poem is at times cruel' - and part of the fun derives from Hope's temerity in taking the side of one of his selves against the other, the poet against the Australian who is also critic and academic. The title of "'Duck-billed Paradox'" given to Phillips, could be applied to Hope. The *Dunciad* is a typically ambidextrous exercise by Hope. The poet exists as a separate persona in Hope's poetry but the material from which he fashions his verse is the experience of the man. Where the poet's view prevails, as in the *Dunciad*, and a degree of incongruity results, the autonomy and integrity of the poet-persona are demonstrated. The Australian critic-professor fares less well.

---

159. Dorothy Green, "A Mark for the Arrow? A. D. Hope's 'Dunciad Minor'."
160. Dorothy Green, "A Mark for the Arrow?" p.428.
Two 1940 radio items are of particular interest. In the period when he conducted fifteen minute sessions for young writers, reading out and commenting on contributions from members of the ABC's Argonauts' Club, Hope gave a talk to the Argonauts on Surrealism and poetry. Patricia Kelly, Document Archivist with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, has collected information from research done for Ida Elizabeth Jenkins' book about the Argonauts' Club, *Good Rowing!*, and she writes, 'A. D. Hope was associated with the ABC Children's Session from 1940-46 and a special page for Argonauts was introduced in the *ABC Weekly* from December 1944. Hope edited this page on only two occasions and made a comment on originality in another.' The article on Surrealism is not by Hope. Headed "Argonaut Defends Surrealism", it begins with the editorial explanation, 'A talk about Surrealist poetry, broadcast by Antony Inkwell, in the National Children's Session, evoked this defence of Surrealism from Castor 28, a 15-year-old Brisbane girl, who is a member of the Argonauts' Club.' Antony Inkwell was Hope's programme name and Castor 28 was the programme name assigned to Barbara Blackman, who became a writer. It would seem that in his talk about Surrealist verse Hope declared it was not poetry but the point must remain conjectural.


168. Geoffrey Dutton kindly supplied the present writer with an address for Barbara Blackman. Unfortunately, a letter sent to her at that address was not answered.
quoting from a tape sent to him by Barbara Blackman, comments,

In 1944, the year of the Ern Malley hoax, there was a fascinating outbreak of modernity from Anthony Inkwell, alias A. D. Hope. 'He read out a big chunk of Rimbaud's Les Illuminations, all about banners of raw-meat. I thought it wonderful'. Barbara Blackman sat down and wrote lots of surrealist poetry, very bloody and ghoulish, and sent it off to A. D. Hope with a highly rhetorical defence of the modern epoch. There was a page in the ABC Weekly for poems and drawings. Amazingly enough, Hope put it in.169

Barbara Blackman's reference is to Les Illuminations, XXIX, "Barbare", which begins, 'Bien après les jours et les saisons, et les êtres et les pays,/Le pavillon en viande saignante sur le soie des mers et des fleurs arctiques; (elles n'existent pas.)'170 The page to which Dutton refers had not begun; the fifteen year old's article171 appeared as half a page by itself, the other half page being advertisements. Probably it was not Hope who decided to publish it. The tone of Castor 28's item is a mixture of exasperation and patience and its writer tells Antony Inkwell, 'I hope you are not one of those "Old Socks", as I call them, who peer at you over piles of Wordsworth and Longfellow and Shakespeare, and sigh and say, "No, this is not poetry! Fetch me my paper basket!" She instructs him in appreciation of Surrealist verse:

Every word must be tuned and tested to fit that subject, every picture (it is essentially a drama of mingled pictures) must be undeviating from that theme. As soon as you use an abstract noun or epithet, plonk goes the poem ...

Barbara Blackman's advice is similar to some of the advice the adolescent Hope was given by Violet McKee, 'that I write only what I knew about at


170. 'Long after the days and the seasons, and the creatures and the countries,/The banner of bloody meat over the silk of the seas and the arctic flowers; (they do not exist.)' Translation from Rimbaud, ed. Oliver Bernard (Baltimore, Maryland : Penguin Books, 1962), p.275.

first hand, always looked firmly at the object and tried to evoke it in
the simplest, most direct and economical terms'. 172 Sheila L. Roper has
seen that Violet McKee 'was advancing a thoroughly imagist programme' and
she considers that when he wrote of Violet McKee, Hope was so intent on
'having nothing to do with the modern influence' that he did not recognise
the advice for what it was. 173 In the light of Hope's sweeping dismissals
of Surrealism, free verse, Symbolism and Imagism, Sheila Roper is probably
right.

By the 1950s, Hope was still far from immune to the attractions of
Romanticism and Modernism. The second item connected with broadcasting
which is of interest is a holograph note made by Hope on a radio programme
typescript and, again, the reference is to Rimbaud. This quotation of
Hope's note is taken from Geoffrey Dutton's Snow on the Saltbush:

Rimbaud's phrase 'j'assiste à l'éclosion de ma pensée'
(I assist in the hatching of my thought.) The implication
here that the poet is powerless to control the poem -
deply involved in modern 'free' practice - goes back to
the Socratic view of inspiration ... yet it really has
quite another implication for it is profoundly true.
The abrogation of the personal freedom in the interests
of the necessity of the art. 174

The Hope Papers in the Menzies Library, Australian National University,
are not definitively classified. The present writer failed to locate
the radio typescript in the Hope Papers. Geoffrey Dutton has advised
that he thinks the broadcast is in the Menzies Library and that the
translation, 'I assist in the hatching of my thought', is his own. 175
When Hope returns to Rimbaud's letter to Paul Demeny, 176 from which

174. Hope, quoted by Dutton, Snow on the Saltbush, p.159.
      Oliver Bernard, pp.7-17.
'j'assiste à l'élosion de ma pensée comes, he translates the expression, 'I witness the unfolding of my thought'. Hope apparently made the note on the broadcast typescript in the 1950s; he was debating 'modern "free" practice', which involved the artist's yielding of control of the creative process. Hope was drawn to the idea of the artist as a medium for the mystical Muse but resisting the idea of yielding conscious control of the creative process, a dilemma he has only partially resolved.

Hope's interest in Baudelaire continues to appear in his mature period poetry. "Flower Poem" (p.14) is partly a response to Fleurs du Mal. Baudelaire's "Don Juan in Hell" has a thematic counterpart in "The Damnation of Byron" (pp.2-6). Hope's "The Vampire" and "Necrophile", published in 1946 but written earlier, echo Baudelaire, the first in its title, the second in its re-working of the theme of sexual love and death, a theme which Hope repudiates in his middle period sonnets VII and VIII of "Sonnets to Baudelaire" (pp.237-8). Writing in 1956, without documenting the quotation, Matters remarks on

the long period of apprenticeship which he [Hope] has still not completed: apprenticeship to Baudelaire, to Swift, to Milton, to Blake, and, today, to Dryden .... 'The only way in which it can be done is by long and patient study of those who know how it is done ... Ten years ago it was Baudelaire, to whom I no longer go - the umbilical cord is cut.'

Hope was, or had been, attracted to Imagist poetry, particularly that of Hilda Doolittle (H D), and while at the University of Sydney

178. Dutton, Snow on the Saltbush, p.159.
he had 'dabbled' in 'new experimental modes of poetry, particularly free
verse, imagism and symbolism'. He would have been aware of the
Surrealist movement, which had its literary beginnings with de Sade,
Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Mallarmé and others. Hope's qualified acceptance
of Freud's theory of the mind did not go so far as to allow him to
accept fully that introspection was an appropriate creative method for
a poet ("Rawhead and Bloody Bones", p.41) but he used introspective
material, as in "Ascent into Hell" (pp.31-4) and "Flower Poem" (p.14).
In "Flower Poem", the 'frail root' of a poem 'penetrates the cave beneath'.
Adherents of Dadaism - which was 'devoured and digested' by Surrealism
- and Surrealism employed automatic writing as offering a new kind of
poetry. Hans (Jean) Arp, a Dadaist, explained that 'Automatic Poetry
springs directly from the poet's bowels or other organs which have stored
up reserves of usable material'. André Breton defined Surrealism as
'pure psychic automatism by means of which it is proposed to transcribe
... the true working of thought dictated by thought, without any rational
aesthetic or moral control'. James Gleeson, in 1940, was more moderate
in his explanation:

Surrealism ... is an attempt, not to abandon reason, but
to make reason reasonable - to rejuvenate the concept of
reason. It is the fantastic used as a method of elucidation.
It aims at a re-orientation of values through a broadening
of the concept of reality. It reports the final destruction
of the primordial fear of darkness, for it is creating a
synthesis between the daytime reality of our mind and the
darkness of our subconscious world.

183. David Gascoyne, A Short Survey of Surrealism (1935; rpt London:
186. Hans Arp, quoted by Hans Richter, Dada, p.50.
187. André Breton, "Excerpts from The First Surrealist Manifesto (1924),"
in Surrealists on Art, ed. Lucy R. Lippard (Englewood Cliffs, N.J. :
188. Gleeson, "What is Surrealism? " p.28.
Humphrey McQueen has made an undocumented comment that Hope briefly experimented with 'automatism in creation'. That may be a reference to the Surrealistic poems Hope composed to send to Max Harris or to a programme, not brief, which Hope undertook to record and study his dreams and the fragments of poems he composed while dreaming. Sheila Roper draws attention to Violet McKee's tutoring as 'a thoroughly imagist programme', and adds, 'It is an incongruous thought, given Hope's later notorious antagonism; but it is not one which seems to have struck the poet himself, so intent has he been on having nothing to do with the modern influence'. In the context of her article, Sheila Roper's reference to Hope's 'later notorious antagonism' must be to Hope's antagonism to free verse, not only to Imagist poetry. She points to Hope's dislike of Pound and Imagism and, towards the end of her article, notes that there is little evidence that Hope has made a scholarly examination of the arguments on which Imagist poetry is based. Hope did make some examination of Imagism, and of Symbolism, enough so that in 1938 he taught and published the observation, 'we can never get away from the meaning and suggestion of words ... Even an incoherent arrangement of words is full of suggestion. Imagist and Symbolist verse is built up on this idea'.

Hope makes little distinction among Symbolist, Imagist and Surrealist verse. In "Free Verse : A Post-Mortem", he couples Symbolist and Imagist poets almost as casually as elsewhere he labels free verse as Surrealist.

189. McQueen, Black Swan, p.87.
Two expatriate Americans, Francis Vielé-Griffin and Stuart Merrill, writes Hope, helped to develop a new and virulent form of the free-verse theory among the decadent symbolists [in France] at the turn of the century. It remained for two other American ex-patriates, T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, to catch the new form of the infection and transplant it, together with the decayed matrix of symbolist technique and theory, back to England.196

Elsewhere he comments, 'From the mumbo-jumbo of _The Waste Land_ to the incantatory logorrhea of the Surrealists is but a step'.197 In "The Discursive Mode", Symbolist doctrine is represented as a Pandora's box of Modernist meaninglessness:

Poetry was not the thing said, but continual evocation of delicious suggestions of meaning. Poetry was an unconscious crystallization of glittering images upon the bare twig of metre. Poetry, at the nadir of this search for its essence, became the formless babble and vomit of the poet's subconscious mind.198

Hope has described his attraction to Imagism, despite his disapproval: 'I thought the Imagist school at the beginning of the century was talking a lot of nonsense... In spite of this I was very much attracted to the poetry of H D'.199 In "Free Verse : A Post-Mortem", Hope writes of 'Hilda Doolittle's tender phrasing of a momentary impression captured in a cool, detached image.'200 That quality marks the poetry of P. K. Page,201 the Canadian Symbolist poet to whom Hope dedicated "Soledades of the Sun and Moon" (pp.106-10). His appreciative attention to Brennan's poetry indicates his sympathy with what Brennan was trying to do by means of

Symbolism. Hope has been drawn to the kinds of poetry practised by the French Symbolists and their successors, whether Symbolists, Imagists or Surrealists, but he has felt the need to exercise, in his poetry, the control of formal verse and, as he remarks in his 1973 HSC broadcast, the need to say something. He has argued in support of his techniques but by 1965 he was able to concede that, although he had 'attacked free verse quite strongly in print ... I think that you can write a quite reasonable sort of poetry in free verse.' He has remained in two minds about the poet's abdication of the conscious self in the process of composition. This is most evident when some essays in The New Cratylus are considered. In "Dream Work", where he turns Freud's expression to his own use, Hope quotes some recorded fragments of his dream verse:

The three examples quoted from my own dreams all have in common this quality of playful invention, the suggestion of unexpected verbal felicity which a genuine poem always displays, but they also have in common that lack of inner structure, connection and 'point' that a genuine poem must have ... It is, in fact, the combination of the tedious shuffle of the so-called free verse with the incoherent vomit of that uncontrolled subconscious, 'la bouche/Sépulcre d'égout bavant boue et rubis', that makes most surrealist verse so unpleasant in spite of the often brilliant and sometimes beautiful images that sprinkle it, the rubies dotting the formless mud.204

Hope has said elsewhere that it is 'a mistake to divide the processes [of creative composition] into two groups. Those that rise unforeseen and unbidden from the depths and those that are deliberately constructed at the level of consciousness. It is not as simple as that'.205 He describes the creation of two poems which provided for him the experience

that was 'the nearest thing ... to having a poem emerge complete and ready made.' References in "Poems in the Making" to spontaneous poetry, especially to Anna Akhmatova's "Creation", give recognition that there are poems which manifest themselves through the poet independently of his conscious intervention. Although he has been drawn to Romantic notions of divinely-given inspiration and metaphysical poetic vision, Hope has acknowledged the surrealism of dreams as an element in poetic composition. Calliope, at the end of "Conversation with Calliope" (pp.177-200) is given to say to the poet, 'the gift of sleep/I leave you, not my gift of song'.

The 1985 poem, "On the Night Shift", endorses the importance of the non-rational but with a rider. When sleep takes over and 'all controls are set/On automatic, brain idling, will shut down', the 'back-room boys' take over:

These are my fellow workers every day
In that weird business of composing verse.
Without them my part falters flat and tame;
Without me in their wild surreal play
Senseless inconsequence would prove their curse
In kindling from dull fuel a roaring flame.

Although "On the Night Shift" and his use there of 'surreal' clarifies Hope's considered attitude to the surreal function of the subconscious in composition, the poem is best read as the poet's personal statement of the time of its being written. In the poetry of the middle period Hope most evidently shares Rimbaud's assertion - made in the letter where Rimbaud wrote 'j'assiste à l'éclosion de ma pensée' - that the poet must be a visionary: "Je dis qu'il faut être voyant, se faire voyant".

Fig. 1  James Gleeson, "We Inhabit the Corrosive Littoral of Habit", National Gallery of Victoria
In his later period, Hope has leaned more to Rimbaud's assertion that, as a poet, 'Je est un autre', but in the sense that the Hope who commits the poetry to paper is the medium of a force outside the conscious self insofar as his material is concerned, not insofar as how he writes.

While Hope was debating with himself the issue of conscious control in poetic creation and whetting the appetites of litterateurs with reviews and broadcasts, he further drew some attention during the 1940s by the scattered appearance of poems which ignored the world political situation and concentrated, not on local or international literary issues, but on satire, sex and self. By the time The Wandering Islands appeared, the particular nationalism of the Jindyworobaks had been largely subsumed into wider expressions of national consciousness in Australian literature; Hope had set his seal of approval on university studies in Australian writing; and the check to Modernism in Australia which had occurred a decade before was generally accepted as being the work of Stewart and McAuley. Hope's leanings towards Surrealism apparently passed unnoticed.

A quarter of a century after The Wandering Islands appeared in print, Humphrey McQueen considered the Surrealist aspects of Hope's poetry of the early mature period. McQueen saw a 'corrosive literalness' in the poetry and recognised that 'Hope achieved what the Surrealists claimed to want' by his treatment of taboo subjects and use of 'tactile imagery'.

'Yet in no sense was he a Surrealist', McQueen concludes, on the grounds


211. McQueen, Black Swan, pp.86-7.

212. McQueen's reference puns on the title of James Gleeson's "We Inhabit the Corrosive Littoral of Habit," 1941.
that the poetry expresses Hope's insistence on the application of reason as a constraint against decivilising hedonism. Whilst the form of the poetry is an expression of Hope's intellectual insistence on reason, recurrent preoccupations point to the poet's being buffeted by forces other than reason, the most dominant of which is sexuality. The dispersal of established repressive reactions to sex was a Freudian method utilised by Surrealists: 'L'éroticisme est à fois un élément constitutif de ce mouvement Surrealism, un de ses buts et une arme de choix parmi les multiples moyens dont il a usé pour manifester et rendre efficace sa révolts.'

Long before he prepared "Censorship and the University" in 1955, Hope was intellectually clear about the need for rational discussion of subjects traditionally, sometimes only regionally, considered taboo. Much of the poetry of The Wandering Islands period, however, reflects the psychological stresses which he underwent in a period when he was simultaneously drawn to and repelled by sexuality. Eroticism is an element in its own right in Hope's poetry, as well as a means of bringing the subject of sex to the treatment of reason, and it is as integral in the poetry as it is in Surrealist art. If the public figure of Hope, the intellectual critic, expressed Hope's aspirations for Australian literature to become Apollonian, the intellectual control of form in the Hope poems of the late 1930s to the mid 1950s was the Augustan cloak through which showed the twitching, tormented, Dionysian shape of the poet.

When McAuley gave the CLF lectures to Brisbane students in 1955, he was intent on alerting the students to what he saw was a dangerous moral trend in Hope's poetry but, with double irony, the highbrow

lecturer who had hoaxed himself as well as Max Harris was given attention in one newspaper under the headline, 'SEX POEM LECTURER is the man who hoaxed the HIGHBROWS', and, for a few days, Hope's poetry was in the limelight in Brisbane. Both because of and in spite of the ambiguous moral tone of the volume, the publication of The Wandering Islands established Hope's place as a poet in the Australian literary scene. It also established him as an *avant garde* poet of the sexual revolution, a Modernist aspect of his poetic achievement which has not been appreciated.