

Editor's Introduction

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At this time last year, and in this context, I noted the high degree of uncertainty that Victoria University was experiencing – an uncertainty that was the outcome of an exceptionally difficult financial situation. The financial difficulties that the University faced led to the loss of significant numbers of staff, with consequential changes to the kind of teaching and research that Victoria University was able to engage in. How welcome it would be to be able to report that those financial difficulties have been addressed; but the reality is that many years of underfunding cannot be addressed overnight, and the University – indeed, the tertiary sector – remains in a very challenging situation. How those challenges will impact on the Stout Centre and on this Journal remains to be seen.

Before remarking on the contents of this issue, however, it is incumbent on me to note, with very great sadness, the death of Emeritus Professor Sir Vincent O'Sullivan, formerly Professor of English Literature in this University, and one time Director of the Stout Centre. Vincent passed away on April 28th and was farewelled at a Requiem Mass at St Mary of the Angels in Wellington. He was 86. Obituaries and tributes to Vincent record his enormous achievement as a New Zealand writer and scholar, and a glance at a bibliography of his work reveals how exceptionally productive he was as poet, short story writer, novelist, dramatist, librettist, together with his scholarly work as biographer, editor, anthologist and critic. The quantity of work he produced is phenomenal – just before he died, he was correcting proofs of a new volume of poetry which was launched last week – but as Heidi Thomson notes, the quality of the work throughout his long career was equally amazing.

Long time colleague and friend of Vincent, Heidi Thomson reflects on his work and on their friendship in the essay that opens this issue; and in a gesture to the loss of one of our greatest writers, the two essays that follow are literary: Jan Cronin explores the lines connecting Patrick Evans and Janet Frame that can be teased out of Evans's novel *Gifted*, followed by an essay that looks at the influence of two little-known Polish figures on Eileen Duggan and Katherine Mansfield. By a happy coincidence, Vincent was one of the readers of the latter essay.

Picture books for emerging readers was one of the few fields that Vincent didn't explore, but he would no doubt have been keenly interested in Nicola Daly's examination of the role of bilingual picture books in what proved to be a crucial period in publishing in New Zealand.

Historians then 'take the stage', as Rosi Crane considers the evidence about the role of women naturalists in the Otago Museum of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and Martin George Holmes discusses the rise and fall of the Round Table Movement in New Zealand in and around the First World War. Jack Montgomerie looks at the life – or lives – of Ian Bing, revealing that life to contain so much more than implied by the role of the genial publican of Picton's Crow Tavern.

In the final full essay in this volume, Christopher Longhurst considers the use of Maori motifs by non-Maori artists in the production of some Christian art, and proposes a new term by which such artwork may be described. Finally, we present a short note by Fransesc March de Ribot that responds to an article previously published in the *JNZS* on Frances Hodgkins' cataracts.

Finally, as one of those who took voluntary redundancy last year, my term as editor of this journal has come to an end. It remains to welcome the new editor of the *JNZS*, Professor Jim McAloon, who will take over the reins from July.