Frank Eyre (1910-1988), a significant shaper for: definitive writing of Australian history and culture, supporting the nation's myth-makers and the most important national identity recorders from 1948 to 1976*

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ABSTRACT: This paper provides some account of Frank Eyre's carefully selected and supported writers and scholars, and his brilliant success in facilitating their carefully crafted, nuanced and sensitive responses—especially to the earlier white Australian experience, and so to sharpen its people's thinking about its own truer identity than the prevalent and simplistic treatment as still accorded to them so often in print / sound media just after World War II; and so to some consideration of his then so memorable editing and publishing of significant texts—from his selected and so perceptive and collaborators of the highest quality; and his similar immigrant co-worker in their like campaigns of shaping / actualising the Australian experience in print, Grahame K.W. Johnston (1929-1976).

KEYWORDS: Frank Eyre, Grahame K.W. Johnston, Australian identity, national identity

In the earlier twentieth-first century there would be but few Australian adults—even amongst those with some real awareness of (more current) Australian writing, or of the shapers / recorders of the settler-created and widely accepted patterns in Australian culture—who may have heard of the name of the so very quiet and immediately post World War II English migrant, Frank Eyre (1910–1988). And yet he may, in the early twenty-first century, be said to have achieved for himself what must now be acknowledged as the most laudible and highly successful role in facilitating publication / recording of the most talented and significant of

* He is discussed in Volume 17 (Melbourne University Press, 2007) of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, in an article by David F. Elder.

their deeply considered responses to the style, thought, and written and spoken expression of the Australian people from colonial times onward, this work to have been achieved in the period from c.1948 until his formal retirement in 1975.

And the rousing of the Australian nation to a much sharper and significant awareness of its cultural past—as mainly from 1958 to the latter's death in 1976—was to occur in this period of his crucially supportive assistance with the shaping—and so, duly, the launching—of many outstanding and significant texts, such as those as yet to be discussed, or the career capping work of Eyre with Grahame Kevin Johnston[1] (1929–1976) in the latter's *Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary*, a chunky and yet so easily accessible, readable, brilliantly nuanced work—and almost encyclopedic in its succinct sidelong glances at sport, recreation, and so many other pursuits, as in the daily round of the national life—the whole first so purposefully and successfully presented to the nation by them both in their touring the state capital cities with it throughout the latter months of 1976.

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For it is certainly the case that, in that relatively brief period of his living and working in Australia, as from 1958, with Grahame Johnston (1929-1976) and other, to be listed, significant writers, Frank Eyre had become someone whose thoughts, words, and consequent cultural acts—including his publishing support to salient figures of his then forged renaissance with their then commissioned and so distinctive literary achievements—should put the younger man—but much later—in a direct / sequential line of Australia championing writers—it to include such potent / memorable wordsmiths and impassioned recorders and further shapers of the national essential thought and identity, as:

> Rolf Boldrewood, i.e. Thomas Alexander Browne, the world savoured and so vital novelist, wordsmith and brilliant recorder of the age of gold mining and bushranging (he living, 1815–1898, and the later parts of his life in Australia, first in Northern New South Wales, and then in Metropolitan Melbourne, in his retirement);

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1 Johnston's life is treated by W.S. Ramson in his article in Vol. 14 (1996), of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press). The more and Australian scholarly aspects of his life, as in Australia, are discussed by Frank Eyre in the small book, *Grahame Johnston: A Reminiscence* (Canberra: Humanities Research Council, 1978).

S.J. Baker, the New Zealand born student of the English language and to become popular exponent of everyday Australian language and detector of so many of its subtle social nuances (his life, spanning the age, 1912-1976);

Russel Ward (1914-1995), historian and significant folklorist, especially of the early years of white settlement in Australia, and also of the slowly developing bush lifestyle of Australia and of the social mores to be best gathered up / focussed in the fine concept of support, or 'mateship';

Judith Wright (1915–2000), the daughter of a pioneering New England pastoral family /dynasty, one operating in both New England, and, variously, in southern and central Queensland; and the sensitive poet and reflective historian of the manner of taking up of so much Aboriginal land in the cause of ever more white pastoralism;

and the perhaps less familiar name and yet White Australia's so sharply nuanced speech and language analysing lexicographer, and teacher of so many sectors of society and culture—Grahame K.W. Johnston (1929–1976).

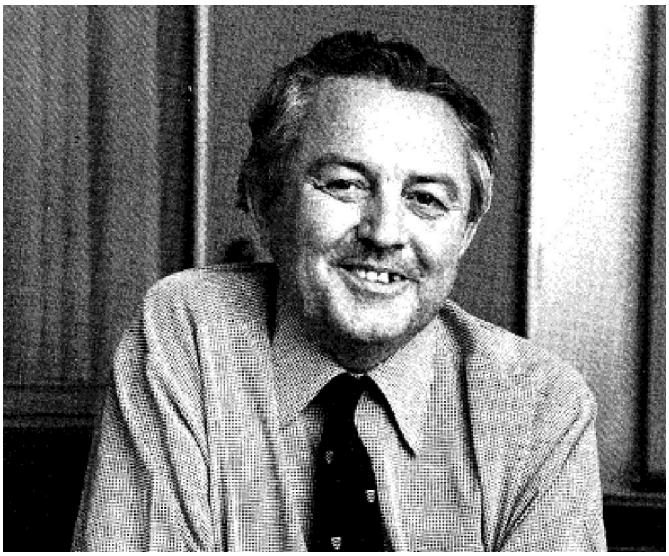

Figure 1. Grahame Johnston

And this last, a trained linguist and yet infectious literary critic and prose writer, the son of a journalist from Scotland, but New Zealand

nurtured, and language instructed at the feet of the Scotsman, Ian Gordon,[2] and then, to be studying in Oxford (1952-1954) where he, Johnston, to was to be further educated, in the finer nuances of the earlier English language and of its semantics and so rich cultural inheritance, and he perhaps deemed to be best represented by his quickly so ubiquitously appearing historical lexical work and smaller (desk) *Australian Pocket Dictionary*, of the contents of which, or, indeed, the nature and social and cultural richness of whose book, and, indeed, of his diverse and most fascinating critical and interpretive works, so many are ignorant; and yet that lexicon is now one to be lauded, even as it is a work to be found on desktops in so many homes, offices, and schools, and it is to be continually referred to, for his most small yet significant volume is one almost offering the general reader, a work that was soon—and rightly—to be styled a 'pocket encyclopedia of the thought and expression of the Australian nation'.

It must be stressed, at the outset, that the last three of these deeply thinking and contemplative writers, on the pondering Australian settler and his complex but so rich later cultural experience, may be said to have owed much of their then quite quickly—and so very much merited influential places in advancing both Australian culture and quality letters—as from his, Frank Eyre's, quietly and effectively facilitating the opportunities for them; and so they were enabled to speak up, to reach out, and to create in discrete blocks, and in a fairly narrow window of opportunity, the nation's best and most insightful, historical and cultural and reflective pondering, this then done both eloquently and precisely.

And this same artistic world of fine thought and much subtlety was then enabled—by the far–seeing publishing and marketing genius, their meticulous editor—to reach out to such wide and significant readerships, as so covering so memorably the national story, art, poetry, and then making the most sensitive response to the ongoing tragedy of the plundering of the Indigenous people's land and landscape, as well as the slow emergence of a newly forged and so distinctive national identity.

Further, in the year of his own death, 1976, Eyre's ever close collaborator, G.K.W. Johnston, had worked so closely to facilitate and finally produce the most remarkable and compendious aid to the settler and sequential culture in this country, at all levels, the quite amazing and almost pocket encyclopedia, *The Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary*.[3]

Also to be noted is the fact that, of the now to be listed Eyre-nurtured figures and shapers of some of white settlement's most abiding and deeply

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2 Gordon would also, about the same time be guiding the former soldier, R.W. Burchfield in the language studies that would, duly make the latter the Editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

3 Based on *The Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, as First Edited by F.G. and H.W. Fowler, 5th Ed., 1969. Some closer discussion of GKWJ's style has been held over to *Australian Folklore* 32.

significant cultural perceptions, only Wright and Ward had been born and had their nurture in Australia.

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Some background to the postwar arrival of this so subtle, yet far-seeing and dynamic forging wordsmith, Frank Eyre, for his facilitating so much more profound Australian historical reflection and perception as in the writers and scholars whose qualities he had quickly perceived and so significantly supported.

Born in 1910, in Manchester, in England, Frank Eyre had had a quiet and yet considerable career there as a naturalist writer, in 1935 publishing *The Naiad and Other Poems*, becoming a canoe and English canals and riparian landscapes enthusiast—for he had been co-author with E.C.R. Hadfield of *English Rivers and Canals* (1945), and so is often deemed to perhaps have been the most successful water landscape delineator, in his tired post-Depression country in the years just before World War II.

And so, after civil defence service during the Blitz, at that war's end, he had seized on an overseas expansion planning offer from his employer, the home country's pre-eminent scholarly and historical culture publisher, the Oxford University Press, to go to Melbourne as 'editorial Manager' (i.e. the general manager) in 1952, and in that post he was to initiate a publishing programme that had quite soon come to involve—and thus, he had, most insightfully and ably, very often drawn in, as well as commissioned—some several particular Australian writers into participation in what may be called a formal cultural campaign, one with no less a worthy objective of re-shaping the hitherto O.U.P.'s just retailing outlet for British works, so that it was soon moving towards the most meticulous and worthy publication of hugely insightful Australian texts across the genre range of its own, and his much preferred distinctive / various kinds / genres of *belles lettres*.

He was, similarly, and simultaneously, to be noted for publishing the many illuminating books concerned with haunting romantic qualities of the peoples of the South Pacific, where he had travelled extensively at the beginning of his time in Australia, and observed so much, and for which he would produce such continually influential, and to remain, native populaces in those territories—respecting cultural / educative works as: Kingsley Roth, *The Fijian Way of Life* (1953); or his own *Oxford English Course for Papua and New Guinea* and its successor, the *Pacific Series*, one which is reported as having had enormous sales, as well as a massive impact on the so much speeded up acquisition of the English language in those territories.

Further, Eyre would soon become a major contributor to the development of quality writing for children, beginning with his own *Twentieth Century Children's Books* (1951), and his careful support for the to be so influential Nan Chauncy, Eleanor Spense, and H.F. Brinsmead, these last being activities which flowed naturally from his earlier career British interests and liking for the traditional styles of story-telling for the young. And very significantly, as David Cunningham would point out [see below], Eyre had been a crucial figure in developing the confidence and quality of so many Australian publishers, as with those in the Children's Book Council, to which he contributed so much from 1958, and of which he would, duly, become the national president, as from 1966-1968.

In addition to all of this, no longer would he have the Oxford University Press just continue to import and sell British publications, and their favoured genres, but he had set about shaping Australian perceptions of its own culture, its distinctive space, its national experiences in both peace and war, and some of the most significant concepts of its own very powerful and almost totally Australia-derived recent and so embraced fresh—and freshly perceived—heritage, and for that new and dynamic culture to now have its most sensitive and subtle recording, as with:

Alexandra Hasluk's *Portrait with Background* (1955),

Russel Ward's *The Australian Legend* (1958),[4] or

Judith Wright's familial and national ponderings, notably with her *The Generations of Men* (1959), that work following his editing / presenting of her *A Book of Australian Verse* (for adult readers)—in 1956, and, in the same year, and for schools, *New Land New Language*.

Further, there would also be the two and so sensitively perceived editions, as of Bernard Smith's *Australian Painting* (1962, and 1971); and he had encouraged young artists to become book designers and illustrators, and played a leading part in establishing in 1952 the ABPA's [Australian Book Publishers'] Book Design Award.

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4 Ward had told the present writer, at a time, about August of 1959, that he, Ward, had had to re-write [parts of the body of his] *The Australian Legend* more than a dozen times before it was accepted, but this rhetorical outburst—if not an exaggeration—was, perhaps the reflection of a desire from Eyre that Ward tell the national story in a literary and reflective style worthy of the theme, and not as in earlier drafts, these a consequence of the historian's terrible political and academic problems as suffered after the mid-life completion of his PhD, and so his distraction from the task of melling it into a flowing historical and mental climate text from 1955; for till then he had been the focus of much right wing-caused almost police surveillance of his whole life prior to his coming to a University post, one at the University of New England, where he would remain / be so closely linked with Wright College [see elsewhere in this journal issue] and attain the position of Deputy Chancellor.

Similarly Eyre would encourage and bring to launching after some ten years of intensive preparation, Australia's most informative and nuanced scholarly dictionary of the national language in a compact format up to the present time, the work from the New Zealand born and Oxford trained G. [Grahame] K.W. Johnston, as in his *The Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary* (1976).[5]

All the earlier named word smiths, Boldrewood,[6] Baker, and Johnston himself—and all three themselves so very strong minded and powerful prose writers—and so pivotal in their perceptions of their own times' experience and understanding of Australian life, manner and both rich and memorably expressed mode of thought and experience—were, in their several, various and hugely significant fashions—to be concerned to capture the style, thought, expression and emerging character of both the there nurtured and incoming—and the steadily evolving and distinctive elements in their culture and perceptions—of the ever more aware, reflective and so very proud Australian people.

This last manner and style is evidenced both in their best stories, in the their multi-stranded lexis as used in their diverse range of reflective publications, and in their distinctive and robust modes of daily expression, the last being so succinctly and fascinatingly illustrated in Grahame Johnston's to-be-last publication, right at the end of his short life, *The Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary* (released in later 1976).

Each of these three instanced wordsmiths, and Boldrewood, too, had a remarkable passion for so carefully catching and illustrating so memorably the actual language and the manner / mode of thought and, likewise, for chronicling the settler / gold miner / later experience of life in this country which their perceptive and insightful writing / immensely subtle and informed scholarship had enshrined, and have so successfully communicated to that and the following generations, and then, and further, the recent and Australian culture—as being experienced, and savoured—by new settlers from a multitude of lands.

And in the case of so many of the above-mentioned Australia-born writers, it was the quite recent and sharply observant migrant, Frank Eyre, who had closely edited, suggested, and gently guided their expression so as to be the most suitable for their contexts / chosen genres, the which would prove to be so significant, respected, and memorably phrased in their cultural writings—and in the particular range of current forms and meanings in the case of the last and best publication and fields of

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5 A close analysis of some of the definitions, points made in the text, has had to be held over to a later issue of this journal. Eds.

6 See in particular, J.S. Ryan, *Golden Words and a Golden Landscape* (Armidale: University of New England, 2010), for a very comprehensive treatment of the both technical and more particular social vocabulary of the gold mining epoch in Australia, especially as found in the writings of the long time goldfields magistrate, T.A. Browne.

interpretation from the remarkably energetic of the so very prolific and quite New Australian, Professor Grahame K.W. Johnston.[7]

And they, the above named six distinctive and perceptive much writers / literary figures, had so much in common, in their so significant and remarkably interesting subjects' content, for their carefully wrought prose / so finely nuanced awareness of lexis would prove to be eminently readable, as well as their diverse writings / reflective prose, being both perceptive, and now so much further fashioned by their publisher–task master, as to capture so memorably the grand movement as well as the most sensitive—and significant—subtleties of the *in situ* Australian life. And most of them, and of course Eyre himself—save Russel Ward and Judith Wright—were to have been born in another distinct country and vastly different culture, and so were to be so much the more fascinated by the nature, psychology, and style of Australian observation / expression—often the colloquial, but that best enjoyed and understood when used and so subtly nuanced by native born writers of perceptiveness and of a powerful narrative manner and of an impressive stylistic integrity.

Further, they, his specifically commissioned authors, would all accept his wise and intuitive editorial advice—if he felt it to be needed—as in the conveying of their perceptions, interpretations and most subtle observations—to make it their business of exploring, to utilising, to explicating, and so to illustrate their insights and intuitive responses into the greater national experiences, social history and ever developing style of thought, expressive word, and social activity in Australia, all these which he—and they—had deemed to be at the core of their artist-creator role to capture / show, and to be of the greatest national and cultural significance.

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A Case Study of Frank Eyre and the Oxford University Press in Australia[8]

In this most perceptive and more recent piece, David Cunningham had reflected on Eyre's work in Australia from 1951 to his retirement at the end of 1975, including the [when, notionally 'retired'] extra year of zealous and generously supportive work on, and with, Grahame Johnston,

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7 Johnston had also edited closely argued commentaries on quality works from various national streams of writing in English, as for Adult Education bodies in both Victoria and Tasmania, notably the following works: Judith Wright, *The Generations of Men*, 1962; John Henry Newman, *Apologia pro Vita sua*, 1965; Emily Bronte, *Wuthering Heights*, 1966; Saul Bellow, *Herzog*, 1966; Scott Fitzgerald, *Tender is the Night*,1967; and Saul Bellow, *Mr Sammler's Planet*, 1971. [See the brief discussion of these in *Grahame Johnston: A Reminiscence*, 1978.]

8 This is the title given by David Cunningham to his brief essay on Frank Eyre, in Craig Munro, ed. *Paper Empires* (2006), and as then issued by the Queensland University Press.

on the latter's *The Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary* (1976) 'which was finally to be published in 1976 after almost ten years of painstaking work.' (*loc. cit.*, p. 23).

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And so, for now, to the arrival in Australia of a remarkable shaper / catalyst / lexicographer-enthusiast for the issuing of the finest Australian prose and poetic thought, to become, variously, classic texts, as well as one of the most remarkable desk companions—the Australian Pocket Dictionary of English (1976)—as yet to have been published.

Perhaps we may begin our to-be-variously evidenced musings over the later career—and remarkable achievements—in Australia of Frank Eyre (1910–1988), a reserved and both bookish and nature loving and academic publishing career savouring, Englishman, one who had come to this country in mature years, arriving in 1951. Much of his time in Australia is interestingly recalled in his *Oxford in Australia 1890-1978* (1978), and, during that period, he would both explore—and become so deeply committed to recording and imaging—the most significant facets of the social history, the artistic responses to its brilliant light, its landscape painters, and to all aspects of living in Australia, even as his legacy would be his success in leading many of the above cited figures into publishing—and so significantly with his own famed publisher-employer—their most significant, finely intuitive and expressed works, these now to be showpieces in the splendidly dynamic and intellectually powerful range of the O.U.P.'s most truly and significantly Australian books.

Apart from the critical literary series Johnston-edited, and aimed at community study groups, we may instance, firstly, some four towering figures, all of these hugely important for the so very much better understanding of Australia's slowly—and then very significantly and sensitively / graciously proffered—cultural history, as, from amongst them, in:

Alexandra Hasluk's *Portrait with Background* (1955);

Russel Ward's *The Australian Legend* (1958);

Judith Wright's anthology, *A Book of Australian Verse* (1956);

Judith Wright's *The Generations of Men* (1959); and the two editions of,

Bernard Smith's *Australian Painting* (1962, and 1971).

All these works are, rightly, deemed to be deeply insightful and carefully crafted / introduced writings, each in a nicely crisp prose, but it is not usual to consider what they may very well have in common in both their expression and their makers' / editor-selectors' purposes. Pleasingly, this very theme is to be found nicely treated in a more recent essay included as pp. 21-24 of Craig Munro (ed.) *Paper Empires*,[9] in a passage which succeeds in making cultural statements of the nature of Eyre's finest authors' own life experiences and so, now, proceed to their expression of further—and memorable—articulately expressed and subtly nuanced intuitions as to the deeper significance of the cultural changes occurring around them. To illustrate the last propositions, we can do no better than quote from David Cunningham's own account of this remarkably achieved transition and so proffered than as phrased for us / given by the latter in his reflective set of musings, *Paper Empires*:

> Frank Eyre managed the Oxford University Press Australian branch from 1951 until his retirement at the end of 1975… He was an editor and designer, and his wife Muriel was a book shaper designer also. Eyre had a forceful personality, strong opinions and a willingness to help and guide others. His arrival, as an experienced publisher at the height of his powers, coincided with the beginnings of professional publishing in Australia and his influence was to extend well beyond the OUP. (*op. cit*., p. 21)

And we are also told that he had been on the committee that had produced the important work, the *Australian Government's Style Manual for Authors, Editors and Printers* (1966).

And, typically, and in his evenly–across-the-genres pursuit for excellence—and also with the greatest clarity of expression—he was deemed also to be one of the key people involved in the advocating for Australian writers 'what themes to treat in their own developed thought', for he had variously and deeply probed and led a number of them to develop with both subtlety and much insight their several very intuitively felt studies of cultural matters of moment, and of much potential to both enlighten and, at the same time, to entertain. And Grahame Johnston had had much pleasure in joining him in like activities, as in the classic texts that he had prepared from other sources for so many discussion groups around the Australian states.

Eyre had too, and soon after his arrival in Melbourne, become a leading figure in the Australian book trade, serving as the Victorian Vice-President, and national president (1961-1963) of the Australian Book Publishers Association.

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9 Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 2006. Eyre's own reflections are fascinatingly recalled in his last prose work, *Oxford in Australia 1890-1978* (1978).

Thus, it was that we have Cunningham discussing the finest Australian literary, artistic and reflective historical and lexical voices, and their subtle but relevant perceptions from thenceforth to be heard throughout the land.

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And so to a glance at his concern for a rich, exciting and so very appealing desk size, and even chunky pocket dictionary, one to be accessible for all the people of Australia.

> *The Australian Pocket Oxford Dictionary* (1976), as edited by Grahame Johnston; a volume printed in Melbourne, for the Oxford University Press, 'London Wellington New York'.

Perhaps the best way to approach the style and significant difference of this now all Australian work is to compare it closely with *The Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, Sixth Edition edited by J.B. Sykes (1978), one of 1055 pages in the main text. Such a comparison of the two books will reveal that the Melbourne-produced one has about the same text mass, as evidenced by many close comparisons, but with a mass of re-writings/ re-defining clusters of words, the main features of which are:

- a considerable number of expanded definitions, perhaps 10% in the total;
- many French / Provencal and other European languages' cultural etymologies;
- numerous references to Australian sporting teams, especially to the state capital cities;
- and, therein, authentically phrased reference to the rivalry of the main football codes;
- items identified as particularly Australian, as in outback (p. 553);
- Oxford (University) usages, as in O.U. (p. 552);
- many colloquial items, as knock out, Austr. slang, in the sense of 'disqualify', (p. 553); outback (Austr,) remote inland districts or back country (p. 553); out (for the count) Austr., slang, i.e. knocked unconscious. (p. 553), etc.; etc.

The main nuanced details as added to this Oxford University Press Australia-produced text are:

- numerous Australasian colloquialisms, sporting usages, etc.;

- an assumed familiarity with the Australian state capital cities and their major suburbs;
- a larger than to be expected knowledge of the religious terminologies and so much of the Old French culture of earlier Middle English [the last of which he had studied at an advanced level in Oxford in that University's English School, Course I, in the academic sessions Autumn 1952—Summer 1954];
- a certain delight in etymology, as with the many relevant scraps of Old French; or -
- an interest in Mediaeval history as of Western Europe, and so of the culture impinging on it, as, e.g., with 'Ottoman', noted (p. 552) as Turk. F.f., Arab, name of Othman ([c.574-656, 3rd Muslim Caliph.]) etc., etc.

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Some biographical background to this surprisingly exciting and readable volume

Grahame Johnston, himself a Roman Catholic, born in Scotland, but raised in New Zealand, a student of English and English language first at Victoria University in Wellington,[10] and studying there under Professor Ian Gordon,[11] had then been to Oxford University, where he was to be a senior student member of Merton College (1952–1954), and doing the earliest English Schools' degree, one formally styled Course I. He had then proceeded immediately to various Australian academic appointments: in Brisbane (at the University of Queensland); and then to Melbourne—where he had, somewhat briefly, held a chair, at an amazingly youthful age of thirty four, at the University of Melbourne;[12] to Canberra, where he had various academic posts, and then, to later be moving to service on several related and national scholarly academic bodies; but his increasing sickness—obvious during the whirlwind tour to promote the new dictionary had recurred in later 1976, and he had died at the age of forty seven. This sad sequel to a brilliant life was to be recorded for us by Frank Eyre in the small volume of tribute and understanding, one entitled *Grahame Johnston: A Reminiscence*:[13] Canberra, Humanities Research Centre, ANU, 1977.

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10 His brilliant career is given, in sequence, by Eyre, *op.cit.*, p. 14.

11 Professor Ian A. Gordon had about that time also tutored R.W. Burchfield, who would proceed to Oxford, study with Professor J.R.R. Tolkien as his supervisor, and, duly, succeed Dr C.T. Onions as the Chief Editor of *The Oxford English Dictionary*.

12 This he had had to resign from due to the first serious breakdown of his health.

13 Pp. iv, 16. This small monograph—after a terse summary of the sequential steps in his quite remarkable career—gives us, on pp. 14-16, a sequential list of Johnson's scholarly publications, a list which makes very clear: his mediaeval training; his taste for the development of the American novel; his deep concern for 'The Language of Australian

The last sentence, at the end of the monograph, is perhaps the one of the most national and cultural significance:

> As mentioned more fully by Frank Eyre, Grahame acted as General Editor in three highly prestigious Oxford University Press series (*op. cit*., p.16)*:*
>
> *Australian Writers and their Work;*
> *Australian Bibliographies;* and
> *Selected Essays on Australian Writers.*

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In truth, he had already taken on—and achieved so much of—a lifetime's work in a career that was to terminate in his forty seventh year. And he was, *par excellence* one of those 'southern champions and scholars',[14] instanced but not specifically named—such as the to be Oxford professor, Eric Dobson, originally from the University of Sydney, or Professor Gerald A. Wilkes [the latter always teaching at the University of Sydney, and also a lover of the richness of English language as variously used in Australia]—to all of whom, as , as a group, Professor J.R.R. Tolkien would pay the most sincere tribute in his farewell address to the University of Oxford in the English spring of 1957.

Yet, the point to make here is that Johnston, above all his other scholarly, academic, and mentoring qualities and achievements, had loved people, was an excited and exciting communicator, and someone who epitomised a zest for life, a gentle and amazingly tolerant understanding of well-nigh every aspect of the so often debilitating daily round, and was one ever one of the most fascinated and fascinating of the post-World War II English language's colonial scholars, and then further Oxford-trained and to be finest practicing wordsmiths, despite his all too brief life.

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Literature' 1967, and following; and his concerns for quality texts to be comprehensively and illuminatingly annotated for the better guidance of Australian Adult Education classes, as in Victoria and Tasmania.

14 This term used by J.R.R. Tolkien in his farewell address to his then last Oxford College, Merton, and to the University of Oxford, had pointed to a class of 'southern' scholars, from New Zealand and Australia—who had done so much for mediaeval and later high scholarship of the English language; and Johnston had belonged in the particular cluster of them moving from New Zealand to Oxford, and then to Australia, in all cases doing sterling work in editing, interpreting, and rousing reader and student desire for access to the finest earlier texts, and /or to a better comprehension of their own national literary as well as historical cultures.

The actual reflective and so laudatory address was only to be published after Tolkien's death, in 1973, as pp. 16-32, of *J.R.R. Tolkien: Scholar and Storyteller: Essays in Memoriam* (Cornell University Press: Cornell and London).

And so, what is to be said finally, as of the ultimate achievement of both of these two close friends, the most talented and post World War II immigrants, incoming to Australia, and so soon to become such significant writer-thinkers, mutually supporting each other and close friends, as well as passionate advocates for authorial stylistics delivered with feeling and passion—those mid twentieth century newcomers to Australia and shapers of its thought and experience, Eyre and Johnston?

As this impressionistic account of mine will have indicated, these two men:

- were most certainly needed by their time, even as they were inspired by each other's efforts and achievements;
- were amazingly perceptive and possessed of the intuition that can come to the outsider that, in post World War II Australia, there was a nation aroused, one with a vast cultural experience, just waiting for that to be explored so deeply, and then both recorded and its greater—and significance—adequately and truly meaningfully interpreted;
- and, further, both had understood very clearly that the nation must be educated at every level, must be assisted to find and support from within its people as from its own hugely insightful thinker-writers who would assist them to express memorably—and so pass on—the most powerful of these national experiences as befitting the society's cultural understanding of itself—both within and, duly, far beyond its sprawling southern shores.

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In Johnston, skeletally, and yet on so many accounts, we were to have the most committed interpreter of the word splinters of our attained-to-that-point thought and national discourse, while in Frank Eyre Australia had found the passionate word shaper to give truly epic grandeur to the Australian people's social and cultural rise from scattered settlements and the several penal colonies to the proud, if long somewhat tentative nation that, at last, might truly benefit the vast southern continent.

The just cited—if somewhat esoteric—Tolkien link for the driving forces behind Grahame Johnston is a fascinating one, as is the background of the English landscape shaping the mind and heart of Frank Eyre, and the two men are, rightly to be seen as its 1960s and 1970s incoming 'champions' in their respect for and use of the Australian English tongue from a somewhat sloppy vernacular as the nation roused itself from a great torpor, to proffer from the pangs of its birth, bondage, and two world wars, the deeper insights now coming from its too long delayed maturity; and

the two 'New Australian' friends—and themselves quiet thinker 'wordsmiths', who had so bravely laboured for the better presentation of the nation's thought and feeling, were to pass away in the same brief period in the later 1970s.

They had had much in common, and would, alike, leave as their so often overlooked bequest, their own and others'—as now articulated—cultural insights into the now so much better understood and realised surrounding society, its now richer explored and used language, and thus so much more thoughtfully recorded cultural experience. Indeed, for each of these quiet yet so determined men was it now the case, after their remarkable and self-imposed and most unexpected labours and the consequences that were to flow from them, was it ever more true, culturally, as it has long been apposite with Christopher Wrenn, that -

Si monumentum requiris, circumspice.

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