

EDITORIAL

Since the first issue of *LINO* appeared in roneo in September, 1971, members of the different editorial committees have refrained from regularly discussing the journal in print. This seems to have been caused by a natural reticence, and also by a belief that the journal could speak for itself. Generally speaking, such a belief is not unjustified. Journals *can* often be trusted to define themselves by their contents.

Recently, however, we have realized that certain misunderstandings of the aims and circumstances of *LINO* are current. It therefore seems desirable that these should be defined and described.

As the title suggests, *LINO* is a regional journal, intended to provide an outlet for North Queensland writers of short stories, essays, poems, reviews and so forth. That is the primary goal, but in practice about half of each issue is given over to writers who do not live in North Queensland, and some contributions are of general cultural, rather than of strictly literary interest.

The regional orientation of the journal is easily defended. North Queensland has a wide variety of landscapes, and a long history of unique events, but a great number of writers with the interest or ability to capture them has not appeared. Typically, people of literary talent associated with the North leave at an early age (Clem Christessen), or reside fleetingly in adult life, sometimes compelled by their occupation (Thea Astley). One must assume the presence of social forces opposed to cultural development. A journal such as *LINO* might hope in part to counterbalance these forces.

Contributions by non-regional writers are included in *LINO* in the first place because of literary merit. The selection committees, which always include more people than the named editors, choose material for each issue with merit as the primary criterion. When a decision is difficult to reach — that is, when a contribution inhabits the twilight zone between acceptance and rejection — the author's known residence in North Queensland, or the relevance of the contribution in subject matter or form to the region is permitted to weigh in its favour. Secondly, the non-regional contributions published in *LINO* form a standard against which the regional writers can measure their work. The aim is to prevent the journal from becoming the instrument of a self-congratulatory coterie, lacking relationship with the wider world.

The circumstances under which *LINO* is produced are not in every respect ideal. The editors gratefully acknowledge a useful grant from the Literature Board of the Australia Council in 1975, and the continuing

financial support of the Queensland Government's Department of Cultural Activities. Although some members of *LiNQ* committees are connected with James Cook University, the journal is not intended to be an academic publication, and it receives no funding from the Department of English. The deficit remaining after grants is met by the fund-raising activities of the body primarily responsible for *LiNQ* — the English Language and Literature Association. The hair-trigger budget with which the editors work is mainly responsible for the journal's somewhat austere format.

A further difficulty is that all who contribute to the production of *LiNQ* do so voluntarily and part-time. For most, *LiNQ* is a single activity among a multitude of commitments and obligations. Many of the journal's shortcomings are, we believe, to be attributed to its lack of paid full-time staff.

The present editors, however, are more than willing to take out their reward in satisfaction. We honestly believe that *LiNQ* may in time contribute to the cultural development of North Queensland, and we shall continue to work for that end.

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