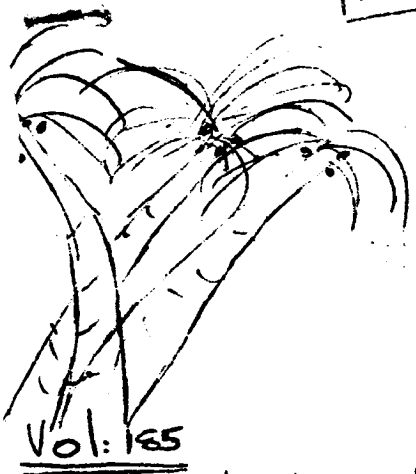


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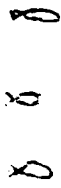
17 JUL 1974



MANINGIDA MIRAGE



A/S



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An article about writing articles:



In order to write this article. I must take it upon myself to presume that the people who read it will understand it, otherwise there is no point in even beginning. But, to immediately contradict myself I must admit that, in reality, this cannot be true. There is not an item written which is understood by everyone who reads it - perhaps because the reader is too young; or because the article is beyond his sphere of knowledge and interest; or because the writer has not been intelligible enough in his writing.

What proportion of the reading public should the writer wish to reach? It is here that he strikes the problem. If only a minority is going to understand him then it is hardly worth writing the article at all. In this case he should endeavour to discover where the fault lies, and to take steps to remedy it.

If the problem entails a lack of the writers knowledge of the language in which he is writing for instance then he should, no doubt, seek out someone fluent in that language to help him express himself in the manner he wishes. If alternatively, the problem lies not in the language medium as such, but in the actual representation of this language in the written form, then he should seek assistance to overcome this.

However, notwithstanding all of this, there is a definite pitfall inherent in assistance of this kind. It is inevitable that the person giving the assistance will not be of precisely the same line of thinking, or even of the same opinion as the person receiving the assistance. So, unless one is writing in ones own mother tongue in which one is completely fluent, both in the spoken and the written forms, ones writing will of necessity be tainted to a greater or a lesser degree, by the attitudes, opinions, and method of expression of another personality.

The writers dilemma, then, is to decide whether he will be satisfied with an understanding of his article by only 20% of those who read it, because it lacks adequate knowledge of the language of communication, or whether he will seek assistance, and by so doing sacrifice a little of the significance of what he has to say, for the sake of having his article read and understood by, perhaps, 80% of the readers.

If he chooses the latter of these avenues, should he be criticised for approving the use of words and phrases which "don't sound like him" (to those who know him at least) and should his assistant - being an entirely independent personality - be criticised for " putting his or her own ideas and opinions into the writers head"? To criticise such a thing would do no more than to discourage the writer from writing (publicly at least), and to hinder his efforts to become fluent in a language which is not his mother tongue (a difficult task for any person - writer, student or whatever) .

Rather than attempt to provide a solution to this dilemma, I leave the decision to those of you who understand what I've been writing about.

.....BRUCE NEALE

POST SCRIPT :

I, Bruce Neale, do solemnly swear that the thoughts and ideas contained in the above article are only and entirely my own, and have been influenced by my upbringing, and by that of no other person, so help me God.

STORY STORY:

The story Jack brought to me and the one I helped him with appear below. This may put some people in the picture as to Jack's work and ours.

M.N.

My story to the editor of Maningrida Mirages. Why are you telling me for not helping my giid english with writing a lot more to change the right words by another european people? My trouble is that I have never been to school in my life. But I taught by balanda friend teach me how to print and read many books. I had learned a little from Welfare power of intelligence test, which means for my own good. I know my ideas and words but I don't know what order to put them.

So why do you criticize me for not thinking in the independent way of my own? Few Aborigines understand the job or tribal land right of their own forefather's country. You know that Dan- I couldn't learn to live be like you either. When I want to make a balanda friends mind your own busines. You have already few Aborigines as your guides and nobody stoping you.

I was argueing with you because of last week's articles seems to wrong saying to me, nice and worse, but only different all according to the needs and wants of the tribes in us. I print this story not for my interest and pleasure to live the ways and unhappy seening theings. Do I worried you very much about blaming the mirages and deciding which is better.

When I always looks the balanda picture in the threater that remaind me the olden days of my people Jinang and Wulaki that they used to fight amoun themselves like enemy in the tribes over women, ceremonies, dead bodies etc.

Jack Mirritji

Why are you telling me not to get help with good English - changing to the right words - from European people? My trouble is that I have never been to school in my like. But I taught by my balanda friends who teach me how to print and read many books. I had learned a little form Welfare teaching, which is for my own good. I know my ideas and words but I don't know what order to put this.

So why do you criticize me for not thinking in the independent way of my own? Only a few aborigines understand the job or tribal land rights of their own forefathers' country. You know that Dan- I couldn't learn to live like you either. Then I want to make a balanda friend, mind your own business. You have already a few aborigines as your guides and nobody stopping you.

I was argueing with you because of last weeks article. It seems a wrong saying to me. *They were good words and meaning but bad for me. But we are all different according to the needs and wants of the tribes and languages in us.

*I print this story not for my interest and pleasure but for my living which is my job. I might get help for my people as I have seen many unhappy things.

Do I worry you very much by flaming the mirages or deciding which is better?

When I always look at the balanda picture at the school yard I do not copy the balanda story but that remind me of the olden days of my people Jinang and Wulaki who used to fight among themselves like enemies. It is these stories of my people that I want to write about.

Story by Jack Mirritji
assisted by Marg Keale

N.B. 1) This is an example of the sort of assistance Jack seeks. In this particular story his needs are very little only a few of his ideas needed clarification and extension. This extension of his ideas resulted from his talking about the words.

However his expression is not always as clear as this and he then needs more assistance.

2) The minor alterations like the odd conjunction, spelling etc, (unnecessary you might say), are done for Jack's benefit and serve as a teaching point for his improvement.

3) This also shows just what a good command of English he has - which might surprise many of the readers.

Marg. Neale.

EDITORS REPLY

Before I reply to any of these articles I will say that I made an error in my comment on Jack's story last week. Although I made the distinction between balandas who gave unbiased assistance and those who imposed their own ideas on Jack's stories, the general impression of my comment was that I totally disapprove of European assistance to Aboriginal writers, this is not true and I apologise for this false impression.

I hope our three correspondents will accept my answering them as briefly as possible in note form - otherwise we'll have eight pages on the same subject.

BRUCE. I cannot agree with you that a person who assists someone like Jack with his stories will 'of necessity' taint the story with his opinions and attitudes. I don't recognise this inevitability and I don't see the grounds on which you have based it. The assistant's role should be that of a translator who works in a disinterested style and keeps interference at a minimum. That this can be done has been amply demonstrated by yourself and Margaret in past articles (ref. the story on the Namadjirri, the story on the spear throwing a couple of weeks back and Jack's story today). It can be done and it generally is - when it is not done stories like last week's are the pitiful result.

On your percentages of readers who will understand a person's work - from where do you get your figures of 20% and 30%? Looking at the original of Jack's story and the corrected version this week I would say that if people could understand one story, they could understand the other. This may vary from story to story but I feel that your 60% variation is extremely dubious.

What worries me in some corrected stories is that the 'correcting process can remove the story from the reading grasp of many Aboriginal people, and they I feel are a crucial audience for writers like Jack. Some of the corrections carried out on Jack's stories last year could have only had the effect of drastically lowering the potential audience.

MARGARET. I am sorry that my comment on Jack's story affronted your sensibilities. I do not accept that it was in poor taste - I believe it was suited to the article.

Where are the ridicule, deletions etc. to which I subject contributors.

Jack's sensitivities notwithstanding his writing is not sacrosanct - neither is mine or anyone else's. If Jack or anyone else places his work in the public forum they must expect the public's reactions. I had certain feelings about Jack's story and I expressed them in the way I thought best at the time. Others in turn have attacked my writing. That, I believe, is as it should be.

Your suggestion for placing the names of both parties on stories is an excellent one.

I do not think that the Aboriginal people's call for assistance with writing (as at the P&F meeting) is 'poignant' - I think it is hard-headed pragmatism in the face of a real problem.

As I replied to Bruce's article, I don't see that Aboriginal people's thinking has to be influenced by the person who helps them with a story - I think you're work with today's story is the strongest proof we could ask for of this.

With reference to my 'over-zealous editorial participation' -

perhaps some people may like to see editorial power decentralized somewhat - an editorial committee perhaps, in which we could hopefully have some Aboriginal participation. I have made calls in the past for assistance with the editorial process. The response, to say the least, has been weak. If you or any other reader has any ideas on this subject I would be pleased to hear them.

JACK. What I didn't make clear to you in my story last week was that I did not mean for you to stop getting balandas help at all. For giving this wrong idea I am sorry. My main meaning was that you should not let people who help you change your thinking and push their ideas into your stories.

I am not trying to say in any way who your friends should be - that is your business.

I know that you didn't have much school. Still your story this week is a strong one and I think it could stand on its own.

As I said last week sometimes balanda people write your thinking (like this week) and sometimes they push their thinking in (like last week). When this happens I think you lose some of your dignity.

I had some thoughts about your story last week. I wrote them down. Margaret, Bruce & yourself didn't agree so you all talked hard to me. Now I am speaking back. That is one of the jobs of the Mirage I think. The Mirage is always here for people to print their stories - and it is also here if people want to speak against someone's story.

DAN GILLESPIE

This story came to hand on Thursday after most of the paper had been assembled (received 11am Thursday). It does not alter any of my views expressed above. ed.

To the people:

With reference to Jack Miritji's story about the crabbing trip and to the Editor's comment, I wish to clarify a few very valid points.

It is true that many of us know how much English Jack can write. It is UNTRUE that the "BULLDUST" in Jack's story was thought out or written by me.

We all enjoy Jack's stories and respect the Editor's encouragement to Jack to do his own writing.

However, as a trained EDUCATOR, I felt privileged when approached by Jack to help him put his story into better English. He has a real desire for everyone to fully understand what he is writing. Even more important he has an extremely deeply sincere yearning to LEARN TO WRITE GOOD ENGLISH CONSTRUCTION.

This was my first attempt ever to help anyone of his calibre to write correct English and I can assure you that story was Jack Miritji's story and Not my story. I can also assure you that it took over 4 HOURS of discussion and explanation for both Jack & I to understand each other - what he had written and why I wrote it in the sentence construction I did.

I am a teacher and I am too willing to help teach anyone who approaches me for such help. I am disappointed that my help and tuition has been referred to as my overpowering "bulldust" thinking.

An Editor's note such as the one referred to may possibly force a wonderful philosopher and seeker of Education to completely withdraw from attempting any such feat again.

People of Maningrida, I trust you will respect Jack's desire to philosophise, tell stories and learn English, so that he will feel confident enough to do it all by himself in time. If he asks for help, then help is what you give him.

I am absolutely confident that NONE of us have ever written his story for him, but that we have all HELPED him whenever he has requested it.

Let us all encourage him and help him even more

GLADYS PASCOE

The uppercase letters, parentheses and underlinings are the writers -- ed.

CRAFT SHOP

We apologise to those people who are finding the Craft Shop a bit empty at present when they come to look for small things to buy. We have had two very large orders - both over a thousand dollars - and most of our stock has been cleared out. As well as this 3 or 4 of our regular bark painters are having a holiday in Darwin and it is not always easy to get transport for the ladies to get pandanus - despite the co-operation we receive from all sides when possible.

Things should pick up soon we hope and the usual range of small baks, baskets etc. should be back in the store.

Johnny Mundurrug Mundurrug has been working since Easter on a very long and interesting job. He is making an old time fishing net from grass - the grass called munbala. The net is about 20 feet long. Johnny says that in the old times they were often much longer. The net is pegged out on the ground a rope made of bark (it is called mundrun) runs along the top and strands of munbala are run down from it. Now Johnny is weaving strands across to make a strong net. This will take him 'a long time' he says.

Harry Mulurbuk says that in the old times men made a half circle carrying the net and other men chased fish into it. When the fish were trapped other men speared them. Harry says that this was dangerous

because the fish tried to jump out sometimes and hit people on the body or the face. Because of this children couldn't do it, only grown up people. (Information supplied by Johnny Mundurrug Mundurrug and Harry Mulurbuk.)



old custom net -
djingudabar

The new barge landing is a good place to go fishing and many people are using it. Some people are using it as a toilet too - probably children. This is making the whole place smell bad, and it is getting too bad to go fishing there. Think about the other people and find a better place for your toilet.
D.G. - at the request of local fishermen.

Apologies to Jimmy Pascoe who wrote an article for us last week. The story was lost between the editors office and the typing room. Sorry Jimmy - hope you can write it again for us.
ED.

STORY FROM LALA.

I will tell you about two canoes that my uncle Barney made, and it was nice too. Everyday after school, children run straight down the beach for canoes, one was Len's cankes and the other was new one and they were both faster one. My mother Mary Dadbalak is making a sail for a little new canoe out of pandannus tree and it's belong to Bob Colin. That all I can say to you.

From Jeannie Gadamera

EISTEDDFOD ON AGAIN:

The eisteddfod will be on again 10-18th August 1973. Plans this year are to send a DC3 load (28) of adult competitors to compete in the various sections.

Money must be raised, about \$800. There is still some left over from last year, about \$160.

Last year's finance was gained through that famous rort, the Maningrida fishing competition. Well, it's on again this year, so starting hoarding your live mullett and ready cash and wait for the big advertisement in this paper.

It is also planned to hold some special bunguls for paying customers, to augment the kitty. Watch your paper for advertisements.

-J.H.

PERMITS:

People are reminded of the necessity to secure permits to enter the reserve in respect of all visitors, etc, to Maningrida.

Permits are issued by the superintendent, on the recommendation of the Maningrida council.

Please address your applications for permits to the Secretary, Maningrida council, c/- the Settlement Office.

-J.H. (Supt)

DRINKING AT THE MOVIES or M.C.G.:

Balandas are advised that in law, consumption of liquor in a public place, i.e. the movies, or the M.C.G., is prohibited. Your liquor permits entitle you to drink in the confines of your own home, and not elsewhere. Please check that you have a current liquor permit. Future permits will be issued only on the recommendation of the Maningrida Council.

-J.H. (Supt).

SPORT:

Over the last few years many Kormilda College students from Maningrida have done very well playing sport in Darwin. A few that I can think of are Barney Wirinidj who played on 1st grade for Wanderers Australian Rules team last season, and Bobby Pascoe who was the captain of the Wanderers Reserve Grade team last season. Here are some interesting reports, by some of our Kormilda College students, on their activities. — B.S.

RUGBY LEAGUE: By Jimmy Maralunga.

In Darwin there are many different kinds of sport. The most unusual one is Rugby League. It consists of thirteen players as follows - front row, hooker, front row, second row, second row, lock, half lock, five-eighth, inside centre, outside centre, right wing, left wing and full-back.

In Darwin last year I played for the Under 15 South Darwin Rugby League and I was picked as the best player, including the other two boys (Ian Moygunu from Echo Island and Ronald Lami Lami from Croker Island). The same two fellows are in the Darwin squad as I am. I had a letter from Ron Knobbs that said that I am in the Darwin Junior Rugby League team. I had to train for six weeks every Sunday. It's just a physical training. In August we'll probably go for a tour to Sydney to play Rugby League the most toughest football league, more than Australian Rules.

SOFTBALL: By Rosemary Ginmalia.

In Darwin we always play softball every Saturday morning at 10 O'clock to lunch time. We played under 16 against Rebels, that's red and blue. We played against them but we lost by two points. After lunch A grade and A reserve, that's Ada and Margaret, they played against Pink Panthers. They well and at the end they win. A grade played very well too. I hope next Saturday we can play and win the softball.

SOFTBALL: by Ada Pilakui Mangwanda

In Darwin we always play softball. I play for A reserve and we played against Pink Panthers, but they didn't have many players so the umpire, Fred Smith said, "the A reserve Kormilda will win." So Miss Priserly told us to go and watch the A grade and the A grade played against Hells Angels win by one points We all went back home.

FRESH FRUIT & VEG HUMBUG!

The Co-Ord transport strike will have some effects on the supplies at the Store. The strike is now into its second week. The Store will be unable to get potatoes, oranges, onions, apples etc. for the present. If the strike breaks supplies of vegetables and fruit should be available in about 11 days.

from G.B.

AT THE WEEKEND:

DUTY SISTER: Mr. Marc

DUTY OFFICER: The guess is Rusty Steele.

CHURCH

PROGRAMME AS PER USUAL

MOVIES:

FRIDAY

The Comancheros
John Wayne Super Western.

Peoples

Nice to see Ron Berryman and family back in town. Ron looks fit again and is back in the bike saddle. We hear that he's ready for the next cricket match

Old painter Bob Bilinyarra arrived this week. He has been in his country at Gadji for a long time and has had a spell in hospital.

SATURDAY

"Frogs" - Science fiction
Spine Chiller.

MAGAZINES WANTED:

PICTURE MAGAZINES ARE URGENTLY REQUIRED FOR THE DROP-TN CLUB. ANY OFFERS SEE ROGER PINK. MAGAZINES LIKE WOMEN'S WEEKLY, POST, PIX ETC. ARE TOPS.

~//~

NOTICE

Cadell River Road between ~~to~~ Gudjerama Rd of 2nd Fire Tower will be closed all next week.

Rainfall

When will it end!

May 8	52 pts
" 9	48 pts.
" 10	7 pts
" 11	43 pts.

Another article about writing articles

I was just sitting down having a private bitch the other day whilst reading the mirage when I came across the words of our illustrious editor" ... don't sit and bitch in private - make your thinking known". This prompted me to action on another issue.

With all due respect to the editor and his editorial licence, I find that his response to Jack Mirritjs' story was in poor taste and a symptom of an increasing over zealous editorial participation. We, the contributors - both aboriginal and European- should generally be able to write with a fair degree of immunity from ridicule deletions and non-constructive margin quips.

An opinion, such as that following Jacks story, would have been of more value and less damage if it had been expressed in person, to the man concerned or with a little more tact and clarification in the mirage. The ideal implied in the comment is admirable enough but without consideration for that individual writers circumstances; his interpretation of such a comment; and above all his sensitivities.

To one who has had some experience with Jack in the capacity both of a personal friend and a "ghost writer" (for want of a better term) I feel it is necessary after discussion with Jack, to write a little about his limitations and potentials in this area as I see them and without any illusion of being an authority on the matter.

However such an exercise would be a story in itself and better reserved for a separate article.

Perhaps then to be truly honest to Jacks' stories and to all who read them the names of two parties could appear on them. This could be done in either the form of, STORY TOLD TO.....by JACK MIRRITJI or STORY BY JACK MIRRITJI ASSISTED BY.....

From there it is a matter of the degree of assistance, which must be the ~~by~~ business of Jack and the person who helps him. It is, then, this degree of assistance that is open to conjecture.

Surely the movement at present is to work as "shaden men" and advisors in all areas of the community. This very real need for assistance was poignantly demonstrated at the recent Parents and Friends Annual General Meeting where aboriginals expressed this need for assistance with running committees, meetings and voicing opinions. One aboriginal man expressed this need admirably by saying, in effect, that many of them could not write or read but did a lot of thinking, and that if we (balanda) accepted this handicap and assured them of assistance in this area they were prepared to try anything. This assistance takes the form of writing up minutes of meetings, writing their views on such issues as land rights, permit system etc, answering questionnaires often compiled by Europeans to mention but a few forms.

Surely then we must assist in these areas at the risk of influencing the opinion of the aboriginal to a degree in an effort to inspire the required confidence into those who want to go forward in community matters. Also to allow them to influence decisions concerning their own destinies.

Are Jack Mirritji's efforts in his chosen work any exception?

Marg Neale

Maningrida Mirage

AIATSIS Library, RS 29.7/2

"Maningrida Mirage Volume 185" May 11th, 1973.

Maningrida Mirage NT Maningrida Community

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