

## BOOK REVIEW

Marcel Chicoteau, *Bibliographia et obiter dicta (1939-1989)*, Brisbane, privately printed, 1990, pp. [10], 70, [8].

Professor Chicoteau sent a copy of his bibliographical account of his own highly varied output to the *Australian Journal of French Studies* in April 1991. Since that journal does very little reviewing, it seemed more appropriate to the Editor that a notice should appear in *Explorations* in connection with the series of articles dealing with Australia's French consuls. That moment has been too long delayed, but it is a welcome opportunity to salute the achievements and talents of someone who is himself a contributor to the study of French-Australian cultural relations.

Not long after he took up a post as French Vice-Consul in Sydney in 1955, Marcel Chicoteau was invited to give a lecture at the University. We thus became aware of his double career, as an academic and in the consular service. After three years as Consul between 1959 and 1962 he returned to university teaching. In the following decade he was, amongst other things, Professor of French at the young University of Waikato in New Zealand and Reader in French at the University of Queensland. Early retirement in 1972 brought no diminution in intellectual activity, and Chicoteau has continued to reside in Brisbane, thus making the second half of his life Australian where the first had been essentially British. (He was born in Bristol in 1915 of a father who was Honorary Consul for France in that city and of an English mother.)

The work under consideration includes a list of patrons and teachers in Britain and France (Chicoteau has first degrees from both the University of London and the Université de Lille), a brief curriculum vitae, an index of his books and articles arranged thematically, the bibliography itself (pp. 1-70), notes on his distinguished French and British ancestors and a short account of the castle purchased in the nineteenth century by the author's paternal grandfather. However, there is no mistaking what is central in all this.

To speak of a "bibliography" is in fact inadequate. We are given extracts, judgments, notes on sources and occasional additions for some of the items listed. Various languages are used, including Latin for the headings. The range of the author's curiosity is very wide indeed, as a summary recital of the thematic divisions indicates, running as they do

from his inaugural lecture in the Waikato Chair in September 1967, through Racine, classical studies, editorial activity for *Comparative Literature Studies / Cahiers de littérature comparée* (which kept the spirit of the *Revue de littérature comparée* alive in Wales during the Second World War), cartographical work with an Australian bent, French-Australian investigations, Christian liturgy and archaeology and essays on Alpine topics, to notes on lexicology. It is hardly necessary to add that such ease across diverse cultures is something rarely encountered in younger generations. That it has chosen its domicile, and quite often its place of publication, in Brisbane, is an effective rebuttal of some of the more stupid prejudices of people who live in the "Southern states".

The readers of *Explorations* will be particularly interested in the Franco-Australian material, which covers a number of quite different topics as well: Eccleston Du Faur's translation of the *Quatrains* of his famous ancestor Pibrac, Chris Brennan's French poems, a Randolph Hughes exhibition, an obituary of Antoine Denat. It is a useful reminder of the diversity and fruitfulness of the French presence in Australia. No one is better suited than Marcel Chicoteau, the champion and distinguished exponent of comparatism, to make the point.

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