

SELECTED WORKS OF
on Applied Linguistics

DAVID NUNAN

纽南 应用语言学自选集

David Nunan (澳) · 著

Selection Series
of World-Famous
Applied Linguists

世界应用语言学
名家自选集

As the language classroom is specifically constituted to facilitate language development, this should constitute sufficient justification for studying what goes on there. Despite this seemingly uncontroversial observation, it is evident from this review that little second language research is actually carried out in language classrooms, and that we know comparatively little about what does or does not go on there. The existence, and indeed persistence, of this state of ignorance may seem surprising given the frequency with which attempts are made to import into second language classrooms insights from research conducted outside the classroom (Weinert, 1987). In fact, language teachers may be forgiven for believing that the history of their profession is characterized by the efforts of researchers to search anywhere but the classroom itself for insights into what it is that makes learners tick. The paucity of research that is actually grounded in the classroom itself is such that it is customary to speak not of classroom research, but classroom-oriented research. This locution allows for the development of research agendas that are designed for consumption by classroom practitioners, but that are not actually located within the classroom itself. In fairness to those who are committed to classroom research, I should point out that it is, in fact, not always easy to gain access to classrooms, and that gaining such access is not always facilitated by teachers themselves. It is not particularly difficult to see why so much research is conducted within the English Language Institutes of university language departments.

外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

SELECTED WORKS OF
on Applied Linguistics

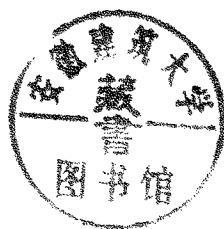
DAVID NUNAN

纽南 应用语言学自选集

David Nunan (澳) 著

Selection Series
of World-Famous
Applied Linguists

世界应用语言学
名家自选集



外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

北京 BEIJING

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

纽南应用语言学自选集 = Selected Works of David Nunan on Applied Linguistics: 英文/(澳)纽南(Nunan, D.)著. — 北京: 外语教学与研究出版社, 2010. 12

(世界应用语言学名家自选集)

ISBN 978-7-5135-0440-9

I. ①纽… II. ①纽… III. ①应用语言学—文集—英文
IV. ①H08-53

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2010) 第 262404 号

出 版 人: 于春迟

选题策划: 刘相东

责任编辑: 毕 争

封面设计: 袁 璐

出版发行: 外语教学与研究出版社

社 址: 北京市西三环北路 19 号 (100089)

网 址: <http://www.fltrp.com>

印 刷: 北京双青印刷厂

开 本: 650×980 1/16

印 张: 29.25

版 次: 2011 年 1 月第 1 版 2011 年 1 月第 1 次印刷

书 号: ISBN 978-7-5135-0440-9

定 价: 59.90 元

* * *

购书咨询: (010)88819929 电子邮箱: club@fltrp.com

如有印刷、装订质量问题, 请与出版社联系

联系电话: (010)61207896 电子邮箱: zhijian@fltrp.com

制售盗版必究 举报查实奖励

版权保护办公室举报电话: (010)88817519

物料号: 204400001

出版前言

“世界应用语言学名家自选集”丛书收录世界知名应用语言学家的学术论文和专著章节，结集成书，共10部。本丛书的出版可填补两方面的空白：1. 以世界知名应用语言学家为主线的自选集；2. 以应用语言学学科为主题的系列丛书。

应用语言学有狭义和广义之分，狭义的应用语言学指跟语言教学密切相关的学科，如二语习得、教学法、语言测试等；广义的应用语言学则指利用语言学的理论解决社会生活的实际问题的边缘学科，如社会语言学、翻译学、词典学、文体学等。本丛书除有些学者的研究集中于狭义的应用语言学概念之外，一般采用广义应用语言学的概念。

本丛书选用的文章多散见于国外学术期刊、论文集和专著，时间跨度较大，读者不易觅得。这些文章汇集成自选集，充分展示了诸位名家对应用语言学各分支学科的研究脉络，是应用语言学研究领域不可多得的材料，可作为英语教师、英语专业研究生、师范院校英语本科生等从事科研、撰写论文的参考文献。

丛书编写体例如下：

一、收录发表于学术期刊、论文集中的学术论文以及学术演讲，文章字数无严格限制。专著中的章节酌情收录。

二、所收论文的语言仅限英语。

三、所收论文的内容须与应用语言学有关，纯语言学理论、文学研究、国情研究类论文不收录。

四、所收论文大多为原已发表过的文章，基本保持原貌以尊重历史的真实。文章一般注明论文发表的时间和发表刊物的名称（或论文集、专著书名）和期号（或出版社名）。文章格式也基本保持发表时的原貌。未在刊物上发表过的文章，如演讲等，则注明对外发布（成稿）的时间、地点和场合。

五、作者可将新的观点以尾注的方式放在相应论文的后面，表明作者目前的观点与当时有所不同。

六、每部选集作者撰写自序，详细地记录作者求学、教学、治学的经历和感悟。书后附有作者主要学术著述的目录。

世界应用语言学名家自选集编委会

2009年2月18日于北京

世界应用语言学名家自选集 编委会

主 任：胡文仲 Christopher Candlin

委 员：胡壮麟 王守仁 石 坚 秦秀白
杜瑞清 王宗炎 桂诗春 戴炜栋
刘润清 张正东 文秋芳 刘道义

策 划：刘相东

序

纽南(David Nunan)是国际著名的英语教学专家和学者。他曾担任1999—2000年度美国英语教师协会(TESOL)主席,出版和发表过100多部/篇专著、编著和文章,涉及应用语言学的许多领域,从语言分析到第一语言和第二语言习得,从语言教学的宏观课题(如课程设计)和微观课题(如教学方法)到语言教师的发展,还有对应用语言学研究方法,特别是课堂研究方法的探究与提炼,其教学思想和研究成果在国际英语教学和研究界产生了深远和持久的影响。由外语教学与研究出版社出版的这部《纽南应用语言学自选集》汇集了20篇论文,并附有作者自己撰写的、可读性非常强的学术小传,让读者不仅可以阅读名家的学术思想和研究成果,亦可以追溯他的职业和学术发展历程,从中受到启发和鼓舞。

纽南出生于澳大利亚新南威尔士州的布罗肯希尔(Broken Hill)。这座建造在世界最大的银、铅和锌矿上的内地城市当时只是一个贫困的矿区。他的父母均未接受过高等教育,也无力为他支付大学学费,所以他选择了能够提供奖学金的新州高等教育学院,攻读英语语言文学专业,毕业后成为一名中学英文教师。他的学术小传以生动的文笔描述了他入职第一天尴尬的甚至可以说是恐怖的境遇,并详细叙述了他如何凭借自己的努力,不断反思现状,抓住发展机遇,逐渐从一个矿区的孩子成长为一位著作等身的国际知名学者。他的学术生涯是教学与科研有机结合的绝佳典范,相信会给许多在完成繁重的教学任务的同时为科研压力而苦闷的一线外语教师带来许多启示。

纵观纽南教授的学术发展历程,我们不难发现他在英语教学、课程开发和教学研究中始终保持着对学习者和教师的高度关注,这一点在这本自选集中得到了充分的体现。这20篇文章分为两大部分:实证研究和课程开发与课程设计,反映了他从1987年至2005年近20年的研究兴趣和成果。

第一部分收录了11篇论文,围绕着两个不同的课题:课堂互动和学习者策略,关注的焦点是“以学习者为中心”、“学习者的声音”、“学习者在学习过程中的作用”等主题以及它们在课堂教学中的体现。从这里我们看到,纽南始终把学习者的需求放在第一位,进行研究的根本目的是帮助学生学有所得。除了学习者,我们在这里还看到他对教师成长的关注。“Action Research and Professional Growth”一文阐述了行动研究对教师发展的重要性,总结了行动研究的八个主要步骤,并对制约

一线教师进行科研的五大因素——提出解决的办法。由于这部分文章均为实证研究，且大都采用课堂研究的方法，它们将为英语教师进行教学研究提供范例。

第二部分收录了9篇文章，前5篇文章从不同的角度探讨课程开发的原则，包括合作方法、交际任务、综合大纲、以学习者为中心等。其余4篇文章涉及学习风格与策略、任务型教学法、二语教学的理念与方法变迁以及对二语教学的标准化评估。这些文章虽然主题不尽相同，但反映的都是作者对语言学习者的关注。也许我们可以说，“以学习者为中心”是纽南一生不变的研究主题。

除了外语教学研究，纽南教授还编写了多部英语教材系列，包括 *ATLAS*, *Go For It*, *Listen In*, *Speak Out*, *Expressions* 等，销量逾亿。其中 *Go For It* 被人民教育出版社采纳，改编成《义务教育课程标准实验教科书——英语(新目标)》，供中国的初中英语教学使用。这些教材广受欢迎，从而使本书的英文序言的作者 Ken Beatty 博士得出结论：世界上有很多人因为纽南而学会了英语。

从作者的学术小传看，纽南教授进入外语教学领域似乎是偶然的，但是他的研究所反映出的对学习者和教师的关注却是必然的，因为他不仅是一位外语教学专家和学者，还是一位教育家和青年学者的引路人。不管是担任中学教师，还是代课教师，还是大学教授，他在传授知识和技能的同时，非常关注学生的需求和个人成长。学术小传中关于 Bruno 的故事就是最好的例证，在 Bruno 用刀刺伤他以后，他并没有报警，而是在 Bruno 鼓足勇气重返课堂的时候，耐心地去了解其愤怒的原因，并试图提供可能的帮助。此外，曾经师从纽南教授的 Ken Beatty 博士在本书的英文序言中讲述了自己的导师如何在繁忙的教学、科研和行政工作中挤出大量的时间对他进行指导和帮助，以及这些经历对他个人的发展所产生的影响，其感激之情令人感动。我想，很多时候，影响和改变我们的不仅仅是前辈们的学术思想和真知灼见，更多的也许是他们的人生经历、为人方式和生活境界。

金利民
北京外国语大学
2010年3月

Preface: David Nunan on the Knife's Edge

For most teachers, education is very much about the throwing of a pebble into a quiet sea, and then having to walk away before the ripples hit distant shores. Most of us never see the long-term impact of our lives in education. This is especially true in terms of the ways in which our work has influenced and changed the thoughts and lives of others: our students, our peers, and even our own teachers. One thrower of pebbles who has created a great many ripples in the world of language teaching and learning is Professor David Nunan. In a small way, this book shows how far his influence is felt.

David did not enter the world into the arms of academia. His parents were not professors. They were not university graduates. David did not live in a university city. He did not live in a city at all, but rather the Australian outback mining settlement of Broken Hill. The greatest lesson this hardscrabble place taught young David was that he did not want to grow up to work in its lead and zinc mines. He wanted something more out of life and, despite any disadvantages, thought he might be bright enough and hardworking enough to get it. The route to *something different* was via the lifeline of a university education.

David's parents did not have the money to put him through university but, fortunately, a scholarship was available from the New South Wales Department of Education. The major catch was that the scholarship required repayment through five years' service as a teacher. He accepted and, after graduation, was assigned a job at a rough and tumble working class school with a sadistic headmaster that provided a harsh introduction to teaching. Police officers often came to question or arrest his students. David's complaint about one troublesome student, Bruno, sent as a note home to his parents, caused an unexpected result:

"... the door to my classroom was flung open, and a giant of a man strode into the room. Grabbing Bruno by the throat, he hauled him out of his seat, growling 'Me Father! Me fix!' Then, with an almighty

swing of his hand, he sent Bruno flying across the room. Bruno hit the wall, and ended up in a crumpled heap on the floor, where he lay without moving. His father strode out of the room. Bruno was very silent the next day, and obeyed directions, if somewhat sulkily. At the end of class he stayed behind, lingering at his desk. Then, as I was bending down to stuff my books into my bag, he came up behind me, produced a knife, and stabbed me. Then he dropped the knife and fled from the classroom. ”

Even though the stabbing was not life-threatening, it was clearly an incident that should have been reported. The boy most certainly would have been taken away to juvenile court. But, instead of calling the police, David sat and reflected; even though he could understand what Bruno did and even why he did it, he realized that he did not really understand Bruno and the other boys in his class. When Bruno finally worked up the courage to return to class the following week, David gently took him aside and tried to learn what made him tick.

“... the course of my life was set. Whatever else I did, teaching would be something that defined me. And my growth as a teacher was firmly rooted in the belief that my students’ interests, needs and learning preferences should constitute the cornerstone of everything I did in the classroom. Later, it was also to be the basis of much of my research. For that, I have Bruno to thank. ”

David would doubtlessly have made an exceptional classroom teacher and changed the lives of countless boys like Bruno, but events took him elsewhere, first to Exeter in England for further education and work, and then to Thailand as a curriculum developer at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. From there, he returned to Australia where he became the Founding Director of the National Curriculum Resource Center for the Adult Migrant Education Program, then Director of the National Language Curriculum Project. A move to Sydney’s Macquarie University as Associate Professor in Linguistics, School of English and Linguistics, led to the dual roles of Associate Director at the newly established National Center for English Language Teaching and Research, and Director of the Macquarie University English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students program.

In 1994, David took a further career leap to become Director and Chair

Professor of Applied Linguistics at The English Center, University of Hong Kong (HKU) and later held a concurrent appointment of Dean, Acting President, and Academic Vice-President of the Graduate School of Education, Anaheim University. Since stepping down from HKU, David has become its Emeritus Professor of Applied Linguistics, and Distinguished Visiting Professor at both the University of Stockholm and Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok.

Throughout this path of educational leadership, including extensive volunteer work, such as serving as President of TESOL, David has been involved in three distinct but related areas: contributions to the field, textbook writing, and the shepherding of young academic talent.

David's contributions to the field of language teaching and learning are wide and varied. They include the structure of language, curriculum development, first and second language acquisition, discourse analysis, language teaching methodology, action research, classroom observation and research, teacher education, language arts, reading, sociolinguistics, research methods in applied linguistics and language and cognition. His research has manifested itself in a series of best-selling textbooks guiding teachers in the latest methodologies. Countless international presentations, workshops and paper publications in distinguished journals have made him a central figure in the field around the world; a recent version of his curriculum vitae runs 45 tightly-typed pages.

A bit of trivia: David mostly types with two fingers; one shudders to think how much more he might have produced had he bothered to learn to type with all ten digits!

Teachers worldwide know David not just from his teacher training materials, but also from his many textbook series. After honing his skills writing various language learning textbooks in Australia, he made a major break into the world market with *Atlas*, a four level series aimed at young adults. This innovative series, and many others that followed, have made him one of the world's best-selling authors—not just textbook authors. Sales of his books have topped 800,000,000 copies. There are a great many people around the world who are now able to speak English because of him.

Although I have co-authored papers, presentations, and textbooks with David, I know of a third area in which David shines no less brightly: his shepherding of young academic talent through his work with Master's and Doctoral students. This is the area on which I can speak with authority,

having had the great pleasure of being one of his dozens of Ph.D. students.

The start of my studies with David was not auspicious; I did not come from the traditional linguistics background and my area of interest, Computer-Assisted Language Learning, was outside his research area. He said as much at our first formal meeting but was quick to laugh and agree with me when I explained I was aware of his work and also knew I would be an excuse for him to explore this growing area.

That meeting followed a pattern that continued for years to come: we decamped to his home where he prepared a fabulous Thai meal and, over one or more bottles of wine, we shared his infectious curiosity in discussing all the world's pleasures and problems. It is hard to imagine anyone so busy setting aside so much time but, just as he had done on the knife's edge with a young student named Bruno so many years before, he took an interest in me as a person, not simply as a student, an additional part of his course load.

Along the way, like countless others who have studied, researched, and written with David, my association with him—and all I have learned—have opened many doors. For that, I have a gratitude that I hope you, and all others who read this book, will share. I hope you will enjoy and apply David's ideas with the same true purpose in which he has written them; to help make the teaching and learning of language a more passionate experience.

Dr. Ken Beatty
Chair of Liberal Studies
Higher Colleges of Technology
United Arab Emirates

An Academic Autobiography

My first day as a teacher is almost my last. It is 9:05 on a hot and sunny January morning; the first day of the new school year. I catch the wrong train, and in consequence, I'm five minutes late. I scramble up the stone steps into the Victorian school building after students and teachers have entered their respective classrooms.

The secretary in the school office directs me down the corridor to my classroom. I know which classroom is mine by the cacophony inside. As I approach the room, a tall, ruggedly built man in his mid-sixties comes down the corridor from the opposite direction. His face is lined, weathered and set in granite. The look is unadulterated fury. He reaches the door, wrenches it open, steps inside, and pulls it shut so violently that the entire building shakes. On the other side of the door, silence is instant.

I hesitate outside the door. A rumble begins and grows into a crescendo. The granite-faced man is bawling out the kids behind the door. I am in a quandary. Then, as no other option presents itself, I open the door and step into the classroom. The room is chaotic. There are upturned chairs and desks, and books are scattered across the floor. The man pauses in his oratory, sizes me up, and then points to an empty chair in the corner.

"You," he says, "sit over there."

I do as I am told.

When he has finished reducing the adolescent boys to psychological rubble, he turns to me.

"And who are you?"

"Please Sir," I reply, "I'm the new teacher." My chance of ever establishing discipline among this rag-tag rabble is about as good as earning the respect of the granite-faced man—who, I finally figure out, is the headmaster of the school. Turning back to the boys, he shrugs his shoulders, says, "See what I have to put up with?" and marches out of the room, leaving me to contemplate my future. After a short pause, the boys gleefully resume their interclass warfare. My entreaties for order are ignored.

The year that I begin my teaching career is 1972. The other momentous event of that year is the election of the Whitlam Labor Government. Labor returned to office after two decades in the wilderness. It was an event that shook the fabric of Australian society. My arrival at Tempe Boys' High School set off a couple of damp squibs in the staff room, but that was about all.

My parents could not afford to send me to university. In order to get there, I had to get a scholarship. I managed to get one of these from the New South Wales Department of Education. In consequence, I was indentured to the Department for five years. This was fine by me. Well, at least it was at the time.

Having majored in English, I was eager to embark on a twin career as teacher and author. My game plan for the next three to five years was to initiate high school students into the mysteries and joys of literature and, at the same time, to write the Great Australian Novel.

The author, media commentator and critic Clive James once remarked that quite commonly those who make a splash at university aren't much heard of afterwards. I wouldn't know about that. I was all but invisible at university, and it took me years to achieve overnight success.

I was quickly disabused of my desire to teach literature, and gradually disabused of my intention to write the great Australian novel. In the 1970s, Tempe Boys' High School was a dumping ground for immigrant kids. Before I had any hope of introducing them to literature, I had to teach them English. I became an ESL teacher by default. I had absolutely no idea how to go about this, but was lucky enough to find two trained ESL teachers on staff who were kind enough to help me on my way.

The Head of the English Department quickly became a role model and mentor. A small, balding, softly spoken man, Mr. Quinn was able to command respect from even the most thuggish student. On many occasions in that first year, he would glide into my classroom where I had been reduced either to impotent rage or tears, and produce order from mayhem without so much as raising his voice. To this day, I do not know how he did it. He carried with him a quiet authority that even the most brutish boy recognized and respected.

Every so often there would be a knock at my door, and two burly police officers would appear and haul one or more of the kids out of class. One of the most insubordinate and troublesome boys in the class was a large Yugoslavian boy called Bruno. One day, driven to the limits of my

endurance, I had the school secretary send an official notice to his parents warning of suspension if his behavior did not improve. The following morning, halfway through the second period, the door to my classroom was flung open, and a giant of a man strode into the room. Grabbing Bruno by the throat, he hauled him out of his seat, growling "Me Father! Me fix!" Then, with an almighty swing of his hand, he sent Bruno flying across the room. He hit the wall, and ended up in a crumpled heap on the floor, where he lay without moving. His father strode out of the room. Bruno was very silent the next day, and obeyed directions, if somewhat sulkily. At the end of class he stayed behind, lingering at his desk. Then, as I was bending down to stuff my books into my bag, he came up behind me, produced a knife, and stabbed me. Then he dropped the knife and fled from the classroom.

Even though the stabbing turned out to be superficial, doing more damage to my sweater and shirt than it did to me, it sent me into shock. I picked up the knife—it was one of those small paring knives with a sharp point—and put it on the desk. Then I sat down. I started to shake all over. A nerve in my cheek began to twitch, something it continues to do from time to time to this day.

Once I found that the stab wound did not require stitches, I decided I needed to report the incident. But instead of heading to the front office, I continued to sit at my desk with my head in my hands. What was I doing at this school? What good was I to these adolescents who were destined to be factory-floor fodder?

Instead of reporting for what was undoubtedly a serious infraction, and one that should have landed him in juvenile court, I decided to find out what made him tick. Not surprisingly he failed to turn up for class the following day, and Friday, but did show up on Monday. He avoided any eye contact with me, kept his head down, and appeared to be doing his work. At the end of the lesson, as he was leaving the room, I touched his arm and asked him to stay behind.

At first, he was truculently silent, but when it became clear that I had no intention of punishing him for what was clearly a serious offense, he began to relax. We sat down on opposite sides of a desk, and he began to give me a window on his world.

He was born in a small town on the Adriatic Coast. He and his family had immigrated to Australia four years ago. His father worked in a factory in

Botany, an industrial suburb close to the airport. His mother was a hospital cleaner. His older brothers also worked. He and his sister were still at school. His father wanted them to leave school and get jobs so that they could contribute to the family income. His mother, on the other hand, wanted them to go as far as they could with their education. This was obviously a source of conflict within the family. His father solved family conflict with his fists.

“And what do you want to do?” I asked.

“I want to be a doctor,” he said. This brutish looking boy, who was disruptive and aggressive, who beat up other boys, who took a knife to stab his teacher, wanted to be a doctor. “But I never will,” he said. And then he hung his head, defeated at fourteen.

I owe Bruno a great deal. He taught me the very first and, in some ways, most valuable lesson I was to learn as a teacher—that unless I knew my students, unless I knew what filled their heads and hearts in the world beyond my little classroom where the roof leaked in winter and our lessons were punctuated by the 747’s taking off from Kingsford Smith Airport, I had little hope of fulfilling my responsibilities as a teacher. He set me on a path to penetrate the hearts and minds of the other boys in this most fractious class. And gradually, as they let me into their lives, they also let me teach. Conflict and aggression were never entirely absent, but being able to connect with most of the boys in the class made a huge difference to their attitude towards me.

As my connection with the boys grew, my relationship with the headmaster deteriorated. He was set to retire at the end of the year after 45 years’ service with the department. His parting gift to the profession was to bring me to my psychological knees. And he succeeded. His relentless persecution took its toll, and in October, just weeks short of the end of the school year, I resigned and retreated into myself. Back then I was suffering from what an unkind uncle called “lack of guts”. These days it’s called a nervous breakdown.

One Friday afternoon, some weeks after I had resigned, there was a tentative knock on my apartment door. When I opened it, I was astonished to find five of my former students standing there. They had tracked me down halfway across Sydney. We looked at each other for a minute, and then one of the boys said, “Please come back, Sir. We need you.”

I didn’t go back. But the course of my life was set. Whatever else I

did, teaching would be something that defined me. And my growth as a teacher was firmly rooted in the belief that my students' interests, needs and learning preferences should constitute the cornerstone of everything I did in the classroom. Later, it was also to be the basis of much of my research. For that, I have Bruno to thank.

For the record, I was a lousy teacher in that first year after graduating from university. I doubt that my students learned anything of much value. I spent hours planning my lessons, and often abandoned them within minutes of entering the classroom. Many of my lessons were confused (and no doubt confusing). Often, I prayed for the bell, signaling the end of the lesson, to ring.

The Great Australian Novel laid dormant all that year. By the time I got home from school and had completed my lesson plans for the following day, I had no energy for creative writing. I tried writing on weekends, but quickly discovered that writing was not like gardening or quilt-making. It was not a diversion that could be quarantined to the weekend or whenever else a little spare time presented itself. It was something that had to be practiced every day.

Now that I was unemployed, I had more time than I knew what to do with. However, rather than steaming through a first draft of my novel, I was struck down with what is often a fatal disease for a budding author—writer's block. Someone once said that writing is easy, and that you simply stare at a blank sheet of paper (or word processing screen) until drops of blood appear on your forehead. I sweated buckets of blood, but the words just would not flow. I found every excuse under the sun to avoid a confrontation between myself and that blank sheet of paper. I needed money, so I took a series of part-time jobs: cleaning restaurant toilets, delivering orange juice, window cleaning door-to-door, and laboring on building sites. This last job was illegal, as I did not have a union ticket with the Builders' Labourers' Federation—one of the most closed union ships in the country. When this fact came to light, I was offered two broken legs for my trouble. I declined the offer and disappeared. I think that I was only saved from physical violence by one of the men I drank with at my local hotel, the Beauchamp at Taylor Square. His name was Ray, and he had some kind of official position with the BLF.

At this point in my life, I was stuck in a kind of limbo land. I had no money and needed to work. But the piecemeal work drained my energy and

blocked me creatively. I became depressed, drank heavily, and dabbled with drugs. I was at one of the low points in my life, when I met someone who threw me a lifeline. It happened at a party one night, thrown by one of the few co-teachers from Tempe Boys' High School that I had kept contact with. His name was Alan. He had recently returned from living and working in London.

We hit it off immediately. When Alan heard about my desire to make it as an author, he mentioned that he had recently purchased a terrace house in an inner city suburb, and would be happy to provide me a room, rent free, so that I could concentrate on my writing. I was overwhelmed.

Alan was going back to London for Christmas and he suggested that I accompany him. I jumped at the opportunity. Alan had graduated from Sydney University with a cohort of students who were to change the way that the world looked at Australia and Australia looked at the world. These days, in Britain, Australia and in other parts of the world, Germaine Greer and Clive James are household names. There were others. Less well known perhaps, but extremely influential nonetheless. Hanging on to Alan's coattails, I met many of the ones who had settled in London. It was a remarkable introduction to the world beyond Australia's shores.

Looking back, I am struck by the way that chance encounters have played an important part in the evolution of my professional life. One of the most significant was my meeting with Dorothy Economou. Several days after returning from abroad, Alan asked me to drop off some shirts at his local laundry. The laundry was a family concern run by Dorothy's parents. On the day that I dropped off Alan's shirts, Dorothy was helping out.

Dorothy was one of those extraverts who could extract one's life story in an instant. As she sorted through the shirts and issued a receipt, she had extracted from me the story of our trip as well as my hopes, dreams and desires. When she discovered I was a teacher, and had some experience as a language teacher, her eyes lit up.

"Are you interested in doing some teaching?" she asked.

"Maybe," I said. "Tell me more."

Dorothy had a part-time job as an instructor at the Institute of Languages at the University of New South Wales. The Institute ran an extensive extramural program in foreign language teaching for the University. They also ran intensive English programs for immigrants with professional qualifications. Dorothy taught in this program. However, she wanted to go back to Greece