Australian Women Writers 1900-1950

An exhibition of material from the Monash University Library Rare Books Collection

29 March to 31 July 2007

Exhibition room, level 1, ISB Wing, Sir Louis Matheson Library, Clayton campus
Item 17 Image from cover of Coonardoo: the well in the shadow, by Katharine Susannah Prichard. London, Jonathan Cape, 1929

cover

Item 60 Cover of The glasshouse, by M Barnard Eldershaw. London, Harrap, 1936

credits

Exhibition and catalogue by Associate Professor Maryanne Dever and Dr Ann Vickery, Centre for Women's Studies and Gender Research, Monash University. Copies of the catalogue are available from Rare Books Collection, Library, Box 4, Monash University, Victoria, 3800 Australia. An electronic version of this catalogue, with additional illustrations, is available at the Monash University Library website. Electronic catalogue prepared by Iris Carydias

thanks

Thanks to art historian, Dr Janine Burke, for opening the exhibition. Thanks to Rare Books Assistant, Lorraine David for organisational work, particularly at the opening; to the Publications and Web Assistant, Rosemary Miller, for her design skills; and to Iris Carydias for preparing the electronic catalogue.
Introduction

Writing produced by women in the first half of the twentieth century challenged previously given roles of gender and negotiated a rapidly changing social climate. Australia became an independent nation in 1901. By 1903 it was the only country where white women could both vote and stand for national parliament. Women’s writing between 1900 and 1950 reflected the suffrage movement, as well as the effects of Federation, two World Wars, increasing industrialisation and urbanisation, women entering the workplace, and emergent discourses of sexology and psychology. New subject formations were taking place around gender, race, and nationalism.

While the women’s movement began in the late 1880s and 1890s, the high point of suffrage was between 1906 and 1914. Women’s new freedoms were viewed as a mixed blessing. An article in *The Age* discerned that the New Woman “wants independence, individual and economic as well as political independence…she wants absolute freedom to choose her occupations and interests. She thinks that all legal or conventional obstacles should be removed which debar woman from determining herself, as freely as man determines, what are the real limitations of sex, and what the merely conventional”. In contrast, the 1903 Royal Commission into the Decline of the Birthrate concluded that the selfishness of women was a significant cause.

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While the New woman was regarded with varying ambivalence, even seen to be “shaking [her] well-manicured fists in the face of God’s immutable laws,” another relatively new social identity, the girl played an important role in post-Federation constructions of national identity. Neither wholly child nor wholly woman, she represented Australia’s promise not only in the independence of her outlook but also as future bearer of the race. Whereas the New Woman was primarily an urban manifestation, the girl was a product of the bush. Writing for the *Australian Magazine* in 1908, John Garth argued that “the real abode of the Australian girl is in the country”. Shaped by her pioneering heritage, “no finer feminine comrade can be found on earth”.

As an admirable companion, the girl did not threaten gender relations in the same way as the New Woman. She might do similar things to the New Woman, like ride a bicycle or take up a job, but ultimately she was destined for marriage, hearth and family. Bourgeois domesticity was safely intact, even biologically confirmed. “Above all things, “Garth discerned, “the Australian girl is ‘normal’ in mind and body and consequently it is not in her to be intellectual”. The Australian girl emblematised a natural progression of femininity, being free of the social pathologies that preyed upon the New Woman or girls from other countries. She showed neither the degeneracy exhibited in the “vapid English girl,” nor the mannish traits displayed by the “typically assertive American girl”. Instead she struck a happy eugenic medium. In nationalising a particular form of femininity, the Australian girl at once refined the scope of a nascent sexual identity while, at the same time, counteracting the volatile feminism of the New Woman.
Women writers contributed in part to this creation. The heroine of Catherine Martin’s novel, *An Australian Girl* (1890), declares her independence from colonial ties yet remains committed to an unequal, indifferent marriage. In 1902, Louise Mack envisaged a happier romance with *An Australian Girl in London*, with her title character finding married love with an Englishman while remaining ‘true’ to her own country.8 Other publications like Marie Pitt’s “How Kitty Kept the Camp,” Rosa Campbell Praed’s *My Australian Girlhood*, Lilian Turner’s *An Australian Lassie*, and Mary Grant Bruce’s Billabong books reinforced the girl as a free-spirited entity but firmly within the parameters of the status quo.9

From the 1890s onwards, a woman-oriented culture was becoming increasingly visible. For instance, there was a growing market for journals devoted specifically to issues of interest to women. Groundbreaking journals like *The Dawn* (1888-1905 run by Louisa Lawson), *Woman’s Voice* (1894-1895 run by Maybanke Anderson) and *Australian Women’s Magazine* were succeeded by *Woman’s Voice* (specifically devoted to the suffrage movement) and more populist journals like *Australian Women’s Mirror* and *New Idea* (or *Everylady’s Journal*, as it would later be known). Such journals were crucial in extending and authorising women’s presence beyond the private realm. In the early 1900s, *The Woman’s Sphere* carried advertisements by women doctors, chemists, and doctors searching for patients. Both it and *New Idea* began a series of women in professions. *New Idea* featured interviews with prominent women. Later still, similar articles would appear in periodicals such as the *Australian Women’s Mirror*. In *The Disenchantment of the Home*, Kerreen M. Reiger argues that the core ingredients of the dominant familial ideology—the home as a sanctuary and as woman’s sphere—rested upon the assumption of the complementarity in marriage of a sexual division of labour. Articles and stories emphasized the importance of clear masculine and feminine spheres. The years around the turn of the century and the 1920s and 1930s in particular were marked by discussion of ‘woman’s sphere.’ Magazine culture like *The Home* that catered primarily to a female market and had now well-known women writers and artists published in its pages. In the latter period there was a conservative reaction against the feminists’ stress on women’s contribution to the public world. *Everylady’s Journal*, for instance, promoted the domestic sphere far more heavily in the 1930s than its predecessor, *New Idea*, had ever done.10

Women’s networks also began to be formalised, with the emergence of clubs like the Lyceum and the Austral Salon and local reading circles. Nettie Palmer was a founding member of the Ex-Rays, a group of some twenty old girls from Presbyterian Ladies College who met regularly to discuss literature. Running from 1903 to 1944, the Sandringham Ladies’ Reading Circle attracted both socialist and Labour members who were, no doubt, influential in shaping the direction of any literary talk.

Although starting in the 1890s, the full effect of women’s growing professionalisation as writers only began to be felt in later decades. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue that modernism arose as a reaction to the “woman question” and in response to increasing numbers of women entering the literary marketplace. “Indeed,” they contend, “it is possible to hypothesise that a reaction-formation against the rise of literary women became not just a theme in modernist writing but a motive for modernism.” Following their 1890s predecessors, many women writers of the early twentieth-century combined what were considered more “serious” artistic endeavours with “bread-and-butter” work such as writing for popular journals, book reviews, and children’s literature.
This opened the way for their work to be critically devalued. In *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Postmodernism, and Mass Culture*, Andreas Huyssen contends that:

> Mass culture has always been the hidden subtext of the Modernist project. In the age of nascent socialism and the first major women’s movement in Europe, the masses knocking at the gate were also women, knocking at the gate of a male-dominated culture. It is indeed striking to observe how the political psychological, and aesthetic discourse around the turn of the century consistently and obsessively genders mass cultures and the masses as feminine, while high culture, whether traditional or modern, clearly remains the privileged realm of male activities.¹²

Unfortunately, women writers sometimes internalised these negative opinions. Judith Butler refers to this as the “paradox of subjectivation.” She states, “the subject who would resist such norms is itself enabled, if not produced, by such norms”.¹³ Accordingly, agency is a reiterative or rearticulatory practice that is immanent to power, not a relation of external opposition to that power. For writers like Zora Cross or Nettie Palmer, taking up the pen as critic was a way in which they could assume authority, even as they repeated past critical opinion. In *An Introduction to the Study of Australian Literature*, Cross wrote:

> So far, in Australia, it is in the realm of fiction that women writers have succeeded. In the mass, their efforts in this field can be creditably linked with the output of men. Not so in verse. Though a considerable number of women persistently sing, the thought and passion and feeling behind the song are not very intense. Mary Gilmore stands on a lonely peak, far, far from the majority, because the hot sparks of a real woman’s song are behind her.¹⁴

Palmer, too, was dismissive of women’s poetry:

> In general, it may be said that the Australian women poets have contributed less than their quota to that stream of really vital work which it is here our purpose to study. Of efficient verse they have made a great deal, far more than it would have been possible to mention here, ere the omission of everything else; but romantic associations, spread out over long, shapely verses, do not make poetry. It is originality, or perhaps intensity, that has been lacking.¹⁵

Palmer’s thinking here is common to modernist critical discourse. As Rosalind E Krauss discerns, originality in modernism is usually bound in a kind of aesthetic economy with the notion of repetition, whereby a second term must be reduced or repressed. Male writers are therefore positioned as originators while women writers are derivative, offering pale copies or versions of their colleagues’ more “seminal” work.¹⁶

To some extent, the culture of literary clubs and societies reinforced and authorised values assigned to women’s writing. The Literature Society of Melbourne was predominantly a male institution. In contrast, the Melbourne Literary Club attracted a wide range of men and women writers when it was established in 1916. Its members dominated the Victorian literary scene for the next decade and included Frank Wilmot, Bernard O’Dowd, Marie Pitt, Mary Fullerton, Frederick Macartney, Nettie and Vance Palmer, Elsie Cole, Mary Wilkinson, Percival Serle, Bernard Cronin, Louis Lavater, Frederick Sinclair, and H.H. Champion. The club even had its own magazine, *Birth*. However, in 1922, the club and its magazine were superseded by the newly formed and shortlived Institute of Arts and Letters. Then in the 1930s, the
Bread and Cheese Club was formed. Its exclusively male membership reflected a more general backlash to the growing acceptance of women within the professions. Like the Melbourne Literary Club, the Bread and Cheese Club produced its own magazine, *Bohemia*. Ted Turner wrote to Marie Pitt that “the rule of no women members was formed at the first meeting, done to keep a lot who infest the literary scene out”. Pitt distanced herself from Turner’s implied mob of female scribblers by responding:

> I quite sympathise with your rule ‘no women in the club’—I’ve been somewhat of a lone wolf myself—so if I am not eligible because I happen to be nominally feminine instead of masculine (however comprehensive I happen to be) I obey your decision and withdraw my hankering to belong to something away from the beaten track of the conventional in literary clubs.¹⁷

Later, Pitt pointed out that as she did not feel herself to be a particularly gendered individual, she also did not desire to join any women-only clubs.¹⁸

Mary Gilmore also sympathised with the men's only rule of the Bread and Cheese Club, but saw it as emerging out of men’s need to bond collectively together. Unlike Pitt, she saw this as an underlying difference between the sexes. With an archness matching that of Jane Austen, she wrote:

> …men may be convivial and women may not, and that perhaps is the root of difference and the fence between them. There are no Armies of women. When there are they cease to be women. I said to a demobbed man yesterday, ‘It must have been terrible coming back to Civilian life after the fellowship of the Army.’ And so I can understand your Bread and Cheese Club…¹⁹

By the 1930s and 1940s, however, women writers such as Flora Eldershaw would overcome some of the sexual politics of the earlier years to play significant rather than token roles in literary organisations such as the Fellowship of Australian Writers and the advisory board of the Commonwealth Literary Fund. But even then the question of gender would resurface in familiar ways. For example, the minutes of the 1940 Quarterly Report of the Fellowship of Australian Writers record that Eldershaw, then a Vice-President, hosted a special function on May 15th to present the Australian Literature Society’s Gold Medal to Xavier Herbert for his novel, *Capricornia*. She had also “at the request of her fellow executive members...delivered a most informative and enlightening critique on the novel”.²⁰ The House Committee minutes for the same function, however, contain the note: “Savouries - Miss Eldershaw be approached re. same”.²¹

Many women writers attempted to sidestep the presumptions of gender through the use of pseudonyms. Nettie Palmer published under the pseudonyms of “Shalott,” “Owen Roe O’Neill” and “L”, Mary Fullerton used the epigrammatic “E,” while Anna Wickham used John Oland. Marie Pitt also adopted the pseudonym of “Joseph Marizeeni” when writing her most overtly feminist poems. Mystery novelist Hilda Bridges often assumed male pseudonyms. These pseudonyms strengthened the separation of the narrative self from the authorial self, distinguishing the imaginary from the real and the embodied. For women writers who kept their gendered signature, the two realms were often collapsed, especially if they wrote openly about sexuality and intimacy. Zora Cross and Dulcie Deamer’s writing was read as confirmation of their sexual exploits. As had occurred with other modernist women like Nancy Cunard and Mina Loy, their writing became circumscribed by the gossip of their lives. While Deamer played up to expectations by reinventing a self-consciously bohemian self, Cross struggled against it for the rest of her life.
Making a living as a writer remained a challenge for many of the women represented in this exhibition. Dymphna Cusack in later years observed “when collectors tell me of the fantastic prices they have paid for second-hand copies of *Jungfrau* I remember that I received £23 from its writing”. Some writers also felt that the very status of being a writer was devalued in Australian society. As Miles Franklin lamented, “in Australia the writer has ceased to have any of that social notice or esteem which is kept for those who succeed in business or become conspicuous in sport”. Marjorie Barnard pointed out to Leslie Rees with some irony that the 1934 Victorian Centenary literary competition was worth £200, while the golf championship attracted five times that amount. However, while she may have deplored the set of priorities embodied in the respective prizes, the issue for Barnard was not simply a financial one. As her collaborator Flora Eldershaw argued in relation to the expatriation of Australian writers, financial remuneration was but one aspect of a larger cultural agenda:

> The export of brains, literary and otherwise, is one of our most important industries, even though it appears in no trade balances. Young men and women of promise are continually crossing the sea to make their way in a larger world. A surprising number succeed, and we are the poorer for their loss. If we do not offer them sufficient rewards we cannot hope to keep them. By rewards I do not mean only payments in hard cash, though that is a part of it, but also freedom to express themselves, reputation and scope.

This exhibition brings together writers of established reputation and those less well-known; it also brings together genres that cross boundaries of high and low culture. Accordingly, we are showcasing genres such as the novel, poetry, children’s literature (including the sub-genre of teen literature), memoir, crime/mystery fiction, romance, travel writing, and non-fiction. Significantly, many women writers would cross genres. Often romance would be underscored by a crime plot; poetry and romance are also often twin genres. The exhibition also covers topics of particular interest such as the growing division between the bush and city, the impact of war, reflections on writing itself, and the emerging figure of the Modern Woman. As the works collected here demonstrate so clearly in their diversity, there is no single feminine tradition in Australian writing of this period. In selecting the works we have, we are neither seeking to reinforce an existing canon of Australian literature nor to propose an alternative one; rather, what should be apparent here is women’s significant participation in the realm of the ‘literary’ and the cultural agency of women.

In bringing together this selection of Australian women’s writing we are endeavouring to show how those better known writers from this period were not exceptions nor were they members of an isolated minority: they sat here in the context of a thriving literary world in which many women actively participated. Susan Sheridan has observed the importance of contributing to a ‘wider feminist project of reading women writers together, with and against one another, for differences as well as similarities in what they tried to create out the knowledges and commitments and desires that textured their lives’.

This exhibition forms part of that project.

Ann Vickery and Maryanne Dever
The Modern Woman

Particular women writers in this period directly challenged the prevailing social and sexual mores, exploring topics that were close to scandalous in their departure from the dominant feminine norms. In their novels they explored sexuality and maternal relations, women’s sexual inequality, birth control, rape, exploitative marriage, abortion, death in childbirth and the possibilities for free love. As Kay Ferres notes, they were endeavouring to write for women about the possibilities that might lie beyond “the bridebed — childbed — deathbed plot”. But in a world where reproductive sexuality was still viewed as the only socially sanctioned form of sexual expression, such ideas were not only radical, they seemed in questionable taste. As Dympha Cusack recalled in relation to her first novel, Jungfrau, a novel concerning pregnancy and abortion: “I overheard one of the senior teachers at Sydney Girls’ High saying how, after reading it, she put in the bottom of her wardrobe lest any visitors coming the house should see it on her bookshelf!” Taken together, these works demonstrated the fierce contest over the meanings of femininity that was taking place across these decades.

1. Henry Handel Richardson’s typewriter (by courtesy of Prof. Clive Probyn)

The Varityper is no ordinary typewriter. It is far more complex (and difficult to master) than a standard typewriter and is now considered the "word processor" of the pre-digital age. These machines had the advantage of offering a huge variety of type styles and could write in 55 languages. It was also possible to adjust the space between characters and even produce right-justified copy. They were, however, incredibly difficult to set up and use and it was also extremely hard to correct mistakes on this style of machine.

2. Franklin, Miles, 1879-1954.

My brilliant career / by Miles Franklin; with a preface by Henry Lawson. (Edinburgh : William Blackwood and Sons, 1901)

In My Brilliant Career, Franklin sought to resolve the contradictions between the values of 1890s bush nationalism and an emergent feminism. In Sybylla Melvyn she created possibly one of the best known heroines in Australian fiction of this period. Sybylla's refusal of Harold Beecham’s proposal of marriage sets her outside the dominant romantic tradition and introduces the prospect of women imagining a future for themselves that was not defined by marriage and motherhood. Franklin was only twenty-two years old when the novel appeared but her literary career was then marked by a lengthy silence in the years following publication of My Brilliant Career. She left Australia in 1906 to pursue work first as a feminist activist in the United States alongside Alice Henry and later as a nurse in Serbia during World War 1. She re-emerged on the literary scene with the publication of the Brent of Bin Bin novels (see Item 68 below) and the celebrated novel, All That Swagger (1936). My Brilliant Career was adapted for the screen by Gillian Armstrong in 1979 with a young Judy Davis playing Sybylla to Sam Neill’s Harry Beecham. My Brilliant Career was followed by a sequel My Career Goes Bung (1946).


Often considered a work of children's fiction because of its boarding school setting, _The Getting of Wisdom_ is perhaps better thought of as an adult novel in the tradition of the _bildungsroman_. Laura Tweedle-Ramsbotham is an awkward country girl with a vivid imagination who is sent to an exclusive and very strict boarding school in Melbourne (loosely based on PLC) in 1910. Laura initially finds it difficult to conform to the desired standards of decorum and her odd and often rebellious nature brings conflict among both her peers and teachers. Early reviewers of the novel reacted negatively to Laura's less than innocent outlook on the world, decrying Richardson's violation of the 'purity of girlhood'. The image of schoolgirls smoking in the novel might also have raised eyebrows! But the novel is really concerned with the making of a writer and the growth of artistic talent in the course of a difficult adolescence. Again we are offered here the possibility of imagining a feminine type whose life ambitions might include creativity and independence.


Kay Ferres notes that Richardson’s singular contribution to the development of the ‘new woman’ in fiction was the variety and particularity of her portraits of women. “Her women bend and break the rules, as do her men. The difference is that her women survive”. Readers initially did not suspect that the author of _Maurice Guest_ was a woman and, indeed, given the frank portrait of sexual freedom and homosexuality offered in the novel, they may well have imagined no (decent) woman could possibly have produced such a text. In the character of Louise — heavily influenced by Wedekind’s _Lulu_ — Richardson gives to us one of the most strikingly independent and sensual women in Australian fiction.

5. Boake, Capel [Doris Kerr Boake], 1889-1944.  

_Painted clay_ / by Capel Boake. (Melbourne : Australasian Authors’ Agency, 1917)

Boake’s first novel, _Painted Clay_, explores working life for women in an era when marriage and domesticity were thought to delimit their proper realm. Indeed, Boake explicitly advocated the freedom and independence for women to work outside the home and to earn their own money. The story of a shop assistant’s campaign for independence, the novel makes a case for wider choices for young women. But it also advocates the right of women to engage in sexual relations before choosing a marriage partner and the rights of daughters to leave their family home before they marry. Capel Boake was active in P.E.N. International and a foundation member of the Society of Australian Authors. Her friend Myra Morris (see Items 18 and 19 below) wrote of Boake after her death: "There'll never be anyone else like Doris — so generous, so full of understanding, with so rare a mind."

_The butcher shop_ / by Jean Devanny. (New York : Macaulay, 1926)

Published while Devanny was still living in New Zealand, this novel achieved the singular honour of being banned in New Zealand, Australia, Boston and Nazi Germany. The trouble sprang from its frank depiction of sexuality and its emphasis on the violence and brutality of New Zealand rural life. Devanny’s strong feminist politics are clearly evident in this early work as she challenges women’s role with the family.


_Jungfrau_ / by Dymphna Cusack. (Sydney: The Bulletin, 1936)

Dymphna Cusack dedicated _Jungfrau_, her first novel, to her mother only to find her mother was horrified by its subject matter: “all about sex”. In _Jungfrau_ Cusack exposed the fact that nice girls — even university educated ones — sometimes did ‘do it’ and she tackled head-on the sexual double standard that left such women to handle the unwanted consequences of sex outside marriage. When Thea finds herself pregnant following a brief fling with a university professor, she seeks the assistance of her friends to secure an abortion. But when she finds herself unable to go through with it, in desperation she commits suicide. The novel was runner up in the 1935 _Bulletin_ novel competition. Cusack exclaimed after _Jungfrau_ appeared that “I was a writer at last!”


_The pea-pickers_ / by Eve Langley. 2nd ed. (1942, Sydney : Angus and Robertson, 1958)

Anyone who has read _The Pea Pickers_ never forgets Steve and Blue — two girls dressed as men who are taken on as seasonal farm workers in the Gippsland region. While their quest is love more than work, the novel ends in a conventional marriage for Blue only; with Steve’s desires represented as more complex and confusing as she strives to retain the independence her masquerade delivers to her. Evoking the tradition of the picaresque novel, _The Pea Pickers_ also celebrates the Australian landscape and a passionate patriotism, even if by today’s standards many of Steve’s florid outbursts on the subject appear obscure and often racist.

Commentators have been fascinated by the novel’s representation of the transvestic and by the sensational and troubled life of Langley whose biography was marked by eccentricity, mental illness, incarceration, a transgender wardrobe and the decision to change her name by deed poll to “Oscar Wilde”.

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Item 6
Mary Gilmore was evidently moved by *The Pea Pickers*, writing to Miles Franklin that she had found much in it reminiscent of Franklin’s own work:

Yesterday I finished ‘The Pea Pickers’ and…felt Stella Miles Franklin’s mind all through it…But the feeling did not die, so this is written because of the beauty of the book as a response to life and to the living things that are Australia. I found all my own responses in it but for which I have never found words. I lived in it as I read….

I have praised many books in my time, but none like this. This is a vine on its own. The teller emerges through it and takes all the other characters swirling after her like debris in a stream. She is so vital that the others are shadowy by comparison….

As a matter of fact I sometimes wondered was the writer Stella Miles Franklin plus the unknown poet [referring to ‘E’ or Mary Fullerton] S.M.F. found.34


*Out of such fires* / by Jean Devanny. (New York : Macaulay, 1934)


*Prelude to Christopher* / Eleanor Dark. (1934, London: Collins, 1936)

This was Eleanor Dark’s second novel and established her as a significant new voice, especially after the novel was awarded the Australian Literary Society’s medal for the best novel published in that year. Not everyone was enamoured of it, however. Marjorie Barnard wrote to Nettie Palmer of how she had:

…just read “Prelude to Christopher” and wiped my brow with the feeling of having had a miraculous escape from writing it. Pretty bad, don’t you think? A showing-off book, simply loaded with techniques — some positively inspired carpentry and joinery. Is it a youthful indiscretion? There are some good spots too.35

Barnard may well have been reacting to Dark’s ambitious attempt to achieve a different form for her fiction, one that entertained multiple temporalities. It is the first of her novels in which she endeavoured to record life ‘as an endless present moment, moving snail-wise through time, carrying the past and future on its back’.36 The ‘Christopher’ of the title is the as yet unborn child of two characters, Kay, a nurse and Nigel, a doctor who is a patient under her care. The plot revolves around Linda, Nigel’s wife who is convinced she suffered from a form of hereditary madness which dictates she should not have a child with the man she loves. In its exploration of sexual morality, sexual competition, biology and eugenics, Dark blended romance and realism at the same time as reaching towards a more complex novel of ideas in the modernist tradition.
11. Laker, Jane. [Alice Jane Muskett], 1869-1936

*Among the reeds* / by Jane Laker. (London; Melbourne : Cassell, 1933)

Alice Muskett is far better known as a painter than as a writer and *Among the Reeds* is her only published novel. Muskett was a pupil of Julian Ashton who provided Sydney's first life-class for women artists. She exhibited annually from 1890 with the Art Society of New South Wales and with the professional breakaway Society of Artists, Sydney, from its first exhibition in 1895. Between 1895-98 she studied at the Académie Colarossi in Paris and in 1896 she exhibited at the Salon de la Société des Artistes Français. Muskett moved back and forth between Australia and Europe over the following decades. During World War I she worked at a soldiers' canteen in London, returning again to Sydney in 1921.

Having previously published verse and short stories, in 1933 Muskett published *Among the Reeds* under the name ‘Jane Laker’ (her maternal grandmother's name). *Among the Reeds* draws on Muskett’s own life experience as a painter and the challenges that faced women of her class who sought to train and work as professional artists and who inevitably found themselves choosing between marriage and a career. The novel is remarkable for its strongly feminist point of view and for the explicit way in which it dealt with conflict between Bohemian or artistic values and middle-class social mores.


*The beauties and furies* / by Christina Stead. (New York : Appleton-Century, 1936)


*For love alone* / Christina Stead. (New York : Harcourt, Brace, 1944)

Critic Dorothy Green, writing of Stead’s early fiction groups *For Love Alone* with *The Man Who Loved Children* and *Seven Poor of Sydney* (see Item 82 below) and finds in them "one of the most remarkable accounts of what it feels like to be a creative artist who is also a woman, a woman of intellect and passion, to whom both are equally necessary, growing from adolescence through to the threshold of full womanhood". 37


*Return to Coolami* : a novel / by Eleanor Dark. (London: Collins, 1936)


One of Charmian Clift’s earliest published works, this short story tells of a woman who displaces a wife only to realise later that she herself is to face the same fate.
Magazines

The expansion in local magazine production in the early twentieth century provided new and potentially lucrative publishing opportunities for women. Nettie Palmer described how her work produced for the *Australian Women’s Mirror* was “just to buy family shoe-leather.” Marjorie Barnard was not always so fortunate in gaining a foothold in this market, however. She commented to Palmer at one stage that “I am having a perfect orgy of unsaleableness [sic] and the postal revenue being benefited by the passage to and fro of my MS. I might as well start breeding homing pigeons”.


    *Coonardoo: the well in the shadow* / by Katharine Susannah Prichard. (London : Jonathan Cape, 1929)

Prichard’s *Coonardoo* might be said to explore not only issues of gender—the tension between masculine and feminine spheres in the Australian landscape but also the question of race. The novel was quite controversial in taking as its subject the experiences of an Aboriginal woman when it was first published in serial form in *The Bulletin* in 1928. The journal’s editors received hundreds of letters written in protest so that by the time the novel came to be published in book form a year later, Prichard added a preface which justified the novel both as a work of fiction but also as having historical and social accuracy—as falling within the genre of documentary. “Life in the north-west of Western Australia,” she wrote, “is almost as little known in Australia as in England or America. It seems necessary to say, therefore, that the story was written in the country through which it moves. Facts, characters, incidents, have been collected, related and interwoven. That is all.” Prichard’s son, Ric Throssell, remembers his mother researching the novel at Turee, a station in the Kimberlys in 1926. He notes that he himself had played with the model for Coonardoo’s son, Winnie. Prichard, by her own admission, arrived at Turee with little knowledge of life in the outback and even less of Aboriginal culture. She would write to her friend Nettie Palmer:

    I’ve been riding nearly every day and am that colour of red mulga and hennaed with dust...Sometimes one of the gins rides with me, sometimes mine host, who is really a bit of the country, and sometimes Mick, a stockman who has lived here all his life...And the blacks are most interesting—fair haired—and I find them poetic and naive. Quite unlike all I’ve ever been told, or asked to believe about them. I’m doing some character studies.

She notes that she became inspired by the “beauty and tragedy” of the stories of the outback. When she came to write Coonardoo, she gives a picture of station life with a good deal of naturalistic detail both inside the homestead and out. And it is in this respect that the novel might be described as realist.
When *Coonardoo* was published in the late 1920s, there had been two widely-
publicised incidents involving inter-racial conflict in the north-west. The first had been
in 1926 when a group of Aborigines was massacred by police at Onmalmeri in the
Kimberley as retaliation for the murder of a single white man. An outcry from the
cities resulted in a Royal Commission. Two years later, there was another reprisal
massacre, this time north-west of Alice Springs. So when *Coonardoo* appeared,
white Australia was just beginning to debate the responsibilities of government
towards the Aborigines. Those in the cities were indignant at the brutalities still
occurring on what they saw as the backwards periphery of society.

18. Morris, Myra.

*White magic* / by Myra Morris. (Melbourne : Vidler, 1929)

Born in Boort in the Victorian Mallee country, Myra Morris spent most of her life in
small Victorian country towns and these form the backdrop to much of her fiction.
She contributed poetry, serials and short stories to many Australian publications,
notably the *Bulletin*. She also wrote *Australian Landscape* (1944).

19. Morris, Myra.

*Dark tumult* / by Myra Morris. (London : Thornton Butterworth, 1939)

In a letter dated 20 September, 1938, Victor Kennedy wrote to J.K. Moir that, “Myra
Morris once told a yarn…that she was so pestered with fans blowing into her den at
Sandringham (I think) that she had to put up a sign: ‘Miss Morris is
very ill—with syphilis


*The singing gold* / by Dorothy Cottrell. 1st Australian ed. (Sydney :
Angus and Robertson, 1956)


[American edition of “Earth battle”]


*My south sea sweetheart* / by Beatrice Grimshaw. “Free supplement to
the *Australian Women’s Weekly*


*The Coral Queen*. (Sydney: N.S. W. Bookstall Co. Ltd., 1920)

27. Deamer, Dulcie, 1890-1972.

Holiday / by Dulcie Deamer. (Sydney : Frank Johnson, 1940)

Born in New Zealand, Dulcie Deamer was a well-known figure in Sydney Bohemian circles of the 1920s and 1930s. Initially Deamer pursued a career in the theatre, but in 1907 she won first prize in a Lone Hand competition for her 'highly imaginative' Stone Age story. Her family were shocked by the voluptuous and graphic Norman Lindsay illustrations that accompanied the story when it subsequently appeared in print. Deamer later admitted that: “Even at that tender age I loved blood, murder and violence”. In Holiday Deamer attempts to give women an active role in the unfolding historical events (even if drama and colour prevail over narrative sense!).

Poetry

28. Fullerton, Mary, 1868-1946.

Moles do so little with their privacy : poems / by E ; preface by T. Inglis Moore ; explanatory note by Miles Franklin. (Sydney : Angus & Robertson, 1942)

Like Mary Gilmore and Marie Pitt, Mary Fullerton had a bush childhood. In her early twenties, she moved to Melbourne where she took up journalism and became involved in women’s suffrage. She was a prominent member of the Women’s Political Association and Women’s Peace Army, working closely alongside Vida Goldstein, Adela Pankhurst, Bella Guerin, Cecilia John, Jennie Baines and Alice Henry. Her early published poetry provided a further vehicle for her politics. Work that remained unpublished often explored Fullerton's same-sex desires using the discourses of Romanticism, eugenics, and transcendentalism. In 1922, she moved to London where she set up home with Mabel Singleton and Singleton’s son, Dennis. She also became close friends with fellow writer, Miles Franklin. In the 1930s Franklin and Fullerton bluffed Australian literary circles by writing under the pseudonyms of Brent of Bin Bin and “E” respectively.

In 1942, Mary’s third collection of poetry, Moles Do So Little With Their Privacy. Joy Hooton suggests that it was made possible largely due to Franklin’s “bullying” of publishers. Angus and Robertson paid Mary only three pence per copy (the equivalent of a 7.1 % royalty). The poems themselves were chosen from some 450 poems Mary had, by then, sent Franklin. The title of the collection teasingly suggests the actual boredom of an underground life. Dedicated to “Virginia” (Mabel’s second name), it would contain some seemingly personal poems such as “Lovers”:
To be unloved brings sweet relief:
The strong adoring eyes
Play the eternal thief
With the soul's fit disguise.

[...]

To be unloved gives sweet relief;
The one integrity
Of soul is to be lone,
Inviolate, and free.44

Besides these personal poems are character poems such as “Outsider,” as well as the epigrammatic, such as the following in honour of one of Mary's favourite poets, Emily Dickinson:

If you had been more fed
Our feast had been more,
You whose mere crumbs
Leave us less poor.45

And lastly, there are more philosophical nature poems such as “Heron”:

I watched a motionless bird,
Straight by the rushy lagoon;
Lonely he seemed as a cloud
Shunned by the moon.

I went to the motionless bird,
"Why stand remote and alone?"
I spoke to rushes, the legs
Had waded and flown.

But close to the weight of my foot,
A welter of feathers and blood:
So, since love is the heart of the world,
I knew why he stood.46

With the publication of *Moles*, Mary Gilmore wrote to Franklin on the subject of “E”:

I think again that “E” has something warmer in her than Emily Dickinson. She is nearer the human heart & nearer the wonder that lies in a heart seeing intellectually but with a little friendly fire in it. In plain words, there is more wonder, less ego in her work than Emily.47


*Who's who in rhyme and without reason / by Ruth Bedford ; with line illustrations by Judith Mauldon. (Sydney : Australasian Publishing, 1948)*

Although primarily known as a children’s poet, Ruth Bedford published seven collections of poetry. *The Brisbane Courier Mail* approved of the fact that she had “not been caught in the stream of so-called modernism” although some reviewers dismissed her work as slight. One of her closest friends was fellow poet, Dorothea Mackellar, and they would collaborate on a number of light novels.

*Poems* / by Miriam Moxham; illustrated by the author. (Sydney: Shakespeare Head, 1936)


*Princess Verdure: a poetic phantasy and other verses* / by Ruby Gill. (Sydney: Building Publishing, [1944])


*Fancy dress and other verse* / by Dorothea Mackellar. (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1926)

Born in Sydney, Dorothea Mackellar was the daughter of Sir Charles Mackellar, physician and parliamentarian. After going to University of Sydney, she finished her education by traveling overseas. She was fluent in French, German, Italian and Spanish and was able to act as translator for her family. Dorothea's best known and much loved and memorised poem 'Core of My Heart' ('My Country') was written while she was in England when she was nineteen years old (although it was revised on her return to Australia). She published in a number of magazines and journals in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom. She published two novels with her close friend, Ruth Bedford. Her health deteriorated in the late 1920s and eventually put an end to her writing.

33. Gilmore, Mary, Dame, 1865-1962.

*The tilted cart: a book of recitations* / by Mary Gilmore. ([Sydney: M. Gilmore], 1925)

Gilmore wrote of the difficulty of finding time to write:

> By the time a woman has washed & baked, ironed & scrubbed, swept & cleaned & dusted, cooked three meals a day, darned & stitched & made one’s own & one’s child’s clothes by hand & has the reputation of being one who keeps the corners clean, there isn’t much time for writing…and besides…I didn’t contract when I married, to be a writer, I contracted to be a wife & mother…There are many pages for me to write yet in this living book in my hands, & it is better to write them well & faithfully than to waste my time trying to be the brilliant woman I not only am not, but never would be.(1903)

Many of the poems in *The Tilted Cart* feature life on the land or the small town, with a number located in Wagga and the surrounding area. Gilmore provides a series of often autobiographical-based endnotes to provide context and explanation. As with earlier published verse, a number of the poems are narrated through a colloquial working-class voice:

> “Watchin’ your face, or watchin’ your nose,  
  Keepin’ the dam’ thing offa your clo’es—  
  That’s the way your Sattady goes—  
  Doin’ the boots for Sunday.”(“Doing the Boots for Sunday”)

Many of the poems focus on female experiences. “A Common Story,” for example, tells of the vindictiveness of small-town gossip: “We’re afraid she’s fond of the men!”. “A butterfly—hardly a wife—/Poor flutterer, broken of men.”

_Under the Wilgas: poems_ / by Mary Gilmore. (Melbourne: Robertson & Mullins, 1932)

_Under the Wilgas_ is a good example of Gilmore’s use of poetry as cultural intervention. While Gilmore had already begun writing about the place of Aborigines in Australian history, in this collection she more often assumes an Aboriginal voice. Whereas poems like “The Waradgery Tribe” echo her earlier collection, _The Wild Swan_, mythologizing the Aborigines as a dying race, Gilmore begins to represent the present-day Aborigine as a victim of continuing injustice and discrimination. In “The Myall in Prison,” she assumes a first-person voice to emphasize her sympathy with Aborigines in custody. At the same time, she uses European poetic forms like the dirge and the elegy to mourn specific Aboriginal loss (as in “Wariapendi: A Dirge” and “The Children of Mirrabooka”). _Under the Wilgas_ is also more self-consciously an attempt to map out a cultural history, featuring poems on specific events (The Eureka Stockade) and figures (Parkes and Lawson). A number of poems also consider trace the relationship between the English language and history through what are largely modernist terms. One example would be the aptly titled “Language”:

Flower turns to seed, and seed becomes a flower;
One seed makes many flowers, one flower much seed!
Thus form a word does mighty thinking breed,
And simple thoughts, to great, increase the dower.
Are not all words old thought new-set to power—
Late visible where we, late-come, may read,
To lose by them, the low place of the weed,
And climb, where, if unlearned, we still much cower?
Speak not of history in stone! For I
Can show you history written deeper yet;
The simple words nor youth nor age forget,
Passed lip to lip, as centuries go by;
The caravans of time these leave behind—
Shards from which man makes ladders for the mind.

History can no longer be written “in stone”. Instead, Gilmore suggests a cyclical understanding of time. Present-day language is also fragmentary, mere “shards” from a past which was more unified in meaning. Yet, it may still enable “ladders,” a pathway to greater understanding. Gilmore plays with the sonnet form to suggest that form as well as “old thoughts” may be “new-set to power”.


_The south wind_ / by Nettie Palmer. (London: John G. Wilson, 1914)

In April 1914, Nettie travelled to London and married Vance Palmer on the 23rd of May. Her brother, Esmonde, wrote half-seriously upon hearing the news, “[W]ere you born for this? Did I do my best to bring you up only for this?…Vance’s crime…is very great.” Katharine Susannah Prichard was still in England and encouraged Nettie to establish a writing career for herself. Nettie’s first collection of poetry, _The South Wind_, was published in London, reflecting Nettie’s belief, and that of many Australians at the time that it was superior to local publication. Yet the title reflects Vance’s cultural politics in locating the poet’s voice within the fresh air of Australia. Its content too, aimed to be fresh, accessible, and Australian. Nettie was pleased with the result, writing again to Esmonde:
The poems make a decent little volume, don’t they? I think you’ll see why I left out all translations and experiments. Do you know, old soul, I’m awfully keen to see if you’ll like any of them.49

The collection included a number of previously published poems like “In the Concert Hall”:

Who is to blame? The woman,
Just for being there
Simple and human?
The man who wants to look at her,
And slightly turns his chair,
And as he likes will watch her faintest stir?

I wonder if he guesses
How his causal stare
Stabs and oppresses;

The woman dreads to raise her eyes

Or even touch her hair;
All seems a pose to which his gaze replies.

The thing is hardly level:
Woman, if you glance
You’re called a devil;
For hours he tempts you and you endure
Behold the world advance:
You’re paying now for Cleopatra’s lure.

Here, Nettie foregrounds the power of the male gaze, revealing how woman is prescribed through it. Woman is reduced to “pose” or masquerade, pre-defined as seductress rather than self-determining.

Unfortunately, the volume itself was also judged through gendered terms as the reviewer of the “Red Page” [of The Worker] declared:

For what she writes is poetry—a poetry of limited range, a fireside poetry, domestic and human. Her verses have an atmosphere: they are burdened with scents that, analysed, are not entirely to be traced to the mere words.
A slight, little feminine song, but from an unaffected human and singing throat.50

Responding to Esmonde’s dislike of “In the Concert Hall,” Nettie reveals an awareness of how her work has been positioned:

But I do not claim that it is a transcript from life, no matter how many other sides there may be to the question. The editor of the Bulletin sent it back with the remark, “All very well, but you haven’t given the woman’s point of view!” How did he know that? What woman? Anyway, the joke is that the Red Page man falls over himself in the effort to announce me as the exponent of the feminine.51

By deeming it feminine, Nettie’s poetry can be seen to be minor, tangential to the nationalist culture-building project of writers like Vance. In England, Nettie’s book received little attention and was relegated to the “colonial shelf” at the Poetry Bookshop.

_Shadowy paths /

by Nettie Palmer. (London : Euston Press, [1915])

The title of Nettie Palmer’s second collection, _Shadowy Paths_ (1915), emphasizes a more atmospheric and abstract palate—of paths not too frequently taken. It too juxtaposes constraint and enclosure with the possibilities of freedom. In “The Window,” the narrator looks out on the wild night landscape:

> Trees on the skyline darken,
> Tell me, what is beyond!
> Hungry and fond
> Here I must linger and hearken.


_The poems of Lesbia Harford._ (Melbourne : Melbourne University Press in association with Oxford University Press, 1941)

One of the first women to graduate in Law at the University of Melbourne, Lesbia Harford was involved in the anti-conscription movement, promoting both pacifism and greater cultural tolerance. Attracted to the International Workers of the World, a radical labour movement, she took up their policy of direct action and was, at various times, an art teacher, a servant, and factory-worker. She became involved in the Clothing Trades Union and was the first Woman Vice-President of its industry section in Victoria. Often minimalist, her poetry focuses on the everyday, the colloquial, and the particular. It is often underwritten by a sharp awareness of class oppression. Perhaps because she intended her poetry to stay private (and indeed, most of it remained unpublished during her lifetime), it would be a vehicle through which Lesbia vividly explores aspects of female sexuality. At the same time, her poetry is marked by both sexual and spiritual ambivalence. While it had been hoped that Lesbia’s brother, Esmond Keogh, would organise a posthumous volume of her work, it did not eventuate and it was not be until 1941 that her close friend Nettie Palmer went through Lesbia’s exercise books and put together a selection. The manuscript was then sent to the Commonwealth Literary Fund. Nettie’s husband, Vance, and a friend, Flora Eldershaw, were on the advisory board. It was reviewed by Louis Lavater who reported back, “These shy, intimate blossomings of a human spirit are not for the rough surgery of criticism. One reads them—remembers them—returns to them. Certainly they must be preserved”. The advisory board decided to publish the volume. Later, Nettie told Guido Baracchi (who may have been Lesbia Harford’s lover at one stage and who maintained an interest in Lesbia’s literary reputation) that the poems were given the grant only because Professor Osborne, S. Talbot Smith and George Mackaness, “three old gentlemen of the censor type…have no time to read, which sometimes prevents them from fulfilling their natural function, which is to obstruct”. “Professor Osborne now says,” she continues, “that if he had read Lesbia’s _Poems_ beforehand he would never have consented to their publication. Fortunately Flora is a strong enough character to take all such back-kicks quite calmly and the Board carries on”. The decision to publish was perhaps not as simple as Nettie thought, for it overlooks Lavater’s positive review. The volume too was presented as a modest venture.


_Selected poems of Marie E.J. Pitt / foreword by W.F. Wannan._ (Melbourne : Lothian, 1944)

Virginia Woolf once wrote of Edwardian works that “in order to complete them it seems necessary to do something—to join a society, or, more desperately, write a cheque”. At times, Marie Pitt’s poetry provokes precisely this feeling. Yet Pitt remains one of Australia’s most powerful protest poets, mobilising a forthright and colourful rhetoric to stir readers into action. Both Woolf and Pitt focus their attention
on material change for women and the need for women to develop their full potential. Both saw education and freedom from domestic tyranny as the key to achieving this goal. Yet while Woolf advocated finding a room of one’s own and five hundred pounds a year—an unrealistic goal for most middle-class women, let alone the working class—Pitt warned against the dangers of an over-prolific motherhood. Her work was populist, seeking out readers who had little leisure time and whose knowledge of the world was drawn primarily from the newspaper. She employed familiar poetic forms like the ballad, the song, and the sonnet to rally readers, in a similar way that the song and manifesto were used by racially and economically disempowered groups in the early to mid twentieth century.

Like Mary Gilmore, she saw motherhood as the central defining fact of gender difference. Yet, Pitt understood that middle-class women were further interpellated through bourgeois capitalism, resulting in different priorities, sometimes even a different morality, to their working-class counterparts. Her voice could be considered outspoken for a woman, even in an era where women were entering and informing public debates. Unlike Gilmore’s more monitored feminine tone, Pitt’s bold complaint and insistence to be heard were viewed by many as “masculine”.

Born in 1869 in Bulumall in north-east Gippsland, Pitt experienced a rough pioneering childhood. As the eldest of seven children, it fell to her to walk the mile or so to the local hotel and procure whisky for her goldmining father, “Wild Ned”. She married a goldminer who later contracted miners’ phthisis. Her best-known poem, “The Keening,” was written in response to the mining company’s refusal to pay the Pitts any compensation. In it, she describes the harsh conditions of the mining work, of men choking on the “‘fracteur’ fumes, ‘stoping’ the stubborn matrix,” and “stifling in torrid ‘rises’”. Alliteration—emphasising poetic language’s breath and aesthetic orientation—is set against the grim loss of workers’ breath. For Pitt, the mining bosses were in league with the men of government, “fat blasphemers” sacrificing men in the name of capitalism. Pitt assumes the collective Othered “we” in vowing vengeance for the “life-blood” that has been spilled:

We are the women and children
Of the men that ye mowed like wheat;
Some of us slave for a pittance—
Some of us walk the street;
Bodies and souls, ye have scourged us;
Yet have winnowed us flesh from bone:
But, by the God ye have flouted,
We will come again for our own!

Throughout her husband’s illness, Marie was the primary breadwinner, editing The Socialist. In 1912, William Pitt died, leaving Marie with three children to raise. He was still only in his forties. Marie would become increasingly closer to fellow poet and socialist, Bernard O’Dowd and in 1920 they created a scandal when O’Dowd left his wife and five children to set up house with Marie and her children.


Judith Wright was born into one of the premier pastoral families of New South Wales. She attended Sydney University and then travelled to Europe. Between 1943 and 1947, she lived in Brisbane where she helped out with Meanjin Papers by performing unpaid secretarial tasks. Through the Meanjin office, she met her future husband, Jack McKinney. The Moving Image (1946) was her first published collection of poetry and was a critical success. It contains some of her best-known poems like “Bullocky” (which was widely taught in schools) and its title poem reflects the influence of McKinney’s philosophies.
Winifred Shaw was heralded as something of a child genius, having produced an accomplished collection of poetry by the age of fourteen. It is worth noting the changes in the way her work was marketed. In the first collection, *The Aspen Tree and Other Verses*, she is pictured in the opening pages as the innocent schoolgirl. Only four years later, a subsequent book, *Babylon*, reveals the influence of the Lindsay circle and touches on social degeneration and decadence.

In 1918, Zora Cross’s career was at its zenith. Her popularity was such that, as Michael Sharkey notes, her name “was fashionably given to children born in subsequent years, and even bestowed upon a race horse”. Her best-known volume, *Songs of Love and Life*, with its erotic sonnets provided a new register for young Australian women searching for ways to articulate their sexual desire. Initially, Bertram Stevens approached George Robertson with the manuscript but Robertson was not interested in the proposition. He attributed this initial reaction to “the mood I happened to be in” and “the fact that the lady’s mother was willing to ‘put up’ part of the cost (almost invariably a bad sign)”. Mary Cross ended up financing the first edition of *Songs of Love and Life* in late 1917. It sold out in forty-eight hours. The second edition was picked up by Robertson, who began viewing Zora as a modern-day Currer Bell. Robertson’s opinion was reinforced by Christopher Brennan’s report on the manuscript. Making a number of detailed comments on various sonnets, Brennan noted that he would not have been quite so thorough were it not that he felt that he had before him “the real stuff of poetry”. Zora’s sonnets sometimes reminded him “without any copying, without any reminiscence—of the best sonnet-writers, from Rossetti back to Shakespeare”. Yet while she had an unbridled talent and “astounding” mastery of the sonnet-form, there were also “astounding lapses”.

The collection contains two quite different sets of poems, a series of girlhood poems and the love sonnets. In the former, girlhood is a state separate from the realities of the modern world. They echo the poetry of Mabel Forrest and Dorothea Mackellar in being filled with witchery, spells, faerys, and fayness. Yet for Zora, the language of enchantment provides a way through which a girl’s sexuality may be spoken. It is no coincidence that sexual pleasure is covert in both “Girl-Gladness” and “The New Moon,” being represented as truant activity and a secret evening tryst. In “Memory,” Zora reveals the girl and the woman as ‘moments’ of the one subject. Full of “childish charms,” an eight year old asks the older version of herself, “Now have you
been a good, good girl? Have you had much spanking since you were Me?" The older self evades her question, “For I’ve earned more spanks than I dared to tell". While “Eight must never see Twenty-three,” she provides a way through which Zora can hint at the more adult pleasures gained from being bad.

In contrast to the girl-poems, the volume’s central group of poems, the sixty “Love Sonnets” do away with concealment. Sonnet XXX advocates a free love ethos:

Ah Love, back to realities we rush  
Over each lidless dream, as boys to play.  
Fancies and thoughts may blossom any day  
But Youth has only once her early flush.  
Age trammels us, and all her threshers crush  
Passion, delight, and beauty into clay;  
Time broods upon the bosom of the bay  
Holding his finger with an ancient “Hush”.

So while we are both young, while my breasts well  
Tingling to you, and life is mostly fire—  
Warm blood, and warmer throbf pulse and kiss—  
Strive not our happy passions to dispel.  
Love…Love…until our bodies both transpire,  
For growing old, we must forswear such bliss.

In bringing both kinds of poems together in the one collection, Zora draws an inevitable comparison between the freedom of affection that girlhood allows and the bohemian desires more associated with the New Woman. Their difference is revealed to be of discursive degree: girlish sexual desire is described as “gladness” rather than “bliss,” a girl merely “cuddles” rather than indulging in a clinging embrace.

42. Hirst, A. D. (Amy D.)

*Through the gates* / by A.D. Hirst. (Sydney : Tyrrell's Limited, 1921)

On her way to England in 1910, Nettie Palmer met Amy and Hetty Hirst, who she wrote of being “wonderful friends—brother & sister, lovers may be—without demonstration or anything unnatural”. Nettie became particularly close to Amy, describing her to Vance as very sweet, quite the most original human on the boat, I think. She has rather short hair, not from any “mannish” intention assuredly, & it happens to suit her wonderfully, with her light, frank poise & eyes like wells of blue lights. She is little & sometimes looks like a rather eerie child, but she has a strong, understanding face, too.

She concludes, “I think you’d like her a whole lot”. Like Nettie, Amy also had poetic aspirations and on the journey, they wrote verses to each other, “‘Larboat Lyrics’ & ‘Starboard Spasms,'” which Nettie explained were “quite serious when you get inside”.

Amy would die prematurely in 1920, her life “cut short by disease brought on through unwearied exertion in an inclement climate on behalf of the soldiers of Britain and Australia”.

Besides discussing literature, Nettie and Amy shared their thoughts on sexuality with Amy declaring herself neuter. Nettie was much taken by this idea and later declared to Vance, “Sometimes I wish I had no gender but it is not entirely unmanageable”. Amy’s posthumous collection of poetry, *Through the Gates* (1921), gives some insight into Amy’s state of mind. While she herself is described on the opening page as “Poet—painter—psychic,” the volume depicts a division between the “Dayself” and the “Night-soul”, with reference too, to a “Dreamself”.

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Nettie explained to Vance, “By the way, this girl, Amy Hirst, can write—queer, vivid transcripts of subconscious states...all lateral renderings of dream places that she & another know”. The beloved Other referred to in Amy’s verse is addressed as “Pussy” and *Through the Gates* suggests a sexual identity that is subterranean, shadowy, and mystical. She would note the difficulty of “thinking Night-life into language” when “Daywords” as square and “cornery”. There is also plenty of reference to colour, Hirst referring to “True Colours” which leave no Shadow “but only the clear colour-glory of the Outline”. True-Colours also include sound.

Transformations in life, including the transition between Life and Death are called “Colour-Changes”. Hirst was also a painter and a number of her pictures are in *Through the Gates*.


*The earth lover and other verses* / by Katharine Susannah Prichard ; with decorations by Eileen McGrath. (Sydney : Sunnybrook Press, 1932)

Following the success of Zora Cross, Katharine Susannah Prichard explored female eroticism in her collection, *The Earth Lover and Other Verses*:

Adventurous lips
That o’er me rove,
So swelling soft
And smelling lie the rose,
Lips of my love! My love!

Lips of the bee
That cling
And fall from clinging,
Yearning,
Drunk with bliss!
Dear lips
That to me prove
My body
But a chalice, white
For your delight
My love, my love!

Oh, I am faint
When your lips hang on mine,
And there is ecstasy
In their mute questing,
Easting, westing,

So,
They are gentle
As the brooding dove,
Fierce as twin birds of prey,
Lips of my love! My love!

Here, Prichard’s narrator is a pure, previously unread recipient of male attention (a “white chalice”) rather than the initiating subject. For Prichard, the woman still experiences intimacy as submersion in a powerful male Other. Nevertheless, she makes public the private sphere of woman’s love, creating a further redaction or variant of the “New Woman”.
Travel

Flat Case 2

Writing and travel both represent forms of escape and while women and proper femininity have routinely been associated with the home and with staying “at home”, as the century unfolded mobility became an increasing possibility for middle class women. Indeed, women’s increased mobility can be read as a sign of modernity. Longer and shorter periods overseas mark the biographies of writers such as Miles Franklin, Christina Stead, Marjorie Barnard, Katharine Susannah Prichard, and Nettie Palmer. Travel provided women with opportunities to observe, describe, catalogue, reflect and report on what they had witnessed. And, as Stirling Armstrong, the novelist character at the centre of M. Barnard Eldershaw’s shipboard novel The Glasshouse (1936) shows (see item 60 below), travel also provided those stretches of time so conducive to writing. The works collected here are not formal guides intended for use by other travellers; they are travellers’ tales that offer vicarious pleasures for the armchair traveller, a political education for the curious or early lessons in environmental consciousness.

44. Devanny, Jean, 1894-1962.

*By tropic sea and jungle: Adventures in North Queensland.* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1944)

A series of essays on aspects of life in tropical north Queensland, an area of Australia that Jean Devanny knew well and loved. However, as Devanny’s biographer Carole Ferrier noted, Devanny — a well-known Communist activist — was under constant police surveillance as she travelled around the region recording and documenting life there for this collection.


Prichard, a founding member of the Communist Party of Australia, was just one of the many writers and left intellectuals from the West who made political pilgrimages to the Soviet Union in the 1930s at the end of the first Five year Plan. While Prichard was not involved in the explicit production of propaganda, hers is an idealistic account of life there. While on this trip, she received the devastating news that her husband, Hugo Throssell, had committed suicide. She later recorded: “Only my belief in the need to work for the great ideas of Communism and world peace helped me survive a grief so shattering”.


*Moscow excursion* / by P. L. Travers. (New York : Reynal & Hitchcock, [1935])

Pamela Lyndon Travers — best known as the creator of Mary Poppins — was born Helen Lyndon Goff in Maryborough in Queensland. Travers began to have her poems published while still a teenager and wrote for *The Bulletin* and *Triad* at the same time as gaining a reputation as an actress. She toured Australia and New
Zealand with a Shakespearean touring company before leaving for England in 1924. The publication of *Mary Poppins* in 1934 marked her first literary success.

*Moscow Excursion* began as a series of personal letters sent home while Pamela Travers was on holiday. Travers’ account of the Soviet Union sits in direct contrast to Prichard’s *The Real Russia*. Evincing a certain quality of detached scepticism, Travers finds the Soviet Union dull and drab.

47. Murdoch, Nina, 1890-1976.

*Seventh heaven: A joyous discovery of Europe.* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1930)

48. Gaunt, Mary, 1861-1942.

*Reflection - in Jamaica.* (London: Benn, 1932)

When the early death of her husband left her ‘penniless, homeless and alone’, Mary Gaunt refused the option of returning to her parents’ home and instead embarked on achieving her childhood dream of exotic travel. She managed to support herself by writing fiction, journalism and travel books for over forty years.


*Ports and happy havens / by Ethel Turner (Mrs. H.R. Curlewis)* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, [1912])

50. Gilruth, Margaret, 1910 - ?

*Maiden voyage: The unusual experiences of a girl on board a tramp ship.* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1934)

In her Foreword the author describes this book as “a collection of diary-letters written home to Australia during a five months' voyage on a little Norwegian tramp ship with a personality”. The daughter of a Melbourne society family, Gilruth initially had difficulty securing a passport for the trip as the mode of transport proposed was not thought suitable for an unaccompanied young woman of her background. Gilruth later wrote of her European travels for the *India Times & Herald* (1932-34), conducted European tours for the Australian & Overseas Travel Service (1936-38), and worked as an Australian correspondent in UK & Middle East during WW2.

**War**

**Flat Case 3**

When war broke out in 1914 some feminists assumed that women would or at least should oppose the war because of their vested interest in the creation of life. Other feminists, while not going so far as to oppose the war effort in progress, nevertheless saw a special role for women in the prevention of future wars. Both strands were present in Australia and especially in Victoria, which was the centre of both movements of anti-war women in Australia. Australian women produced prolific
amounts of poetry and verse about the Great War. Most was written to promote recruiting, to raise money for the Australian Wounded Soldiers’ Fund & other funds, and to eulogize Australian soldiers. Such poetry belongs to what Catherine W. Reilly calls the ‘white feather’ genre of war literature.

The question of war and appropriate responses to it troubled the writers of the next generation. Marjorie Barnard, for example, found herself at odds with Nettie Palmer over Spain: Barnard advocated pacifism which Palmer simply could not accept as an adequate response to the Spanish question. World War 2 left many writers questioning their role in the face of that conflict. Others such as Dymphna Cusack and Jean Devanny felt compelled in their different ways to document the challenges and changes they saw the war bring to Australian society.

51. Whiting, Mary Bradford.

_A daughter of the empire / by Mary Bradford Whiting._ (London : Humphrey Milford, 1919)

52. Cross, Zora, 1890-1964.

_Elegy on an Australian schoolboy / by Zora Cross._ (Sydney : Angus & Robertson, 1921)

Zora Cross's _Elegy of an Australian School-boy_ (1921) was published in a limited edition. In 1918, Cross had published a children's long poem, _The City of Riddle-me-ree_ as a pamphlet, dedicating it to her youngest brother Jack who had been killed in the Great War. _Elegy_ would also emphasise Jack's status as child and be dedicated to him. Its title poem suggests that his death has not been in vain:

Man that is born of woman may not die
Through the dear death of One
Who lived and breathed beneath our happy sky
Under our warm, sweet sun.
The resurrection and the light are here
O world redeemed of pain,
The Son of Woman through the halls of fear
Comes back to live again.

As this first stanza reveals, Cross makes an analogy with Christ's own sacrifice. However, in foregrounding that this son is "born of woman" rather than of God, she emphasizes both the humanity of the soldier-boy and the significant role of mothers in bearing such heroic sons. The sacrifice is not divine but a human one and as such, will be writ in collective memory.

53. Meadows, Maureen C. (Maureen Clare)

_I loved those Yanks / by Maureen C. Meadows ; cover design by Winifred Towers._ (Sydney, N.S.W. : George M. Dash, [1948])
54. Kent Hughes, Mary.

*Matilda waltzes with the Tommies* by Mary Kent Hughes (T/Major Thornton, R.A.M.C.) Third impression. (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1946)


*The little company* (New York: Macmillan, 1945)

Set in the Blue Mountains and in Sydney, *The Little Company* is the story of the writer Gilbert Massey and his family who are grappling with the impact of the unfolding events of the Second World War on their lives. The novel opens in 1941 with Gilbert suffering from writer’s block:

Yet when he tried to work again he was conscious of a drag somewhere. He had always written slowly, but steadily. Now he found himself floundering among innumerable false starts, discarding, beginning again, altering, revising until the thought he had begun with was entirely lost, and all was to do over again. He found himself continually betrayed by his own ignorance...So he went doggedly delving into what were nowadays known as World Affairs. He continued to question, to investigate, to read and think; he continued to discover and disbelieve, to rage and despair... (19)

While not a strictly autobiographical work, *The Little Company* nevertheless explored many of the issues that Dark herself struggled with in these years. As her biographers Barbara Brooks and Judith Clark note, the book is “a kind of intellectual memoir, recording, in fictional or partly fictional narrative, some of the events of the war, and the arguments she had with herself and others about politics, about propaganda and who or what they are writing for”.

56. Eldershaw, M. Barnard.


M. Barnard Eldershaw’s fifth and final collaborative novel was their most ambitious and innovative, but it also represented their greatest disappointment after censors interfered with the final text, the publishers lopped one ‘Tomorrow’ from the title and readers seemed uncertain what to make of the novel. The censorship is usually thought of in terms of wartime necessity, but in reality it was probably the result of nervousness on the part of Georgian House who submitted the manuscript to the censors after their involvement in the scandalous obscenity case involving Robert Close’s *Love Me Sailor*. *Tomorrow and Tomorrow* was written across the war years when the authors’ were both vitally concerned over prospects for peace and the direction of post-war reconstruction. The novel takes the form of a fiction-within-a-fiction and is suggestive of Barnard Eldershaw’s growing impatience with the limitations of the conventional realist novel and a search for alternative fictional form. Shifting between the 24th century and the 20th century, the novel on the one hand dramatises the dilemmas of the writer as an intellectual and social critic blazing a path through the “wilderness” of time and history, and on the other it captures the plight of ordinary citizens prey to the vicissitudes of war and profit. The portrait of Harry Munster and his family set against the background of Sydney in the Great Depression and Second World War represents some of their most compelling writing. In the early 1950s when William Wentworth sought to attack the Commonwealth Literary Fund for allegedly supporting Communists, *Tomorrow and Tomorrow* would be denounced by him in Parliament and the press as a “trashy, tripey novel, with a Marxist slant”.

*Spain: The Spanish people present their case: Australian nurses' response,* with special article by Nettie Palmer. (Camberwell, Vic.: Spanish Relief Committee, 1936)

Nettie and Vance Palmer and their daughter Aileen had rented a house outside Barcelona in May 1936, anticipating a quiet year of writing. They were interrupted in July of the same year by an attempted Falangist coup and the beginning of the Spanish Civil War. “Into the bright morning some evil seemed to have suddenly entered, violently shattering the quiet, threatening all the future”, Nettie wrote. While Nettie and Vance left Spain within a week of the outbreak of hostilities (Aileen Palmer remained behind), Nettie in particular was to continue to publicise the Spanish cause, stressing that the threat of Fascism extended well beyond Spain and that the international community needed to be engaged: “We Australians should try to help ravaged Spain, believing that her fight is our own”. Back in Melbourne, she continued to speak publicly and to write about the war and to help raising funds through the Spanish Relief Committee.


*Come in spinner* (London: Heinemann, 1951)

The manuscript of *Come in Spinner* won the 1948 Daily Telegraph novel prize but would wait three years before appearing in print in a severely abridged form. The full version of the text only appeared in 1988, around the same time the successful ABC television mini-series was screened. Cusack and James had met as undergraduates at the University of Sydney and began working on the novel while sharing a house together in the Blue Mountains during the latter stages of the Second World War. As James later reflected:

> Now we had time in the Blue Mountains, why not tell the Sydney war story? Why not write about the women's world we knew, where men's labour was in short supply and women were “man-powered”? We would keep within the range of our own and our friends' experiences. We would tell the story of Sydney as we knew it, pulling no punches...we were both pretty steamed up about the problems of women on the home front.

Set at the fictional ‘South Pacific’ hotel in the centre of Sydney, the action revolves around three women – Guinea, Deb and Claire – who work in the hotel's glamorous Marie Antoinette beauty salon. Their lives are each complicated by war-time romance and a world where, as James observed, the war 'had thrown decent people off balance and exploitation had become the name of the game'. The novel's frank account of sex in wartime (prostitution, pregnancy, abortion) guaranteed a certain sensationalism attached to its publication.


*Bird of paradise* / by Jean Devanny. (Sydney: Frank Johnson, 1945)

Devanny received a fellowship from Commonwealth Literary Fund to support the writing of *Bird of Paradise*, a work she considered to be her most important contribution to winning the war. In her introduction she talks of how the book she wanted to write "is a story about the national integrity of the Australian people during wartime. I want to tell the world what our people think about the war and the kind of society they would like to see arising out of it..." The book is a form of oral history and begins in North Queensland and finishes in Sydney. Devanny noted, however, that conditions in North Queensland were not conducive to work: “I can't work during the day for the heat, and the mosquitos dive one mad when the light is on, unless one is under a net”. *Bird of Paradise* includes a chapter, “Writers at Home” which profiles Eleanor and Eric Dark.
At a time when Australian literature was not taught in universities and the question of whether a distinct national literature could be said to exist was still being debated, a surprising contingent of women were contributing some of the very earliest sustained critical commentary on local writers and historical accounts of the development of Australian writing. Some were also actively exploring these issues in their fiction. M. Barnard Eldershaw and Eleanor Dark, in particular, used writers as protagonists in order to explore the role of the writer in a new culture and particularly in times of cultural crisis (see also ‘War’ above). (Also on display in this case is an original letter from Flora Eldershaw to Ruth Bedford explaining her decision not to continue as a member of the writers’ organization, PEN International.)

60. Eldershaw, M. Barnard. [Marjorie Barnard, 1897-1987 and Flora Eldershaw, 1897-1956]


_The Glasshouse_, M. Barnard Eldershaw’s third novel, drew on the experience Barnard and Eldershaw gained on their separate grand tours of England and Europe in the early 1930s. Indeed, following her voyage home from England in 1933, Barnard wrote longingly to Nettie Palmer of the possibility of another, more congenial lifestyle:

> I've even had a wild fleeting idea that I could live by my pen if only I kept travelling on the sea, on small boats, going anywhere so long as it was a long way. I might do good work, first class work, even now at the eleventh hour, if I had the courage to throw up my job & go adrift.

Both Barnard and Eldershaw had chosen to travel on Norwegian cargo ships and they set their novel on one too. While the dustwrapper portrays a rather jaunty figure, Stirling Armstrong, the writer-protagonist describes herself in the opening pages as one of those “middle-aged spinsters with small but steady incomes” whose acquaintances are “mostly women as detached and lonely as herself”. Stirling’s “years of steady mild success as a novelist” have developed in her a sharp eye for detail and a taste for the comic, the absurd and the satirical. Rather than risk direct acquaintance with other passengers and have them recount their life stories, Stirling pre-empts them by writing their stories for them. In the course of the voyage from Antwerp to Perth, Stirling also has a brief affair with the ship’s captain. As her relationship with the Captain develops, Stirling increasingly betrays traces of the ‘lady writer’ whose traditional domain is (here quite literally) romance. Barnard Eldershaw were themselves uncomfortable with the ‘lady writer’ as the paradigmatic figure of the woman of letters, often using it as a source of self-deprecating humour and irony. Replying to Vance Palmer’s praise following the publication of _The Glasshouse_, for example, Barnard wrote: "Especially is it a relief that you think the ship's company succeeds. One is horribly afraid of showing the hoof of the lady novelist in a man's world". The writing of the novel wasn’t plain sailing, however, with Barnard confessing to Nettie Palmer that “we’ve rowed the old tub every inch of the way".

An introduction to the study of Australian literature. (Sydney, N.S.W. : Teachers' College Press, 1922)

Cross's Introduction to the Study of Australian Literature (1922) was one of the first surveys of Australian literature, preceding Nettie Palmer’s Modern Australian Literature, 1900-1923 (1924) and H.M. Green’s An Outline of Australian Literature (1930). The volume was compiled from lectures Cross had given at the Teachers’ College between 1920 and 1921. As she noted in the preface, “They do not propose to give any more than a hint of the rich field open to study”. Cross covered plenty of poetry, beginning with Henry Kendall and including Charles Harpur, Victor Daley, Roderic Quinn, David McKee Wright, Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson. Of Australian women poets, she believes the most “striking” is Mary Gilmore. John le Gay Brereton discussed with Cross the possibility of enlarging her booklet into a larger volume for Australian Literature for the Schools. “He advised me to do it immediately,” she recalled, “as H.M. Green, then librarian at the Fisher, was writing such a book, publication of which depended upon its use in schools”. Cross later came to regret not acting upon his advice.


Modern Australian literature (1900-1923). (Melbourne: Lothian Book Publishing Company, 1924)

Following the lukewarm reception of her two collections of poetry and with the encouragement of her husband, Vance, Nettie began concentrating on criticism. As Drusilla Modjeska discerns:

It wasn’t simply that she married Vance and became a wife. It was also, I would say, that she was afraid to confront her poetry and the exposure, the possibility of failure that went with it. Poetry, with its metaphoric language, was bringing her closer to articulating her existence as a woman. Criticism was safer and in the end she accepted silence from poetry. This decision, if decision is the right word for it, was not consciously taken and was not easy.

The die was cast when she won Lothian’s essay prize with Modern Australian Literature (1900-1923) in 1924. Like Zora Cross’s Introduction to the Study of Australian Literature, the essay was written more as an overview than as a comprehensive study. Nettie did not extend her scope to Australasian writers (although she was familiar with the work of many New Zealand contemporaries) and narrowed her focus by examining only early twentieth-century literature. She was more prepared than Cross to be critical, and shrewdly balanced praise with an awareness of a work’s limitations. Palmer’s biographer, Deborah Jordan, notes how Vance had taken the couple’s two children out of the house so Nettie could work undisturbed on the essay. The prize and the publication of the essay marked Palmer’s emergence as a critical voice and opened up new opportunities for her.


Talking it over. (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1932)

In her role as critic Nettie Palmer worked tirelessly to promote Australian writing to the general public through newspaper and magazine articles and radio broadcasts. This collection represents some of her best essays from the period and established her as the leading non-academic critic of the day.
64. Eldershaw, M. Barnard. [Marjorie Barnard, 1897-1987 and Flora Eldershaw, 1897-1956]


Barnard and Eldershaw had been encouraged by Nettie Palmer to try their hand at literary criticism. The two women conceived of the collection as a beginning or a starting point: a site from which to promote some form of public dialogue about the contemporary Australian literary experience and to create and educate readers of Australian writing. As Barnard stressed, "some important part of our self respect is bound up in intelligent appreciation of our national literature. That's where I want to drive a nail". Many of the essays here began life as public lecture or reviews which were then expanded and developed. The collection covers the work of Henry Handel Richardson, Katharine Susannah Prichard, Christina Stead, Eleanor Dark, 'Martin Mills' [Martin Boyd], Leonard Mann, Vance Palmer and Frank Dalby Davison. Given the close-knit nature of the local literary community at this time, Barnard and Eldershaw show a remarkable capacity for even-handed criticism of their peers and contemporaries. H.M. Green also noted how discerning they were in their selection and criticism of this group given that many of the writers considered (e.g. Stead, Dark, Boyd) were yet to produce their best and most enduring work.

65. Australian writers speak: Literature and life in Australia: A series of talks arranged by the Fellowship of Australian Writers for the Australian Broadcasting Commission. (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1943)

This series of war-time broadcasts was designed to answer the question of "what ... is the primary aim or function of the writer in times of stress?" Among the women writers who contributed to the series were Miles Franklin, Dora Birtles, Jean Devanny, Katharine Prichard and Marjorie Barnard.


Plaque with laurel. (London: Harrap, 1937)

M. Barnard Eldershaw always claimed to be able to write only of what they knew and in this sense their satirical account of a writers' conference in the new national capital provides an interesting insight into the issues that confronted them as writers in the interwar period; namely, the struggle to establish and situate themselves in an often less than encouraging environment. The focal point for the visit to Canberra is the dedication of a plaque to the memory of Richard Crale, a distinguished writer who died tragically five years earlier. The original idea for the novel may well have come from Nettie Palmer's description of the unveiling of a memorial to Joseph Furphy at Yarra Glen in 1934. At the time, Barnard had written, "Your unveiling ceremony seems to have been amazingly complete - impressed professor and all. What a one act play it would make - or perhaps the third act in the dramatisation of an Australian author's life". So closely was the novel felt to parallel the activities of the contemporary literary scene that their London publishers, fearing a law suit might ensue, insisted on seeking a legal opinion prior to publication. This novel can be compared to Eleanor Dark's The Little Company (1945) and Christina Stead's I'm Dying Laughing (1987), which both explore the complex interrelationship between individual literary careers and the tensions of culture and politics. (This item is accompanied by a souvenir cup and saucer commemorating old Parliament House in Canberra.)
Published in association with Australian Authors' Week, the *Australian Writers’ Annual* 1936 featured work by Eleanor Dark, Jean Ranken, Dulcie Deamer, Henrietta Drake-Brockman, Mary Gilmore, Miles Franklin, Zora Cross, Dora Wilcox, Frank Dalby Davison, Hilary Lofting, Tom Inglis Moore, Vance Palmer and Ian Mudie, with illustrations by Norman and Percy Lindsay among others. Eldershaw's introduction to *Annual*, while entitled "The Future of Australian Literature", concerns itself almost entirely with a retrospective account of the development of Australian writing on the grounds that the "past is all we can know of the future with any certainty. The past indicates the future". Eldershaw had served as President of the Fellowship of Australian Writers the previous year. Frank Dalby Davison claimed that he was "instrumental" in Eldershaw's election in 1935 to the Presidency of the FAW, prompted apparently by the conviction that it was "time the Fellowship had a woman President". Marjorie Barnard's counter claim, however, that Eldershaw was elected because "she was the only member of the Committee who had the brains and personality for it and was not involved in any of the numerous and violent quarrels that beset the Fellowship" suggests that the final outcome was influenced by a variety of factors. Barnard took a something cynical view of the Fellowship in those years, describing the conclusion of an FAW meeting during Eldershaw's Presidency to Nettie Palmer in the following way:

a comic and depressing evening... The 'Presidential party' went to coffee afterwards and that was worse. [Flora] being very nice to everyone as a president should and cursing - I knew full well - like a trooper underneath; Frank [Dalby Davison] very tired, very anxious that no one should notice it, saying 'What shall we do to bring up the Fellowship in the way it should go?' and getting no answer... 70

Even during the years of her most active involvement in the FAW, Barnard still questioned its direction and maintained to Nettie Palmer that "the untidiness of the meetings would horrify [her]".71
Bush

Flat Case 5

68. Brent of Bin Bin [Miles Franklin], 1879-1954.


In a diary entry of 24 March 1927, Franklin wrote of visiting Fullerton and discussing the possibilities of writing an “epic of Australia never done before”. That year, she started her Brent of Bin Bin series, with *Up the Country* appearing in 1928. Mary wrote to Franklin on 27 March 1928 that “Women are the next top dogs” of Australian literature, which had a special attraction: “Such a field: consider its virginity, its scope”.

On 13 February 1929, Franklin wrote gleefully to Fullerton after the reviews of *Up the Country* came out, “Yes they all think me a man”. When *Ten Creeks Run* was to be published, Mary wrote to Franklin:

> How chucklesome when this new book of yours gets into the reviewers’ hands here and there, the guesses—all at sea again. It will make them to think furiously this time for ‘ho, ho, here is a strong man, the man at last and who the deuce is it?’

The identity of Brent of Bin Bin continued to be a local literary mystery. Marjorie Barnard wrote to Nettie Palmer in 1931 that, “I shall be very surprised if Brent is not an elderly man — probably a bachelor”. Although Franklin’s *All That Swagger* won *The Bulletin*’s Memorial Prize in 1936, she was disappointed by its reception:

> It has been acclaimed by the Sydney Morning Herald, by the Bishop of Goulburn and the communists so must have a wide appeal…Melbourne has been rather piffling and patronising…Nettie and Vance [Palmer] politely congratulate me on prize—but otherwise silent or they fall back on saying I am a wonderful woman.

69. Craig, Ailsa.

*If blood should stain the wattle* / by Ailsa Craig. (Sydney : Currawong Publishing, 1947)

70. Methley, A. A. (Alice A.)

*Bushrangers’ gold* / by A.A. Methley. (London : A. & C. Black, 1930)
71. Fullerton, Mary E. (Mary Eliza), 1868-1946.

*A Juno of the bush* / by Mary E. Fullerton. (London : Heath Cranton, 1930)

Mary Eliza Fullerton was born in 1868 in a bark hut on an isolated selection at Haslemere, Glenmaggie, in North Gippsland. Originally from Belfast, her father came to Australia as part of the gold rush and turned to farming. In 1921, her mother died and Fullerton was motivated Fullerton to write *Bark House Days*, a memoir which looks nostalgically back to her childhood. In 1922, Mary left for England where she lived for the rest of her life. In the mid-late 1920s, Fullerton began publishing novels, *The People of the Timber Belt* (1925) and *A Juno of the Bush* (1930), and the non-fiction, *The Australian Bush* (1928).


The grim realism of Baynton’s stories collected here in *Bush Studies* challenged more romantic literary views of settler life in the Australian bush. Stories such as “The Chosen Vessel” and “Squeaker’s Mate” capture the isolation, violence and fear that women experienced and suggest a gothic dimension to the suffering of the female characters.

Baynton, Barbara, 1857-1929.

*Human Toll* / by Barbara Baynton. (London: Duckworth & Co., 1907)

73. Trist, Margaret, 1914-1986.

*In the sun* / Margaret Trist. (Sydney : Australasian Medical Publishing Co., 1944)

Margaret Trist wrote many short stories and published regularly in the Sydney *Bulletin*, but also in *Southerly*, *Overland* and *Meanjin*. She was born Margaret Beth Lucas in Dalby, Queensland, in 1914 and was educated at St Columba’s Convent there. On leaving school she moved to Sydney where, at the age of nineteen, she married Frank Trist. Her stories frequently explore the bittersweet experience of a small town and rural life. She published two collections of short fiction, *In the Sun* (1943) and *What Else is There* (1946). She also wrote three novels *Now that We’re Laughing* (1945), *Daddy* (1947) and *Morning in Queensland* (1958). The last of these draws on her Darling Downs background and has many auto-biographical resonances. It was highly commended in the Mary Gilmore Awards in 1958.

Children’s Literature: Teens

Flat Case 6

The genre of ‘teen’ literature was still relatively a new phenomenon, as was the figure of the teenager. It tied closely to the emerging figure of the ‘girl’—that there was a story for her and that she too could embark on adventures—although the ending was always neatly resolved and often pointing toward marriage and settling down to a home of her own. Teen literature often reinforced the importance of independent thought and pluck within the regime of feminine values.

*Teens Triumphant* / by Louise Mack (Mrs. J. Percy Creed) (Sydney : P.R. Stephensen, 1933)

Louise Mack was one of the earliest Australian writers to broach specifically adolescent anxieties and dreams. Growing up as one of thirteen children (fellow writer Amy Mack was her sister), Louise was the first daughter after six sons. She was educated at Sydney Girls’ High School where she became close friends with Ethel Turner. Although known primarily for her adult novels, she wrote a highly successful teen trilogy that begins with *Teens: A Story of Australian Schoolgirls* (1897). This introduced Lennie Leighton and her best friend, Mabel, who attend a Sydney high school. There was controversy over the possibility of it being a rather thinly veiled version of Louise’s alma mater. *Teens Triumphant* is the final instalment and takes up Lennie’s life in London where she is now studying art. The trilogy concludes with Lennie’s decision that Australia is the place for her and her return.

75. Whitfeld, J. M. (Jessie M.)

*Tom who was Rachel* / by J.M. Whitfeld ; illustrated in colour by N. Tenison. (London : Henry Frowde, Hodder and Stoughton, 1911)

Born in 1861 in Sydney, Jessie Mary Whitfield went to Sydney Grammar School. Her sister Ellen was one of the first female students at Sydney University and her brother Hubert became the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Australia. *Tom Who Was Rachel* is about Rachel Thompson, the daughter of the Samford children’s stepmother. While Whitfield’s children may argue with one another, they are presented within an ultimately loving family unit.

76. Bruce, Mary Grant, 1878-1958.

*Norah of Billabong* / Mary Grant Bruce. (London : Ward Lock, [195-])

Born in Sale, Victoria, in 1878, Mary (Minnie) Grant Bruce began her career as a journalist on the staff of the Melbourne Age and the Leader, where her early Billabong books first appeared. She married her second cousin, Major George Evans Bruce, in Melbourne 1914, after meeting him on a visit to London. After World War I, they divided their time between Ireland and Australia. Between 1910 and 1946, Bruce wrote thirty-seven novels, a collection of Aboriginal Dreaming stories, and a fantasy.

The ‘Billabong’ stories are set on the Linton family’s sheep station located in northern Victoria. Norah is the original ‘little bush maid’. She is an outdoor girl, one of the ‘mates of Billabong’, but retains her femininity through knitting, cooking and charitable enterprises. As the series proceeds, Norah marries Jim’s best mate, Wally Meadows, and has a son, Davie.
77. Methley, Violet M. (Violet Mary)

*The queer island* / by Violet M. Methley ; illustrated by D.L. Mays. (1934; London : Blackie & Son, [1949])

Violet Mary Methley was a prolific English author who set some of her books in Australia. Or used Australian characters in her adventure and school stories. *The Queer Island* follows *The Bunyip Patrol: the Story of an Australian Girls’ School* (1926) in featuring Girl Guides. In *The Queer Island*, Dorcas, Carol, and Wynne apply their survival skills to existing on an island.

78. Methley, Violet M. (Violet Mary)

*Two in the bush* / by Violet Methley ; illustrations by Isabel Veevers. (London : Oxford University Press, 1945)

The continuing imperialist approach by some English writers toward Australian material is flagged in this tale where the two heroines have to an Aboriginal child, Woppity, as a pet.

79. Turner, Lilian.

*Peggy the pilot* / by Lilian Turner. (London ; Melbourne : Ward, Lock, 1922)

Lillian Turner came to Australia with her sister Ethel in 1881 and her works are often compared unfavourably with those of her sister. Editors of *The oxford Companion to Australian Children’s Literature* argue that “Lilian does not write as consistently well as Ethel, although has some of the same irony, and she is more ambivalent in her acceptance of the social mores of her time”(426).

Lilian wrote for the teen market, beginning with *Young Love* (1902). While earlier books like *April Girls* (1911) had female characters who merely giggle and throw tantrums, Turner looks at gender stereotyping in *Peggy the Pilot* and has Peggy imagines a world where women have the same freedom as men.


*Wilderness Orphan: The Life and Adventures of Chut the Kangaroo* / by Dorothy Cottrell. (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1936)

Dorothy Cottrell had little formal education and was confined to a wheelchair after contracting polio when she was six. She was a protégée of Mary Gilmore’s and her first novel *The Singing Gold* (1928) was serialised in the American *Ladies Home Journal* in 1927 and in the *Sydney Mail* the following year (see Items 21 and 22 above). The proceeds of American serialisation enabled she and her husband to travel to the United States where she lived for the rest of her life. After an earlier children’s book *Winks, His Book* (1934), she wrote *Wilderness Orphan: The Life and Adventures of Chut, the Kangaroo* (1936). It was first published in *Cosmopolitan* in 1935 and then made into a film, *Orphan of the Wilderness* (1936) by Ken Hall.


*Little Mother Meg* is the final instalment of the trilogy that began with *Seven Little Australians* (1897), a much-loved novel that focussed on seven children adjusting to a cold and demanding father and a very young stepmother (only a few years older than the eldest child). That novel had ended dramatically with the death of its heroine, Judy, when she saved the life of the youngest, the General. *Little Mother Meg* takes place three years after Meg’s marriage to Alan Courtney. The novel is mainly concerned with Nell, who falls in love with a ‘bounder’ who has “treated her as a plaything, and she had not had sense enough or dignity enough to see it: instead she had given away unasked—what?” This being teen literature, the worst Nell has done is to hold his hand! Meg’s intervention into Pip’s romance illustrates Ethel Turner’s own difficulties with marriage across the classes. The novel includes a visit to Judy’s grave at ‘Yarrahappini’ where Esther (the stepmother) comes to the rather bizarre conclusion that Judy’s death ‘had been for the best’.

**Social realism**

*Flat Case 7*

During the 1930s, writers on the left had begun to promote realism, or more specifically, a subgenre which might be known as socialist realism. This was due partly to a feeling that the economic crisis of the Depression was challenging the dream of equality and that the material needed to be foregrounded over the ideal. Prichard was part of an Australian nationalist literary tradition that has as its origins Henry Lawson and Joseph Furphy. This tradition sought to voice the working community, to be in the idiom “of the man on the job, with his slang and his colloquial rhythms”. As Susan Lever points out, women writers like Katharine Susannah Prichard, Jean Devanny, Eleanor Dark and Miles Franklin were attempting to do three things. The first was to represent a specifically Australian experience and the second was to change the current political order wherein working people were at the mercy of economic depression and war, and the third, was to represent the conditions of life for women, with some attempt towards reform through the representation of that experience.82. Stead, Christina, 1902-1983.

82. Stead, Christina, 1902-1983.

*Seven poor men of Sydney* / by Christina Stead. (New York : Appleton-Century, 1935)

*Seven Poor Men* was originally titled “Death in the Antipodes” and certainly its characters struggle against a kind of death in life, with Australia — “this waste and sleepin’ land” as it is called — appearing rather like the land of the living dead: a sleeping, unquestioning society. Set against the vivid background of Sydney in the Great Depression, several of the poor men of the title — brooding, marginal figures such as Michael Baguenault, Baruch Mendelssohn, and Kol Blount — are said to suffer from being “too much awake”, too aware of the iniquities, injustices and philistinism around them to rest easily. As Michael laments not long before his suicidal leap from the Gap, “I never sleep anymore. I have such bad dreams”.

As the novel has no identifiable hero and no clear narrative line, it often confounds readers as they follow the nightmares, arguments and monologues that link the seven men and one woman of whom Stead writes. One of the telling images in the novel is that of a fragile web — “threads...woven of the bodies of flying men and women” — something which binds the characters to one another, but is too insubstantial to hold them together. For all their talk, Stead’s characters seldom hear one another; and they remain alienated, alone. Australia, by Stead’s reckoning, is no working man’s paradise.
83. Park, Ruth. 1922-

*Poor man's orange* / by Ruth Park. (Sydney : Angus & Robertson, 1949)


*No escape* / by Velia Ercole. (London : Thornton Butterworth, 1932)
Margaret Gregory was born in White Cliffs, NSW, into an Italian family. *No Escape*, her first novel, explores the experience of immigrants settling in a new country through the character Dr Leo Gherardi, an Italian doctor who initially has difficulty adapting to life in rural Australia. The novel won the *Bulletin* novel competition for 1932. All but Ercole’s first two of her novels were published under the pseudonym “Margaret Gregory”. Ercole eventually settled in England.

85. Campbell, Jean, 1901-1984

*Greek key pattern* / Jean Campbell. (London : Hutchinson, [1935])
Melbourne born Jean Campbell was a prolific author of popular fiction. Her third novel, *Greek Key Pattern*, deals with a Greek family in Melbourne. The central character, Yianni, is believed to have been inspired by Antony John Jereos Lucas (1862-1946), a local Greek community leader, philanthropist and restaurateur who was said at one time to be the wealthiest member of the Greek community in Australia.

Campbell is perhaps better known – or recognised — today as the flamboyant subject of a series of portraits by Australian artist Lina Bryans. The best known of these is “The Babe is Wise” which takes its title from Campbell’s 1939 novel of the same name.


*The battlers* / by Kylie Tennant. (1941, Sydney : Sirius Publishing, 1945)

*The Battlers*, a novel of the Great Depression, won both the S.H. Prior Memorial Prize and the Australian Literature Society’s Gold medal for the young novelist. For three months in 1938 Tennant undertook research for the novel by taking to the roads of southern and western New South Wales in a horse and buggy to learn firsthand of the lives of the men, women, and children dispossessed by the Great Depression.

*Ride on stranger* / by Kylie Tennant. (Sydney : Angus and Robertson, 1943)

Like *Time Enough Later*, *Ride on Stranger* is set predominantly in the inner city streets of Sydney, providing a vividly satirical snapshot of the city between the wars. From the moment of her rather inauspicious birth, we watch the protagonist, Shannon Hicks, as she grows from a precocious bookworm into an independent, resourceful and street-smart young adult making her own way in the initially unfamiliar streets of Sydney. As her peripatetic life moves relentlessly forward we are taken along for the ride: she swings, along with the turn of the calendar year, from job to job.

Like these novels, in the end the girl does not get the guy, but neither is she condemned to suffer or die for her sexuality or for maternity, or forced to destroy and escape the domestic space. Instead she finds herself comfortably ensconced in a rural idyll, providing sanctuary to pregnant waifs in the form of the ‘plump, giggling’ Hennessy girl and even a stray, starving cat. Like Bessie, the protagonist in *Time Enough Later*, Shannon finds comfort and security in her self, her skills and her rural surroundings, each of which is, ultimately, independent from any form of masculine control. Despite its unconventional closure, this is an enormously satisfying and enjoyable novel, bitingly funny at times, profoundly moving at others. It is one that I’m sure will attract a sizeable and devoted readership.


*Sugar heaven* / by Jean Devanny. (Sydney : Modern Publishers, 1936)

*Sugar Heaven* provides an almost documentary account of a strike on the North Queensland canefields. It tells the story of Dulcie a ‘southerner’ who comes to Innisfail to be with her cane cutter husband, Hefty. Dulcie learns the hard way about work, class and sexual politics in the heart of an industrial dispute over deadly Weil’s disease in the cane.

**Crime/Detective**

**Flat Case 8**

89. Grimshaw, Beatrice, 1871-1953.

*The missing blondes* / by Beatrice Grimshaw. (Sydney : Invincible Press, [1945])

Born in Ireland and educated in France, the University of London, and Queen’s College in Belfast, Beatrice Grimshaw became a journalist in Dublin from the age of 21. She worked for a number of shipping companies in the Canary Islands, the United States of America and England. Her first novel, *Broken Away* (1897),
was a romance about an assertive, independent woman. In 1902, she became publicity manager in the Liverpool head office of the Cunard Line. In 1903 she left for the Pacific region to report for the Daily Graphic, accepting commissions to write tourist publicity material for Pacific islands and New Zealand. In 1907, she left for Papua New Guinea in 1907 (accepting commissions from the London Times and the Sydney Morning Herald) and stayed there for most of the next twenty-seven years. She wrote forty-two books, most written and some set in Papua, including a partly autobiographical title, Isles of Adventure (1930). When the Red Gods Call (1911) is the best known: the book has been frequently reprinted, serialised and translated into several languages. Between 1917 and 1922, Beatrice managed a plantation near Samarai and accompanied exploring parties up the Sepik and Fly rivers in 1923 and 1926. In 1933 she tried tobacco growing near Port Moresby with her brother Ramsay. After visiting Fiji, Samoa and Tonga again, she retired in 1936 to Kelso, near Bathurst, spending the last seventeen years of her life in Australia. Nigel Krauth;'s J.F. Was Here is partly based on her unconventional life. Although she was a best-selling author in the 1920s and sometimes favourably compared with Joseph Conrad, Bret Harte and Robert Louis Stevenson, she is now little known.

90. Neville, Margot.


The Goyder sisters Margot and Anne Neville combined to write as ‘Margot Neville’ (according to her nephew, R.H. Morrison, the younger was originally Neville Ann, and known as ‘Nev’; she reversed the names after her divorce from Jerrold Joske). They came from a literary family: Alastair Morrison, “Afferbeck Lauder”, the author of Let Stalk Strine, was one nephew, and Guy Morrison, the distinguished journalist, was another. They had written a series of lightly entertaining and romantic novels but turned to crime with Murder in Rockwater in 1945 (published the previous year in the United States as Lena Hates Men), and produced 22 crime novels, mostly formal murder mysteries which are, with 2 exceptions, solved by a police inspector and sergeant named Grogan and Manning. Most are set in Sydney and its hinterland, including the Blue Mountains and the Hawkesbury area, but the social setting remained within the elite of professional and moneyed people.


House with Black Blinds (South Melbourne: Popular Publications, 1940)
A ‘spooky old house’ thriller, this story was first serialised in the Brisbane Courier between 4 December 1930 and 5 January 1931. Following a tyre blow-out and a sequence of unfortunate events, Jack Mayne and his wife and sister accept the offer of a stranger to stay at a house left to the stranger by an eccentric grandfather and which he is yet to visit. Hilda was the sister of fellow writer, Royal (‘Roy’) Bridges. She wrote a number of novels under male pseudonyms.

92. Franklin, Miles. 1879-1954.

Bring the Monkey: A light novel / by Miles Franklin. (Sydney: Endeavour Press, 1933)

Mary Fullerton suggested to Franklin that they try their hand at detective fiction. At first, Franklin rejected the idea, writing to Mary in February 1930, "No, you are wrong, I have no invention none at all, in the detective plot way". However, in 1931-32, Franklin stayed with Fullerton for fifteen months and Fullerton's suggestion came to fruition. In her detective spoof Bring the Monkey (1933), Franklin is critical of degeneration among the English upper classes, comparing it unfavourably to the
freshness of Australian blood. Her story focuses on a pair of Australian women, Zarl Osterley and Ercildoun Carrington, who live in London with a pet monkey, Percy. Percy seems modelled after Peter, a pet monkey owned by Jean Hamilton, a close friend of Mary and Mabel whose visit overlapped with Franklin’s. Zarl and Ercildoun gatecrash a house party at the country seat of Baron Tattingwood in Supersnoring, with Ercildoun disguised as Zarl’s Italian maid and Percy’s keeper. In the course of the weekend, the Eastern jewels of a Hollywood starlet are stolen and Captain Stopworth, the true love of the Baron’s wife, is murdered in a variation of the locked room puzzle. It eventually comes to light that Zarl and another houseguest, Jimmy Wengham, have stolen the jewels for a lark. Captain Stopworth has been murdered by the Baron in order to prevent his wife from leaving him and from reuniting with a long lost daughter she had with the Captain.

While Percy epitomises Darwin’s “heroic little monkey,” the Baron is the picture of degeneration, with hair everywhere, “a big red face with small eyes, a long ungainly nose, a narrow forehead and a sloppy mouth”. He is even described as ape-like. Zarl, on the other hand, is smart, spirited, and independent. Both she and Ercildoun are able to adapt to alien environments, a fact registered in their successful passing of Ercildoun as Zarl’s Italian maid. In contrast to the racial and class divisions displayed by their British counterparts, the Australians exercise a democratic outlook. Although Ercildoun first condemns the starlet’s Indian servant, she realizes that he too is only performing the servant role in order to make his way through university.

Not only is there a suggestion of national superiority, but also a sexual superiority. The Baron tells Ercildoun, “Brains in women is a sign of decadence”. Precisely because Franklin has this theory come from the Baron’s lips, it can be dismissed. While the Baron receives a form of poetic justice in dying of cancer, Zarl is hardly a figure of responsibility. She fails to admit to the jewel theft and is content to leave Ercildoun as a primary suspect. Like Zarl, Franklin’s detective novel avoids moral accountability and reminds the reader of the importance of pleasure. Franklin rewards her errant female figure and revels in female friendship.

93. Gwynne, Agnes M.

_The mystery of lakeside house_ / by A.M. Gwynne. (Melbourne: Robertson & Mullens, 1925)

94. McKee-Wright, April.

_Murder rose_ / by April McKee-Wright. (Sydney: New Order Publications, [1944?])
The daughter of Zora Cross and David McKee Wright, April McKee-Wright published three mystery novels toward the end of World War II. _Murder Rose_ is set in the Blue Mountains, an area she knew well.

95. Ranken, J. L. [Jean] and Jane Clunies-Ross

_Murder Pie_ / by J.L. Ranken ... [et al] ; edited by J.L. Ranken, Jane Clunies Ross. 3rd ed. (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1936)

The 1930s saw a rise in interest in detective fiction. Various publishing novelties were tried to further stimulate the public’s interest. In 1931 Hodder and Stoughton in London published _The Floating Admiral_, with each chapter written by a different detective novelist. It included chapters by Agatha Christie and Dorothy Sayers. Following its popularity, Angus and Robertson published an Australian version, _Murder Pie_, in 1936 with chapters by such authors as Walter Murdoch, M. Barnard Eldershaw, and Ethel Turner.
As Juliet Flesch points out, the audience for romance novels in the English-speaking world is, overwhelmingly, women. Some romantic novelists attracted a celebrity status and many had large fan bases. As demonstrated by the titles in this exhibition, many novels were later adapted to the screen where they also achieved great popularity.


*The wild moth* / by M. Forrest. Popular ed. (London : Cassell, 1927)

Growing up in rural Australia, Mabel and her sister Ethel were educated at home by their mother "who spoke several languages fluently and had been to school in France and Germany." Mabel had an unhappy first marriage with the selector, John Frederick Burkinshaw, who was unable to support Mabel and their daughter. Mabel began writing professionally as a means to support the family. In 1902, she divorced Burkinshaw and married John Forrest the same year. The theme of fidelity and betrayal were dominant themes in her work. Mabel became one of the most successful professional women writers in Australia of the early twentieth century and was an admired poet and short story writer. However, her most successful work was *The Wild Moth* which tells the somewhat predictable story of the simple country girl who goes to the big smoke, is exploited and eventually returns home. A suitor who has known her when she was younger rescues her from attentions being forced upon her by a colleague of her father. Charles Chauvel would turn the novel into the film, *The Moth of Moonbi*.


*A warning to wantons : A fantastic romance, setting forth the not underserved but awful fate which befell a minx* / by Mary Mitchell. (Garden City, N.Y. : Doubleday Doran, 1934)

Her father, Sir Edward Mitchell, the principal of Melbourne’s Scotch College decided that Mary Mitchell and her three sisters should be educated by governesses and then sent on a tour of Europe to finish their education. Working for various Red Cross organisations, Mary wrote only as a hobby until *A Warning to Wantons* was published. Described as "a combination of ultra-sophisticated worldliness and romantic melodrama", it was an instant success. There was some surprise that a colonial lady could produce such a cosmopolitan, racy work. As the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entry notes, “The Gothic fantasy of the plot and the charm of the gamine heroine’s innocence and amorality, in contrast to the ironic astringency of the social observation, appealed widely; it became a Book Society’s book of the month and was translated into Swedish, Hungarian, French and German.” It was turned into a film in 1949. Although Mary went on to publish over twenty more novels, none had such broad appeal as *A Warning to Wantons*.
98. Littlejohn, Agnes, 185-1944.

*Mirage of the desert* / by Agnes Littlejohn. (Sydney : J.A. Packer, 1910)
Known more for her poetry and short stories, *Mirage of the Desert* was Agnes Littlejohn’s only novel.


*As it was in the beginning* / by Dulcie Deamer ; illustrated by Norman Lindsay. (Melbourne : Frank Wilmot, 1929)

100. Bjelke Petersen, Marie.

*Jungle night* / Marie Bjelke Petersen. (London : Hutchinson, [1937])
Born in 1874 near Copenhagen, Marie was schooled in Denmark, Germany, and England. The family migrated to Tasmania in 1891. Illness forced Marie to consider try her hand at writing for a career. Her first three romantic religious sketches were very successful; *The Mysterious Stranger* (1913) was deemed a classic by *The Times* and translated into Arabic. Her first novel, *The Captive Singer* (1917) sold over 100,000 copies and 40,000 in Danish. In 1921, *The Triad* noted that, “Her people are real…and their inconsistencies are credible. She is not afraid of passion, though her theme and treatment are entirely…respectable.” However, she recalled that *The Bulletin* “loved making fun of my lovemaking.” Marie attracted a huge fan base and was often referred to as Australia’s Marie Correlli. She was also the aunt of infamous Queensland premier, Joh Bjelke Petersen.

Flat case 10

101. Reynolds, Broda.

*A black silk stocking* / by Broda Reynolds. (Sydney : Henry Edgar Reynolds, 1907)


*On the knees of the gods* / by Mabel Balcombe Brookes ; with four three-color pictures and eight full-page line illustrations by Penleigh Boyd. (Melbourne : Melville & Mullen, [1918])

103. Rosman, Alice Grant.

*The sixth journey* / by Alice Grant Rosman. (New York, Minton, Balch & company, 1931)

104. Boake, Capel, 1889-1944.

*The Romany mark* / by Capel Boake ; illustrated by Percy Lindsay. (Sydney : N.S.W. Bookstall, 1923)

Boake’s second novel is about life in a circus. This edition has a cover illustration by Percy Lindsay.
105. James, Winifred, 1876-1941.


Born in Melbourne, James worked as a journalist before moving to England in 1905 where she embarked on a successful career as a novelist and travel writer. Her best known and most successful work was *Letters to My Son* (1910). She returned to live in Australia in 1940. True to the genre, by the novel’s end Betty is not destined to remain a ‘bachelor’ for much longer.

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**Memoir**

Flat Case 11


*Twelve milestones : being the peregrinations of Ethel Knight Kelly.* (London: Brentano, 1929)

Ethel Knight Kelly was born in 1875 in New Brunswick, Canada but brought up partly in Britain. From childhood Ethel ‘enjoyed dramatic action’ and her favourite novels were those by ‘Ouida’ and Rider Haggard. She married when very young but was widowed within a year. She became well-known on the stage in the United States and arrived in Sydney in March 1903 to appear in the comedy, *Are You a Mason?* She married Thomas Herbert Kelly later that year and left the world of professional acting in October. With abundant energy, plenty of beauty, personality, and wit, she quickly established a profile as a socialite and was well-known for her ‘original ideas’. In 1911, she published a book, *Frivolous Peeps at India* following a visit there and between 1904 and 1913 had four children. She helped organise many fund-raising activities during World War I including a dolls’ carnival and appearing in plays. From 1919, the Kellys made regular visits to England and Europe and in 1922, she edited the woman’s page of *Smith’s Weekly*. In her capacity as journalist she was allowed to visit Tutankhamun’s tomb which inspired her to write the novel, *Why the Sphinx Smiles* (1925). From about 1925, Ethel lived mainly in Florence. She wrote another novel *Zara* (1927) and her memoir *Twelve Milestones* (1929). She returned to Sydney in 1934. She maintained her charity work and gave to causes that included, the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, the Actors’ Benevolent Fund, the Women’s and St Vincent’s Hospitals and the Kindergarten Union of New South Wales.

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Born in Tipperary, Ireland, Daisy Bates’ mother died in her infancy. On the death of her maternal grandmother when Daisy was about eight years old, she was sent to London. Suspected of having tuberculosis, she was sent to Australia in 1884 where she lived briefly as a guest of Bishop G.H. Stanton. On 13 March 1884, she married Edwin Henry Murrant who is almost certainly Harry Harbord Morant of Breaker Morant fame. Shortly afterwards, they separated. After a short stint as a governess, she married the cattleman, Jack Bates, in 1885 and had a son, Arnold. In 1894, she left her husband to work on the *Review of Reviews* in England. She returned to Australia in 1899 and worked on the Trappist Aboriginal Mission at Beagle Bay near
Broome. In 1904, she compiled a dictionary of the Bibbulmum language. By 1912 she had established the first of the isolated camps in which she lived for lengthy periods. In 1914, she was invited to the Attend a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science and arranged a crossing of the Nullabor (402 km) in a small cart pulled by camels. Between 1912 and 1945, she lived almost entirely with the Aborigines, collecting material about their customs and legends. The Aborigines called her ‘Kabbarli’ (wise woman, grandmother). Although many applauded the altruism of her acts, Daisy Bates believed that she was motivated by similar reasons that had led her to enjoy activities such as hockey, tennis, and fox-hunting. Her views were controversial, particularly in respect to her opposition to miscegenation and her assertions concerning Aboriginal cannibalism. Her work has not been well-received by anthropologists although it reveals a strong empirical thread and she was careful “never to intrude my own intelligence” upon the Aborigines.

A small woman (5’4”), she stood out in maintaining Edwardian dress and decorum in the desert (wearing even her gloves). She wrote around 300 articles about the Aborigines and was a staunch advocate for the reform of Aboriginal welfare. Her autobiography, My Natives and I was published in serial form in Australian newspapers in 1936 and her most significant work, The Passing of the Aborigines (1938) was published with the aid of Ernestine Hill. By 1945, she returned to Adelaide where a secretary described her as ‘an imperialist, an awful snob…a grand old lady’. Radcliffe-Brown likened her mind to a well-stocked but very untidy sewing basket.


*Old days, old ways : a book of recollections / by Mary Gilmore. (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1934)*

As an infant of three, Mary Gilmore was particularly sensitive to ballads such as “The Irish Emigrant” and “The Bonnie Hills of Scotland” not just in terms of their affective rendition of place but also for their rhythm. Gilmore recalls beginning to write when she was seven:

> Hitherto, I had written set copies and dictation, but had not known that I could use words to express my own thoughts. I could scarcely eat, and never played at the school at dinner, filling slate after slate with compositions, imaginative and descriptive of natural phenomena such as sunshine, red roads, wind, rain, sky, the colours of a cow, or how wonderful was the shine and colour of a chestnut horse…


*Adventures in Appleshire / by Ethel Anderson. (Sydney : Angus and Robertson, 1944)*

Ethel Anderson was born in 1883 at Lillington, England, the child of Australian-born parents. In Sydney she was educated at home and at Sydney Church of England Grammar School for Girls. In 1904 she married Major Austin Anderson at Bombay, India. Major Anderson served in World War I and continued his military career after the war, retiring as Brigadier in 1924. The Andersons moved to Sydney where Austin Anderson began his long tenure of service for several governors. Drawing on her experiences in Australia, England and India, Ethel Anderson began contributing to a variety of periodicals. During the 1940s she published two volumes of verse and four volumes of essays and short stories. She also edited the letters of Patrick Hore-
Ruthven. Anderson's knowledge of English, French and classical literature is reflected in her prose and poetry. Her admirable experimentation with metre and form in poetry is matched by the rich use of fantasy and comedy in her prose.

Left with little money after her husband's death in 1949, Anderson earned her living by writing. Her novella, *At Parramatta*, was published in 1956. Ethel Anderson died at Turramurra in 1958.

110. Richardson, Henry Handel, 1870-1946.

*Myself when young* / by Henry Handel Richardson ; together with an essay on *The art of Henry Handel Richardson* by J.G. Robertson. (Melbourne : Heinemann, 1948)


*Fourteen years : extracts from a private journal, 1925-1939* / Nettie Palmer. (Melbourne : Meanjin Press, 1948)

*Fourteen Years*, while billed as extracts from a private journal, was not in fact written quite as it was published. It is in many respects a reconstruction: Palmer produced the volume by going back to her diaries, her published critical work and also her extensive collection of correspondence from her wide and influential network of correspondents in Australia and overseas. The result is a valuable, personal account of Australian letters.


*We of the Never-Never* / by Mrs Aeneas Gunn. (1908, London : Hutchinson, [1937?])

Children's

While nineteenth-century children's literature showed strong signs of European influence, by the beginning of the twentieth century, the Australian landscape was beginning to have a greater impact. This was particularly noticeable in the genre of the fairy story as illustrators like Ida Rentoul Outhwaite and May Gibbs included native flora and fauna. Classic figures like Snugglepot and Cuddlepie and Blinky Bill emerged in the early twentieth-century and would reinforce national values of the well-meaning, fun-loving characters who inevitably end up having a multitude of scrapes.

Wall case 1

113. Sister Agnes

*Fairy Tales Told in the Bush* (London: Elliot Stock, 1912)

Following Olga Ernst's *Fairy Tales from the Land of Wattle* (1904), Sister Agnes was one of the earliest writers of Australian fairy stories. While not all the stories are set in Australia, there are allusions to Aboriginal history, such as the life of King Barak, as well as to the origins of the Blue Lake at Mount Gambier. Some stories feature European fairy creatures. One story has the central character, Tom, steal an Aborigine’s magic nail gun with which he then proceeds to delight in using kangaroos for target practice and nailing kookaburras to their trees.


Born in Melbourne in 1888, Ida Rentoul Outhwaite was the leading illustrator of the fairy tale genre during the first part of the twentieth century. She had an international reputation and exhibited in Paris and London as well as in Australia. Ida was said to have been able to draw birds before the age of two and used to draw in the margins of her books as a child. She started her career at the age of 15 illustrating a fairy story by her sister, Annie R. Rentoul, in *New Idea*.

While fairies were of popular interest, Ida depicted them alongside Australian animals like kangaroos, kookaburras, and koalas. Ida displayed her work at the Women’s Exhibition in Melbourne in 1907. The event was the first to celebrate women’s achievements in Australia.

In 1909, she married businessman, Grenbry Outhwaite and, as she had done with her sister and her mother, she would draw him in as a collaborator on a number of books, including *Fairyland* and *The little fairy sister* (item 126 below). Grenbry strongly promoted her work and was instrumental in sealing her global fame. Domestic help further relieved her of most household and childcare responsibilities (she had four children). In an interview with *Woman’s World*, she noted the difficulties of balancing family and work: “One’s work must suffer. How can one remain really inspired when ‘leg-of-mutton’ matters constantly intervene?”


*Bunny & Brownie: the adventures of George & Wiggle* / written and illustrated by Ida Rentoul Outhwaite. (London: A. & C. Black, 1930)

Although she collaborated on a good many books, Ida would start writing and illustrating books in the 1920s. After an exhibition at the Fine Art Society in London in 1920, A. & C. Black would publish five of her books between 1921 and 1934, all in luxury editions. With the depression seeing the end of the luxury book, the shift towards characters like Winnie the Pooh and Babar, and the new colour lithography, Outhwaite’s popularity began to wane.
Wall case 2

116. Quin [Daskein], Tarella, 1877-1934.


Spanning the first three decades of the twentieth century, the fairy stories of Tarella Quin Daskein are amongst the most carefully detailed and innovative in early Australian literature. A number (such as _Gum Tree Brownie and Other Faerie Folk of the Never-Never_ (1907), _Before the Lamps are Lit_ (1911), _Chimney Town_ (1934) and _The Other Side of Nowhere_ (1934) would be illustrated by her friend Ida Rentoul Outhwaite. The illustrations Ida did for Tarella Quin Daskein’s _Gum Tree Brownie and Other Faerie Folk of the Never Never_ (1907) would confirm her reputation as a first-class illustrator. Like many writers of the period, she frequently has a child die.


_Snugglepot and Cuddlepie : their adventures wonderful / pictures & words by May Gibbs. (Sydney : Angus & Robertson, 1940)_

Born in 1877 in Surrey, Cecilia May Ossoli Kelly emigrated to Australia with her family when she was four. She notes that, “I could almost draw before I could walk.” After studying art during a series of periods in London, she returned to Australia in 1913. Gibbs was Australia’s first full-time, professionally trained children’s book illustrator. In 1913 she created the gumnut babies, stating of the inspiration:

> When I stayed with my cousins in the Bush, I amused myself and them by telling stories about the little people I imagined to be there. They always took the form of sturdy, common-sense little persons living the same practical busy lives as ants and other intelligent bush creatures. Never did I find the elegant star-browed fairies that my old-world books showed me. The bush suggested always things grotesque, mirthful, cunning and quaint. Even the flowers held an eccentric charm for me rather than an appeal by their beauty. *(Woman’s World, 1 Nov 1924).*

In 1918 her most famous creations, Snugglepot and Cuddlepie came into being. “I thought of the name Snugglepot for a book on bush babies but I could not get another name. I wanted two, and one night, lying in bed quietly, I thought Snugglepot...Cuddlepie!” The adventures of the two half-brothers were published shortly after Armistice in 1918.

*Scotty in gumnut land* / by May Gibbs. 2nd ed. (1941; Sydney : Angus & Robertson, 1955)

May learned to drive a car nicknamed Dodgem and would often take her beloved Scottish terriers for rides in it. In *Scotty in Gumnut Land* (1941), Scotty leaves home because he thinks he is unloved. In his adventures, he comes across the Banksia Men, Boomer Roo the Kangaroo, Dr Stork, Mrs Kookaburra, Bib and Bub and others. *Mr and Mrs Bear and Friends* (1943) continues Scotty’s adventures, and was Gibbs’ last book about her gumnut characters.

**Wall case 3**

119. O'Harris, Pixie, 1903-1991

*The Pixie O. Harris fairy book : stories and verse* / by Lynette Yardley, Eva Lawton, Gwen M. Cock. Pixie O. Harris ; illustrations in color, half-tone and line by Pixie O. Harris. (Adelaide : Rigby, [1925])

‘Pixie O'Harris' was the pseudonym of Rhona Olive Harris née Pratt. At the age of 14, she was a member of the South West Art Society in Wales. The Harris family migrated to Australia in 1920. It was on the voyage out that she adopted the name ‘Pixie’, disliking the name Rhona and having been referred to as ‘the Welsh pixie.’ A change to her surname began after a printer at the *Sydney Morning Herald* accidentally added an apostrophe to her second initial. Pixie undertook art training at the Julian Ashton School in Sydney. She wrote and illustrated more than forty books and painted many murals in succeeding years, until she was well in her 80s. From the 1920s on, Pixie O'Harris wrote commercially successful fairy stories, although they reflect more of a European influence than the output of some of her contemporaries.

120. O'Harris, Pixie, 1903-1991.

*Pearl Pinkie and Sea Greenie : the story of two little rock-sprites* / told and decorated by Pixie O'Harris. (Sydney : Angus and Robertson, 1935)

*Pearl Pinkie and Sea Greenie, the Story of Two Little Rock Sprites* (1935) is about Pearl Pinkie, who is beautiful but vain, and Sea Greenie, who is plain but humble.

121. Higgins, Kathleen.

*Betty in bushland* / by Kathleen Higgins ; illustrated by Pixie O'Harris and E.A. King. (Sydney : Angus & Robertson, 1937)
Wall case 4

122. Wall, Dorothy, 1894-1942.

*Blinky Bill and Nutsy: two little Australians* / story and illustrations by Dorothy Wall. (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1939)

Born in New Zealand in 1894, Dorothy Wall migrated to Australia in 1914. Wall had training in art and would support herself through a series of commercial jobs that included illustrating fashion designs, and book jackets. An earlier book, *Tommy Bear and the Zookies* (1920) has a koala as its central character. Blinky is first found in Brooke Nicholls’ *Jacko the Broadcasting Kookaburra* (1933) but Wall developed the character more fully as the archetypal Aussie larrikin. *Blinky Bill and Nutsy*: Two Little Australians (1937) introduces a new friend for Blinky. Nutsy is an orphan adopted by Mrs Bear. In this book, Wall simplified her drawings in an attempt to make them for adaptable for animation.

When Mickey Mouse was chosen to be King of Melbourne’s Moomba festival in 1977, there was a public outcry and a campaign to replace him by Blinky Bill.

123. Wall, Dorothy, 1894-1942.

*Blinky Bill* / [Dorothy Wall]. (Racine, Wisconsin: Whitman Publishing Co., 1935)

This is a copy of a rare American pop-up version of Blinky Bill. It was a pirated publication for which Dorothy Wall received no royalties.


*Fairies and fancies* / by Ruth Bedford; with seventeen page illustrations by Mela Koehler Broman. (London: A. & C. Black, 1929)

Born 1882 in Petersham, Ruth Marjory Bedford, was part of a prominent Sydney family. When she was ten, she wrote to her mother that she would try to be ‘more clever and good’ and the following year saw the publication of Rhymes by Ruth. At the age of forty, she claimed she could still write her “own thoughts of the times of ten or eleven.” In a profile on her in Aussie magazines, she declared that “children come first in her affections, and then people, books, the stage, surfing, pictures, and travels.” *Fairies and Fancies* touches on childhood experiences, including trying on summer dresses.
Small upright case


_The ivory gate_ / by Marjorie Barnard ; illustrated by Leyshon White. (Melbourne : H.H. Champion, Australasian Authors' Agency, 1920)

This represents Marjorie Barnard's earliest published literary effort. A honours graduate of the University of Sydney, Barnard was the librarian at Sydney Technical College for many years, and later at the National Standards Laboratories, CSIRO. Her children's book, _The Ivory Gate_, contains stories such as ‘Shadows’ about how fear is created; descriptions of magical places; and small adventures, such as ‘The Runaways’ about two boys who save an injured child. This was Barnard's only work for children. Her next literary efforts would be adult fiction written in collaboration with Flora Eldershaw and published under the pseudonym, “M. Barnard Eldershaw”.


_The little fairy sister_ / By Ida Rentoul Outhwaite and Grenbry Outhwaite. (London : A. & C. Black, 1929)

127. “Beauty is strength”, by Marjorie Barnard, in _The Home_, 1 May 1940, p. 25.

A number of the stories collected in _The Persimmon Tree_ (item 128 below) first appeared in magazines. Barnard was extremely fond of _The Home_ as it paid its contributors so well.


_The persimmon tree and other stories_ / by Marjorie Barnard. (Sydney : Clarendon Publishing Co., 1943)

This volume shows the quality constraints wartime placed on local publishing efforts. This was Barnard’s only collection of short stories to appear in her lifetime and it represents some of her best work. The title story, ‘The Persimmon Tree’, remains one of the most frequently anthologised short stories of the period. A number of stories in the collection deal with the dramas of marital infidelity, love triangles and the challenges facing women endeavouring to do ‘the right thing’. Several of these stories reflect aspects of Barnard’s own secret love affair with fellow-writer, Frank Dalby Davison.

Barnard, an honours graduate in history, received a large commission from *The Home* to produce historical essays for issues of the magazine coinciding with the Sesquicentenary celebrations in New South Wales in 1938. After the work was produced, however, the editor Leon Gellert, decided not to publish the full text and this piece represents one of two “salvaged from the wreck”. On a personal level she found the 150th anniversary celebrations less than inspiring. She wrote to Nettie Palmer that: “The Celebrations are upon us, so I think, is general rain — so badly needed. The city is festooned with sopping and melancholy bunting. Everywhere is crowded and messy. Personally my impulse to celebrate is quite dead”.


*Don't wait for love* / Maysie Greig. (New York : Triangle Books, 1941)
Born Jennifer Greig Smith in Sydney, ‘Maysie Greig’ won a literary competition at fifteen. She worked as a journalist with the Sydney *Sun* between 1919 and 1920 and then went to England where she published *Peggy of Beacon Hill* (1920) which was serialised and later filmed. One of the most prolific romantic novelists to emerge from Australia, ‘Maysie Greig’ went on to write some 200 popular novels. She also wrote as Jennifer Ames, Ann Barclay, Mary Douglas Warre and Mary Douglas Warren, and published in the *Westminster Gazette*, *Daily Sketch* and *Mirror*. She married three times and worked primarily in England but also in New York, Boston and, in the 1950s, in Australia. Greig noted that, ‘Love is the most fascinating, inspiring, complete emotion in the world. Happiness is its greatest virtue, and misery the greatest sin in the world.’


*Marry in haste* / Maysie Grieg. (New York : Triangle Books, 1943)


**Corridor cases**

*Walkabout*, a monthly magazine published by the Australian National Travel Association, first appeared in 1934 and frequently included articles by and about Australian writers. Ernestine Hill was a dedicated traveller and after her husband’s death in 1933 embarked on a life of almost continual travel. Her first major publication, *The Great Australian Loneliness* (1937) is an account of five years’ travel around the Australian outback.


A graduate of the University of Sydney, Marie Byles was the first woman to practise law in New South Wales, a feminist and a champion of the League of Nations. She maintained strong interests in travel, conservation and wildlife issues and, like Margaret Gilruth, sought to travel by less conventional means such as cargo ships.


### Historical fiction


*The timeless land* / Eleanor Dark.  
(1941, Sydney : Collins, 1963)

*The Timeless Land* is the first volume in Dark’s trilogy which also included *Storm of Time* (1948) and *No Barrier* (1953). Dark is perhaps best known to many readers for these three novels which trace the development of European settlement in Australia, 1788-1814. Based on extensive historical research, the trilogy is notable for Dark’s attempts to acknowledge Australia’s indigenous past and to include race conflict as a dimension of the settlement. *Storm of Time* covers the first five years of European settlement and also explores the relationship between Governor Phillip and Bennelong.

*Pageant* / by G.B. Lancaster. (New York : The Literary Guild, 1933)

*Pageant* draws on Lancaster’s family background in Tasmania to depict the fortunes of a Tasmanian family from the 1820s to the twentieth century. Pageant is considered the best of Lancaster’s works and won the Australian Literature Society Gold Medal for the best novel of 1933.

144. Lancaster, G. B., 1874-1945.

*Pageant* / G.B. Lancaster. (1933, New York : Triangle, 1942)

145. Simpson, Helen, 1897-1940

*Under Capricorn* (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1937)

Born in Australia, Simpson left for England at the age of sixteen where she became a well-known crime writer. Her work is almost entirely set and published in England. In *Under Capricorn*, she created a novel focussed on Australian crime, although it is strongly historical and set in the high days of convict Sydney. Hitchcock’s film of the novel, which starred Ingrid Bergman and Michael Wilding, indicates both her standing and the potential of her work.

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**Endnotes**

6. Ibid., 1007.
7. Ibid., 1006.
17. Marie Pitt, letter to Ted Turner, 5 January 1939, H.H. Pearce Private Collection, MS 2765 III, NLA.
18. Ibid.

20 FAW Papers ML MSS 2008, Box K22105.

21 FAW Papers ML MSS 2008, Box K22117.


23 Miles Franklin and George Ashton, "Is the writer involved in the political development of his country?" *Australian Writers Speak* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1943): 31.


25 M. Barnard to Leslie Rees, 5 January 1934 [Leslie Rees Papers, ML MSS 5454/1].


34 Mary Gilmore, letter to Miles Franklin, 26 April 1942, Miles Franklin Papers, MS 364, ML.


37 Dorothy Green, "Chaos, or a Dancing Star? Christina Stead’s Seven Poor Men of Sydney", *Meanjin* 27:2 (1968): 151.


41 Mary Fullerton as ‘E’, *Moles Do So Little with Their Privacy* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1942).


44 Mary Fullerton, *Moles, op. cit.,* 34.

45 *ibid.*, 60.

46 *ibid.*

47 Mary Gilmore, letter to Miles Franklin, 2 July 1943, Miles Franklin Papers, MS 364, ML.

48 Esmonde Higgins, letter to Nettie Palmer, May 1914, Palmer Papers, MS 1174/1/1103, NLA.

49 Nettie Palmer, letter to Esmonde Higgins, 13 November 1914, Esmonde Higgins Papers, MS 740 ML.


51 Nettie Palmer, letter to Esmonde Higgins, 18 April 1915, E.M. Higgins Papers, MS 740/8/138, ML.


53 Nettie Palmer, letter to Guido Baracchi, 2 May 1942, Baracchi Papers, MS 5241, folder 1, NLA.


57 George Robertson, letter to Bertram Stevens, 29 October 1917, *Dear Robertson, Letters to an Australian Publisher* ed. A.W. Barker (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1982) 84.

58 Zora Cross, *Songs of Love and Life* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1917).
59 Christopher Brennan, letter to George Robertson, Angus and Robertson Papers, MS 314/108, ML.
60 Epigraph to A.D. Hirst, Through the Gates (Sydney: Tyrell’s, 1921) n.pag.
61 Nettie Higgins, letter to Vance Palmer, 1911, MS 1174/1/479, NLA.
62 Nettie Higgins, letter to Vance Palmer, early March [1910], Palmer Papers MS 1174/1/288, NLA.
64 Zora Cross, The City of Riddle-me-ree (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1918).
65 Zora Cross, An Introduction to the Study of Australian Literature (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1922) n.pag.
69 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 2 July 1935 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4703].
70 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 10 November 1935 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4822].
71 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 30 March 1939 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5502].
72 Mary Fullerton, letter to Miles Franklin, 27 March 1928, Miles Franklin Papers, MS 364/16, ML.
73 Miles Franklin, letter to Mary Fullerton, 13 February 1929, Miles Franklin Papers, MSS 364/16, ML.
74 Mary Fullerton, letter to Miles Franklin, 27 March 1930, Miles Franklin Papers, MSS 364/16, ML.
75 Marjorie Barnard, letter to Nettie Palmer, 25 September 1931, Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/3816-8
76 Mary Fullerton, letter to Mary Fullerton, 22 February 1937, Miles Franklin Papers, MSS 364/17, ML.
79 Miles Franklin, letter to Mary Fullerton, 1 February 1930, Miles Franklin Papers, MS 364/16, ML.
80 Juliet Flesch, From Australia with Love: A History of Modern Australian Popular Romance Novels (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre, 2004).