Subject to Authority

A Study of M. Barnard Eldershaw

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ABSTRACT

The thesis concerns 'M. Barnard Eldershaw', the literary collaboration between Marjorie Barnard (1897-1987) and Flora Eldershaw (1897-1956) which produced five novels, three historical works and a collection of critical essays, in addition to numerous other articles, short stories, lectures and plays. While this particular writing relationship forms the central focus for the project, the work on Barnard and Eldershaw is framed by a number of more general considerations. The first of these is the question of women's artistic and literary collaboration and the development of a female collaborative aesthetic. This thesis examines conventional models of authority and creativity as well as challenging familiar empiricist approaches to collective authorship. Barnard's and Eldershaw's literary, cultural and political activities are placed in the context of the formation of an intellectual culture in the interwar period. Their role in constructing and influencing Australian cultural policy is traced through their efforts as freelance critics and their work within the Fellowship of Australian Writers (FAW) and the Commonwealth Literary Fund (CLF). Through a consideration of the literary careers of Barnard and Eldershaw, I endeavour to explain why, in their particular cases, the status of woman and the position of cultural authority appear not to have been mutually exclusive, thus reconceptualising women's relationship to mainstream culture and challenging conventional definitions of the "intellectual". This thesis also involves an assessment of Barnard's and Eldershaw's roles in formulating the concept of an "Australian Author" and the construction of Australian literature as a separate discipline. Within this framework, their writing is read as a template of their wider concerns. The key preoccupations in their fiction are examined in the light of the cultural politics expressed through their wide range of activities and commitments. Particular attention is focused on their treatment of literary, cultural and political authority.
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"They drew in each other's ideas and gave out their own by a gentle process, like breathing. They had pinned down the most slippery, ethical subtleties for absorbing, tireless analysis".

Elizabeth Bowen, The Hotel, p.8

"The pleasures of writing are the pleasures that attach to the functioning of any ability, its pains those that arise from failure, obstruction or frustration. At best it is rather like being in love".

M. Barnard Eldershaw, "The Writer and Society", p.6
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introduction
INTRODUCTION

"I read all day in the Mitchell and Teenie dashes in any instant she gets & in the chinks we brood. It takes a lot of brooding to lay the foundations of a book doesn't it? Standing, toothbrush in hand, foaming at the mouth, staring at the tap". Marjorie Barnard writing to Leslie Rees regarding *Phillip of Australia*.¹

"I cannot explain to myself how two personalities can together produce a work of art, a unit, a thing of form and passion and individual integrity. Yet here the miracle happens...". Richard Church reviewing *Plaque With Laurel* for *John o' London's Weekly*.

Discussing the genealogy of the author, Roland Barthes observed that the author was "a modern figure, a product of our society insofar as emerging from the Middle Ages with English empiricism, French rationalism and the personal faith of the Reformation, it discovered the prestige of the individual".² This tendency in Western culture to equate 'literature' and 'literary authority' with the 'individual' has meant that collaboration has remained something of a blindspot for literary and cultural history. Even in Australia, a culture which abounds in significant instances of literary collaboration, relatively little interest has been focussed upon this issue. It is not surprising, therefore, that 'M. Barnard Eldershaw', the literary collaboration of Marjorie Barnard and Flora Eldershaw, has not received the prominence that it deserves in Australian literary history. What recognition this pair of writers receives is usually related to their final novel *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow*, with scant attention being paid to other aspects of their writing career or to the dynamics of collective cultural production. Crucial questions about the impact of collaboration upon conventional notions of literary authority, about M. Barnard Eldershaw's part in constructing an idea or ideal of the 'Australian

¹M. Barnard to Leslie Rees, 24 March 1937 [Leslie Rees Papers ML MSS 5454/1].
Author' in the inter-war years, and the role these issues played in the wide range of writing they produced have been overlooked. It was the desire to pose some of these questions which shaped this thesis. Focussing on the active and productive years of their collaboration from 1928 when their first novel was written to 1952 when the two writers were named in a damaging parliamentary witch hunt, the thesis seeks to explore the nature and significance of their collective endeavours for our conceptions of literary, cultural and textual authority. The three parts of the thesis can be read, then, as separate, if interrelated, speculations on the nature of the authority of the writer.

To employ a conventional belles-lettrist approach to M. Barnard Eldershaw's work, fixing on chronology as an organising principle and simply situating the authors within mainstream literary history, would be to ignore the fact that the acknowledged presence here of collaboration and pseudonymity necessarily disrupts the very notions of 'author' and 'text' upon which such critical practices depend. Indeed, both collaboration and pseudonymity represent self-conscious attempts to construct a literary subject, underscoring the notion that authors are made rather than born. The often problematic nature of M. Barnard Eldershaw's literary reputation derives at least in part from the acknowledged presence of a collaboration, for the author here is double and duplicitous — the one which is not one. As Barnard suggests when she claims that she and Eldershaw would "snatch" ideas "whole out our mind", collaboration offers a radical challenge to the unitary concept of the subject in the act of creation. Collaborative texts clearly disrupt the romantic ideologies of individual agency and the sense of unity

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3Marjorie Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 28 February 1937 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5249].
traditionally associated with and valued by author-centred modes of critical practice. They subvert the paradigm of authorship with which, or at least in full awareness of which, we still generally work: namely that the author (a single, coherent, pre-existing historical and biographical entity) precedes or authorises the text in hand. As Wayne Koestenbaum observes of collaborative texts, "like bastards in King Lear, these mongrel texts come from no centred position in a moral universe; they evoke uncertainty and condescension in a reader who demands to know at all moments a sentence's source".4 These texts deny readers the comforting fiction of a single, authoritative and legitimising voice, offering instead the inherently unstable, multiple or fragmented character of a collective subject: the Author here becomes the site of excess.

Is it perhaps this threat to traditional notions of authority and the unified creative subject which prompts critics either to displace or discredit the collaborative element in such works? The critical emphasis certainly tends to be placed upon locating a 'single hand' or at least a 'major contributor' behind the works. Often this takes the form of a healthy if predictable partisanship, the kind of response Miles Franklin refers to when she says of Pioneers On Parade that "where I am known Pioneers is credited to me and where Dymphna is known the same to her".5 But this is also seen in the case of M. Barnard Eldershaw where there have been numerous efforts to rewrite Flora Eldershaw's contribution into a 'merely critical' rather than 'creative' one.6 The

5Miles Franklin to Dymphna Cusack, 24 June 1947 [Franklin Papers ML MSS 364, Vol. 30].
6See, for example, Louise Rorabacher, Marjorie Barnard and M. Barnard Eldershaw (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1973) and, more recently, the introduction to Robert Darby, ed. But Not For Love: Stories of Marjorie Barnard and M. Barnard Eldershaw (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1988).
same impulse doubtless underlies the extraordinarily uncritical acceptance accorded to Marjorie Barnard's latter day accounts of her apparently single-handed endeavours behind the double name, accounts that prove on closer examination to contain more fiction than fact. The widespread disavowal of collaboration has ultimately meant that little constructive attention has been devoted to speculations about the practice of literary collaboration in general or of Barnard and Eldershaw's writing relationship in particular. Is it possible to reconstruct the conditions of production for collaborative texts? If so, what would it demonstrate? How did Barnard and Eldershaw carry out their writing? Why has critical attention tended to favour Barnard at the expense of Eldershaw?

And what of the underlying critical concern as to whether collaboration can produce Literature? As collaboration is generally associated with the so-called popular forms of detective fiction and science fiction and with children's literature, it raises the vexed issue of 'literary merit'. The notion of a collective text conjures images of hack work produced by a team of craftspeople as opposed to the more 'refined' products of the solitary genius. Afterall, how can two people be divinely inspired at the one moment? Can they be divinely inspired in sequence? The fate of "Michael Field" (Katharine Bradley and Edith Cooper) is perhaps revealing on this point. Once critics discovered the fact of that collaboration, much finer work than they had already published passed unnoticed or was reviled, while work they continued to publish anonymously was noticed and appreciated. It was not long before The Cambridge History of English Literature could dismiss their work simply as a 'curious fancy'. As Mary Sturgeon notes, "it may be
that something in the fact of a collaboration was obscurely repellant”.7 Similarly, while Australia's literary history is replete with examples of collaboration, little or no attention has been given to the work of "Margot Neville" (Margot Goyder and Anne Neville), Jean Rankin and Jane Clunies Ross, Miles Franklin and Dymphna Cusack, Dymphna Cusack and Florence James, or Beatrice Osborn and Hilary Lofting to name but a few. The potentially collaborative nature of the literary relationships between Nettie and Vance Palmer, Marjorie Barnard and Frank Dalby Davison, George Johnston and Charmian Clift, and Frank Clune and P.R. Stephensen also remains largely unacknowledged in critical commentaries. It is probably no coincidence, therefore, that Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow, the only M. Barnard Eldershaw text to receive wide critical approval is also the one generally, if somewhat erroneously, attributed to Barnard alone. What does this treatment of collaborative texts reveal about our critical practice and our conventional definitions of 'Literature'? What anxieties lie behind this reluctance to recognise doubly-authored texts? Can explication of the genuinely collaborative work of M. Barnard Eldershaw prompt some re-evaluation of the unacknowledged collaborative element in Australian literature generally?

To these speculations about the nature and impact of joint authorship can be added the equally important issue of how Barnard and Eldershaw positioned themselves as authors in the literary culture of the inter-war and immediate post-war periods. Considerations of what it meant at this time to be a woman writer and an Australian writer ultimately influence the ways in which we interpret Barnard and

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7Mary Sturgeon, Michael Field (New York: Arno, 1975): 29. Further consideration of Michael Field is given in Chapter Two.
Eldershaw's pursuit of authority (in the wider sense here of cultural power) and the ways they positioned themselves in relation to existing cultural institutions. Traditional definitions of authority as "a mode of discourse which gives expression to rank, order, definition and distinction"\(^8\) have generally excluded those values associated with the feminine, effectively denying women a place in public life and compromising their right to speak. Such definitions have, moreover, usually been accompanied by a strong dependence on notions of hierarchy. How then do these ideas accord with Barnard and Eldershaw's experience of cultural authority? On what terms did they succeed in reconstituting the subject of authority in such a way as to give themselves access to its operations? Hannah Arendt in her essay "What is Authority?" notes that authority is derived etymologically from the verb *augere*, "to augment",\(^9\) providing the basis for an alternative construction of authority in terms of interaction among equals. Such a construction enables us to consider authority as a horizontal rather than a vertical alignment and to conceptualise the practice of authority in terms of expressing and enabling action in community. Here the element of collaboration that proved so central to their own creative practice can be seen to provide a persuasive basis for the general concept of authority which informed their wide range of social and cultural endeavours. As their writings and their gestures demonstrate, Barnard and Eldershaw clearly conceived their public roles not in terms of domination but in terms of co-operation, establishing a viable sense not merely of their own cultural authority but

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of the authority of the culture they were in the process of producing and promoting. This necessitated the negotiation both of a role for themselves (as women and as intellectuals) in relation to key cultural institutions such as the academy, and also of a place for the national literature within such institutions. In this way they actively confronted dominant or hegemonic cultural values, influencing what constituted the 'mainstream' of Australian culture in the interwar years and altering perceptions of women's relationship to cultural authority.

Tracing the specific role played by 'M. Barnard Eldershaw' in the formation of the literary culture of the inter-war and immediate post-war period, however, involves more than simply establishing their 'contribution' or 'putting them back' in order to complete the overall picture. It demands some revaluation of the established standards of historical significance in this area, and entails giving value to previously ignored experience and arguing for female agency. The 'privatised' nature of much of women's experience in this period means that tracing Barnard and Eldershaw's roles as cultural producers necessitates a consideration of the more ephemeral, fugitive and dispersed sites of literary and cultural production. Rather than dealing solely with the more traditional and 'public' texts, it is necessary to accord value to correspondence, diaries, committee minutes, radio broadcasts, and teaching notes, sensitive to the fact that "what passes for trivia and gossip in the masculine eye...[can be] profoundly philosophical".10

Letters have been used as a key source in this work and it is probably necessary to note here some of the problems and difficulties

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associated with the use of them as "evidence". As observed in Chapter Two, relatively few of Barnard's and particularly Eldershaw's letters have survived: only one brief note remains of their mutual correspondence, while each confessed to destroying letters held among their personal papers at different stages in their lives. The main sources for those remaining letters are the Miles Franklin Papers in the Mitchell Library and more particularly the Palmer Papers in the National Library of Australia. Whether preserved by accident or calculation, what remains of Barnard and Eldershaw's correspondence is necessarily a fragmented and highly selective collection and, if that single note from Barnard to Eldershaw and Barnard's letters to Jean Devanny regarding her relationship with Frank Dalby Davison are any indication, we can assume that a particular form of intimate, self-revelatory letter has almost certainly been lost. This raises questions as to the "representative" nature of those remaining letters and to the validity of judgements based exclusively upon them. Once isolated and stripped of their immediate context, personal letters can sometimes represent potentially ambiguous and misleading sources to the researcher, as Vita Sackville-West's observations clearly suggest:

We should ourselves be sorry to think that posterity should judge us by a patchwork of our letters, preserved by chance, independent of their context, written perhaps in a fit of despondency or irritation, divorced, above all, from the myriad little strands which colour and compose our peculiar existence, and which in their multiplicity, their variety and their triviality are vivid to ourselves alone, uncommunicable, even to those nearest to us, sharing our daily lives.11

Given that as a genre, letters may be considered a nascent form of autobiography, they need to be viewed as actively producing rather than merely "revealing" a self and as prey to conflicting impulses toward

self-assertion and self-censorship rather than as invariably presenting unproblematic "truths". And yet, as a "private" form of discourse, one less mediated than published or "public" discourses, they are uniquely positioned to articulate the conflicts and competition between public and private issues, particularly as the reflective mode of letters perhaps leads to closer consideration of such issues. However, as I argue in some detail later, in their activities Barnard and Eldershaw effectively challenged that distinction between the "public" and the "private". Their correspondence represents a further aspect of this shift, their letters constantly incorporating elements such as critical commentary which we more readily associate with "public" discourse.

In M. Barnard Eldershaw's case, the recovery of work from alternative sites like letters, committee minutes, teaching notes and can transform the traditional perception of them as the authors of a single book of literary criticism to a perception of them as one of the most influential critical forces of the period. Efforts such as these represent a shift away from the conception of separate and mutually exclusive spheres of cultural activity to an account of how the so-called 'private' experience may be recovered in terms of its place in the 'public' sphere, collapsing the apparent opposition implicit in the two terms. It also offers the possibility of reconceptualising existing models for the transmission of 'public' culture and reconsidering what constituted an 'Australian Author' in this period. But acknowledging the active role that Barnard and Eldershaw and women like them have played in constructing the culture may well expose the ideological limitations of the conventional practice of literary history. As Sydney

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12 The attached appendix demonstrates the full extent of Barnard and Eldershaw's collective literary output.
Janet Kaplan argues, "studying groups of women writers within a particular time-frame and social class may actually lead to a redefinition of periods in literary history. The traditional parameters of a period may be shifted or its predominant preoccupations reassessed if it is studied through the perspective of women writers".¹³

Within this framework, it is possible to read M. Barnard Eldershaw's writing as a template of their wider cultural concerns. This thesis does not attempt, however, to offer comprehensive coverage of all writing by M. Barnard Eldershaw, but focuses instead on those works which offer most insight into the concept of authority and the role of the writer in the community. For this reason, the small body of short fiction produced in collaboration has been dealt with only as it relates to the production of other, more substantial works. Some consideration could perhaps have been given to differences that exist between Barnard Eldershaw's short fiction and the rather more celebrated short stories by Barnard alone, but I fear such approaches only lead us back to relatively reductive assessments of the nature of collaboration. Their playscripts have not been discussed primarily because the texts themselves are fragmented and because I believe genuine doubt exists in several instances as to whether these works were in fact produced in collaboration. Given that only one of their playscripts, "Watch on the Headland", was ultimately produced and published, drama could reasonably be considered a relatively peripheral enterprise in the context of their overall careers. The primary focus then has been placed on M. Barnard Eldershaw's long fiction and Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow in particular, for it is these

works which served as a site for them to rehearse and debate at length many of the issues they themselves confronted as women writers, as collaborators, and as cultural authorities. What is the nature of the cultural dictates which separate women and the feminine from the concept of authority itself? How can the female voice of would-be authority make itself heard? What is the social function of literature? Of the author? Can authority be interpreted as representing something other than power and domination? Are there ways in which authority can be reformulated, in Kathleen Jones' terms, as "a way of cohering and sustaining connectedness"? The focus they give to collective or shared authority in their writing, moreover, represents a subversive position from which to revise conventional literary and cultural history. These preoccupations which they address in their novels reveal both a desire on their part to scrutinise the exercise in which they themselves are involved as authors and to raise questions about the strategic role of the written text in a climate of political change. They also reveal an increasingly acute awareness of the act of writing as subject to and enmeshed in a network of social, political and cultural tensions. As Frank Dalby Davison once remarked, it was these issues, the social and the philosophical, which were "nearest to their true selves".

15Frank Dalby Davison to Vance Palmer, April 1941 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5945].
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 CHAPTER ONE

The Game of the Name

"What difference does it make who is speaking?"
Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?"

Michel Foucault's question, "what is an author?", raises an issue central to any consideration of "M. Barnard Eldershaw"; namely, the cultural construction and cultural function of the author. The conventional definition of M. Barnard Eldershaw as "the pseudonym adopted by Flora Eldershaw and Marjorie Barnard for their works of collaboration" addresses neither the historical nor the discursive production of the author, two factors which influence the ways in which "M. Barnard Eldershaw" is read and understood. In contrast, the post-structuralist critiques of authorship offered by both Foucault and Roland Barthes provide a useful framework for conceptualising the challenge instances of pseudonymity and collaboration such as "M. Barnard Eldershaw" pose to conventional constructions of the author.

Roland Barthes in his essay, "The Death of the Author" interrogates the familiar image of the author as a single, unified, pre-existing, psychological entity which operates as the creative source of texts and sole guarantor of meaning within them — an image necessarily problematised by pseudonymity and collaboration. He argues that this "fictional" construction of the author turns language into a servant of subjectivity, and so denies the process of writing as "that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the

negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the
body writing". Barthes views this loss of identity as the "death" of the
authorial subject in writing and proposes in its place a new definition of
literature as a dynamic process of "writing" which is not "owned" or
"authorised" by the author but which is produced by the reader: "the
reader is the space on which all the quotations which make up a writing
are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its
origin but in its destination". Such a definition, arguing for reading
and writing as processes which call into question the idea or ideal of a
unified creative subject and unities of meaning founded in that subject,
can help to reconceptualise the relationship between collaborative
authors and the works they produce, by resolving to some degree the
anxiety over whose subjectivity prevails in those works and by
questioning the continued cultural privileging of the notion of a single,
unified creative subject.

While accepting Barthes' revisioning of the relationship of author
to text, Michel Foucault questions whether this "death" can be
realistically applied to the wider cultural functions of the author.
Indeed, unlike Barthes, Foucault views the author not so much as an
ideological fiction, but as a function of discourse and so, rather than
focussing on texts and their production, Foucault instead considers the
range of discursive functions through which the modern concept of
authorship is constructed. He claims that the author is not the origin but
a function of discourse, and consequently mobilises the term "author-
function" to explain the ways in which the concept of the author is
produced and circulated within specific cultures. This "author-

3Barthes: 148.
function", according to Foucault, is defined by four characteristics:

(1) the author-function is linked to the juridical and institutional system that encompasses, determines, and articulates the universe of discourses; (2) it does not affect all discourses in the same way at all times and in all types of civilization; (3) it is not defined by the spontaneous attribution of a discourse to its producer, but rather by a series of specific and complex operations; (4) it does not refer purely and simply to a real individual, since it can give rise simultaneously to several selves, to several subjects — positions that can be occupied by different classes of individuals.⁴

Foucault uses the example of the author's name — of particular significance in cases like "M. Barnard Eldershaw" where that name is also a pseudonym and has what might be considered a life of its own — to demonstrate the ways in which this "author-function" marks a specific way of thinking and writing about texts. He suggests that the author's name carries with it a whole series of cultural associations and assumptions so that it does more than simply refer to an individual subject:

...an author's name is not simply an element in a discourse (capable of being either subject or object, of being replaced by a pronoun, and the like); it performs a certain role with regard to narrative discourse, assuring a classificatory function. Such a name permits one to group together a certain number of texts, define them, differentiate them from and contrast them to others. In addition, it establishes a relationship among texts...The author's name serves to characterise a certain mode of being of discourse: the fact that the discourse has an author's name, that one can say "this was written by so-and-so" or "so-and-so is its author", shows that this discourse is not ordinary everyday speech that merely comes and goes, not something that is immediately consumable. On the contrary, it is a speech that must be received in a certain mode and that, in a given culture, must receive a certain status. It would seem that the author's name, unlike other proper names, does not pass from the interior of a discourse to the real and exterior individual who produced it; instead, the name seems always to be present, marking off the edges of the text, revealing, or at least characterising, its mode of being. The author's name manifests the appearance of a certain discursive set and indicates the status of this discourse within a society and a culture.⁵

Such formulations are especially pertinent when dealing with an author who could be said to exist, quite literally, "in name only", as they enable

⁵Foucault: 147.
us to understand how literary authority can be thought of not as sourced in the individual, but in a discursive construct. Indeed, the arguments advanced by Foucault, together with those of Barthes, provide a context for considering the ways in which "M. Barnard Eldershaw" is produced and circulated as an authorial subject in Australian culture. They do so by offering conceptual models capable of accounting for the ways in which "M. Barnard Eldershaw" generates meaning or existence both in excess of and independent of the individual subjectivities or biographical presences assumed to lie behind the works and behind the pseudonym. After all, by adopting a pseudonym, we could argue that they set out consciously to court the very processes described by both Barthes and Foucault: that is, in deliberately effacing their own identities, they encouraged their reading audience to create "fictions" about them and their identity.

And what of that gesture of assuming a pseudonym? The Oxford English Dictionary defines the pseudonym as "a false or fictitious name, especially one assumed by an author. It is a name taken instead of, or in addition to, a person's real name".6 In the case of a collaboration, the pseudonym could perhaps be seen as a necessary fiction; but it also lends a peculiarly literal quality to the task of 'making a name for themselves' in Australian letters. As a pseudonym, however, "M. Barnard Eldershaw" raises various questions, primarily because it fails to conform to convention. Pseudonyms have, for example, commonly been used by women writers to escape certain gender-based prejudices within the literary world, but the need or desire thus to disguise gender had lost some of its urgency by the late 1920s. Moreover, "M. Barnard

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Eldershaw” is not necessarily a masculine-sounding name; it is at best ambiguous or potentially gender neutral. And while there exist occasional overseas reviews of works by a "Mr Eldershaw", these are arguably the product of prevailing literary and cultural assumptions, rather than of the name itself. Pseudonyms can also function as "literary masks" for the concealing of identity, but again this would not seem to be the case here. Instead, "M. Barnard Eldershaw" represents a declarative gesture, one that reveals rather than conceals both identities. It is a staged signature which "signs double"7, as it were, and which actively asserts the presence of the unstable and multiple subject, a divided or split author. An "agglutination" or "an abbreviated compromise" was the way Nettie Palmer described it in her 1932 article "Writing Under a Pen Name: Consistent and Inconsistent Disguises". "There is no mystery about it," she suggested, "you can meet the two writers in Sydney; their photos (separate not composite) have frequently been published; and the compound name is the merest convenience".8 But while the name does not disguise identity, it does offer the opportunity to escape the immediate contextuality of their own separate, individual names and to open a new space for their writing. "M. Barnard Eldershaw" may function as a costume rather than a mask, as a specific performative guise or "an articulation of the border between life and letters, body and language".9 This use differs little from that of the writer who assumes a different name in order to distinguish one aspect of her or his writing from another. Indeed, Barnard had earlier published a collection of children's stories, _The Ivory Gate_ (1920),

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8Nettie Palmer, "Writing Under a Pen Name: Consistent and Inconsistent Disguises", _Illustrated Tasmanian Mail_, 11 August 1932: 61.
under her own name.

Thus "M. Barnard Eldershaw" represents not simply an attempt to find a name, but also to escape from some others. Anne Freadman in her discussion of Louise Labé likens the pseudonym to the enseigne, the sign traditionally hung outside a shop to advertise the trade of its owner, a "shop-front for the carrying on of her craft and the selling of her work". As opposed to the possible private associations of their individual names, Barnard and Eldershaw's combined name becomes a platform for 'public speaking'. Just as the adoption of a pseudonym often facilitates an escape from the Name of the Father, the encrypting here of their surnames embodies a similar and somewhat ironic strategy wherein the combination of the two patronyms serves to distort the conventional kinship narrative. As Lynda Boose argues, "the daughter out of her correct locale sets up a threat of territorial invasion and usurpation of the father's cultural space...a vision of social inversion". The double barrelled name here signifies another form of unsanctioned or unsanctified connection: a doubling wherein the names cease to be those of the Daughter, becoming instead that of the author of themselves. The name is thus the site of production, the source of a new "generation" in Kristeva's sense, not of chronology, but of a new signifying space. This 'coupling' provides an enabling moment of bibliographic rather than dynastic import.

When the history of Barnard and Eldershaw's use of the

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pseudonym is approached systematically, however, it is apparent that "M. Barnard Eldershaw" was neither their first nor their only pseudonym. Consider the brief career of "Faith Sydney" (1928-1928) which usually passes without comment. For the 1928 *Bulletin* novel competition, writers were required, not unusually, to submit entries under a *nom de plume*. And so on July 4th, 1928, *A House Is Built* was listed in *The Bulletin* as the work of "Faith Sydney", the simple combination of Barnard's and Eldershaw's two middle names. The novel joined *Coonardoo* by "Ashburton Jim" (Katharine Susannah Prichard) and *Men Are Human* by "Bryan Ward" (Vance Palmer). Several months later when negotiating publication of their prizewinning novel through their London agent, John Farqharson, Barnard received the following advice:

> It is usually found to be rather bad policy to have two authors' names on the title page. May I take it to be the wish of Miss Eldershaw and yourself that the name Faith Sidney [sic] be used to cover you both?  

Barnard and Eldershaw had, it appears, already considered the issue for the rough draft of their very first letter to Farqharson bears Eldershaw's crossed out attempts at the signature "F. Barnard Eldershaw". And while "The Quartermaster", the truncated version of *A House Is Built* serialised in 1929 was credited to "Flora Eldershaw and Marjorie Barnard", the series of critical articles which followed later that year in the *Sydney Morning Herald* was attributed to "M. Barnard Eldershaw". Nettie Palmer gave her version of the development of the name in a 1933 radio broadcast:

When in 1928 that long, vivid and enterprising novel, 'A House Is Built' was discovered by the award of the first Bulletin prize, the authors were announced as Miss Marjorie Barnard and Miss Flora Eldershaw. These two

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13 John Farqharson to M. Barnard, 13 November 1928 [Barnard Papers ML MSS 451/5].
14 M. Barnard and F. Eldershaw to John Farqharson, 6 October 1928 [ML MSS 451/5].
names on the title page would have made rather a clumsy mouthful, though in
the past such collaborations have been named in full (books have been
published as by "Walter Besant and James Rice", for instance). In this case the
neat abbreviation of "M. Barnard Eldershaw" was reached by the time the book
appeared. No casual reader would be likely to feel any sense of burden or
oddity with the name such as happened many years ago when Shaw,
diagnosing the collaboration & interaction of G.K. Chesterton & Hilaire Belloc,
insisted on describing the composite entity as 'the Chesterbelloc'. 15

The "neat abbreviation" is itself worth commenting upon. While
Barnard appears to have been given pre-eminence through the retention
of both her first initial and her surname within the pseudonym, this is
balanced by Eldershaw's name achieving bibliographic precedence.

But "putting their name on the line" in this fashion creates other
tensions. In particular, the question of what is "M. Barnard Eldershaw"
can be raised. Is it singular or plural? Is it "it,"she" or "they"? Indeed,
the use of the pseudonym appears to have created a shifting and plural
subject, sometimes "we", sometimes a double "I". In their early article,
"The Historical Novel", for example, "we" is used, but in Essays in
Australian Fiction, both "I" and "we" appear: "I" for critical opinion
and "we" for acknowledgements. The phenomenon of "M. Barnard
Eldershaw" is variously discussed as the "Barnard Eldershaw" and the
"Misses Barnard Eldershaw". Pseudonymity clearly subverts the
conventional relationship between signature, authorial subject, and a
coherent, pre-existent, historical and biographical entity. They become
tangled, the traditional formula relating author and text is displaced, and
the homologous fit between author and her or his works disrupted. As
Michal Ginsburg has argued, "a pseudonym always subverts, or inverts,
the relationship between an author and his (sic) work. It creates a
situation in which it is not a certain reality (personal, biographical,

15 Nettie Palmer, "Wireless blither", dated 23 May 1933 [Lucille Quinlan Papers NLA MSS 7362].
social) which creates a fiction (a novel) but the opposite: it is the fiction which creates the reality". Indeed, while "M. Barnard Eldershaw" has sense, it has no signified. As a sign "M. Barnard Eldershaw" is, in Rosalind Krauss' terms, a "function of absence rather than presence, is a coupling of signifier and immaterial concept in relation to which...there may be no referent at all". Here, it could be said the author is the fiction: a fiction in and of itself. Its only real presence is a fictional presence. There is no danger here of a text being subsumed by the personality of its author because there is no author in the sense of an ontological presence or point of origin. For even while the use of the pseudonym may permit the projection of the author as an empirical subject, a living embodiment of individual creativity and experience, the split or divided subject of biographical discourse emerges to confound such ideas. "M. Barnard Eldershaw" is not anyone, nor is it any one. Authority, therefore, cannot be perceived to reside in a speaker's anterior position or presence; it is an analytic or textual construct rather than an available subject. (One can only wonder how the FAW coped in 1941 when a "distinguished writer" was required to fill the position of President of the Authors' Ball Committee and "M. Barnard Eldershaw" was nominated and approved.) After all, it could be argued in a gesture of curiously inverted genealogy that "M. Barnard Eldershaw" has no existence beyond the text and that it is created out of that text. For "M. Barnard Eldershaw" only came into existence with the publication in book form of A House Is Built in 1928 and continues to exist only as a construction or projection of a discrete body of works. Here is Barthes' simultaneous birth of scriptor and text, where "at the edge of the work,

the dividing trait of the signature pulls in both directions at once: appropriating the text under the sign of the name, appropriating the name into the play of the text".18 Far from subjection under the dual impositions of origin and individuation, the texts of "M. Barnard Eldershaw" could be said to represent a most radical exemplification of the de-authorised text, freed from the tyranny of a single authoritative voice: "no single voice to the text but rather a war of voices".19 Gone is the Author assumed to be a "natural" authority over the text and gone is the unified writing subject, reduced here to a series of multiple and dispersed traces. And yet, this dispersal of authority within the text does not mean that there cannot be located within the text an identifiably authoritative voice or voices as indeed we find in M. Barnard Eldershaw's texts, merely that these voices cannot be equated with an individual writer thought of in terms of a pre-existing and unified consciousness.

But while the Author might well disappear, should these authors be permitted to slip away so easily? The use of the pseudonym certainly offers the tempting possibility of the ultimate de-authorised text, but such speculations must surely be tempered by considerations of the equalling compelling significance for "M. Barnard Eldershaw" of the material aspects of that writing project. Although Barthes' notion of the author's disappearance is a seductive one, it can also represent a problematic one for female writing subjects where questions of performance, production and authorship may retain considerable strategic significance. Indeed, such considerations have formed the very

18Kamuf: 13.
basis of feminist accounts of female literary culture. As Andreas Huysen argues:

...doesn't poststructuralism, where it simply denies the subject altogether, jettison the chance of challenging the ideology of the subject (as male, white, and middle-class) by developing alternative and different notions of subjectivity?²⁰

Any account of M. Barnard Eldershaw's writing must also ultimately reflect upon what took place behind or because of the name; that is, reflect upon these women as text producers and examine the conditions of production of their work. In Nancy Miller's words, the act of women writing must remain "inseparable from an expanded definition of, and expanded attention to, the social field in which the practices of reading and writing are located and grounded".²¹

CHAPTER TWO

Working Together

"And anyway, who can write alone?"
Julia Kristeva, "The True-Real".

The suggestion that "collaboration sometimes poses almost hopeless tasks to the literary detective"\(^1\) foregrounds the overriding critical preoccupation with identity and process, and evokes with unusual vigour the familiar litany used to ascribe meaning and value to a text: "from where does it come, who wrote it, when, under what circumstances, or beginning with what design?"\(^2\) It also signals a significant lapse from 'criticism' into 'detection', with its attendant suggestions of criminality, deviance or fraud, and of the need to establish a 'positive identification' in the 'quest' for 'who wrote it'.\(^3\) Is it surprising, then, to find collaboration labelled "the conspiratorial form *par excellence*"?\(^4\) Or to discover the inordinate emphasis placed upon establishing the conditions of production or genetics of collaborative texts? This reduction of the critical exercise to one of literary detection in turn implies a particular set of assumptions about the way literary collaboration or 'joint authorship' functions. It assumes a definition of collaboration as a simple division of labour, privileging the use of empirical 'evidence' either to assert the presence of a single authorial consciousness or to re-establish individual authorship over discreet sections of a work, ultimately presenting the


\(^3\) See Krauss: 23-40.

collaborative text as the mere sum of the separate individual contributions. With such approaches in mind perhaps, the manuscript of M. Barnard Eldershaw's *A House Is Built* offers an enigmatic caution in the form of a note tipped into the front of the manuscript warning that "this manuscript is alternately in the handwriting of each author but if anyone thought that this was a key to the collaboration they would be vastly mistaken".\(^5\) Such a narrow definition of collaboration also ignores the enormous variation that can exist within a collaborative scenario, in particular those where writers "prefer to work in intimate association, going over one another's drafts, revising, deleting, and interpolating . . . [mindful of] the possibility of the final product, however it was achieved, being revised by one of original authors".\(^6\)

This central preoccupation with the authorial signature also assumes that the collaborative enterprise will invariably leave some *textual* trace or clue, with the implication that collaboration exists only in the form of words on the page. It denies the wider collaborative opportunities provided through conversation, correspondence, the sympathetic hearing or reading of a manuscript, the vigorously sought opinion, and similar instances of what could be termed "intellectual co-operation".\(^7\) Marjorie Barnard herself stressed the significant role of conversation or discussion in their writing relationship, arguing that the collaboration had "already taken place in the discussion period".\(^8\)

This critical impulse toward detection, however, is perhaps not

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\(^5\) Manuscript of *A House Is Built*, Marjorie Barnard Papers ML MSS 451/1. The note appears in Barnard's hand and was probably attached when the manuscript was donated to the library.


\(^7\) This term appears as a Library of Congress heading under "joint authorship".

altogether inappropriate to discussions of a phenomenon commonly held to be something of a mystery, one that is often relegated to the ranks of the creative freak show: a two-headed author. Certainly there have been numerous critical efforts to "saw the famous novelist in half", not to mention assertions that M. Barnard Eldershaw may be "Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde in reverse", that is, two authors in the one personality.\textsuperscript{9} Is the study of this writer less biographical or historical than teratological? This element is underscored by the judgements of critics like H.R. Nowotney who prefaces his discussion of M. Barnard Eldershaw's early fiction with the confession that he could not "for the life of [him] conceive how a work of art can be written in collaboration".\textsuperscript{10} It is as though, like anonymity, collaboration can only be tolerated in the guise of an enigma. Suggestions of the mysterious and the arcane are, however, recurring features of the authors' own attempts at self-representation. Barnard, for example, likened collaboration to "a bedroom secret",\textsuperscript{11} and both Barnard and Eldershaw were noted for their diffidence with regard to discussions of their "method", a diffidence sustained on both a public and a private level. Their very first interview revealed only sparse details of their working habits, Barnard commenting that

Since our undergraduate days, we have written together — one would write something and give it to the other for suggestion and discussion. Since graduation we have followed the same plan, the idea developing that we might write a book together... The announcement of the Bulletin Competition gave Miss Eldershaw and myself the incentive we needed to write the book we had so often discussed; so we set out to plan it. We found it entailed a great deal of research work, but the Mitchell Library was an inexhaustible mine. We spent

\textsuperscript{9}Two Novelists in One". Unsourced clipping from a Melbourne daily newspaper circa 1946. See also H. M. Green, History of Australian Literature, Vol. 2 Rev. Edn. (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1985): 1182.
\textsuperscript{10}H. R. Nowotney, "The Australian Novel", The Steering Wheel and Society and Home, January 1933: 32.
all our Saturday mornings there during the first few months. After the research was over we wrote together at week-ends and during our holidays. It was a great pleasure, though at times we had our bad moments when we could do nothing.  

Eldershaw's family acknowledged her reluctance to discuss the authors' working habits and Marjorie Swain, a long-time friend of Eldershaw's and sometime typist of Barnard Eldershaw manuscripts recalls feeling obliged to leave the flat she shared with Eldershaw whenever the pair were discussing their writing. "Fitz" of The Bulletin provides one of the few in camera portraits of the two at work:

> How the two women who write as M. Barnard Eldershaw achieve their perfectly seamless collaboration has inspired curiosity overseas as well as here — where it ranks with 'Who is Brent of Bin Bin'? Accident has twice given me glimpses of them at work. The first time there were two writing pads, two heads in close conference and then two pens scratching simultaneously. Next time a final draft seemed to be in progress. One held a longhand copy and the other worked the typewriter, with brief intervals for mutual consultation. These snapshots, of course, leave much unexplained, but may be worth noting for such inferences as may be drawn from them.  

In the face of inquiries, Barnard frequently maintained that it was "unwise to talk publicly about the methods of collaboration as this distracts the attention of readers". A subtle variation upon this view is also reported from one of Eldershaw's final public lectures on the subject of their collaborative work of which the particular comment was made that "what she did not relate...was how much each had contributed to their work: this she would not disclose, even had it been possible." The destruction of Barnard and Eldershaw's mutual correspondence further obscures various aspects of the working relationship of the two

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12 Beede, "The Happy Collaborators", The Australian Women's Mirror, 4 September 1928: 12.
women. Indeed, no detailed accounts by them of their collaboration exist. Most descriptions of their writing processes rely on accounts by Barnard alone, accounts generally produced many years later, usually after Flora Eldershaw's death, and favouring Barnard as the primary agent. What is the status of a solitary voice which attempts to speak for M. Barnard Eldershaw, a composite construct which clearly displaces any notion of authorial singularity? Could it not be argued that M. Barnard Eldershaw as an author has no voice at all, but is simply an effect of a text or series of texts? Barnard perhaps is not the author of those texts in the sense of an originating subject, but a writer, one who attempts to write (right?) that relationship through her accounts of the collaborative process. Her accounts would then form part of the ongoing process of fiction-making.

The most detailed of Barnard's accounts of the collaboration is found in an article entitled "The Gentle Art of Collaboration", written in 1975 for a Society of Women Writers' publication. It is interesting, not because it is particularly revealing of their intentions or method, but because it stands as Barnard's own retrospective reading of the relationship. As the title implies, the text is generally more prescriptive than descriptive, but it offers a brief history of her collaboration with Eldershaw and a discussion of their writing process:

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17 Contrary to common speculation that the two destroyed their mutual correspondence in a conscious attempt to conceal aspects of their relationship, their letters appear to have been destroyed over a period of time in the process of tiding up their affairs. Eldershaw, for example, confesses to Nettie Palmer that "I only destroyed all my long letters to Marjorie when I left Melbourne in 1953. M. had kept them as a record all this time until she left for England in 1952 & I disposed of them when I fell ill. Thought I was on my last legs and was saving my heirs and assigns all the trouble I could". [NLA MSS 1174/1/8674]. Barnard makes a similar comment to Jean Devanny when she goes into hospital for an operation: "...have destroyed most of my literary remains, set in order many years' chaos of papers, made my will, & so am neatly wound up for nothing to happen". [MB to JD 16 November 1946 JC JD/CORR(P)/15]. Eldershaw's older sister Molly also reportedly burned other papers and correspondence that were left at her house following Eldershaw's death.
... the method Flora and I found most workable was this: from the inception, or conception, of a novel we talked about it to one another, discussed it at length, story, characters, background, treatment, in that order, getting the feel of it, coming to know it in depth, all this without putting pen to paper. We discussed every aspect until we came to agreement. We worked it up together and our thoughts and ideas became inextricably blended into a whole. There was no mine or thine but ours. This not only excluded proprietary rights on either side but gave the book its unity.

Curiously it seems to follow that when two people have worked and thought together on a book their prose styles become similar. They unconsciously take up from one another. This is much better than making adjustments after writing.

The division of labour, when it comes to writing is best if flexible. Arbitrary rules like writing alternate chapters are too artificial and affect flow. It does not matter who writes which section.18

This description differs little from the majority of Barnard's records of the collaboration. In response, for example, to an earlier inquiry regarding A House Is Built, Barnard formulated the following reply:

As for the mechanics of collaboration it was quite simple. We discussed the plot and treatment very thoroughly before pen was put to paper and reached agreement as to how it should be done. We were both very busy at the time and whoever could muster a little leisure did the writing. We have never dissected the novel saying "I wrote this chapter" "She wrote that" because we have not wanted to destroy the unity. It was a genuine collaboration throughout not a patchwork quilt.19

The similarity and indeed symmetry of Barnard's accounts serve to focus attention on the structure of these performances and what begins to matter is the narrative repetition rather than the details of the descriptions themselves. The structural perfection of her version of events is indicative of an iterative or regularising mode, of a narrative ordering of experience that approaches the fictional encounter. It is a story, but not the whole story. It is an attempt to fix or limit the collaboration, by providing a 'readerly' text of their writing, one that denies the possibility of instability or change in the production of M. Barnard Eldershaw.20

19M. Barnard to Miss Cliffe, 13 March 1956 [University of Queensland, Fryer Library MSS P25].
Documentary material, however, would seem to suggest that the collaboration was, of necessity, subject to greater alteration or variation than the influence of the written relationship would allow. The usual possibility is that Tom's possible claims to written influence are those which he, as the elder, on his own, originally wrote and produced. It is only in the final months between the two that they hit upon the title one soaking wet Sunday out walking in the rain, signalling the colloquial and ambulatory nature of their collaboration.

21M. Barnard, "How 'Yesterday and Tomorrow' Came to Be Written", Monitor 3 (1930), 329.
22Note in M. Barnard's hand in colophon of the book (ML MSS 451:5).

Marjorie Barnard c. 1935
Documentary material, however, would seem to suggest that the collaboration was, of necessity, subject to greater alteration or variation than these constructions of the writing relationship would allow. The influences of time and distance on the Barnard Eldershaw relationship usually only enter commentaries on the production of *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow*, and then they are invoked to dispute the possibility of any collaboration on that text. Barnard, for example, claimed in her essay, "How 'Tomorrow and Tomorrow' Came to Be Written", that the collaboration on the novel "broke down almost from the beginning, not from any quarrel, disagreement, or failure of friendship but by reason of war and geography".\(^{21}\) Ironically, it is those very features conventionally used to deny collaboration which appear to be the hallmarks of the relationship generally. The production of their first novel *A House Is Built*, written for the 1928 *Bulletin* novel competition, offers one example of that writing relationship. The text was produced over a period of nine months between September 1927 and May 1928. The story of its production is the subject of a lengthy note requested originally by Barnard and Eldershaw's publishers for publicity purposes. The note, like the novel itself, betrays an excess of youthful enthusiasm:

> The book was written eratically [sic] in our very scanty spare time and practically finished in a grand burst of energy the following Easter at Kiama on the South Coast. We wrote day and night and accomplished the final catastrophe in a state of mingled exaltation and desperation.\(^{22}\)

A deleted but legible passage preceding this account reveals that they "hit upon the title one soaking wet Sunday out walking in the rain", signalling the collocutory and ambulatory nature of their collaboration

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\(^{22}\)Note in M. Barnard's hand in correspondence file. [Barnard Papers ML MSS 451/5].
at this point. Easter holidays and hiking feature again some years later in the production of The Glasshouse when Barnard remarks in a letter to Nettie Palmer that the two "went to Kurrajong Heights and, between long walks and large meals, did quite a lot of writing and planning".23 The emphasis upon holidays, at Easter and at Christmas, recurs in correspondence and becomes, ironically, a kind of code for 'work', the "forced marches"24 which characterised their writing habits in the face of busy day-to-day schedules. There is nothing leisurely about their time. As Barnard records in an oft-quoted letter, again to Nettie Palmer, the constraints of their working lives largely determined the shape of their writing lives. Barnard's response is prompted in this instance by Nettie's query about the length of time taken to produce their second work, Green Memory:

"Everyone, I suppose, has a best speed and it is nearly as disastrous to drag as to rush a book. I wish that we could work steadily and constantly at ours. As it is the work is done in gushes when we can lay our hands on a little spare time and then often has to wait months with the knowledge that the spirit we had been trying to grasp is melting back into air. To work eight hours a day, travel for another two and after that perform the duties (and pleasures) of a daughter and amateur housemaid, leaves me little time and less mental energy to write. Miss Eldershaw is a rather worse case as teaching is a more exacting profession than library work. However, if we didn't have to snatch it we'd probably never write at all."25

The progress on their fourth novel, Plaque With Laurel was certainly speedier, but the familiar refrain is heard nonetheless:

"Our new novel is begun - the first chapter written - and then Christmas intervened...Teenie spent a week with me before she went to Glenisla for the holidays but it was a fruitless week, she only came home to sleep and we didn't even mention the novel. It is tough luck we can't be together now, especially while it is in its precarious early stages."26

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23 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 28 April 1935 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4655].
24 M. Barnard To Nettie Palmer, 8 October 1935 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4794].
25 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 1 December 1930 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/3721].
26 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 29 December 1935 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4864]. Glenisla was the property managed by Eldershaw's family.
That time was short is generally accepted, but little has been made of the distance between Eldershaw's residence at the Presbyterian Ladies' College, Croydon, where she worked as a senior mistress, and Barnard's home in Longueville, a factor which perhaps had just as significant an effect on the logistics of their collaboration as their later separate trips to Europe and Eldershaw's transfers to Canberra and later Melbourne. That is to say, the latter separations seem less dramatic if it is considered that the two were relatively rarely together and even more rarely shared a workspace. Even the much publicised flat they shared as a workspace at 22 Orwell Street in Potts Point represents a brief and contingent arrangement entered into only after four of their five novels had been written and largely as a result of Eldershaw's increasing dissatisfaction with her live-in arrangements at PLC, Croydon.27 Given these conditions, it is interesting that unlike the noted collaboration between Miles Franklin and Dymphna Cusack on Pioneers on Parade, there appears no evidence of Barnard and Eldershaw conducting significant parts of their collaboration by telephone. Describing the working relationship between Cusack and Franklin, Florence James revealed that

Both were busy people and meetings were difficult. Actually they did not meet more than half a dozen times while the book was being written. All the serious work of collaboration was done by telephone.28

The lack of privacy both at home and at school, however, may well have been a motivating factor in Barnard and Eldershaw's reluctance to utilise this method.

27There is some confusion over the length of their arrangement with the Orwell St flat, mainly because Eldershaw subsequently lived in a series of flats in the Kings Cross (before and) after this time, including Kanimbla Hall in Tusculum St, just behind Orwell St. Barnard also later rented a place of her own in Clapton Place where she would write and where she used to meet Frank Dalby Davison.

The manuscript for *A House Is Built* and *Green Memory*, the only complete version of the manuscript as submitted for publication, is a decorative variant of the typescript of *A House Is Built* in golden ink-like* and is written in an avuncular script. The handwriting is no longer visible, the paper is stained with the ink and the writing is decaying. The manuscript, which consists of single sheets, is too legible to be used as a guide to the original text. Frequently in the original manuscript, the occasional neat deletion of a line or phrase is due to the author's concern for the text. Rarely, if ever, does the text invade the neatly observed one paragraph. The author is known to be a perfectionist, and even the smallest changes are carefully noted.

25Bernard Papers ML MSS 431/1. Transcripts exist for *Tomorrow and Tomorrow* and *Tomorrow, But Not For Love* and their radio plays *Work on the Woodland*. Manuscripts also exist for some of their plays.

*Flora Eldershaw c. 1915*
The manuscript for *A House Is Built* and *Green Memory*, the only major Barnard Eldershaw manuscripts remaining, provide a commentary of their own. Like Barnard's retrospective accounts of the collaboration, the archivally packaged manuscripts produce a neatness and order that is seductive, if contrived. In the case of *A House Is Built*, for example, what must once have been loose leaves of unlined foolscap paper (with the occasional quarto page) now appear in a single volume bound between brown cloth covers with a gold embossed title, all of which lend the manuscript a distinctly "book-like" quality. The table of contents appears in Eldershaw's hand and is without correction or annotation. Throughout the manuscript writing appears on both sides of the page and is alternately in the handwriting of each of the authors. The balance between the two is fairly even, with just over half appearing in Eldershaw's rounded hand. There is no apparent pattern to the alternation and, contrary to expectations, the writing changes neither strictly from chapter to chapter, nor part to part. Instead, the handwriting alternates randomly and exhibits the uncanny habit of changing not only in mid-chapter, but more remarkably in mid-paragraph. However, just as the packaging is deceptive, so too possibly is the appearance of the written text. The manuscript as a whole is remarkably free of corrections, deletions, additions and overwriting. Most alterations take the form of single word substitutions (frequently in the other's hand), indications of changed paragraphing, and the occasional neat deletion of a line or phrase. Rarely, if ever, does the text invade the keenly observed one

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29 Barnard Papers ML. MSS 451/1. Typescripts exist for *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow, But Not For Love* and their radio play *Watch on the Headland*. Manuscripts also exist for some of their plays.
inch margin. While it is known that Barnard, for one, was not fond of revision and while it is possible therefore that the manuscript achieved its pristine character by default, the impression gained is not of a working manuscript at all, but probably of a final script recopied and prepared for the typist. This would account not only for the relatively 'clean' text but also for the unusual pattern of the handwriting. Ultimately, however, the manuscript raises more questions about the shifting nature of their collaborative process than it actually settles, the only certainty arising from its perusal being that Eldershaw for her part occasionally ran low on foolscap paper.

The manuscript of *Green Memory* is incomplete, lacking the final chapters of the novel. Again, the bound volume carries Barnard's note suggesting that "the handwriting is no indication to the composition of the various parts". This manuscript exhibits a less finished quality than the earlier one. Between the unlined foolscap sheets there are inserted leaves of quarto paper and scrap sheets of odd sizes and shapes. Corners and backs of sheets occasionally carry a scribbled line or note about the text and the manuscript as a whole reveals a much greater degree of correction, both self-correction and correction in the alternate hand. Several titles of chapters have been altered and lengthy interpolated passages, frequently in the other's hand, appear in a number of sections. Again the handwriting alternates and the balance is fairly even. There are instances in this manuscript, however, where the handwriting actually changes in mid-sentence and where a different hand supplies either the opening or closing sentence of a given paragraph. No distinct pattern of division between the two hands emerges and it appears that the division of labour was neither rigid nor mechanical. It is established that Barnard and Eldershaw used to pass
draft sections back and forth between themselves and that they would actually work together on a manuscript when circumstances permitted.  

But how is it possible to reconstruct from the 'evidence' on the page the precise conditions of composition? Could the random and often abrupt changes of handwriting, for example, be accounted for by a practice of dictation, one serving as an amanuensis when the other tired of the task? Did one perhaps finish a sentence while the other made a cup of tea? The hypothetical patterns of collaboration which could produce such a manuscript are legion and would necessarily include the possibility of individual or joint composition in the first instance, complicated by individual or joint participation in revision, rewriting, interpolation and deletion. In which circumstances then could an individual handwriting be claimed with any degree of certainty to represent individual authorial agency? And to these practical considerations must surely be added the possibility that a text produced through the very processes of both conscious and unconscious co-operation, from the merging of individual subjects, simply cannot be reduced satisfactorily to the mere sum of the separate individual contributions. One is reminded of Hélène Cixous' definition of écriture feminine where she speaks of "the ensemble of one and the other, not fixed in sequence of struggle and expulsion or some other form of death but infinitely dynamized by an incessant process of exchange from one subject to another".  

The collaborative enterprise emerges, then, as a kind of open-ended performance, the manuscript forming a ludic discourse. But here there is no revelation scene. This performative element is also entertained by Katharine Bradley, the

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30 Barnard comments, for example, that she had gone to PLC "for a week to be with Teenie during the last agonies of 'Plaque With Laurel'" [MB to Nettie Palmer 13/7/36 NLA MSS 1174/1/5029] and, as mentioned above, it was not uncommon for them to go away on holidays together to work on their writing.

"Michael" half of the now largely forgotten Victorian collaboration, "Michael Field". Bradley once wrote in a letter to Havelock Ellis that:

as to our work, let no man think he can put asunder what God has joined . . . the work is a perfect mosaic: we cross and interlace like a company of dancing flies, if one begins a character, his [sic] companion seizes and possesses it, if one conceives a scene or situation, the other corrects, completes or murderously cuts away.32

Bradley's evocative images of the marriage contract, possession and conception cast the collaborative text as a foundling of obscure origins or the offspring of some shady alliance in a revenge play. (Perhaps a second glance should be given to the nine months taken to produce *A House Is Built.*) The revenge here, however, is upon the critic, the one who would "put asunder" and whose task is itself, ironically, a "collaborative act of negative capability".33

Further empirically based speculation is constrained somewhat by the absence of other major Barnard Eldershaw manuscripts. Barnard and Eldershaw appear to have had no particular interest in retaining manuscripts once they were in possession of the typescript. An incomplete and fragmentary account of the business of collaboration emerges nonetheless through the correspondence of the period, in particular Barnard's letters to Nettie Palmer. These letters represent an interesting text in themselves, a text that is neither entirely public nor wholly private. For Barnard, who frequently commented in the early

32-Quoted in Mary Sturgeon, *Michael Field* (1922) (New York: Arno, 1975): 47. 'Michael Field' was the name used by Katharine Bradley ('Michael') and her niece Edith Cooper ('Henry'). Writing at the turn of the century, they produced together 27 verse plays and a number of collections of poetry. Sturgeon's is the most detailed account of their life and work but brief analyses of their collaboration can also be found in Wayne Koestenbaum, *Double Talk: The Erotics of Male Literary Collaboration* (New York: Routledge, 1989) and Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendships and Love Between Women From the Renaissance to the Present.* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1981). Of further interest is Christine White, "Poets and Lovers Evermore: Interpreting Female Love in the Poetry and Journals of Michael Field". *Textual Practice* 4:2 (1990): 197-212.

33Shapiro, 45.
years on her relative isolation from Sydney literary circles, this extended epistolary discourse provided a means of writing herself into public affairs, into the literary and cultural milieu of the "house of Palmer".34 While the letters are increasingly personal and familiar in tone, they frequently allow for virtuoso critical performances and staged debates on literary matters. They form, in essence, an "autobiography of the self with others".35 That the letters foreground Barnard's particular interest and involvement in the collaboration is inevitable, but it is also misleading. Eldershaw was, by all accounts, a much poorer correspondent and her remaining letters, both professional and personal, are marked by a brevity and directness that contrasts strongly with Barnard's generous and discursive style.36 The Palmer Papers which are so often used to reconstruct the literary culture of the interwar period, and which contain over two hundred letters from Barnard, reveal only a handful from Eldershaw. Barnard's letters describe, in particular, how the collaboration functioned in the course of their respective trips to Europe in 1933 and 1934, journeys which together represented an almost two year separation for the collaborators. During this period a lengthy and detailed correspondence took place between the two and manuscripts of critical articles and plays37 were exchanged by mail. When Eldershaw was on sabbatical leave, for example, Barnard writes to Nettie Palmer of her plans for retiring to her club for the weekend with a partly written playscript.

34M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 23 July 1934 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4475].
37Barnard and Eldershaw wrote a considerable number of playscripts in the mid-1930s (see the accompanying bibliography of their unpublished work) but only one, Watch on the Headland, was produced as a radio play and subsequently published.
saying "I must finish the first draft and post it to Teenie in England. There is only an act to revise and an act to write and all this is planned".\textsuperscript{38} In a letter written on her own trip the previous year, she first noted her dissatisfaction with a lecture she had drafted and then consoled herself with the knowledge that "Teenie will tune it up".\textsuperscript{39} More intriguing perhaps is Eldershaw's anecdotal account of the genesis of \textit{The Glasshouse}, their novel of a sea voyage. Barnard had returned from Europe on a small Norwegian ship, the 'Talleyrand', and proceeded to fill her letters for several months afterwards with projected shipboard idylls ("I've even had a wild fleeting idea that I could live by my pen if only I kept travelling on the sea"\textsuperscript{40}). Eldershaw, who subsequently took a similar ship to England, planned \textit{The Glasshouse} during that voyage and wrote to Barnard with her ideas, only to arrive in England to find a note from Barnard containing an almost identical plan, based no doubt on their earlier discussions.\textsuperscript{41} Expressing doubts about that novel once it had been completed, Barnard gives a further glimpse into their writing practice through her suggestion that the novel might have been more successful if they had "divided the work logically, one writing the stories, the other the main story — but it did not fall out like that".\textsuperscript{42} Throughout, the overwhelming impression is of a process which is multiple and discontinuous, of a product that is genuinely collective.

In most accounts of the collaboration, it is the final novel,

\textsuperscript{38}M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 25 March 1934 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4405]. 'Teenie' was Eldershaw's widely used family nickname. She was also known as 'Elodie' and 'Twinjie'.
\textsuperscript{39}M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 19 March 1933 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4218].
\textsuperscript{40}M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 10 September 1933 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4290].
\textsuperscript{41}Interview with Marjorie Swain, Sydney, 13 March 1989.
\textsuperscript{42}M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 26 February 1936 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4957].
Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow, which remains problematic. Confusion has generally arisen as a result of Barnard's later accounts of the production of the novel, accounts in which, as Jill Roe notes, "memory has played small but protective tricks".\(^{43}\) In these accounts, Barnard suggests that the novel was hers alone. It is this claim which forms the basis of her 1970 *Meanjin* article entitled "How Tomorrow and Tomorrow" Came to Be Written".\(^{44}\) The article was written in direct response to a request from the editor, Clem Cristesen, who wanted, ironically, "an account of how you and Flora came to write Tomorrow and Tomorrow, the problems you encountered, and so on".\(^{45}\) The issue has been further clouded by the tendency on the part of some critics to make overdetermined readings of the use of the first person singular pronoun in Barnard's correspondence, readings which fail to perceive that this singularity often achieves its identity as an extension of the collective. Significantly, these retrospective accounts of the production of the novel do not accord with contemporary documentation which reveals Barnard cheerfully encouraging Vance Palmer to add Eldershaw's signature to her own on his copy of the novel and Eldershaw referring to herself unapologetically as the novel's "(part) writer".\(^{46}\) The role played by Vera Murdoch in this latter day construction of Barnard as the 'true' force behind the collaboration, and Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow in particular, should not be


\(^{44}\) M. Barnard, "How Tomorrow and Tomorrow Came to be Written", *Meanjin*, 3 (1970): 328-30. Barnard repeats this thesis in her interview with Bruce Molloy where she responds to his question about the novel with "I wrote that alone" and the claim that Eldershaw "[n]ever felt anything much" about *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow*.

\(^{45}\) Clem Cristesen to M. Barnard, 14 August 1969 [Barnard Correspondence, Meanjin Archives, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne].

\(^{46}\) M. Barnard to Vance Palmer, 8 September 1947 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/7262] and F. Eldershaw to Nettie Palmer, 18 March 1948 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/7388]. As late as 1966 Barnard spoke of writing "five novels...in collaboration". [See Barnard interview (12/12/66) in the De Berg Tapes, National Library].
underestimated. Murdoch lived with Barnard for some forty years and
certainly, from the 1970s onward, interviews with Barnard inevitably
involved Murdoch as well, Murdoch increasingly answering questions in
Barnard's place. The interview with Candida Baker in *Yacker* is a very
good example of this.\(^\text{47}\) Murdoch frequently reports on and interprets
events at which she herself was not present, and this is certainly the case
with the writing of *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow*. Murdoch
offered fulsome accounts of its development despite the fact
that she and her mother only came to live with Barnard following the
death of Barnard's mother in 1947, thus preventing her from having
any first-hand knowledge of the writing of the novel. When
interviewed after Barnard's death, her responses revealed a significant
level of hostility toward Eldershaw whom she implied had benefitted
unduly from what she saw as Barnard's individual efforts.\(^\text{48}\) Her role as
gatekeeper and subsequently 'caretaker of the memory' might be likened
to that of John Middleton-Murray's in relation to Katherine Mansfield,
Olga Roncoroni and Henry Handel Richardson or perhaps even Eric
Dark in relation to Eleanor Dark.

Contemporary evidence suggests that Barnard and Eldershaw's
final novel was conceived and executed as a collaboration. As early as
1937, Barnard writes to Vance Palmer that

we feel the symptoms of a new novel coming on — something well in the
future, the death of civilisation after this when all things we piously hope for are
accomplished . . . This is in confidence for maybe nothing will come of it. It's
just an idea that seems to be taking root. . . In any case it will have to wait for a
time because Teenie is going away for the holidays & will have her hands full

\(^\text{48}\) Interview with Vera Murdoch, Point Clare, 26/11/89. When pressed Murdoch would suggest that
she had heard her accounts of the writing of *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* from Barnard's
mother.
of this & that, and I am really tempestuously busy all of a sudden.\footnote{M. Barnard to Vance Palmer, 12 December 1937 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5331].}

Little appears to have happened at this point and it is only in 1941 that continuous reports of progress on the work begin. Much is usually made of Barnard's comment to Nettie Palmer that, "I'm going to write a book — for the first time in my life, a book. And it's going to be called 'To-morrow and To-morrow and To-morrow'. Can you make anything of that?"\footnote{M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 22 April 1941 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5954].} Less frequently quoted or commented upon is her letter a fortnight later to Vance Palmer in which she discusses the impact of Eldershaw's imminent departure upon the progress of the new novel. Eldershaw was moving to Canberra where she had accepted a job in the Department of Labour and National Service:

\begin{quote}
We've taken the hideous plunge into the new novel and it is getting underway. I'm feeling as one does feel in these early morose stages of a novel...Teenie is being translated to Canberra, a job there with the Commonwealth Government, but it will be better for her to tell you about that. I think it is a Good Thing \[sic\] for her but makes the world look a bit hollow from this end. We're not going to let a little thing like distance interfere with collaboration. It's a pity the new book isn't further on.\footnote{M. Barnard to Vance Palmer, 8 May 1941 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5962].}\\
\end{quote}

Eldershaw's removal first to Canberra and then to Melbourne is usually taken to represent the collapse of their collaborative enterprise. Distance and separation had, however, been constant features of the relationship over the years and pressure of outside commitments could more accurately be cited as an impediment to the progress of this novel as both Barnard and Eldershaw were now involved to a greater or lesser extent in the war effort. Eldershaw's work in the Department of Labour and National Service and later in the Department of Reconstruction necessitated her working long hours and making frequent trips. She wrote to Frank Dalby Davison in 1941 that
I'll have a couple of days in Sydney & should very much like to see you if it can be arranged. I'm going down Tuesday night and on Thursday am going to Katoomba for a week for a Y.W.C.A. conference (!!) on reconstruction. Then I'll be back in Sydney the following Thursday until Saturday night. I'd suggest that later time as there'll be longer then, Friday night for dinner, or if you're engaged or too tired after the week's work, Saturday lunch or dinner, or anytime. 52

Later she would describe her job as "8.30 am to 10.30 pm or later six days a week, and perpetually behind schedule at that", noting also that "since Xmas, I've had 2 days in Brisbane, 3 in Perth, 2 in Adelaide, 1 in Hobart, 2 in Sydney". 53 Perhaps this is what Jean Devanny refers to when she cautions J. B. Miles over adverse Communist Party response to *Tomorrow and Tomorrow*, asking him to "keep in mind the rotten mistreatment Flora received at the time the book was being written. Just to think of that makes me mad". 54 This is also the period of Eldershaw's greatest involvement with the Advisory Board of the Commonwealth Literary Fund to which she had been appointed in 1939.

Writing of that work, Vance Palmer observed that

it was in those days I saw most of her...we were continually travelling together. What a companion she was — exuberant, gay, inexhaustible. There seemed no limits to her vitality. She could emerge from a dreary night's journey under war-conditions and take her place, fresh and expectant at the conference table, ready for a long day's discussion and decisions. Her powers of concentration were remarkable. How often have I seen her settle down in a 'plane, take a couple of manuscripts from her case and bury herself deep in them, shutting out all diversions. 55

By 1942 Barnard too was involved again in full-time work, this time with the CSIR where she was librarian-in-chief at the Radiophysics Division of their National Standards Laboratory in Sydney. It would appear that neither had much time then to devote to *Tomorrow and Tomorrow*, a fact which seems to have preyed upon

52E: Eldershaw to Frank Dalby Davison, 11 September 1941 [Davison Papers NLA MSS 1945/1/212].
53E: Eldershaw to H.M. Green, n.d. (c. early 1946) [H.M. Green Papers NLA MSS 3925, Box 1].
54J: Devanny to J.B. Miles, 21 March 1947 [JC JD/Corr (P)/229].
their minds. According to family and close friends, Eldershaw was "very worried at that time because she was so taken up with her work...that she did not have time to give to her writing".56 And Barnard too confessed that "Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow was written under pressure, often after midnight on days that had begun at 5am...and there were long pauses which did it no good".57

It remains difficult, nonetheless, to infer that their separation was absolute at any point. Rather than the collaboration having "[broken] down almost from the beginning",58 it would appear that they continued to work together on the novel despite the irregularities produced by the war years. Barnard's letters from the early Forties contain various references to trips made to Melbourne and to Eldershaw's fleeting visits to Sydney. In her letters to the Palmers, she exhibits a continued familiarity with details of Eldershaw's life and affairs. Eldershaw's brother, Pat, comments that while Flora "was more in Melbourne then...she was often down [in Sydney]"59. The most significant evidence to this effect emerges not from correspondence, however, but from the minutes of the Sydney branch of the Fellowship of Australian Writers. The minutes of 6 May 1941 carry the information that Eldershaw had resigned from office as she was taking up a position in Canberra. But subsequent minutes reveal that she was co-opted to the committee once more in May 1942 "on her return to Sydney".60 In the early months of 1943 she is listed as attending meetings and in March of that year she is elected President of the Sydney FAW for the second time. She

56 Interview with Marjorie Swain, Castle Hill, Sydney, 13 March 1989.
57 M. Barnard, "How 'Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow' Came to Be Written". 379.
58 M. Barnard, "How 'Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow' Came to Be Written". 379.
59 Interview with Pat Eldershaw, Roseville, 10 February 1989.
60 FAW Papers, Box K22117.
continues to chair their meetings throughout 1943 with only occasional absences being recorded and, according to the minutes, she remained in office until early 1944 after which time she presumably returned to Melbourne.

Further contemporary evidence also suggests the involvement not only of Barnard, but also of Eldershaw in the production of this novel. In a letter to Nettie Palmer written while she was working in Melbourne in 1942, Eldershaw relates how "Saturday and Sunday were nice & I got on with the novel". Later, Katharine Susannah Prichard in writing to Miles Franklin recalled Eldershaw's assertion that "she put everything she's got into it", and Aileen Palmer spoke of it as "the novel she valued most". While no manuscript of this text survives, there is a marked up typescript which again bears emendations in both hands, and Marjorie Swain who was responsible for part of its typing stresses this was also the case with the manuscript. All correspondence from their publishers Georgian House assumes that this work, like the earlier ones, was the result of a joint effort. Indeed, Edgar Harris phrased his initial fears over the novel's 'sensitive' subject matter thus:

Are you prepared to risk your reputation as front rank Australian creative writers for the sake of ideology? These matters could be so much more easily discussed by word of mouth, but let us first of all try to straighten the matter out by correspondence. Is there any likelihood of either yourself or Miss Eldershaw visiting Melbourne in the near future?

The draft of their reply to Harris' letter appears in Eldershaw's hand.

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61F. Eldershaw to Nettie Palmer n.d. [c. 1942] [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/6112].
63Unpublished obituary notice for Eldershaw by Aileen Palmer. Aileen Palmer Papers [NLA MS 6759, Series 3, Folder 24].
64Interview with Marjorie Swain, Castle Hill, Sydney, 6 November 1989.
65Edgar Harris to M. Barnard, 22 March 1944, [Barnard Papers ML MSS 451/5].
and is equally suggestive of Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow's collective nature. That draft begins:

As you surmise, we did write the last part with our eyes open to the risk that details of the immediate future would invalidate the sequence of events in the last part of the inner novel. It was a risk we had to take if we were to write the novel.66

When Harris returned the censored manuscript to Barnard a month later he wrote that he was doing so in order that she may "discuss the deletions with Miss Eldershaw" before going herself to Melbourne.67 It is Eldershaw too who later writes in a letter to Miles Franklin of the "awful effort of having to close up the gaps left by the censor and adapting the end - never successfully accomplished".68 Although Harris originally promised publication in late 1944, it was in fact late in 1947 before the novel appeared. It is worth noting perhaps that this delay does not accord with Barnard's subsequent statement that she "knew nothing of the censoring until the eve of publication [when] we were then faced with an alternative, to accept the book in its altered form or forego publication altogether".69 It should also be noted, moreover, that the contract for this novel, which was not signed until 1946, appears in both names, as do the subsequent royalty statements in which their usual 50-50 split applied.70 It was Eldershaw too who ultimately had the task of checking the final galley proofs for the novel.71 The continued delays in publication provoked mixed feelings from the two. Barnard commented at one point in a letter to Jean Devanny that

66Draft of letter to Edgar Harris, n.d. (c. March/April 1944) [Barnard Papers ML MSS 451/5].
67Edgar Harris to M. Barnard, 12 April 1944 [Barnard Papers ML MSS 451/5].
68F. Eldershaw to Miles Franklin, 22 February 1948 [Franklin Papers ML MSS 3659/1/CY 1262].
69Barnard, "How 'Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow' Came to be Written", 330. (Emphasis added).
70Both names appeared on the contract which was dated 25 February 1946. Royalties were to be divided evenly between the two authors and signatures of both were required should permission be sought to reprint extracts.
71See letter Edgar Harris to F. Eldershaw, 22 April 1946 [Barnard Papers ML MSS 451/5].
Teenie has some ideas for picking it to pieces & re-doing but I'm not enthusiastic, I think the changes will upset the balance of the book & dilute it. In any case she has not the time and no prospect of it, to do the work. I just can't...So To-morrow hangs like a carcass in a butcher's shop, dead meat & deteriorating.  

By 1947, however, Eldershaw herself was to claim that she felt "nothing but a sick distaste for 'Tomorrow' and wish we'd never written it". But the fact that both had been involved in the production of the novel rather than Barnard alone is registered almost symbolically in a notice of correction which appeared in *Australian Books* in February 1947. That notice read:

Correction:

In the January issue under the heading 'Items of Interest' it was reported that the book *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow*, soon to be published, was written by Marjorie Barnard. The Editorial Board wishes to make it known that the book is part of the collaboration, an M. Barnard Eldershaw book.

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72M. Barnard to Jean Devanny, 31 July 1945 [JD JC/CORR(P)/12].
73F. Eldershaw to Vance Palmer, n.d. (c1947) [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/7081].
CHAPTER THREE
One Which Is Not Anyone

"Are we one or are we separate?"
Virginia Woolf, The Years, p. 144

How was this collective gesture maintained? What shape did the relationship between the two take? Wayne Koestenbaum in his study of literary partnerships reads collaboration as representing the sublimation of erotic entanglements. "A writer turns to a partner", he argues, "not from practical assessment of advantages, but from a superstitious hope, a longing for replenishment and union that invites baroquely sexual interpretation".¹ Although no critics have actually pursued such speculations in print, prurient interest in the sexual behind the textual has certainly been a popular response to the Barnard-Eldershaw union. This is despite the fact that issues of sexual identity are by no means central to their writing or their politics. Barnard and Eldershaw both endorsed a social code that valued privacy and while this may in itself fuel speculation, it has meant in practice that actual references to the possibility of an erotic or sexual bond between the two are tantalisingly rare. Miles Franklin raises the issue once only to dismiss it in the same breath when she writes to her friend Mary Fullerton that these aspersions of frustration and lesbianism, against [Barnard and Eldershaw], I have always resented, and refuted, because I think them foul and unfounded, and tho MB in particular has been so virulent to me I still will not countenance such a depiction of a good friendship and smooth collaboration between these women.²

¹Koestenbaum, Double Talk: 4
²Miles Franklin to Mary Fullerton, 16 August 1944 [Miles Franklin Papers ML MSS 364/120]. Franklin was clearly still smarting from the perceived insult of Barnard's CLF lecture in which she chose to include the 'Brent' novels among Franklin's work, prompting Franklin to denounce her on the spot. (See Chapter 7) For an account of this episode, see Marjorie Barnard, Miles Franklin (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1967). For a fascinating discussion of Franklin's own relationship with Fullerton see Sylvia Martin, "Women's Secrets" - Miles Franklin in London: The Story of a Friendship", Meanjin 51:1 (1992):35-44.
Another teasing reference comes later in Beverley Farmer's *A Body of Water* where she recalls an incident from a friend’s visit to the then quite elderly Barnard:

> It was forty degrees on the first day T visited them. Marjorie was lying down, but got up to have tea and Christmas cake with the visitor. ("Marjorie likes the crusty, burnt bits.") She went back to bed while Vera entertained T. As T was leaving, Vera beckoned her into the bedroom: there was Marjorie lying naked, frail and white…
>
> *I thought she was asleep and made to leave but Vera propelled me forward and with a chuckle said, "Well, now you’ll be able to go home and tell your folks what a queer old woman she is", at which Marjorie piped up and said defiantly: "Why? We’re all GIRLS*. ³

But questions of 'were they or weren't they?' and 'did they or didn't they?' are perhaps misguided in that they not only suggest that lesbianism exists only as a sexual practice rather than as a culture, but they lock the critic into a peculiarly voyeuristic search for the kind of 'evidence' seldom required to 'prove' the assumed heterosexuality of other writers. As Catharine Stimpson warns, in "confusing attention and voyeurism, we [may] inadvertently extend the error that defines women either as chaste creatures incapable of sex, or as promiscuous creatures capable of nothing else".⁴ Regardless of motivations, such a search for 'proof' could never hope to recover what Virginia Woolf calls

> those unrecorded gestures, those unsaid and half-said words, which form themselves, no more palpably than the shadows of moths on the ceiling, when women are alone, unlit by the capricious and coloured light of the other sex.⁵

The search would also inevitably stumble onto the conflicting evidence of heterosexual liaisons. There are, for example, rumours that

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Eldershaw was involved with a man during her time in Melbourne, while Barnard's attachment to Frank Dalby Davison is well-known. Of her eight year affair with him she later wrote:

I was deeply in love with him — I think I still am, but it is all now so confused with pain that I know I don't want to see him again. We were lovers for eight years...I loved him from the first time I saw him...I kept a place for us at Kings Cross, we had every Monday evening together. I never asked for any more or tried to have any bigger part in his life. We never went anywhere together. I kept everything very still, not that I was ashamed but because I didn't want to put any sort of bond on him...Teenie knew, of course. No one else. I was very happy. Frank taught me a lot. I loved him with all my heart.6

And what of such ambiguous remarks as Eldershaw's to Nettie Palmer in 1953 that Barnard is "miserable altogether about her life. What she needs is a real companion - a husband no doubt for preference but not necessarily"7

Ultimately, however one cares to define the relationship between Barnard and Eldershaw, there is no denying that, while it lasted, it represented a primary bond of extraordinary intensity and one that testified to the importance and value of "a women's we-ness".8 In some respects, the relationship can be seen as very much the product of a period in which close, if not lifelong friendships between university-educated women provided an alternative to marriage and children, which were viewed as incompatible with professional careers like teaching and librarianship.9 The closeness of the bond between the two can be read in the terms of endearment used in the one surviving letter from Barnard to her "darling" Eldershaw, in Barnard's despairing confession when Eldershaw is sent to Canberra that she "want[s] Teenie

6M. Barnard to Jean Devanny, 1 January 1947 [JD JC/CORR(P)/15].
7F. Eldershaw to Nettie Palmer, 7 September 1953 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/8387].
8Stimpson: 135.
back terribly", and in the descriptions of their reactions to crisis points such as Barnard's hospitalisation:

Teenie flew from Melbourne next day — Saturday — and stayed till Wednesday, mostly with me. She was so calm, steady and gentle — tho' I heard later and circuitously that she became distraught with grief and fear as soon as she had left my room, because I looked so ill and changed.\(^\text{10}\)

Janice Raymond in her work on passionate friendships has termed this kind of involvement "gyn/affection", defining "affection" as "more than the personal movement of one woman toward another. Affection in this sense means the state of influencing, acting upon, moving and impressing".\(^\text{11}\) It is this enabling bond which appears to have created the conditions for one another's creativity. Despite Barnard's earlier published collection of children's stories, both it seems required the conditions of a collaborative arrangement in order to develop as writers. Each embodied for the other something approaching the 'ideal reader', a function that allowed them in turn to play a crucial role in making writers of one another. As Barnard rejoiced, "How magnificent to have a partner - to through [sic] the thing into her lap & say 'See if you can make something of it' and think of something else".\(^\text{12}\) Their relationship is represented as an interlocking dyadic arrangement in which they located the consent and encouragement fundamental to them as literary producers. They were co-creators and challengers who urged one another to take their work further, more seriously, than they might have dared individually, and who provided not only the conditions for work but the work on which each might build. In this respect, their relationship recalls the dynamic between H.D. and her

\(^{10}\) Letter from M. Barnard to F. Eldershaw, 13 March 1956 [Eldershaw Papers ML MSS 5601]; M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 23 April [1942] [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/6106]; M. Barnard to Jean Devanny, 1 January 1947 [JD JC/CORR (P)/15].


\(^{12}\) M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 17 April 1934 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4411].
friend Bryher, as H.D. described it in her book, *Tribute to Freud*:

And there I sat and there is my friend Bryher who has brought me to Greece. I can turn now to her, though I do not budge an inch or break the sustained crystal-gazing at the wall before me. I say to Bryher, "There have been pictures here — I thought they were shadows at first, but they are light, not shadow. They are quite simple objects — but of course it's very strange. I can break away from them now, if I want — it's just a matter of concentrating — what do you think? Shall I stop? Shall I go on? Bryher says without hesitation, "Go on."

...I knew this experience, this writing-on-the-wall before me could not be shared with anyone except the girl who stood so bravely there beside me. This girl had said without hesitation, "Go on". It was she who really had the detachment and integrity of the Pythonesse of Delphi. But it was I, battered and dissociated...who was seeing the pictures, and who was reading the writing or granted the inner vision. Or perhaps, in some sense, we were 'seeing' it together, for without her, admittedly, I could not have gone on.¹³

In retrospect, the writing relationship between Barnard and Eldershaw bespeaks a kind of "clandestine felicity",¹⁴ a relationship running counter to the conventional fixed, divided and necessarily hierarchical arrangement of a simple binary. It is characterised by a certain shiftingness or mobility (literally as well as figuratively), by a see-saw-like unselfing. These qualities of motion and exchange suggest, as David Shapiro argues, that "part of the darker task of any aesthetic of collaboration is to underline modes in which the collective derives none of its power from the individual but tends toward the dessication of the individual".¹⁵ That each possessed particular strengths and abilities is apparent, but that their roles can be successfully separated along such lines is rather more problematic as the self here is clearly defined in relationship.

The pressure to separate or to divide, to explicate the potentially

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inexplicable, is keenly registered, however, in much of Barnard's correspondence. Frequently her responses on this issue take the form of a defense or an apologia, as in one of her earliest letters to Nettie Palmer. She writes that the lecture Nettie requests

is our joint work though in the circumstances I do not claim my share. Flora speaks very well — brilliantly — and I very badly, so I have given up the practice entirely and if anyone wants to hear our views refer them to her. The least I can do in return for getting out of all the bother is to help anonymously with the speeches, isn't it? This, of course, is confidential.16

In public discourse, Barnard constantly reproduces this simple division, the most striking instance being her labelling of Eldershaw as "our shop window".17 Such characterisations accord with Eldershaw's rise in literary circles, a rise that is marked in the first instance by her 1935 presidency of the Sydney branch of the Fellowship of Australian Writers and later by her participation on the Advisory Board of the Commonwealth Literary Fund. In contrast, Barnard happily constructs herself as a substantial private force behind the scenes, the self-effacing labourer whose vanity "may it not be to put away vanity".18 In the 1930s, Eldershaw presides over meetings of the FAW and holds office in the People's Council for Culture, participates in committees of inquiry into book tariffs and subsidies for writers, edits The Australian Writers' Annual and The Peaceful Army. Barnard, meanwhile, consistently remarks in letters that she does not move in literary circles and claims in relation to the FAW that "somehow I never feel more a stranger than there, always Teenie's guest. She protects me from the wolves...".19 Eldershaw rapidly comes to represent the public face of M. Barnard Eldershaw, while Barnard appropriates the role of private

16M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 25 September 1931 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/3816].
17M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 4 April 1933 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4231].
18M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 16 September 1932 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4074].
19M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 10 November 1935 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4822].
voice until she herself begins to resemble "the scarcely distinguishable but unmistakable form of a woman whose face was in shadow".  

Significantly, the publicity photos of Barnard and Eldershaw circulated from 1928 and through the 1930s reinforce just this paradigm of collaboration. Eldershaw's portrait which usually appeared on the left is a well-lit three-quarter profile against a light background. In contrast, Barnard's picture is a shadowy full-face portrait against a gloomy background, in which her face and throat alone are lit above what appears to be a dark fur collar.

This persuasive construction of their respective roles appears to have met with general acceptance for as Nettie Palmer records in her journal:

> until I met [Flora Eldershaw], I'd thought of Marjorie Barnard as the directive part of that composite...chiefly, I suppose, because I'd come into contact with Marjorie first and found she had so definite a personality, in letters and then in talk...Flora Eldershaw was a vaguer figure in my mind. Yet as soon as she got down from the bus yesterday it was plain that she could not be dismissed as a part of a composite.

While Palmer goes on to surmise that "it isn't easy for an outsider to understand how a literary partnership is carried on", she seems in fact in her correspondence to have embraced just this role of the questioning outsider who attempts to divine and to divide. That her letters to Barnard on this subject have not survived creates a curiously one-sided performance out of Barnard's replies. They are letters which frame explanations to a disembodied voice, the present/absent materfamilias.

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21See, for example, Australian Woman's Mirror, 4 September 1928, p.12 [Illustration].
23Palmer, "Fourteen Years": 128.
HE BULLETIN Prize Novel Competition has introduced two entirely new stars in Australian literature. *A House Is Built*, the story placed first by the judges, was written by Marjorie Barnard and Flora Eldershaw, of Sydney—and neither had ever tried to have as much as a paragraph published before.

These happy collaborators are an inspiring illustration of a perfect friendship. Each would talk warmly and eloquently of her friend when I tried to make her talk about herself. Their satisfying alliance began at the Sydney University; they graduated together and have done most things together since. Marjorie Barnard told me that in one year her friend scored 100 per cent. for Latin—a feat unprecedented.” She said with warm emphasis. “She was wonderful at history, too, and would have graduated with honors in that also, but she ‘did’ it for only two years. She is a first-class teacher and good at most sports. I’d scarce if I had to teach, because I couldn’t, and I don’t go in for any sport. These are about the only two things in which we do not harmonise. She has special gifts for organising, and for the girls of her school last year she wrote and produced *A Pageant of the World*. It is an historical presentation and splendid enough to grace any stage. It really should have had a much wider audience.”

Miss Barnard has dark-brown hair, amber-brown eyes and a warm color in slightly-tanned skin—on appearances one would really take her for the sporting partner. Miss Eldershaw has very dark-brown wavy hair, pale, creamy skin and dark hazel-brown eyes. She is very vivacious, and her eyes fairly danced when she told me what a delightful surprise it was to win the first prize and how excited she still was; whereas her friend smiled quietly and said, “We never dreamed of getting it, so we were naturally very pleasantly surprised.”

Miss Eldershaw is a teacher at the Presbyterian Ladies’ College, Croydon. “I love teaching and I love the girls,” she told me—quite unnecessarily, because such great content in one’s work could produce such a happy comeliness and such warm enthusiasm. She is a country-born girl; her people live in the Riverina. Eldershaw, the well-known water-color artist, is a cousin. Miss Barnard is an Australian of the second generation and was born at Ashfield. She is librarian at the Sydney Technical College, but though she adores books she does not delve into the scientific and technical volumes under her care.

The collaborators are avid readers of fiction and also of poetry. They both love the same authors, and neither will pick out a special favorite, although their conversation discloses a specially warm corner in their regard for Galsworthy. Thornton Wilder, a comparatively new writer, is much approved of, and Scandinavian authors, particularly Bojer and Hamsun, are favorites. Miss Barnard found the two books of Aloysius Horn fascinating. After discovering what warm friends with such common bonds these two are it was not difficult to imagine how they collaborated in writing the book. “Since our undergraduate days,” Miss Barnard said, “we have written together—one would write something and give it to the other for suggestion and discussion. Since graduation we have followed the same plan, the idea developing that we might one day write a book together. I have always regarded the novel as a work of art, and every book I read I study its structure and in following the development of the story always endeavor to reason out why the author created this and that. The announcement of the BULLETIN Prize gave Miss Eldershaw and myself the incentive we needed to write the book we had so often discussed. That, set out to plan it. It was found it entailed a great deal of research work, but the Mitchel Library was an indispensable mine.”

We spent all our Saturday mornings there during the first few months. After this research was over we wrote together at week-ends and during all our holidays. I was a great pleasure at times when we had our bad moments when we could do nothing. The strange part of it is our book is merely what was originally intended to be a prologue! But we became so fascinated with our research that the book developed along quite different lines—and it is just as well there was a time limit; we would have been at it still.”

Miss Eldershaw added a little more about the writing: “We just sat down and wrote a chapter each. We only planned the plot very generally. We worked on the book during holidays and at Miss Barnard’s. Each wrote a portion decided upon before hand, then we exchanged, crossed out altered and saw that the sections fitted properly—or course, every situation was planned beforehand. We always had to perfectly unanimous that everything was easily and smoothly it was all worth while, even had we got nothing but a great thrill of winning!”

"It really is funny," she said, "but the book is not at all what we set up to do. We talked it over and decided to take a certain type of woman and write about her. After we'd planned out we decided she must have an ancestry, so we started out to give her one in a chapter. That chapter grew and grew and so did Sydney in forty seven years, and the original character of our book wasn’t even born then!"

"We mostly wrote at my country home during holidays and at Miss Barnard’s. Each wrote a portion decided upon beforehand, then we exchanged, crossed out altered and saw that the sections fitted properly—or course, every situation was planned beforehand. We always had to perfectly unanimous that everything was easily and smoothly it was all worth while, even had we got nothing but a great thrill of winning!"
In response, for example, to Nettie's account of that first meeting with Eldershaw, Barnard is prompted to offer an alternative reading of their writing relationship:

You ask me if I am going to be "powerful enough" to keep up with her when she returns. I stared sombrely at that question for a long time. There must always be something like that to fear. There has always been disparity, perhaps a little more won't matter. The natural end of our collaboration (nothing external will ever destroy it, I think) will be bitter enough for me. It comforts me to empty my little vial into her fountain and see it lifted. I don't know why I should need comfort but I do.24

Barnard's metaphor of fluidity conveys a sense of the inseparable or indivisible, the sense of something that dilutes or mixes to such a degree that the distinction between the one and the other becomes problematical: voices that overflow the individual subject.25 Perhaps this is the "shapeless shapeliness" that Dorothy Richardson calls the "the unique gift of the feminine psyche".26 That their respective roles should blur into indistinction, their voices blend in chorus is highlighted by the difficulties and doubts revealed in Barnard's decision to resign from her position as a librarian in order to write full-time. In a profoundly equivocal confession of her intentions, she writes:

I think I believe that I am a writer — not just an educated woman who wields an occasional pen — but I don't know what my staying powers are, how deep it goes...In other words I don't know if I'm worth (literally speaking) this upheaval, even whether I can stand finding out definitely that I'm not...I know you have a certain faith in my literary ability — but it's faith not knowledge isn't it? For after all you've seen nothing that I've written alone and there's no particular reason to think that any of the virtues of our joint work are my contribution. (People have not scrupled to suggest on public platforms that I was being carried by my brilliant collaborator or to ask her privately why she did it.) It has been honest however. The partnership will continue.27

It is as if Barnard and Eldershaw are figures whose outlines begin to blur when viewed closely or when stared at for any length of time. And

24M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 25 March 1934 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4405].
26Dorothy Richardson, "Leadership in Marriage", New Adelphi 2 (June-August 1929): 347.
27M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 13 February 1935 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4589].
Barnard's questions clearly raise the dyadic issues of envelopment and separation. Within the context of the collaboration, they cannot separate themselves into discrete creative subjects, into "vial" and "fountain", "fountain" and "vial". The fluid and reactive ties which bind them obliterate the distinction between the two, resulting in a sense of "perpetual betweenness". In the words of Hélène Cixous, each is "not a woman. She is plural. Like all living beings who are sometimes invaded, sometimes populated, incarnated by others, drawing life from others, giving life. Do not know themselves". However, as Barnard's doubts testify, in such a process of un-selfing, one can momentarily disappear into the flow of things, discovering an unsettling sense of self-less-ness.

Once Barnard resigns from her job, this crisis of authorial integrity quickly subsides into the flow of their collaborative discourse. Her letters from time to time reveal a rare period of comparative leisure within the collaboration. The shifting and balancing of energies engendered by this alteration of circumstances is registered in the account of the progress of their third novel, The Glasshouse:

Teenie is being very noble about this book. You can imagine how easily she might envy me my greater leisure to wrestle with it or be jealous of the time spent alone with our common property. But she isn't. The atmosphere between us is so clear that any speck would show up monstrously. I think collaboration (in creative work) is impossible, but now and then it happens. And an entirely satisfactory friendship that neither trails off at the edges into boredom nor gets clogged with emotion is another good save in this rather dark world. I've a lot to be thankful for and - strangely enough - I am thankful.

Rather than the either/or economy of a fixed and hierarchical

30M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 9 April 1935 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4642].

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opposition, here meaning or value is plural: Barnard constructs a collective identity based upon the "exchange that multiplies".\textsuperscript{31} This exchange issues into relative complacency in matters of authority. Neither Barnard nor Eldershaw seems to have been particularly concerned at this time with proprietal claims in relation to authorship. It is as though they sensed that within a collaboration, the whole issue of 'who did what' was displaced, the work produced being the result of neither one nor the other, but of some third entity "which is like a field of energy or a field of transaction".\textsuperscript{32} In relation, for example, to their collection of critical essays on Australian literature, Barnard records that

there will also be the difficulty of authorship. If Teenie gives most of the essays as speeches I can hardly add my name on the title page — & she is disinclined to take the whole responsibility, credit or whatever it is. Still that's a long way off — & an unimportant point which we can settle between us if necessary by tossing a half penny.\textsuperscript{33}

The halfpenny when tossed must have come to rest on its edge because \textit{Essays in Australian Fiction} appeared in 1938 under the name of M. Barnard Eldershaw.

That authorship or "ownership" remained something of an irrelevant detail is further revealed in professional correspondence concerning the collaboration. Drafts of letters to their agent or publisher often exhibit the same shifting pattern of handwriting found in the manuscripts of their early novels. Judging from the replies to them, however, these letters frequently went out under one name only. There are others where the draft appears in Eldershaw's hand, while the reply

\textsuperscript{33}M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 6 August 1935 [Palmer Papers NL A MSS 1174/1/4745].
is addressed to "Dear Miss Barnard" who presumably typed and signed the original letter. The most revealing instance of this practice occurs in the well-known defence to their publisher of the prophetic nature of *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow*. The original letter from Edgar Harris of Georgian House publishers in which he questions the wisdom of their "speculations" is addressed to Barnard. The Barnard Papers contain a very rough and incomplete draft of their subsequent defence of the novel. This appears in Eldershaw's hand on her characteristic blue personal notepaper. The defence is couched almost exclusively in the first person plural and describes their collective intention in so dealing with contemporary events. The reply to the letter arising from this draft is again addressed to "Miss Barnard".

This process of handling such matters, the co-respondence within the correspondence, reads as a further indication of the effacing of the individual authorial subject within the collaboration. There is a sense in which Barnard is not simply Barnard nor Eldershaw simply Eldershaw, but that either is enfranchised at given moments or in particular contexts to speak for both. Conversely, however, M. Barnard Eldershaw is never just Barnard or just Eldershaw. Within the dyadic structure of the collaboration they are not the opposites of the dichotomous A versus not-A formulation but closer to a continuous A plus B form. This enigmatic structure is suggested by Gertrude Stein in her essay "A Kind of Women" where she writes:

It has been a nice thing to know two who are being living and certainly not any one is not certain that in a way each of them is one being one who is not anyone is completely remembering and certainly in any other way there are two of them. Certainly there is one of them. Certainly there is one of them.

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34 Edgar Harris to M. Barnard, 22 March 1944 [Barnard Papers ML MSS 451/5].
36 Gertrude Stein, "A Kind of Women". In *Two and Other Early Portraits (1908-12)*. (New Haven: Yale
The syntactic and semantic dismantling here of the borders between individual subjectivities provides a curious templating of the collaborative dynamic: the parataxic economy of borrowing and blending, blending and blurring. Here "two always-others" traverse the boundaries of discrete subjectivity to found a non-individuated collective subject. "'We' the composed of many things" writes Woolf. This is also the liminal subject whose constant shifting does not resolve into any fixed state but instead "dissolves alternative, polarized, either/or possibilities into infinite potentiality". Is this what is signalled in the biographical statements which the fortuitous arrangement of Barnard's correspondence makes the first item offered to the reader: statements which record on identical sheets of cream woven paper Barnard's and Eldershaw's initial attempts to compile their own, and ultimately each other's biographical notes? Is this what "Beedee" discovers in their first public interview when she records that "each would talk warmly and eloquently of her friend when I tried to make her tell me of herself"? Again there is that quality of selflessness, the fluid ego boundaries of the pre-oedipal bond which make a non/sense of authorial propriety. It is as though the collaborative author

has constituted herself necessarily as that "person" capable losing part of herself without losing her integrity. But secretly, silently, deep down inside, she grows and multiplies...if there is a "propriety of woman", it is paradoxically her capacity to depropriate unselfishly, body without end, without appendage, without principal "parts"...
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CHAPTER FOUR
The Intellectual Woman

"The public and the private worlds are inseparably connected; the tyrannies and servilities of the one are the tyrannies and servilities of the other".
Virginia Woolf, Three Guineas (1938)

"...I do feel that most authors completely destroy their chances of sales once they allow themselves to be seen or heard in public".
Letter from George Ferguson to Miles Franklin, 6 April 1949

How does a woman become a "man of letters", or more simply, what shape or model for a literary career was offered to Marjorie Barnard and Flora Eldershaw? Interesting as such speculations may be, they are inevitably complicated by the fact that the concept of an "Australian Author" in the interwar period was by no means a fixed and fully-constituted category, an "available speaking position from which to intervene in the cultural economy".¹ The task of the writer in Australia in the inter-war period could be said to have been one of constructing a role for themselves, effectively reinventing themselves in terms of a national cultural imperative. That women represented a significant section of the writing community is fairly widely acknowledged. Indeed, the concentration of successful women writers could be said to have been one of the major distinguishing features of the then Australian literary landscape. Articles appeared on "The Feminine Monopoly of Literary Prizes",² while Marjorie Barnard wrote to Nettie Palmer of George Mackaness' efforts to "inveigle [them]

¹George Ferguson to Miles Franklin, 6 April 1949. [Angus and Robertson Papers ML. MSS 3269/35/241].
³Doris Hayball, "The Feminine Monopoly of Literary Prizes”. The Australian Highway 10 August 1931: 162-64.
into joining his 'Fellowship of Australian Writers'. In addition to representing a significant section of the small reviewing community and holding offices on the executives of the major literary societies, women writers also acted as judges of major literary competitions and editors of anthologies of Australian writing. When plans were first rumoured of a Chair of Australian Literature, Nettie Palmer and Flora Eldershaw were suggested ahead of Walter Murdoch, H.M. Green, and George Mackaness as eligible candidates. As Geoffrey Serle asserts, somewhat grudgingly, "however unconventional one's taste or ranking, it would be impossible to deny that most of the best novelists [of the period] were women."

In order to begin to understand how Barnard and Eldershaw positioned themselves in, and were positioned by, this literary culture, it is necessary to consider their positions as middle-class women intellectuals. Gillian Whitlock and Chilla Bulbeck have argued that "until quite recently, women have lacked access to the public role and institutional framework that would include them in the conventional definition of intellectuals". The careers of both Barnard and Eldershaw would appear to contradict such an assertion, particularly given the prominent or public nature of their wider literary activities and also the largely non-institutionalised status of Australian literature at this time.

4Marjorie Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 9 October 1933. [Palmer Papers NL MSS 1174/1/4304].
5Miles Franklin to Nettie Palmer, 16 May [1938]: "We - the FAW - are trying to get a scheme for subsidising the writing of worthwhile books, and tagged on to it is a demand for a professorship of Australian literature...In talking privately with a member of the sub-committee afterwards he said there was really no man fit for the post from our point of view. I said I had two women. The idea of a woman was revolutionary I could see - Australia is positively troglodyte on the woman question - I said Flora Eldershaw and Nettie Palmer: and he said Flora Eldershaw was a fine woman but that he did not know you. I said they were both fine and had academic qualifications. So now I want one of you with wan lepp [sic] to land on that chair if ever it is hatched". [Palmer Papers NL MSS 1174/1/3855].
7Whitlock and Bulbeck (1988): 147.
(It is, after all, only in the 1950s and 1960s that Australian literature is incorporated into the academy and given the status of a discipline.) Both Barnard and Eldershaw had access to higher education and the opportunity of acquiring the equivalent intellectual capital to that of their male contemporaries. Their respective academic records indicate the level of success each experienced: Barnard topped her year throughout her course and was awarded the University Medal in History and a place at Oxford, while Eldershaw is reputed to have achieved the highest mark ever given in a Latin exam and would also have been awarded first class honours in History had she not been disqualified under the existing regulations. Interestingly, in the years in which they both attended the University of Sydney (1915-20), it was for the most part a "women's university", owing to the impact of the First World War upon the student population. This is not to suggest that the institution was any less the inevitable progenitor, through its association with figures such as Christopher Brennan and John le Gay Brereton, of an assuredly masculine tradition of authorship and pedagogy, or that these women students were accorded a status equal to that of their absent counterparts. However, as Eldershaw later claimed, the war represented a time when "opportunities opened for women" and "conventional women of ability got for the first time full scope for their liberty and were able to make use of it". And for women of that

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9 Eldershaw's brother recalled her being the first person ever to achieve 100% in Latin paper. [Interview with Pat Eldershaw, Sydney, 10 Feb 1989]. This is also mentioned in "The Happy Collaborators" by 'Beede', The Australian Woman's Mirror, 4 September 1928: 12. G.A. Woods in a reference written for Eldershaw in 1927 asserted "by the rules of her time she was debarred from taking honours at Graduation by the fact that she had not done Distinction work in the First Year. This rule has since been changed, and under the present rules she wd have been awarded First Class Honours...Miss Eldershaw is thoroughly well qualified to teach Modern History, whether at School or at University." [Eldershaw Papers ML MSS 5601].
BOARD OF DIRECTORS. 1917.

Back row (reading from left to right): B. Coombes, M. Johnston, E. Hamilton, A. Craig, O. Purnell.

Front row: M. C. Collison (Hon. Sec.), Dr. C. D'Arcy (Vice-president, Senate representative), Miss I. M. Fidler (President), Mrs. H. E. Barff (Senate representative), F. Eldershaw (Hon. Treasurer).

Absent: Dr. Mona Ross, M. Bromley.
generation, a university degree represented the ticket to an independent life, and signified their status as both colleagues and competitors with similarly qualified men.

While access to hegemonic intellectual positions might conventionally be viewed as crucial to the formation of cultural authority, it was in some respects less fundamental to the authority exercised by Barnard and Eldershaw. Their university education arguably provided them with basic critical skills, and Barnard certainly considered one of the virtues of an academic training to be the ability to write in a fluent and informed manner or, as she cynically put it, the "ability to run any amount of smooth and acceptable stuff out of stock".11 They generally separated the "academic" from the "intellectual", using the former term almost exclusively in a pejorative sense. Barnard, for example, defined "brilliant academic careers", including her own, as little more than "the evidence of an outsize ability for display", suggesting that the tendency to "shine to order in set subjects bespeaks a certain glibness & virtuosity and means that one's interest is in oneself & one's achievement rather than in the subject of study".12 But then neither Barnard nor Eldershaw accepted that the authority of the university-trained critic over specifically Australian literary matters was self-evident. Instead, they constructed their own authority in terms of their position as authors, rather than in terms of any formal qualifications they may each have possessed. Indeed, the non-institutionalised nature of the field of Australian literature at the time meant that sanction for critical endeavour was granted not by the academy, but by the marketplace, where their status as writers

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11 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 27 Sept 1934. [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4497].
12 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 11 Feb 1956. [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4933].
functioned as the single most appropriate qualification for the position of critic or literary intellectual. In this context, it is the role of author rather than of graduate which is synonymous with the ability and the right to speak with authority on matters of literary or cultural consequence. Accordingly, Barnard and Eldershaw's first critical articles appear in *The Sydney Morning Herald* under the name "M. Barnard Eldershaw" shortly after the serialisation in the *The Bulletin* of their prize-winning novel *A House is Built*.13 When later called upon to justify the choice of a writer to lecture on contemporary fiction, they summed up their reasons as follows:

I am a novelist. Set a thief as the proverb goes. And whether I'm a good or a bad novelist I have had practical experience of the art and come before you not only as a critic - there is no scale for measuring critics, we are only critics because we say we are - but as a journeyman. If experience teaches, which of course is open to argument [sic], I should have some understanding.14

That their authority was conceived as separate from that bestowed by the academy is further illustrated by Barnard's response to adverse criticism of an article of theirs published in *The Sydney Mail*. She wrote to Nettie Palmer that "I'm sorry we have raised the bristles on academic backs. By the way who has the right to literary criticism if not those who practice the art itself?"15 It is this particular notion of literary authority which is often responsible for the ire provoked by self-appointed or self-authorised critics operating within the field. In the aftermath of the 1935 Authors' Week, Barnard expressed her frustration with Denzil Batchelor, Sydney's official radio reviewer of current Australian literature, characterising him as "a young Oxford

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13These articles were "The Period Novel", 23 and 30 November 1929 and "The Genetic Novel", 21 and 28 December 1929. *A House is Built* was serialised in *The Bulletin* in an abridged form as *The Quartermaster* beginning on 22 May 1929.

14[M. Barnard Eldershaw], "The Writer and Society: Vance Palmer and Frank Dalby Davison", CLF lecture delivered by Flora Eldershaw, University of Sydney, c.1944. [Eldershaw Papers ML MSS S601]. It is likely that this lecture was a version of one delivered by Barnard as a CLF lecture at the University of Tasmania in 1941.

15M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 23 December 1934. [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4543].
graduate (facilly [sic] and fashionably facetious) who gaily admits that he knows nothing, historically, of Australian letters and who has not to my certain knowledge read any of the Australian Literature Society Medallists". They tended to associate the academy with conservatism, philistinism, and ignorance of matters Australian, an opinion frequently borne out by experience. Dr Wallace, the vice-chancellor of Sydney University, whom Barnard and Tom Inglis Moore approached in 1938 on the subject of founding a chair in Australian Literature, was discovered to possess "a sort of professorial impression that there wasn't any". Indeed, Barnard's description of their interview suggests that passages in Plaque With Laurel such as Professor Standish's speech could be read, not as satire, but as documentary realism. That the issue at stake was explicitly one of authority is exemplified in Barnard's attack upon Walter Murdoch's announced intention to edit an anthology of Australian short stories. Responding to Frank Dalby Davison's lead in an article on the Red Page of the Bulletin, Barnard wrote to Nettie Palmer:

I believe Professor Murdoch has been asked to compile a book of Australian short stories. The indications are that he won't get away with it. Why does he pose as an authority on Australian literature when he does not read it? That is irresponsibility verging on dishonesty.

Murdoch didn't get away with it: he was forced in the face of adverse publicity over his lack of suitable credentials to appoint Henrietta Drake Brockman as a co-editor, a gesture which was subsequently read as a cynical attempt to use one writer to placate others. Further, holding

10M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 10 November 1935. [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4822. At this time, Batchelor also had a regular column in Woman magazine where he wrote on such subjects as "Women Who Have Resisted ME [sic]!" and "The Most Important Subject in the World to Woman - Man".
17M. Barnard to Vance Palmer, 20 October 1938. [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5451].
18M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer n.d. c. May 1938 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5391] Davison refused to have anything to do with the anthology and withheld permission to publish any of his work, counselling others including Vance Palmer to do likewise.
down full-time jobs and writing in whatever limited time remained, Barnard and Eldershaw were envious of the opportunities and leisure they saw the academy providing. H.M. Green was considered by Barnard "very fortunate to have a nice plump sinecure with a sabbatical year thrown in".\textsuperscript{19} However, given women's then limited access to positions within the male preserve of the academy, it could be seen as a distinct advantage to Barnard and Eldershaw that their field of interest or expertise was, like themselves, largely excluded from that domain. Indeed, Green himself when discussing possible Commonwealth Literary Fund lecturers in a letter to Vance Palmer in 1943 described the University of Sydney as "not strong on women lecturers...definitely anti-feminist, I should say".\textsuperscript{20} The "amateur" or non-professional status granted the field of Australian literature arguably limited competition for its colonisation which may in turn have allowed women to establish themselves in the practice of it without significant opposition. As Barnard herself noted, no one bothered to contest women's presence in areas where "neither money nor power accrued".\textsuperscript{21}

Their detachment from the academy and opposition to its perceived philistinism did not mean, however, that they were attracted to any notion of themselves as representing, or belonging to, what passed for the local literary bohemia. Barnard, in particular, possessed a certain romantic affiliation with aspects of the bohemian lifestyle and expressed envious delight at the Palmers' Green Island idyll and the Davison's caravan tour, in the belief that "the mind should be driven out into the wilderness every now and then".\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{19}M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 10 September 1933 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4290].
\textsuperscript{20}H.M. Green to Vance Palmer, 20 May 1943 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/6350].
\textsuperscript{21}M. Barnard, "Women's Books", \textit{Australian Women's Digest}, August 1944:4.
\textsuperscript{22}M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 15 March 1934 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4405].
from England in 1933, she wrote longingly 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.23

In practice, however, they treated with a certain amusement and cynicism that area of literary life which had traditionally constructed women as muses, models and mistresses. With regard to a new publishing venture involving Norman Lindsay, Barnard remarked:

I read something, at the time of Norman Lindsay's return from America, about a new publishing venture in which he proposed to interest himself, but didn't take it very seriously - got a vague impression that it would be a no-admission-except-in-the-nude affair.24

The issue here is not simply one of being denied, by virtue of their sex, equal intellectual and professional standing in such circles.25 Nor is it one of petty bourgeois morality: Eldershaw, in fact, strongly supported Lindsay's Saturdee and Redheap against accusations of their being "preoccup[ied] with crude sex".26 It is more likely that the bohemian enterprise, in its studied decadence, exclusivity, and celebration of art for art's sake, failed to offer the possibility of actively engaging as practitioners and critics with a wider cultural enterprise. The rejection of, and withdrawal from, the cultural establishment implicit in bohemianism is antithetical to their expressed desire to promote the local literary product and force recognition of it from the prevailing cultural establishment. While they exhibited a good-humoured tolerance and liking for writers such as Peter Hopegood and Dulcie

23M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 10 September 1933 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4290].
24M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 16 September 1932 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4074].
26H.M. Green to Nettie Palmer, 11 December 1936 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5179].
Deamer, they did not identify with their particular aims and ambitions. Even the "salon" which Barnard and Eldershaw conducted in the late Thirties in various flats around Kings Cross, the erstwhile centre of Sydney's literary bohemia, represented an effort to foster a socially responsible art rather than insobriety.\(^{27}\) It functioned as a site for the circulation of ideas and opinions, for a wider act of literary collaboration in a context where "culture...signified community".\(^{28}\) Needless to say, they were somewhat amused when Xavier Herbert announced on his first visit to the group that "the women could get together and talk", while he and Davison took themselves to the other end of the room and got on with the serious conversation. As Barnard subsequently remarked, "he little knew".\(^{29}\) Their guests at the Wednesday evening gatherings included at various times Frank Dalby Davison, Xavier and Sadie Herbert, Leslie and Coralie Rees, Tom Inglis Moore, Guy Moore, Louis Esson, Frank Wilmot, Miles Franklin, Vance Palmer, I.K. Sampson, Kylie Tennant and Lewis Rodd. The object of these informal gatherings was conversation, though interestingly, in Barnard's letters, the phrase "there is talk" usually signalled the potential for lively or disruptive activity. Indeed, conversation or "gossip" performs a significant function in an area that is non-institutionalised and whose criticism exists largely as a "discourse among educated laymen [sic]",\(^{30}\) for it represents both an intimate or private exchange and the site of a new public culture. Discussion on

\(^{27}\)Commentators have suggested that this salon took place exclusively at the Orwell Street flat the two rented in 1936. They rented that particular flat only briefly and subsequently held their Wednesday evening gatherings in other flats around that area, usually ones in which Eldershaw was living. Later they were apparently held in a flat rented by Frank Dalby Davison at 59 Macleay Street, Potts Point. This same building later housed the Clune Gallery and, later still, became the Yellow House.


\(^{29}\)M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 6 November 1938 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS1174/1/5457].

\(^{30}\)Peter Uwe Hohendahl, The Institution of Criticism (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982): 52.
these occasions apparently ranged from the literary and cultural, to the social and the political, fostering a sense of community and shared intellectual and cultural purpose among writers, critics, booksellers, and broadcasters alike. It is here, for example, that they met Lloyd Ross, the railway union secretary and labour historian. Frank Dalby Davison claimed too that his pamphlet *While Freedom Lives* "arose out of social discussions at the M. Barnard Eldershaw salon - Orwell Street and elsewhere". It was a place where literary production and criticism could effectively interact: a meeting of public writing and private talk inspired by their sense of the writer's privileged role in the promotion of critical discourse. These evenings also served as informal launchings or "christenings" for books by one of their number. It was a way of collectively authorising their individual endeavours. Their notion of "community" extended even to those not present, as Barnard explained to Nettie Palmer, claiming that she had attended the launch of Davison's *Children of the Dark People* "in effigy":

Your photo inhabited the mantelpiece and truly you gave a flavour to the party (so did the Gorgonzola but that was different). Frank was fresh from the publisher with a bundle of 'Children' under his arm and in wonderful form. We undid the parcel and decorated the room with the books. We ate gently all the evening, talked about the Renaissance, and departed in the region of midnight leaving the place to the washing up and the remnants of the Gorgonzola.

Why the status of woman and the position of cultural authority appear not to have been mutually exclusive for Barnard and Eldershaw is a complex issue. They may well have been tolerated as "exceptional" or "eccentric" women, women for whom certain allowances could be made, but whose presence was not thought to represent any direct challenge to the status quo. Vance Palmer, for example, celebrated

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31 Frank Dalby Davison to Vance Palmer, 29 November 1938 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5463].
32 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 20 November 1936 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5168].
Eldershaw's career in terms of what he saw as her ability to neutralise conventional masculine expectations of the threat posed by women in "public life". Ironically, he seems blind to her capacity to play successfully upon just those same expectations:

Not the least of Flora's gifts was her ability to work with men in a jolly, unself-conscious way. Our tradition does not make public life easy for a woman. Frontier prejudices still linger in offices and other places: women are uncertain, hysterical creatures, liable to go off at an emotional tangent, not comfortable to have anything to do with except in a romantic or domestic way! Flora, when she came up against such notions was not the least disconcerted. She met them with her robust good-humour which made such a piquant contrast with her feminine sensibility. I knew men (Chifley was one of them) who were at first inclined to resent her presence at a male gathering, but later they could not help letting a radiant look light up their faces as soon as she came into the room. She had a largeness, a racy humour, a sense of abundance that was inspiring.  

Despite the immense ability demonstrated by both women, the possibility of some element of tokenism cannot be discounted. Frank Dalby Davison, for example, claimed in retrospect that he was "instrumental" in Eldershaw's election in 1935 to the Presidency of the Fellowship of Australian Writers, prompted apparently by the conviction that it was "time the Fellowship had a woman President".  

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 various factors. The issue of their primary institutional location may also have had some impact on the level of authority they possessed and exercised. As single, middle class women with careers, it tended to be the institution of authorship rather than of marriage or motherhood which provided their identities, and

35 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 2 July 1935 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4703].
emphatically public ones at that. Contemporary articles about the two make uncharacteristically slight reference to their personal lives, and then it is usually limited to brief details of their place of birth, their education, and their current employment: "lives externally uneventful". In this particular respect, they differ from other women writers of the period like Nettie Palmer, Eleanor Dark, and Katharine Prichard, all of whose domestic arrangements were perceived to a greater or lesser extent to determine or delimit the bounds of their literary lives, leaving "the fraught and ambivalent intellectual career [to be] organized as an extension of the primary role as wife and mother". That is not to say that Barnard and Eldershaw did not have domestic responsibilities - on the contrary, both had extensive ones - but that these responsibilities, by virtue of their greater cultural invisibility, may not have determined to the same extent the pattern of their public intellectual careers, hence their acceptance in professions or social institutions conventionally shaped by a primarily masculine subjectivity. Nevertheless, aspects of the conventional association between women and the domestic realm retained a kind of spectral presence in their careers, one that can be traced, for example, in sources like the papers of the Sydney branch of the Fellowship of Australian Writers. The minutes of the 1940 Quarterly Report of the Fellowship 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". The House Committee minutes

37Whitlock and Bulbeck: 154.
38FAW Papers ML MSS 2008, Box K22105.
for the same function, however, contain the note: "Savouries - Miss Eldershaw be approached re. same". 39 Similarly, amongst unsorted papers detailing Eldershaw's reports on the relationship between the Commonwealth Literary Fund and Reconstruction, or progress on the Writers in Defence of Freedom volume, are carbon copies of letters thanking her for role in organising the opening of the new Fellowship rooms and commending "the preparation and care...expended in the catering and the decorations". 40 Both Barnard and Eldershaw were more than occasional victims, too, of prevailing stereotypical constructions of femininity. Smith's Weekly, for example, in commenting upon Eldershaw's appointment to the Advisory Board of the Commonwealth Literary Fund, noted that "Miss Eldershaw has the distinction of being the only female member, and, as befits that status, is by many years the youngest member of the board". 41 True to form, they observed among other things that she wrote "historical-romantic" novels. Barnard, for her part, made constant ironic reference in her correspondence to just that conventional public image of the 'lady-writer' and to the subsequent pressure to be charming, entertaining and 'feminine'. After a visit to discuss a new publishing scheme with John Reed, she recorded: "Doubt if I did much good with John Reed. My decor was all wrong. Stout middle aged woman with a cold and galoshes". 42

The fact that the careers of Barnard and Eldershaw coincided with the novel's rise to prominence in Australia and with an almost

39 FAW Papers ML MSS 2008, Box K22117.
40 Letter from W.E. Fitzhenry to F. Eldershaw, 24 November 1939. [FAW Papers ML MSS 2008, Box K22105].
42 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, n.d. [c.1944]. [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/6265].
unprecedented concentration of women writers making contributions to the development of a new national literary tradition, must have had considerable impact upon their acceptance as cultural authorities. As Nancy Armstrong has argued, there is an historical connection between the emergence of female literary authority and the rise of the novel as a major literary form. Moreover, given prevailing publishing conditions in Australia which offered few alternative outlets for writers, Barnard and Eldershaw were effectively obliged to forge their careers within the literary mainstream. Their presence there both as authors and critics, no doubt had the effect of mainstreaming writing by women, incorporating it into the wider body of Australian letters, rather than confining it to the limited range of culturally sanctioned "feminine" forms like romance and children's writing. In Eldershaw's terms, they were involved in an on-going process of depriving women writers of any false prestige, of their "freak" status. By reading the work of other women, writing about it, and taking their ambitions seriously, they not only encouraged and authorised women generally to take part in the mainstream literary culture, but were actively involved in dictating the shape of what was, in effect, still only an emerging 'mainstream'. In their opening essay on Henry Handel Richardson and Katharine Susannah Prichard in Essays in Australian Fiction, they make the point that these writers "stand at the portals of our new fiction and...are the foundation stones of a new era". The essay is prefaced by a discussion of the current proliferation of women writers in all

43 The period of the 1890s saw a similar proliferation of women writers but the majority of these writers tended to be expatriate or to remain in Australia only briefly, thus failing to have the same impact on the local literary culture.
cultures, and they use the examples of Katherine Mansfield, Willa Cather, Sigrid Undset, Selma Lagerlof, Virginia Woolf, and Rose Macauley to suggest that this phenomenon represents not simply a quantitative but also a qualitative achievement. In stressing that "the phenomenon of the woman novelist occurs in all modern literatures", moreover, they explicitly justify the inclusion of women writers in their consideration of the national literature, and in the remainder of the volume they choose to discuss the work of Christina Stead and Eleanor Dark alongside that of Vance Palmer, Leonard Mann, "Martin Mills" [Martin Boyd], and Frank Dalby Davison.

The fact that Barnard and Eldershaw exercised such authority in what is now perceived as the mainstream literary culture of the period suggests the need to look a little more closely both at the assumption that women are always and necessarily excluded from culture.\textsuperscript{47} and at who and what constitute the mainstream literary culture at any given point. The experience of these two women writers suggests that at particular junctures there may be ways in which those who are traditionally marginalised by dominant cultures but who have no alternative other than to develop their own cultural forms from within that culture, can play an active part in defining what ultimately functions as the so-called dominant culture. Indeed, their particular experience indicates that "the notion of a 'subculture' of women writers is insufficiently complex to account for women's relationship to the literary mode of production."\textsuperscript{48}

In the case of Eldershaw, for example, how is it possible to be President of the Fellowship of Australian Writers and the longest-serving member

\textsuperscript{47}See Janet Wolff, \textit{Women's Knowledge and Women's Art} (Brisbane: ICPS, 1989): 3.

of the Advisory Board of the Commonwealth Literary Fund and not play an active and influential part in determining what constitutes, represents, and is funded as Australian Literature? To consider these women solely as members of a separate and subordinate female literary sub-culture not only denies the role they played in constructing "Australian literature", but denies the fact that that literature was still in the process of being constructed, for the notion of a sub-culture implies a pre-existing and fully-constituted culture, whereas it is the absence of, and desire for, just such an Australian literary culture which form the hallmarks of literary activity in this period. While it may be argued that "every woman writer in every age [is] a member of an unconscious sisterhood", these women writers were joined it seems, less by an explicitly woman-defined consciousness, than by a common commitment to broad cultural change on a national level: a commitment to Australian literature rather than to women or women's writing. Even the network of correspondence that linked these women and which can be read as a form of alternative literary interaction, is predicated upon their common participation in activities defined almost exclusively within a literary culture where they publish as successfully as their male counterparts through the same publishing houses, newspapers and journals. If there is a sub-culture here at all, it is arguably not the women writers as such, but the wider group of Australian writers actively involved in shaping a national literary culture which possessed at this time only marginal status in relation to imported English and American reading material and to the institutionalised study of English literature.

Barnard and Eldershaw appear to demonstrate little explicit recognition from their position as cultural authorities of the separate cultural interests of women as a group, a fact that has sometimes labelled them conservative in the eyes of some feminist critics.\textsuperscript{50} Indeed, while they shared ideas and ideals in common with other women writers, in their criticism they appear to construct their authority exclusively on nationalist grounds, with little regard for questions of gender. Their preference for nationalist and humanist approaches to literary issues is perhaps an indication of the strength of their commitment to the radical nationalist project, but it may also be linked to the perception that to argue a special case for women represented a narrowing of what was conceived as a broad commitment to national cultural change. Assertions of this kind are not uncommon in their work and they almost invariably constructed culture in inclusive or "humanitarian" terms. In her article "Women's Books", for example, Barnard argued against "the segregation of the sexes along cultural lines", claiming such endeavours represented "a gratuitous insult to the human intelligence". It is not a question, however, of their being unaware of, or unconcerned by, issues pertaining to the position of women. On the contrary, in a lecture on "Responsible Government for Women", Barnard makes quite explicit her appreciation of the gender-based inequalities that persisted in Australian society, asserting that while women have "proved themselves in a way not required of men...Australia is still a man's world, responsible government and political equality notwithstanding".\textsuperscript{51} They may not have actively campaigned for radical social change for women but they did involve

\textsuperscript{50}See, for example, C. Ferrier, "Writing the History of Women's Writing", \textit{Hecate}, 8, No.1 (1982): 77-81.

\textsuperscript{51}M. Barnard, "Responsible Government for Women", T/s lecture, n.d. [Barnard Papers ML MSS 451/4].

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themselves in projects founded upon political solidarity with other women. As members of the Sesquicentenary Women's Advisory Council, both Barnard and Eldershaw worked on *The Peaceful Army*, a volume of essays specifically concerned with the place of women historically in Australia, and Barnard later joined the editorial board of Jessie Street's *Australian Women's Digest*. The tendency to subsume women in their general arguments about Australian literature is not necessarily an example, as John Docker suggests, of the "self-denying impact" upon female intellectuals of the desire for a corporate cultural identity, a desire that forces them to accept and participate in "a tradition which either excludes...or limits them".52 Indeed, the practice appears to derive neither from ignorance nor from a belief that the literature was above the claims of gender, so much as from an uneasy knowledge that feminine difference would inevitably be constructed negatively. The category of "women's books", was generally used, Barnard suggested, to "cast a light dust of aspersion",53 and they were sensitive to the fact that the term 'woman' in literary matters was often synonymous with that of 'amateur' and functioned as a sign of an essential genetic limitation. As they claimed in the essay, "Two Women Novelists":

A great many silly women have written a great many silly novels - and a great many silly men have, too. But the scores are kept differently. Out of chivalry, perhaps, an individual woman's failures are charged not against herself but against her sex. She is a bad novelist because she is a woman. A man's failures he must bear himself. A woman in the world is a sort of collective noun; a man remains an individual. This is perhaps one of the remaining traces of a polygamous race consciousness. 54

To make specific claims for women or 'women's writing' in the face of such judgements would no doubt have encouraged the automatic

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52 Docker, *Australian Cultural Elites*: 110.
53 M. Barnard, "Women's Books": 4-5.
54 M. Barnard Eldershaw, "Two Women Novelists": 1-2.
dismissal of any work, undermined or limited their own authority, and jeopardised their bid to 'professionalise' writing in Australia by drawing attention to its 'amateurish' elements. It was clearly safer to pursue the seemingly 'neutral' category of 'Australian Literature', attributing merit to writing on literary or nationalist grounds, than to attempt to argue through or against the issues of essentialism and biological determinism and to risk placing their work in a reductively-defined 'feminine' category. In essence, they used the authority and supposed gender 'neutrality' of these other discourses to minimise possible sanctions against their enterprise and to enable them as women to speak without running the attendant risk of being reduced to positions constructed for them by the prevailing masculinist discourse. Fixing women's literary endeavours within a national context rather than within an imposed and limiting category, enabled them both to address women's writing on a new, 'continental' scale and to assert their authority to speak on matters of a similar scale of importance. It must be remembered, moreover, that they were active at a time of considerable anti-feminist feeling, when even the successful arguing of a separate women's cause could have had damaging consequences for their wider cultural agenda.
CHAPTER FIVE
What is an Author?

"Australia is, however, vital to us; and by the same token such literature as we possess is vital to our lives. It is not a matter of size, but of our collective being."
Frank Dalby Davison, "What is Literature?" Australian Writers Speak (1943).

"The books are coming out but is anyone reading them?"
Marjorie Barnard to Vance Palmer, 20 October 1938.

When Barnard confessed tentatively to Nettie Palmer early in 1935 that she believed herself to be a "writer" and "not just an educated woman who wields a pen", she signalled a developing awareness of the quite specific nature of the writing career and the range of obligations that attended upon it. The role of the Australian author at that time was neither an entirely unstructured nor unself-conscious enterprise. As any constant correspondent of the Palmers could not fail to recognise, being a writer was not an isolated activity to be pursued by individuals, and involved far more than the occasional publication of a literary work. Indeed, under their direction the writing career developed the dimensions of a vocation in which individuals were called upon to act as organisers, advocates, critics, and "permanent persuaders". Barnard and Eldershaw's perception of the responsibilities or duties attaching to the role of the writer is perhaps best demonstrated by Eldershaw's suggestion later in life that she could cease "to regard [herself] as a 'writer' at all". Clearly a list of published works was not sufficient qualification in itself.

1 Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5451.
2 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 13 February 1935 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4589].
4 F. Eldershaw to Clem Christesen, 15 June 1945, [Meanjin Archive Correspondence]. Barnard too ultimately questioned whether she might "still count as a writer". M. Barnard to N. Palmer, 17 February 1956 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/8794].
Barnard and Eldershaw's particular construction of the Australian author and the writing project was shaped at least in part by their sense of inheriting a significant cultural legacy. In their critical and "promotional" writing, both Barnard and Eldershaw acknowledged their role as heirs to the writers of the 1890s, constructing themselves in the 1930s and 1940s as the vanguard of the second generation of Australian writers. This position accorded with their sense of writing as a collective cultural endeavour and they emphasised that "Australian literature [was] small enough and young enough to be clearly seen as a communal effort, something to which many have contributed, valuable and cogent as a whole rather than in its parts". Eldershaw's introduction to the 1936 Australian Writers' Annual, while entitled "The Future of Australian Literature", concerned 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". This community with the past - a 'past' often created in their own image - represented a way of legitimising their own enterprise by taking upon themselves the established authority of tradition and continuity. The continuity of the collective cultural project, moreover, was crucial to their struggle against the perceived threat posed to the national culture, if not to civilisation generally, by the combined forces of capitalism and industrialism.

Interestingly, Barnard and Eldershaw's approach to the Legend of

the Nineties was in many respects a profoundly uncritical one. They showed no particular awareness of the limitations of the Legend, no anxiety over its fundamentally unrepresentative nature. Indeed, they seem to have identified strongly with the bush tradition, frequently sourcing their notions of a national identity in it. In their writing they emphasised what they perceived to be the unifying potential of this national tradition. However, the sense of unity, consensus, solidarity and community that radical-nationalists like Barnard and Eldershaw envisaged the Legend fostering was founded upon a series of exclusions. As James Walter has noted, "radical nationalism, with its emphasis on the bush tradition and the digger, leaves women, Aborigines and urban dwellers out of the picture". However, Barnard's and Eldershaw's emphasis was not placed upon the heroised masculinity of the bushman and the qualities of mateship. On the contrary, they sought in the Legend rather the sense of marginality, exclusion and neglect associated with its chief exponent and emblem, Henry Lawson. Beyond consensus and solidarity, the Legend appeared to offer them a model of their own position and vocation as writers. It was the period of the 1890s that informed their image of the Australian writer: that potentially marginal, neglected, and generally unrewarded being for whom Lawson provided the model *par excellence*. Members of the Fellowship of Australian Writers involved themselves, for example, in a constant round of activities - talks, pilgrimages, fundraising for monuments - to honour Lawson, activities designed to accord to him a level of recognition appropriate to his stature and which they believed others could not be relied upon to encourage. As with the Legend, however, Barnard and Eldershaw's construction of Lawson tended to be a rather selective and

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uncritical one. Kay Schaffer has commented upon the ways in which "layers of myths and interpretations" have shifted focus from Lawson the man to Lawson the "cultural object"8, and it was clearly the iconic and symbolic worth of this "cultural object" in which they were investing. Consequently, the more problematic aspects of Lawson's politics and lifestyle were overlooked in favour of celebrating the radical nationalist ethos, the ideals of brotherhood and innocence and the image of forsaken genius.

This image proved a compelling one for writers of their generation and one that seemed to accord with their own experience. 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".9 The state of the local publishing industry in the 1930s and 1940s,10 the relative dearth of informed critical comment, and the impossibility of earning a living from their writing would have further contributed to their sense of writers as a somewhat neglected body within the community. 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.11 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 and she


9Miles Franklin and George Ashton, "Is the writer involved in the political development of his country?" *Australian Writers Speak* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1943): 31.


made it quite clear that "commercial success" was not what M. Barnard Eldershaw was about. As 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.

Barnard and Eldershaw were also influenced in their construction of the Australian author by their perception of the relationship of the writer to society. While Julie Wells maintains that it is only in the immediate post-World War II period that writers and intellectuals first attempted to consolidate their links with the wider society by assuming a higher public profile and by involving themselves with the cultural, social, economic, and political life of the nation, the beginnings of such activities can be traced to the mid-1930s with the visit of Czechoslovakian journalist Egon Kisch, the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, and the rise of Fascism in Europe. Indeed, just as Barnard Eldershaw's somewhat romanticised and selective account of the writing of the 1890s saw it developing out of the need for "political expression", a need which they suggested lent a distinctly radical and oppositional quality to the writing, they constructed the role of the contemporary Australian author in terms of a public intellectual responsibility. "To write", they contended, "should never be thought of

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12 M. Barnard to Leslie Rees, 5 January 1934 [Leslie Rees Papers, ML MSS 5454/1].
as an intransitive verb. A writer wants to write because he has the urgent need of communicating something to his fellows... Writing is communication and however good it may be in an abstract sense it fails unless it is read." The concepts of "community", "society", and "audience" were thus fundamental to their concept of "author" or as Barnard argued in her radio talk on "Our Literature", Australian literature was "a community effort". In this context, the writer carried the authority of an intellectual, one who acted out of a political sense of culture and who was committed to a wide discursive community rather than to a closed coterie of literary or academic peers. She or he also possessed the honour of being at once privileged or distinctive and yet somehow representative of all Australians. In Barnard Eldershaw's terms, these qualities enabled the writer to provide their audience with virtually unmediated access to the 'real Australia'. Interestingly, they made no claim to the equally important role the writer may have played in constructing that same 'Australia'. They wrote of Frank Dalby Davison, for example, that he

endeavours in his books to make as direct a transcription as possible ... He wants to show life as it is, as little edited as possible and all the versatility and subtlety of his technique is directed, not to sculpturing his material into set forms, but to clearing the path for his picture of all the accrewed [sic] obstacles of literary expression. He passes his material through his creative imagination but abstains from processing it in any other way ... Read his description of felling a tree, raising [sic] a fence or any other common activity and you will feel at once that he values skill and the functional rhythms for themselves and not as mere ornaments to his books or symbols for abstractions, and that he records them with utter fidelity.18

However, while they were convinced of the potential influence and impact of the writer or literary intellectual upon contemporary Australian society, they were not always convinced of society's capacity

16[M. Barnard Eldershaw], "The Writer and Society: Vance Palmer and Frank Dalby Davison": 3
17M. Barnard, "Our Literature", Australian Writers Speak: 98.
to recognise this and respond accordingly, a situation which frequently led them to assert that Australian society was "dull, commercialized, [and] anti-intellectual".\textsuperscript{19} Eldershaw charged that the "odd shyness" of the general public in relation to local literary works exhibited "the influence of society working blindly",\textsuperscript{20} while Barnard at one point likened their group to a "tribe in the desert" with the Palmers as the only "rallying point".\textsuperscript{21}

Such a construction of the Australian author can be read as a response both to the specific positioning of Australian literature within the wider literary and cultural fields and to the desire among these writers to construct for themselves a position of cultural centrality, for as Patrick Buckridge has argued, Australian literary intellectuals have generally construed their role in society as one of building, promoting, and defending Australian literature.\textsuperscript{22} Writing themselves into the national literary project, however, involved for these writers an almost obsessive will to self-definition and to collectivity, both of which served to increase their sense of themselves as the first generation of genuinely "professional" writers the country had produced. They were professional, not in the sense of perceiving themselves as professionals, a status already secured by the writers of the 1890s,\textsuperscript{23} but in the sense of identifying with one another as part of a particular profession united by a common cultural project, and in the sense of perceiving the need to "professionalise" the field of Australian letters. This professionalism

\textsuperscript{19}Tim Rowse, \textit{Australian Liberalism and National Character} (Melbourne: Kibble Books, 1978): 177.
\textsuperscript{21}Marjorie Barnard to Leslie Rees, June-July 1935 [Leslie Rees Papers, ML MSS 5454/1].
manifested itself both in the effort to negotiate a sound legal and financial position for the individual author and in a growing desire to establish their collective social and cultural function. It also shaped the heavily politicised literary agenda which Barnard and Eldershaw together with Frank Dalby Davison succeeded in promoting among Sydney writers from the late 1930s. In the case of Barnard and Eldershaw, the focus for both sets of objectives was ultimately neither Sydney nor Melbourne, but Canberra: the site of political and legislative authority and also the setting for their satire on the Australian literary establishment, *Plaque With Laurel*.

Barnard and Eldershaw's entry on this career path was a function both of their increasing reputation as writers and their growing circle of literary acquaintances. One of the first writers to approach Barnard and Eldershaw following the extraordinary success of their first novel *A House Is Built* was Mary Gilmore who offered both encouragement and an informal kind of patronage: she harassed Barnard over her spelling and invited both of them to accompany her to afternoon tea with Lady Mary Poynter. According to Barnard, Nettie Palmer too had made them "feel welcome" by her "kindness in writing to [them]" and her "sympathetic & understanding attitude".24 Beyond the offering of encouragement, both Gilmore and Palmer provided exemplary models of broad-based literary careers and of female literary authority: Barnard visited Gilmore at the offices of *The Worker*, while Nettie Palmer was in the process of completing her biography of H.B. Higgins at the point of initiating her correspondence with Barnard. Discussions of the nature of biography and history filled some of Barnard's initial,

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24M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 25 September 1931 [NLA MSS 1174/1/3816].

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rather formal letters to her:

But isn't biography at least a quasi-creative art? The author supplies form and manner. The raw material of a novel is "given", but the novelist pieces it together, arranges, edits and synthesises it, only in doing this has he more scope than the biographer whose first duty is to interpret and analyse. I have always looked on history as one of the creative arts and in my youth acted on this assumption not without success.25

However, despite expressing admiration for Nettie Palmer's "ideal of 'sticking together'" , 26 Barnard and Eldershaw were originally reluctant to join the Fellowship of Australian Writers and they took pleasure in refusing George Mackaness' offer of extended time in which to pay their five shilling subscriptions. "We resist the temptation with joy", 27 was Barnard's comment. Barnard suggested that writers were in her opinion "unclubable", and she frequently expressed her frustration over the limitations of the various local literary societies, contending that "the only literary club of any value in Australia was composed of the people [Nettie Palmer] corresponded with". 28 PEN, the English Association, and the Writers' League were each criticised by her in the early 1930s for their disappointing lack of intellectual engagement. And she described the conclusion of an FAW meeting during Eldershaw's Presidency as

a comic and depressing evening... The 'Presidential party' went to coffee afterwards and that was worse. Teenie being very nice to everyone as a president should and curing - 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... 29

Even during the years of her most active involvement in the FAW, Barnard still questioned its direction and maintained to Nettie Palmer

25 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 4 September 1931 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/3809].
26 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 10 September 1933 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4290].
27 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 9 October 1933 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4304].
28 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 17 February 1936 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/8794].
29 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 10 November 1935 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4822].
that "the untidiness of the meetings would horrify [her]". Their association with the FAW dated, however, from 1933 when Eldershaw was invited along with Dora Wilcox, Ada Holman, Nora Kelly, Miles Franklin, and Alice Henry ("six very well known women of letters") to participate in a formal debate on "The Feminisation of Literature". She noted in her argument that "freedom [was] to be restrained, not by sex, but by our ability" and doubtless Eldershaw's ability was a consideration when, on the same evening in February 1935 that she followed Barnard's example and finally joined the Fellowship, she was immediately elected to the Executive Committee. Within a matter of months she was the FAW's new President and had been appointed to their Cultural Defence Committee. Ultimately, the FAW was to be one of the most significant sites for the development of Barnard and Eldershaw's literary agenda, providing as it did both a workshop in which strategies could be refined and a major vehicle for change.

Whatever doubts they held about the value of literary societies generally did not prevent Barnard and Eldershaw from developing their particular cultural agenda within the communal context provided by both the formal and the informal literary circles of the day. Writing in response to Leslie Rees' request from London for a report on local literary activities, Barnard described to him a movement that was "still small enough for an individual to influence it deeply". Given the size of the field, it could also be argued that the action of any individual would necessarily have assumed a collective significance. Moreover, in

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30 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 30 March 1939 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/592].
32 Eldershaw joined on 20/2/35 while Barnard joined on 25/1/35. Minute Book, Box K22104, FAW Papers [ML MSS 2008].
33 M. Barnard to Leslie Rees, June-July 1935 [Leslie Rees Papers, ML MSS 5454/1].
Flora Eldershaw c. 1938

an environment which frequently failed to acknowledge writers' individual existences, it was ultimately the collective whose presence served to confirm or attest to their separate contributions. By acting as a corporate or communal cultural being, the collective functioned to define and promote the place of the individual. In Eldershaw's terms, they were a "band of writers" who "[gave] one another courage". This form of collective or collaborative enterprise also served to foster new possibilities and conditions for writing. By enabling the field of Australian literature to be constructed by and through its members, the group effectively rewrote the concept of authorship to encompass an extremely wide range of literary activities.

All activities undertaken by them in their capacity as writers appear to have been deemed 'literary'. The ways in which the writers of this period constructed their field is clearly demonstrated in the contents of the 1935 FAW Authors' Week publication, The Australian Author. More than half the articles concentrate on exploring the areas where the Australian Author either functioned professionally or possessed some professional interest. In addition to articles on "The Australian Novelist" and "The Australian Poet", there were contributions considering "The Australian Humorist" (R.H.J. Moses), "The Australian Film" (Eric Bedford), "The Australian Publisher" (P.R. Stephensen), "The Australian Censor" (Bartlett Adamson), "The Australian Essayist" (S. Elliott Napier), and "The Australian Critic" (T. Inglis Moore). Zara Aronson in her article "The Australian Radio Writer" suggested that

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The term 'writer' had clearly ceased to be synonymous with the 'creative writer' alone and now encompassed a range of non-fiction and industry-related forms of writing and considerations of changing conditions for work. The term in effect signified a multiplicity of involvements in the writing process, involvements that were apparently non-hierarchical and in which the critical and supportive capacities were not necessarily subordinated to the creative. They constructed for themselves a shifting position from which to enact new capacities and possibilities for work, a position which influenced not only the shape of the field as a whole, but also that of individual literary careers. While The Publicist attempted to condemn the FAW's 1939 anti-fascist volume Australian Writers in Defence of Freedom on the grounds that writers were "eminently unqualified to issue such a book", it was in fact quite common for these particular writers to produce works of history, political philosophy, and cultural criticism, in addition to works of fiction, drama or poetry. Barnard and Eldershaw themselves exemplified this model of a literary career by together producing novels, history, short stories, radio plays, political essays, and literary criticism.

The inaugural "Authors' Week" which the FAW organised in 1935, the first year of Barnard and Eldershaw's official association with

36 Zara Aronson, "The Australian Radio Writer", The Australian Author: [no pagination].
the group, was a key event in terms of establishing a collective and manifestly public existence for the Australian writer. It also represented the first significant event in which Barnard and Eldershaw joined their peers in attempting to forge a collective national cultural agenda. The issue of 'selling' Australian literature was a longstanding one, and one over which there had been discernible differences of opinion. In 1923, Vance Palmer had cautioned that "indiscriminate publicity" was no substitute for genuine criticism when it came to interesting the public in books. But William Moore in his Australian English Association address of 1932 lamented that Australian literature could not develop while the Australian public failed to acquire "the novel-buying habit". \(^{38}\) Eldershaw was a member of the committee for Authors' Week, and both Barnard and Eldershaw joined the editorial committee of *The Australian Author*. The Authors' Week proceedings were held on 8-13 April in Farmer's Blaxland Galleries and the stated aim was "to encourage the development of our national literature, especially by bringing the work of our authors before the general public and the schools. Its purpose [was] at once cultural, patriotic and educational". \(^{39}\) Proceedings included personal appearances by authors, dramatised readings from their works, a pageant of famous characters from Australian literature, direct radio broadcasts, and an extensive exhibition of books, book plates, literary portraits, and caricatures. Barnard and Eldershaw were also on the executive committee of the much celebrated Authors' Ball (at which Bartlett Adamson appeared as Quartermaster Hyde from *A House Is Built* and P.R. Stephensen donned a wig and beard to appear as 'Brent of Bin Bin')). The ball committee's


\(^{39}\) FAW Press Release for Authors' Week, Box K22112 FAW Papers [ML MSS 2008].
central dilemma, as reported in *The Daily Telegraph*, appeared to encapsulate the dilemma facing organisers of the week generally:

The meeting decided to give a free ticket to the ball to every author who sold 20 tickets, and the only difficulty seemed to be to decide who was or was not an author!^40

Judging by the media response, the week appears to have provided an opportunity to promote and publicise both individual contemporary authors and the general concept of the Australian Author. In essence, they were attempting to sell both a product and an idea or cultural icon, a slippage signalled (albeit unconsciously) in the strange mobility of the apostrophe in the title for the week. They created a spectacle in which they promoted not only their work, but also themselves as products of a wider cultural text. This caused some tension, however, over how far they could reasonably go in their efforts to 'sell' themselves. Despite their general participation in the organisation of Authors' Week, both Barnard and Eldershaw seem to have been somewhat uneasy about the blatant commercialism and self-promotion present in certain aspects of the programme. Writing to Leslie Rees immediately prior to Authors' Week, Barnard commented that she feared it may be "treated rankly in the spirit of an advertisement",^41 and many years later Miles Franklin recorded Eldershaw's distinct opposition to a proposed book signing exercise where the authors were required to sit "in a sort of wire cage" in a department store. In Franklin's account, Eldershaw "was definite that she could not lend herself to that sort of thing".^42 Barnard too

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^40*Authors' Croon Song*, *The Daily Telegraph*, 20 March 1935.

^41M. Barnard to Leslie Rees, 20 February 1935 [Leslie Rees Papers, ML MSS 5454/1] Katharine Prichard was similarly disturbed apparently by Jim Throsell's earlier efforts to market her work "as if it were a pound of tea". [Quoted in Ric Throsell, *My Father's Son* (Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1989): 98].

^42Miles Franklin to George Ferguson, 28 March 1949 [Angus & Robertson Papers, ML MSS 3269/35/239].
refused all such invitations, subsequently placing her opposition on record with the FAW.\textsuperscript{43} They were in the awkward position of fearing the worst excesses of commercialism, while engaging nonetheless in what was ultimately a public relations exercise to influence public taste, market forces, and the inclinations of readers, publishers, and booksellers. Indeed, as there existed no adequate institutional or commercial structures to perform the role of middleperson, they had no alternative to self-promotion, their well-being depending upon them dealing directly with their public and being complicit in their own commodification. Nettie Palmer had fewer qualms, it seems, about this role: she later warmly praised those involved in the writing, printing and editing of \textit{Meanjin} as "promoters" all.\textsuperscript{44} Barnard and Eldershaw did participate directly in the Week's activities by producing the script for the scene from \textit{A House Is Built} in the Pageant. Originally, it had been understood that the producer of the Pageant would take responsibility for devising the piece, but as Barnard recounted

\begin{quote}

a week or so later, however, on a Saturday, [Eldershaw] received a frenzied telephone call Why wasn't the script in the producer's hands? He wanted to begin rehearsing on the Monday. Teenie sent post haste for me. I went out to the School on the Sunday, we only had an hour and a half and not an idea between us. But at the last minute the Lord provided (He's good that way, don't you think?) and we got something into shape. We were lucky to have the chance.\textsuperscript{45}
\end{quote}

Barnard considered them "lucky" as she feared for the outcome of any pieces left solely in the hands of the Pageant committee and produced without consultation with the authors.

\textsuperscript{43}Barnard wrote to Catherine Lindsay, Secretary of the FAW on 26 October 1938: "I have received your letter asking if I wanted to attend at David Jones's book department during Author's [sic] Week. I have never been in favour of this scheme as I do not think that it achieves its purpose, so I must decline the invitation". [Box K22112, FAW Papers MLMSS 2008].

\textsuperscript{44}"Extracts from Correspondence", \textit{Meanjin} No.3 (1941): 12.

\textsuperscript{45}M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 22 March 1935 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4622].
In the weeks around the celebration, general articles as well as those on specific events and personalities regularly appeared in such publications as the *Australian Women's Weekly*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *Wireless Weekly*, *The Bulletin*, and *The Sunday Sun and Guardian*. These articles ranged in style from editorials, commissioned accounts of Australia's literary history and quite detailed reports of events to the ubiquitous photos of the Authors' Pageant and the Authors' Ball in the social pages. Much attention was focussed, for example, on the photogenic Miss Bluebell Searby who performed in a scene from *A House Is Built* in the pageant. Far from being ignored, the writers' activities were accorded surprisingly detailed and considered coverage. Women writers were particularly well represented in the media. The *Australian Women's Weekly* carried an article entitled "Women Writers in the Vanguard of Our Literature" which provided not only photographs and biographical details but also included some brief critical assessments of writing by these women. Errors in names and titles were fairly common, however, as enthusiasm and feigned familiarity often replaced accuracy, and 'M. Barnard Eldershaw' was frequently transmuted into 'C. Barnard Eldershaw' and occasionally 'Bernard Eldershaw'. But what was significant, however, was the extent to which interest and attention centred on contemporary authors rather than on figures from the past, a feature fostered by the FAW who had enlisted H.M. Green to produce a list of "Present Day Australian Authors" for publicity purposes. A certain (temporary) celebrity status was accorded to them and the

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47 H.M. Green, "Present Day Australian Authors", unpublished t/script [FAW Papers ML MSS 2008, Box K22112].
barrage of media coverage frequently constructed literary knowledge in terms of familiarity with the authors' lives, rather than familiarity with their work. In "More About Our Women Writers", Zara Aronson waxed lyrical (and stereotypical) about Eldershaw's background and ability:

Among the moderns we find many women writers of interest. A born novelist, and with no other member of her family having shown any literary talent, Miss Flora Eldershaw, suddenly found herself in the literary limelight. A clever country girl, brought up in the open spaces of Junee, Miss Eldershaw lived her early life on her father's station. She was educated at a convent, and a University career followed. With her forcible character she became a clever debater and organiser. Then in addition, she undertook tutorial classes at the Sydney University. Later Miss Eldershaw spent several years abroad, but now she has returned to take up further educational duties, for which she is so well fitted. As everyone knows, with Miss Barnard, she won the "Bulletin's" novel prize with the book of that year, 'The House Is Built' (sic), followed by 'Green Memory'. She admits that the interesting early facts, of which her books are full, were collected from her father, who had known many of the characters drawn. As a woman she is attractive, ever ready with a merry smile, and she has a vivacious manner.48

It is interesting to see the way in which Eldershaw as a writer is here constructed as possessing almost a girl-next-door quality, her credentials deriving from a rural childhood, a good education and a fortuitously useful father. Indeed, as Daniel H. Borus has argued in relation to American literary culture, "the promotion of an author's personality created an interest in his or her product that extended beyond the work itself", capitalised on the ability of authors to embody certain desires and hopes of the readership, and thus turned personalities into virtual commodities.49 While specific areas of the media were keen to focus on individuals, the FAW itself tended to promote the field as a whole, minimising the distance and difference between historical periods and between individuals in the interests of producing a cohesive cultural agenda. They were determined to celebrate the extent and

quality of all aspects of the local literary culture. To this end, displays also included segments dealing with the material aspects of book production and design, although the emphasis on the 'local' meant that works published overseas were excluded from displays. A "Service Bureau" was set up in the exhibition which not only offered advice on getting published, but also answered queries on any aspect of Australian literature. The Bureau, like most activities throughout the Week, sought both to promote and to inform. Serious debate across the week in newspapers, talks, and radio broadcasts centred mainly upon the respective general roles of authors and the public. Frank Dalby Davison in his broadcast expressed fears that "culture in Australia was inclined to be of the 'agriculture and physical culture' varieties", but saw this as providing a challenge he was confident Australian authors could meet "in the right manner".50 The fortunes of the Australian Author swung constantly between the poles of the lone and unattended voice and the influential cultural arbiter. An editorial in *The Telegraph* entitled "Authors and Readers", lamented that an Authors' Week was actually necessary to remind the public of the existence of authors and vice versa. "A wider and deeper appreciation of Australian letters is actually one of our national necessities", it suggested, commending those it saw as "continually and obscurely working to give Australians a literature which they may call their own".51 Not all commentary, however, supported the exercise. Brian Penton in his "Sydney Spy" column in *The Telegraph* was less than enthusiastic about the Week, suggesting that in his opinion such an event could not hope to remedy the fact that "authors and their craft of writing [were] not highly regarded". Penton also appeared to have had little interest in collective

50Quoted in "Authors' Week: Exhibition Closes Today", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 April 1935.
51"Authors and Readers", *The Telegraph*, 9 April 1935.
gestures, instead describing writing in terms of the individual's solitary engagement on "the most loathsome and agonising task ever imposed on man as a means of disseminating his urgent opinions, and providing his bread and butter".\textsuperscript{52} \textit{The Sun}, moreover, carried an editorial just prior to Authors' Week in which it issued that familiar warning against the evils of the double standard inherent in advocating local mediocrity over imported "genius" and the evils of neglecting "decent" English prose. Here the Australian Author was a potentially suspicious self-promoter of dubious qualifications. While various ills were attributed to "many authors", no names or titles were cited in support of general arguments about falling standards and provincial geese lauded as swans:

The Australian writers, who are organising a week of intensive boosting of the Australian product, will have the full sympathy of the reading public in their attempts to interest their countrymen and sell their books to them, but the Australian public is hardly to be expected to adopt an attitude of economic nationalism in literature, and any boosting which aims to exclude books from abroad, or limit them (there have been several attempts to induce the Government to impose a high tariff) will not help the cause of the popularity sought by the authors who are organising the Week... Many authors have managed to gain some popularity, though unable to write decent English, or to put their ideas together with fluency and conviction.\textsuperscript{53}

Such criticisms, despite their inaccuracies and inconsistencies, were probably all to the good as they did, after all, constitute a form of public debate about the contemporary literary agenda, a debate which the organisers were at pains to promote but which might not otherwise have emerged given the lack of distance separating criticism from its object where the organisers themselves were concerned. In fact, the FAW carefully collected all articles on the Week that appeared in the press and pasted them into a makeshift scrapbook.\textsuperscript{54} Barnard's final assessment was that they had received "a good deal of publicity" and that

\textsuperscript{52}Brian Penton, "The Sydney Spy: Why a Good Book's Rare", \textit{The Telegraph}, 8 April 1935.
\textsuperscript{53}"A Thought for Authors' Week", \textit{The Sun}, 30 March 1935: 4.
\textsuperscript{54}See Box K22109, FAW Papers ML MSS 2008.
Flora Eldershaw and Frank Dalby Davison at the Authors' Ball,

David Jones, 14 May 1938

the FAW was "pretty satisfied with the effort, financially and otherwise".\textsuperscript{55}

The shape of the literary careers of Barnard and Eldershaw over the following years again illustrates the extent to which they rewrote or reworked the concept of the Australian author to encompass a multiplicity of literary and cultural projects. Under Eldershaw's 1935 term as president of the FAW, moves were initiated to develop better relations between authors and the ABC. Barnard wrote to Nettie Palmer that W.J. Cleary from the ABC wanted "to achieve a closer relationship between the writers - through the Fellowship of Australian Writers - & the Commission and he is willing to provide facilities for anyone who wants to study the technique of writing for broadcasting by letting them attend rehearsals etc and see for themselves what are the possibilities and limitations of the medium".\textsuperscript{56} Both Barnard and Eldershaw gave many talks on Australian literature on both the ABC and commercial stations over the next few years and Eldershaw even briefly considered leaving teaching for a career in broadcasting. The two also involved themselves in considerations about the relationship of writers to the various aspects of radio production. As an executive member of the FAW, Eldershaw was called upon to consider the question of royalties paid to poets whose work was featured on programmes like the ABC's Poetry Sessions. Barnard corresponded with the ABC on the issue of the particular constraints upon the writing of short stories for broadcast purposes. Reporting the findings of the FAW's committee, she explained that

\[\text{no serious writers would accept an arbitrary time limit on their work} \ldots\]

\textsuperscript{55} M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 9 April 1935 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4642].
\textsuperscript{56} M. Barnard to N. Palmer, 6 August 1935 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4745].
fact that radio is a very fugitive form of publication inclined to prevent serious writers taking an interest in it, and if in addition a narrow time limit was fixed, writers were further discouraged from using the medium.  

Eldershaw and Frank Dalby Davison subsequently formed a delegation to conduct talks with the ABC on this issue. The effort to negotiate relations between authors and sectors of the wider community was a constant feature of Barnard and Eldershaw's literary activities. They involved themselves, for example, in the teaching or promotion of Australian literature through Extension Board classes at Sydney University and through the school curriculum. In 1938, Eldershaw was an FAW delegate to the "Conference on Education for a Progressive, Democratic Australia" and she continued to monitor the inclusion or otherwise of Australian literature in the school syllabus. In response to an Education Department request to the FAW, she compiled a list of Australian books suitable for use in schools and in the School Magazine. She was also active in winning better rates of pay for those whose work appeared in the magazine and in 1943, at the request of the Director of Education, she joined Frank Dalby Davison and Margaret Trist on a committee to work with the editor of the School Magazine in securing suitable material for publication by Australian writers.  

Barnard for her part acted on occasions as a judge for the FAW Schools' Essay Competition, a duty that was not without ironies of its own. In 1939 Barnard recorded in her judge's report that two students' work was disqualified because they had plagiarised their essays from M. Barnard Eldershaw's Essays in Australian Fiction.  

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57 Recorded in minutes of FAW executive meeting 2 June 1942 [Box K22117, FAW Papers ML MSS 2008].
58 See, letter from Secretary of Education Department to Catherine Lindsay, 18 October 1938 [Box K22109, FAW Papers ML MSS 2008] and minutes of executive meeting, 25 May 1943 [Box 22117, FAW Papers ML MSS 2008].
59 M. Barnard, Judge's Report, 1939 FAW Schools' Essay Competition [Box K22109, FAW Papers ML MSS 2008].
The Sesquicentenary celebration of 1938 was another occasion of considerable interest and activity for Barnard and Eldershaw. Eldershaw delivered a series of Sesquicentenary lectures on Australian literature at the University of Sydney. She was also head of the Literary Sub-Committee for the 150th Anniversary Celebrations and responsible for editing *The Peaceful Army*, a volume of essays intended to give public recognition to the role played by women in the first 150 years of European settlement. Correspondence between contributors indicates that the memorial volume was in fact a genuinely collective effort by all concerned. A number of sub-committee meetings were held to determine the nature and constitution of the volume, and Miles Franklin's advice and support was frequently sought on these occasions. It was Franklin who ultimately secured Helen Simpson's contribution and who advised on locating a portrait of Catherine Helen Spence. Barnard, who was a member of the sub-committee, was frequently delegated to invite people to these meetings and to assist Eldershaw in following up promised contributions solicited largely from their own circle of literary acquaintances, among them Eleanor Dark, Mary Gilmore, and Dymphna Cusack. It was also Barnard who devised the name eventually used for the collection. Barnard and Eldershaw, in company with Frank Dalby Davison, were also responsible for judging the 150th Anniversary Literary Competition in which they awarded the prize for the best novel published in 1937 to Xavier Herbert's *Capricornia*. Herbert later credited his three judges with "discovering" him, although they would not have found his accompanying description especially flattering:

There were really three judges; but the other two were female (Marjorie Barnard and Flora Eldershaw) to whom FDD seemed to be related as a rooster to a brace of hens - rather a Bantam rooster to a large Black Orpington & a larger Red
Judging literary competitions was a duty which often fell to Barnard and Eldershaw, as well as other members of the FAW, but they could not be accused of simply taking care of their own, as became clear in Eldershaw's judging of the Sesquicentenary Essay Competition, a task which yielded comic results. Barnard recounted the embarrassing details to Nettie Palmer:

Tom [Inglis] Moore with a smooth piece of special pleading on 'A Quartette [sic] of Australian Poets' tied for second with an essay on Thomas Mann. He arrived promptly on Teenie's doormat to enquire why he had not won first prize. The man who did win first prize - with a very thoughtful & well balanced piece of work also on Australian poets - turned out to be a septuagenarian pastry cook at Parramatta. If you know Tom you'll see how funny that is. Poor Tom.\[61\]

The importance of that duty, particularly for the recipients of the various awards, should not be underestimated. Like Herbert, Melbourne writer John Morrison spoke of the significance for his career of winning the "Production Front" category of the FAW's 1943 short story competition judged by Eldershaw, George Farwell, and W. Gollan.\[62\] Indeed, such awards often provided crucial peer recognition in the early stages of writer's careers, effectively making 'authors' of them.

\[60\] Xavier Herbert to Hal Porter, 17 October 1966 [Hal Porter Papers, ML MSS 794/54].
\[61\] M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, c. May 1938 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5391].
\[62\] Interview with John Morrison, St Kilda, Melbourne, 23 March 1990.
CHAPTER SIX

Culture and Government

"Politically, I'm afraid, I'm an irresponsible. I have no politics, only a political philosophy held (at places) with passion".
Marjorie Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 29 April 1938

"On behalf of the Fellowship of Australian Writers I wish to express our appreciation of your comments in the recent debate in the House on the Commonwealth Literary Fund. We feel, particularly, that accusations under the privileges of the House against distinguished Australians in the field of creative literature negate the very principles of our democracy".
Phyllis Aylward, Secretary, FAW to R. G. Menzies, 5 September 1953

The increasing politicisation of the writing project was fundamental to the role Barnard and Eldershaw sought for the Australian author. The furore surrounding the 1934 visit of Egon Kisch saw the departure of a number of the key conservative members of the FAW and specifically the resignation of George Mackaness from the presidency. The presidencies of Eldershaw, Frank Dalby Davison, and Bartlett Adamson in the years 1935-1938 and the amalgamation with the more explicitly left-wing Writers' Association (or League) in early 1938 together signalled a change in direction and policy for the Fellowship and its members. In the words of Jean Devanny, "the executive committee sparkled with the leading names of the Australian literary field . . . [and] the new Fellowship went ahead with all the verve of the old Writers Association, all the functions of which were taken over". This change in direction was to become more explicit in the platforms adopted by the FAW in the face of the rise of Fascism and the Second World War and the particular crises of commitment those events

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1 Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5380.
2 FAW Papers, Correspondence, Box K22112, ML MSS 2008.
brought to the various members. Eldershaw's personal political sympathies have seldom been the subject of much speculation. John Morrison remembered Eldershaw as "socially and politically inclined to the left",4 while her pro-Soviet stance and her involvement in the Peace Movement earned her a slim, unspectacular ASIO file. Barnard's allegiances are rather more problematic. At times she appeared less than comfortable when taking a stand and in later life frequently denied ever having any interest in politics whatsoever. In general, her account of her political allegiances shifted between assertions of possessing no politics at all and the now familiar characterisation of herself as a nineteenth century liberal, a legacy, she suggested, of her time as a student of George Arnold Wood. Drusilla Modjeska gives a clearer picture in *Exiles At Home* where she details Barnard's shift to the left during the 1930s, her attachment to Aldous Huxley's *Ends and Means* ("that book 'Ends and Means' is like a shock under my mind"5), and her increasing adherence to a policy of non-violence or passive resistance. Modjeska also describes Barnard's work with the Peace Pledge Union and their magazine *Fact*, and her attempts to publish her pacifist pamphlet "The Case For the Future". In several interviews late in life, Barnard denied that she ever joined the Labor Party,6 but her letters to Nettie Palmer clearly establish that in 1940 she joined the Lane Cove branch of the NSW ALP, and that this was the result of a keenly felt need to become involved in the events taking shape around her. "Today is remarkable for two events", she wrote to Nettie Palmer on 13th February. "I am being received into the local branch of the ALP and 'The Life and Times of Captain John Piper' has arrived in all its

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4Interview with John Morrison, St Kilda, Melbourne, 23 March 1990.
5M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 29 April 1938 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5380].
glory". A few weeks later she made explicit the connection between this act and her other involvements at the time when she again wrote to Nettie that "I've joined the ALP. The ideological roots (so to speak) of this will be on view presently I hope in my pamphlet". In response to a query from Nettie, she added, "No my character isn't changing. I'm just taking a reef in it out of a pigheaded & perhaps fantastic sense of duty". By April she had developed a world-weary tone when describing her work for the Peace Pledge Union magazine and the ALP Education Committee:

So Teenie thinks I'm overworked! I don't know about that. Not really. There's the house . . . And jobs - Fact, and playlets for the ALP Educ. Committee (which get censored anyway) . . . and fruitless efforts to sell stories . . . All tiring but in this sort of world it would be sheer exhibitionism to claim that that was overwork.

In September 1940 she was busy "electioneering" and writing brief notes for Progress, the free newspaper of the North Sydney Council for Unemployed and Relief Workers. This level of activity is a far cry from her 1934 assertion that she found it "delightful to have no political party and so be able to throw stones at them all". However, as Rob Watts has argued, ALP policy in the years of the Second World War saw a marked coalescence of liberal and ALP values, effectively diminishing the distance between Barnard's long held views and those of the party she chose to work for.

That "fantastic sense of duty" Barnard spoke of was present at the

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7M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 13 February 1940 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5703].
8M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, Tuesday (c. March 1940) [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5744].
9M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 29 April 1940 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5757].
10M. Barnard to Eleanor Dark, 5 September 1940 [Eleanor Dark Papers, Correspondence 1923-43, NLA MSS 4998].
11M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 8 July 1934 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4469].
same time in the combined political activities of Barnard and Eldershaw within the Fellowship of Australian Writers. Recent events in Europe and at home had underscored for them the politically sensitive, if not central, role of the writer in a climate of major upheaval and social change. The furore surrounding the visit of Egon Kisch whom Barnard heard speak at a meeting in Newcastle and Nettie Palmer's campaigning in support of the Republican government in Spain reinforced the notion that to be involved in writing was necessarily to be involved in politics. The growing Fascist movement represented to them a politicisation of culture in a negative and threatening sense and it had to be met by a strong assertion of the writer's combined intellectual, cultural, and political purpose. Debate over writing and its relationship to politics was by no means new to Barnard and Eldershaw. Their salon had fostered discussion along those lines and the FAW was moving increasingly to seeing itself having a genuine role as a lobby group. In Barnard's words, "the FAW, large and shambling & disrupted as it is, has been developing some power".13 Barnard and Eldershaw had been party too to the various anti-censorship campaigns in the 1930s, an ironic position given that both were soon to suffer in various ways at the hands of wartime censors. Responding to Nettie Palmer's request for support, Barnard replied enthusiastically that

Frank [Dalby Davison] sent me a copy of your letter to him about the latest move in the Anti-Censorship Campaign. Naturally Teenie and I are ready to cooperate in this movement in any way we can and gladly accept your invitation to come onto the Committee. Perhaps you would like this formally set forth. I'll enclose something you can lay before your committee if you wish to. Have you been driven to the empirical method by the imperviousness of the official mind to principal [sic]?14

Probably the most explicit expression of the nexus between

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13 M. Barnard to Vance Palmer, 20 October 1938 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5451].
14 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 5 April 1933 [sic- but should read 1937] [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5252].
writing and politics occurred in the FAW's efforts to collect and publish a collection of statements and essays in the volume *Writers in Defence of Freedom*. First mention of the collection in Barnard's correspondence occurs on 6 November 1938 where she wrote to Nettie Palmer that

There's talk - this is strictly confidential - of bringing out a writer's testament, a declaration for democracy and peace. The idea came from Jean Devanny and is being beaten out at the FAW executive. There's a sub-committee of five (our gang well represented Flora, Frank, me) to make a recommendation to the executive.

She alluded to the difficulties involved in deciding just what shape such a testament should take, given the differing political philosophies present among the members of the sub-committee:

Jean & I are in head on collision about it. She is all for keeping it large & vague & getting everybody to hold up their hand for peace & democracy. Of course everybody would, Joe Lyons would himself & it would mean just about nothing, an album full of pious aspirations. I'd like to see something more in the shape of a battering ram, strongly left, with co-ordinated contents and a manifesto or testament that every writer who agrees with it can sign.15

Barnard was clearly in favour of confining the exercise to a statement made primarily by writers, rather than an appeal from a popular front, on the grounds that such an exercise might have greater effect and carry greater authority. However, even to include just the writers of their circle meant including a wide range of communist, liberal anti-fascist, and pacifist viewpoints. Barnard's suggestions for the project were adopted and Eldershaw, Jean Devanny, and Frank Dalby Davison were given the responsibility of editing the collection. The volume was to bear a dedication to Henry Lawson, Tom Collins, and "those other writers who set the tradition of Australian freedom and fellowship",16 again placing these writers as part of a pre-existing democratic

15 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 6 November 1938 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5:57].
16 "Writers in Defence of Freedom", unpublished typescript [FAW Papers ML MSS 2008, Box K22104].
tradition. Requests for contributions were made to various prominent writers and the FAW produced a lengthy Prefatory Statement which was forwarded to writers and intellectuals generally for their endorsement. The Victorian branch of the FAW, possibly offended at not having been invited to play a more substantial role in the endeavour, took the opportunity to rewrite the Prefatory Statement on the grounds that is was badly written. The statement contained a strongly worded condemnation of authoritarianism, militarism, infringements of civil liberties, suppression of free thought and utterance, and the use of violence as an instrument of government. It also contained specific references to local conditions, condemning perceptible shifts in Australian society:

Authoritarian tendencies are gaining ground in all democratic countries. Whether the trend shown by certain events in Australian social and political life is deliberate or not, it does disclose that the way to dictatorship is being made easy. This drift is indicated by the customs censorship that restricts access to the world of ideas; the making of repressive laws, or of laws so wide in their powers that they may be used repressively; the increasing power of the executive division of government shown by the creation of inner cabinets; the disposition of governments to maintain secrecy on vital issues; the increasing authority of the executive; the long periods of parliamentary recess; the extension or attempted extension of the duration of parliaments and the constant encroachment upon the right of the citizen to have his rights and liabilities determined in public Courts of Law. We have also seen the formation of semi-military bodies likely to be used for unconstitutional purposes.17

Contrary to the views expressed in The Publicist which had suggested that they were "eminently unqualified", these writers clearly considered not only that they could speak with authority on the issues raised, but that they had a responsibility to do so. Contributors to the volume included Miles Franklin, Leonard Mann, Brian Penton, Vance Palmer, Brian Fitzpatrick, Sir Isaac Isaacs, Dulcie Deamer, and Dymphna Cusack. That the volume grew out of a genuine sense of crisis, both

17"Prefatory Statement" to "Writers in Defence of Freedom", unpublished t/script [FAW Papers ML MSS 2008, Box K22104].
cultural and ideological, on the part of these writers is demonstrated in Barnard's account of the difficulties and despair she and Eldershaw encountered in producing their own contribution, "Liberty and Violence", while returning by ship from a holiday in Tasmania:

We had a tortured two days in the ship trying to plan our contribution. Nothing come of it for we could not agree. Everyday reality moves further away from my political philosophy, yet I cannot bring myself to abandon the beliefs that are part of my flesh. My mind is a gulf of black melancholy - but that I know well is a luxury to which I have no right. I have suggested to Teenie that she abandon me to my lost causes & take her own line over her own name, but she is reluctant. It is a little absurd that, under the circumstances & intellectually placed as we are, we should be contributing to such a book at all.18

The volume, although edited to publication point, failed to appear. The official reason cited was paper shortages, but it was generally believed within the FAW that world events and government policy had overtaken them and that Angus and Robertson had possibly developed cold feet.

Government policy was increasingly the subject of FAW action as wartime conditions made inroads on a writer's ability to continue with her or his writing. The FAW Papers again reveal the extent to which Barnard and Eldershaw, together with Frank Dalby Davison played a major role in developing FAW policy on political and cultural issues and in consolidating the FAW's position as an articulate and informed political lobby group. That these writers felt both justified and qualified in relation to their various representations to the Federal government is exemplified in the remarks which prefaced a 1942 FAW letter to H.V. Evatt which contained a series of resolutions concerning Fascism and recent attacks on communists. "By reason of its composition, and the nature of the work and activities of the mass of its members", they wrote, "the Fellowship is able to speak with authority,

18M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 20 January 1939 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5488].
regarding the subject on which it now addresses the Federal Government".\textsuperscript{19} It is not surprising, then, that they were quick to respond to the dangerous and ironic implications of the Federal Government's war-time National Security Acts. The original National Security Act passed on 8 September 1939 may at first have seemed general and open-ended in that it simply empowered the government to make regulations on "any subject which might plausibly be linked with the defence of the Commonwealth or the efficient prosecution of the war".\textsuperscript{20} However, as additional sections were added, it rapidly became apparent that the National Security Act threatened to impose at home the very same forms of repression that Australia was supposedly fighting against abroad. The FAW was quick to respond to those sections which impinged on the writer's ability to carry out her or his work. They were particularly concerned with regulations numbers 41-44 which could make it unlawful to exercise the basic freedoms of speech, press, and assembly, but they reserved their most sustained criticism for regulation 42 which declared that

A person shall not endeavour, whether orally or otherwise, to influence public opinion (whether in Australia or elsewhere) in a manner likely to be prejudicial to the defence of the Commonwealth or the efficient prosecution of the war; or to do any act or have any article in his possession with a view to making or facilitating the making of any such endeavour.\textsuperscript{21}

Interestingly, the Australian form of this particular section was far more draconian and inclusive than that of Britain or any other Commonwealth country at the time. In May 1940 Barnard was largely responsible for drafting the FAW's letter to Menzies condemning those National Security regulations like number 42 which permitted, among other things, the confiscation of property considered "subversive".

\textsuperscript{19}Letter from the FAW to H.V. Evatt, 20 July 1942 [FAW Papers ML MSS 2008, Box K221111].
\textsuperscript{21}Dorothy Fitzpatrick, "Six Years of National Security": 2.
Despite the war on Fascism that was being waged abroad, this legislation was being used in practice to target left-wing rather than right-wing forms of 'subversion'. Barnard was supported in her work by both Eldershaw and Frank Dalby Davison. Entitled "Freedom of Speech, the Press and Association", the statement called for the reversal of the government's current policy and outlined the Fellowship's position on freedom of speech and censorship. Barnard's draft read as follows:

In Germany we have seen the tragic results that follow from the suppression of these liberties. After eight years of Fascist Government there is no literature in Germany, her world figures have been driven into exile, imprisoned, silenced. A great literature has died with its freedom. Men, even if they consent, cannot write under such conditions and neither edict nor prize can recreate what is lost.

We are, then, as writers, deeply concerned in this matter of freedom for our existence depends on it. We are not revolutionaries, for we speak only of what has been traditionally our right. Freedom and publicity are the foundations of that democracy for which, in this very hour, we are told to fight. Yet everywhere we see freedom of speech curtailed and freedom of conscience infringed - in the suppression of the Communist newspapers, in the drastic censoring of the Labour and Trade Union Press, in the curtailment of speakers' privileges in the Domain and elsewhere, in the censor's ban on broadcast plays dealing historically with Labour's [sic] war policy in 1914-1918 and sponsored by the Education Committee of the Australian Labor Party, in silencing through pressure on printers of all pamphlets likely to be unpalatable to the government - - This is only the beginning, but suffices for example ... The Fellowship of Australian Writers asks you, sir, as the political head of the nation, to uphold in practice that freedom which you are willing to support in theory, and to exert yourself to reverse a policy which is undermining the integrity of the community.22

While the terms of the statement were fairly general, the implications for writers working under these conditions are clear, as shown by the references to printers and to the censoring of radio plays which both find close parallels in Barnard's own recent experiences in attempting to publish her own pamphlet and in writing plays for the ALP Education Committee. According to Frank Dalby Davison, the FAW encountered some political difficulties over the letter. The Executive originally resisted the idea, while the membership delayed its finalising through

22 Minutes of the FAW Executive Meeting, 7 May 1940 [FAW Papers ML MSS 2008, Box K22109].
three meetings. Two members eventually resigned over it and Davison surmised that "the writing world is in the process of sorting itself into those who are prepared to do what they can for our traditional freedom of expression and those who are prepared to let the war solve anything". 23 When the Daily-News, among other papers, printed the letter in full on 20 May 1940, another member resigned, but twenty other people applied to join. Possibly as a response to the reticence of some of its members, the FAW in its circular for May 1940 reprinted that section of their constitution which outlined the FAW's responsibility to defend culture in Australia against censorship and any attempts to restrict freedom of speech and the free exchange of ideas. Copies of the final version of the letter were sent to every Federal member. The irony of the necessity for such action was not lost on these writers. As Barnard reported to Eleanor Dark, it was "curious that people who have been staunchly democratic all their lives should now have come to look upon our liberties as some sort of handicap, which 'ought' to be 'sacrificed' for 'the time being'. Protests may not get much hearing just now, but it seems to me that the main thing is to keep them up". 24

Eldershaw meanwhile was involved in documenting cases of property confiscated in police raids carried out under the Act. The FAW collected this information in order to make direct representation on behalf of individuals and cultural organisations like the New Theatre to the Federal Attorney-General, W.M. Hughes. Some of this experience no doubt provided the material for the police raid and

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23 F.D. Davison to Eleanor Dark, 14 June 1940 [Eleanor Dark Papers, NLA MSS 4998, Correspondence 1923-1943].
24 M. Barnard to Eleanor Dark, 6 June 1940 [Eleanor Dark Papers NLA MSS 4998, Correspondence 1923-43].
Domain meetings in *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow*. Eldershaw was also keen to remind the Attorney-General, as Davison had previously, "of the necessity for writers having in their libraries all shades of opinion as tools of trade", the confiscation of which could represent a serious diminishing of their ability to earn a living. Matters of censorship and cultural liberty were a source of major concern for both Barnard and Eldershaw. It was suggested at one point that Barnard subvert the censor's efforts at suppression by reading her pamphlet at one of the FAW's evening meetings, while Eldershaw became a vice-president of Bartlett Adamson's Central Cultural Council. The latter office appears to have fired the imagination of the security services as copies of a CCC flyer can be found in ASIO's file on Eldershaw's activities. Eldershaw was also a strong proponent of the FAW's pro-Soviet platform. She was invited to speak alongside Miles Franklin, Katharine Susannah Prichard, and Frank Dalby Davison at the Cultural Conference of the NSW Aid Russia Committee (pressure of work ultimately prevented her from attending) and during her 1943 term as FAW president she was responsible for conveying the following greetings to the Soviet Consul in Canberra:

> The FAW, assembled here in annual meeting on this great day, the 25th anniversary of the birth of the Red Army, sends fraternal greetings to the writers of the USSR who, by word and deed, have so vitally supported the Red Army . . .

> The sense of an assembled group and the possibility of a collective

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25Minutes of the FAW Executive Meeting, 6 August 1940 [FAW Papers, ML MSS 2008, Box K22109].

26Minutes of the General Meeting, 26 August 1941 [FAW Papers, ML MSS 2008, Box K22117]. This was put as a suggestion to the Talks Sub-Committee but there is no record of the reading taking place.

27FAW to Soviet Minister in Australia, M.P. Vlasev [FAW Papers, ML MSS 2008, Box K22106]. The FAW was generally pro-Soviet in its policies following the Soviet Union's entry into the war in 1941, particularly as the FAW had always maintained a strong anti-fascist position and presumably saw the Soviet Union as the major anti-fascist force among the allies. The FAW was affiliated with the NSW Aid Russia Committee.
Written on the back of this photo was the following note:

"Melbourne Oct 1939
Dear Marjorie,
I do hope your eyes are well enough to feast on this portrait of Prince's Bridge"
Love N.P."

Barnard replied that she "had no idea the scenery on Prince's Bridge was so fine!...The snap is rather nice of you but what an extraordinary expression Teenie is wearing. She uttered a howl of chagrin when I showed it to her."

[M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 31 October 1939 NLA MSS 1174/1/5612]
statement appears to have been a vital support to these writers at this time. Corresponding with Eleanor Dark on the subject of censorship, Barnard spoke in terms of the "honour" she felt in being able to "put [their] hands to the same plough".28 As the war continued, the need for such solidarity only increased, particularly once the impact upon them as individual writers began to be apparent. Unable to publish her pamphlet, Barnard sent her own copy to the Palmers and the Darks in the hope of receiving comments and reactions. Similarly, copies of Eric Dark's article "Property and Health" were also circulated, Barnard referring to it as "the most valuable thing any of us have done" and claiming to "know stacks of people to whose education it is so very necessary".29 For many of them, however, the war represented a major rupture in their writing careers, either directly through changes in occupational circumstances or indirectly through the creative bloc it induced in those like Dark. Barnard summed up their plight when sympathising with Dark over her particular difficulties:

Sorry you're not writing. That's bad. Why, you are almost the only one of us left standing. You & Kylie. Vance is all snarled up in earning a living. Frank & Len are overwhelmed...Xavier is in the army...And so it goes on. Hell of a world, isn't it? Sir George Julius came to inspect me in my new job. He said: "You do other things, don't you? You write?" I, feeling very low, said "Not now". He said: "No-one has anything but the war now". We looked at one another. Our hands hung down. I haven't changed my spots & I don't think you have either...30

The FAW in its many activities arguably represented a form of collective protest that could continue to function where individual voices failed to be heard or were silenced by circumstance or censorship. The network of correspondence which had developed among many of these

28M. Barnard to Eleanor Dark, 11 June 1940 [Eleanor Dark Papers, NLA MSS 4998, Correspondence 1923-43].
29M. Barnard to Eleanor Dark, 12 October 1940 [Eleanor Dark Papers, NLA MSS 4998, Correspondence 1923-43].
30M. Barnard to Eleanor Dark, Sunday 1942 [Eleanor Dark Papers, NLA MSS 4998, Correspondence 1923-43].
same writers fulfilled a similar function by providing a free space for the workshopping of those ideas and strategies which were denied wider currency under wartime conditions. The letters served as a site where allegiances could be tested, opposition gauged, and defences — articles and statements — collectively produced. Not that the correspondence was without tensions of its own. Barnard’s position on the war had been fostered by her reading of Huxley’s *Ends and Means* which supported her own pacifist stance. This stance, developed and tested in her letters, divided her from Nettie Palmer who, following the experience of Spain, upheld a people’s right to defend themselves against attack. This awkwardness with Nettie brought about a break in their correspondence, which in turn resulted in Barnard developing a closer relationship with Eleanor Dark, with whom she corresponded more frequently in the early years of the war and with whom she clearly felt herself to be in sympathy.

It is not the case, however, that all negotiations and communications between writers and the government were of an admonitory nature. Shortly after the outbreak of war, the FAW, convinced that writers could play a constructive part in the national war effort, wrote to the Prime Minister and asked him to indicate how they, as writers, could best contribute. When they received no reply to this request, they set about formulating a further request for a group of established writers to be commissioned to study the fighting and home fronts on the spot as this, they considered, would be "conducive to creation of an interpretive war literature (not necessarily for immediate

31See, for example, Carole Ferrier, ed. *As Good As A Yarn With You: Letters Between Miles Franklin, Katharine Susannah Prichard, Marjorie Barnard, Flora Eldershaw and Eleanor Dark* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
publication) which would be of immense value to Australia in the future.".32 Partial agreement was given to this scheme by Curtin and one of the works to result from it was *Bird of Paradise*, Jean Devanny's account of the home front during the war years. They also approached the government on the issue of paper shortages, arguing the necessity for supporting and maintaining the local publishing industry in the face of wartime shortages. In particular, they questioned the established priorities of the federal government's Book Committee, urging that preference be given to allocating paper for the publication of works by Australian writers. Eleanor Dark put the case succinctly in an interview with Jean Devanny:

Unfortunately, when the writer has done his job to-day, delivering a book into the hands of the publishers, publication factors often short-circuit his efforts and prevent it from fulfilling its natural purpose. The paper shortage and the illogical use being made of such paper as is available is stultifying the writer's war contribution to a great extent. And manpower problems too. It is like ploughing cabbages into the ground. Wasteful from every point of view.

We hear a lot of talk about morale. A lot of trouble is gone to to supply a sort of synthetic morale and at the same time the creative writing which is one of the most important natural sources of a nation's morale is bottle-necked.33

The close relationship between cultural and political agendas was further expressed in the FAW's stand on Reconstruction, an area in which both Barnard and Eldershaw took a particularly active interest. The FAW was interested in exploring the role of writers in Reconstruction, an issue which featured on their agenda from 1941, and which continued as an FAW platform under Eldershaw's presidency in 1943. The views of the FAW, however, were occasionally somewhat at odds with those of the government. In a rather peremptory response to a 1941 request for co-operation from the Reconstruction Division of the

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32 "Writers and the War", Minutes of FAW Quarterly General Meeting, 24 February 1942. [FAW Papers ML MSS 2008, Box K22109].
Department of Labour and National Service, the FAW Executive, of which Eldershaw was a member, suggested that

the development of culture in Australia cannot progress as it should for the benefit of the Australian people so long as the economic structure of our society is based on the profit motive, and that it is the Fellowship's opinion that by the elimination of the profit motive the cultural life of this country can be developed to the benefit of the whole community.34

A similar case for Australia's future had been put by Barnard and Eldershaw in their book *My Australia* (1939) where they claimed that "nothing corrupts a people more quickly and surely than the opportunity to make a profit out of their fellows".35 They were evidently not uncomfortable with the role of writer as social critic. Barnard did, however, support the concept of writers playing a part in Reconstruction and led an FAW Saturday Members' Meeting in a discussion of "The Writer and Reconstruction".36 This occurred at the same time that Eldershaw left her teaching job to join the Division of Post-War Reconstruction within the Department of Labour and National Service. Indeed, as a committed pacifist, Eldershaw considered working towards Australia's post-war reconstruction an acceptable alternative to more direct support of the war effort. Under Eldershaw's 1943 presidency, an FAW sub-committee on Reconstruction was established to draft a series of proposals on the subject. The committee ultimately produced a fifteen point plan that covered the development of a Department of Culture within the federal government, international writers' exchanges, an annual Commonwealth prize for Australian literature, the development of workplace and community arts schemes, the introduction of Australian literature as a compulsory subject in

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34Minutes of the FAW Quarterly General Meeting, 16 August 1941 [FAW Papers ML MSS 2008, Box K22105]. Ironically, this is also the Department in which Eldershaw was working at the time.
36Catherine Lindsay to M. Barnard, 14 July 1941 [FAW Papers ML MSS 2008, Box K22110].
secondary schools and universities, the introduction of half-time school and college teaching positions for established writers, and the incorporation into the Australian Constitution of clauses guaranteeing freedom of expression and speech in the interests of culture and democracy.\textsuperscript{37}

The issue of writers and the government working for one another was not in fact an initiative born solely of wartime conditions. The desire for positive government intervention in the writing field was present in the FAW's successful 1938 bid to gain government subsidies for writers under an expanded Commonwealth Literary Fund scheme. Working from a suggestion from their treasurer, Alex Bookluck, the FAW in 1938 formed a committee consisting of Alex Bookluck, Barnard, Eldershaw, Frank Dalby Davison, I.K. Sampson, Will Lawson, and Miles Franklin to "consider the matter of a Government subsidy to be paid to writers".\textsuperscript{38} Eldershaw was to become one of the main architects and lobbyists for their proposals for an expanded Commonwealth Literary Fund (CLF) or "Council of Literature" to fund and promote the writing, reading, and teaching of Australian literature. The original CLF, founded in 1908, was operated by an Advisory Board of three and had been primarily responsible over the years for the administering of a limited number of literary pensions. Under the proposal made by the FAW committee for an expansion of CLF functions, it was envisaged that writers' efforts would for the first time be subsidised by writing grants and that the Advisory Board would be expanded to include representatives of the writing community. Other key proposals included publishing subsidies, funding for annual lecture

\textsuperscript{37}Plans for Post-War Reconstruction", Fellowship (June 1944): 2.
\textsuperscript{38}Minutes of FAW Meeting, 16 May 1938 [FAW Papers, ML MSS 2008, Box K22104].

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series, and the establishment of a Chair of Australian Literature.\textsuperscript{39} It was an attempt to convince the government of its responsibilities in relation to the national literature and initial plans advocated requesting something in the range of £40,000, a figure that was later revised to £20,000. While the writers of the FAW were confident of the merit of their ideas, the daily press was rather more cynical. Under the headline, "Books and Bureaucrats", The Daily Telegraph made the following series of wry observations:

Some Australian writers are inviting the Federal Government to begin publishing their books.

Their intentions are good. They think the plan would assist Australian literature to develop.

The kind of literature sponsored by a Government which has banned some of the finest current writings is not likely to be much good.

So, for the writers' own sakes, and for the sake of the ideal they are so energetically prosletysing (sic), it is a good job the Government has no interest in literature and is not likely to take their proposition seriously.\textsuperscript{40}

Such predictions did not deter the FAW from sending a delegation comprising Eldershaw, Bartlett Adamson, and Frank Dalby Davison to Canberra to put their case personally to the Prime Minister (Lyons) and the Leader of the Opposition (Curtin) immediately prior to the 1938 Budget Estimates Debate. During two days of meetings, the delegation spoke with various members of the Government and the Opposition, the Treasurer and Minister for Customs. They had chosen to stay at the Hotel Kurrajong which proved to be fortunate as it afforded them additional opportunities to meet socially with Curtin and other members

\textsuperscript{39}A brief history of the CLF is provided in Helping Literature in Australia: The Work of the Commonwealth Literary Fund 1908-1966 (Canberra: Commonwealth Government Printer, 1967). The booklet was prepared, however, by Arthur Grenfell-Price, an arch conservative appointed to the Advisory Board by Menzies after the 1952 furore and the history therefore makes no reference whatsoever to the FAW's role, crediting Scullin (with whom they had negotiated) with the initiative for expanding the Fund.

\textsuperscript{40}"Books and Bureaucrats", The Daily Telegraph, 1 June 1938.
who lived there. From Curtin they managed to gain an assurance of full Labor Party support in both Houses should the current Government introduce the scheme and that they themselves would bring it forward in the event of a change of government. Lyons went so far as to state "definitely" that "in his opinion the responsibility lay with the Government, and that a Government unprepared to foster its national literature was certainly lagging behind in its proper task." 41

The deputation must have made a favourable impression on the politicians for in the following Estimates debates, despite significant increases to the defence budget, the fundamentals of the scheme were adopted and the annual budget for the CLF increased from £1,050 to £6,250. After a brief furore over the constitution of the membership of the Advisory Board, 42 Eldershaw and Davison representing Sydney and Vance Palmer and Frank Wilmot ("Furnley Maurice") from Melbourne were appointed to the Board. It appeared then that they had finally succeeded in gaining official endorsement of a broadly consensual notion of Australian culture and of their shaping and caretaking role in its future. Indeed, Canberra's endorsement of their project appeared to support that sense of a central public intellectual vocation which had developed out of their politicised sense of culture: the continuing atmosphere of cultural and ideological crisis had galvanised their

42 Following the death of Lyons, the Committee to administer the CLF came under the control of Menzies and instead of appointing the four representatives the FAW had been invited to nominate, they appointed S. Talbot Smith, Professor W.A. Osborne, and George Mackaness to the Advisory Board. The FAW protested strongly in the press that the appointed members "may have some distinction in law, teaching, and physiology, or some other special field but such a board should, for the effective administration of the fund, be composed of critics or creative writers of standing. If this were a plan to assist painters, musicians, scientific workers, or members of any profession or trade, the Government could not possibly have disregarded them as it is now disregarding writers." [Argus, 15 May 1939]. The Committee bowed to pressure remarkably quickly and accepted the original nominees as well.
understanding of the nature and role of the writer in relation to wider social, political, and cultural institutions. It was only later that the accompanying danger of accepting such a level of state intervention in a changing political environment became apparent. From the time of her appointment in 1939 until she retired from the position in 1953, Eldershaw was to work tirelessly as a member of the CLF's Advisory Board. Vance Palmer recalled that

I don't think any of those who sat on the Advisory Board would have any hesitation in saying that she was the most valuable member of it . . . she remembered all its complex transactions down to the last detail and could always be referred to in a difficulty. Her literary judgement was unerring: it was broadly based on her knowledge both of life and books. She was passionately devoted to the interests of the Literary Fund and was intent on keeping it from becoming one of those sapless and sterile bodics grow up round the arts like rushes round a spring.43

The minutes of Advisory Board meetings also reveal the nature of her particular contribution: explaining the fundamentals of authorship and the writing project to the politicians and bureaucrats responsible for administering the Fund. In one meeting, for example, where the issue of writer's incomes was under discussion, Eldershaw delicately pointed out that the fellowships were not intended to supplement a writer's existing income, but to free them temporarily from the need to undertake paid employment. "The point", she argued,"was not that they were making money from writing, but from other sources which prevented them from writing".44 She was also responsible on the other hand for explaining the mysteries of a government bureaucracy to the writers who hoped to gain its patronage. The minutes of a 1942 FAW Executive Meeting reveal that Eldershaw "gave a comprehensive, confidential report on the operations of the Commonwealth Literary

44Minutes of Combined Meeting of Committee and Advisory Board of Commonwealth Literary Fund, Parliament House, 21 March 1946: 3. [Palmer Papers, NLA MSS 1174/30/77].
Fund", while other FAW correspondence shows the extent to which she was willing to deal with individual writers' problems and queries in relation to grant applications and to the Fund generally. Eldershaw, Davison, and Miles Franklin formed a CLF sub-committee within the FAW to monitor progress and to formulate further proposals for the development of the Fund. Eldershaw was also responsible for publicising the activities of the CLF on a wider front. The first issue of Fellowship, the FAW's broadsheet newsletter, included an article by Eldershaw entitled "Govt Meets the Demand for Books", which detailed the plans for the Australian Pocket Library sponsored by the CLF:

The Commonwealth Literary Fund, in sponsoring the issue of the Australian Pocket Library, has sought to meet in some measure the widespread demand for Australian books that paper shortages and other wartime difficulties have left unsatisfied.

There is hardly a section of the community unrepresented in this demand, the Australian services, men and women, sick and well, free and imprisoned, Allied servicemen who want to know something of the new country or to send some expression of it home, men working in isolated areas on big war projects, and the civilian in his war job - we are all the reading public now.

Australian book publishing and the problems associated with it was another general area of concern. In 1943, when Eldershaw was again President of the FAW, the executive commenced an enquiry into the current problems in book publishing. In July of that year, they established the FAW Co-operative Publishing Society in an effort to resolve some of the immediate difficulties facing local writers, difficulties further exacerbated by wartime restrictions and shortages. The foundation members of the Co-op were Eldershaw, Frank Dalby Davison, Miles Franklin, Margaret Trist, Dulcie Deamer, Louis Esson, Bartlett Adamson, Katharine Susannah Prichard, George Farwell, and George Ashton. As Eldershaw outlined in her report to the members,

45 Minutes of FAW Executive meeting, 19 May 1942 [FAW Papers, ML MSS 2008. Box K22117].
the aims and objectives of the Co-op were:

To co-operate with the FAW in all measures deemed to be desirable as means of promoting the development of Australian and New Zealand Literature and of developing wider public interest in and recognition of such literature, and in particular, in the pursuance of these aims, to 'print, publish and sell books and other literary material of all descriptions written' (1) by Australians and New Zealanders and other residents of Australia and New Zealand and (2) by persons of non-Australian nationality and/or residence; to establish and operate reference and/or circulating libraries, and to engage in any other activities deemed desirable for advancing the objects of the society and permissible under the Co-operative Act.47

The aims of the Co-op were clearly similar to those of the FAW's earlier CLF and Reconstruction proposals, and while the Co-op ultimately failed to fulfil those objectives and was eventually disbanded in the 1950s, its very establishment represented a further effort to work collectively towards achieving more author-centred modes of production.

By the end of the war, it may well have seemed that this particular group of writers had succeeded in displacing any notion of the writer as a detached, inward-looking aesthete and had secured a significant role for themselves in Australia's postwar culture. Indeed, when Barnard and Eldershaw signed the Australian Peace Council's "Ban Atom Bomb" petition, they were cited prominently among the "cultural leaders" who had lent their support to the campaign. That this publicly-held political stance could become a liability or that their position and influence could possibly be questioned was initially signalled to them in 1947 when Sir Earle Page questioned in Parliament "the extent to which the Commonwealth Literary Fund [was] being used to subsidize Communists and former Communists in the production of

47President's Report, Minutes of FAW Meeting, August 1943 [FAW Papers, ML MSS 2008, Box K22117].
Australian literature". While the ensuing debate was, according to Leslie Haylen, incited by M.H. Ellis and "his employers at The Bulletin, who are haters of Labor and the Communists", and largely concerned with the political tendencies of former communist J.M. Rawlings who had been awarded a CLF grant to write a biography of Charles Harpur, Barnard's and Eldershaw's names were mentioned in passing and slurs were cast upon a number of writers with whom they were closely associated, including Jean Devanny. That such a discussion could take place at all indicated, however, that a new and unsettling direction was emerging in Australian politics, one that was a far cry from Leslie Haylen's 1943 FAW talk on "What Parliament Can Do For the Writer" and one that would have worrying implications for those involved in cultural activities.

The later and more damaging furore arose out of the 1952-53 Estimates debate in the House of Representatives and had a direct impact upon Barnard and Eldershaw. By 1952 the Cold War was well underway, its impact on Australian society signalled by our involvement in the Korean War and the fierce debate over the banning of the Communist party. It was within this context that William Wentworth, following the lead of Stan Keon, made several highly inflammatory, if ludicrously inaccurate, speeches on the subject of whether the CLF was "being honestly administered for the furtherance of Australian literature

50Devanny's researching of Bird of Paradise was described by Archie Cameron in the following manner: "I asked a question, upon notice, in the House quite a long time ago, about a well-known person named Jean Devaney [sic]. I do not think that it will be denied that she was a member of the Communist party. Yet, in the height of the war, when members of this Parliament could not enter certain areas, this woman was given a fellowship and permitted to enter those areas, where some of the most secret of our defence measures were being applied, allegedly for the purpose of writing a book on how people reacted under war conditions". Hansard, Reps, 8 May 1947: 15.
51"What Parliament Can Do For the Writer", Sunday Talk, 5 December 1943 [FAW Papers, ML MSS 2008, Box K22104].
or whether, in some way, it is under Communist influence and is being used as a means of providing sustenance for Communist authors and propagandists and the glorification of Communist ideas".\textsuperscript{52} The substance of Wentworth's claim was that approximately one third of all CLF fellowship holders either had been members of the Communist party or had had some association with it, and that their funding success was directly attributable to the political bias of the Advisory Board. In relation to Vance Palmer and Flora Eldershaw he asserted:

It may be that no member of the advisory board is a Communist; but one finds at its head Mr Vance Palmer and Miss Florence [sic] Eldershaw, neither of whom may be a member of the Communist party but both of whom have been associated with organisations in which Communists were prominent and which follow the Communist line. Both persons have done considerable service for the Communist party.\textsuperscript{53}

Guilt by association and by innuendo became the order of the day, as did the cruelly opportunistic conflation of "political" and "Communist party" which effectively rendered most of these writers' public activities immediately potentially subversive. While Wentworth's exaggerated claims were disputed in the House by Leslie Haylen and by Menzies (who chaired the political committee which administered the Fund), and in the press by Vance Palmer, Tom Inglis Moore and others, the personal nature of the attacks combined with the public nature of the debate to produce a situation where writers were "being butchered to make a political holiday".\textsuperscript{54} In a perversely gallant gesture, Wentworth paid particular attention to the women writers, singling out Kylie Tennant, Katharine Susannah Prichard, and Marjorie Barnard for


\textsuperscript{53}Wentworth, Hansard, Reps, 28 August 1952: 727.

\textsuperscript{54}Vance Palmer, "Literary Award Funds: 'Personal Attacks' by Politicians", The Sydney Morning Herald, 18 September 1952.
detailed mention. Several speeches in Hansard are devoted to his claim that Barnard had misled the Fund as to the nature of the project for which she had received a CLF fellowship in 1941. Barnard had originally applied for a grant to write an historical novel and had later notified the Fund that the project (Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow) was now to be a novel of the present day written within a futuristic framework. Wentworth demanded to know

How is it that, when a fellowship is granted for an historical research work, a trashy, tripey novel, with a Marxist slant, appears in its place . . . How is it that a fellowship is issued to Miss Marjorie Barnard, and then the work that is supposed to be subsidized is written, not by her, but by her in collaboration with a lady who is one of the five members of the Advisory Board?55

He also expended a good deal of energy intimating that sections of her book, Macquarie's World, were secretly plagiarised from the manuscript of M.H. Ellis' book on Macquarie and that her book ("a cheap pot boiler") had received assistance from the Fund in preference to Ellis' on account of their respective political affiliations.56 Wentworth was clearly misinformed on this point as Macquarie's World had not in fact received a publishing subsidy from the CLF. However, innuendo reigned supreme, and he went on to claim that "all those matters call for investigation".

Wentworth's various conspiracy theories might have had little impact but for the glee with which they were taken up by the press. Indeed, probably no other issue in Australian literature before or since has attracted the same coverage. Helen Palmer, who was at that time living in Sydney, commented that "the local papers are concentrating on Wentworth's, rather than Keon's, splurges, which means Marjorie B.

55 Wentworth, Hansard, Reps, 4 September 1952: 1036.
56 It was revealed that Barnard had been given access to Ellis' manuscript by Franx Dalby Davison while it was under review by the Advisory Board.
rather than Judah [Waten]". She added that "Wentworth's prestige, however, could hardly be lower".57 In The Sydney Morning Herald on August 29, Wentworth's accusations over the two Macquarie books were summarised under the headline "'Red' Authors and Professors - Lively Debate in House".58 While Ellis was not named, the author of the alleged "pot boiler" was identified, although the book was incorrectly attributed to M. Barnard Eldershaw instead of Barnard alone. After his renewed attack the following week, the Herald again named Barnard, this time in a context where it was implied that she had received more funding than she had been entitled to, that she had knowingly misled the Fund, and that she was involved in some kind of cover-up over the supposed funding of Macquarie's World. These two articles appeared on pages 3 and 4 of the newspaper, while the whole issue was also played out in detail on the Letters Page for several weeks. Wentworth used the Letters Page to make further unsubstantiated assertions including his famous reference to Katharine Prichard as "alias Mrs Thorssell [sic]",59 but most of the letters published supported the CLF and those writers who had received grants. Tom Inglis Moore in his letter suggested that Wentworth was "hopelessly confused in his almost mythical account of the Macquarie books mentioned. Factually the charges against the fund are merely laughable".60

Despite the obvious climate of prejudice and hysteria, the

57Helen Palmer to Nettie Palmer, c. September 1952 [Palmer Papers, NLA MSS 1174/1/8157].
58The professor referred to was Lord Lindsay who had served for several years with Communist armies in China and who had been appointed to the ANU. Keon is reported in the article to have said that "the National University had become a nest of Communists organising to subvert the educational institutions of Australia".
60T.I. Moore, "Literary Fund Decisions: Denial of Political Bias", The Sydney Morning Herald, 10 September 1952.
exchange of letters in the press represented an extended debate about the role of the writer and the relationship of literature and politics. Those who rallied behind the writers and the Advisory Board denied the claims of "political bias" and upheld the principle of literary freedom which was at stake. Many took the opportunity of countering the records of subversion related in Parliament with records of service to Australian letters. The Barnard Eldershaw "combination", for example, was hailed as "a decoration to Australian literature",\textsuperscript{61} while the Fund's non-partisan approach to supporting literary production was repeatedly demonstrated. The need for such a strong defence could be read, however, as something of an unfortunate and belated object lesson on the dangers of collapsing cultural and state responsibilities into one another and of soliciting and accepting government patronage in an uncertain and shifting political climate. Barnard arguably fared worse in this affair than Eldershaw over whom no specific case was made and whose position as a member of the CLF Advisory Board was frequently defended in Parliament and in the press. Indeed, Menzies' defence of the Advisory Board was as uncharacteristically vigorous as it was hypocritical. While he stated in Parliament his unqualified support for the members of the Advisory Board, publicly listing the individual merits of Palmer and Eldershaw, he had already some seven months previously ordered secret security checks on all writers applying for fellowships on the basis of his "meagre confidence in the Advisory Committee".\textsuperscript{62} He went on to order security checks on the Board members themselves. Unlike Prichard who considered legal action against Wentworth, Barnard's own response to the debate was somewhat muted. She appears to have made no attempt to defend herself publicly,

\textsuperscript{61}M.P.s' New Attack on Literary Fund', \textit{The Sydney Morning Herald}, 5 September 1952: 3.
\textsuperscript{62}See Richard Hall, "Menzies' Literary Lie": 3.
and her response in a letter to Judah Waten expresses frustration but little more:

We've had a bit of publicity in parliament recently as no doubt you've noticed, with all the facts wrong. Dirty bit of work. I've been advised to take no notice. My old enemy Ellis is obviously behind the attack on me & 'Macquarie's World'. Why do we write? It certainly isn't for money and scarcely for fame.63

However, Vance Palmer who was passing through Sydney at the time, wrote to Nettie that he found Marjorie "fairly bright, though knocked about a bit by the Wentworth business which is still in the Sydney papers, bitterly regretting she ever took a fellowship".64 Given that Barnard had never been fond of publicity and had generally depended upon Eldershaw as the "shop window" for their partnership, such accusations and embarrassingly public attention would no doubt have deeply disturbed her, and may have been partly responsible for her later reticence concerning her personal politics.

What the Parliamentary debate ultimately represented both for Barnard and Eldershaw and for the writers of their group generally was a radically conservative attack on the cultural agenda they had developed over the previous fifteen years. That criticism was the subject of a parody in The Austrovert magazine which commented ironically, if pointedly, on the new-found role of the parliamentarian as literary critic and cultural arbiter:

Canberra is lucky. It has a new literary magazine. Known locally as "Hansard No. 15", it is edited by Mr S.M. Keon, M.P., with an advisory board consisting of Messrs Mullens, Wentworth and Gullett. . . The main article is a stirring critique of Eric Lambert's "20,000 Thieves" by reviewer Stan Keon. This is ably supported by shorter pieces from Keon on the work of Judah Waten and Vance Palmer, while Wentworth devotes his section to the Misses

63 M. Barnard to Judah Waten, 31 August 1952 [Waten Papers, NLA MSS 4536/2/92].
64 Vance Palmer to Nettie Palmer, c. September 1952 [Palmer Papers, NLA MSS 1174/1/8210]. Ironically, at the time Barnard had hesitated over applying for a grant for fear of embarrassing or compromising Eldershaw in her position as a member of the Advisory Board.
Barnard and Eldershaw, Kylie Tennant and Dymphna Cusack... Hansard 15 shows that a healthy element - unrestrained vilification - is entering the field of Australian literature, quite unburdened with any suggestion of justification or veracity.65

The construction of the Australian writer projected throughout the debate was frequently alien to these writers' sense of their role and their place in Australian society. Such a meeting of literature and politics, mediated by the press and the parliament, might once have been desired by them as an indication both of the cultural centrality of their claims for the national literature and of the existence of a flourishing public sphere in which such issues could be debated. They had, after all, called for government intervention in the writing project through their original proposals for the CLF and they had striven for powerful patronage and for changes which would construct for them a position of cultural leadership where they would be responsible for creating, promoting, and defending Australian literature.

These claims were effectively cancelled by the nature of the Parliamentary debate which separated the practice of literature from any wider political and cultural commitments by constructing the politically aware, left-liberal writer not as a valuable cultural producer, but as a cultural subversive. The body they had convinced of the importance of taking responsibility for the national literature was now so convinced as to wish to dictate the political preferences of those permitted to pursue it. Indeed, the government had developed its own preferred writing subject and its own model of a literary career. To some extent, the writers could have foreseen the possibility of such action: they had earlier witnessed the same government's response to Egon Kisch, they were aware of the position of writers like Bertold

65"Hansard", The Austrovert, October 1952: 1.
The Austrovert

NUMBER EIGHT
ONE SHILLING

HANSARD

Canberra is lucky. It has a new literary magazine.

Known locally as "Hansard No. 15," it is edited by Mr. S. M. Keon, M.L.A., with an advisory board consisting of Messrs. Mullens, Wentworth and Gullett.

Hansard 15, we may as well admit at the start, has a severe format and no pictures or art work. Its main charm lies in its vigorous review section.

The main article is a stirring critique of Eric Lambert's "20,000 Thieves" by reviewer Stan Keon. This is ably supported by shorter pieces from Keon on the work of Judith Waten and Vance Palmer, while Wentworth devotes his section to the Misses Barnard and Eldershaw, Kylie Tennant and Dymphna Cusack.

Though not a willing contributor, the Prime Minister (Mr. R. G. Menzies) himself makes an appearance in Hansard 15's pages. He revealed the fact that: "I have read one of John Morrison's books with great pleasure." He also cast doubt on many of the literary theories put forward by Mr. Keon.

Indeed, it shows great tolerance and breadth of mind for the editor, Mr. Keon, to allow such criticism to be printed in his own magazine. However (on page 7?) he explains his motto: "I have no desire to see literature put into a strait-jacket."

Hansard 15 shows that a healthy element — vigorous, unrestrained vilification — is entering the field of Australian literature, quite unburdened with any suggestion of justification or veracity.

The magazine, in view of the wide interest taken in it even by the daily press, should sell well. The annual sub. is only 4/- The editor has done a fine job indeed, and if he didn't get all his facts straight the first time, why worry? He can always try again. His life as a critic will undoubtedly last as long as his parliamentary privilege provides protection.

(For further comments, see page 4.)

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Brecht, Thomas Mann, and Heinrich Mann forced to flee the fascist regimes of Europe, and more recently the Fellowship had sent a formal letter of protest to the United States condemning the treatment of the so-called "Hollywood Ten". As Barnard herself had earlier observed in a letter to Eleanor Dark, "no time is inopportune for a protest - only, perhaps, for the protestor". It may be that they never imagined the domestic political climate shifting as rapidly as it did or, given their generally cordial dealings with Canberra and their sense of their own authority, that they believed themselves above or beyond attack from that direction. Their tendency to identify culture with politics may also have prevented them from imagining a situation in which the two concepts could function separately or in which one concept could be used to prescribe or limit the function of the other. While Stan Keon claimed he had "no desire to see literature put into a strait-jacket", it was clear that writers adopting politically resistant or oppositional stances and works of literature which challenged the prevailing political orthodoxy were not fit to be "subsidized at the expense of the taxpayers". Nor, despite the Prime Minister's even-handed, liberal protestations, were writers to be permitted to embarrass the government by their political activities. 'Literary' endeavour and the writer's role were reconstructed then under such close scrutiny and surveillance and in terms so narrow as to exclude altogether the possibility of representing any critical exteriority to the governing political and social systems. Indeed, the invasive and proscriptive agenda arising out of the debates effectively terminated the cultural policies developed by Barnard and Eldershaw within the context of the FAW by denying

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66M. Barnard to Eleanor Dark, 6 June 1940 [Eleanor Dark Papers, Correspondence 1923-43, NLA MSS 4998].
writers a wider involvement in social, cultural, and political issues and by denying them the authority to speak out on those same issues. The debate also struck at the base of their conception of literature not only by negating what they perceived to be the inherent political nature of their position, but by severing them, literally and symbolically, from the community or audience whose support was integral to their sense of the writing project. Without community support, a consensual notion of Australian literature and culture was an unrealisable ideal.
CHAPTER SEVEN
Learning to be Critical

"It is a very difficult task to mediate between a complex literary work that is the product of an advanced consciousness and a fragmented, unevenly informed reading public".
Peter Uwe Hohendahl, The Institution of Criticism, p.79

"I feel convinced that the critic has a very important part indeed to play, particularly in our young Australian culture. Let us put aside all childish ideas of the critic as a sour cantankerous trouble-maker".
Leslie Rees, "Is the Critic Creative?" Meanjin 5:1 (1946)

In his review of Essays in Australian Fiction for Desiderata, W.D. Langham, after first confessing that he had read none of the texts under discussion, proceeded to complain that

As time presses on most readers, it is a matter of regret that the essayists did not indicate more clearly the best work of each writer. I agree wholeheartedly with their preference for The Fortunes of Richard Mahony and Working Bullocks as the principal novels of Henry Handel Richardson and Katharine Prichard; but how, without reading them all, am I to discriminate among the many works of Vance Palmer?1

By treating the essays largely as an end in themselves and regretting that reading them had not absolved him entirely of the need to consult the original texts, Langham had failed to grasp the purpose of the collection and of Barnard and Eldershaw's critical endeavours generally. The two had 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".2 Essays in

1W.H. Langham, "Essays in Australian Fiction", Desiderata, 1 August 1938: 15.
2M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 13 November 1934 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4519].
Australian Fiction was an opportunity for them as private individuals to initiate public discussion of the role of contemporary writing in Australia's evolving national consciousness and to encourage readers to participate in Australia's developing cultural project. Criticism, they believed, represented the ideal meeting point for readers and writers to collaborate in recognising and supporting the ideal of a national culture, in a context where 'culture' and 'community' could be viewed synonymously. This exercise of bringing writing to readers and readers to writing was dependant upon the effective mobilisation of particular notions of "literature" and, more importantly, "Australian Literature", notions which were central to Barnard and Eldershaw's project of expanding the areas of cultural debate, giving a new prominence to specific authors and texts, and raising the profile of literature within the general domain of Australian culture.

Essays in Australian Fiction, while certainly the best-known of their critical work, was by no means M. Barnard Eldershaw's first foray into the realm of criticism. On the contrary, they had published their first critical articles in The Sydney Morning Herald in 1929, shortly after the serialisation of A House Is Built in the Bulletin. As with the work of the Palmers and other writer-critics, these initial articles on "The Period Novel" and "The Genetic Novel" develop from Barnard and Eldershaw's own personal concerns and recent experiences:

If I had to diagnose our own case, I would say that "A House Is Built" is a family novel of the circular type. It is the story of a group, not an individual. We had no intention of setting forth the quartermaster as the principal character...It is the rise and fall of the Hyde family as a complex unity that we tried to delineate. There is no hero or heroine...Our unit was the family and we tried to focus attention on them by the well-tried method of subordinating all other characters to the Hydes, all other interests to their development, and by
supplying a background calculated to act as a commentary upon them.³

But as Lukács has noted, for many writer-critics it is "the search for self-clarification" and "the writers' intimate acquaintanceship with the subtlest problems of the creative process" which provide the point of departure and the foundation for their wider critical investigations.⁴ In addition to these early published pieces, Barnard and Eldershaw were also consistently involved in exchanging notes and impressions on recent works by members of their circle, reading work in draft stages, and providing critical comment on the finished manuscripts of their closest associates, including Frank Dalby Davison, Judah Waten, Xavier Herbert, Olive Hopegood, and Leonard Mann. When he experienced difficulties with Blue Coast Caravan, Davison gave Barnard a copy of the manuscript and anxiously awaited the verdict:

I called [Marjorie Barnard] up on the 'phone this morning to make arrangements. Reference to the ms was avoided. The suspense grows exciting. I'm wondering whether I'm going to get a crown of bay leaves or a sock on the jaw. It is comforting to know (knowing Marjorie) that whatever comes will be intended for ones [sic] own good - and will be as near to the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, as it is possible for human words to be.⁵

Davison subsequently entrusted to Barnard the task of sub-editing the manuscript and received in return "seven pages packed with necessarily brutal comment".⁶ In this communal context, criticism functioned as a further form of literary and cultural collaboration, although Miles Franklin represented it rather more cynically as "a little circle which exchanges idolatry".⁷

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⁵F.D. Davison to Nettie Palmer, [February 1935] [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4554].
⁶M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 4 March 1935 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4607].
⁷Miles Franklin to Dymphna Cusack, 13 November 1940 [Franklin Papers ML MSS 364/30/55-56].
Early on in their correspondence, at Nettie Palmer's instigation, Barnard began to swap notes with her on the books that she and Eldershaw were currently reading, debating their respective impressions across several exchanges of letters. Talking in a radio broadcast on M. Barnard Eldershaw as critic, Palmer remarked of these impressions that

when it comes to questions of literary form, especially in the novel, I have often been so grateful to Barnard Eldershaw for her comments and perceptions that I find it hard to quarrel with any of her findings. If I had sent out a questionnaire on these matters, I could hardly have got better summaries than what have come casually in letters about some books that have shown themselves over the skyline.8

The gradual shift towards contributing to formal public criticism was in many ways a logical extension of Barnard and Eldershaw's activities and experience within their immediate circle of acquaintance. Nettie certainly encouraged them, suggesting that they might contribute critical work to the magazine, Pandemonium, and arguing that they should enter into the running debates on the 'Red Page' of the Bulletin. But Barnard and Eldershaw also appear to have had some desire to prove their intellectual credentials in the area of literary criticism and argument, an area where few women in Australia other than Nettie Palmer and, to a lesser extent, Zora Cross and 'Margaret Fane' (Beatrice Osborn), had so far ventured. Barnard, for example, characterised Essays in Australian Fiction as

an attempt to clarify our literary position and for some reason we are driven to do it publicly. What we are really fumbling for is a basis of criticism in understanding, the dry light, & to practice the discipline of the critic which is to take nothing for himself. That's the theory . . . A bit of a lost cause like trying to lift yourself up by the seat of your pants.9

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8Nettie Palmer, "M. Barnard Eldershaw", unpublished t/script of radio broadcast, n.d. (c. 1934) [Palmer Papers, NLA MSS 1174/25/1].
9M. Barnard to Vance Palmer, 24 January 1937 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5228].
They were not without some experience in the area already as Eldershaw had been invited through the early 1930s to present a number of talks on issues in Australian literature before meetings of the Australian English Association, the texts of which were subsequently published as offprints of the Sydney University *Union Recorder*. They had also been involved in giving lectures on literature for Sydney University's Extension Board evening classes and in presenting papers to the Writers' League. From 1937, both were appearing in occasional radio broadcasts on 2BL and 2GB discussing a variety of aspects of Australian literature and history. As Barnard remarked in her typically self-deprecating manner, "history and books are all I have to talk about".10

A key motivating factor in their move into formal criticism was clearly their concern over the absence of informed critical comment at a crucial moment in the development of the national literature. Barnard summed up the problem as she saw it in a 1934 letter to Vance Palmer:

> But criticism as a whole is at a very low ebb. It's serious don't you think? Our literature has got to the stage when honest and intelligent criticism is a necessity - a necessity to our self-respect. And there is so little of it. Even if the right books are praised it is usually for the wrong reasons which is utterly harmful. Anyhow a drop of comprehension is worth more than buckets of praise.11

This grievance was certainly not a new one. Since his 1923 *Bulletin* article, "The Missing Critics", Vance Palmer himself had been arguing that criticism was lagging seriously behind creative work in Australia. Such criticism as did exist in the 1930s was generally perceived to fall into two quite distinct categories; namely, simple-minded praise and carping fault-finding. As Leslie Rees noted in his 1937 address to the

10M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 8 November 1937 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5307].
11M. Barnard to Vance Palmer, 7 December 1934 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4534].
Australian English Association:

In discussions about Australian literature one found two schools of thought out there: one that the Australian book was being mollycoddled, the other that it was being neglected. Both were in some degree right. In other words, there was an absence of reliable indigenous criticism.\(^{12}\)

With the exception of the Palmer family, Barnard and Eldershaw were uneasy about many of the existing critics, in particular H.M. Green. Green apparently had a high regard for Eldershaw with whom he had worked on a number of small projects, but had had a falling out with Barnard. "We quarrelled (over Vance)", she explained to Nettie Palmer, "and it was a real shock to him to find that so quiet and negligible a creature had so swift and savage a bite. He has never got over it."\(^{13}\) Barnard consistently expressed frustration and disappointment with Green's critical work on Australian literature and with what she claimed to be his arrogance and his empire-building, arguing fiercely that "the critic of all people must not compete with his subject matter".\(^{14}\) She felt, moreover, that his encyclopaedic approach to Australian literary history could not possibly do justice to individual authors and their works. Later Eldershaw would deal tactfully and patiently with Green's applications for successive extensions to the Commonwealth Literary Fund grant for his monumental history. The efforts of Hartley Grattan caught their interest, and while they were grateful for his contributions to the public debate on the subject, referring to an early article of his as being "something tangible, a basis of argument [sic]", they remained uncertain of his ability to interpret Australian literature successfully from the 'outside'. Barnard


\(^{13}\)M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 7 January 1936 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4933].

\(^{14}\)M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 7 January 1936 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4933].
commented wryly on his often glib advice to writers:

Like so many critics he seems anxious for authors "to let themselves go". How does one do it and what exactly does one let go? Why is a fine careless frenzy so beneficial to art? The phrase is quite meaningless to me.\(^{15}\)

Barnard also expressed general dissatisfaction with the current standard of newspaper reviewing and the treatment of works published by their contemporaries. "Too often," she wrote, "book reviews are no more than a chore in the newspaper office, or, and I feel this is a doubtful practice, writers take in one another's washing and impartiality flies out the window". "The function of the critic", she argued, "is to set up standards, to stimulate interest, and to integrate the pattern of contemporary writing".\(^{16}\) Barnard criticised the practice by The Sydney Morning Herald of publishing only unsigned reviews, although they apparently used such reputable reviewers as Mungo Macallum, R.G. Howarth, and Frank Dalby Davison. She found that Davison would sometimes be assigned up to six books at a time to review and then through space constraints have only one of those reviews appear. Practices such as these mitigated against the possibility of attracting and retaining competent reviewers or of generating any sustained public debate about contemporary Australian writing. Given that reviews were probably one of the most important avenues both for the promoting of individual works and the development of an informed and amenable readership to receive such works, the issue was clearly a significant one for Barnard and Eldershaw. After all, they argued in their lecture on "The Writer and Society" that the writer's desire to write is, or should be, matched by "an equally urgent interest in

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\(^{15}\) M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 17 January 1932 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/3900].

sharing [their work] by finding readers...the measure of the creative writer's success is the depth and width of his communication".\textsuperscript{17} Through reviews and criticism, the reader could be introduced to a range of contemporary literature and be offered the opportunity to become a collaborative partner in the nation's cultural development. To this extent, criticism and reviewing had the potential to perform a vital 'public relations' function for writers by generating the sense of a common cultural endeavour.

Barnard and Eldershaw were at pains when entering into the realm of criticism to avoid the suggestion that they were simply joining "the penny in the slot review field".\textsuperscript{18} They saw themselves instead as rectifying in some small way the perceived paucity of informed comment on Australian literature and contributing to the development of a healthy public sphere in which issues of literature and culture could be widely and freely debated. At this time, criticism was generally limited to occasional, isolated monographs and sporadic articles and reviews in magazines and literary periodicals, so the possibilities for sustained debate about Australian literature were fairly limited. Even in the late 1940s, publisher Andrew Fabinyi would describe the state of the local literary-critical scene as a cause for concern:

In point of fact a demand for new books only exists if it is created by drawing the public's attention to them...[People] cannot reasonably be expected to ask for a book they've never heard of. It is therefore a matter of concern to writers and publishers to find that there are practically no Australian channels available for disseminating news about their books. The ideal media for book reviewing, the little magazines, are only just beginning to take root in Australia. The standard of reviewing in the daily press is, with exceptions, extremely low. It is not unusual for 'reviewers' to reprint the book's blurb as their review.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{17}M. Barnard Eldershaw, "The Writer and Society": 3.
\textsuperscript{18}M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 16 January 1937 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5218].
Throughout the 1930s, Barnard and Eldershaw continued to publish critical essays and reviews in a variety of magazines and newspapers, but it was a constant struggle to find a suitable vehicle for detailed and continuing debate, especially given the short-lived nature of many of their chosen publications. Barnard, for example, began reviewing Australian books for *The Australian Monthly* in October 1936 only to recount the following January that "my small platform in the *Australian Monthly*, by the way has collapsed. It ceased production suddenly in December together with 'Flame'".20 Barnard made constant reference to the fear that their articles would be perceived by editors as either too long or too academic and she claimed that *The Sydney Morning Herald* never took her material unless she pulled strings. One-off articles or reviews in the *National Review*, *Desiderata*, *The Sydney Mail*, and publications like *The Newcastle School of Arts Journal* were generally their experience, so that much of their considerable body of criticism exists in dispersed sites.21 That criticism in this decade led such a fugitive existence may explain why critics such as Brian Kiernan and Patrick Buckridge have tended to argue that a strong, indigenous critical tradition really only emerged in the 1940s.22 Certainly it was only in the 1940s with the establishment of the annual Commonwealth Literary Fund lectures and the emergence of *Meanjin*, *Australian Women's Digest*, and *Australian Books* that Barnard and Eldershaw found more reliable outlets for their work and could consider the possibility of writing for an informed or interested reading audience.

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20 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 16 January 1937 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5218].
21 See Appendix for a bibliography of published criticism by M. Barnard Eldershaw, Marjorie Barnard and Flora Eldershaw.
Vance Palmer and The Short Story

"Life... he thought wistfully, setting for the spade in the darkness of the outshouse."—"The Birthday," p. 106.

By M. Bernard Eldershaw.

The accompanying brief but critical survey of the art of the short story in general, and, in particular, of the art of our Australian novelist, Vance Palmer, in his new collection of stories published on this page this week in lieu of the book review which usually appears, will not be the last. That is my firm belief.

Eldershaw.

A House is Built, a story which deals truthfully and shortingly with the fates and events of many of the years of the "colony." The collaborators followed up "A House is Built" with the "colony" story that will appear in this week's "Memory." Which, in the opinion of many competent critics, is fully equal to literary merit of its predecessor. Both writers are young and both are graduates of Sydney University. — S.N.

whom his strength is in their design; those of which O'Casey's "The Ploughman" is the classic example, that delineate a portrait and draw their unity from a central character; and, lastly, that more serious class that draws its significance neither from plot nor from character, but from its relation to life, to an eternal standard.

It is to this third category that Vance Palmer's stories belong. Each, divergent in subject and scene as they are, has been poured into an inviolate mould; each leaves upon the mind an impression of close-knit unity and finally that comes, not from the content of the story, but from its implicit equation of man with life. Life looms over every story, however slight the theme—the cutting down of a tree-stump, the ordering of a coffin, the sale of a mare; the reader is conscious of the invisible control of life over the art that conceals art from a rough world of men and work. His people are inarticulate, touched to pathos- ness or heroism by their very inability to grasp with their minds the impasses and tangles that flow through them. They are common clay in the sense that their clay is common to all of us.

The idea of confraternity haunts these stories, as it haunted London's work; but in Palmer it lacks the latter's power of class consciousness. It is more individual, more wistful, less robust and humorous. Out of loneliness comes the fear of loneliness; the fear of loneliness is the Grael in a hard world. It is shown us in many phases, from Comic Book to the "colony" story, and after it to the story of the boy who won his manhood risking his life in a fickle river in a baking sun; the story of a maidservant in her love for a man; from the fantastic loyalty of a week's worksman to the ailing husband and wife in such stories as "The Black Man" and "The Interloper," from the humanness of a successful business man for the danger-quenched friendship of his youth, to the tragedy of "The Brigadier." The stories are not of a reality, a kind of black and white or brown and black, but of the "colony" in the Australian tradition. They are touched with the loneliness of the bush and the harshness of life. Palmer acquiesces and finds beauty and pity in ugliness itself. Vance Palmer is sensitive to the negative aspect of life, he draws his world from a different angle, realizing that the things that do not happen happen often more important than the things that do; that

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VANCE PALMER AND THE SHORT STORY

MRS FLORA ELDERSHAW.

(Phot. DYNMOK)

MISST MARJORIE BARNARD.

(Phot. Depam.)

Miss Marjorie Barnard is the natural, the appointed victim of the back. Every month, every week, the covers of the lighter journals must be ploughed out with short stories. In consequence, a great many bad ones are produced hastily for sale. It is easier for a writer to sell a bad but obvious story than a good but subtle one, for editors of popular journals believe, quantitatively enough, that the man in the street finds bad art easier to stomach than good art, and has taken to heart the advice, so amply attributed to a prime-donna, to "sing low and come high." It is refreshing to see that, throwing off the encumbrance of its pot-soiling relations, the short story is finding favour as a work of art, and that some of the ablest writers are giving it their serious attention. Reputation even can be built upon it. It is encouraging too, to know that Australia is represented in the movement. In "Separate Lives" Vance Palmer has just published in England a collection of short stories that should enhance his reputation and add to the prestige of Australian letters abroad.

Short stories fall into three categories—those, of which Somerset Maugham is the most brilliant exponent, that rely on situation or plot, and that

Miss Flora Eldershaw.

(Phot. DYNMOK)

Such difficulties did not pertain solely to magazine and journal publication. The publication of their criticism in book form was plagued by similar constraints. Melbourne University Press, recommended to them by the Palmers, was somewhat anxious about producing a book of individual essays rather than the more conventional survey of contemporary writing or a complete and retrospective literary history. Suggestions from the Press to cut the length of the book, led Barnard and Eldershaw to drop their projected chapters dealing with "Australia in Fiction", "The Short Story in Australia" and "The Convict in Fiction". They were disappointed too when the Press made it a condition of publication that they also omit their final chapter on "Critics and Criticism" for, as Barnard complained, "we wanted to have our say on that subject". These changes altered Essays in Australian Fiction from being a much more comprehensive study of Australian writing and its reception to one which concentrated exclusively on the achievements and contributions of particular contemporary individuals. Further conditions MUP attached to the publication of the volume indicated quite clearly that they did not consider the project a financially viable one and saw themselves in fact as doing the authors a significant favour. In their correspondence, they made constant reference to the fact that they stood to make a loss on the initial print run of one thousand copies. This left Barnard and Eldershaw with little alternative other than to accept the Press's terms and conditions which included significant in-house editing and the waiving of royalties on the first print run.

Fewer constraints were encountered it seems in their extensive

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23 M. Barnard to Vance Palmer, 23 July 1937 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5290].

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lecturing where some of Barnard and Eldershaw's most interesting and original criticism emerged. Unlike *Essays in Australian Fiction* which ultimately consisted mainly of exercises in practical criticism, their lectures range across wider theoretical issues including the nature and development of particular literary forms and give consideration to the history and politics of such concepts as the "Australian tradition". It is here that many of the terms and concepts that they deploy elsewhere are developed or defined. The two women began lecturing in the mid-1930s for Sydney University's Extension Board evening classes, which were followed in 1938 by the Sesquicentenary lecture series and in the 1940s by several series of Commonwealth Literary Fund lectures in Sydney, Hobart and Armidale. In contrast to the published criticism which deals exclusively with Australian literature, in their early Extension Board lectures they concerned themselves with an extraordinarily wide range of English, American and European authors. In one lecture on "Technique in the Novel" they discussed with great familiarity the work of Colette, Pearl Buck, Willa Cather, Rose Macaulay, Joseph Conrad, Osbert Sitwell, Thornton Wilder, Marcel Proust, Lion Feuchtwanger, Radclyffe Hall, Ford Madox Ford, and Dorothy Richardson.24 In a further lecture on "Naturalism and Decorism" they devoted considerable space to a discussion of the recent work of Virginia Woolf. They were greatly impressed by *To The Lighthouse* ("So far she has done nothing better or even as good"), but they were clearly unsettled by the stream of consciousness technique as it developed in *The Waves* ("It is an amazing piece of virtuosity but the author's technique seems to have hardened and stiffened as it grew more

elaborate"). It is here too that they begin to refine the forms of technical analysis that appear in Essays in Australian Fiction and the definitions of realism that they use throughout their work. Realism for them is the faithful representation of life achieved by the artful selection and arrangement of infinite detail. In the lecture "Realism, Naturalism, Decorism", they defined it in the following manner:

Life is the raw material not the finished product of art. The function of art is to arrange, to group, to edit the chaos that is life and to bring form and pattern out of it. Realism cannot afford to dispense with form, it must modify its accuracy and truth to that extent. I think, however, that it [is] safe to say that the re-arranging and editing by the author is done in accordance with the workings of the normal mind, by omitting everything extraneous, by taking tucks in time here and there, and by distributing emphasis... The realistic novel takes its material straight from life - instead of via the imagination - and imitates the action of the mind in arranging it.

These same ideas are developed within a specifically Australian context in Essays in Australian Fiction where particular forms of realism or "poetic realism" tend to be privileged for their ability to deal with the contemporary and the local. Among the most highly praised texts are those works like Prichard's Working Bullocks, Davison's Man Shy, and Mann's Flesh in Armour which they claimed transformed the "raw material" of life successfully. Individual novels tend to be commended for the fidelity of their representations of the so-called "real Australia" and faithful reproduction of the "great continent" emerges as possibly the most important aspect of the writer's role.

Notions like the "real Australia" and the "great continent" tend to recur throughout Barnard and Eldershaw's critical discussions of Australian literature. While their reduction of aspects of the Australian

character and culture to such highly generalised statements now borders on cultural cliche, it must be remembered that their writing represents an attempt to isolate and define crucial elements of the Australian cultural experience and to negotiate the terms in which debates about "Australia" and "Australianness" could be conducted. Just as the radical nationalists' view of Australian history is now perceived "not as a description of nation-building, but as part of the process of nation-building", the literary and cultural criticism practised by Barnard and Eldershaw needs to be seen as participating not simply in the presentation, but in the production of "Australia" and "Australian literature".

The "Australia" produced in and through their criticism is in many respects a familiar one in that it participates in the same liberal-humanist, nationalist politics practised by the Palmers and later associated with the Meanjin group of writers and critics. Barnard and Eldershaw addressed the particular issue of defining "the Australian experience" in one of their CLF lectures on contemporary Australian literature. They acknowledged the highly urbanised nature of Australian society, but asserted that we popularly imagined ourselves in quite contrary terms:

The great open spaces are more potent in our imaginations than the city streets about us ... We are aware of the hinterland even if we never see it. There are great open spaces indelibly mapped upon our imaginations. We think automatically of the bush man as the real Australian. Our composite self is a lanky, loose-limbed horseman, a laconic, capable, sun-burned fellow, long sighted and serviceable.

28M. Barnard Eldershaw, "Miles Franklin and Brent of Bin Bin", CLF lecture, unpublished transcript n.d.(c.1944) [Eldershaw Papers ML MSS 5601]. A copy is also held in the Barnard Papers ML MSS 451/3.
As Raymond Williams argues in *The Country and The City*, it is not unusual for urbanised societies to enact such an identification with nature or the pastoral life. Barnard Eldershaw's evocation of the rural should be read, however, not as a form of nostalgia or escapism, but as a way of using nature as a vehicle for defining and asserting such crucial cultural values as community, stability, democracy and continuity, values they occasionally perceived to be at odds with "the present social order". It is the task of the writer to communicate these values, and the "corporate" or "shared" image of Australian life which they inform, through her or his writing. This perhaps explains how they could refer to the gloomy, tortured landscape of Henry Handel Richardson's *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony* as "not the real Australia".

Within Barnard and Eldershaw's construction of an idea or ideal of "Australianness", the "soil" played a key role. When examining the issue of cultural development, they generally employed an historicist model, stressing the original or unique nature of Australian culture and sourcing it to a rural or "folk" base. Interestingly, in an effort to legitimate further this model of "indigenous" cultural development, they linked its nomadic, primarily oral culture to "the black men who had lived before them a nomadic life in the bush [and] had developed their own distinctive culture in the corroboree". According to their arguments, literature developed or "grew" through a series of

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distinctive stages in which the environment or "soil" played a vital, shaping role:

There are, putting a subtle process in point blank terms, three bold stages in the development of the communal effort called literature; the folk stage, which is spontaneous, anonymous and unseparated from the patterns of daily life; the co-operative stage in which the sum is more important than the parts, and lastly, the delegated stage, in which power so cumulates in a few individuals that they sum up and are accepted as tokens of the whole. These stages are not like the rungs of a ladder, one above the other. They are co-existent, or rather, as a literature in its natural growth develops from one to another the earlier stages persist. The folklore element must continue if a literature is to survive, it renews itself ever from below, comes up from the soil, soil being the generic term for a blend of earth and social conditions that make up the wider environment.32

Here, and throughout their criticism, the "soil" needs to be read as a complex social matrix rather than interpreted literally. It functions, like the rural sphere generally, as an imaginative construct or symbolic arrangement onto which particular ideals of a collective Australian culture could be projected. This evolutionary model of literary development with its emphasis upon indigenous origins can also be viewed as a strongly anti-imperialist gesture. Notions like the "soil", the "land" and "the great continent" could be mobilised in opposition to old-world civilisation and to British imperialism. As Tim Rowse has observed, the writers and intellectuals of this period "confidently formulated a national cultural identity which looked back on a sustaining tradition of socially critical and aggressively idiomatic writing. They were moved by a strong sense of opposition to the dominance of metropolitan, particularly British, artefacts and intellectual standards".33

Like the Palmers with whose ideas they identified directly,
Barnard and Eldershaw viewed literature as evidence of a society's progress towards cultural maturity and they believed that local writers and local writing had a privileged part to play in producing particular persuasive constructions of "Australia" or the national culture. Championing the national literature, however, was not simply a matter of promoting a pre-existing body of works. On the contrary, it was through their criticism in lectures, articles and reviews that Barnard and Eldershaw set about actively determining how people might read and discuss "Australian literature". Through their selection and arrangement of specific authors and texts they began to formulate the series of values and concepts that were ultimately to constitute the "Australian tradition" as they and their contemporaries perceived it. It is worth noting too that their construction of this tradition arguably had less to do with any particular desire to idealise and romanticise the literature of the 1890s, than with an imperative to find in the national culture generally some bulwark against the present moment which they characterised as "a falling world in which so much is doubtful".34

In a lecture on "Vance Palmer and Frank Dalby Davison", Barnard provides an interesting summary of the breadth and direction of one of their joint lecture series, a summary which indicates some of the values and priorities they claimed for Australian literature:

In the first five lectures which you have already attended my colleague, Flora Eldershaw, has given you in outline the historic growth of Australian literature, the emergence of an Australian folklore, the influence on our literature of the Australian earth and continental mass and an account of the democratic spirit which lies and breathes in it. In the five lectures beginning today I shall narrow the field to the discussion of 8 contemporary novelists and the indigenous [sic] short story. But it is the same field.35

Australian literature is constructed here as the privileged site through which a unity of culture and environment could be forged. However, while they appear to have had their gaze firmly fixed on the past, the two critics were in fact vitally consumed by the present and future possibilities for Australian literature, by "the tradition that looks forward not back". In particular, they were concerned to highlight the part writing played in defining and shaping contemporary social and cultural values. In their criticism, 'Australian writing' was often constructed as virtually synonymous with fiction, and realist fiction in particular, which they tended to promote over other forms of writing. This emphasis on prose stems from the fact that it was largely among the novelists and short story writers that they located the particular set of values which they isolated as the "democratic tradition". This writing, which offered both the representation of an elusive organic community and the promise of political engagement, became the cornerstone of their efforts to determine what was 'Australian' in local writing. They claimed that this literature, derived initially from the political unease of the 1890s, possessed a revolutionary or oppositional quality that they likened to a flame which "as a bush fire prepares tough bush seeds for germination, brought to life and to articulation the treasury of folklore that had been accumulating in the bush". Henry Lawson and Bernard O'Dowd were credited with being the "fathers" of this democratic tradition in Australian literature, but like so many of their contemporaries they claimed Joseph Furphy as the tradition's greatest exponent.

"Democratic literature", as they formulated it, was distinguished by its opposition to class division, its links to Australian folklore, and its dependence upon such themes as hardship, work and poverty. They suggested that this element was "still the strongest, most characteristic bent in Australian fiction to-day [sic]", and in their survey of the democratic tradition in contemporary Australian literature they included Louis Esson, Steele Rudd, Louis Stone, John Dalley, Vance Palmer, Katharine Prichard, Kylie Tennant, Xavier Herbert, Gavin Casey, Margaret Trist, and Desmond Tate. A distinction was drawn, however, between the "democratic" and the "propagandist" in fiction. Devanny's *Sugar Heaven*, Fred Davison's *Storm Bradley*, *Australian* and *Public Enemy No. 1* and Prichard's *Intimate Strangers* were cited as openly propagandist novels possessing "pointed leftist morals", as opposed to the democratic tradition which was apparently subtler and likened to a "natural" and "unconscious" solution in the blood. The democratic tradition was

a matter of attitude and subject matter, not a precept and example. The focal point is in the life of the people, the workers, the men scratching for a living in the bush, the battlers and the flotsam of the slums - different versions of the same people who inhabit Lawson's stories.

Within the terms of this tradition, literature was constructed as the product of the so-called "national genius" or "spirit of place", rather than simply the product of an individual consciousness:

Genius is a word that has come unmoored. It has come to mean for many a supernatural quality, a manna from heaven, and not, as it should, a natural essence, something inherent and basic. This thing genius is in the literature of this country, as a place spirit, an essence, but it has not yet been shared up among writers. It is something of which they partake in varying degrees but not something they own.

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38 M. Barnard Eldershaw, "Lecture 5: Australian Literature and Democracy - Part II": 1.
This model of a culture founded upon collectivity and solidarity, recalls Benedict Anderson's concept of an "imagined community", in which the nation is traditionally "conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship".\textsuperscript{41} To this representation of the Australian tradition as white, mainly rural, working class, and male – one which they shared with the Palmers and A.A. Phillips – Barnard and Eldershaw added two significant refinements. They argued that with the resurgence in Australian writing, particularly the novel, in the late 1920s, the democratic spirit remained but its crude nationalism and class consciousness subsided. The reasons they put forward for this were two-fold. They suggested that the self-conscious element in nationalism was perhaps diminished by the merging of the democratic tradition with a wider, international Left tradition. And conscious perhaps of their own positions or those of their contemporaries, they argued that the class element of the original tradition had been modified or muted in contemporary writing. Reviewing the writers of the day, they maintained that Eleanor Dark, Miles Franklin, "Brent of Bin Bin", G.B. Lancaster, Martin Mills, and Myra Morris were "all stalwarts of the middle class tradition". They based their distinction on attitude rather than subject matter:

It hinges, I think, on this - whether the author's attitude is primarily social or primarily individualistic (individualism is a luxury of the middle class) and as a corollary whether the characters of the books are viewed as detached individuals or as social phenomenon (sic).\textsuperscript{42}

In their discussions of the work of Vance Palmer, Katharine Prichard, Xavier Herbert, and Christina Stead, "social outlook" tended to replace class consciousness as a category of analysis. This emphasis on attitude

\textsuperscript{42}M. Barnard Eldershaw, "Lecture 5: Australian Literature and Democracy - Part II": 15.
over subject matter also enabled Barnard and Eldershaw to extend the
democratic tradition beyond the rural domain to encompass the urban
environment, a shift that allowed incidently for the inclusion of their
own fiction. By arguing that the crucial factors were the values and
politics of individual works, they were able to include novels like Kylie
Tennant's *The Battlers* and Louis Stone's *Jonah* within their discussions
of the tradition, although they hesitated over John Dalley's "suburban
satire".\(^\text{43}\)

Poetry presented certain difficulties for this tradition of
Australian literature. Both Barnard and Eldershaw expressed their
general uncertainty in handling poetry, each claiming their lack of
expertise as practitioners disqualified them as critics. But it is more
likely that they concurred with Vance Palmer's assertion that, separated
from its earlier oral tradition, poetry had become an essentially
'private' literary form incapable of achieving the wide reading audience
necessary to found a truly national culture. As Palmer argued in 1921:

> I believe that some sort of civilization will have to be built up in Australia if we
> are not to remain a meaningless jumble of creeds, cliques, classes. At the
> present time we are living intellectually in a state of barbarism. Poetry is not
> enough to alter our condition - a poetry that is read by only a small circle. We
> want a social life created through prose and the drama both to satisfy our
> instincts as reasonable beings and for the sake of our country as a nation.\(^\text{44}\)

Poetry was also less easily assimilated into "the Australian tradition", as
it was seldom found to offer the same persuasive models of national
identity, the same "democratic spirit", that the prose examples did.
Barnard and Eldershaw observed in their lecture on "Australian

\(^{43}\)M. Barnard Eldershaw, "Lecture 5: Australian Literature and Democracy - Part II": 12.
\(^{44}\)Vance Palmer, *Fellowship*, May 1921. Quoted in Katharine Gallagher, "Shadows and Silences:
Australian Women Poets in the Twenties and Thirties", *Poetry and Gender*, ed. David Brooks and
Brenda Walker (St Lucia: UQP, 1989): 88. See also Vivian Smith, "Vance and Nettie Palmer: The
Literature and Democracy" that:

the poets, with some exceptions, have not adhered directly to this tradition. They have, for the most part, withdrawn from the arena or progressed into a world more specifically poetic, till poetry has, like music, become its own subject matter. The poet is lyrist [sic], like Hugh Macrae [sic] or Ernest Moll, or philosopher like Christopher Brennan and R.D. Fitzgerald, or begetter of intricate patterns like Kenneth Slessor. But there are some who...remember the machines and urgencies of to-day.45

Among the exceptions they listed were Furnley Maurice's "Unconditioned Songs", Lesbia Harford's poetry on the clothing sweatshops, and Leonard Mann's "The Delectable Mountains", all three of which were felt to affirm through their individual visions of life, the "spirit" of Australia. Overall, however, they concluded that "it is in fiction...that the democratic tradition has been continuous and strongest".

This tradition, as it was articulated in their critical works, provided Barnard and Eldershaw with both a context for the reading of individual writers and texts and the basis for the formation of what amounted to a literary canon. Significantly, the context they established for the reading of texts was not a universal one, but a specifically national one. Texts were consistently examined for their ability to interpret the national culture. "Australia", they felt, should be subject only to the mediation of the author's individual consciousness:

Our landscapes are not highly coloured but they have a deep individuality of their own; our national character is emphatic in its strength, goes quickly to earth, wears a hard shell; our everyday life is pedestrian on its surface, slow moving. To show this world without altering its values or breaking into its reserves that are so much a part of its quality is a subtle and difficult problem of interpretation. It is a highly individual problem for which there are no models and no formulae. Our rhythm is a secret thing. Vance Palmer has caught and preserved it. He has shown it to us on the wing as it were. He has caught the hesitations and the pauses in the rhythm of an apparently robust outdoor life.46

These judgements lead them to dismiss the works of certain contemporary modernist writers on the grounds that they failed to fulfil this crucial interpretative function and that they demanded far too much of their readers:

Life itself is the raw material of the writer. What we ask of him is to shape the chaos of life as we live it into a comprehensible whole, to illumine it so that we may see its meaning, to draw out its essence. In a word, we want him to interpret it for us. If the author merely holds the mirror we get something like the Ulysses of James Joyce or the naturalistic ramblings of Gertrude Stein, which are exasperating and antipathetic to the average intelligence. We want interpretation.\(^4\)

Individual writers are judged in terms of their ability to exercise these interpretive powers in relation to the Australian culture and landscape. This may explain why novels such as Henry Handel Richardson's Maurice Guest or Stead's The Beauties and Furies which are set outside Australia were received somewhat less enthusiastically by Barnard and Eldershaw (in Essays in Australian Fiction, for example, Maurice Guest, receives only a single paragraph, as opposed to the sixteen pages devoted to The Fortunes of Richard Mahony). It should be noted that Maurice Guest and The Beauties and Furies were also criticised for apparent naturalistic excesses. Indeed, Barnard and Eldershaw were wary of any shift from realism into naturalism, fearing that efforts such as Joyce's Ulysses ultimately produced life "dead, dissected, horrible". They claimed, in fact, that the banning of Ulysses was unnecessary as it would have "die[d] of its own dullness".\(^5\)

Implicit in these judgements is a sense of the cultural responsibility Barnard and Eldershaw projected onto Australian writers

\(^{\text{47}}\)M. Barnard Eldershaw, "Vance Palmer", Essays in Australian Fiction: 113. Interestingly, Forster in Aspects of the Novel also constructs Stein and Joyce as "failures".

\(^{\text{48}}\)M. Barnard Eldershaw, "Lecture 12: Naturalism and Decorism": 15.
both individually and collectively. This is underscored in the approach they took when discussing the works of different writers. Texts by an individual author tended to be dealt with chronologically and an effort was made to discern what creative development had taken place from novel to novel. As they remarked at the opening of their essay on Eleanor Dark in *Essays in Australian Fiction*:

> When the hardy critic lays an author's works upon the table in chronological order for the purpose of reviewing them, the first thing he looks for is movement. There may be development, progression, elaboration - or repetition ... Talents must grow in one way or another or cease.49

In their *Bulletin* article on Christina Stead, her work is examined for evidence of "solidification" and "the final tendency of a talent which has hitherto been in flux", while they find that from *The Getting of Wisdom* to *Ultima Thule*, Henry Handel Richardson's "genius describes a great ascending curve".50 Implicit in these discussions is a rhetoric of self-development which suggested that it was incumbent upon the writers both to prove and improve themselves. This improvement was valued not so much for its own sake, but for the "contribution to national understanding"51 that it enabled the writers to make. The ethical language employed by Barnard and Eldershaw in their critical assessments served to identify the Australian author with a series of duties or obligations toward themselves and their reading public, reinforcing the notion of literature as having a distinct social function.

The actual style of Barnard and Eldershaw's critical writing has become a point of contention. Their criticism been accused of

49M. Barnard Eldershaw, "Eleanor Dark", *Essays in Australian Fiction*: 182.
exhibiting little more than "a technique of copious quotation with rather sparing, mainly appreciative annotation".\textsuperscript{52} Such comments, based no doubt on their tendency to quote at length in \textit{Essays in Australian Fiction}, ignore the nature of the national intellectual culture of the time and the place that criticism occupied within it. These comments deny, for example, the very real need they had to overcome the lack of knowledge many readers would have had of the texts under discussion. Barnard and Eldershaw had discovered only slight knowledge of, and interest in, Australian literature among most of the local literary societies and could not realistically anticipate higher levels among the general public. The inclusion of substantial quotations to support and illustrate their analyses can be read as an attempt to meet this projected deficiency on the part of their readers by producing a form of criticism which simultaneously embraced the critical, the informative, and the promotional. In their essay on Leonard Mann in \textit{Essays in Australian Fiction}, for example, quotations which introduce significant characters and encapsulate crucial turning points in the narrative serve those who are not well acquainted with his novels, while further quotations are employed to illustrate or emphasise particular critical observations made about specific texts. Doubtless quotation was also an attempt to allow the writers or at least their novels to speak for themselves. As they wrote of Frank Dalby Davison, the "best essay on this subject would consist entirely of quotations".\textsuperscript{53} It is possible that they took their lead here from other contemporary critical models such as Percy Lubbock's \textit{The Craft of Fiction} (1921) or E.M. Forster's \textit{Aspects of the Novel} (1927), both of which employ similar techniques. Lubbock in his

\textsuperscript{52}Patrick Buckridge, "Intellectual Authority and Critical Traditions in Australian Literature 1945 to 1975": 194.

\textsuperscript{53}M. Barnard Eldershaw, "Frank Dalby Davison", \textit{Essays in Australia Fiction}: 41.
study includes detailed plot summaries of the works discussed, while Forster is given on occasions to quoting lengthy passages to support particular critical observations. They were certainly familiar with Forster and appear to have used his chapter on "Pattern and Rhythm" when formulating some of their own categories of analysis.

The assertion that they provide only "sparking, mainly appreciative annotation" is also misleading. Their essays and lectures provide relatively detailed practical criticism of the chosen texts and they are generally inclined to be quite direct in their judgements. Discussing Katharine Prichard's *Intimate Strangers*, for example, they claim that

the book has a moral and the moral devours it. Somehow for all the occasional brilliance of the writing, the dazzling pictures of the beaches, the many touches of verisimilitude and understanding, the book has no heart, no core, no deep spontaneity. If it has a central theme it is homesickness, a novel – and this is cruelly unjust – homesick for the novelette.54

Far from mere summary and quotation, their style could be called loosely formalist in that they exhibit a definite preoccupation with the material reality of the text. This is exemplified in their discussion of Vance Palmer's short stories in *Essays in Australian Fiction*:

Vance Palmer uses the symbol with subtlety and great persistence. He is able with delicacy and economy to make his point by use of a symbol or a parallel. Thus in 'The Jackass' the kinship of the school master to the tormented bird that he rescues is clear and telling. In 'The Trap' a man vents his irritation and anxiety by catching a mouse in a trap. It is another case of 'We take the fishes and God takes us'. It occurs in 'The Rainbow Bird', 'The Dingo', and many others, and the title of the story is often used to point the way to the symbol. The use of a parallel or symbol is economical; it enables the author to suggest a lot in a little space. It tightens a story up and gives it depth at the same time.55

In this discussion, they make the interesting observation that Palmer's key ideas "grow in succeeding novels as clearly as the botanist can see

through glass the seed germinating in the nutrient solution".\textsuperscript{56} This recourse to scientific imagery recalls not only Eldershaw's remark that "some day the theory of literature might become an exact science and the sources of inspiration be tabulated by the philosopher mathematician",\textsuperscript{57} but also the organic metaphors they employed elsewhere when discussing the development of Australian literature. Their mode of analysis bears traces of the scientific too in that they wrote of "pinning books out for inspection" in an attempt to isolate elements of an author's technique. This preoccupation with technique leads them to seek the general laws, structures, and devices that they believe lie "behind" individual texts, a practice that bears traces of Lubbock's edict that "form, design, composition, are to be sought in the novel, as in any other form of art".\textsuperscript{58} In this context, Prichard's early novel \textit{Black Opal} is considered useful because it lacks the author's later "artistry", is more "transparent", and therefore more open to their particular form of technical analysis. They do concede, however, after analysing Palmer's \textit{Men Are Human} in terms of a series of triangular structures that

it is inadequate, of course, to try to sum up a book in geometrical or quasi-geometrical designs. No living book is consciously built in this way. Here it is merely a figure applied in an effort to give intellectually assimilable picture of the book's structure.\textsuperscript{59}

In isolating the structure of works, they are also looking for some form of unity, either within individual novels or within the wider canon of an author's work. While they emphasise the diversity of Frank Dalby Davison's publications and suggest that each of his works differs

\textsuperscript{56}M. Barnard Eldershaw, "Vance Palmer", \textit{Essays in Australian Fiction}: 99.
\textsuperscript{57}F. Eldershaw, "The Builders of the House": 9.
\textsuperscript{59}M. Barnard Eldershaw, "Vance Palmer", \textit{Essays in Australian Fiction}: 90.
in theme and treatment, they also claim that "there is always the sense that they are parts of a whole in something the same way that the movements of a sonata or a symphony are parts of the whole".60 Often it is suggested that this unity derives from a particular pattern, motif, or rhythm they detect, some recurring element which serves to draw together the otherwise random elements of a text. Barnard certainly confessed to "an inordinate appetite for pattern",61 and the importance they attached to such textual features can be seen in their analysis of Palmer's *The Swayne Family* where they conclude that:

the recurring motif of jealousy, the persistent sense of the dead Stephen's influence, hold the pattern together. And there are other threads whose significance is in terms of their fineness rather than their strength. The whole is close-drawn and austere - no short cuts, no easy solutions, no emotional substitutions. Though there are no loose ends there is no sense that life has been forced into a mould. There is nothing diagrammatic or textbookish in this pattern. It is organic. Pattern is rather a belittling word; the book has a deep natural rhythm that goes down a very long way.62

But they evidently found the dictates of conventional formalist approaches rather limiting in terms of their belief in literature's social function and, as their discussion of Palmer suggests, they appeared to lean more towards a kind of 'organic formalism' as a compromise critical position which would permit them to privilege organicist notions like 'rhythm' ("the deep sea lift of the continent")63 over more strictly academic concepts like 'pattern'. In this way they could continue to construct literature as an expression of the "soil" and of a community rather than as an abstract intellectual or creative exercise. They depart further from a strict formalist line by admitting contextual considerations: they acknowledge literature's relationship to some wider

60 M. Barnard Eldershaw, "Frank Dalby Davison", *Essays in Australian Fiction*: 77.
61 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 16 September 1932 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4074].
63 Marjorie Barnard, "Our Literature", ABC radio talk broadcast 27 May 1941 [AA SP 3/01/1/Box 6].
social reality and consider the discussion of that relationship to fall within the ambit of the critic's brief. As they suggested in their discussion of Miles Franklin:

the individual writer does not, wholly, choose what he will write about. There is always, though perhaps unsuspected, social pressure upon him, to write of this but not of that. His major function, whether he agrees or not, is to communicate a shared image of life. If there is no sharing there is no communication. To purvey the Australian image to Australians, the existing state of the image in the social mind must be taken into account. Fiction is gently shouldered into certain channels because those channels are already laid down in the community by other, non-literary, factors. There is a constant interaction between literature and society. The literary image must at least partially coincide with the general social image. There is no such thing as an entirely individual vision – unless possibly in the lunatic asylum.  

In Essays in Australian Fiction, this same point is developed into an argument about literature as a kind of 'sociology of culture':

It is not the author alone that is unconsciously reflected in every novel. There are the premises of period, nationality, and social status behind the author, colouring and forming his work despite him, and there are other reasons than merits or faults that determine its success or failure. Given a single bone a scientist can reconstruct a long-extinct animal, so perhaps in the future a sociologist may be able to conjure up a long-extinct society from the evidence of one popular novel.

In line with their understanding and promotion of literature as a "community effort", Barnard and Eldershaw were clearly committed to constructing as wide an audience as possible for Australian literature. In their lecture on "The Writer and Society", the role of the reading public is dealt with at considerable length. The reader is constructed as the logical conclusion of the creative process, a creative work being incomplete if not appreciated by an audience, however limited. They did not consider writing, as an exercise, to be an end in itself. "It takes a reader", they argued, "to consummate the work of a writer", as it was the reader who was ultimately responsible for interpreting the

64M. Barnard Eldershaw, "Miles Franklin and Brent of Bin Bin": 3-4.
particular ideas or images communicated. With the active cultivation of readers in mind, they were careful to modify their criticism and critical style to suit different audiences and contexts. Their series of articles for the *Bulletin* on contemporary Australian writers, for example, were considerably more popular and belles lettristic than their discussions of the same writers in *Essays in Australian Fiction* published shortly afterwards, but they served nonetheless to stimulate the circulation of opinion on matters both Australian and literary. Entitled "Australian Writers", the *Bulletin* series covered Henry Handel Richardson, Christina Stead, Leonard Mann, Frank Dalby Davison, and Eleanor Dark. These full page articles exhibit a far greater dependence on biographical information and plot summary and they are generally accompanied by flattering sketch portraits by Dubois. In places the tone is remarkably familiar and constitutes something closer to literary gossip than criticism. Writing of Henry Handel Richardson they observed that "Mrs Robertson is now a widow, childless, and divides her time between London and her cottage in Dorset...". Elements such as these presumably added a 'human interest' aspect to the articles, stimulating readers' interest and curiosity not only in the written works but in the writer producing them. Like so many of their brief survey articles and reviews, the *Bulletin* series was almost certainly directed towards an audience largely unfamiliar with the material under discussion and where the need to remind readers that Australian literature was both available and accessible remained a central consideration. But, as in all of Barnard Eldershaw's critical writing, these readers were addressed as Australians and the articles sought to unite them in terms of a common national interest.

In their CLF lectures, they were conscious of addressing an audience most of whom possessed a basic undergraduate literary education, even if they remained relatively unfamiliar with the local product. As Barnard wrote to Nettie Palmer regarding her Hobart lectures in 1941, "I sent a bibliography six weeks ago in the hope that a few earnest [sic] souls might borrow some of the books from their libraries and read them".68 Barnard and Eldershaw appear to have treated the lectures as an opportunity for critically publicising Australian writers and their works to an educated and receptive audience. As such, the lectures tended to offer relatively comprehensive accounts of Australian literary history in addition to detailed exercises in practical criticism, and an effort was made to suggest that "Australian literature" now constituted a viable subject for serious study and criticism. Concessions were clearly made to the medium, however, and anecdotal material and amusing digressions were interpellated into the otherwise relatively staid academic performances. On the script of their lecture on "The Ballad and A.B. Paterson", there is a margin note in Eldershaw's hand recounting how

[V[almer] is at present gathering other [ballads] from the memories of old timers. He himself as a youth on a station heard them sung again and again and recalls their tunes. I spent an evening at his home a few nights ago when he sang them over.69

Such familiar references to their contemporaries coincided with their strategy to engender in their audience the sense that they shared in a living and developing culture whose writers "you are most likely to stumble [upon] in a city cafe, a flat at the Cross or a suburban villa".70

68 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 4 September 1941 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS1174/1/6031].
69 M. Barnard Eldershaw, "The Ballad and A.B. Paterson": 5.
70 M. Barnard Eldershaw, "Miles Franklin and Brent of Bin Bin": 5.
The comment is made in one lecture, for example, that "there is a wider reason for concentrating my attention upon the contemporary novel. It is I think the nearest point of contact between any lecturer in Australian literature and his audience". This search for "common ground" with their readers enabled them to focus in detail on contemporary writers in both their lectures and in Essays in Australian Fiction. This not only provided them with the opportunity to offer a critical response to individual works, but also the opportunity to write their contemporaries into history, thereby generating the sense of an existing and identifiable literati within the local Australian community. Barnard and Eldershaw were not defensive about this practice of writing or speaking about their contemporaries. Instead they foregrounded their personal connection with their subject matter, as in their lecture on "Vance Palmer and Frank Dalby Davison" where the observation is made that

The writers I am going to discuss are all living people whom I know, my friends. This embarrasses me not at all. This is the literary subject on which I am best fitted to speak and to which you, I hope, are most prepared to listen.

This form of criticism had the added function of providing further, much needed exposure for their contemporaries whose works were otherwise unlikely to gain a mention beyond the initial flurry of reviews at the time of publication. It represented an occasion when criticism itself could become "more an act of collaboration than of competition". Projects like Essays in Australian Fiction were surely instrumental in consolidating the reputations of Palmer, Richardson, Prichard and Davison and in establishing those of writers like Stead, Dark, Leonard Mann and Martin Boyd in the crucial early stages of

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their careers. H.M. Green suggested that "it [said] something for Barnard Eldershaw's judgement that she (sic) was able to perceive the worth of Mann and Dark at a time when their best work had not yet appeared". They also made a practice of discussing their contemporaries in terms of their wider writing careers, placing them in the context of their overall commitment to Australian letters, something Vance Palmer conceded was a formidable task when he wrote of the challenge involved in

struggling to form a just estimate of a nearer contemporary, whose shape often looks amorphous, his tail buried in the sand of yesterday's journalism, his claws in controversial matter, and his head in some cloud or other. Australian writers never provide their critics with neatly arranged materials. Their books are out of print or hard to get, and they rarely make an occasion by writing a new one.75

Critical feedback of the kind provided by Barnard and Eldershaw was clearly integral to increasing contemporary Australian writers' sense of an audience at a time when they could justifiably have despaired of attaining any significant critical reception. But public criticism also arguably had the effect of "mythologising" these individuals and their creative efforts. Indeed, criticism represented a further site for the construction of an ideal of the Australian author. The contours of this particular ideal of the author are rendered with extreme clarity in a lecture on "Vance Palmer and Frank Dalby Davison" where Palmer is lauded as the model of the Australian writer:

Vance Palmer is a veteran and probably the most substantial figure in Australian letters to-day. (And that should not be taken to mean that he is either old or stout). Since 1915 he has written 8 important novels, 2 volumes of short stories, a book of one act plays, a full length play, 2 books of poetry and a sequence of short biographies entitled "National Portraits", besides a very considerable body of uncollected short stories, articles, book reviews, broadcasts and editing jobs. Those of us who follow books know well his salty, faintly plangent voice on the air every second Thursday evening. By his

75 Vance Palmer, "The Missing Critics": 2.
quiet persistence, his diffident certainty, his unfailing generosity towards other writers as well as by his great artistry he has become a leaven in Australian literature. He is a writer's writer by reason both of his personality and his craftsmanship, a source of impetus in other men.76

Works like *Essays in Australian Fiction* not only gave prominence to individual contemporary authors, it helped to identify those writers as a vital cultural formation in the public's mind.

That personal friendships influenced to some degree the treatment writers received from Barnard and Eldershaw is undeniable. Their essays on Vance Palmer and Frank Dalby Davison, for example, together accounted for 40% of the available page space in *Essays in Australian Fiction*, and few other readers would agree with their assessment of Davison's work as "perfection" and "great prose". But such connections generally did not prevent them from producing remarkably perceptive articles on their fellow writers, articles which frequently represented the first extended critical discussion of these writers' work. Their articles on Christina Stead, for example, in the *Bulletin* and in *Essays in Australian Fiction* were among some of the earliest critical appraisals of her writing and isolate many features elaborated upon by later critics of her work. In both they expressed admiration for *The Salzburg Tales*, commenting on the range and versatility of the tales and noting the tendency toward the unusual and the grotesque which marks her early fiction. Her prose style they labelled "rich and strange" and admired its sensuousness and its "imaginative bloom".77 They used the idea of a "Looking Glass Country" to identify the quality of unreality that attends her landscapes. Of *Seven Poor Men of Sydney*, they argued:

76 M. Barnard Eldershaw, "Lecture Six: Vance Palmer and Frank Dalby Davison": 3.
The scene, which is laid in Sydney, is familiar and yet unfamiliar. It is still Looking Glass country. Familiar scenes are shown from a new angle, revealing curious proportions. The background is heightened, enriched from imagination, stylised, interpenetrated by strange light.

Of Henry Handel Richardson they made the keen observation that she was not a "stylist", and went on to analyse *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony* in terms of its modernist appeal:

For years its subject matter damned *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony*. Nobody overseas was interested in Australia as the raw material of art. Australia had no nice coloured label to appeal to the romantic public. She has none now and yet Australian books are being welcomed in England and America because of the very qualities that used to repel - grimness and immensity and emptiness - are now assets. A new significance has been found in the negative side of life. After a surfeit of prettiness, harshness is found tonic. The fashion of mind that produced the war books also made the Australian setting popular.78

They were also prepared to be quite dispassionate in their criticism, as they were in the case of Leonard Mann, whose prose they described as "serviceable",79 or in their legendary criticism of Miles Franklin's *Old Blastus of Bandicoot*:

"Old Blastus of Bandicoot" then is a romance on which a tract has been imposed. It is sweetness garnished with tartness. It reveals a certain irresponsibility in character drawing, poverty of invention which drives the author to fall back on stock situations, and a pleasant ability to portray the features of a world now almost lost.80

However, as they discovered all too clearly in respect of Miles Franklin, writing of their contemporaries was not always easy or uncontroversial. The benefits of a supportive and close-knit literary circle were often balanced by significant limitations. Franklin took violent and vocal exception to criticism of the work of "Brent of Bin Bin" in a CLF lecture at Sydney University. As Barnard later recounted to Nettie Palmer:

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80M. Barnard Eldershaw, "Miles Franklin and Brent of Bin Bin": 15.
Our Australian literature lectures have gone very well... Very big classes but very responsive, especially the evening ones... There was a slight fracas because Miles did not like what I said about her and thought it grossly unfair that I should talk about Old Blastus of Bandicoot. My conscience does not reproach me for any criticisms I offered seem to me to have been fair and moderate, certainly no malice involved. I let her batter on my grave imperturbability while I registered polite concern & poor Harry Green fluttered around being indiscriminately soothing. There is no doubt I'm a wretch. Miles would much have preferred a grand scene & it was sheer meanness or thin bloodedness on my part that I didn't give it to her.81

Franklin for her part threatened reprisals in the form of adverse criticism of A House is Built. Earlier, Barnard and Eldershaw had been worried that they might have offended Henry Handel Richardson or appeared "ungrateful" with their comments on The Getting of Wisdom. Tension arose over the exercise of criticising Vance Palmer's work as Nettie proved somewhat protective and proprietorial. On reading the draft of the essay on Vance for Essays in Australian Fiction, she took exception to Barnard and Eldershaw's praise of Vance's "craftsmanship", feeling this to be a demeaning assessment of his achievement. Nettie construed this privileging of craftsmanship as an "attack" on Vance, prompting Barnard to write by way of apology and explanation:

The word "attack" curdled my blood. That it should look like that to anyone at all... To praise his work for the sake of praising it would be an insincerity from us to him, to attack or belittle is so far from our wish as to seem an impossibility. All we tried to do was to draw up a statement of what we found, by the usual methods of critical analysis, working with as dry a mind as we could attain.82

The size and intimacy of contemporary writing circles inevitably established boundaries as to what could tactfully be expressed about another's work. They were interested in the idea of Stead's work being shaped by an "emotional hangover from adolescence" but did not pursue this. Similarly, Barnard's fascinating and frank opinions about Vance

81M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 23 August 1944 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/6615].
82M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 28 February 1937 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5249].
Palmer's later work were tempered by friendship and discretion, as her letter to Clem Christesen acknowledges:

It was very difficult to review Seedtime, remain honest & not hurt Vance. Which won I think you can guess...Vance's novels were always muted, technically so good, as essays in the human comedy, or tragedy, so ineffectual. It used to be said that he wrote novels that his young daughters could read but I guess they are old enough & read anything now & always were and Vance goes further & further along the line of evasion. Aileen's excursion into reality would seem to have proved disastrous. Is there a tie up? You see why I could not undertake a full length analysis of Vance's novels, unless I was prepared to be entirely honest. I look around too many corners, even if I don't see much. Vance and Nettie have done a hell of a lot for Australian writing and Vance's work is so good that it is little short of tragic that it isn't better or that it hasn't progressed. If only he would stop writing & stop reviewing and lecturing. The spiritual vitality ran out long ago.\(^\text{83}\)

Opinions passed in correspondence were, however, always far more frank than those published. While Barnard once remarked that she didn't share the perception of Australian writers as "a forlorn handful holding a sand castle against the sea",\(^\text{84}\) the two appear nonetheless to have subscribed to Nettie Palmer's belief in the need to maintain a certain degree of solidarity publicly. In *Essays in Australian Fiction* it is suggested that the "economy and precision" of Eleanor Dark's fiction is "too calculating" and that "every phrase is a brick in the scientifically planned and erected edifice".\(^\text{85}\) By contrast, in a letter to Nettie Palmer, Barnard accused *Prelude to Christopher*, that year's winner of the ALS Gold Medal, of representing "some rather neat carpentry and joinery, some well executed minor characters and a pretentious, over written and unconvincing story".\(^\text{86}\) When visiting the Darks for a weekend, Barnard suffered "a few bad moments" when Eric Dark "cut [her] out of the herd to demand an honest opinion of 'Pixie's last two books'". She claimed afterwards to have "lacked the courage to say 'bloody

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\(^{83}\)M. Barnard to Clem Christesen, 28 March 1958 [Meanjin Archives, Barnard Correspondence 1950s].

\(^{84}\)M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 10 September 1953 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4290].

\(^{85}\)M. Barnard Eldershaw, "Eleanor Dark", *Essays in Australian Fiction*: 189.

\(^{86}\)M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 25 November 1935 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4838].
awful". Even the criticism Barnard offered to Dark personally was more severe and direct than that enacted publicly. Commenting on *The Timeless Land*, Barnard explained that she found in the book a certain failure toward itself. The original impulse, I imagine, was sharp and exciting but it never quite floated the mass of the book. You planned it, and you carried it out according to plan, but you couldn't keep the sap up. So the hard ribs of intention show through, there is a weight of explanation, a failure to fuse. The fictitious characters do not add anything. In the enormously, excitingly hard task of managing (orchestrating) the strophe and antistrophe of black & white, I cannot believe you achieve the right medium. The idea is there but not the technique. I don't know the right answer, whether it is in structure or in prose.

But whether offered publicly or privately, Barnard and Eldershaw's criticisms were inevitably offered in the spirit of a collective effort to forge, shape and encourage the ideal of a national literature.

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87M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 18 October 1940 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5826].
88M. Barnard to Eleanor Dark, n.d. Tuesday (c. mid-March 1942) [Eleanor Dark Papers, Correspondence 1923-43, NLA MSS 4998].
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CHAPTER EIGHT
Daughters' Stories

"The relative absence of father-daughter discussion has something to do with a cultural metrics that assigns value almost literally by poundage. In the four cornered nuclear enclosure which is the source for Western ideologies about the family, the father weighs most and the daughter least. To consider the daughter and father in relationship means juxtaposing the two figures most asymmetrically proportioned in terms of gender, age, authority, and cultural privilege. All of these asymmetries are ones which are controlled by the idiom of presence which defines the father, and absence, which identifies the daughter".

A nice dinner and a nice household, but rather prim...Afterwards I had some talk with M.B. She's quite delightful in herself, but a bit subdued to the tone of the house, and when in a moment of reckless abandon she lit a cigarette because I was going to smoke my pipe. "Oh Marjorie, won't your father be shocked". Letter from Vance Palmer to Nettie Palmer, n.d. (June 1934)

In their fiction, M. Barnard Eldershaw found the opportunity to explore many of the same issues they confronted in establishing their careers as literary women. Questions such as the nature of literary authority, the role of the writer, and the formation of a national culture which underpinned both their literary and cultural criticism and their public activities are rehearsed or debated in various forms in their fiction. At the same time, it is in these works that on-going tensions and even doubts about the viability of their position as writers and intellectuals find expression. This is certainly the case with their first two novels which are each centrally concerned with the position of women in culture. The woman writer is the daughter of her culture, the one who challenges the privileging of the cultural father's voice and story over those of women. In their capacity as writers and critics, Barnard and Eldershaw worked to ensure "the daughter's accession to
the symbolic estate of language and culture".\(^1\) It is not surprising, therefore, that *A House Is Built* and *Green Memory* should each offer a version of the 'daughter's story': narratives which present women negotiating the conventional cultural positioning of the daughter within the patriarchal family and within a society predicated upon female subordination. Indeed, the relation between familial and narrative structuring in both texts recalls the dynamics of Freud's "Family Romances", an essay in which he traces the struggle for authority and legitimacy which marks the daughter's relation to her father/husband, acknowledging that "the whole progress of society rests upon the opposition between successive generations".\(^2\) In their representations of the problematics of female authority, the two texts can be read, moreover, as allegorical measures of the challenge to the prevailing cultural fictions of femininity that Barnard and Eldershaw themselves posed in forging their positions as literary and cultural authorities.

Very little has been written about *A House Is Built* or *Green Memory*, despite the fact that *A House Is Built* was, in commercial terms at least, far and away their most successful novel and the only one of their works to have remained consistently in print. In recent years, the chief reason for the neglect of these novels is probably that they have been perceived to lie outside those literary and political categories preferred by critics interested in "recovering" the work of women writers from the interwar period. Regarded rather unjustly as conventional period novels or costume romances, they have probably

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been considered conservative or even reactionary, but certainly not feminist. Drusilla Modjeska in *Exiles At Home*, for example, allows just over three pages for a combined discussion of the two novels, and while Louise Rorabacher in her study of M. Barnard Eldershaw gives considerably more space to them, a slightly apologetic tone pervades much of her analysis, particularly with respect to *Green Memory*. In their later career Barnard and Eldershaw themselves became rather troubled by these early novels. One reason for this is that none of their later works approached the success of *A House Is Built* which had capitalised on the vogue for family sagas and historical novels generated by the novels of John Galsworthy and Arnold Bennett. Bennett, in fact, had reviewed *A House is Built* for *The Evening Standard* in London, declaring it "a very notable novel" which had "deeply impressed" him. But as they warned in *Essays in Australian Fiction*, "to write a very successful and critic proof first book is, as a rule, an ill omen. An early and too complete success is likely to arrest growth...". The continuing popularity of this initial novel came to haunt them as they moved away from that area to more contemporary issues and more experimental forms. Commenting on the reception of *The Glasshouse*, Barnard observed:

> My stock in the family circle rises & falls with the reviews. Three inches of damnation in the Bulletin reduced it considerably. They look at me more in sorrow than in anger & wonder why I'm so perverse as to write difficult books when I could write nice popular ones like 'A House' & give them legitimate satisfaction.

Beyond the basic commercial aspect, *A House Is Built* presented M.

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5 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 26 February 1936 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4958].

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Barnard Eldershaw with an often quite paralysing creative dilemma. In
Frank Dalby Davison's words, "'A House Is Built' rides them like an old
man. They say it's such an obvious sort of book...they're terribly
afraid of being obvious". Green Memory they treated with even
greater diffidence because it represented something of a disappointment.
Reviews of the novel tended to be lukewarm, sales were far from
vigorous, and the novel was, in Barnard's words, "remaindered out of
life" and never reprinted.

While A House Is Built and Green Memory both appear to belong
to the general category of period novels, the former a family saga and
the latter a romance, the extent to which they subvert the conventional
discourses on gender encoded in these genres has been overlooked.
Modjeska, for example, is willing to concede that the two novels, in
common with the early works of Eleanor Dark, offer "angry criticism
of the social and ideological constraints within which women lived", but
contends that they are "scarcely radical". However, in reading these
texts, it is possible to locate what Elizabeth Abel terms

a disjunction between a surface plot, which affirms social conventions, and a
submerged plot, which encodes rebellion; between a plot governed by age-old
female story patterns...and a plot that reconceives these limiting possibilities;
between a plot that charts development and a plot that unravels it.

Rather than merely accepting and reproducing the conventional
masculinist discourse on women and the accompanying power relations
characteristic of patriarchy, these texts challenge some of the key
assumptions upon which such discourse depends, offering sometimes

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6 Frank Dalby Davison to Vance Palmer, 29 November 1938 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5463].
7 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 8 June 1934 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4451].
8 Modjeska, 223.
9 Elizabeth Abel, "Introduction", The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development (London: University
disturbing and sinister revisions to various generic conventions. Viewed in this light, the novels can perhaps be read not as youthful indiscretions, but as significant precursors to the explorations and innovations exhibited in Barnard Eldershaw's later works. The questioning of patriarchal authority in these texts certainly appears as a "domestic" forerunner to the rather more complex exploration of the limitations of particular forms of political authority in Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow, while the focus on groups of characters, rather than on individuals clearly anticipates creative developments in The Glasshouse and Plaque With Laurel. A House Is Built and Green Memory, moreover, represent Barnard and Eldershaw's initial tentative efforts at mapping or textualising Australian history and culture, at constructing a vision of Australia and Australian society. Indeed, in A House is Built and Green Memory, Barnard Eldershaw were among the first writers to conceptualise Australian society in terms of a history of urban spaces.

A House Is Built has conventionally been seen as the story of James Hyde, the quartermaster whose rise to commercial and social prominence in the early stages of the colony dominates the narrative. In fact, "The Quartermaster" was the title under which a truncated version of the text, one which concluded with James Hyde's death, appeared in the Bulletin in 1928 after the novel shared first prize in its S.H. Prior novel competition. However, the accepted rubric of "one man's vision of success in a new colony and its tragic effects on the rest of his family" fails to reveal the extent to which the novel takes as one of its

10The abridgement was undertaken by Bulletin staff without the assistance of the authors who were unhappy with the decision and chose to distance themselves from this version of the novel.
central concerns the frustrated ambitions and desires of James Hyde's elder daughter, Fanny. The struggles of the new colony in the 1830s and successive decades against the burdens of British influence and tradition find their parallel in her struggles against the patriarchal family for freedom and self-reliance. Indeed, the master narrative of history is here absorbed into the privatised discourse of female emancipation. Rather than a simple narrative of commerce and male progress, the novel can be read then as a version of the female bildungsroman. Certainly it has in common with the female bildungsroman the desperate struggle to voice aspirations in a culture where women's social options are limited.

In this novel the new colony of Sydney is constructed as the home of the bourgeois family and consequently the space mapped by the text is largely domestic. The novel clearly belongs to that form of domestic epic which Gillian Beer has described as conventionally "set on the level of family, inside houses, among ordinary circumstances". Through the figure of Fanny Hyde, however, there is a questioning of this seemingly arbitrary limiting of the territory of women. In the opening pages of the novel, Fanny's mundane speculations on household provisions are shattered by her sudden consciousness of the relative freedoms of women and men:

"I wish, oh, I wish I was a man!" thought Fanny, suddenly, passionately in the midst of her trivialities. "I'd go whaling in Captain Hildebrand's boat, or I'd go exploring. I'd ask Mr Eyre to take me with him. I'd like, oh, I'd like to be hungry and thirsty and burnt to a chip. Why doesn't William go? I wish I was William".

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13 M. Barnard Eldershaw, *A House Is Built* (London: Harrap & Co., 1929): 19. All further references are to this edition and appear in parentheses in the body of the text with the abbreviation AHB.
Significantly, her exasperated wishes find their ironic fulfilment several chapters later when she does in fact briefly become a 'man'. In the first of several bids to escape from the narrowly prescriptive role of dutiful daughter, Fanny, with her hair cut short and wearing a sailor's rigout stolen from her father's store, attempts to elope with Hildebrand, the captain of the whaler, Rosamund, only to find that she has misread what was to him merely a passing flirtation. It is at this point in the narrative, at the collapse of what should conventionally have represented the culmination of Fanny's emotional and social aspirations, that the text begins to resist the master plot of romance, systematically exposing the limited and limiting ideologies underpinning its conventions: gender asymmetry and the fundamental inequality of women. Indeed, just at the moment when Fanny is poised to join what Ros Ballaster refers to as that "long line of somatic and hysterical victims of passion", the text rejects the erotic-bathetic drive of conventional narratives of seduction and betrayal. Accordingly, the very next chapter finds the recuperating Fanny pointedly casting aside her copy of the romance Evelina by her namesake Fanny Burney, declaring the social adventures of its heroine "tiresome" (AHB, p.107). The discarding of the romance novel signals both the narrative's rejection of romantic love as women's sole socially sanctioned moment of transcendence, and Fanny's intention to invent an alternative plot for herself, one that would deviate from the closure and containment of courtship and marriage. At Camden where she has gone with her sister Maud to recover from an illness precipitated by her failed elopement, Fanny confirms that her emancipation is to be found not, as women of her class have been conditioned to believe, through romance, but

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through participating in genuinely useful work. Interestingly, the
description of the women on the farm at Camden foreshadows the same
privileging of the soil and notions of collective cultural endeavour both
in Barnard and Eldershaw's critical writing and in their later fiction:

Fanny was fascinated. She could feel the steady rhythm of the work going on,
the fertility of the farm, the fertility of the work. These women had something
in their lives that never deserted them, that outlasted love and romance, and that
was their creative power. She was sure they were happier than she, more
contented, though their lives seemed very hard. "It's only people like Maud
and me, who have no definite enduring work in our lives who think love's
going to be everything. It isn't everything, it's only a little bit, and when we try
to believe it's everything and build on that, we come to grief. I wonder if they
would let me stay here helping on the place? But I couldn't ask them that, they
wouldn't want an outsider. Perhaps Papa would let me help him. I know I
could do anything that Benjamin does, or William. It's silly trying to pretend
that I'm nothing but a sort of doll. I'm not a doll, and I can't be caught with the
old tale about love." (AHB, p.110)

It is this struggle between her designated role and her desire for a
meaningful vocation that continues to inform Fanny's development in
the course of the narrative. The opportunity to apply the lesson she
learns at Camden arises when she takes advantage of the labour shortage
in the early days of the gold rush to establish herself as bookkeeper in
her father's harbourside warehouse. Unlike her brother William who
has always been uncomfortable in his role at Hyde and Son, Fanny is
represented as her father's true heir for she shares his love of the
business and joy in his life work. Indeed, work is here constructed
quite explicitly as an alternative source of "romance" and "fruitfulness":

She had thought of her work at the store as providing her with occupation and
independence, but she found in it romance as well. She did not know it but the
quartermaster's feelings toward his life work were being reproduced in her.
She saw their business as a plastic, living thing, and she admired it as she could
never have admired any work of art. When she once mastered their contents
she could read much between the lines of the ledgers, the fluctuations of trade
and her father's reactions to them. She told herself again and again that Papa
was always right. Fanny yielded to something in her blood that she held off in
her youth, she reverted to the type of the family and found her peculiar
fruitfulness. (AHB, p.223)

This passage reveals one of the chief sites of tension within the text;
namely, the drive toward patriarchal succession. As a father, the quartermaster exercises authority over legal rights and inheritance and determines his offspring's privileges, filial duties, property and home. While he is willing to take on his daughters' future husbands as business partners, James Hyde refuses to consider his daughters in such a light: they must remain vehicles for the entry of men into the business rather than entering themselves. This benevolent, paternalistic tyranny and preoccupation with male lineage consistently sees Fanny reconstituted, against her will, in terms of the narrow offices of daughter or prospective wife. Thus she discovers the interest and unprecedented independence she finds in the family business is cut short by her brother who exploits her temporary absence to replace her with a former male employee, a gesture condoned by her father:

She would not go again to the store, as it needed nothing from her. The place she had filled for seven years had closed in behind her as she stepped from it, and there was left no mark even to show where it had been. She supposed she must stay at home controlling the household until Adela grew strong enough to take back the reins of management. Then what? — a long straight path to nothingness. That was all she could see in life. She had defied that destiny once before; now destiny had won. The passion and storm of her heart subsided, leaving a great weariness and a hard, unbreaking core of bitterness against William. (AHB, p.290)

Fanny underestimated the power of convention and patriarchal authority to overwhelm female desire when it dares project a different future. However, Fanny ultimately defies that "destiny" she speaks of and the prohibitive 'no' of her father, by denying her own 'marketability', refusing proposals of marriage, and eventually taking on the running of a charity school for girls. Although the philanthropic work so common among women of her class does not fulfil her aspirations, she reluctantly accepts her role:

Fanny had a great struggle with herself after Adelaide had gone. She did not want to work for the sake of doing good, as some of these ladies did, for the sake of feeling virtuous or for the sense of power over others, as more of them did. The only work she really wanted was to take part in the everyday work of
the world, to feel herself part of the machinery of life. But as she couldn't have
that she must find something else that would give her an outlet for her energy
and capacity. (AHB, p.296)

Her desire for autonomy is contrasted with the shallowness and
complacency of her married sister, Maud, and with the dependence and
vulnerability of her sister-in-law, Adela. Indeed, the novel ultimately
seeks to recuperate the ideal of the single woman by exposing the false
romantic ideology upon which the roles of wife and mother depend.
The single life is constructed as a preferable alternative to the
patriarchal family, a position which persists throughout the work of
Barnard Eldershaw and which Barnard was subsequently to develop
further in her collection of stories, The Persimmon Tree. Adela's
marriage to William and her incorporation into the Hyde family is
imaged in terms of suffocation and disenfranchisement:

She had ceased to be Adela Gage, and become William's wife, the
quartermaster's daughter-in-law, Fanny's sister. She had left her world for
theirs. It was an india-rubber world into which she had strayed. It yielded
readily to her touch, but she made no lasting impression on it; as soon as she
withdrew her pressure the impression disappeared. (AHB, p.146)

Maud's rather more successful marriage is shown nonetheless to have
reduced her to a state of almost bovine satisfaction and is ultimately
represented as a betrayal of her sister:

Maud's departure for the country, whence she emerged only two or three times
a year, to christen a baby or buy a stock of bonnets and gowns most unsuited to
country life, left an aching blank in the social life of the household at City Road.
Fanny felt it most deeply and said least. Looking back, she thought Maud had
been slowly breaking all their sisterly ties ever since the day she first entered on
the life of deceit which culminated in her marriage. Now the final severance
had been made. Maud had gone away gaily and lightly, leaving Fanny with the
memory of their inseparable childhood and girlhood lying like a broken and
discarded toy, at her feet. [AHB, p. 156]

There are, in fact, very few positive representations of the married state
to be found in M. Barnard Eldershaw's work where single women,
affective friends, sisters and aunts abound. It is Fanny's increasing sense
of personal authority, moreover, an authority derived from the society
of women and girls outside the family, which allows her to escape the self-mutilation and self-sacrifice demanded by the authority of the family and to which Adela is seen to fall victim. Working for the charity school enables her to enter the public sphere, however peripherally, on her own terms, a position from which she is able to renegotiate her place within the family:

Of course Fanny still lived with them at Firenze. The upper floor of the east wing was tacitly hers in its entirety, and here she lived her own life, intruding little on the others, though they never lost the feeling of her presence and her occasional scrutiny...it was too late to break away from Adela and have her own home. Habit, more potent even than the quartermaster's will bound them together. She was satisfied there. She went four days a week to the city, where she still controlled the Poor School for Girls. Though public responsibility for the education of future citizens of the State was growing, there was still ample scope in the crowded slum areas for its work. For the rest she had her rooms here, overlooking the quiet courtyard and the Lane Cove River, which changed its moods from hour to hour as she watched it. (AHB, p.346-7)

As in so many of Virginia Woolf's novels, 'spinsterhood' is seen here as a measure of success, as the forging of a space, however provisional, outside the strictures of convention. But Fanny's 'spinster' status nevertheless remains a constant challenge to the authority of the male-organised world where the single and celibate female is a source of fear and uncertainty. Fanny is, however, the only person in the novel to defy her father successfully, prompting him to declare her "an unnatural girl" (AHB, p.95).

At the close of the narrative, it is Fanny who ultimately has the satisfaction of presiding over what can be read as the 'fall' of the House of Hyde. With the inexorability of a Greek tragedy, the men of the Hyde family are struck down one after another by their own anger, pride or obsession. It is as though the competition between feminine and masculine authority has ultimately exhausted the male characters leaving them spent, castrated. The central irony of these episodes is that
the family business is passed on, not to the grandson James, the mirror-image of Fanny's father, but to his 'weak' younger brother, Lionel, in whose hands, it is implied, the business will founder. In the course of the narrative, Lionel has been 'feminised' by his ill-health, his indulgent rearing by the women of the house and by his continuing interest in music rather than commerce. Neglected by both his father and grandfather, he has allowed the domestic space of the Hyde household to delimit his world. In the final chapter, Fanny, who survives to inhabit the grand, empty house her father has built, watches, Cassandra-like, as the family business effectively passes to a 'woman' afterall. Indeed, Lionel is represented as the true heir, not of the quartermaster, but of the circle of oppressed women over whom the Quartermaster had for so long exerted his authority:

[Lionel] had so much and he had given so little — a heritage that was never meant for him, a power he had no wish to exercise...The Hydes had always taken the difficult road, they had been builders and makers. Lionel knew that it was not for such as he that his grandfather had striven. Beside the old man who was dead, he felt himself a ghost. He did not belong to the Hydes, and their wealth and power hung on him like a garment that is much too big. He was a mouse that the mountain had brought forth. (AHB, p.358)

Monstrous fathers and perverse legacies also feature in *Green Memory*, Barnard Eldershaw's second novel, which is also set in Sydney, this time in the period of the 1850s and 1860s. It is apparent, however, that *Green Memory* like *A House Is Built* is, as Modjeska suggests, less an historical novel than a period novel, its focus not on "nineteenth century Australian history but [on the] paradigms of M. Barnard Eldershaw's perception of the conflicts facing women of their own generation and class".15 Indeed, while it could be maintained that the narrative of *A House Is Built* at least engages directly on occasions with the circumstances of the period in which the novel is set (e.g. the

15Modjeska, 221.
All About Books
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M. BARNARD ELDERSHAW,
whose book, "Green Memory," is reviewed in this issue.
gold rush), in *Green Memory* Darling Point and Woolloomooloo form scarcely more than a backdrop to a narrative in which temporal and spatial concerns lie elsewhere. Taking the family again as its subject, *Green Memory* deals chiefly with the contest between Lucy and Charlotte Haven, daughters of Alfred Haven, a disgraced government official. As the title suggests, theirs is a contest for the father's memory. Barnard referred to *Green Memory* as "a rather bitter book and...likely to be criticised on that ground", 16 and it does represent a significant shift in tone from *A House Is Built*. H.M. Green compared the book somewhat unfavourably to "a long passage of music in a minor key". 17

Just as *A House Is Built* represented a rupturing of the conventional romance narrative, *Green Memory* too refuses to privilege what Nancy K. Miller has termed the "heroine's text", the familiar narrative of the sexually vulnerable female protagonist whose future happiness depends upon negotiating a successful marriage. 18 As in *A House Is Built*, *Green Memory* creates a space for articulating the "other side" of this story, exposing once again the constrictions of the romance plot and how that plot enforces the prevailing cultural construction of female identity and destiny. This counterpointing is achieved through the relationship between the two sisters who, like Maud and Fanny, represent separate alternatives for women: marriage or the single life. Following her father's suicide, Lucy is presented with the possibility of marrying Richard as originally planned and thus

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16M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 16 November 1930 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/3706].
resolving to some extent her family's present difficulties. While the passage containing Richard's restatement of his commitment to Lucy rehearses the conventional social, economic, and psychological necessities motivating marriage in a woman of her circumstances, Lucy refuses his proposal of marriage:

"What other chances will you have? Who else will love you as I do, proud and bitter as you are?"
"What right have you to speak to me like this?" cried Lucy, stung to fresh anger. "I give you none. If I did love you it would make no difference. I could not desert Mamma for the sake of your father's pride."
"I have not asked you to desert anybody. No matter whom you married you would leave your home. Your mother would not call a rich marriage a desertion."

He had gone too far. He had lost her now.
"Please go," she said very low. (GM, p. 79)

In contrast, Lucy's sister Charlotte, like Maud in the earlier novel, seeks the "euphoric" destiny of courtship, love and marriage.19 While Lucy struggles to cope with the family's straightened circumstances, Charlotte indulges in the comforting escapism of her romantic possibilities:

Charlotte was absorbed in her thoughts. She would have to give Michael a definite answer, perhaps to-day. His gentle insistence was closing in upon her; although her mind, not understanding her heart, flinched from a decision, she would be glad to have Michael decide for her. If he could only make her feel that their love was greater than the claims of her upbringing, she would have peace. She wanted him by his fervour to blind her to all else, to sweep her into a marriage that would mean escape and safety and happiness... (GM, p. 85)

Love and marriage are here imaged in terms of surrender and incorporation, of the grateful subsuming of her will to that of her lover, and in terms of a safe haven from the world and its claims. Once married, however, the harmonious closure projected in her romantic self-narrativising is inevitably revealed as a form of enclosure, a loss of freedom and mobility, a frustrating negation of her independence, her desires and her identity. As she ponders the occasion of her first

19Miller, The Heroine's Text, xi.
wedding anniversary, Charlotte reluctantly finds herself confronting the troubling loss of her girlhood dreams and recognition of the fact that "life then had been very much more vital and real than it had been since" (GM, p. 117). Rather than the sought-after surrender of her will, Charlotte discovers instead that marriage into the Henderson family represents the active frustration and denial of her will. Her relatively simple request for the opportunity to redecorate her rooms in the family home, a request that is vigorously opposed by her father-in-law, brings home to her the realisation that her dreams of a comforting envelopment and incorporation were indeed dreams and fantasies. Instead, marriage is revealed to her through this episode as a stifling institution characterised by repression, separation and alienation:

In the wave of silence that followed Eva burst into tears. Michael stared at the salt-cellar. Only the two facing each other, the old man, heavy and immobile, and the flushed and quivering girl, seemed alive. Charlotte felt herself an alien in this house. She was stricken and silenced by such horror as a changeling might feel in finding his way irrevocably set among men. These people to whom she was bound by the most intimate of ties were utterly different from herself. (GM, p. 123)

However, in Green Memory spinsterhood or the single life is by no means represented as the desirable alternative to subjection and marriage. Unlike Fanny in A House is Built whose efforts to rewrite her traditional destiny and forge for herself some provisional existence outside the strictures of convention are endorsed by the text, Lucy Haven's strivings for independence are represented rather more problematically. For example, in this later novel Fanny's initial expressed desire to be a man finds its nightmarish complement: Lucy is so seduced by paternal affection, or the memory of that affection, that following her father's suicide, an incident for which she feels directly responsible, she effectively becomes a man in drag or a figurative father. She takes her father's place at the head of the family and
dedicates her life and theirs to the continued fulfilment of his plans for
them. So completely has she internalised his values that she is oblivious
to the disturbing and repressive influence her desires have upon herself
and upon the family. She practically confines her younger sister Mina,
refusing her opportunities to make friends in the neighbourhood to
which they move and pressures her brothers to prepare themselves to
redeem the family's position through their own careers. As Charlotte
remarks with some despair, "Lucy doesn't understand. She's so strong
and clever she can't understand weakness, and it makes it all so hard for
everyone".20

It becomes increasingly apparent that Lucy confuses independence
with isolation, integrity and duty with stubbornness. The second of the
three chapters entitled "Lucy and Richard" confirms this pattern of
confusion. Whereas Lucy's initial refusal of Richard is represented as
justified in the light of his arrogant and overbearing behaviour, her
second refusal is represented as more capricious, as an active stifling of
her desires. While this second refusal is again couched in terms of her
independence and her duty to her family ("she had chosen to rebuild her
family, instead of marriage", p.142), the value of this justification is
undermined by the reader's increasing awareness of Lucy's oppressive
hold over the family and the anxieties and resentment with which other
members of the family view this arrangement:

[Charles] was making a desperate appeal to Lucy's understanding and
sympathy, but at once he wished he had kept quiet. She couldn't see Gerald as
a human being with real difficulties to face, only as a scholarship-winning
machine with a duty to his family. (GM, p. 168)

Indeed, in Book III, Lucy's pressure to restore the family's honour and

20M. Barnard Eldershaw, Green Memory (London: Harrap, 1931): 87. All further references are to this
dition and appear in parentheses in the body of the text with the abbreviation GM.
prestige through her personal sacrifices and through the success of her brothers, leads to a further family crisis when one of her brothers, Gerald, repeats his father's crime by inadvertently cheating in a scholarship exam. At this point Lucy, who has come to embody a repressive familial authority figure lacking even basic sympathy and understanding, is represented as directly instrumental in Gerald's failure. Even the limited independence Lucy achieves through her work as a music teacher is compromised by the understanding that it is only a further means by which she may ultimately perpetuate what she believes to be her father's will. Indeed, rather than seeking her own destiny as Fanny had, Lucy in fact follows slavishly what she believes to be her father's desires for her family. Not even the unanticipated inheritance of her uncle's money which makes her struggles unnecessary, deters Lucy from her increasingly maniacal commitment to the father's memory.

In many respects, Lucy's duty to her family but more particularly to her father invokes the model of the "good daughter". Linda Zwinger, who discusses this phenomenon in relation to such familiar literary figures as Miranda in *The Tempest*, Jo March in *Little Women*, Florence Dombey in *Dombey and Son*, notes the way in "the legend of good daughters invariably nurses the plot of true romance, the plot of sentimental fiction, and the plot, above all, of heterosexual desire — plots constructed by and for the father".21 Like the "good daughters" Zwinger identifies in her study, Lucy too can be seen to conform to the father's mandate and to transform her own desires into the fulfilment of that mandate. Lucy is not alone, however, in her intense devotion to

filial duty. On the contrary, her obsessive fixation is matched by her sister Charlotte, the two forming the balance of a triangular pattern of desire. As Charlotte herself recognises, her connection to her husband and his family can never compete with the surviving bond with her own father:

Despite their love, despite the sacrament of marriage, she and Michael remained separate individuals. They were strangers to one another in their memories and traditions. The eighteen years in her father's house were still stronger than Michael. The memory of her father was stronger. She had thought to find a sure refuge in her marriage, and she had found a conflict of loyalties. (GM, p.126)

There exists, moreover, a strong element of competition between Lucy and Charlotte as the structural relationship between father and daughters establishes them as rivals in their efforts to demonstrate their continuing love and duty. While in one sense Lucy has taken the place of their father, there is also a contest played out between the two sisters as to who should be 'mother' to the dispossessed family and an unspoken 'custody' battle ensues as the two vie for the right to care for their mother and younger siblings. Lucy's dedication to the family is represented ultimately as a form of masochism or self-sacrifice, an act of abasement or subjection through which her continued submission to her father's authority is enacted. The father's influence is also seen to exert itself upon Charlotte for whom his death originally meant freedom to marry her wealthy but socially inferior lover. Guilt at betraying her father's authority, prompts Charlotte to consecrate her child to him:

As soon as he could understand she would talk to him about his grandfather, would train him to be like the dead man, but this new Alfred would be all hers. (GM, p.130)

In a speech that is strongly marked by sibling (and sexual) rivalry, Lucy explains to Charlotte's mystified husband, Michael, that while Charlotte
had married him for love, she had subsequently been overcome by the demands of her father's memory:

"But afterwards [Charlotte] was afraid she had cut herself off from Papa altogether. She couldn't give him up — to me. When Alfred was born I think her purpose solidified. She set herself to take Mamma from me — and the children. She wanted to humiliate me, and she has. She has taken Papa's responsibilities from me, and now she means our father to live again in Alfred. That is what she cares about most in the world...She has loved a dead man best". (GM, p.279)

Indeed, while the text entertains no overtly incestuous suggestion, both daughters clearly construct their fantasies of desire within the context of the nuclear family, making the novel indeed a kind of 'family romance'. As they distort their lives and their desires to accommodate the memory of their father, both Lucy and Charlotte are shown to be victims of a kind of exquisite torture. It is as though they willingly destroy their lives as an act of humiliation and punishment for their respective failures in filial duty.

Just as Charlotte is unable to free herself and so makes her child the focus for the displacement of her desire for her father ("She would lavish her love and devotion on him as she had never been able to lavish it on her father. Her new loneliness, her old love and jealousy, beat together in this new passion", p.130), Lucy too fails in her attempt to liberate herself from the authority of the absent father. In a rather gothic twist, on the final page of the novel she joins him in a symbolic marriage. Interestingly, this gesture is prefigured in the illustration on the original dust jacket for the novel which showed a young woman, presumably Lucy, embracing an older man in the shadow of a tree. In Lucy's dreams on the night before her wedding, the figure of her dead father supplants that of her fiancé Richard:

Lucy was afraid. "Richard", she cried, "take me away," but Richard was no longer there. Her father stood beside her, and her heart leapt as it never had for
Richard. The last of the light fell on him, so that she saw him very distinctly —
his clear brow and fine shining eyes, his long, eloquent hands, the cornelian
ring. But he was looking beyond her towards the trees, his face haggard and
desperate. She caught his arm in terror.

"What is it, Papa?"

Lucy's terror woke her. The first pale light of morning was flowing
into the room, grey and meaningless. The to-morrow she had longed for had
come, but she was not free. "Richard!" she whispered. "Richard!" but the
other was still beside her and she knew now that he would never leave her.
(QM, p.288)

This passage has created a number of difficulties for critics who have
generally viewed it as a rather unsatisfactory ending. Green regarded it
as one those unfortunate "touches of melodrama" to which he believed
the novel was prey, while Modjeska, contrasting it with the insoluble
positions of Fanny and Adela in A House Is Built, argues that it
represents "an unconvincing capitulation".\(^{22}\) The ending is only
melodramatic or unconvincing, however, if the structural configuration
of desire upon which the narrative is based is overlooked. It is quite
natural in terms of the libidinal economy of the text that Richard should
become Lucy's father's "supplement", effectively overcoming and
inscribing the father's absence through his presence. As the authority
or strength of the father is represented here, daughters can never step
beyond its influence, but are fated instead to join themselves to its
symbolic double. In Lynda Zwinger's terms, "the daughter figure as
inscribed in the bourgeois novel accepts her father's word as law and
solicits [his] approval only to learn that her approach to the father...is
always mediated by someone else's body".\(^{23}\) Lucy's plea to Richard that
he "take her away" goes unheeded, indicating that marriage to another
man does not offer the prospect of escape from the authority of the
Father so much as the reproduction and extension of that authority

\(^{22}\)Green: 11184; Modjeska: 223.
\(^{23}\)Zwinger: 65.
through another.

*A House Is Built* and *Green Memory* challenge idealised representations of the family, using these representations as the basis for a wider critique of the conventional, culturally-sanctioned position of women. The permutations of the parent-child relationship inscribed here can be read in terms of a particular anxiety about the daughter's literal and symbolic positions in culture. While neither text offers its protagonists an escape from the relational configurations which bind them, they nonetheless offer a powerful critique of the ideological and cultural processes responsible for their positioning: the processes that suppress female authority. Moreover, Fanny's struggle to establish sites of authority outside the family, her struggle to become the author of herself rather than remaining subject to the prescriptive text of the patriarchal family, foreshadows the efforts of Stirling Armstrong in *The Glasshouse* and Knarf in *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* to establish their own own artistic authority, the authority of the writing subject.
CHAPTER NINE

Reader and Writer

"I wondered if this feeling of paralysis were a result of our having been — as writers, you know — kept at arm's length by the community. We haven't ever been made to feel that there's a population demanding our products, just as it demands food or clothing. So that when life falls into chaos as it is now, there is no established bond between the public and its writers . . ."

Eleanor Dark, The Little Company (1945), p151

"The important question is, have we anything of our own to say as a people? I think we have, that when we fully recognize this there will be a continuous, subtle flow of communication between writer and reader: the one will kindle the other's feeling and imagination and become inspired himself by the depth of the response".

Vance Palmer, "It takes readers as well as writers to make a literature", Australian Writers Speak (1945), p.96

In the winter of 1942, Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow, three quarters written, had been at a standstill for four months. "This waste of time is terrible", Barnard complained to Nettie Palmer, before providing her with one of the most intriguing in camera portraits of the collaborative process. "We tried to get a birdseye view of [the novel] so far", she explained. "Teenie read it aloud to Frank and me . . . It's too large to get your hands around".1 The exchange or slippage here between the roles of author and audience and between the acts of reading and writing is not only central to Barnard and Eldershaw's collaborative practice, but also provides a template for the representation of literary production in their fictional works. The Glasshouse (1936), Plaque With Laurel (1937), and Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow (1947) all centre upon aspects of reading, writing or the production of narrative, performing a critique of what Ross Chambers calls "the norms and conventions by which the literary community (authors in their writing and readers in their reading)

1M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 14 July 1942 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/6131]. 'Frank' is Frank Dalby Davison.
produce the phenomenon of literature. In constructing a series of texts with a focus on process or production rather than the more romantic model of 'creation' and with an emphasis on community and collectivity, M. Barnard Eldershaw appear to echo Virginia Woolf's call to readers not to consider that writers are of different blood and bone from yourselves... Never was there a more fatal mistake. It is this division between reader and writer, this humility on your part, these professional airs and graces on ours, that corrupt and emasculate the books which should be the healthy offspring of a close and equal alliance between us.

These three later texts also reveal Barnard and Eldershaw rehearsing a number of alternative possible constructions of the author, alternatives which again touch upon the options that they themselves negotiated.

Perhaps because Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow has been taken up more readily by historians than literary critics, there has been comparatively little discussion of the self-reflexive aspects of the novel: the way it functions as a critique of the fiction-making process. This stems in part from a tendency to deal almost exclusively with the 'inner' novel, a tendency initially exhibited by those publishers who favoured publication of the core narrative only. The practice has served, however, to displace focus from the novel-within-a-novel structure of the text, thereby limiting consideration of the processes by which the inner narrative is produced. It has also mitigated against acknowledgement of the remarkably innovative, metafictional aspects of

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4See letter from Edgar Harris to F. Eldershaw, 1988/48 regarding Appleton Publishers (USA): "I was interested to learn of their reactions to the story, particularly because it was my own when I first read the manuscript. However, I do not suppose you and Miss Barnard would be disposed to extract the present-day story and offer it as a novel in itself. If you do, it might be worthwhile taking it up with Appleton's, which we would be very glad to do". [Barnard Papers ML MSS 451/5].
the work. Little discussion has appeared on the relationship between the core narrative of the twentieth century and that of the twenty-fourth century which frames it. Similarly, critics have tended to ignore the ways in which the narrative of the twenty-fourth century functions as a performative critique of the practices of reading and writing. Stripped of its framing narrative, *Tomorrow and Tomorrow* has tended to be seen as a fascinating experiment in documentary-realism rather than as an extension of the preoccupations with literary production which emerged in *The Glasshouse* and *Plaque With Laurel*.

Their preoccupation with questions of process and practice derived in part from a climate of uncertainty in which Barnard and Eldershaw found themselves, a climate which prompted them increasingly to question both their roles as writers and the place of literature in contemporary culture. When completing *Phillip of Australia* (1938) under the shadow of the Spanish Civil War, Barnard revealed to Nettie Palmer that she had "never felt so utterly futile. To be writing a book on Phillip when our whole world was dying". These feelings were echoed later when they began *My Australia*. "What a world to write a book in", Barnard commented at that point. "Somehow it seems so smug, but what are we going to do?" This "coming to consciousness", as Peter Widdowson describes it, appears to have instilled in them a heightened sense of the need for self-scrutiny and the desire to explore and question the nature of their enterprise. It also marks a shift towards an understanding of the act of writing as

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5M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 31 July 1937 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5292].
6M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 12 April 1939 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/5504].
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MELBOURNE
subject to and enmeshed in a network of tensions — social, political, and cultural — and a perception of fiction-making as a complex and contingent process. Their doubt and confusion is reminiscent of the writer, Gilbert Massey, in Eleanor Dark's *The Little Company*:

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... Nothing kept him at it but his growing alarm, and a certain native habit of perseverance which had made him, as a small boy, collect stamps for years with joyless patience. Even worse was the discovery of how much he had to unlearn, for he was even then approaching middle-age, and the discarding of conventions and ideas to which he had been bred was as painful as the stripping of bandages from a dried wound.8

*Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* represents Barnard Eldershaw's most explicit development of the drama of the writing subject. While writers appear as protagonists in *The Glasshouse* and *Plaque With Laurel*, the treatment of both Stirling Armstrong in the former and the members of the Australian Writers' Guild in the latter is frequently ironic, humour and satire being the keynotes of both texts. The novel-within-a-novel structure of *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* offers the occasion for a more developed and complex exploration of the figure of the writer than occurred in the earlier works. The visit of Knarf's historian friend, Ord, on the day of the symposium provides the opportunity for Knarf to read aloud his newly finished manuscript. Through his discussions with Ord in the framing narrative of the twenty-fourth century, Knarf reveals the processes behind the production of the more traditional core novel of the twentieth century, *Little World Left Behind*, that he has written. It is

these discussions together with Knarf's reading aloud of his manuscript novel which introduce into the text a new quality of self-consciousness and self-reflexivity not present or developed in earlier works. Ord's participation (or cross-examination) enables Knarf to reflect upon his role as a writer and upon the 'readerly' aspects of his novel. The relationship between the two, with its strong elements of contest and exchange, provides a curious model of literary collaboration. Anticipating Ord's arrival on the morning of the Symposium, Knarf reflects on their friendship:

Ord would be here and, although he was exasperating sometimes, he was stimulating, his mind dry and sharp like herbs rubbed between the hands. Sardonic and combative, there was something comforting about him. They would talk about the book. Ord was the only person he could talk to about his writing. Ord infuriated him, drove him to defend and justify himself. Many an idea he'd beaten out in the heat of opposition. Ord had no leaks in his mind, none that Knarf had ever discovered. It was as strong, unsentimental, impersonal, as an anvil; as an anvil he would use it... But for Ord the book would never have been written... Today would mean different things to many people, an excursion, a rare taste of political excitement, a break in routine, but to Knarf it meant that Ord would come and that they would talk about his book and in the passion of conflict the book would come alive to him again, or so he hoped.9

There are obvious autobiographical inflections in this description of their relationship with its "long walks through the countryside" and "secret nourishment of the spirit" (TTT, pp.22-23), statements echoing Barnard's accounts of her own collaboration with Eldershaw. The transformation of the relationship into a masculine partnership is an intriguing shift. While it may represent some residual uncertainty over the relationship between gender and literary genius, this choice of a male protagonist can perhaps be read as a further comment on the lack of real change present in the society of the twenty-fourth century.

9M. Barnard Eldershaw, Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow (London: Virago, 1983): 22-23. All further references are to this edition and appear with the abbreviation TTT in parentheses in the body of the text.
More interesting is the way in which Ord enacts the role of reader (or listener), demonstrating the integral part that audience plays in the production of a work of literature. Echoing the central tenets of Barnard Eldershaw's lecture, "The Writer and Society", Knarf reflects that:

The book was finished and yet his mind was not discharged. It was as yet unshared. Today he would talk to Ord about it, they often had talked about it but never as a whole. Ord, who knew perhaps all that had been salvaged of the old Australia, had been his quarry. He at least, had come, long ago, to take the work for granted and that was a help. Knarf must talk to someone, get this book that was still and finished into the world. A book is as implaceable as an unborn child, a rising day, inevitable in its demands. (ITT, p.18)

As the reader, recipient or "quarry" of Knarf's text, Ord is far from passive. He constructs his role as reader in terms of an equal partnership, conscious of the crucial role he has played in the genesis of the text. Within this dialogic relationship, power shifts back and forth as the narrative is unravelled and teased out between them. Indeed, it is frequently Ord who orchestrates their progress through the text and at various points dictates the direction the narrative will take:

"What about the story?" Ord asked. "It seems to have bogged down in world history. Did it ever get out again?"

"The story goes on, but as the book rises to its crisis it shifts into the major theme of the whole community. It is people in a context and the context grows more and more important. They are only little fishes in a maelstrom".

"I'm fond of fish," said Ord, obstinately, determined to get Knarf off his high horse. "What happened to that poor fish, Ally?" (ITT, p.342-43)

Ord demonstrates that reading is in fact a form of dialogue, although here it is both a dialogue with the text and with the author as producer of that text. He establishes a competitive or, to use Knarf's term, "combative" atmosphere in which he questions, challenges and pre-empts Knarf who must not only read from his text but discuss, illuminate and justify the form it takes. Creation here is fused with critique: Knarf's reading doubles as an exercise in practical criticism, an accomplished explication de texte he performs for his audience of one.
At other moments, however, Ord is less of a partner and more akin to an editor. He voices the doubts and difficulties of projected readers who must cope with the complex nature of Knarf's narrative. He draws Knarf's attention to the responsibility he holds towards "the ordinary reader":

"What I want to ask is," said Ord, "Is Shirley the little girl in the train with the fat mother and aunt who saw Ally beat Jackie before Ben was born?"
"Yes."
"Well how in the name of fortune do you expect the ordinary reader to remember that?"
"I don't. It isn't important. If they do remember, that's all right; if they don't, that's all right too. It's this way. There are many characters in this book, they recur and recur. It saves me inventing new people all the time. Even if the reader can't place them they are sure to have left a trace in his mind from their last appearance. . . ."

"How do you know the reader is going to play your game? He'll probably run round in circles looking for the plot and feel disgruntled because he doesn't find it."

Knarf passed his hand across his forehead. "He probably will. I cannot postulate the reader. I'm not responsible for him. He is not my business."

"But the reader is your business. What is the good of going to this trouble, compiling this mountain of words, if you are going to retire into some writers' cult where they can't follow you? Like going to a party and sitting it out in the lavatory." (TTT, p.204)

Ord voices here the hopes and desires of the novel's own authors who argued that a book like *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* "isn't worth a quarter of the effort it cost if it doesn't communicate" and lamented when it failed in their opinions to "make contact".10 The 'contest' or dialogue between Knarf and Ord ultimately centres upon the question of narrative authority. Ord shows quite clearly the essential contingency of the writer's authority. As his line of questioning indicates, Knarf's authority depends upon an authorisation by the reader, authorisation which may be withdrawn at any point.

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10M. Barnard to Aileen Palmer, 19 [March 1948] [Helen Palmer Papers NLA MSS 6083, Correspondence Box 2] and M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 21 April 1948 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/7399].
Consequently, Ord is at pains to signal those aspects of the narrative which he fears may alienate a less familiar or indulgent reader, and to instil in Knarf a sense of audience. This may, however, be a foreign concept in the world of the twenty-fourth century where publication remains a shadowy outcome and where the only end Knarf articulates for his novel is the possibility of a week's display in the Pavilion beside the cakes, flowers, statues and toys produced by other citizens of the Tenth Commune:

In some of the big Centres the Pavilion was a vortex of criticism and emulation, but here it was quiet enough. Few came to exhibit their work and because they were few they were embarrassed. Knarf thought he might take the manuscript of his book and lay it there for a week as a matter of principle. On the communal altar, he thought with a wry smile. No one would have the curiosity to turn its leaves, not even Ren. Least of all Ren. (TTT, p. 21)

In contrast, Ord perceives that as a storyteller or fiction-maker, it is imperative that Knarf produce and sustain involvement on the part of the reader if he is to maintain narrative authority. As Ross Chambers has argued, narrative authority, unlike other forms of authority, "is essentially without external support and derives almost totally from the 'interest' of the tale". The interest or desires of readers must be secured if that authority is to be retained and, in odd moments, Knarf does consider the necessity of achieving this. Reflecting on his son's political commitment, for example, he sees a possible value in attracting and persuading readers:

Knarf had no illusions about the help he could give his son in the future. At forty-seven he could not make himself over miraculously into a fighter. Ren would have only himself and his comrades to depend upon. Unless, perhaps, the book he had just written worked on people's imaginations, leavened them, and so, circuitously, made a track in the wilderness for Ren's feet. (TTT, p. 228)

Writing here is constructed by Knarf in terms of history: his text serves

11Chambers: 213.
as an agent of tradition or a guide to the future. It will, he hopes, become a force by working on people's imagination, blazing a path through the "wilderness" of time and history. As he remarks more than once, "Nothing passes, we carry with us all that there has ever been" (TTT, p.240). Knarf's unease, however, with the question of audience may arise from the tensions present in the role or roles he occupies. On one level, as Ord contends, Knarf is writing his own troubled autobiography — the story of an "individualist" whose "life did not mesh with the life of his community" (TTT, p.21) — hoping through that exercise to find the audience his personal drama lacked. But there are indications that he senses he has a responsibility not merely to himself or his art but also to the community. From Ord he appropriates the role of historian or chronicler, dispensing with "the canons of exact scholarship" in favour of a process of "imaginative reconstruction" which he views as a more potent "means of communication" (TTT, p.204). Knarf, however, is no simple entertainer. In Modjeska's terms, the writer here "is dramatised as an intellectual, as a social critic and as the conscience of society".12 These are not easy roles to fulfil and Ord has already surmised that this new novel would make trouble because it threatened to "burst right open the whole mild convention of modern writing" and "touch the bedded-down imagination of a slothful generation" (TTT, p.240). Indeed, like Ren, Knarf must pit the authority of his personal vision against the force and authority of Oran, head of the Technical Bureau, and his bureaucracy. But while Knarf's reading is often marked by zealous intent, his behaviour at the lunch with Oran demonstrates a certain reluctance to embrace this role publicly. Rather than voice his own criticisms of their society, Knarf

12 Modjeska: 81.
leaves his idealistic son Ren to articulate an oppositional agenda.

Barnard and Eldershaw explored this same question of the writer's public position earlier in *The Glasshouse*. In that novel, Stirling Armstrong exhibits a similarly ambivalent attitude to her public role as a novelist, although her treatment is sometimes too ironic and stereotyped for her actions to be taken always at face value. Boarding the *Therikion*, Stirling is committed to preserving the anonymity that travel bestows upon her and is mortified when she recognises the cover of one of her own books among another passenger's reading. How Stirling's attitudes to herself and to her writing are to be interpreted, however, depend on how she is to be read as a writing subject. Her attitudes, practices and 'decor' suggest a rather romantic rendering of the artist or writer and in the course of the text Stirling appears as a somewhat ambivalent figure, possessing elements of both the 'serious' writer and that rather more problematic figure, the 'lady writer'. Indeed, we see played out in Stirling Armstrong the conflicts between femininity and creativity and between love and vocation as she provides the opportunity for Barnard Eldershaw to begin to explore the conflicting desires and responsibilities (both public and personal) confronting the creative woman and the single woman. By actively engaging with the romance genre in this way, the text questions the centrality of the heterosexual bond for the artist-protagonist. Beyond this, however, is the ever-present question of Stirling's involvement (or lack of it) in all social bonds. Like the circus in Prichard's *Haxby's Circus*, the *Therikion* can be seen to function as a microcosm of the larger society. It represents a world and, through the figure of Stirling Armstrong, Barnard Eldershaw focus on the writer's ambivalent relationship to that world. As we rapidly begin to realise, Stirling is
both of that world and detached from it. But Stirling's ambivalence as a writer-figure can perhaps be read as a symptom of a wider dilemma. However committed Barnard and Eldershaw may have been to a social conception of their role as writers, in their fiction we find the "underside" of that same argument: the anxiety or doubt that attends that role.

Contemplating the prospect of the long voyage among incompatible strangers, Stirling contents herself with thoughts of the pleasure of writing which she represents as both an act of consolation and an act of self-reference:

[s]he would sink herself into her own convenient nonentity and be free of them, live secretly and write, shut her mind to them and open it to the sea and the sky and the living ship. She could be as lonely here as if she were on a desert island. She exulted in it. Always it seemed to Stirling that she had been alone, gathering herself together to meet the impact of the world, guarding her little flame that no one suspected, retreating to conquer, never suffering upon her inner spirit the murk of other lives. She had consciously given up a great deal to hold a little with certainty. Sometimes she had the feeling that she defended porcelain towers, that her invulnerability was no more than a mask of insignificance, convention, nonentity.¹³

Creativity is clearly linked here to subjectivity as writing becomes a mode of self-authorisation. But the passage also expresses a fundamental paradox: that the writer is in a position to give voice to the group only because she herself is a "nonentity". This raises then a number of fairly searching questions. Is Stirling's writing merely a defense, a protective activity designed to lend her a personal authority over those she writes about, rather than putting herself at risk by entering relationships with them? Can a form of writing based on detachment, impersonality, and the denial of social bonds, be conceived of as social?

¹³M. Barnard Eldershaw, The Glasshouse (London: George G. Harrap & Co., 1956): 26-27. All further references are to this edition and appear in parentheses in the body of the text with the abbreviation TG.
The text does not attempt to resolve these questions so much as allow them to operate as the nodal points of its interrogation of the concept of the writer, a concept here represented not solely in terms of an intellectual dilemma but linked to ideas of loneliness, isolation, and even sterility. Interestingly, Stirling's ideas here on creativity are a curious combination of Barnard's own professed enthusiasm for a life at sea following her own voyage home on the Talleyrand and a European-derived romanticism which could be interpreted as the prevailing orthodoxy, an orthodoxy which Barnard and Eldershaw with their notions of a social context for creativity were arguably hoping to displace or even dismantle. Definitions of creativity and literary practice clearly intrigued the authors, particularly Barnard whose early thoughts on the matter appear to parallel closely those of their protagonist:

How magnificent to be able to sink into a state of profound incubation and write a novel. That is how novels should be written, not in jerks with the remains of one's mind after it has been used for everything else. How are novels planned, worked out and accumulated? I should very much like to know in other words, what is creative thinking? Of course I've read the text books — apperception, perception, conception and the rest but these things don't happen to me. I don't think at all. I simply wait and watch, make myself as hollow and impersonal as possible & then just wait and when an idea comes floating by, seize it.14

Barnard it seems was often caught between the desire for the kind of productive isolation she had envied in the Palmers' Green Island sojourn and the equally compelling conviction that the writer needed to maintain a sense of the wider context in which their writing took its place; the same conflicting impulses that are apparent in Stirling Armstrong.

Stirling's "years of steady mild success as a novelist" (TG, p.21) have developed in her a sharp eye for detail and a taste for the comic,

14M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 9 October 1933 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4304].
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. She likens herself to a hunter and the passengers who fall victim to her gaze are perceived as "quarry" or "raw material". Just as the passengers live in the "glasshouse" on board the ship, Stirling styles herself as the privileged observer, the one who watches them from a distance, telling their stories and imagining their pasts for them. Not having a "past" herself, Stirling feels she can perhaps afford to throw such stones. But in telling their stories, Stirling is also a Scheherazade who uses her narrative ingenuity both to stave off the death blow of familiarity and to conceal her anxiety at the possibility of having no story of her own. As she reflects upon concluding the doctor's story:

But after all she had caught nothing. This story that she had written was not his story, it was Vera's, or Christy's, or, nearer still, just a pattern fitted down on life like one of those cutters in fancy patterns you use for stamping out biscuits. Perhaps the Doctor's real secret was that he had no story. "Like me," she thought, "I haven't a story. It's almost indecent to be without a past, but it does leave one delightfully free. I should have a tragic love story — or something. I only hope that as I get old I don't begin imagining I had. There should be a club, a secret society, of spinsters without pasts. With stone-throwing competitions. People who don't live in glasshouses may throw stones. There is no doubt that writing is a cruel and cold-blooded profession". She thought this complacently, with glee. Next I'll do the Weatherall's, she told herself. (TG. 186-87)

Ironically, in the course of the text, Stirling not only succeeds in creating stories for her fellow passengers, but ultimately acquires a story, a "past", of her own.

Stirling elaborates on her creative philosophy quite early in the novel where she explains that

I'm a creative artist because I have nothing. I make up things about people. I feel wise and clever, but when I come to live with them they are quite different. I don't know them at all. I'm quite alone. If only I were honest and didn't try to understand people, didn't always try to make them into patterns, I'd have
more friends, I'd be able to love them more. If I could go to them gently and openly and bravely, taking then just as they are, like Helen Weatherall...but she doesn't exist...I've invented her. The real Helen is probably quite commonplace. It's just the chance of the flesh that she has clear hazel eyes, a brave clear forehead, a sensitive mouth. She's probably a nice sincere girl, not very clever I expect...It's quite obvious how it all happened. I'm making a pattern as usual. (TG, 38)

Here Stirling expresses anxiety over her practice of cultivating distance between herself and others, but she also posits an answer to that anxiety in terms of a "pattern". If Stirling were personally involved or implicated, she would not be able to locate the social and aesthetic pattern which is so central to the success of her work. She argues that she does not want companionship but remained "content to let her thoughts hover over her companions, to study their lives and actions with an interest half scientific, half creative, fastidiously impersonal" (TG, 80). The idea of the pattern emerges again later when she describes the ideal state of mind for creative endeavour:

She had counted on the peace of the voyage and the stimulus of the sea to help her finish the novel. She had looked forward rather greedily to an orgy of writing. The peace was there, the stimulus was there. Her mind was in its creative mood, a bloom of significance appeared upon the most commonplace events and sights; design, pattern seemed immanent in all things, a comfortable feeling of coming together and working towards a climax filled her - an aesthetic, not emotional climax. (TG, 115)

Arguably, her distance is not a form of disconnection or isolation necessarily, but a form of self-effacement. This quality of self-effacement could be read as resembling that fleeting and somewhat uncharacteristic sensation experienced by Mona Devlin in comforting her baby:

Back and forth across the cabin she walked with the warm weight of the child in her arms. All her careful hard brightness had left her, all her defences against the child were down. She stood for a moment staring at herself in the dim mirror, a girl in a blue gown holding a child in her arms, the face so faintly lit that it might be any woman's, pale, grave, with dark eyes. "Is this I", she thought, "I. l. l.?" How strange and comfortable and deep it was to be this woman in blue with a child, instead of that hard, sharp, slender thing I; to put on universality like an old and comfortable garment; to want, just for a little while, only this; to stop the terrible incessant wanting that had always driven
Stirling characterises her position as "escaping out of the foreground into the background" (TG, 81), a settled place from which she could look back at the activities of the foreground. This assertion recalls her earlier discussion with the Doctor in which the power of the Australian landscape is described in terms of a foreground and background, where the background is thought of as the "wild and free" (TG, 75) alternative to the narrow, ugly and "domestic" foreground. It is in this foreground, however, that Stirling locates the tales which form the novel's series of internal narratives. As she muses, "each of these people placed a thread in her hand; if she followed it into her own mind she could walk the mazes of their lives" (TG, 81).

The recourse in The Glasshouse to internal narratives, reminiscent of Christina Stead's The Salzburg Tales or Boccacio's The Decameron, also foreshadows the more complex exercise of Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow with its self-reflexive emphasis on process. Indeed, The Glasshouse is in many respects a highly self-conscious and experimental work, although both its self-consciousness and its experimentation have gone largely unnoticed in the limited commentary that has appeared on the novel. The novel's form is suggestive of a growing impatience with the limitations of the conventional realist novel and a search for alternative fictional forms, a search that would ultimately give rise to Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow. While lacking the thoroughgoing self-reflexivity of that later novel, in The Glasshouse Stirling's casual efforts at fiction-making nevertheless bring the "the instantaneity of reading and writing
within the composition of the text". As the stories emerge from the framing narrative, the reader shares with Stirling the uncertainty of what is to follow as well as the range of attendant possibilities. Rather than the simple recounting of tales, we are offered then a meditation on the process of narrative production. In "Mrs Cartwright's Story", for example, the conventionally 'invisible' interruptions and pauses in the production of the narrative are made freely available to the reader:

"Cartwrights, Cartwrights, Cartwrights," said Stirling to herself, shutting her eyes and trying to squeeze herself back into the imaginary world she had so rashly left. Her mind felt porous this morning. She wasn't in the mood for writing. "But this is an easy one," she told herself encouragingly, though she didn't believe it. She took up her pen and wrote resolutely on.

*Leo Cartwright was a little bewildered by his good fortune, and never quite understood how it had come about . . .* (TG, p.207)

The ensuing story is then charged with the conditions of its own creation, marked by the stresses and limits of the moment in which it was produced and immersed in the temporal, social and psychic conditions of the female consciousness that gave rise to it. Moreover, by symbolically inserting the writer into the social group, these stories lend complexity to Stirling's carefully cultivated persona of the artist as a social outcast or isolated aesthete.

This focus here on short stories needs to be considered in the context of Barnard Eldershaw's recent writing experience. Just prior to *The Glasshouse*, they had met with difficulty and disappointment over their proposed volume of short stories, *But Not For Love*. After the stories were rejected by a series of publishers, Nettie Palmer tactfully suggested they abandon plans for the collection. While they followed Nettie's advice, the failure clearly rankled. Writing to Vance Palmer in

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December 1934, Barnard remarked that she was "writing a few short stories but getting no satisfaction". "I've positively preyed on your short stories", she confessed, "but the secret is unstealable. (I'm not at all bad with the jemmy either)".\textsuperscript{16} The following month in the same letter to Vance in which she reveals that they have begun work on \textit{The Glasshouse} ("It's to be a conglomerate, stories inset, not 'true' stories but the stories that one passenger makes up about the others"), she is still wrestling with the problem:

I've thought of what you say about the short story, about letting it lie in the mind until it becomes transparent — (or settled into its inevitable folds). The trouble here is that my stories don't seem to have any inevitable folds because they don't begin life as stories or episodes at all but as ideas or angles of vision or sometimes just phrases, and have to be clothed with synthetic flesh. There's a little troubling speck of something alive in my mind and I've got to get it into a body. It never grows one of itself no matter how long I leave it. It's the wrong way round isn't it?\textsuperscript{17}

The difficulties expressed here are part of Barnard's on-going preoccupation with aspects of the writing process. Her letters to the Palmers frequently include queries about Nettie's and Vance's personal writing practices and her attempts to define their own. Barnard, in particular, was at pains to determine whether there were general principles that could be said to inform the exercise in which they were all engaged. The interpolation of the short stories into the framing narrative of \textit{The Glasshouse} provides Barnard Eldershaw with a further way to interrogate their own practice, an opportunity to experiment in public as it were. The fact that Stirling's stories are not "true" stories serves in part as a protective mechanism, indemnifying them against outright failure. Through imaginative sleight of hand, it is not M. Barnard Eldershaw but Stirling Armstrong who must own their success.

\textsuperscript{16}M. Barnard to Vance Palmer, 7 December 1934 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4534].
\textsuperscript{17}M. Barnard to Vance Palmer, 22 January 1935 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4573].
or failure. Nevertheless, in the stories that Stirling relates, there are echoes of those included in the rejected manuscript of *But Not For Love*. The representation of the wistful, dutiful Leo Cartwright in "Mrs Cartwright's Story", for example, bears comparison with Edward Grassick in "Open Confession" from the earlier collection: both are studies of introspective personalities in quiet crisis, a theme which Barnard was later to develop so poignantly in *The Persimmon Tree*. Similarly the focus on pivotal moments in childhood in "Raymond Becque's Story" recalls the more fully developed story, "Easter Moon" from *But Not For Love*. While the latter story is potentially one of the more successful of those in the rejected collection, both betray an odd and almost cloying preciousness about childhood and helpless creatures, a weakness witnessed earlier in the rather unsatisfactory section of chapter nine in *Green Memory* related from the perspective of Charlotte's infant son.

The desire to perfect the short story arguably reflects Barnard and Eldershaw's commitment to a particular sense of the writer's relationship to, or place within, the tradition of Australian writing. In a lecture on the subject, they suggested that the short story was allied to the song and the ballad and "began on the droving track and beside the camp fire". Pre-empting Russel Ward's and Vance Palmer's accounts of the Nineties, Barnard Eldershaw were clearly working from an organic model of literary development wherein writers generally, and short story writers in particular, were charged with the task of transmitting a folkloric or 'primitive' culture that grew 'out of the soil'.

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or 'out of a way of life'. Contemporary writers whom they regarded as a 'second generation' were to uphold this tradition of the Nineties. In "Vance Palmer and the Short Story" they confidently assert that Palmer's success in Separate Lives guaranteed his position in "the Australian tradition, the democratic tradition" and they were perhaps anxious to attain similar credentials for themselves. Certainly, it seems to have troubled them that they could not emulate his ability to "draw his raw material almost at random" or to write "with art that conceals art". However, it is possible to find in The Glasshouse a model of collectivity that would not be out of place in the Lawson-Furphy tradition as the novel arguably participates in what Sandra Zagarell has identified as the "narrative of community" where the predominant focus is on collective life and the self is presented as part of an interdependent network rather than as an individualistic unit. In her role as narrator, Stirling mediates carefully between her position as a participant in community life and her role as its observer.

The stories that Stirling chooses to tell cover a wide range of characters, situations and styles and consequently they may appear at first to represent merely a random and disconnected collection of narratives. But individual stories, such as "The Doctor's Story", frequently offer a form of ironic commentary on events taking place on board ship, while others can possibly be viewed as parodies of the work of other Australian writers. "David Priestley's Story", for example, replicates some of the basic structures of Henry Handel Richardson's Maurice Guest, although the central figure here is a singer rather than a

pianist. Whereas in Richardson's novel Maurice was largely the victim of the egoism and indifference of those around him, in the story here it is David Priestley's own ego and indifference which distinguish him, making him incapable of the depths of passion and despair which wracked Maurice throughout. David Priestley's failure as a musician and a lover disturb him far less than the dietary privation he must endure in a foreign land:

"Why don't you go home?" she said. "There's no music in you. You'll never make a singer, and everyone knows it. They're laughing at you." Then she turned and fled into the dark house to lie weeping on her narrow bed.

The next day David Priestley was crossing to England. It was a British packet. He heard his own language on all sides. He went down to dinner. Here at last was food he could eat. He told the waiter in a loud voice to bring him a ragout. He knew that was stew. He thought of the stews his mother used to make, brown, thick, succulent, and a wave of emotion, half nostalgia, half relief, overtook him. (TG. 152)

Barnard in particular took exception to Maurice Guest, describing herself as having been "repelled" by it and Barnard Eldershaw give only passing mention to the novel in Essays in Australian Fiction, so it is perhaps not surprising to find it treated in this way in The Glasshouse.

Other stories in The Glasshouse can be interpreted as reflecting on Stirling's own position. Perhaps the most significant instances of the latter occur in "Miss Williamson's Story" and "Corinne's Story". Both stories concern the circumstances of women like Stirling herself who have never married and it is to these "spinsters" that Stirling lends a "past", however pathetic or contrived. (One wonders too whether some autobiographical inspiration might lie behind these two stories dealing

22 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 13 February 1935 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4589].
respectively with a school teacher and an adult daughter condemned to a life at home with her parents). These two alternative representations of the spinster, one comic and one tragic, allow for the exploration of the prevailing stereotypes of single women, stereotypes with which Stirling herself must contend and to which M. Barnard Eldershaw consistently return in their writing. In the case of Gloria Williamson, the school teacher with whom Stirling is forced to share a cabin, we are offered a fictional prelude to Miss Williamson's voyage on the Therikion. Described as content with the "unadulterated femininity of her world" teaching in a girls' school, Miss Williamson was "ill at ease" with men, finding in their company that "coyness settled on her like a badly fitting garment" (TG, p.140). In the course of the story, she is revealed to be a shallow and foolish figure who has made little of her life. Indeed, her life is represented as narrow and empty, her time consumed by idle fantasies, petty rivalries and superficial relationships. The fantasy of herself as an esteemed and valued member of the school community is punctured when her insipid and insensitive flatmate steals the limelight on the night of her long service presentation. Stirling claims on completing Miss Williamson's story ("a piece of malice") to have "wiped out quite a number of scores" (TG, p.144) but one wonders how many of those scores were actually with Miss Williamson and how many stemmed from Stirling's anxieties about her own carefully negotiated position.

While "Miss Williamson's Story" focuses with cruel humour on the single woman as a pathetic figure largely of her own making, "Corinne's Story" is a somewhat more compelling depiction of a woman trapped within and struggling against the conventions that would see her bound forever by rigid social mores and a sense of family duty and
propriety. In contrast to the retrospective sweep of "Miss Williamson's Story", the latter story anticipates the course of events when, following her mother's death, Corinne's friends and relatives imagine her taking her mother's place, remaining with her father, and supporting him in his bereavement. Corinne is stricken at this scenario, desiring instead to make a life for herself, however belatedly:

They expected this prospect to comfort her, but on the contrary it filled her with rage. Did they think her life was over and that there was nothing left for her but attendance on an old man? The very love which she felt for her father she now began to see as a treachery to herself, and as something of which she must rid herself so that she might be free, even now, to begin to live her own life. (TG, p.228)

Corinne uses her newly acquired financial independence to buy herself the life she feels she has previously been denied ("She bought herself many things that she had never had before, fine and delicate underclothes, perfumes, many elegant trifles. She went often to the Beauty Parlour, spending money on treatments and preparations, and expanding happily in the interest and flattery with which she was surrounded there", TG, p.230). When the "procession of Life, Joy, Passion, Fulfilment, Heroic Sorrow and Sacrifice" (TG, p.231) promised by these trifles fails to arrive, Corinne is unable to cope and descends into increasingly pathological romantic fantasies as a buttress against the repellant knowledge that she remains alone and unloved. "Corinne's Story" bears comparison with "Epilogue to Adventure" from But Not For Love. In that story, the aging, unmarried daughter of a clergyman is also reduced to a situation of intolerable dependence upon her brothers and a family from which her only forms of escape are romantic fantasies and films ("Miss Deborah found life very strange, very unnatural and unreal")23. Further similarities can be found in the

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cameo portrait of the late-wedded Euphemia Giles in *A House Is Built* who is glimpsed prior to her supposed suicide "sitting at an open window...dressed for the evening in a satin gown cut very low...all the jewellery she possessed, and her cheeks and lips...painted" (*AHB*, p.176). When Corinne's fantasies are finally stripped away by her triumphant sister-in-law and she is forced to face her circumstances, she is shattered:

The end of the rope was in her hands at last. There was no treasure. There was nothing. Nothing at all. She was frightened. She beat upon her mouth with her closed fist, cutting her lip with the diamond ring so that the blood ran down her chin. Terror rose, blotting out thought and knowledge. She was alone now and forever. (*TG*, p. 237)

The unintentionally ironic nature of Stirling's story is underscored a few pages later when Corinne actually confronts Stirling, making cryptic allusions to an "affinity" she fantasises exists between herself and the Captain and intimating that the growing intimacy she has observed between Stirling and the Captain is but a "blind" to cover his true affections.

Corinne's and Gloria Williamson's narratives then can each be seen as offering stereotypes of the single woman or "spinster" who becomes either a humiliating figure of fun or a pathetic and frustrated neurotic. It is against these stereotypes that Stirling both defines and defends herself, anxious to distinguish herself from such images:

[Stirling] could not fix her attention on the book she was reading, thoughts kept shouldering in between her and it. One twitched uncomfortably at her mind. She supposed people lumped them together, Miss Williamson — she couldn't even think of her as Gloria — Corinne, and herself. Three women coping with their spinsterhood in a different way, three rejects...bound together by our common biological failure...(*TG*, p.247-8)

It is her writing and her creative sensibility which Stirling believes ultimately separate her from these other women and which redeem her
single status. And yet, in the course of her storytelling, Stirling's positions both as narrator and writing subject are called into question. Ironic resonances emerge from the self-consciously literary assessments she makes of herself and her work. She argues, for example, that as a writer she is one of those who

withers at the word 'melodramatic'; who eschew plots and coincidences and devices, heroes and heroines, and murder their characters with the greatest subtlety, off; who shudder at a word of inept praise and pick their way delicately among shades of meaning; who have an aesthetic reason for all they write and can discuss it endlessly with the cognoscenti, but are put out of countenance by a word of robust praise (TG, p.186).

But these assertions could be seen as undermined by the often sentimental and melodramatic stories she produces in the course of the novel. Indeed, the titles of chapters in which these stories appear ("The Pleasures of Malice", "Variations on a Theme", "Silly Symphony") only serve to underscore the clichéd nature of the material. The romantic extravagance of her statements about writing ("groping about in that deep exciting limbo where unwritten novels lie"), coupled with her assertion that "there isn't an idiom yet" (TG, p.76) sit rather uneasily with Stirling's claims to be a serious writer, while her pose as the isolated, aloof, and common-sensical woman writer is challenged, moreover, by her growing attraction to the brusque, silent (married) Captain of the Therikion:

Stirling, walking beside him, felt the magnetism of his strength. She thought him a very simple and steadfast man, not troubled with subtleties, whose life was plain and straight before him, and she was stirred by a small but not rancorous envy, such as one might feel on meeting a wanderer from a golden age ...Swinging round the deck into the companionate light out of the darkness, she felt herself caught into a rhythm stronger than herself and therefore comforting. She confused, as her way was, the glamour of the night, her own reticulate reactions, and the man beside her. (TG, p.157)

This may, incidently, represent an interesting autobiographical trace within the text if Barnard's parallel account of her final days on the Talleyrand, the ship on which she had returned from Europe, is any
indication:

...I was the sole survivor on the passenger list. The Captain and I breakfasted, lunched and dined alone together for three days and made ruthlessly merry.\textsuperscript{24}

As it becomes apparent that Stirling is participating in just the kind of stereotypical romance plot she allegedly eschews, her status as a narrator is further called into question. It becomes apparent that whatever her claims to seriousness, Stirling is nonetheless also a figure to be gently mocked, in much the same way that Tom Collins operates in \textit{Such Is Life}, a novel that was highly regarded in Barnard Eldershaw's circle.\textsuperscript{25} When discussing \textit{Such Is Life} in a lecture, Barnard Eldershaw remarked upon the network of "self-directed ironies" involving Tom Collins and upon the blindness which afflicts him when confronted with the obvious: textual strategies which inevitably prompt the reader to question the authority of a narrator and which are echoed in \textit{The Glasshouse}.\textsuperscript{26} Indeed, 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 \textit{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".\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{24}M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 10 September 1933 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4290].
\textsuperscript{25}I am grateful to Robert Darby for his discussion on this point.
\textsuperscript{26}M. Barnard Eldershaw, "Such Is Life", Commonwealth Literary Fund Lecture, n.d. [Eldershaw Papers ML, MSS 5601].
\textsuperscript{27}M. Barnard to Vance Palmer, 10 March 1936 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4970].
The Glasshouse, however, provides the perfect opportunity to explore that particular construction of the female literary career. Stirling's presence as a subtly parodic figure invites the possibility of alternative constructions or models. These possibilities are suggested, albeit obliquely, in such gestures as Stirling's throwing overboard of a copy of one of her own novels: an act of radical criticism. A less dramatic but equally pointed act is her purchase in Lisbon of an unspecified volume by Virginia Woolf. Woolf's concern for the social and intellectual positioning of women writers was well-known. In her essay, "Professions for Women", she expressed exasperation at the obstacles and opposition the writing woman encountered, arguing that she "still [had] many ghosts to fight, many prejudices to overcome"\textsuperscript{28} before her seriousness might be acknowledged. As Rachel Blau Du Plessis has observed, in her own fiction Woolf "struggled to achieve a way of thinking about narratives with women that was not synonymous with thinking about romance for women".\textsuperscript{29} Woolf followed the example of Mary Carmichael in A Room of One's Own, who, supported by the legacies of Mary Seton and Mary Beton, was free to experiment with new forms of fiction, forms which displaced dominant interests and which exposed the ideological burdens of the romance form. Stirling's choice of a Woolf text suggests a questioning and even a rejection of both the romance form and the model of the "lady novelist", actions supported by the direction ultimately taken in the plot. For the irony which attends upon Stirling is not thoroughgoing. She has gained a story or a "past" but it is neither Corinne's nor Gloria Williamson's. Her seriousness as a character is redeemed, moreover, by

her decision to leave the ship at Fremantle rather than travelling on to Sydney, thus abandoning her liaison with the Captain and confounding the conventional romance plot by resisting the formation of a new couple. In this way heterosexual romance is displaced from a privileged position within the text, the focus returning to independence and selfhood. Stirling's final position is not unlike that of Sybylla Melvyn in My Brilliant Career when she refuses Harold Beecham's proposal. Like Sybylla, having relinquished the romantic involvement proposed for her, Stirling's future is now unclear. The narrative appears to resist closure almost as strongly as it reveals the desire for some end or revelation:

She had no plans. She would go on because there was nothing else to do. It was what every one else did. Everything was meaningless and inconsequent, a tangled, inchoate pattern. A tram drew up in front of her, she got in, and was carried through the ugly streets of the port over the flat sandy country towards the city. (TG, p.316)

The rejection of the "heterosexual salvation" of romance leaves Stirling free, as Nancy Miller argues, to "remain alone and on the move; to return to the solitude of writing".30

In contrast to the figure of Stirling Armstrong, the writer in Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow is free from significant irony and stereotyping. The tension between the romantic desire for isolation and the impulse toward communication which marked Stirling's meditations have been replaced in the later novel with a more clearly defined emphasis on social responsibility. The representation of the writer or artist which emerges from Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow is an emphatically social one as the interdependence between

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Knarf and Ord suggests:

Knarf, as if he had received an awaited signal, walked towards the pavilion. Ord followed him. Knarf picked up a bundle of manuscript and began to turn the pages, not reading it, but rather touching it with his fingers as if it were a bas relief. They would finish the book. (TTT, p.240)

There is a significant departure too from those humanist and romantic models of creativity which conventionally omit any account of production in favour of the more spontaneous and mysterious irruption of 'genius'. Stress is placed here upon skill and 'making' rather than upon 'inspiration', and the writer is constructed not as "a subject centred in his creation, . . . [but] as an element in a situation or a system".31 As they "circle" the core novel in their discussion, Ord's persistent questions focus specifically upon the novel as a literary product which Knarf has laboured to produce, emphasising the fact that writing and literature are social phenomena. Little World Left Behind is represented, then, not as Knarf's 'creation', some miraculous epiphany to which he bears witness, but as a product of a genuine period of labour:

His unattached imagination had found its host. Slowly, in the years since, he had beaten the moment into shape and fashioned from it something that was his own. The book that was just finished was not obviously related to its source and yet was rooted there and the Brooding Anzac had been its touchstone. What had begun in that moment was finished in this, as far as processes can finish . . . He believed that his life would not accumulate enough energy for another major work. His writing had caught up with his living and had consumed all that the years had hoarded. The shock of finishing a book is almost as great as the shock of beginning it. (TTT, p.17-18)

This privileging of process and method produces an increasingly self-reflexive narrative. Indeed, just as the framing sections in The Glasshouse provide the vehicle for an exploration of the short story form, the discussions between Knarf and Ord in Tomorrow and

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Tomorrow and Tomorrow ultimately constitute an interrogation of both the novel form and the realist mode of novel writing. Knarf reveals that he has chosen "the antique form of the novel" because "it is contemporary with the subject, and it gives the maximum room" (TTT, p.44). Ord commends this choice, claiming the period in question "needs an elastic, free, inclusive form" (TTT, p.79) and remarking that "I, too, have lived with this book for a long time. The thought that it was growing here, expressing a world we share and giving it back to life in a way I could never have done, has meant a lot to me" (TTT, p.43). But while Ord articulates here the basic convention that the novel will produce a world or act as a model through which a society can conceive of itself, his line of questioning serves in fact to challenge the assumptions of coherence and significance upon which such definitions of the novel rest. Indeed, the very framing narrative in which Knarf and Ord appear effectively questions the literary models upon which the novel as a whole relies and draws attention to its procedures and status as a work of fiction. Using a technique now familiar to the practice of metafiction, Knarf and Ord step back from the world created by the core novel, rupturing the sense of such narratives as unmediated or unprocessed and breaking the 'frame' that is the provisional set of conventions governing the formal organisation of such novels:

"I see what you are doing," said Ord, "you are creating the world. The molten magma and this woman, one bubble in it, part of it thrown up in the natural process. We follow her don't we?"

"Yes." Knarf resisted the temptation to explain and extenuate. "It is turgid and chaotic, now, but soon, you will see, it will take shape." He was not willing to discuss the book till it had established itself further. (TTT, p.48)

Ord's "readerly" interrogation also exposes the artificial and constructed nature of the traditional "seamless" realist narrative by prompting Knarf to articulate the fissures, slippages, and elisions which
comprise his tale. In response to Ord's challenge, he confesses to viewing his narrative as a "jigsaw puzzle", the pieces and fragments of which he has fitted together "however cursorily" to form a "pattern" (TTT, p.316). The novel is then exposed as an elaborate verbal structure. Such admissions, however, allow Knarf to demonstrate the power and authority of the text producer whose decisions ultimately shape the hermeneutic network in which future readers are to participate:

"...I've manipulated time. I've pressed events closer together than they actually were. Something had to go, and time was the expendable. The phase I wanted ran to more than the lifetime of my characters. To keep time extended meant to break every link of interest and emotion that I had forged, to break the image that focussed the whole period. Can't you see the leakage of power that would result if I started off a new generation two-thirds of the way through the book? If I used this form it was incumbent upon me to make it cogent..."

"What have you done?"

"I've taken a pleat in time. I have kept to the order of events, but I have brought them closer to one another..." (TTT, p.205)

These confessions of textual manipulation and mutilation reconstitute Knarf as a "reading writer", one who projects and hypothesises the potential pleasures and anxieties offered to the reader by the completed text.32 As the staging of the framing narrative suggests, texts are produced through a complex series of negotiations with their readers.

While Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow focuses on the production of an individual work of literature, in Plaque With Laurel that concern is largely subordinated to the desire to foster a broader movement in the interests of producing a national literature. The emphasis in Plaque With Laurel is upon the writer and the ways she or he chooses to conceptualise and shape their career and the way that individual career relates to a wider, pre-existing tradition of Australian

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32See Beer, 8.
writing. In many respects, this novel offers a satirical gloss on Barnard and Eldershaw's own personal and professional concerns and 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. Barnard and Eldershaw were impressed and influenced by the intellectual power and structural innovation they witnessed in writing by Dark and Stead and their debt to them is keenly felt in *Plaque With Laurel*. Indeed, in its obsessively detailed account of four brief days, *Plaque With Laurel* owes as much to Dark's *Prelude To Christopher* (1934) or even *Return to Coolami* (1936) as it does to Virginia Woolf or to the Sitwells of whom Barnard was so fond. And while it is doubtful whether Barnard and Eldershaw were familiar with Christina Stead's writing on "the many-charactered novel" which she argued could be used to "portray contradiction, tension and conflict, while also being humorous, colourful and entertaining",33 *Plaque With Laurel* certainly conforms to such a model. At times there seem to be almost too many characters to follow, but the treatment of their interrelationships and professional rivalries provides for an intriguing, if slightly malicious, exploration of contemporary literary hierarchies. As one reviewer suggested, M. Barnard Eldershaw had a "special gift of creating a sort of psychological fugue".34 The two always claimed to be able to write only of what they knew and in this sense their satirical account of a writers' conference 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

34Richard Church review in *John o' London's Weekly*. Quoted on the jacket of the 2nd impression of the novel.
encouraging environment. 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. In a draft of a letter to their publishers, Eldershaw insisted such action on their part was both hasty and superfluous:

For your personal assurance we should like to add that we definitely set ourselves at the outset against any portraiture of actual people, however disguised, and were most careful to avoid even accidental likenesses. To test our success in doing this, we asked Mr Frank D[alby] D[avison] the President of the Fellowship [of] Aust. Writers who is in close touch with all Sydney writers and their societies, to read the MSS & let us know if he found any personal applications in it. He read it with a lively sense of the possibility of personalities in such a theme but assured us that he could find no personal references at all.35

However, while Guy Moore, the Sydney bookseller and close friend of the authors, was also said to have been disappointed when his own careful reading of the novel failed to reveal glimpses of any leading literary figures among its characters, it is just possible that the authors protested too much. Shades of Mary Gilmore can surely be found in Mrs Norton's lengthy discourses on 'old days' and 'old ways' and the calm but earnest Jim Walters is more than mildly suggestive of either Frank Dalby Davison or Tom Inglis Moore in their official capacities within the FAW.

Through its account of the Australian Writers' Guild conference in Canberra, Plaque With Laurel continues the extended 'portrait of the artist' which culminates in the figure of Knarf in Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow. 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 narrative 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".36 The novel departs from convention in focussing on a group of writers rather than a single literary protagonist. This reflects the extent to which Barnard and Eldershaw considered the development of Australian literature to be a collective endeavour, where the search for the all too rare "genius" might give way to support of "the sincere and able writers"37 they saw as the mainstay of any national literature. Literature or, more specifically, writing is constructed in the text not as an act of individual self-expression — the voice of the solitary genius — but as part of a collective experience in which all contributions find a place. In this way, Plaque With Laurel can be seen to participate in the same models of literary production offered in both The Glasshouse and Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow where writers are represented as voices embodying the collective authority of the community from which they emerge. This is underscored in Plaque With Laurel by the use of the writers' conference to frame the celebration of an individual writer. Whether all writers' contributions are to be considered equal is a fraught issue and one that remains central to the narrative as a whole. The text facilitates an exploration of the hierarchical relationship in Australian culture between so-called 'serious literature' and the writing

36M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 4 October 1934 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1/4499].
of hacks, academics, and journalists. The fact that these writers participate in a marketplace in which, ironically, "it's not the most gifted writers that make money; [but] the ones with the best business heads" (PWL, p.42) is also acknowledged. In its efforts to confront such questions, Plaque With Laurel effectively maps the literary terrain that Barnard Eldershaw and their contemporaries were endeavouring to negotiate for themselves.

In the course of the novel, various models for 'literary' careers are offered, largely as yardsticks against which to measure the achievement of Richard Crale, the writer whose memory they have gathered together to honour. The conversation between Jim Walters and Imogen Tarrant, Crale's erstwhile lover, at the welcome dinner at the Hotel Australasia serves to establish the fine distinctions which order their literary world:

"The young man at his table is Bruce Crist, the treasurer".
"He's very nice. I shouldn't have thought he wrote at all".
"But he does. He's a journalist. He's a drama critic and goes to all the new pictures. He's written a novel too, very promising, but a little immature".
"I know the other young man there is Percy Jones, the secretary. We've corresponded. He has a very colloquial style".
"He reports football, boxing, and the dogs, but he has literary aspirations. Amy Ledwidge is the assistant secretary, and does all the work".
"Poor Amy! And I expect she writes for a woman's paper and is terribly helpful".
"She does, under fifteen aliases".
"I can see her telling people what to do with their complexion and their babies and the remains of Sunday's joint".
"The charmer in the chiffon at the next table is Virginia Summer".
"A poetess?"
"Oh, yes, oh, yes, oh, yes!"
"Tawny love?"
"Very tawny. The fair boy with her is Ken Hadley, and the dark one is Donald Moore".
"Real estate?"
"Free-lance - stories and things. He's got a job of some sort too, I think".
"And learned to write by the correspondence method".38

38M. Barnard Eldershaw, Plaque With Laurel (London: George C. Harrap & Co. 1937): 29-30. All
The text exposes here the rather fragile and insubstantial base upon which the national literature depends and uses this to interrogate the conflicting theoretical and practical limits of the term of 'writer'. What does it mean to call oneself a writer, how does one become one, and what responsibilities accompany the use of the term? The treatment here of most pretenders to the title is relentlessly satirical. Petty rivalries and practical ironies consume the attention of most of the members at the conference and their achievements are revealed to be largely non-existent and their concerns crudely materialistic. Their claims to the title of 'writer' are shown to be highly problematic; the term appearing in some cases merely to identify inclination or aspiration. This savage and merciless treatment of characters earned the text an unfavourable reputation as patronising or "superior". Such superficial readings overlook the fact that Plaque With Laurel is centrally concerned with the question where such popular or 'hack' writers and their journalistic counterparts fit into the national literary project, even if, as Imogen discovers, theirs is something of a broken down, fifth-rate Bloomsbury:

Was Australian literature being born out of this sort of melting pot, these ingredients? Imogen tried to pull her mind free from its sludge of imagery. She wanted to think firm thoughts, but only soft, chaotic ones came. These people were the writers. Somehow out of them, at haphazard, the literature of the country was made. She felt the sort of disappointment in them that she always felt at a garden party or race-meeting. . . By just so much did this gathering of the literati fall short of the Wildean picture of what such a gathering should be. The nicely matched wits, the flow of epigrams and aphorisms, the undertow of cynical philosophy, were strangely absent, the whole pattern jumbled and unrecognizable. Imogen tried to pick her way through it. (PWl, p.182)

Few appear to be "serious" writers after the manner of Richard Crale and none articulate the kind of cultural and political concerns which
animated the FAW, for example, in that period. The romantic insularity of literary organisations generally is exposed in an oddly sentimental outpouring by Jim Walters, who perceives the limitations of the group and their literary pretensions, but is inclined to forgive them for he believes those elements are characteristic ultimately of even the best literary societies as his description of "Job's" demonstrates:

The other kind [of literary society], of which "Job's" was a fair specimen, was pugnaciously professional, ostentatiously poor, and the members had painstakingly rid themselves of their repressions. They met in bare rooms, with unshaded lights and a scattering of decrepit Austrian chairs, and presumably brought their own gaiety. The secretary took up a collection for the rent in a saucer. Halfpennies were welcomed as a matter of course. No one would have had the moral courage to put in a coin larger than a sixpence. Men told one another truculently that they were poets. The women smoked — before the War. The cloak of the Quartier Latin covered many deficiencies. Some of the members quite genuinely starved in garrets, but they did not write masterpieces. That was the disquieting thing about the clubs: they were not, despite their sordidness, hot-beds of talent. But they talked — they became intoxicated with talk — and sometimes felt magnificent. (PWL, P.237)

While the productivity and professionalism of such groups is shown to be questionable, their role in the recruitment and 'training' of writers is seen to be crucial. As Mason Griff has argued, societies like this can form a significant part of the "whole social paraphernalia for getting persons committed to their artistic identities".40 Against the petty hierarchies that are shown to divide the group is posed the positive institutional role the Guild plays in 'initiating', supporting, and 'professionalising' these writers as a group. The fact that entry into the group is neither strictly limited nor heavily controlled suggests an openness to the various ways in which writers could choose to pursue their literary careers. This laissez-faire attitude is constructed as an infinitely preferable alternative to the narrow model of a literary career espoused by Professor Standish, who is offered in the text as a

caricature of academic approaches to literature generally and to Australian literature in particular. Standish, who is "Acting Professor of English at the University of Sydney", argues forcibly for an elitist and romantic notion of the writer as a "sort of priestly caste, writing for a few" (PWL, p. 140). His offensive opening gambit that he had not known there were so many writers in Australia and "could not say that he had read all their books" is not redeemed by his suggestion that "it was high time that a chair of Australian literature was founded at the University" (PWL, p. 120-21). But it at least enables the inevitable question of whether there is such a thing as 'Australian Literature' to be posed and, in the light of the unsettled responses it generates, to be answered unequivocally in the affirmative. His spirited Leavisite attack on mass culture and journalism as the two greatest enemies facing "serious" literature, while expressing sentiments close to the heart of some Australian writers in the 1930s, is exposed as ignorant and elitist given that most of the writers present supported what serious writing they did either through journalism or by writing for mass circulation magazines. As Barnard said of their own generation,

there is no school of professional writers. Australian literature is produced by Australian writers in the hard-won intervals of their various jobs. It is no hot-house plant. Half the time it is not even house-broken.41

Two members conferring afterwards agree that Standish "doesn't know the world he lives in. Those sort of coves are as thick as barnacles at the University. Haven't progressed since the Idylls of the King were published" (PWL, p. 140). Ironically, Standish's speech indicates that the greatest threat confronting the national literature may in fact be the patronising and ill-informed gatekeepers of culture who reside in the

universities. In the face of such attitudes, the position of the popular or "hack" writer is strengthened considerably.

As the narrative progresses, terms such as "quality" and "art" become increasingly suspect and writers come to be viewed not in terms of their position in any pre-ordained hierarchy but in terms of their commitment and their relative contribution as part of a larger group. In the words of Imogen Tarrant, "the pattern is all that matters. It doesn't matter by whose hand it is woven so long as it is woven" (PWL, p.297). This sense of collective endeavour and group identification forms an important keynote for the narrative. As the president announces, while Crale is the reason for their coming together as a group, the event enables them to acknowledge their professional unity:

... the true significance of this Conference lay in the spirit of brotherhood that had made it possible and that informed it. They had come together for the refreshment of intellectual intercourse, the exchange of ideas, the stimulus of discussion, and to honour the achievement of Richard Crale. But greater, more important than these avowed objects was the spirit of brotherhood fostered by such a gathering. Here writers of different ages, some old and experienced, some young and untried, the writers of the present and of the future, could meet together as writers with the stress on their unity rather than on their divergences. There was, he felt, a fine corporate spirit uniting them all, and that spirit was the best possible medium for the growth of talent, that vital spirit of our young and lusty Australian literature. (PWL, p.119)

The importance of such common endeavour is also evoked in the discussions which take place on the first evening of the conference. As Donald Moore suggests when addressing the issue of writers' habitually poor financial positions:

I think something could be done about it. There are lots of ways of making money out of what you've written — serialization, syndication, book publication, film rights. What we need is a central body, an authors' marketing trust, to place work to the best advantage, to bring the business man and the writer together on a basis of equality. Now if every writer in Australia belonged to such a society and marketed all his work through it there'd be practically no waste, rates could be forced up to a reasonable standard — (PWL, p.43)
The "fall" of Owen Sale which runs parallel to the celebration of Richard Crale is seen to come about as a result of the burden of guilt which prevents him from readily identifying with the group. Most members are surprised to find that he has chosen to attend the conference at all given that his manner is fundamentally anti-social. His enclosed and alienated state of mind also prevents him from writing, his only other possible avenue of communication:

It was as if his mind were held prisoner in a magnetic circle. He could no longer write. Ideas, conceptions, hung before him like mirages in the sky, but he could not reach them; the thoughts in his mind were rootless. Whenever he tried to concentrate on so much as the writing of a sentence a black shutter cut him off; he found himself insulated. Other ideas thronged his brain, but between him and the one he needed was blindness — a thick impenetrable vacuum. Try as he would a thousand subterfuges and devices, the attack upon any theme remained futile. Month after month this terrible aridity had gone on, while he watched his reputation and his bank balance dissipate. (PWL, p.68)

Sale feels a close affinity with Crale but not with the successful writer, only with the lost and haunted man facing death. As he wanders recklessly away from the hotel and towards his own accidental death, Sale's mental state is conveyed through an erratic stream of consciousness:

He had been pushed beyond the human world, been exiled from it as Richard Crale had been, because he had let himself be used as a cat's-paw of that universal darkness that lies behind life. He too had destroyed without intention and against his will. (PWL, p.228)

Crale, on the other hand, could not be more different from Sale. While his extraordinary brilliance, brooding temperament and heroic torment cast him as something of a romantic stereotype, that romanticism is qualified by the impact he has upon the collective memory of the group. He is in fact the significant absence in the novel, the missing guest of honour. His troubled life and career are gradually reconstructed in the course of the narrative through the memories of those who knew him — as a young writer, a soldier or as an ill and
haunted man — and he is shown to possess what Nettie Palmer termed "all the significant virtues — loyalty, selflessness, industry, and, of course, sincerity".42 But beyond the individual and personal associations that Jim Walters, Imogen Tarrant, Ida Crale, Owen Sale and Jim Pevick offer, the question arises of what Crale symbolises to each member, individually and collectively and what it is they are commemorating in fixing a plaque to the wall of the National Library. The text shows that Crale's chief significance may in fact be the influence he has on the imagination of the group as a whole. The descriptions of his penury and his unsatisfactory marriage suggest a contemporary Henry Lawson figure and he is certainly constructed as possessing a similar legendary or iconic potential. Crale becomes a symbol for a tradition of Australian writing in which they can all share, while his memory provides access to a literary heritage or legend which serves to bestow meaning and significance upon their own individual efforts. As Barnard contended in her essay "Our Literature", the national literature "is something more than the sum total of the books written in Australia; it is [some] instinct within ourselves, a community effort".43

The unveiling ceremony at the National Library represents then a consecration of their collective identity rather than simply a celebration of individual achievement. The individual is subsumed into, or figures as an agent of, the wider national tradition of letters, a tradition that resembles Imogen's "melting pot". The nexus between this tradition and the political and historical processes of the nation is underscored in the

43M. Barnard, "Our Literature": 98.
choice of the federal capital as the site for the memorial. The placing of a plaque on the wall of the National Library in Canberra is a way for these writers to claim publicly their central position within the national culture and to acknowledge their collective cultural vision. It is an act of collective authorisation:

Any literature was a composite effort . . . Hundreds of people each did their small part, added their stroke, insignificant in itself, and yet part of the design. They blindly set their hands to the scheme, made an apparently meaningless scrabble, and a remote, untabulated, presiding genius digested and synthesised these scrabbles into a whole. No one was to be despised; each was a part. From the smugness of this doctrine Imogen's mind flinched away. (PWL, p.182-3)
CHAPTER TEN

Speculations

"Masterpieces are not single and solitary births... they are the outcome of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice".
Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own, p.98

"Most often, our perception of the city is not sustained, but rather partial, fragmentary, mixed with other concerns".
Kevin Lynch, The Image of the City, p.3

"A desperate effort to see where we are going"¹ is the way Barnard characterised Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow, articulating the impulse to trace or map the shifts and developments of contemporary society and politics which informs the novel. The exploration of political possibilities offered in Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow can be viewed, however, as the culmination of a series of visions of Australian society produced by Barnard and Eldershaw in the course of their writing career. Visions produced in their early novels and such histories as The Life and Times of Captain John Piper and Phillip of Australia tended to read Australian society largely in celebratory terms, focusing upon bourgeois society and the colonial past and stressing the qualities of progress, plenty and stability. These visions tend to be recast in works like My Australia and, to a certain extent, Essays in Australian Fiction where a greater degree of political complexity is apparent. In My Australia, in particular, their analysis of the impact of rampant materialism and financial monopolies, of the fragmenting of the population and of the "hapless ugliness" of settled areas suggests an increasing sensitivity to the problematic nature

¹M. Barnard to Jean Devanny, 1 January 1947. [JC/JD/CORR (P)/16].
of contemporary Australian society. These issues are then foregrounded in *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* where, in contrast to the earlier novels, attention is focussed via Harry Munster, his family and the inhabitants of Carnation Street on Sydney's inner city and upon the experiences of the urban working class from the First World War in which Harry fought, through the Depression and the Second World War to a projected Third World War in which Australian society as they know it is effectively destroyed. The urgency which attaches to this particular vision of Australian society in *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* is an urgency born of the struggle to give material form to the abstract pressures confronting Australian society and culture in the late Thirties and Forties. Indeed, any focus on the writer's relationship to culture and society is complicated here by the need to begin to question the very nature of that society. As Barnard suggests, "it was a period in which we had to know where we stood and with whom. There was a confusion of ideologies and we sought among them for some sort of intellectual salvation". That such concerns should permeate the products of the literary culture is not unusual given that the period in question represented a phase of significant national and international crisis. To the extent that political culture can be argued to be involved (directly or indirectly) with questions of what Australian society is or ought to be, literature could be argued at this point to have become part of the fabric of political culture, with left-liberal writers effectively joining the ranks of those "ideology makers" who existed on the fringes of or outside conventional

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mainstream political institutions. Within this context, the novel attained a new kind of authority, becoming the privileged literary mode for the exploration of a disparate body of social, cultural and political knowledges. In David Carter's terms, the novel alone appeared capable of mediating the "uncontrollable excess of ideologies" engendered by the political and philosophical crises the war precipitated. Situating itself both within and against prevailing ideas and ideologies, the novel offered the possibility of a dialogue with the competing discourses of the period. The attempt to find forms that were capable of engaging with mass society and with the cultural and material activities of the moment, necessitated a shift away from the focus on the individual found in conventional bourgeois and modernist novels toward epic forms. Taking Such is Life as her model, Barnard suggested that Australian writers were seeking "big, formless, moving novels of community rather than individuals". In Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow, this connection between the crisis in culture and a crisis in cultural forms, is stressed by Ord when he maintains that:

The novel is the organ of becoming, the voice of a world in flux...In times of struggle and becoming, the words are released, the forms break of their own inadequacy. Literature ceases to be an art with canons, it becomes a hungry mouth. The novel was a mouth, sucking avidly at life. A Protean form for an age out of control...The enormous clash and upheaval was reflected in chaotic literature. The surge of novels — what was that but an attempt to get the chaos of circumstances into some some sort of shape, using every method of attack, every ingenuity. A natural organic reaction. (TTT, p.80-81)

This organic conception of the novel offers the possibility of

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negotiating and resolving the diverse fictional modes like formal realism, documentary reportage, utopianism and modernism that operate in *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow*. It also anticipates the incorporation into that novel of territory traditionally held by the journalist, the social theorist, the poet, and the visionary or prophet. While this ability to mediate between the discursive powers of various literary and non-literary languages lends considerable authority to the text, it was the source of some confusion among the original reviewers of the novel. Rather than viewing the novel as a successful hybrid form combining fiction with political and social theory, it tended to be read solely as an exercise in applied political theory, leading one critic to ask in all seriousness, "What was the Roman Catholic Church doing while a Communist revolution was brewing?" and "Would ordinary Australians, owning their own homes at Bankstown and Lidcombe, acquiesce in the burning of their city because some orator told them they had been betrayed?"7

The complex formal structure of *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* reveals the extent to which the crisis in cultural forms which Ord elaborates can be read, in part, as a crisis of authority. *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* could be said to play out on a formal level the examination of authority which had been explored in rather more theoretical terms through their earlier novels. The split focus around which *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* is constructed creates a radically dispersed or decentred narrative where focus is necessarily multiple rather than singular. The focus of the core narrative, for example, shifts with an almost filmic abruptness at times

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among the various disconnected "cells" of characters, so that it is often left to the reader (with Ord's assistance) to reconstruct the basic linear outline of Harry Munster's individual story. These narrative shifts are accompanied by an equally complex pattern of shifting narrative authority. Unlike Barnard Eldershaw's earlier works of fiction, *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* does not depend upon the presence of a single, stable authorial voice. Instead, various characters exhibiting differing levels of influence and reliability take over this role in the course of the text. The effect is to produce what Bakhtin calls a "polyphonic" novel where a "plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousness" is given play. This reading of *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* as a chorus of voices is introduced on a narrative level by Knarf who refers to his story as "just voices . . . Men talking in the dark" (*TTT*, p.171) and who at one point exclaims in exasperation to Ord that "I can't read you all this. The best I can do is pick out the voices here and there" (*TTT*, p.141). The notion is developed further through some of the lengthy political speeches and dialogues where characters often cease to function in terms of individual subjectivities, and instead emerge as a series of seemingly disembodied voices given over to the articulation of specific social standpoints or ideologies. They are not characters then so much as speaking positions. This accounts for the way individuals like Timmy Andrews, Peter Hally and Bowie appear to speak "out of character", voicing sophisticated ideas and opinions with a sudden and uncharacteristic clarity and articulateness. As is made explicit at various points in the narrative, they are part of "the multitude of conflicting voices" (*TTT*, p.147) that expresses the chaos and impending doom facing Australian society, and

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they are also the "voices [that] weren't heard" (TTT, p.198). Ultimately, they merge with the voices of "ideological confusion" which feature in snatches of dialogue:

"Aggression, barefaced aggression", cried the Right. "Self-defence", declared the Left; "look at Leningrad up near the border, exposed to attack. Russia must protect herself". "Finland's a democracy, we are fighting for democracy, so her cause is ours", asserted the Right. "Oh yeah", said the Left, "What price Mannerheim?" "Idealism", said the Right. "Realism", said the Left. (TTT, p.249)

Among these voices no single, authoritative voice exercises the right to an overall interpretive function within the text, so that the narrative cannot be synthesised ultimately into a single, final, ideological statement. Instead, the text enables each opposing viewpoint to be rendered in its full complexity. In this respect, the novel is reminiscent of Barnard Eldershaw's historical writing in works like The Life and Times of Captain John Piper and Phillip of Australia where the narratives are constantly ruptured by the inclusion of random "voices" from the past in the form of extracts from primary documents. In Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow, the voices are sometimes anonymous, involving half-formulated ideologies and prejudices:

"There won't be a war. Last time finance capital wanted war, this time it doesn't suit their book. So it won't happen".
"England isn't prepared. The War Office is in a frightful stew".
"Time someone taught Hitler"
"If they want to fight in Europe it hasn't anything to do with us".
"A scrap would clear the air".
"There's worse things than war".
"If it hadn't been for the disarmament foolery he would never have dared". (TTT, p.198)

Elsewhere the voices are identified and their positions fully articulated. Peter Hally, for example, who befriends Harry on the work gang during the Depression, argues forcefully against the profit motive in capitalism and exposes the Depression as ultimately benefiting big business. His ruminations stand alongside those of Harry's benefactor, the
philanthropic businessman, Olaf Ramsay, who struggles in the final feverish moments before his death to distinguish democracy from dictatorship, free will from chaos, and those of Bowie, founder of the Peace Party who argues for sacrifices in the name of peace:

Paula listened to Bowmaker talking. War and Peace. War didn't solve anything, war was evil. Peace was the world's first necessity, to refuse war the greatest moral triumph. If the people...the people had nothing to gain by war...Women who know the value of life because they bore the children...The Prince of Peace...If one made sacrifices for peace comparable to the sacrifices of war...[TTT, p.211]

These distinctive and often persuasive voices have the effect, in Terry Eagleton terms, of "turning the frayed edge of ideology to the light".9

This contest of ideologies represented in the novel focuses largely upon the question of liberty and the possibilities for its realisation in any society. Drawing upon Harold Laski's notions of liberty as "the absence of restraint upon the existence of those social conditions which, in modern civilisation, are necessary guarantees of individual happiness...the choice by the individual of his own way of life without imposed prohibitions from without",10 Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow begs the question of whether any of the available ideological discourses — capitalism, marxism, pacifism — can by their very nature guarantee individual and collective liberty. As Knarf explains to Ren, liberty itself "is always a threat to those who operate the engines of authority" because liberty "cannot help being a courage to resist the demands of power at some point that is deemed decisive" (TTT, p.36). The issue of authority and the possibilities for resistance to particular forms of it is raised early in the novel through the discussion between

Knarf and Ren of the vote that is to be taken that afternoon. Ren's movement proposes a different distribution of authority in the community, one based upon the idea of giving a voice to those who currently play no direct role in their own governing. He speaks against the consolidation of authority in a narrow, unrepresentative power base, recalling Barnard's expressed opposition to "the callousness and cruelty of all reactionaries and 'top dogs'". This notion of an alternative, democratic form of authority based upon the principle of making voices heard is developed throughout the text, specifically through that chorus of voices — like Peter Hally's, Timmy Andrews', and Sid Warren's — which becomes the site of an on-going critique of the authority of prevailing ideologies.

This exploration of the limitations of capitalism, marxism and pacifism and of the possibilities for strategic political change are here embedded in, and developed through, the discourse of utopianism. The question of whether *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* can be classified as a work of utopian (or alternatively dystopian) fiction is a vexed one that has troubled critics considerably. While the novel is consistently listed in bibliographies of Australian utopian and dystopian writing, it is generally perceived to rest uneasily within either of those categories. Indeed, some critics, like Jill Roe, assert that the novel is "neither utopian nor anti-utopian". These difficulties have arisen partly because utopias are "boundary works" whose heterogeneous or

11 M. Barnard to Nettie Palmer, 25 November 1935 [Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1 4838].
hybrid forms often make classification a matter of uncertainty, and also partly through a failure to recognise the extent to which *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow*, like George Orwell's *1984* after it, is not a novel in which the future is planned or projected so much as one in which the threatening potentialities of the present are analysed. The greatest confusion has no doubt arisen through too rigid an adherence to simplistic definitions of utopian fiction as a didactic or programmatic mode committed to providing blueprints for an improved society or to offering prophetic visions of hope and optimism. Such definitions are confounded by the fact that in neither the twentieth century nor the twenty-fourth with its "equitable organization and distribution of the fruits of production" and "world federation of non-national states" does *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* offer a textual construction of a perfectable society that can function as a conventional utopian figure. Within the novel these conventional notions of utopia are aligned with such phantasms as the Elixir of Life and the philosopher's stone, its realisation constructed as a scientific possibility but a social illusion. As Ren suggests in the opening sequence, "it's no good countering one patent remedy with another" (*TTT*, p.35). If we accept instead Louis Marin's definition of utopia as "a stage for ideological representation", a "place where ideology is put into play", it is easier to see the ways in which *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* positions itself within that discourse, negotiating a series of social and political alternatives. The society of the twenty-fourth century clearly embodies one ideological alternative, that of scientific socialism, while the application of the novel-within-a-novel technique effectively

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displaces and defamiliarises the society of the twentieth century to the point where the workings of its dominant ideology, capitalism, are exposed as ideology. As the text shifts between its different narrative spheres, these separate visions of society compete with and comment on each other. The effect of this exchange or dialogue between the societies of twentieth and twenty-fourth centuries is ultimately to point up the contingent and provisional nature of all forms of social organisation and ideologies, none of which is represented as capable of guaranteeing liberty, the touchstone of the novel. While, as David Carter argues, *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* "does not reject all projects for imagining better communal forms", the novel ultimately approaches the "open-ended utopia" where the familiar certainty and perfection of closed systems is replaced by "contingency, relativism, difference, multiplicity, plurality". The effect, however, is to suspend the novel in a state of potent ambiguity, entertaining at once the possibilities of both the utopian and anti-utopian positions. This accounts for the mixed and occasionally hostile response the novel received at the time of its initial publication. Barnard recalled that "with the publication of the novel I was involved in a labyrinth of denials. No, I was not a Communist or a Trotskyist or a fellow traveller or a reactionary or an intellectual or a prophet". Both the Right and the Left in turn disowned the work, Katharine Prichard, for example, writing in exasperation to Miles Franklin that

Talking or arguing logically, that's what I find wrong with *Tomorrow and Tomorrow*...the characters & conditions described by MB & FE have no relation to either Communist mentality or methods. I think Flora, at least, intended to

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16Carter, "Present History Looks Apocalyptic": 176-77.
18Barnard, "How 'Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow' Came to be Written": 330.
be sympathetic, but the result wd [sic] be damaging if anybody thought a nit-wit like her Communist could be responsible for Communist policy.19

In the course of *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow*, it is the city which emerges as the chief site for this play of ideologies, these (anti-)utopian visions. It is also constructed as the social space in which voices have play. This is not surprising given that Sydney as a city has consistently functioned in Barnard Eldershaw's writing as an index of history, the measure of progress and change. As Sid Warren makes clear when the burning of Sydney is underway, the destruction of the city means the destruction of the social system and a way of life. Earlier *A House Is Built* and *Green Memory*, more reminiscent of nineteenth century realist novels, offered the city as a relatively fixed and stable social milieu: the locus of growth and progress where the positive and productive forces of history were enacted. In those works, the city appeared as "the emancipating frontier, the point of transition into hopeful possibilities".20 From their histories too, Sydney rises from its humble beginnings to emerge as "a very clean and shining city" with a "civilised and suave note".21 As their work unfolds, Sydney gathers within its metonymic register the whole of Australian culture and history and, like Ord, Barnard Eldershaw undertake a considered excavation of that "fabulous" city site. Read in sequence, works like *A House is Built, Green Memory, Phillip of Australia, The Life and Times of Captain John Piper, The Watch on the Headland* and *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* represent consecutive attempts to textualise and, consequently, authorise particular visions of the city-as-society.

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19K. Prichard to Miles Franklin, 11 December 1947 [Franklin Papers ML MSS 364/21/507-13].
Taken separately, these visions of Sydney as a colonial settlement, a modern city or a wasted plain may be partial and fragmentary, but taken together they form a kind of palimpsest, a layered text built up over time wherein they map the nation's past, present and future. In effect, they produce a kind of cultural cartography in which, like Knarf, they succeed in laying "three worlds one on top of the other, like three plates" (TTT, p.26). The visions of promise and certainty offered in the works dealing with the city's past are complicated or qualified, however, when the present moment too must be apprehended as a further moment in history. The focus of their extended narrative of place shifts when, as Barnard observes,

the story of Sydney...cannot be disentangled from larger events. The city is one more cog in the world, it is Every City...She was once a microcosm and events originated and ended in her. Now, in the state of the world, it cannot be so any longer...Sydney is in the world, a million threads pass through her and on.22

As Every City, Sydney becomes the symbolic figure for the conflicting pressures confronting twentieth century civilisation, pressures which threaten to undermine the values of community and collectivity which have defined Australian culture for Barnard and Eldershaw, particularly in their critical writings. As Jean Radford notes, there is a lengthy and distinguished tradition of writing on the effects and values of industrial capitalism which "[takes] the city as its symbolic target".23 Caught between the poles of hope and dread, between the possibilities of distant utopia and imminent apocalypse, it is the figure of western capitalism, of modernity, and of post-industrial society governed by profit, competition and over-production. It is these

pressures which the various named and anonymous voices articulate, making Sydney a kind of 'storm centre' of civilisation. From the first images of crowds at Sydney's Central Station, there is a sense of dislocation, of a breakdown of 'true community':

For so many people the apex of the week had just passed — Friday, payday, the shopping night, was over, they were returning in a sluggish tide to their small homes and circumscribed orbits, carrying with them such fragments, often tawdry and lifeless, as they had been able to break off or capture in the course of their communal hunting. It was all without pattern or direction; no common purpose or thought held the crowd together, an infinite crisscross of destinies, in the mass illegible and insignificant. If there were a common denominator it must have been some sort of passive, unregistered disappointment, the inevitable concomitant of lives passed in the sight but not the possession of plenty. (TTT, p. 45)

In its chaos and alienation, this description recalls Engels' formal analysis of the effects of city life as the fostering of "brutal indifference", "unfeeling isolation" and "narrow self-seeking".24 As Bowie and his associates in the Peace Party assert, "communal living...doesn't mean communal thinking" (TTT, p. 171). Mass society is imaged here as undermining any sense of organic community: these are not Lawson's "Faces in the Street" that Pa Blan, the Munster's aging fellow tenant, associates with the militant labour era of the 1890s. Instead, it is the metropolis as a version of hell, where "the scale of life dwarfs the individual and where each isolated person lives in bewildering, shifting patterns of relationship with others, or in no discernible patterns at all".25 It is interesting to note the way the formal concept of the "pattern" which underpinned M. Barnard Eldershaw's criticism re-emerges here as a social concept. City living is represented as the "clotting of life" or the inhabiting of separate "cells":

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"People who live in houses are more friendly than people who live in flats. For real neighbourliness you've got to go to the country, where the next homestead is ten miles away. Brotherliness is in inverse ratio to propinquity."

"Do slums, tenements, breed brotherly love? These flats are only the slum idea adapted for the well-to-do."

"The sort of sharing that is forced on people in flats only breeds competition." (TTT, p. 172)

It is a place where, as Harry quickly discovers "the rules were different" (TTT, p.68) and "you couldn't trust it" (TTT, p.77). Barnard Eldershaw may have exhibited a certain uneasiness in relation to the texts of high modernism, but it is nonetheless T.S. Eliot's "The Wasteland", James Joyce's Ulysses, John Dos Passos' Manhattan Transfer, and Christina Stead's Seven Poor Men of Sydney that lie behind these images of dislocation and cultural fragmentation. Constructed through the rapid flow of often random impressions, Sydney takes on at various moments the proportions of Eliot's "unreal city" with its "heap of broken images"26:

Coloured fire. Vivid, acrid, neon lights, coloured taxis, red two-decker buses swinging down Wylde St., striped awnings, fruit, flowers, buckets of marigolds out on the pavements, gee-gaws, and women's clothes. Necessities looked like luxuries here. Even bread. A window full of bread, beautiful, fantastic, full of sex appeal. It was bread that became the body of God in token sacrifice. But not these breads, they were pagan, sophisticated, adult. Civilisation was nature into image. Higher and higher the edifice of bright unreality built out over the gulf. A fantasia on given themes. (TTT, p.193)

The debt to Ulysses is perhaps even more marked. As happens in that novel, the action of Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow, at least in its framing sequences, takes place over a period of twenty-four hours, while Harry Munster's peregrinations as a city-dweller could be said to find their immediate antecedents in the wanderings of Leopold Bloom:

Harry stumbled through the dead smell of hot asphalt, a taint of refuse, a whiff from a butcher's, the lingering odour from a fish and chips joint. He turned aside to vomit, vomited his very soul out, and went slowly on. He had to sit

down to rest, fell into a dream. He felt the pavement with his hands, "Hard", he thought, "City streets are hard". It seemed a very sapient reflection. There was no reason why he should get up but he did, walked on, past the Technical School and the Technological Museum, smelled the vegetable markets, Friday's markets, the smell could not escape in the hot air...He skirted the station; trees in Belmore Park, men lying under them sleeping, like dead men. He followed Elizabeth Street for a block, then turned up Albion Street. Now he was in the dead world again, the stricken city, more terrible than any desert. Here he would walk looking for work, here men came in ever greater numbers for ever lessening work. Parched walls, cliff-like shadows, sickly patches of impenetrable light, smell of dust, thin, dry, deserted smell. Life had receded here, here were the shards. This was the city, not the bright open spaces where the shops and idle crowds were, here were the roots from which that leafage grew. (ITT, p.99-100)

Like Ulysses, Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow is in many respects a novel about walking, as it is through the journeys that Harry, Ben, Ruth, Paula, Bowie and the Professor make that the spatial qualities of the city are revealed and its districts, paths and by-ways mapped. On the night of the first blackout in Sydney, for example, Paula, Bowie and the Professor set out to walk from Kings Cross to the Domain:

They set out along Darlinghurst Road, arms linked, Paula in the middle...It was easy enough to avoid running into people, but at first they could not walk fast enough because the darkness seemed to tangle their feet, the ordinary balance between sight and pace was upset. It was short-range walking instead of long-range walking, and the natural confidence of the pedestrian was impaired. A little pulse of excitement beat in Paula's brain.

She said, "Everything looks bigger." There was a close drawn purposefulness about the Cross. She hadn't felt it there before. And something else. She struggled to define it. There were cliffs of darkness and chasms of shadow, here and there moonlight picked out a façade in sharp clarity, unexpected outlines showed against the sky. Not only was so much rubbed out in darkness, but other unrealised aspects were emphasised.

"I know what it is," said Paula, "the incidence of light and shadow is quite different. It's strange, it's new, it's marvellous".

"Every day the light paints a new city, but we've got the convention of what it looks like so stuck in the mud of our imaginations that we don't see it. We live in a mirage and don't know it. It takes something unusual to shock our eyes open. We live in a flux and a mirage". (ITT, p.283-84)

They are, in de Certeau's terms, the "walkers, Wandermanner, whose bodies follow the thick's and thins of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read it". While their wanderings reveal in detail the

bloated department stores, teeming streets, run-down boarding houses, crowded terraces, parks and memorials, Sydney is ultimately represented as the environment of the individual consciousness, a place where Harry senses "that at any moment he would blunder into someone else's world" (TTT, p.68). Paula Ramsay underscores this point when she observes that "there are thousands of cities here, everyone has one to himself" (TTT, p.284). For these individuals, awareness of the city is intense, fragmentary, and subjective. However, as Raymond Williams argues, this awareness incorporates "in the very form of its subjectivity...others who are now with the buildings, the noises, the sights and smells of the city, parts of this single and racing consciousness".28 From the fragments of the lives of urban dwellers such as his brother-in-law Arnie, Timmy Andrews, Sid Warren, Elsie Todd, Mr and Mrs Blan, and Gwen, Harry first learns about and experiences the city. It is through this same series of subjective visions, moreover, that the reader is provided with an almost panoramic view of the city. It is as though they too looked down upon it like the "Brooding Anzac" atop the Anzac Memorial or Olaf Ramsay's distant and dispassionate God. From this angle, the city takes on that "fabulous" aspect Ord comments upon, and which Knarf imagines as he recalls in the opening pages of the novel his flight to the Centre on the coast to view the excavations:

The panorama of the coastline, the great procession of treeless headlands north and south, green, brown, bronze, dust, smoke, in diminishing tone, old and dogged; the scallops of the apricot sand, the highlights of white surf, the voluminous blue of the ocean, the jewel-like harbour, the Centre so compact where once a great city had sprawled, invaded his brain like an intoxication of light. To walk upon the ground and perform the common routine had, in the hour after their arrival, been curiously unreal. (TTT, p.14)

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Perhaps Barnard Eldershaw were merely heeding Christina Stead's recommendation that "the panoramic novel was the ideal form for a world in which society is disorganised and the individual feels small".29

But Sydney as it is represented in Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow exists not just in the three dimensions of space but also in the further dimensions of people's lives, people's histories and people's voices. Among the passages dwelling upon the city's more forbidding aspects, there appear significant counter-images. Particularly in the earlier sections of the narrative, dealing with Ben's childhood and the initial, carefree stages of Harry's blossoming relationship with Gwen, there are voices which celebrate the qualities of energy and life to be found in that environment. In their evocation of the specific delights of inner city living, these sections are reminiscent of Jack Lindsay's "The Roaring Twenties" or even Kenneth Slessor's Darlinghurst Nights. Ben, for example, who alone of Harry's family is a genuine child of the city, revels in his playground of alleys and intersections. Unlike his sisters born in Toongabbie, the city is Ben's environment, the only one that he has ever known and he responds with confusion and amazement to Harry's suggestion that he might like to leave this world in order to follow his father's failed efforts at co-operative farming. As Harry ultimately concedes, "if you took Benny into the country he'd be miserable, he wouldn't know what to do with himself" (TTT, p.210). The only job Ben initially envisages is that of a paper seller, one which would enable him to continue working on the streets. His subsequent career as an apprentice mechanic and truck driver is but an extension of the fascination he and Ruth exhibited as children with the hypnotic

waves of traffic they watched coming over the hill at William Street. To Ben the city is the source of all excitement and promise. It offers unparalleled opportunities and "treasure" which he jealously hoards:

[Ben] was the young hunter of the city. The city was his playground and a rich mine of sensations and profit. William Street was his galaxy... He got his thrills scaling trams, chased by irate guards, or tearing down the hill among the traffic on his billy cart to the imminent danger of his life... Profit was everywhere. He knew where ashes were given away, where broken boxes and bits of wood could be picked up and sold again, dirt cheap but at enormous profit, for firing. Now and then he got away with a billy cart of coal from the railhead at Darling Harbour, a long trek by back streets, but worth it. He could always allay his lust for ha-penny confectionery by collecting newspapers for sale to the butcher, or bottles garnered out of dust boxes. The competition, especially for bottles, was enormous, but Ben was spry. He picked up oddments in the very gutters, cigarette butts and cigarette cards — until they were stopped — matchboxes, fruit with only a spot of badness on it, an occasional coin. (TTT, p.133)

Sydney is also held up as the emblem of modernity with its sparkling glass and chrome shops, jangling trams, and the "lighted cylinders" of waiting trains. It is the city celebrated by the advertising culture and popular publications of the time. The glimpses of skyscrapers, neon lights, crashing surf, jazz, and humming traffic recall such works as Jean Curlewis' enthusiastic text for Ure Smith's Sydney Harbour (1928), a profusely illustrated volume embracing Sydney as a modern city. Similarly, the descriptions of the trips Harry and Ben make to Bondi, Bronte and Maroubra are reminiscent of Max Dupain's bathing series of photos from the 1930s or Charles Meere's famous painting, "Australian Beach Pattern" (1940):

The child ran about the beach, trailing seaweed after him, kicking up the shallow water, enjoying his own energy. After a quick dip Harry generally lay on the sand, letting the sun soak into his body and his weariness soak into the sand. He fell into a drowse. More and more people collected, family groups with babies and hampers and striped umbrellas, schools of young people, the girls in smart waterproof make-up, the men oiled for suntan, couples lying side by side in drowsy contented intimacy, solitary like himself, caring for nothing but the hour and the sun. From time to time Harry would lift his head and look about him, the laughing water, the clear sky, the throng. (TTT, p. 142)

In a passage reminiscent of Prichard's surf carnival scenes in Intimate
Strangers, Sydney and its inhabitants are here celebrated in terms of their physicality, vitality, and casual hedonism. The "Poet of Kings Cross" who appears intermittently in the text takes as one of his chief responsibilities the celebration of the city as an extravagant cornucopia from which the blessings or bounty of modernity flow. Again, the concentration on the mechanical and upon modes of transport conjures up those popular images of the late 1920s and early 1930s in which photographers like Harold Cazneaux, Henri Mallard, and Keast Burke and painters like Grace Cossington Smith documented the progress on the Sydney Harbour Bridge rivet by rivet:

One of the starving poets of the Cross, disciple of the new mechanic beauty, seeing old things in the guise of new and the new in terms of the old, weaving the world together with simile and image, thought of the newsboys as seagulls, strident voices crying storm, quick light bodies graceful in the heavy traffic, erratic and light, hard predatory eyes, swooping on pennies wherever they saw them in the crowd. The streets were channels scored by traffic through the honeycombed infested rock of dwellings. Cars were the giant, ensharded beetles, trams the green of drab myopic lizards, double-decker buses the megatheria of the future's pre-history. Metallic flowers of sound on terraces of asphalt, air vocal with ten thousand radio sets, primordial ooze of civilization. Armour of macadam on the earth, armour of light on the night, armour of unreality on the brain, and tough armour of romance on the human heart. (TTT, p.131)

The poet admits that he does not "hanker for brown paddocks and blue hills", but in fact he rediscovers something of these qualities in the primitive elements of the city itself with its "primordial ooze". It is to the city too that the poet turns when he decides to write his epic poem in blank verse, the "skyscraper of modern poetry", on the theme of "Man in search of civilisation. Man the creative, who could not acquiesce" (TTT, p.193).

However, just as significant irony attends the poet's celebration of the city as "a new Paradise Lost", in the course of the novel the authority of his vision of the "beauty" of the mechanical and the
technological is seriously challenged and technology's threatening potential to enslave, to promote another "fall" of humankind, exposed:

The search for money created the machine. So the machine is civilisation...There would be a war sooner or later, and what would war do, using the material of a new civilisation, destroying machines by machines, neutralising them, cancelling them out. Violence will be the spanner in the machine...The unseen distant root of this bright mechanic beauty will be touched and the secret withering begin. (TTT, p.194)

Echoing the central tenets of Huxley's *Brave New World* which reveal that technological supremacy can guarantee neither liberty nor happiness, *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* rejects the possibilities of technological futurism and the super-city, linking them initially to the destructive impact of industrial capitalism and later to the limitations of scientific socialism. Machine technology along with mass production and mass consumption is viewed as a key element of the mass society produced by industrial capitalism, a society based, as Knarf acknowledges, upon overproduction, profit, and competition:

Knarf could think of the Australians as living in a perpetual high gale of unreason. Their whole life was stormy and perverse. They were city-dwellers and their cities were great vortices of energy that carried them nowhere. They strove enormously for the thing called profit. In competition men's efforts cancelled out, one against another; they could succeed only, one at the expense of another, but when competition merged into monopoly they were worse off, for as the forces became more powerful they were more destructive. A terrible logic worked itself out. There were those who saw the end coming and cried their warnings, but helplessly. When a man is caught in a conveyor belt he is not saved by realising his danger. (TTT, p.10-11)

Harry is very much the man on the conveyor belt, the man bound to the machine wheel, the Everyman of the twentieth century. As Knarf remarks, "the microcosm of the individual reflected the macrocosm of society" (TTT, p.317). Harry's drift from Anzac to dole recipient and finally to lift Johnny and bombing victim, follows the boom and bust cycle of profit generation under the capitalist system. He is a random pawn in an economic game played for the benefit of others, a "trap" in which there were "mass villains, mass victims" (TTT, p.81). Just as
these social and economic systems are imaged as facets of a reckless, uncontrolled technology, Harry's discovers his work to have the same qualities:

When Harry thought of the twenty lifts all working but never getting into line, and the twenty liftdrivers gabbling their piece all the time, opening the doors and closing the doors, starting the lift, stopping the lift, repeating it over and over, he felt a little crazy...He tried to work out how many trips they all made between them every day, and how many words each must say on each journey and multiply them by twenty...he got a light feeling in his head as if his brain were like a clenched fist. (TTT, p.149)

At crucial moments, the city itself is represented as a monstrous machine which strips individuals of any authority over their own lives. In this guise, the previously lauded symbols of modernity become sinister and threatening and the city itself closed and cold. One of the significant qualities of M. Barnard Eldershaw's writing is revealed here; namely, their ability to interrogate alternative perspectives on a single issue, entertaining the ironies present in those perspectives. The nightmarish other side of their vision of the city is revealed here too. Sydney becomes a manifestation of the unguarded excesses of reason and science; not the product or plaything of human endeavour, but a strange, new, potential whip hand:

The city of steel and concrete, of polished and impervious bank fronts, of packed concrete roads and everlasting pavements, mechanic, mechanised, controlled, product of reason and science, dependent in its workings, not on mother wit of man, but on specialised knowledge, formalised knowledge, the secret code of the gasfitter, the closed corporation of the electrician, the higher arithmetic — abracadabra to you and me — of the constructional engineer, the apostolic knowledge of the loftier sanitation. (TTT, p. 90)

The "specialised knowledge" here is suggestive of a divided and alienated labour force, where workers function merely as elements in a vast and inexplicable network and where "the strongest and cleverest of them [are] separated out and bought off" (TTT, p. 113). There is no room for social consensus; in fact the system is said to preside over "the slow destruction of consent" (TTT, p. 81). In this environment, people
lose not only their liberty and individual authority, but also their humanity as they are absorbed into the mechanised nightmare that is economic determinism. It is for this reason that Harry fears for his children going off to school as he recognises their "herd" education as the first step in delivering them up to an indifferent world where they too will be "mass produced". One evening he has a vision of his own deadening incorporation into the capitalist machine that is the city. He sees

...a man, himself, sinking still sentient into the macadam. A city paved with men. Standing at the corner of William Street, watching the traffic stream up the hill at dusk on a winter's night, the cars like Frankenstein's of the jungle, robot animals of unvarying, mindless, mechanical ferocity, coming from prey, going to prey, the tender sky fenced by the hard serrations of the city's skyline, the living, changing earth sealed beneath the insentient and unchanging concrete, he felt himself grow unreal along with the things he cared for, came to feel that he no longer existed for anyone about him, but turning, not to stone, but to concrete, the grey, dead, false stone. He looked at the passers-by in the light-streaked dusk, and it seemed to him that, however much they differed, they were alike too, always the same face, hungry and afraid...Once they were individuals, now they were masses. (TTT, p.112)

The novel seems here to slip into the topos of science fiction: the city becomes an amalgam of horrific images from the cinema and other forms of mass culture. Indeed, Harry's vision concludes with an image of "the city whirring with its own momentum, a strange machine for devouring men" (TTT, p.113), an image that could have been lifted straight from Fritz Lang's 1926 film, "Metropolis". This is reason and science gone mad - "man's creation...gone past him" (TTT, p.90) - reason separated from imagination, science for its own sake. There is a crucial link, moreover, between this condition of 'madness' and the degree of alienation from the 'soil' or the 'earth' which is here lost far beneath the concrete surface of the city.

A further aspect of this enslavement of the individual is represented in the city's ability to stimulate false needs and desires, to
function as a showcase for capitalism's deceptive bounty: "Xanadu with a price ticket" (TTT, p.148). Interestingly, this is in direct contrast to a novel like *A House is Built* where the development of trade and commerce in Sydney was linked to the prosperous development of the new colony. Rather than enslaving people as it does in *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow*, the world of provisions and finance was seen as potentially liberating for Fanny Hyde, an avenue through which she might free herself from the demands of family and from the limitations of her position as an unmarried daughter. Here, however, just as the two German refugees discover that the fabulous display of chocolates over which they have been sighing is but a carefully constructed array of wooden dummies, the products of capitalism generally are shown to be false and unsatisfying:

...the wrong sort of plenty. The shoddy replica of everything the heart can desire in the bargain basement. The simulacrum of every human emotion on sale in the cinema. (TTT, p.90)

Ord speaks of capitalism as offering not true democracy but the mere "democratisation of appetite" (TTT, p.80) and this form of consumption is closely linked to gluttony through Harry's resentful reflections on the bloated women shoppers ("the big bosoms") he ferries in his lift to and from the restaurant on the top floor of Morgan's department store. In these passages, Sydney is exposed as the site of an almost mindless feeding frenzy and its shops are seen as seductive promoters of unfulfilled (and unfulfillable) desires. It is this aspect of the city with "its lights, its amusements, its piled up plenty" (TTT, p. 63) which initially attracts Ally and underpins her arguments for leaving Toongabbie. Although, as she ultimately discovers, these shops offer only "the dream, the phantasmagoria", their promise lures her nonetheless into joining the empty and unsatisfying cycle of
consumption and momentary gratification. Significantly, reckless consumption appears to be an almost exclusively female disorder in the novel. Ally is shown to turn to shopping to compensate herself for what she sees as the undeserved strictures and limitations of her life in Carnation Street. She feeds constantly upon a bag of sweets or greasy snacks beside her and she indulges her passion for hire-purchase at the expense of the family's food budget. Like her daughter Wanda after her, she joins the "pack" who hunt "with eyes, with febrile, stunted imaginations, with unattached, fishlike appetites" (TTT, p.46).

While Drusilla Modjeska argues that "M. Barnard Eldershaw are much harder [here] on women than they had been before", it is possible to see this harsh construction of women as enmeshed in their overall critique of the impact of capitalism upon the individual and upon society generally. Certainly Ally's mysterious set of financial entanglements ultimately appears to be but a further facet of the same web in which Harry finds himself caught: "the web of a thousand million flies" (TTT, p.262). The family in Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow functions, as it does in A House is Built and Green Memory, as a 'domestic' model for the larger city-society. The adverse impact of the city upon human relations is indicated initially in the breakdown of the bond between mother and child which occurs in Ally's violent outburst on the train ride home at the opening of the inner novel. Ally is frustrated that the child has come between her and her enjoyment of the luxury of a day in the city. The city is also associated with, if not implicated in, the subsequent death of their son, Jackie, on their first night in the cluttered flat in Carnation Street.

30 Modjeska: 243.
following the shift from semi-rural Toongabbie. This move to the city, a decision fraught with tension and compromise, consolidates the breakdown of relations between Harry and Ally. The point is made that Ally's situation is not unique, given that women generally in this society suffered from "a mass grievance, a mass hostility, a mass frustration" (TTT, p.203). Only Ruth appears to escape this fate and to develop a measure of individuality, although her revolutionary vocation is still expressed through a man. In this sense, *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* can be read not as a harsh indictment of women but as an extension of the analyses of the position of women offered in *A House Is Built* and *Green Memory*. Both of those novels challenged the debilitating authority of the patriarchal family in much the same way as *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* confronts the corrupt and corrupting authority of the capitalist and scientific socialist systems.

The book's critique of technology is confined neither to the twentieth century nor to the capitalist system. The society of the twenty-fourth century where a form of scientific socialism is practised is revealed, despite its apparently progressive and innovative nature, to possess similar limitations. Society is still imaged as a "machine" (TTT, p.34) and the technocratic elite responsible for its running - the "Technical Bureau" - is exposed as repressive, exclusive and self-perpetuating. While scientific methods may have been used to overcome the problems of production, distribution, competition and profit, they are represented as giving rise in turn to an additional series of problems: an emphasis on material welfare only, the surfeit of leisure which accompanies the lack of genuinely useful labour and the impulse to perfect human life by eugenic means. As one of Knarf's guests argues:
Society has reached, or is quickly reaching, a state of saturation. The machine dominates the society and can do nothing but repeat itself. The individual has more leisure than he can utilise. Like anything that ceases to be useful it is now a menace. It drags us down, as unemployment did once, it unfits men for living. Whenever the material side of life outstrips the spiritual, there is trouble. We're in a dead end now. (TTT, p.223)

Oran, who himself is strongly identified with "the machine he served with such pleasure" (TTT, p.227), argues that they have created a "Golden Age", but Illil in discussion interprets their society instead as the source of a "slow, cold, scientific violence" (TTT, p.225), a violence suggested by the automaton-like civil guard who break up the crowd following the vote. It is a society in which people are still as far from exercising authority over their own lives as they were in the society of the twentieth century. In Ord's words, "Today, we have neither energy or imagination. The average citizen does nothing towards shaping his world" (TTT, p.135). It is a society in which the individual remains almost as alienated and enslaved as in the twentieth century and where the familiar dialectical oppositions between reason and imagination, the 'material' and the 'spiritual', 'nature' and 'civilisation' persist. Knarf explains the failure of the Movement to Ren in terms of the fundamental irony underlying their methods. Having relied on a machine to break the mechanistic hold over their society, they have all but predetermined the outcome of their experiment:

The votometer is just a gadget. This is an age of gadgets, a mechanic answer to every problem. That's where you and it are in conflict. You say, 'The whole of life can't be measured by the machine,' and yet you try to measure public opinion by this votometer. The very thing that's important for you escapes the gadget. You played into the hands of your opponents. (TTT, p.454)

Knarf's writing is represented as an escape from this life, another world in which to live.

Against these visions of the city and the technological future
which challenge the authority of the capitalist and scientific socialist systems, is posited a further conception of society. This is a vision of the organic wholeness denied by these two social systems as they are explored within the novel, a vision which underlies many of the criticisms developed against those social systems and which comes to have increasing authority as the narrative develops. In place of the alienation offered by the societies of both the twentieth and twenty-fourth centuries, *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* makes recourse to another possible form of society that is represented, like the society of the Aborigines ("the First People"), as closely linked to the earth, "a way of life adjusted to circumstance and the country" (TTT, p.192). Fundamentally rural and collective in nature, it has explicit links to both the radical nationalist ethos and the ideals embodied in the ALP's government's policies on Post War Reconstruction, the shared ideological lineage of which is clearly evident in the statement on "A New Social Order" presented by Lloyd Ross, one-time associate of Barnard and Eldershaw and Director of Public Relations in the Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction:

The argument [of Reconstruction] is Fabian in its aim, revolutionary in its speed, democratic in its method — Australian in its inspiration to remove the ills of our community. The tragedy of the Australian outback — gashed, devastated, scorched by its own patriots — requiring rebuilding as insistently as the bombed cities of Britain; the challenging of Australian emptiness; the impossibility of people hoping to survive, living on the edge of an inverted basin, like men clinging desperately to the raft of history; the frittering away of precious energy and well-being in the slums of our cities; the eroding of men and country alike; the emptiness of our intellectual reinforcements throughout the rural areas — towns and villages without a library, without a civic centre, without a social synthesis: these are the question marks in Australia today.31

Reconstruction appeared to offer the opportunity for the kind of widespread, democratic change writers like Barnard and Eldershaw

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argued was vital to redressing the existing social and economic inequalities in Australian society. Indeed, in the words of Frank Dalby Davison, writers "swung to meet the fateful forties in the spirit in which their ancestors faced the turbulent nineties". The cultural vision offered in *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* also represents a return to the "soil", that combination of "earth and social conditions" which featured so strongly in Barnard Eldershaw's earlier critical works and in *My Australia*. The presence of these elements is not surprising given Nettie Palmer's argument that the key preoccupations of "To-morrow and To-morrow are matters that have filled the minds of the authors for at least a decade".

Introduced in the "Aubade" section through Knarf's solitary, early morning vigil, these ideas gain in momentum and authority in the course of the novel. Initially there is little to distinguish such speculations from the leisured landscape of the conventional pastoral or arcadian tradition, an element underscored by the description of the coming dawn over the Centre with "the library in its grove" (TTT, p.20). Something of this arcadian existence is also suggested by Harry Munster's experiences on a co-operative farm at Toongabbie, the increasingly romantic recollections of which constantly serve as a counterpoint to the wretchedness of his life in Carnation Street. It is the prospect of reclaiming the remnants of that earlier existence which prompts him to desert the city at the height of the depression. The

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world beyond the city is represented as the site of redemption:

He did not know this world. It was drying up; men everywhere were doing a perish, caught in a trap. You couldn’t do anything with a machine when it broke down, but out in the bush, there was always something to try. A man wasn’t a grain of dust there, he could manage for himself somehow. He would go tomorrow, there was nothing to keep him. Ally and the children would be better without him...He’d go where the earth was still alive and make a place for them, come back and get them. Hundreds were feeling the same urge, turning over the same argument. Harry walked home feeling more nearly happy than he had for months. (TTT, p.113)

Indeed, just as the city functions as the symbol of corruption, social dislocation and political chaos, Toongabbie and the Riverina come to embody a powerful alternative rural metonymy. It is probably no coincidence that Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow both begins and ends in the Riverina, effectively framing and commenting upon the central city experience. It should perhaps be remembered too that the Riverina was Eldershaw's birthplace. While Harry's depression journey ends in failure, his vision is partially recovered when, during the evacuation, his son Ben stops to pick fruit in the orchard of an abandoned poultry farm on the outskirts of Sydney, almost certainly the farm that was once his father's:

On the eastern slope was a derelict orchard, a wild pattern of burgeoning branches tossing in the wind against the red sky. It was the season, and Ben began to search for fruit...He climbed into a tree and began to feel systematically among its dark leaves. At last his hand met an apple. It felt sound and ripe. He sniffed it, its apple smell living and wholesome. (TTT, p.413)

The earth is here constructed as possessing a redemptive or regenerative potential, a quality which is introduced initially through discussions between Knarf and Ord on the subject of Henry Lawson, "one of the ancients". In explaining the source for the title of his novel, Knarf argues Lawson's "genius" had grown out of and been nourished by "that barren soil" (TTT, p.170) and his final thought, the statement which concludes the novel, is that "the earth remains" (TTT p.456). All the
virtues of the society of the twenty-fourth century are seen to derive from its rural nature and its status as a frontier settlement, elements which serve as a link to both the 'first' and the 'second' peoples who have previously occupied the land. The situating of the Tenth Commune in an area of the Riverina, the cradle of the legend of the 1890s, immediately conjures the spirit of Joseph Furphy and the radical nationalists, whose values of collectivism and egalitarianism pervade these sections of the text. When Australia is threatened with invasion, it is again "a boy who came from a farm in the Riverina" (TTT, 313) who speaks of Australia in terms of a timeless rural vista, a speech which prompts his fellow pilots to consider deserting their posts to come to her aid:

...it's such defenceless country, old and quiet and easily hurt. There are brown paddocks and out beyond them a ridge with blue trees on it and away and away pale blue mountains just one shade darker than the sky. There's the homestead on the little hill, the tanks and the windmill and the pepper trees. The light comes flooding down and then darkness floods down. Any amount of earth and light and air, and smells of hot grass. The water in the dam is like a blue eye in a brown face and the new iron on the roof on the shearing shed is like a silver fire. You hear the earth ticking and there's nothing in the sky but a crow... (TTT, p.313)

As Knarf says of the area, the earth there "was not not like any other earth, it had its spirit still, even if old God Murrumbidgee was tamed and made to serve it" (TTT, p.5).

This focus upon the soil should not be read as a form of escapism, a strategy by which "the 'realism' of the way we live is exposed by a further romantic vision of another possible future";35 the proffered restoration of a Golden Age. Indeed, the text makes quite clear that the "Golden Age" is a signifier that shifts constantly according to historical circumstances. "If we looked back at today instead of living in it",

Knarf speculates, "we would say it was a Golden Age" (TTT, p.19). Neither should it be assumed that these ideas necessarily embody an alternative structure for society. Instead, it should be read as one of the ways in which the text raises the possibility of a different distribution of authority, a concept implicit in Ren's push to establish an auxiliary committee representing those who currently had no direct voice in their own governing. Indeed, the Movement, which Ren hopes will shape their future, is constructed as somewhere people can work "collectively", rather than as alienated individuals, towards a new future. The images of the soil which recur throughout the text are frequently associated with this strong sense of the communal and of a shared social and cultural heritage. When, for example, Ren looks out across the people gathered in the square to vote he becomes conscious of the bond they have in common:

This people, conscious not of differences from other people but of affinity to this countryside, this landscape — for all the individual differences a likeness ran through them...The girls and women were set in the same mould as the men, one compact community. (TTT, p.433)

One of the chief virtues the twenty-fourth century is seen to possess over the twentieth is the ability to foster this sense of community, a quality suggested by the apparently collective nature of social units like the Tenth Commune. Despite the unsettling nature of its outcome, the Symposium sequence with its lengthy lunchtime discussion clearly embodies this aspect of the new society:

The guests willingly filed into the courtyard and took their places without ceremony at the table. There were seventeen in all, twelve men and five women. The conversation which had begun in the anteroom scarcely suffered a break. It had already developed a tempo, because the occasion had focussed men's minds and because all these people, except Oran and Sfax, were accustomed to meeting one another and talking interminably. Their minds were adjusted and discussion was a pleasure to them, like eating. (TTT, p.217)

This represents a continuation of the spirit of reconstruction which is
represented as a co-operative gesture made in the cause of social justice:

But there was, still latent but continually growing, a rebellion as individual as the upsurge of the 'nineties, against the very premises of society. There were men with two-edged strength, belief and disbelief, belief that had passed over into their blood, passion that had saturated their minds. They saw clearly, not necessarily the truth, but something. They had accepted as axioms that men could not change until their circumstances changed, that wars would continue while their roots in the social system were left, that exploitation would continue while the means for it existed. (TTT, p.340)

This collective challenge to the authority of the state is based largely on the authority of tradition and the authority of history, both of which are seen ultimately to reside in, and to establish their continuity through, community and the land. The question of history or tradition as an aspect of the land and of the community is introduced very early in the text through the image of the small family holdings with their "continuous, hereditary feeling for the land...an element of plasticity in an already too rigid system" (TTT, p.35). It is the land which links past to present and ultimately to a projected future, providing the community with some sense of continuity. This is brought out most clearly in the surreal waking-dream sequence following the vote when Ren wanders lost on the far side of the river. He encounters there a series of disembodied voices - drovers apparently - with whom he converses, an incident which recalls the earlier discussion of the lingering presence of the ghosts of the Pioneers. A similar passage occurs in Barnard's short story "Dry Spell" in which Sydney's streets are inhabited momentarily by the survivors of past droughts:

All about me were points of light from cigarettes, a murmur of talking...I turned to my neighbour and was surprised to see that he was apparently in fancy dress, white breeches, a tail coat, and a three-cornered hat. He was small and sharp, but fine too. Before I could speak to him he addressed me.

"This is nothing new, Sir, it happened before, and worse".
"Indeed?" said I, not feeling comfortable.36

36Marjorie Barnard, The Persimmon Tree (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1943): 158.
The apparent co-existence of past and present evokes Knarf's stated belief that "all that happened was written in the dust, it didn't end and wasn't lost, it was woven in" (TTT, p.5), an argument which underpins the construction of history within the text. Unlike A House Is Built and Green Memory with their strong emphasis on familial descent as the principal means of narrativising the past, Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow offers an organic model of history based on a conception of the present, past, and future as inextricably interrelated. The familiar linear imaginary of time is dispensed with in favour of a model in which intertwined and reactivated memories blend with a consciousness of the present and a projection of the future. This is achieved partly through the framing of the core narrative which allows for the development of an explicitly historical dimension within the novel by creating the present both as a moment in history and as the object of future scrutiny. It is also developed through Knarf's self-conscious gesture of creation which facilitates the momentary co-existence of two separate worlds, the continued circulation of the elusive idea of liberty and, through its title, the communication of the traditions of Lawson and Furphy.

Literature here is represented once again as the bearer of a culture of community, a proposition that has been central to so much of Barnard Eldershaw's writing. That sense of a tradition or legacy is constructed both as a familiar or intimate gesture and as part of a larger impersonal transmission of culture. In each narrative there is a moment, brief and unceremonious, where the older generation is eclipsed by the younger who take up the burden of their struggle: a handing over from Harry to Ben and from Knarf to Ren. For Ren, the moment falls after the failure of the vote, an event which is portrayed as
a crucial rite of passage for him. Looking out across the plain, he acknowledges the difficulty and protracted nature of the struggle on which he has embarked and he sees stretching before him

The Promised Land. The *tabula rasa* of the future. He stood still, staring straight ahead, as if waiting to pick up the beat that would carry him across some invisible line into the earth's eternity. (TTT, p.443)

But this sense of tradition is also constructed as a larger, on-going pattern of communication, an anonymous legacy handed blindly down through the ages. In Barnard's terms, tradition is the "secret collaborator" in the process of shaping a national culture.37 Recalling the "melting pot" image of *Plaque With Laurel*, in *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow*, this form of cultural transmission is imaged as being like "a turkish funeral" where

the coffin was carried out of the house into the street, there were no bearers, no procession as was usual, but men passing in the streets lent their shoulders as a pious duty, carried it a few yards and then relinquished their place to another, and so the journey was made. So endeavour passed from hand to unknown hand, without reward, none following all the way, few seeing or foreseeing the end... (TTT, p.141)

Tradition here represents not one voice but the voices of many, the anonymous chorus that exists "in a floating mass of stories and legends and songs...a large common heritage, like the seed reserve in the Australian earth".38 *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* offers then not simply an analysis of the political possibilities confronting Australia but also a sense of the cultural possibilities, both defined in terms of collectivity, co-operation, and liberal consensus. These are the principles which informed not only the body of M. Barnard Eldershaw's writing but also their wide range of cultural and political commitments and their practice as writers. The cautious optimism these

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37 M. Barnard, "Our Literature": 98.  
38 M. Barnard, "Our Literature": 99-100.
principles engendered in them is registered in Knarf's statement in the closing passage of the novel: "This is the beginning" (TTT, p.456).
conclusion
When the Patrick White Award was made to Marjorie Barnard in 1983, the judges’ citation stated that the award was being made for the novels, and for *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow* in particular. But while the judges acknowledged that "in honouring Marjorie Barnard as a writer, we also honour Flora Eldershaw",¹ no effort was made to extend any form of posthumous recognition to her contribution. This current study perhaps goes some way to giving that recognition. What I have attempted to do is to reconceptualise our understanding of how collaboration works generally and to apply this to the writing relationship that developed between Marjorie Barnard and Flora Eldershaw, possibly Australia's most celebrated instance of collaboration. Just as conventional definitions of collaboration have been influenced significantly by prevailing notions of "literature" and authorship, re-evaluating the practice of collaboration clearly has implications for certain conceptions of a literary work, its author, and the relationship between the two. In problematising both the image of the single, unified creative subject and the concept of an homologous fit between author and text, speculations over collaboration can prompt new ways of thinking about a literary work and the interpretive modes available for its explication.

Contrary to prevailing critical practice which has tended to approach collaborative work from the positivist perspective of assessing the relative separate contributions of each party, I have chosen instead to focus on the totality of the joint production, conceiving of literary collaboration as a process that extends beyond the page and the

¹Barnard Papers [ML MSS 4869, Add on 1925].
individual. This shift allows us to consider collaboration as something more than the mechanical division of labour it is commonly represented to be. For Barnard and Eldershaw it was clearly a more flexible and fluid practice, the dimensions of which are more suggestive of a creative philosophy than simply a fortuitous working arrangement. Such an approach also encourages us to view Eldershaw's contribution more centrally than has previously been acknowledged and to incorporate into our definition of collective creativity the wider collaborative opportunities offered by discussion and other forms of intellectual co-operation.

Traditional associations between authority and masculinity have served to produce quite particular — phallocentric — definitions of the 'literature' and the literary career. The adherence to conventional readings of the relationship between 'public' and 'private' spheres has lent further weight to such definitions. Indeed, the unproblematic acceptance and application of this public/private split has frequently constructed women's literary and cultural experience as lying outside the masculine space of history, effectively denying the need for any examination of the wealth of evidence that would render that experience visible. The presentation here of new archival sources and the re-examination of existing sources raises questions about the position of women and of women writers in relation to the dominant cultural institutions of the period and challenges the validity of the public/private split for conceptualising women's creative lives. As the experiences of Barnard and Eldershaw suggest, it is only through reconceptualising the relationship between the so-called public and private spheres in terms of their inseparability that we can begin to understand fully the shape that so many of these women's careers took. That women dominated the
literary scene in this period is now widely acknowledged. However, it has often been thought sufficient to explain this flourishing either in terms of the First World War depriving women of male competition or in terms of a few talented women who represented exceptions to an otherwise secure, masculinist status quo. Tracing the careers of Barnard and Eldershaw within the literary community of the interwar and immediate post-war years demonstrates the inadequacy of such explanations when accounting for the success of these and other Australian women writers. Indeed, the pattern of Barnard's and Eldershaw's careers suggests that conventional assumptions about women's marginal relationship to particular modes of cultural production and limited access to key sites of cultural power must be reconceptualised in the light of women's changing social and educational status, of changing ideas and ideals of femininity, and prevailing historical conditions.

Rather than continuing to focus solely on the notions of exclusion and marginalisation, it is apparent that consideration must now be given to the particular strategies available to women in different periods for successfully negotiating their positions as cultural producers and as cultural arbiters. Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock suggest in their study of women artists that there is an urgent need to examine how in different periods "the factors of sex, class, and dominant forces in art, together with the changing identity of the artist have produced distinct and differing possibilities for women's practice", ¹ and the same arguments could be extended to the study of women writers. Further, consideration must be given to the ways in which the careers of

individual women like Barnard and Eldershaw effectively challenge accepted definitions of the "amateur", the "professional" and the "intellectual", reshaping our understanding of what constitutes a literary career in ways not founded upon a normative masculine subjectivity. Such a re-visioning can help us to recognise that women may occupy and speak from different positions within culture.

Beyond reconceptualising the formation of a literary life in the interwar years, the study of Barnard's and Eldershaw's careers and their writing suggests an alternative understanding of the nature and function of literature. The collective ethos present in their creative realm was clearly also a significant feature of Barnard's and Eldershaw's wider cultural commitment. For them literature was a community effort, the emphasis falling not on the mere publication of works or on the achievement of a literary reputation, but on the communicative potential of literature and on the transmission of culture and of tradition, both imaged in terms of collectivity and consensus. Writing offered them then the opportunity to explore, in conjunction with their readers, a range of cultural possibilities in the context of a common heritage. It is not surprising, therefore, that so much of their writing should involve itself with questions of what it means to be a writer and on-going reflections on the nature of the creative process itself. The examination of this work in the light of their manifold cultural activities and commitments, moreover, underscores the extent to which their writing operated as the natural extension of a quite specific set of beliefs or commitments.

Doubtless, there is still room for further speculation and exploration with regard to M. Barnard Eldershaw and the milieu in
which these two writers functioned. It is possible that a more detailed consideration of their historical writing, for example, could lend additional nuances to our understanding of the ways in which they constructed their notions of history and of the national culture. Such explorations might also serve to elaborate their position in relation to prevailing nationalist discourses. The wider collaborative dimensions of Eldershaw's and more particularly Barnard's friendships with people such as Nettie Palmer and Frank Dalby Davison could certainly be explored in more detail. Barnard's correspondence with Nettie Palmer, for example, while touched upon here could almost constitute a further study in itself. While not central to my arguments here, consideration might also be given to Barnard's independent writing and how it relates to their collaborative work. More detailed analysis should also be directed to Barnard's short fiction, but her unpublished novel "The Gulf Stream" and even her CSIR commission "One Single Weapon" deserve consideration too. It is to be hoped, however, that the "recovery" of figures like Barnard and Eldershaw will not be solely in terms of their literary output, significant as it may be, but also in terms of how they might redefine and reshape our understanding of the Australian literary landscape and women's place within it.
appendix
Bibliography of Works by M. Barnard Eldershaw

Books

Fiction

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Eleanor Dark Papers NLA MSS 4998
Frank Dalby Davison Papers NLA MSS 1945
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Jean Devanny Papers JD MSS James Cook University Library
Flora Eldershaw Papers ML MSS 5601
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Miles Franklin Papers ML MSS 3659/1 and ML MSS 364
Mary Gilmore Papers ML MSS 123
Meanjin Archives, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne
Nettie and Vance Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1
Helen Palmer Papers NLA MSS 6083/2
Leslie Rees Papers ML MSS 5454/1
Judah Waten Papers NLA MSS 4536/2

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Meanjin Archives, Baillieu Library, University of Melbourne
Nettie and Vance Palmer Papers NLA MSS 1174/1
Aileen Palmer Papers NLA MSS 6759
Helen Palmer Papers NLA MSS 6083
Judah Waten Papers NLA MSS 4536/2

**Related Manuscript and Archival Material on Barnard and Eldershaw**

**Barnard Papers ML MSS 451/1**
Original ms of *A House Is Built* in hand of M. Barnard and F. Eldershaw

Ms of *Green Memory* in hand of M. Barnard and F. Eldershaw

**Barnard Papers ML MSS 451/2**
Two bound vols containing carbon t/script of *Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow*, one with ms corrections. Final sections bear red stamp "Passed by Publicity Censorship, Melbourne. 17 Mar 1944" and marked by red pen. Additional ms corrections.

T/script of "The Watch on the Headland" with ms corrections and annotations

Unpublished plays by M. Barnard Eldershaw:
"Chinese Wall". Ms and T/script
"The Conquest of Europe. A Procession Play in Fourteen Scenes". 3 copies t/script
"Interval". 2 copies t/script
"[The Odd Moment] A Play in Three Acts". Ms and t/script

"The Alabaster Box" (short story). Carbon t/script

**Barnard Papers ML MSS 451/3**

Short stories from the M. Barnard Eldershaw collection 'But Not For Love':

"Christmas". T/script with ms corrections
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"The Miles to Babylon". T/script with ms corrections
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"Shipwreck". Ms.
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Australian Literature lectures:

"Lecture 1 - The Australian Scene"
"Australia in Fiction"
"Australia in Australian Literature"
"Lecture 4 - Australian Democracy and Literature - Part 1"
"Hungerford by Henry Lawson - To illustrate Lecture 4"
"Lecture 5 - Australian Democracy and Literature - Part 2"
"Australian Literature and History"
"Drama" Lectures Nos. 1-4, 6-7

**Barnard Papers ML MSS 451/4**

Lectures on Modern Fiction:

1) Introductory. What is Creative Literature?
[ Lectures 2-5 missing. See Eldershaw Papers ]
6) Post War Literature #1
7) Post War Literature #2
8) Post War Literature #3
9) Post War Literature #4
10) Trends Within the Novel - Classicism and Romanticism
11) Trends Within the Novel - Realism, Naturalism, Decorism
12) Naturalism and Decorism
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15) The Techniques of the Novel
Lectures Not in Series:
1) Lecture (no title) on Australian Literature Today (includes mss pages by F. Eldershaw). T/script
2) Critics and Criticism. T/script
3) John Shaw Neilson "Address given by Miss F. Eldershaw at the Opening of the Children's Library, 23 June 1946". Offprint and t/script
5) Australian Literature since 1929. Mss by M. Barnard, including "notes from Nettie's portfolio".
6) Leonard Mann. T/script
7) Australian Literature (Chambers Encyclopaedia 1946). T/script
8) Carbon as above
9) Additional later copy of (7)
10) Responsible Government for Women. T/script
11) Patterns of Australian History. Mss by M. Barnard

Barnard Papers ML MSS 451/5
Correspondence 1928-49 chiefly with publishers and Barnard Eldershaw's literary agent, John Farquharson, in London. Contains many drafts on letters from M. Barnard and F. Eldershaw. Also important correspondence with Georgian House regarding Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow.

Barnard Papers ML MSS 2809
One carton of material including:
Correspondence with Clem Christesen regarding R.D. Burns Meanjin article on Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Barnard's piece in same issue.

Galley proofs of Sydney: The Story of a City

Mss of Miles Franklin and The Gulf Stream (unpublished novel)

Ms of play "The Conquest of Europe"

Barnard Papers ML MSS 2809 (add on 1066)
Folder One - Short Stories from "But Not For Love":
"Dry Spell"
"Speak To Me"
"Liabilities"
"The Party"
"Habit"
"Parade of Women"
"In Munich When It's Dark"
"The Sheltered Masterpiece"
"The Romantics"
"Truth's in her Well"
"The Cough"
"The High Price of Moonlight"
"Say Good-bye and Mean It"
"The Other Cheek"
"The Sleeping Bride"
"The Rock"
"Open Confession"
"The Burden of Riches"
"The Loaded Inheritance"

Folder 2
Australian Dictionary of Biography entry on Elizabeth Macarthur.

T/script
Australian Dictionary of Biography entry on Captain John Piper.

T/script
"Circuses". Playscript

Short Stories:
"Contentment"
"The Journey"
"Tree Without Earth"
"The Rock"
"Open Confession"
"The Burden of Riches"
"The Loaded Inheritance"
"The Sleeping Bride"

Essays:
"A Mask for Australia"
"Country Under Drought"
"The Maintenance of Culture"

Barnard Papers ML MSS 4869 (add on 1825)

Includes
Barnard's birth certificate, arts degree from University of Sydney.

Judges' citations for 1983 Patrick White Award and 1984 NSW Premier's Literary Awards.

Author's copy of original contract with Georgian House for Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow.
Barnard Papers ML MSS A3577
"The Australian Cultural Background". Lectures 1-16, 28 and 50 with outline of complete series prepared for the Library School, Public Library of NSW by M. Barnard, 1942. Original Ms and t/script.

Barnard Papers ML MSS 887/1-3

ABC Radio Archives
M. Barnard, "Australian Literature", ABC Radio Talk, 25 September 1941. SP 300/1/Box 3

Eldershaw Papers ML MSS 5601*
Folder 1 Five short stories:
**"Open Confession". Short story. T/script. [Earlier draft than copy ML MSS 451]
**"The Rock". Short story. T/script. [Copy ML MSS 2809, Add on 1066, Folder 2].
**"The Creek". Short story. T/script
**"The Little Grave". Short story. T/script
**"Scoot and Pincher". Short story. MS F. Eldershaw

Two letters from Eldershaw to family members, no dates

Summary by F. Eldershaw of her work history with the Department of Labour and National Service. Ms F. Eldershaw. 2pp

Selection of references for F. Eldershaw:
*Frederick Todd, professor of Latin, University of Sydney, 25/11/20
*E. Neil Mc Queen, Principal PLC, Croydon, 8/10/27
*G.A. Wood, Professor of History, University of Sydney, 5/10/27. (Includes personal note from Wood to Eldershaw).
*Anna Drennan, Acting Principal of PLC, Croydon, 25/10/30
*Edith Muscio, 26/11/40
*A.S. Gasdin [?], Church of England Grammar School, Cremorne, 27/9/27
*Leonard Mann, 22/3/41
*Mary Hamilton, former principal of PLC, Croydon, 5/9/55
*F.L. Thompson, Chair, PLC Council, 16/8/55

*These papers were recently donated to the Mitchell Library and have yet to be sorted and catalogued. The arrangement listed above reflects the state and arrangement of the papers as they were when held by the Eldershaw family.
Letters to Pat Eldershaw following F. Eldershaw's death from Aileen Palmer, Tom Inglis Moore, Judah Waten.

Folder 2 "Lectures on Australian Literature & some scraps":
1) "The Poet of Affairs: Bernard O'Dowd and Leonard Mann". 2 copies, one incomplete typescript and one complete with 4pp ms M. Barnard.
2) "The Legacy of the Nineteenth Century". Typescript.
3) "Before the War". Incomplete. Typescript.
4) "Australian Literature and Democracy - Part II". Typescript.
5) Lecture on drama. Ms F. Eldershaw
6) "Ballads". 24 pp. t/script, 4pp ms F. Eldershaw
7) "The Ballad and A.B. Paterson". T/script. 2 copies
8) "The Three A's of Drama". 12 pp. t/script, 21 pp. ms M. Barnard
9) "Australian Literature - Introductory Lecture". T/script
10) "Lyric Poets - Hugh Macrae and John Shaw Neilson". T/script, 2 pp. ms M. Barnard.
11) Set of lecture abstracts:
    The Dramatists: Louis Esson
    The Novel: Such is Life
    The Novel: Henry Handel Richardson
    The Landscape School: Fred Blakely and Francis Ratcliffe
    [All duplicated ML MSS 451]
12) "Building the Stage". T/script [Missing drama lecture from series held at ML MSS 451]
13) "Vance Palmer and Frank Dalby Davison". T/script
14) "Such Is Life". T/script.
16) "K.S.Prichard and Kylie Tennant". T/script [Duplicated ML MSS 451]
17) "Leonard Mann and Xavier Herbert". T/script [Duplicated ML MSS 451]
18) "Miles Franklin and Brent of Bin Bin". T/script [Duplicated ML MSS 451]
19) "The Australian Short Story". T/script [Duplicated ML MSS 451]
2) The Influence of Nationality on Literature. T/script
[Duplicated ML MSS 451]
3) The Legacy of the Nineteenth Century. T/script
4) Before the War. T/script
5) The War and Literature. Ms F. Eldershaw
6) Post War Literature I. T/script. [Duplicated ML MSS 451]
7) Post War Literature II. T/script. [Duplicated ML MSS 451]
8) Post War Literature III. T/script. [Duplicated ML MSS 451]
9) Post War Literature IV: A Miscellany and a Retrospect. T/script. [Duplicated ML MSS 451]
10) Trends Within the Novel: Classicism and Romanticism. T/script. [Duplicated ML MSS 451]
11) Trends Within the Novel II: Realism, Naturalism, Decorism. T/script. [Duplicated ML MSS 451]
12) Naturalism and Decorism. T/script. [Duplicated ML MSS 451]
13) Forms of Fiction: The Short Story. T/script + 15pp Ms M. Barnard
15) Technique in the Novel. T/script. [Duplicated ML MSS 451]
16) No title but final lecture. Additional 5pp t/script included at end on the idea of time in the novel.

Additional material includes photographs, playscripts, Eldershaw's teaching notes, juvenilia including a notebook in which Eldershaw began writing the story of her grandmother's life.

Flora Eldershaw ML Doc. 2315
Carbon copy of ABC Radio One script for broadcast of "Watch on the Headland". Contains ms remarks probably by director or actor.

Australian Archives
Material on and by Flora Eldershaw is held among papers concerning Post War Reconstruction in Australian Archives CP 43/1. See, for example, F. Eldershaw, "The Part Women Can Take in Reconstruction" [AA CP43/1 Item 1943/403]; "Research (Internal): Subjects- Economic and Social" [AA CP43/1 Item 1943/785] and miscellaneous items under AA CP 43/1 Items 1943/140 and 1943/215.

Eldershaw's ASIO file is held at AA CRS 6119/10, Item No. 290. The file is probably at least 11 pages in length, although only five of these were made available under the Freedom of Information Act. The file includes a standard Personal Particulars Sheet (P.P.S.) and copies of leaflets and petitions listing Eldershaw's support for, or participation in, the People's Council for Culture and the Australian Peace Council. No
separate file exists for Barnard, although at least one page in Eldershaw's file is devoted to her.

**Fellowship of Australian Writers Papers ML MSS 2008**
Box K22104 "Liberty and Violence", t/script MBE contribution to "Writers in Defence of Freedom".

These papers are unsorted, however, material in the form of correspondence, policy papers and minutes pertaining to the activities of Barnard and Eldershaw can be located in the following boxes: K22104, K22105, K22106, K22109, K22110, K22111, K22112, K22113, K22117

**University of Queensland, Fryer Library MSS 5/490**
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(1) "Introductory"
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(3) "The Poet of Affairs – Bernard O'Dowd and Leonard Mann"
(4) "The Lyric Poets – Hugh Macrae and Shaw Neilson"
(5) "The Philosopher Poet – Christopher Brennan"
(6) "The Dramatist Louis Esson"
(7) "Australian Short Story"
(8) "The Novel – Such is Life – Tom Collins"
(9) "The Novel – Henry Handel Richardson"
(10) "The Landscape School – Fred Blakely and Francis Ratcliffe"

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**Ida Dawson Family Papers ML Uncat. MSS 475, Item 3**
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