

CHAPTER 4 - 'FELLOWING' WOMEN: MARY GILMORE AND WOMEN WRITERS OF THE 1920s

He who goes lonely comes not back again,

None holding him in fellowship of men;

Empty he lived, empty he dies,

And dust in dust he lies.

But these, these fellowing men, shall know

Love's Memory though they go.

They are not dead; not even broken;

Only their dust has gone back home to the earth:

For they—the essential they—shall have re-birth

Whenever a word of them is spoken.¹

Mary Gilmore

'Oh, "Fellowing Woman"' Fred Broomfield hailed Mary Gilmore in a letter to her in 1919.² 'Australia needs such a "fellowing" woman as yourself', Florence Fourdrinier gushed a year or so later.³ Both of these were responses to Mary Gilmore's poem, 'These Fellowing Men'. 'Fellowship' was a word long favoured by Gilmore. She wrote in 1912, about "'The Invisible Fellowship" of human love', and also used the word personally to express a certain level of creative camaraderie such as the 'quiet fellowship' she shared with George Robertson when reading the proofs of her first Angus and Robertson

¹ Mary Gilmore, 'These Fellowing Men', Mary Gilmore, *The Passionate Heart*, (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1918), p.1.

² Fred and Alice Broomfield to Gilmore, 6 Jan. 1919, in Gilmore, *Dame Mary, Papers* (MGP), vol. 25, ML A3276 (CY1860), n.p.

³ F.F. Fourdrinier to Gilmore, 14 June 1922, MGP, vol.28, A3279 (CY 1863), n.p.

publication *The Passionate Heart*.⁴ Published in November 1918, the first poem in the volume was 'These Fellowing Men', a lament over the spilled blood of the young men of the world in war.

The women of Sydney's upper middle classes took to charity in the context of war, and created an interest in the dramatic arts in the process. Ethel Kelly's actions exemplified a specific concern for the cultural welfare of the city and a tendency to link its cultural development with civilisation and progress. Following the war, a socially diverse group of women likewise displayed an interest in the personal and collective needs of the local literary community. As the war marked a watershed in the evolution of Australia's national identity, it seems a particularly appropriate point at which to return to the subject of women writers and examine their actions as they moved beyond the legacy of the radical nationalism of the 1890s. The terminology of Mary Gilmore's tribute itself offers a clue to the manner in which Sydney women writers addressed the city's perceived literary needs over the ensuing decade.

To Florence Fourdrinier, founder of the short-lived women's magazine, *Ours*, Gilmore's use of the word 'fellowing' was particularly appealing: 'that word of yours – it seems to cover so much, - and conveys to me such wonderful ideas'.⁵ She quoted the first six lines from 'These Fellowing Men' in the June 1922 issue of *Ours* and expanded on the concept, although an unfortunate type-setting error must have lessened the impact of her message:

It is this beautiful following [*sic* – surely she meant fellowing] Spirit that Woman engendered during the war, and that same spirit must, even more so, be kept alight at the present juncture in Australian history.

⁴ W.H. Wilde, *Courage a grace: A Biography of Dame Mary Gilmore*, (Carlton, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1988), pp.201-2.

⁵ F.F. Fourdrinier to Gilmore, 14 June 1922, MGP, vol.28.

For, by this means, woman will help the politicians, the future welfare of Australia and incidentally the homes and lives of to-day.⁶

The term, 'fellowing', then, had two applications: the first relating directly to Gilmore, the 'fellowing woman', who, like the fallen men of war, would live on in public memory because of her own fellowship with the people of Australia; and the second concerning 'fellowing women', whose 'Spirit' would nurture the young needy nation. Recent discussions of Australian feminism of the first half of the twentieth century have identified a type of 'maternal citizenship' that emerged from the rhetoric of the earlier women's movement, to which Fourdrinier's statement certainly belongs. Maternal citizenship implied that a sense of duty merged nationalist as well as feminist imperatives, but it has been observed that following the war duty subsided slightly to the new pursuit of freedom.⁷ This change was evident among the women writers of Sydney but it did not eradicate their commitment to the welfare of Australian literature and its creators. Their commitment suggests a cultural aspect to Fourdrinier's 'fellowing Spirit'.

The near-religious or congregational connotations of the word 'fellowship' could also apply to the post-war literary community of New South Wales. Aptly the word was utilised as part of the semi-religious civic commemoration of the deeds and sacrifices of the Australian armed forces when Dr Mary Booth founded the Anzac Fellowship of Women in 1921.⁸ Yet, the word also appears in radical, non-conformist and alternate

⁶ 'Woman', in *Ours*, vol.1, no.6, June 1922, p.25.

⁷ For example, Marilyn Lake and Katie Holmes labelled Part I of their collection of documents on women in modern Australia, 'Maternal Citizenship, 1900-1920'. Part II, concerning the years 1921-1940, was alternately defined by 'The modern desire for pleasure and freedom'. See Marilyn Lake and Katie Holmes (ed.s), *Freedom Bound II: Documents on Women in Modern Australia*, (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1995); Marilyn Lake, *getting equal: The history of Australian feminism*, (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1999); and Helen Irving, 'Citizenship' in Barbara Caine (gen. ed.), *Australian Feminism: a companion*, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.25-32.

⁸ Patricia Jalland describes the process by which in Britain, the increasing incidence of non-religious belief, the unprecedented number of war-related fatalities, and the horror and violence of the conditions of the First World War contributed to a rise in 'new civic forms of remembrance.' See Pat Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.379. The Anzac celebrations appear as an Australian version of the civic remembrance of the fallen, but obviously expressed its own nationalistic message.

religious terminology of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century: Theosophists, Frederick Sinclair's Melbourne-based Free Religious Fellowship, and the Christian Socialists of the 1920s, all used the term.⁹ Fellowship, it appears, already implied the coming together of progressive forces in early twentieth century Australia.

As a whole Sydney writers of the 1920s honoured earlier Australian writers, and individually and collectively embraced the aim of aiding the further development of an Australian literary tradition with missionary zeal. Even when personal differences existed, the cause took precedence in guiding the actions of following men and women. This cohesiveness bears out the marginality identified by John Docker (although in identifying it he does not refer to any women writers) inherent in Sydney literary traditions.¹⁰ In its separateness it was nostalgic yet forward-looking, potentially elitist yet open and out-reaching. Growing numbers of women writers became absorbed in the emerging fellowship. Unconsciously they used informal strategies to advance the cause of Australian literature, caring for the welfare of other writers, sharing contacts, knowledge, interests and concerns, and creating opportunities for exposure. Their tactics reveal a tendency to mutuality and self-help.

The phenomenon of mutually supportive women writers as it appeared in its heyday of the 1930s, has been more than adequately demonstrated by Carole Ferrier in *As*

⁹ Frederick Sinclair also published a 'little paperette' under the name of *Fellowship*, subtitled 'a monthly magazine of undogmatic religion and social and literary criticism'. Gilmore was aware of and indeed acquired and kept at least two issues of the small magazine, one from 1917 and the other from 1920. See David Walker, *Dream and Disillusion: A Search for Australian Cultural Identity*, (Canberra: Australia National University Press, 1976) and *Fellowship: a monthly magazine of Undogmatic Religion and social and literary criticism*, vol.4, no.4, Nov. 1917; and vol.6, no.6, Jan. 1902, in Dame Mary Gilmore Papers, NLA MS 727, series 9, folder 2. See also Jill Roe, *Beyond Belief: Theosophy in Australia 1879-1939*, (Kensington, NSW: New South Wales University Press, 1986), ch. 1, 'The First Fellows'; the Theosophical Society 'offered membership, or fellowship, to all genuine truth-seekers', p.2. See also Ross Terrill, *R.H. Tawney and His Times: Socialism as Fellowship*, (London: Deutsch, 1974).

¹⁰ Of course acceptance of the apparent marginality of the Sydney literary community as identified here does not mean that its elitism and pluralism is also assumed. The debates over Docker's conviction that Sydney was characterised by an elitist pluralism will not be taken up primarily because his observations are based on the work of a literary male elite whose work does not overlap to a great extent the period and

Good as a yarn with you: Letters between Miles Franklin, Katharine Susannah Prichard, Jean Devanny, Marjorie Barnard, Flora Eldershaw and Eleanor Dark and Drusilla Modjeska in *Exiles at home: Australian Women Writers 1925-1945*. Nor have women writers of the 1920s been ignored. While Modjeska refers to a host of 'lady-like' 'minor women poets' who in isolation wrote 'genteel rhyme' in the 1920s, and Michael Sharkey to 'Victorian and Edwardian persons imbued with and circumscribed by the values of the time', Kay Ferres hints at the unconventional marital arrangements and reciprocal mentoring of some women writers of the 1920s and '30s. Bohemian and university literary circles have also been investigated by Peter Kirkpatrick and Leslie Heath respectively.¹¹ In addition, the 'impulse to form alliances to foster a national literature' has been noted in *The Oxford Literary History of Australia*, although Nettie Palmer took honours as representative of this tendency.¹² However, the high incidence of direct patronage offered by individual women poets, playwrights, journalists and editors; the increasing tendency for a large group of women to network in the interests of encouraging Australian writers; and the manifestation of this increased contact in the founding of a series of societies are all significant developments united chiefly by the touch of a core of fellowing women writers; a subject historians have not yet considered. This odd core with strong journalistic overtones was comprised of Mary Gilmore, Constance Stephens, Alys Hungerford, Lala Fisher, Zora Cross, Lucy Cassidy, Dulcie Deamer, Dora Moore, Dorothea Mackellar, Ruth

circles of women under discussion. See John Docker, 'Sydney versus Melbourne Revisited', in Jim Davidson (ed.), *The Sydney-Melbourne Book*, (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1986), p.160.

¹¹ See Carole Ferrier (ed.), *As Good as a yarn with you: Letters between Miles Franklin, Katharine Sussannah Prichard, Jean Devanny, Marjorie Barnard, Flora Eldershaw and Eleanor Dark*, (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Drusilla Modjeska, *Exiles at Home: Australian Women Writers 1925-1945*, (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1981), p.24; Michael Sharkey, 'Zora Cross's Entry into Australian Literature', *Hecate*, vol. xvi, no.s i/ii, 1990, p.66; Kay Ferres, *The Time to Write: Australian Women Writers 1890-1930*, (Melbourne: Penguin Books, 1993); Peter Kirkpatrick, *The Sea Coast of Bohemia: Literary Life in Sydney's Roaring Twenties*, (St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1992); Leslie Heath, 'John Le Gay Brereton, The University, and Australian Literature', *Notes and Furphies*, no. 31, Oct. 1993, pp.3-7.

¹² Jennifer Strauss, 'Literary Culture 1914-1939: Battlers All', in Bruce Bennett and Jennifer Strauss (ed.s), and Chris Wallace-Crabbe (assoc. ed.), *The Oxford Literary History of Australia*, (Melbourne: Oxford

Bedford and many others. Its existence does not preclude key male figures holding high profile positions in educational or publishing institutions from importance, but neither does the vital work of men in professional positions preclude the existence of a network of women writers whose endeavours were characterised by a particular approach to cultural activism. It is thus the emergence and flourishing of clusters of women writers, whose actions were expressive of a new sense of literary fellowship during the 1920s, that forms the basis of this chapter.

Fellowing Women

By the conclusion of the First World War Mary Gilmore had lived more than fifty distinctive and eventful years. She had worked as a school teacher, had a close companionship with Henry Lawson, become involved in the radical unionism of the 1890s, played a key role in William Lane's New Australia movement, married, given birth to and raised a son, edited the woman's page of the *Australian Worker* for ten years, published her first collection of verse *Marri'd and other verses*, and embarked on her Sydney-based literary life.¹³ Almost permanently settled in Sydney from 1912 Gilmore quickly became involved in its writing and publishing circles. She became a friend of Alfred George Stephens and a collaborator and often financier of his journal *Bookfellow*. During her frequent visits to Stephens' office in Rowe Street, Gilmore would have encountered his rapidly maturing eldest daughter, Constance or 'Connie'. Indeed, Connie attended and invited others to the 'jolly Friday afternoons at the office ... where Mary

University Press, 1998), p.118.

¹³ Numerous biographical articles and books exist concerning Mary Gilmore, see W.H. Wilde, 'Mary Gilmore', *ADB*, vol.9, pp.14-6.

Gilmore [held] her court'.¹⁴ After several years of experience working with her father on the magazine, and having started a new job with the *Sun* newspaper, Connie was equal to the task of proof reading *The Passionate Heart* for Gilmore.¹⁵ It was the beginning of a long, collaborative relationship with all the traits of 'fellowing', and marked by sincere wishes for the welfare of Australian literature.

During this period Gilmore and Stephens explored the concept of 'living memorials', in order to assist Henry Lawson, who had written to Connie about his concern for his loyal landlady Mrs Byers. Sometime in early 1919, Stephens forwarded Lawson's letter to Gilmore, with hopes that 'something really worth while eventuates'.¹⁶ On 13 February of the same year, John Le Gay Brereton, the poet and Sydney University professor, responded with enthusiasm to an idea Gilmore shared with him concerning Byers. He had heard 'something of what her devotion has meant to Henry Lawson, and to those who have an interest in Australian literature'.¹⁷ Likewise, G.M. Prendergast, leader of the Victorian Labour Party, assured Gilmore that he supported her idea, and agreed that writers of such national consequence as Henry Lawson deserved recognition and assistance during their lifetime.¹⁸ It appears that Gilmore and Stephens having acquired written support for the scheme, then put their heads together and threshed out its details, both writing to Lawson at the end of the month to tell him of the plan hatched in response to his plea for help. The suggestion, they reasoned, would serve to provide assistance to

¹⁴ Ness Mackay 'The Salon in Sydney. Memories of Yesterday', in *The Sun* (New Zealand), 6 March 1925, cutting in Robertson, Constance, Mrs William Kinneard, Papers (CRP), ML MSS 1105, vol.3, item 5, n.p.

¹⁵ Wilde, *Courage a grace*, p.201. See also Julia Horne, 'Robertson, Constance', *ADB*, vol.11, p.413; and Valerie Lawson, *Connie Sweetheart: The Story of Connie Robertson*, (Melbourne: William Heinemann Australia, 1990). As Gilmore was ill, Connie collected the proofs from Angus and Robertson for her, and her mail from *The Worker* office, Connie Stephens to Gilmore, 29 Aug. 1918, MGP, vol.17, A3268 (CY1851), n.p.

¹⁶ Connie Stephens to Gilmore, 'Sunday' [1919], MGP, vol.17.

¹⁷ John Le Gay Brereton to Gilmore, 13 Feb. 1919, in MGP, vol.11, A3262 (CY1845).

¹⁸ G.M. Prendergast to Gilmore, 15 Feb. 1919, MGP, vol.41 'Papers, 1919-1950, re Henry Lawson', A3292 (CY1877).

both Lawson and Byers in a way that enshrined Lawson as a living national treasure, left a lasting institution for the further development of Australian literature and formalised the role played by Byers in Lawson's life. It involved a 'House of Foundations', or 'House of Doors'. A subscription was to be raised in order to purchase a house of six or seven rooms, with a small remainder to be held over for future expenses. Byers, as caretaker, would have two rooms and Lawson another two. The remainder would be available for other writers, or people wishing to share in the heritage of Lawson's life, to rent for a small cost per week. Over the entrance to the house, Gilmore pictured the following dedication: 'Better a doorway to the Living Than memorial to the dead', and along the door frames the names of writers aided by this living memorial beginning with, of course, Henry Lawson.¹⁹ The idea possibly represented an extension of the arguments voiced in nineteenth century France and Britain that placed emphasis on social memory as a claim to immortality, that is, on the continued valuing of the work of the dead after their passing.²⁰ In this case, Gilmore and Stephens sought a continuation on and enlargement of the fund of inspiration Lawson would leave to posterity, by honouring him in life.

It was towards this end that Gilmore published an article in *Worker* concerning memorials, which she and Connie Stephens forwarded to various people likely to appreciate and possibly assist in its realisation. Stephens revealed the full vision to Lawson:

Think of it in a thousand years! Think of it with other doors (not necessarily residential) to Quinn, and all the others who would be permitted to use a desk or a pen and write something there in hours of ease or hours of need! ... It is a trumpery idea, and it isn't one to end with my lifetime or yours and Mrs Byers; and it is wholly after all for Australia.²¹

¹⁹ Gilmore to Henry Lawson, 28 Feb. 1919, MGP, vol.41.

²⁰ See Jalland, *Death*, pp.359-60.

²¹ Connie Stephens to Henry Lawson, 3 March 1919, CRP, ML MSS 1105, vol.1, pp.9-11.

Sadly, for all their enthusiasm, the idea failed to gain momentum. Their interest in the welfare of Henry Lawson persisted, however, and both before and after his death in September 1922, Gilmore and Stephens endeavoured to engender interest in his right to be regarded as a national treasure and his work as a national heritage. Others likewise took this line after Lawson's death. Their reverence and devotion to the memory of Lawson coupled with the terminology they used echoed, conceptually, the ideal of literary fellowship engendered by Gilmore. That story, however, is part of a later episode in the evolution of the fellowship of Sydney writers.

At the same time another woman writer with an equal desire to assist her fellow writers but with very different poetic obsessions published a book of verse. Renowned for the erotic sentimentality of her first volume of poetry, *Songs of Love and Life* (1917), the Queensland-born Zora Cross's sympathies displayed an unconventionality and progressiveness that belied her parents' wealthy origins (the family business suffered badly in the 1890s) and mother's narrow materialism.²² A second passionate volume dedicated to her new defacto partner, the *Bulletin's* 'Red Page' editor David McKee Wright followed within a year. So closely timed was the publication of Gilmore's *The Passionate Heart* and Zora Cross's emotional and erotic *The lilt of life*, reviewers compared them in their columns.²³ However, comparison engendered a somewhat uneasy basis for association. Cross reviewed *The Passionate Heart* in the latter half of 1919 and wrote to Gilmore in a self-conscious attempt at graciousness, 'I was worried about our books coming out together... But I do not think that you have any cause to worry – your

²² During the 1910s she made increasingly feminist and socialist observations about women's work and labour. See Sharkey, 'Zora Cross's Entry', pp.73-76. See also Dorothy Green, 'Zora Bernice May Cross', *ADB*, vol. 8, pp.158-9.

²³ Referring to the comparison of Gilmore and Cross's poetic publications in a notice by 'Gilrooney', John Le Gay Brereton subtly pointed to the unfairness of praising Gilmore at Cross's expense. Brereton to Gilmore, 13 Feb. 1919, in MGP vol.11.

work is so altogether your own that no one can mix them'.²⁴ Naive misunderstandings of Gilmore's deferential comparisons of their poetry aside, Cross's review pleased Gilmore. As it was, the older writer fared better in the comparison. Many critics deliberately snubbed Cross as a result of the eroticism of her poetry and the unconventional relationship that inspired it.

Mild competitiveness did not prevent either writer from taking an active interest in the lives and work of the other. In 1922 John Le Gay Brereton wrote hastily in his defence when Gilmore complained about offensive comments concerning her in an article by Zora Cross; Cross had misquoted him, he explained.²⁵ Zora Cross may have based the article on a series of lectures she conducted at the Sydney Teachers' College in 1921 on Australian women writers, which naturally featured Mary Gilmore. Whether completely flattering to Gilmore or not, Cross continued to write about her and quote her verses throughout the decade. This interest was reciprocated. Together Gilmore, Connie Stephens and others discussed and wrote about Zora Cross and her provocative poetry, sharing information and gossip that they gleaned from a growing circle of women writers. Stephens, for example, recorded a conversation Gilmore reported having with the Queensland-born poet and editor of the *Theatre Magazine*, Lala Fisher, concerning Cross.²⁶ Stephens also noted a 'delightful evening' she and Gilmore spent at the home of Alys Hungerford, a blind poet and writer of children's fairy tales. When, during the evening, the conversation turned to Zora Cross's poetry, Gilmore singled out 'A Vision of Jehovah' as a 'fine' sample,

²⁴ Zora Cross to Gilmore, 'Jan. 1919', in MGP, vol.11. Gilmore thanked Zora Cross for her 'more than ordinarily kind notice of my book'. Gilmore to Cross, 17 March 1919, in Zora Cross Papers, Fisher Library, University of Sydney, quoted in Julia Saunders, 'A Writer's Friends and Associates: Notes from Correspondence in the Zora Cross Papers', in *Hecate*, vol. xvi, no.s i/ii, 1990, p.91.

²⁵ Brereton, together with the publisher George Robertson demonstrated an early and consistent receptiveness to Cross's literary talents (and perhaps in Robertson's case to her personally). See Sharkey, 'Zora Cross's Entry', p.72; and Anthony Barker, Angus and Robertson, 1982, *George Robertson: a publishing life in letters*, (St Lucia, Qld: Queensland University Press, 1993), p.112. See also Brereton to Gilmore, 26 Dec. 1922, MGP, vol.11.

²⁶ Cecil Hadgraft and Lorna L. McDonald, 'Fisher, Mary Lucy', *ADB*, vol.8, pp.507-8.

reasoning that its inherent confusion was an appropriate representation of life.²⁷ In an article probably written at about the same time, Stephens referred to the shock of the first appearance of *Songs of love and life*. Not put off by the unconventional morality or the openness of her poetry, Stephens found much value in her work. To her, Zora Cross possessed the ability to sustain 'the flight of picture, word and phrase ... astonishingly well', a 'swift capacity for vivid imagery', and a 'wonderful aptitude for startling phrases'.²⁸

The literary fellowship extended through the direct interaction of small clusters of people that were simultaneously inward looking and comprehensive. Lala Fisher as owner of the *Theatre Magazine*, herself party to an unusual marital arrangement – separated but not divorced from her husband and ensconced in a relationship with a mysterious 'Mr H' – channelled much information to Stephens and Gilmore about Zora Cross. All of them seemed to visit her office on a regular basis, or corresponded with her, as Gilmore did when she moved to Goulburn on the grounds of ill health for three years. Fisher derived much pleasure from Gilmore's letters. Even Cross, when in Sydney, visited Fisher's office obtaining news about writers, papers and critics. Dulcie Deamer confirms this impression of Fisher's office as a hive of activity, 'you never knew what poet or writer – she knew them all – you wouldn't run into in her office'.²⁹

Another cluster centred on the unionist Lucy Sullivan, later Mrs Lucy Cassidy. Her autograph book reveals her acquaintance with most known writers as well as artists, other unionists and politicians in Sydney from 1916 onwards. A historically significant document, it included among other things reputedly the last verse composed by Henry

²⁷ Connie Stephens, diary fragment, 10 Jan. 1918; and diary entry 16 Jan. 1918, in CRP, vol.1, p.3 and p.4 respectively.

²⁸ Connie Stephens, untitled hand-written draft, in CRP, vol.1, folder 'C. Robertson and others, Articles on Australian Literature etc. 1930-1950', pp.69-71.

Lawson. Although Gilmore signed the book in both 1916 and 1919, and Stephens signed it in 1919, the two were still trying to confirm details on Sullivan's background in 1921. Hailing from Lithgow, with some experience managing a clothing shop for women, she was, according to Gilmore, Vice-President of both the Self-Determination League and the Lithgow branch of the Australian Labor Party.³⁰ Her autograph book also reveals that she attended a Trades Union Congress in 1922. Not surprisingly her unionist links combined with her literary interests in a permanent cluster that included her, 'Gilrooney' (R. J. Cassidy), and Roderic Quinn, the latter two also having unionist sympathies. Roderic Quinn had made his name as a poet during the 1890s, though he drew more inspiration from nineteenth century English and Irish writers than the bush balladry of his contemporaries.³¹ Of a slightly younger generation, R.J. Cassidy joined Quinn in writing poems about Union veterans from the years immediately prior to the First World War.³² Evidently Gilmore and Stephens had little to do with Sullivan at this stage. Nevertheless, the sense of a coming together of personalities is demonstrated through the person of Lucy Sullivan.

In the early 1920s the Irish-Australian minor poet Alys Hungerford also acted as a key link between Gilmore, Stephens and other writers. Hungerford, due to her visual impairment and unfortunate experiences in love, excited the sympathy and admiration of many. Connie Stephens, for example, exclaimed: 'It is one of the greatest tragedies that a woman of her intellect should be sightless'.³³ Despite her blindness, Hungerford managed to type a collection of short fairy tales. Initially they served as entertainment for the young

²⁹ Dulcie Deamer, "'The Golden Decade': an autobiography, 1965, with poems and letters to her daughter, 1964-1970", ML MSS 3173 (CY1743), pp.75, 78.

³⁰ Connie Stephens to Gilmore, 25 Aug. 1921, in MGP, vol.17.

³¹ Axel Clark, 'Quinn, Roderic Joseph', *ADB*, vol.11, pp.320-21.

³² R.J. Cassidy 'Union Veterans', [Christmas, 1934], verse printed on undated card, in Smith, Henry James Papers, ML MSS 3655, n.p. This verse, comprised of 10 6-line verses about the passing of the veterans, marks the end of that process as witnessed by Cassidy. Smith's collection contains numerous memorial poems by Cassidy and Quinn dated from 1911.

Ralph Piddington, when Lady McMillan's house was divided into two, with Hungerford residing in one half, and the eugenicist and sex educator, Marion and her husband, the judge A.B. Piddington in the other.³⁴ From Leura, where Hungerford resided in the early 1920s, she sent long typewritten letters to friends, strangers and acquaintances alike. Carers and companions read her the replies of her many correspondents, as well as anything of literary value in the papers or in publications sent to her by her friends. Within two months of the publication of *The Passionate Heart*, Hungerford had absorbed it and written about it to Stephens. Likewise, a year later, she had found and read Dowell O'Reilly's book *Five Corners*. Knowing him as a distant relative with whom she once hoped to share a closer connection, and rapturous over his poetry, she begged him to try to cheer her friend, Mrs Consett Stephen.³⁵

Perhaps more significantly she approached him on behalf of her friend Marguerite Dale. An active feminist, Dale was also a playwright who held salons in her home at which many writers and dramatists mingled. She was the driving force behind the Tuesday

³³ Connie Stephens, untitled draft, CRP, vol.1.

³⁴ It appears that a network of family connections and friendships spreading from Scotland, Ireland, and England to New Zealand and Australia linked various branches of the O'Reilly and Hungerford families. Dowell O'Reilly was Marion (Mimi) Piddington's brother. Lady McMillan was formerly the widow Helen Marie O'Reilly of Glasgow. The Piddington's residence at her Sydney home following their return from England in 1912 could be indicative of a blood tie. Alys Hungerford also claimed cousinhood with Dowell O'Reilly and held him in some affection. Mary ('Molly') McMahon, wife of Gegan McMahon was the daughter of the pastoralist and politician Thomas Hungerford and sister of Alys Hungerford's second husband, Kenneth. Alys was a distant cousin to Kenneth, whom she married in 1898. As there no records concerning her birth and the date of her first marriage to Henry Beamish who died of Tuberculosis in New South Wales in 1892, and Australia was said to be the 'land of her adoption', it appears that she was not born in Sydney. Her brother, at least, was a police constable in County Cork, Ireland, and had married the prolific Irish novelist Margaret (Molly) Hamilton. Thomas Hungerford, Kenny and Molly MacMahon's father, was born in 1823 in County Cork to a Captain of the South Cork Militia who moved to Australia in 1928. It probable that Alys Hungerford descended from one of the Captain's brothers who remained in County Cork, Ireland. See Gilmore's annotation on the text of correspondence, Alys Hungerford to Gilmore, 18/10/[24], in MGP, vol. 31, A3282 (CY1867). n.p; Ness Mackay, 'The Salon in Sydney'; and respective *ADB* entries for Dowell O'Reilly, vol.11, p.93; Sir William McMillan, vol. 10, pp.342-4; Thomas Hungerford, vol. 4, pp.445-6; Albert Bathurst Piddington, vol. 11, pp.224-6; Marion Louisa Piddington, vol. 11, pp.226-7; and Gegan McMahon, vol. 10, pp.336-7.

³⁵ Consett Stephen was the son of Montagu Consett Stephen, second son of the former Supreme Court Judge, Sir Alfred Stephen, through his first wife, Virginia Consett. See Alys Hungerford to Dowell O'Reilly, 20 July 19[21], O'Reilly, Dowell Papers (DO'RP), ML MSS 231, vol.11, p.13; Ruth Bedford, *Think of Stephen: A family Chronicle*, (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1954), p.242.

Club, which increasingly drew on the ranks of Australian writers for its guest speakers.³⁶ Prior to her departure as an alternate delegate to the League of Nations convention held in Geneva in 1922 Dale shared an ambitious idea with Hungerford that aimed at acknowledging the work of the poet Christopher Brennan. Thinking that she could use her connections with the Swedish Government, Dale hoped to acquire for Brennan the award of a Nobel Prize. Sensibly, she felt the need for some guidance on the matter. It was Hungerford who suggested Dowell O'Reilly.³⁷ Daydreams aside, the two women shared many long hours visiting shops and libraries together. No doubt during these daytrips, their thoughts turned to the welfare or interests of other Australian writers as well.

Marguerite Dale was only one of Hungerford's Sydney contacts. Ada Holman, Connie Stephens and Mary Gilmore comprised the remainder of the central cluster of her literary fellows. A flood of correspondence from 1922 to 1924 reveals a catalogue of each person's presence or otherwise in Sydney, and their general state of health. Over the Easter weekend of 1922 Hungerford stayed with Ada Holman, author, journalist, and wife of prominent ex-Labor politician William Holman. Writing afterwards to Gilmore she praised Holman's skills and literary knowledge, regretting that the full extent of her abilities were left untested as a result of her husband's career. In similar vein, Hungerford cared about Stephens' well being, telling Gilmore that the young journalist needed rest and a 'spiritual mother'.³⁸ Gilmore, herself feeling unwell had repaired to Goulburn and could not help Stephens directly. She assisted Hungerford, though, by editing some of her fairy tales. The latter gushed with gratitude:

No one on earth could, or would, have done so much. You don't understand what you have done; no one else would have taken such trouble over everything – especially reading reams of fairy-tales, and going to the trouble of writing and

³⁶ Susan Mary Waterford, 'Pen Portraits of Some Sydney Women', in *Woman's World*, 1 Dec. 1925, cutting in CRP, vol.3, item 5; and Audrey Tate, 'Marguerite Ludovia Dale', in *ADB*, vol.13, pp.561-2.

³⁷ Hungerford to DO'R, 19 Sept. 1921, vol.11, pp.21-23.

³⁸ Hungerford to Gilmore, 27 April 19[22]; and 30 March 19[23?], in MGP, vol.31, A3282 (CY1867).

telling me what to do, and if they were good enough to print, - all this while you were ill, and, I now see, suffering.³⁹

Together with Mary Gilmore and Dowell O'Reilly, Hungerford met her friend 'Nixie' (Georgina) and her sister, the liberal leaning New Zealand poet Jessie Mackay, for lunch in 1922.⁴⁰ From across the Tasman, the Mackay sisters were able to play their own part in the development of the Sydney fellowship. To Jessie Mackay, the lunch with Gilmore, O'Reilly and Hungerford was a special hour. It was the last time she would see O'Reilly; he died a year later. In the interim, two other well-known poets, Bertram Stevens and Henry Lawson, died, and two women writers, Dora Wilcox and Dulcie Deamer, both known for their infectious energy, arrived in Sydney. This changing of the guard, as well as Mary Gilmore's improved well being and her return to active participation in Sydney's literary scene, took place during the period from 1922 to 1924. Dulcie Deamer first proposed 1922 as a transitional year in her autobiography: Peter Kirkpatrick has since concurred with the suggestion.⁴¹ The notion has merit.

Transition

Early in 1922 Bertram Stevens the amiable long time editor of *Lone Hand* and veteran from the earlier radical nationalist literary tradition, died. Regretting his passing writers from the eastern states of Australia contributed written selections to a memorial book in his honour. The list of contents reads as a catalogue of the established writers of the day. Journalists, poets, writers of fiction, travel books, and children's literature contributed to the memorial volume. Many were women: the volume included Mary

³⁹ Hungerford to Gilmore, 27 Nov. 19[23?], in MGP, v.31.

⁴⁰ Jessie Mackay, aside from being a highly respected New Zealand writer and one of the earliest to value Maori culture, was a prolific journalist and a committed social activist with a particular interest in feminist causes as well as self-determination for Scotland and Ireland. See *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* (no editor listed), (Wellington, NZ: Bridget William Books and Department of Internal Affairs, 1993), pp.292-4.

Gilmore, Dorothea Mackellar, Zora Cross, Ethel Turner, Amy Mack, the Rentoul sisters, Marie Pitt, Nina Murdoch, and Mabel Forrest.⁴² Naturally the number of male writers outnumbered the female contributors, but the inclusion of the above women in the volume demonstrates a certain level of public identification by them with fellow players of the literary scene.

One of the few remaining links with the older nationalist roots, Henry Lawson, passed away in September of the same year. Although his death was greatly mourned, some effort was required to persuade the State Government to arrange a fitting funeral. Phillip Harris, editor of *Aussie*, a light-hearted Sydney magazine that supported and encouraged Australian writers, played an important role in this. Experiencing difficulties, he talked to Mary Gilmore about the best strategies for securing a suitable funeral. Adam McCay, President of the NSW Institute of Journalism, concurred with them on their decision to approach the Prime Minister, Billy Hughes, concerning federal provision of a State funeral. This strategy proved successful.⁴³

A collection of prominent citizens of Sydney, with vice-regal figures as patrons, and judicial, military, professorial and cultural figures on the executive committee formed the Henry Lawson Memorial Society shortly after his death. The fewness of literary figures on the committee implies that the Society represented more a custodial cultural demographic than an artistic one. The committee, which included John Le Gay Brereton, invited Mary Gilmore to join them. The invitation suggests an assumption of her representativeness of the legacy with which Lawson was associated and which, by then, they had taken to heart. The only objection to her membership was on diplomatic grounds.

⁴¹ Kirkpatrick, *Sea Coast of Bohemia*, pp. 99, 77.

⁴² Stevens, Bertram, Memorial Book, c.1924, ML MSS 3761 (CY583), n.p.

⁴³ Phillip Harris, untitled explanatory note, 6 Sept. 1922, in Lawson Family, Henry Lawson Papers, ML MSS 184, vol.12, item 5, pp.3-9.

One unnamed member was concerned that the extension of an invitation to a woman who championed Lawson's landlady might cause offence to Lawson's widow, Bertha.⁴⁴ Only John Le Gay Brereton and Mary Gilmore, therefore, were involved in the Memorial Committee; it seemed to serve a civic impetus, not a literary one. As the years passed and little resulted from the lack-lustre efforts of the Memorial committee writers in Sydney honoured Lawson in their own way. This delayed response belongs to a later discussion. Nevertheless, his passing, in conjunction with the passing of other respected and long-established writers, clearly constituted a key moment in the transition of the literary community.

The death of Dowell O'Reilly just over a year later, evoked a more immediate though more informal response on the part of the fellowing women, as well as the literary community at large. This response may have resulted from the long acquaintance of many of these women with O'Reilly. He and Ethel Turner were in communication from at least as early as 1903, while Gilmore maintained an irregular, though warm and friendly correspondence from 1912 or earlier. Not surprisingly considering his dabbling with politics, Ada Holman had known him as a personal friend for many years, while Alys Hungerford, though equivocal about her feelings for him, had also known him for a long time and consistently expressed her admiration for his work.⁴⁵ Likewise, Connie Stephens was well known to him and his second wife; he took an almost fatherly interest in her well being.⁴⁶ Naturally following his death these women expressed their sense of loss between themselves. Hungerford wrote to Gilmore, grieved, but concerned also for the greater sense of loss that Gilmore must have felt, being a closer and older friend of his.⁴⁷ Jessie Mackay may have also written to Gilmore, for, when the latter sent a letter of condolence

⁴⁴ See Phillip Harris to Gilmore, 29 Sept. 1922, in MGP, vol.30, A3281 (CY1866).

⁴⁵ See DO'RP, ML MSS 231, vol.s 9-11.

⁴⁶ O'Reilly to Gilmore, 28 May 1921, in MGP, vol.16, A3267 (CY1850).

to O'Reilly's widow, Marie, she related how the deceased had given Mackay a kiss of permanent farewell when their enjoyable lunch in 1922 had ended. She continued on to convey her own grief:

Words mean so little. They mend no loss. And if I say that I feel like an orphaner, it is not to set up my own grief, but to measure yours. ... The brotherhood of friends, to have been of that brotherhood of friends, of whom so many are gone, is at once my comfort and my grief.⁴⁸

No doubt her intention in using the word was to evoke the passing of a generation, a generation inaccurately, though in accordance with legend, thought of as a 'brotherhood'. Deriving from the 'outbackery' of the *Bulletin*, particularly the Queensland experience, yet fueled by the urban writings of Bohemians an obscuring masculinity was attached to the literary nationalism of the 1890s.⁴⁹ For Gilmore, a sixteen-year absence from Sydney may have left an anachronistic impression of the radical excitement and literary freshness of the period. Combined with her literary dependence on A.G. Stephens from 1903, and despite her awareness of innumerable women poets, her experiences appear to have made 'brotherhood' seem to her an appropriate description of the earlier community of Sydney writers.⁵⁰

During the same period in which three members of Gilmore's 'brotherhood' had passed away, other leading lights of the literary scene of earlier days were gradually relinquishing their power. Alfred George Stephens, once a crucial patron of struggling writers, had long ago faded to the financially challenged publisher of a small, erratic journal, who, during increasingly absorbing periods of suspected insanity relied on the

⁴⁷ Hungerford to Gilmore, 19 Nov. 19[23], MGP, vol.31.

⁴⁸ Gilmore to Marie O'Reilly, 9 Nov. 1923, in DO'RP, vol.14 'Papers of Marie O'Reilly, 1913, 1923-1944 and Miscellaneous and Incidental Papers', pp.25-26.

⁴⁹ Geoffrey Serle, *From Deserts the Prophets Come: The Creative Spirit in Australia 1788-1972*, (Melbourne: Heinemann, 1973), p.61; and Beverley Kingston, *The Oxford History of Australia, volume 3, Glad, Confident Morning*, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1988), p.217.

⁵⁰ For details of Gilmore's early connection with Henry Lawson, her life at Cosme, the William Lane-inspired Communist settlement in Paraguay from 1895, and her years as journalist for the *Worker*, while living in western Victoria, see Wilde, *Courage a grace*.

funds, time and talent provided by Mary Gilmore and his daughter Connie.⁵¹ Another member of the 'brotherhood', Christopher Brennan, had also surrendered to the instability of mind and the diminishing of his creative and critical faculty brought on by the bottle. A number of other writers from those days, both men and women, in fact still survived and continued active literary careers. However, none were as well known, or, like Roderic Quinn, quite as central as Brereton and Gilmore to the Sydney scene. It is fair to say that the 'death' of the brotherhood made way for the birth of a fellowship that had been in gestation for five years, and that Brereton and Gilmore played crucial roles as links between the old and new literary communities.

While the old guard withered away, fresh arrivals and new personal directions both numerically and intellectually strengthened the emergent literary community. A number of female writers arrived in Sydney who were to play a significant part in aspects of the city's cultural life, while others adopted new roles with greater energy and self-assurance. An Australian journalist and art and drama critic, William Moore, delayed for a year in London following the Great War, met the New Zealand poet and playwright, Dora Wilcox. When he returned to Australia in 1919, he persuaded Dora to join him. After four years during which she unsuccessfully pursued publishing and reading opportunities for both her poetry and plays in England, and a return trip to her homeland, she settled in Sydney and married Moore on 1 October 1923.⁵²

William Moore felt certain that his future wife would provide much encouragement and inspiration to the New Zealand writers while there. His probably biased prediction in fact seems accurate. Jessie Mackay wrote to Dowell O'Reilly prior to his death saying that she wanted to tell him about:

⁵¹ Valerie Lawson, *Connie Sweetheart*, pp.77-79.

Someone in Particular, who has gone to your world, and will really take there the wind-blowing strength of soul, the full, rounded New Zealand personality that I could never have taken anywhere. Perhaps you have already met Dora Hamelius-Wilcox; if not yet, watch out; for I am persuaded that you should become rare friends. [She had] been a link between letters in Australia and letters in London, and now she will bring the bonds closer between the Commonwealth and New Zealand. ... She is magnetic; she is a creature that breathes ozone wherever she goes; she has all the Celtic vibrativeness and responsiveness (through a Welsh strain).⁵³

In similar vein, Mackay asked if Gilmore had met Dora yet, praising her 'rare and lovely soul', her modesty, and 'pure literary performance'.⁵⁴ On meeting her Australian writers tended to agree with the positive tone of these evaluations. 'I loved "Bill and Dora"', Hungerford exclaimed to Gilmore after a meeting arranged by Connie Stephens. They were 'charming, kindly and interested folk': she, 'a dear' who spoke French 'beautifully', he 'a distinct comfort', and like no one she had met before.⁵⁵

Dulcie Deamer's arrival in Sydney perhaps had more to do with the birth of Bohemian Sydney than that of a literary fellowship, and yet, the links between literary and Bohemian circles are too numerous to ignore her arrival at such a crucial point in time. The clusters of fellowing women did not initially discuss Deamer, her life, her work and her activities between themselves (at least not in their letters), nor reach out to her. Nevertheless her presence was quickly felt and their paths often crossed. Further, the spirit of fellowship was no longer felt exclusively by a particular group of writers, but by the literary community as a whole. The change coincided with Deamer's arrival in Sydney. As the Bohemian herself explained:

⁵² See Robert Holden, 'Moore, William George', *ADB*, vol.10, pp.572-73, and Dora Wilcox Papers, NLA MS 7952, series 3, box 3, folder 25 'Letters of William Moore (London, Worthing, Farnham, Sydney) to Dora Wilcox, c.1918-23'.

⁵³ Jessie Mackay to Dowell O'Reilly, 19 Sept. 1923, in DO'RP, vol.11., pp.93-95.

⁵⁴ Jessie Mackay to Gilmore, 26 Sept. 1923, MGP, vol.34 A3285 (CY1870).

⁵⁵ Hungerford to Gilmore, 25 Dec. 1923, MGP, vol.31.

The ['Golden'] Decade must have been incubating when I was in foreign parts for the last time, and I arrived home, to stay put, when it was just hatching out. That was at the end of 1922.⁵⁶

She described a process of social change resulting from the end of the war, in which a nation that had been forced to grow up revelled in the celebratory mood of the entire 'victorious section of the world'; an 'out-of-school feeling', and 'a lovely, irrational, general conviction that everything was going to be good-oh'. She concluded that '[w]here there was, in Sydney, a small, unconsciously maturing seed-bed the "spirit of the time" burst into efflorescence'.⁵⁷ Peter Kirkpatrick, testing Deamer's theory that 1922 constituted a year of change, approvingly pointed to clear indicators of a new Bohemia - the incisive observations by D.H. Lawrence of a politically divided Australia, the failed efforts of Norman Lindsay and the culturally isolationist *Vision* group, and the popular success of *Smith's Weekly*.⁵⁸

While members of an older generation passed or faded away, and new faces arrived, the level of energy expended in the name of Australia literature also changed. Mary Gilmore, for example, returned to Sydney and to full, active participation in its literary life, Connie Stephens consolidated her journalistic position and directed her attention to innovative theatrical endeavours, and Dora Moore, quickly accepted and much loved, arranged poetry and play reading circles. In early 1925, the New Zealander Ness Mackay described a 'company' of Australian writers, who congregated in libraries and newspaper offices around Sydney, and Kate Baker spoke of the kinship of writers which was like the 'inner gates' while 'ordinary folk' remained in an 'outer court'.⁵⁹ The fellowship had arrived.

⁵⁶ Deamer, 'The Golden Decade', p.92.

⁵⁷ Deamer, 'The Golden Decade', pp.92-93.

⁵⁸ See chapter 4, 'Everything Good-oh', in Kirkpatrick, *Sea Coast of Bohemia*, p.75-97.

Caring, Sharing and Creating

The birth of the fellowship did not consist solely of a changing of the guard. Coinciding with this change of personnel was a growing self-sufficiency within the community of writers, and a new emphasis on aspects of literary output other than poetry, for example, plays and later in the decade, prose. The increasing infiltration of journalistic circles by women writers, who thereby gained the means to create a wider 'fellowing' readership also, significantly, marked this period.

Gilmore's early interest in A.G. Stephens' *Bookfellow* led, eventually, to her involvement in the launching of a similar venture in Melbourne. During the *Bookfellow* days Gilmore had in fact dallied with the idea of collaboration with A.G. Stephens, in connection with the Victorian poet, John Shaw Neilson. Writing to Neilson, an itinerant worker, in 1918, Gilmore offered her assistance in publishing a volume of his verse. Neilson explained in reply an unfortunate commitment he had made to Stephens some four years earlier, which prevented him from taking up the offer.⁶⁰ Possibly, however, Gilmore's letter had resulted from a misunderstanding of suggestion made by Stephens (perhaps remembering her generous support of his literary magazine the *Bookfellow*) that she somehow find £50 to produce the proofs for a small book of Neilson's verse. By March 1919, Stephens had placed pressure on Gilmore to 'close up' the Neilson book and forward on the orders and subscriptions to him.⁶¹ The resulting volume of verse, *Green Days and Cherries*, was published within a few months.

On returning to Sydney and to active literary life, Gilmore made plans to travel to Melbourne in June 1924, with the intention of meeting Shaw Neilson. As a result of her

⁵⁹ Mackay, 'The Salon in Sydney'; and Kate Baker to Gilmore, 21 July 1924, in MGP, vol.11.

⁶⁰ John Shaw Neilson to Gilmore, 27 Oct. 1918, in MGP, vol.16.

⁶¹ Gilmore was forced to borrow money off her brother Hugh during the *Bookfellow* episode, and found the financial burden draining. Stephens' expectation that she could fund the Shaw Neilson collection

travels, she crossed paths with Robert Arthur Broinowski, who held a long-term post on the staff of the Victorian Senate. Himself a writer of poetry in his spare time, Broinowski also belonged to the Melbourne Literary Club and had had some involvement in *Birth*, the Club's literary magazine. Disagreements had caused the failure of that venture and Broinowski was eager to edit another literary magazine. Gilmore recognised in him an able and willing literary fellow and discussed the idea of establishing a new magazine, giving an initial donation towards its production. Humbled by the confidence placed in him by Gilmore, Broinowski wrote to her in July 1924, thanking her for enabling him 'to realise a dream that has been with me for years'. Eager to grasp the opportunities provided by her encouragement and initial donation, Broinowski as editor, with the aid of the Victorian publisher Edward Vidler, took less than a month to plan the first issue of the resultant journal, *The Spinner*, and to begin promoting the new venture. Both Broinowski and Vidler repeatedly thanked Gilmore for her generosity, but anticipated an increase in subscriptions and the magazine's eventual independence.⁶²

In the raising of subscriptions, Gilmore was prolific and persistent. People whose subscription to or acquisition of copies of the magazine over the ensuing months somehow resulted from Gilmore's communications with them on the matter included Connie Stephens, Dora Moore, Jessie Mackay, John Le Gay Brereton, Zora Cross, Alys Hungerford, George Gordon McCrae, John Shaw Neilson, Marie O'Reilly, Eva O'Dowd, and Nettie Palmer. No doubt many others did so as well. However, amongst the names

was evidently unrealistic. See Wilde, *Courage a grace*, pp.177-9. Alfred George Stephens to Gilmore, 26 March 1919, MGP, vol.20, A3271 (CY1855); 11 Oct. 1918, in MGP, vol.17.

⁶² R.A. Broinowski to Gilmore, 5 Aug. 1924; and 3 July 1924 in MGP, vol.11. See also R.A. Broinowski to Mrs Francis, 7 Oct. 1924, in Robert Arthur Broinowski Papers, NLA MS 599, no volume, series, or box number, item 8. See also Edward A. Vidler to Gilmore, 12 Nov. 1924, in MGP, vol.21, A3272 (CY1856). For more biographical details, see John R. Thompson, 'Broinowski, Robert Arthur', *ADB*, vol. 7, p.421; and Lurline Stuart, 'Vidler, Edward Alexander', *ADB*, vol. 12, p.326. Neither the correspondence nor Wilde's *Courage a grace* explains how Gilmore could afford the financial aid that she offered to Broinowski and *The Spinner*. Wilde (p.214) assumes that Gilmore's son Billy and husband Will assisted her with

already listed we may find key fellowing figures, an indication that the magazine was well supported by core groups of writers. Conversely, the tendency for mainly poets and writers to subscribe and urge their friends to subscribe to *The Spinner*, suggests that the medium may have served more to create a greater sense of belonging to the fellowship, than as a forum for presenting their work to a wider public.⁶³ Thus, in contrast to the publisher's hope that *The Spinner* would ultimately grow into a 'magazine for cultured people embracing all the arts as well as literature and the drama', it may have remained only a service for a small group of 'lovers of poetry and literature'.⁶⁴ Effectively, despite Vidler and Broinowski's dreams, *The Spinner* quickly became a club magazine.

Sadly, Vidler's unusual and ineffective financial management not only caused pain to writers seeking to publish volumes of their own verses through him, but also threatened the existence of *The Spinner*. By the end of 1927, Broinowski, despairing of a satisfactory future for the magazine, was attracted by another proposal put forward by the ever-concerned Gilmore. A product of Gilmore-Stephens collaboration, it involved Broinowski as editor for a small literary insert in *The Garden*, a magazine edited by Connie. She extolled the insert in her editorials, urging readers to subscribe, explaining its origins in *The Spinner* and sharing the enthusiasm of its readers as letters began to flow in. Only three issues of the small publication entitled simply *Poetry* resulted from this scheme, however, as Broinowski felt it impossible to work with the publisher. Stephens remained silent on the scheme's abrupt termination making no comment in either her editorials or in correspondence to Gilmore. Both Broinowski and the Melbourne poet Louis Laveter continued to harbour hopes to either resurrect *The Spinner*, which had succeeded as a

expenses at the Imperial Hotel, Goulburn, and she published a volume of prose, *Hound of the Road*, in 1922 which may have stretched far enough to allow such generosity.

⁶³ List compiled chiefly from correspondence in MGP, and NLA Broinowski papers.

figurative meeting point for the most active poets and writers on the eastern seaboard during the years from 1924 to 1927, or begin a similar project from scratch. It was *The Spinner*, though, that first consolidated the practice already established informally by the literary fellows of swapping their verses and news, or reviews of contemporary publishing endeavours.

In Sydney, prior to 1923, many local play-writing efforts also appear to have reflected trademark fellowing informality. For example, Dorothea Mackellar, known as the creator of that memorable line 'I love a sunburnt country', recorded play-acting activities in her diary from 1919 onwards. Finding beautiful spots in the bush, she and her friend, Ruth Bedford, picnicked and 'acted Gilbert and Bligh', or 'did a little of Pippa's [Bedford's cousin] play'.⁶⁵ With Bedford, a friend from childhood, Mackellar had already published two novels. Dale Spender wondered about women in collaborative literary partnerships such as that shared by Mackellar and Bedford.⁶⁶ Perusal of Bedford's letters to Mackellar while the latter travelled to Europe offers scope for further separate discussion of their relationship. However, it is possible to see in their acting out of plays the extension of the psychological comfort of friendship to literary fellowing; the mutual provision of an encouraging environment in which to develop as writers. Their acting out of plays may be taken as a little more serious than the light self-entertainment of two

⁶⁴ Edward A. Vidler, untitled paragraph, inside front cover, *The Spinner*, vol.1, no.1, October 1924. The magazine was published monthly, or at worst, bi-monthly until late 1927. See R.A. Broinowski (ed.), *The Spinner: An Australasian Magazine of Verse*, vol. 1, ML A821.08/S.

⁶⁵ Dorothea Mackellar, diary and diary fragments, in Mackellar Family, Dorothea Mackellar Papers, ML.MSS 1959, vol.10. See Beverley Kingston, 'Isobel Marion Dorothea Mackellar', in *ADB*, vol. 10, pp.298-9; and Jane Connors, 'Bedford, Ruth Marjory', *ADB*, vol. 13, pp.148-9. See also Rutledge, *My Grandfather's House*, (Sydney: Doubleday, 1986), ch. 25, 'The Sisters', concerning the close link between the sisters of the Colin Stephen family, of which Philippa was the youngest, and the Bedford sisters, Ruth and Alfreda. Rutledge records Ruth Bedford's difficulties in finding a publisher for her valuable family history *Think of Stephen*, p.155.

⁶⁶ Dale Spender, *Writing a New World: Two Centuries of Australian Women Writers*, (London: Pandora, 1988), pp.218-19.

young women from affluent circumstances. It provided a supportive forum for the threshing out of their ideas and absorption of the work of others.

Although Mackellar and Bedford did not initially interact in the same way with other fellowing women within the literary community, this may have reflected a social difference, not a lack of mutual respect between them and other writers. Mackellar was well known and respected as a poet. Yet, she could record in her diary the pleasure of an afternoon spent writing verse. She could write for leisure, not for the odd extra payment that might result from the publication of a poem. Indeed she could languish all day in bed reading books and daydreaming. Her literary links were with people like Ethel Turner, and of course Bedford. Author of the landmark children's novel *Seven Little Australians*, Ethel Turner lived in Mosman. The wife of Judge H. R. Curlewis, she also mixed comfortably with the upper echelons of Sydney Society, even though she pursued a serious literary and journalistic career editing the children's section of *The Sun*, 'The Sunbeamers'. Apart from the occasional letters to Gilmore and others, she, like Mackellar, appears to have remained emotionally unattached to the city-based fellowship. Ruth Bedford seems to have initially felt the same detachment from literary circles. In her own words a 'thorough Australian', she descended, through her mother, from the former well-known Chief Justice Sir Alfred Stephens. She too, mixed in upper social circles. Confessing to Connie Stephens in February 1923 that she had received very little encouragement in her 'own country' for her verse and fiction, Bedford revealed an unawareness of and separation from the new fellowship.⁶⁷ Stephens' 'write-ups' under the name of 'Eve's daughter', about Bedford and Mackellar for *Aussie*, may have represented the first stage in their

⁶⁷ Ruth Bedford to Connie Stephens, 2 Feb. 1923, in CRP, vol.1, pp.47-49. See also 'Eve's Daughter', 'Australian Women Poets. IV – Dorothea Mackellar', in *Aussie*, 15 Aug. 1922, p37-8; and 'Australian Women Poets. XII – Ruth Bedford', in *Aussie*, 14 April 1923, pp.43-4.

absorption into the evolving fellowship. However, until that stage, Mackellar and Bedford had developed their verse, fiction and drama in isolation from the literary community.

Informal interest in drama soon gave way to a surge of dramatic activity and play writing under the auspices of a series of small theatres and key actor-managers. With the new inclusion in the fellowship of Mackellar and Bedford, the arrival in Sydney of both Dulcie Deamer and Dora Moore, the advent of the Drama League, and Connie Stephens' interest in and support of local theatre, this development was perhaps inevitable. Even in 1919 Connie Stephens made apparent her interest in the theatre when she offered to take Gilmore to a Repertory Theatre production. Stephens, though refraining from acting or writing herself, evidently participated in the developments in stage and drama that took place in Sydney during the 1920s. Her detailed accounts relate also the personal difficulties afflicting the respective theatrical movements that appeared through the course of the decade. Sketching a picture of a community of squabbling dramatists with colliding ideals she drew a genealogy of Sydney theatre groups of the 1920s. Some theatres promoted modern drama, others traditional. Late in the decade interest turned to Australian drama. Duncan Macdougall of the Barn Theatre New York, formed the Drama League in the WEA rooms in July 1923 with the support of the young set designer Don Finley, and the Shakespearean Francis Jackson. The Playbox theatre based in Rowe Street, later Oxford Street, emerged less than a year later without Jackson. Jackson instead founded the Players' Club, and Finley together with Carrie Tennant shortly afterwards deserted Macdougall to stage a Miracle Play at Burdekin House, on Macquarie Street. Tennant then led the Understudies, while Finley launched the Turret Theatre in North Sydney. Finally, with additional players from Gregan MacMahon's collapsed semi-professional Repertory Theatre Company, the Playbox, and Players' Club, and with support from William Moore, Tennant founded the Community Playhouse in 1929. Young

actresses such as Therese Desmond and Carrie Tenant gained exposure through this assortment of theatrical developments.⁶⁸

Though the Playbox had lost Jackson and Finley, it inspired a mostly loyal following. It acquired a bohemian edge, and was supported by a tight-knit social circle that worked and relaxed together. Pakie Macdougall, whose personality was, according to Stephens, responsible for the Playbox's success as a social meeting point, on separating from her husband Duncan in the mid-1920s, opened her own club in Elizabeth Street. 'Pakies' may have attracted a regular bohemian crowd, but other intellectuals such as Marion Mahony Griffin, on one occasion accompanied by a crowd dressed as Aztec Gods in accordance with the Mexican theme of the evening, mingled with the 'struggling artists and writers'.⁶⁹ The open air theatrical activities at Castlecrag, arranged and directed by Griffin and the European-trained music teacher Lute Drummond, as well as the Amphitheatre Players guided by the actress Enid Lorimer represent an overlapping theatrical development with alternate religious or at least progressive tendencies. All three names appear repeatedly in diverse musical and theatrical movements of the interwar period.⁷⁰ Aside from acting as an observer well placed to record the theatrical activities of the 1920s, Stephens appeared, along with Dorothea Mackellar, on Playbox Theatre fliers

⁶⁸ Connie Stephens, untitled draft, n.d. [1930-31], in CRP, box 2, item 2 'Committees, Societies etc, 1921-62, pp.39-71. See assorted cuttings and promotional material concerning the Playbox in CRP, vol. 3, item 5.

⁶⁹ See Stephens, draft, CRP, box 2, item 2; Kirkpatrick, *Sea Coast of Bohemia*, p.134; Peter Kirkpatrick, 'Macdougall, Augusta ('Pakie')', *ADB*, vol. 15, pp.198-200; and Deamer, 'The Golden Decade', pp.160, 170-1.

⁷⁰ Jill Roe has written on a number of occasions, in conjunction with discussions of the cultural imperative inherent in theosophical and anthroposophical teachings, on the progressive theatrical endeavours of Marion Mahony Griffin, Lute Drummond and Enid Lorimer. See 'The magical world of Marion Mahony Griffin: culture and community at Castlecrag in the interwar years', in Shirley Fitzgerald and Garry Wotherspoon (ed.s), *Minorities: cultural diversity in Sydney*, (Sydney: State Library of New South Wales, 1995), p.88; 'Three visions of Sydney Head from Balmoral Beach', in Jill Roe (ed.), *Twentieth Century Sydney: Studies in urban and social history*, (Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1980), p.102 and Roe, *Beyond Belief*, pp.324-5. See also Jill Roe, 'Drummond, Ruth Janet', *ADB*, vol. 14; and Susan Hogan, 'Enid Lorimer', in Radi, Heather (ed.), *200 Australian Women: a Redress anthology*, (Sydney: Women's Redress Press Inc, [1988]), pp.162-3.

under the heading 'Advisory List'.⁷¹ As Stephens explained to Gilmore in November 1923:

Been living in hectic days helping to get 'The Hairy Ape' staged & The Playbox Society somewhat stable. Great experience – once, but I am doubtful if the energy can be expended twice.⁷²

Eugene O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape* was the first play staged by The Playbox, and epitomised the modernist directions of both Macdougall and Finley. According to Dulcie Deamer, another participant in the Playbox's theatrical and social activities, Macdougall produced 'on a shoestring ... plays we would never otherwise have seen'.⁷³

Initially, however, the Playbox offered little opportunity to local playwrights. Dulcie Deamer's participation in its activities consisted mostly of social events such as jazz nights, and weekend picnics. Later in the decade, when the Playbox premises moved to a building just off Oxford Street, Macdougall initiated Friday Cabaret nights and nominated Deamer as hostess. This role entailed not only the welcoming of guests, but the delivery of speeches (often jovial in nature), and the presentation of small satirical skits. Having been exposed to theatre throughout her life, this experience made the transition to play writing seem a natural one to Deamer, so that in the last year or two of the 1920s, she energetically explored this new creative direction.⁷⁴ The Playbox's contribution to the encouragement of Sydney playwrights thus resulted not from the loyal staging of locally written plays, but from the interest it created in drama and stagecraft in general among the literary fellows of Sydney. It was also the great grandfather (albeit a jolly and lively one) in the little theatre family tree, which, in the early 1930s, in the form of Bryants'

⁷¹ See assortment of Playbox Theatre programs and circulars, CRP, vol.3.

⁷² Stephens to Gilmore, 19 Jan. 19[23], MGP, vol.17.

⁷³ Deamer, 'Golden Decade', p.114.

⁷⁴ *ibid.*, pp.170, 180.

Playhouse, and the Community Theatre, did provide the forum for the staging of locally written plays.

Long before the appearance of the Community Theatre, other avenues were offered for the exposure in front of discerning and interested audiences of the work of local playwrights. This exposure was provided through poetry and reading circles, a key organiser of which was Dora Moore. Prior to settling in Sydney, Moore questioned her husband-to-be about the cultural life of Sydney. Among the attractions he listed was the 'People's Theatre' that Duncan Macdougall planned to establish.⁷⁵ William Moore had actively promoted repertory theatre and Australian drama in particular since the first decade of the century. In addition, both Dora and Bill had tried their hand at play writing in England, and collaborated with Louis Esson while in London in an unsuccessful scheme involving the staging of their plays by the Odeon Theatre. It was therefore inevitable that they both responded to contemporary dramatic interests and created means to cater to Sydney's needs in this respect.

Among Dora Moore's first Sydney-based literary activities was the formation of a Poetry Circle at the Lyceum Club. Perhaps strategically, she involved both well-known and lesser-known poets in the circle. For example, she invited Gilmore to read an unpublished poem in May 1925. She feared that M.A. Robertson, whom she had also invited to read, was ill or away from Sydney and knew that Lala Fisher would not read her own poetry. With Fisher and Gilmore on the program, however, 'a delightful (and profitable) afternoon' might result. She also explained to Gilmore that the Lyceum Poetry Circle was, 'probably, I'm sorry to say, not very large as it's a quite new creation'.⁷⁶ Clarifying details a few days later, Moore again made her disclaimer: the reading would

⁷⁵ 24 June [1923?], William Moore to Dora Wilcox, Dora Wilcox Papers. See also Robert Holden, 'Moore, William George', in *ADB*, vol. 10, pp.572-3. William

not attract 'a large audience because this circle has only just been started. But they're a good audience, and keen'.⁷⁷ In similar vein she invited Brereton to give an address, almost apologetic about its modest size. 'I am trying to make the Poetry Circle a real thing with a definite meaning', she added as a justification for her request.

Perhaps partly to provide exposure for her own creative output, the reading circle became a forum for play reading. Moore reported to Brereton on the reading of her own work, 'a Peace play', at the Lyceum Club. She worried about its reception because 'poetic' plays were often prejudged as boring, and its content was serious. The reading did not receive a notice in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, but it was still, she felt, 'extraordinarily successful'.⁷⁸

In addition to the Reading Circle, the Moores decided to hold 'At Homes' on a monthly basis at which they 'intended to try a little music, acting, play, a poetry reading each time, and for the rest - just talk'.⁷⁹ The concept proved successful. A Sydney paper reporting on cultural activities in Sydney, concluded that:

The literary and artistic evenings are much more enjoyable. There is less of the stuffiness of the upper four hundred social gatherings about them, and the play-reading or verse-reading stimulates gossip and conversation. Mrs Dora Moore – she is better known as Dora Wilcox, poetess – has started enjoyable first Saturdays at her home, following the excellent lead of the Lyster Ormsbys, whose first Sundays are always alluring. Both Mrs Moore and Mrs Ormsby are ideal hostesses with genial husbands, and there is good intellectual fare without any hint of superior highbrowism.⁸⁰

Confirming Moore's continued popularity among her literary fellows, Connie Stephens reported two years later on Moore's success in the *Sydney Morning Herald* 'Ode to Canberra' competition:

⁷⁶ Dora Moore to Gilmore, 31 May 1925, MGP, vol.15, A3266 (CY1849).

⁷⁷ Dora Moore to Gilmore, [2 June 1925], in MGP, vol.15, Wilcox's emphasis.

⁷⁸ Dora Moore to Brereton, 3 Aug. 1925 and 15 Aug. 1925, in John Le Gay Brereton Papers, ML MSS 281, vol.11, pp.261-64.

⁷⁹ Dora Moore to Gilmore, 12 July 1925, MGP, vol.15, Wilcox's emphasis.

There is great rejoicing in and among the members of the Poetry Circle of the Lyceum Club, of which Mrs Moore is the moving spirit. Ever since her return from London, Mrs Moore has put new life into the Lyceum Club, and in between times her pen is never idle.⁸¹

The combination of a growing sense of fellowship which affected Mackellar, Bedford, Deamer and Dora and William Moore each in their own way, together with the increased opportunities provided by the existence of a series of little theatres, reading circles and informal salons led in 1930 to the foundation of the Community Playhouse. Through it Ruth Bedford found scope for several readings. A relatively large audience attended one reading in late 1929, though it did not consist of many personal friends. Carrie Tennant intended to produce the play the following May, but Bedford doubted that her business sense would allow the theatre to stay open long enough.⁸² A series of letters from the Moores to the Melbourne writer, Frank Wilmot, also relate the success of a season featuring one act plays by Wilmot, Moore, and Louis Esson, held at the Community Theatre during the year. William Moore was conscious of the inadequacies of his own play, but he and Dora were generous in their praise of Wilmot's *The Disturber of the Pools*. Dora wrote that she could hear 'the true and authentic voice of Furnley Maurice', (Wilmot's literary pseudonym) in the work.⁸³

Dora Moore also mentioned to Wilmot that the Community Theatre would produce her play, 'Fourposter' at the end of the month. It was well received and later included in the book *Best Australian One Act Plays*.⁸⁴ On the same program as 'Fourposter', was 'a

⁸⁰ Susan Mary Waterford, 'Pen Portraits of Some Sydney Women', *Woman's World*, cutting in CRP, vol.3, item 5, n.p.

⁸¹ Connie Stephens, 'Women in the News of New South Wales', 1 Aug. 1927, in *Woman's World*, cutting in CRP, vol.3, item 5, n.p.

⁸² Ruth Bedford to Dorothea Mackellar, 4 Jan 1930, Mackellar Papers, vol.8.

⁸³ Dora and William Moore to Frank Wilmot, series of letters, May – October [1930]. in Frank Wilmot Papers, ML MSS 4, vol.6 'Letters received, 1902-1941', pp.375-93.

⁸⁴ William Moore and T.I. Moore (ed.s), *Best Australian one-act plays*, (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1937), pp.27-50.

one-act in blank verse by Ruth Bedford' and one by Marguerite Dale.⁸⁵ Always ready to show her support, Alys Hungerford attended the show. After the publication of 'Fourposter', Dulcie Deamer wrote to Moore. She had submitted a review of the book of plays to the *Woman's Mirror*, and due to her emphasis on Dora's play, the editor had thought that a photo would be appropriate. The combination of the three playwrights in the one program, with the support and appreciation of the two other literary women, is an apt demonstration of the workings of the fellowing spirit. Both Dora and William had complained to Wilmot about the lack of support from 'literary people' and such organisations as the Fellowship of Australian Writers and Henry Lawson Memorial Committee. Yet informally some members of the various literary circles still cheered each other on. Together, these men and women represent another front in which the spirit of literary fellowship was manifest.

Mary Gilmore also dabbled in acting and dramatic work during the 1920s in a tribute to the popular volume of Australian verse, Father Patrick Hartigan's *Around the Boree Log*. Her gesture was both generous and sustained. At no point did she doubt that the project should go ahead, and on occasion had to persuade its chief instigators to not give up hope. An innovative project, it involved the filming of re-enactments of scenes from the poems. Filming and production took place in early 1925, while contracts for its release were signed with Union Theatres in the middle of the year. It was made possible by a group of subscribers that included Gilmore. As costs had exceeded original estimates, each subscriber paid an additional £17/10/-. The film did eventually make a profit and the subscribers received some dividends from the venture.⁸⁶ Gilmore of course played a more integral role than simply that of subscriber; she became a significant source of inspiration

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Dora Moore to Frank Wilmot, 'I don't know the date', in Wilmot Papers, vol.6, pp.375-376.

to its producer and his wife, Phil and Eva Walsh. Apparently Gilmore had known them for many years. According to a note in her hand on one of their letters, she actually appeared in the film. It was, however, her encouragement and support that Phil Walsh appreciated most of all:

I don't know what to say to you dear lady – you have been so sweet and whoelsome [*sic*] – so good to have you for a pal and such a reserve to have to draw on when the iron mould was showing on the Walsh fabric – Believe me both Eva and myself know and understand and appreciate it all and please God time will help us in some way to express our gratitude.⁸⁷

Later, consumed with doubt, Walsh wished that Gilmore was there to 'cheer and encourage' him. In fact, he and Eva invited Gilmore to live with them and looked forward to the day she arrived.⁸⁸ So absorbing was the project, Gilmore's friends hesitated at the time to approach her with other requests for assistance. She did not shut herself off, however, and maintained a steady stream of correspondence through which she invited all and sundry to the first screening of the film.

Friend to more than one artist, Gilmore's next effort as a fellowing woman stretched even her ample inner reserves. It began sometime in 1925, when Dorothy Cottrell, a disabled Queensland woman who had eloped with a man deemed inappropriate by her family, sought advice concerning a book she was writing.⁸⁹ Cottrell wrote to Gilmore again in early 1926 giving an update on the completion of the typed manuscript and her publishing plans, which entailed a visit to Sydney in the near future. Gilmore greatly admired the resourceful and talented woman she met, and boasted of Cottrell's

⁸⁶ P.J. Egan (for 'Davis, Egan & Co'.) to Gilmore, 14 Aug 1925; and 7 Aug. 1926 in MGP, vol.23 A3274 (CY1858).

⁸⁷ Phil K. Walsh to Gilmore, 27 March 1925, in MGP, vol.39, A3290 (CY1875).

⁸⁸ Walsh to Gilmore, 26 April 1925, MGP, vol.39.

⁸⁹ J.M. Nicholas to Barbara Ross, 15 Nov. 1983, in Cottrell, Ida D. Papers, 1929-1970, NLA MS 6085, folder 'Added 22.10.84'. Walter Cottrell in fact proved an admirable and dedicated husband, carefully looking after his wife, and, despite her disabilities, travelling with her all over America, living on occasion on houseboats or in caravans, and doing much research for her later publications, all with a cheerful, matter-of-fact manner.

accomplishments to Ethel Curlewis. 'I have so much personal pride in her as if she were my own', Gilmore continued in a typical show of modesty that nevertheless conveyed her own importance, 'but she owes nothing to me for I only met her last year. That she met you, Mr Robertson and a few others is all that I have done for her'.⁹⁰ Cottrell apparently rated Gilmore's assistance a little more highly, inscribing 'from your pupil' on one of the first copies of *Singing Gold*, the resultant publication.⁹¹ It was a typical example of Gilmore-styled patronage.

Cottrell's success attracted a large amount of publicity. It partly resulted from a contract she won for serialisation of her novel in the American magazine *Ladies' Home Journal*, for an unprecedented sum of US\$1000. In the subsequent reportage, Gilmore's role in launching Cottrell's career became widely known. Gilmore herself wrote a number of laudatory testimonies to the newly discovered writer's achievements. Other writers commented in their correspondence with Gilmore on Cottrell's style, and the variations that occurred in the first and subsequent serialisations of her novel. Many invited Gilmore to speak about Cottrell at one or other of the numerous reading circles existent in Sydney by the late 1920s. In addition, an army of hopeful writers posted their manuscripts to Gilmore with requests for advice. This placed much pressure on her time, as her following instincts led her to treat each request fairly. She endeavoured to earnestly consider each new writer as another potential 'find', a worthy addition to the ranks of Australian writers, and felt that she could not dismiss that possibility without careful consideration of their work. Though conscious of the importance of her role as literary matriarch, and determined to stake her place in Australia's history by recording the details of all her

⁹⁰ Gilmore to Ethel Curlewis, 30 March 1926, in Curlewis Family, Ethel Sibyl Curlewis nee Turner, Papers, ML MSS 2159, vol.1 'Ethel Turner correspondence 1890-1954', pp.261-62. See also Dorothy Cottrell to Gilmore, series of letters, MGP, vol.11.

⁹¹ Annotation by Gilmore on letter, Cottrell to Gilmore, 18 Dec. 1927, MGP, vol.11.

actions, her ultimate commitment to the evolution of the nation's literature appears to have remained sincere. Her good will nevertheless dwindled as time passed. To Nettie Palmer she confided, 'I think I have found another genius: a totally different type from D. Cottrell'. She hoped, however, for 'the end of the avalanche'. It 'was too much'. She had 'read daily for weeks', in order to return the manuscripts quickly, as she had no safe place to store them and feared that, unprotected, they could perish or disappear.⁹²

The role that the press played in relaying literary news and ideas is highlighted in this episode. It points to journalism as a channel through which many fellowing women exerted their influence in the 1920s. Sharyn Pearce, in providing an overview of the changing circumstances of women journalists in Australia from 1880 to the present, discusses the journalistic work of Mary Gilmore and Dulcie Deamer.⁹³ However, many more women entered the field during the 1920s, particularly women with more literary aspirations or interests, and used the medium to extend their patronage to other Australian writers. Among the fellowing women discussed here, Gilmore, Connie Stephens, Zora Cross, Dulcie Deamer, Lala Fisher, and Lucy Sullivan all either held a permanent post with specific papers or magazines, wrote regular columns, or published articles and reviews on an irregular basis in numerous papers and journals. Many other women as yet not mentioned likewise contributed occasional news or editorial items to newspapers and magazines during the period. In addition women writers began to form mutual interest groups, which, particularly if supported by well-known figures, warranted coverage in the press. That is, the urge to fellowship led the movement from personal demonstrations of patronage to small, informal circles of encouragement, and finally to more public means of

⁹² Gilmore to Nettie Palmer, 18 Dec. 1928, Palmer Papers (Vance and Nettie), NLA MS 1174, series 1 correspondence, Reel MfmG24457, p.3274.

⁹³ See Sharyn Pearce, *Shameless Scibblers: Australian Women's Journalism 1880-1995*, (Rockhampton, Qld: Central Queensland University Press, 1998).

achieving their mission to further the interests of Australian writers. It is the final stage in this process that now warrants attention.

The fellowship congregates

The tendency for professional women, or women with occupations that entailed a public role, to congregate is demonstrated by the founding of the Sydney Zonta Club in 1923, and the Society of Women Writers in 1925. Both of these involved key fellowing women, although those women did not address creative interests directly through these activities. Founded by Dorothea Mackellar, with Ruth Bedford as an able secretary, the Sydney Zonta Club was the first international branch of the Confederation of Zonta Clubs, based in America. Zonta Clubs aimed to bring together business and professional women, establishing among them a set of principles and practices, demonstrating that women were 'good mixers, good fellows, good friends and good competitors'.⁹⁴ Established officially in Sydney in September 1923, Mackellar and Bedford over the next year invited numerous women of high business, professional, public, philanthropic or intellectual standing to join. The Zonta Club founders received acceptances from a surprisingly large number of women. The first application, in fact, came from Ruby Board, voluntary welfare worker and daughter of the progressive educationalist Peter Board, in August 1923, with a recommendation by Lady Davidson, wife of the State Governor of the time. Others included the Dr Constance D'Arcy, Thea Proctor, Olive Kelso King, Beulah Bolton, Judith Fletcher, Mrs Gordon Wesche, Agnes Mowles and Connie Stephens. The Club gathered numerous others during the decade. However, the very strict rules concerning qualification for membership, and the classification of members on the basis of occupation, though beneficial for later historians, proved tiresome to the Australian

members, while the conversion of costs into Australian currency made set membership fees expensive.⁹⁵ The Club folded in the early 1930s, and Mackellar and Bedford eventually resigned. The Zonta episode does, however, demonstrate that the fellowing spirit was perhaps partly a phenomenon of the time, and that women with some sort of public profile, though not all specifically feminist, identified with each other in terms of their professional development as a gender.

The Zonta Club's first guest luncheon honoured the Imperial Press Conference delegate, Lady Burnham. Burnham was also the inspiration for the formation of the Society of Women Writers (SWW). At her suggestion, Mary Liddell, Mrs M.E. Fotheringhame, Zara Aronson and Miss Isabel Gullett held a preliminary meeting on 14 September 1925, to 'discuss the advisability of forming an organisation which would draw together the women writers and women newspaper artists of New South Wales'.⁹⁶ It drew the majority of its members from the journalistic field and the participants in the first meeting were certainly representative. Mary Liddell for example, worked for the *Sunday News*. Fotheringhame, during her long career, had owned, edited or written for a variety of papers including the *Bulletin*, *Young Australia*, *Splashes*, *The Soldier*, *Commonwealth Home* and *The Sphere*. Aronson, encouraged by Lucy Gullett, first wrote for or edited incidental columns and women's interest pages for the *Town and Country Journal*, the *Sydney Mail*, the *Sydney Sunday Times*, *Brisbane Telegraph*, *Perth Western Mail*, and *Sydney Morning Herald*.⁹⁷ Attendees of the first meeting also included Gilmore, Stephens, Moore, Hungerford, Ethel Curlewis (Turner), Nora Kelly, and Marjorie Quinn. Both

⁹⁴ Confederation of Zonta Clubs, 'Our Standard – a Square Deal', n.d. [1919], in DMP, vol.13, n.p.

⁹⁵ See DMP, vol.13, for Sydney Zonta Club records and papers.

⁹⁶ Society of Women Writers, Minutes of the Preliminary Meeting of Society of Women Writer [sic], in Society of Women Writers – Records, 1925-1953, ML MSS 4222, vol.1.

⁹⁷ Notes re Zonta classification of Liddell, Zonta records, DMP, vol.13; 'Mrs Fotheringhame', *The Opinion*, 15 Aug. 1935, vol.1, no.3, pp.30-31; and Martha Rutledge, 'Aronson, Zara', *ADB*, vol.7, pp.101-2.

Mackellar and Bedford indicated that they were unable to attend, but were nevertheless interested in the Society's formation. Nora Kelly, editor of the *Bulletin's* 'Woman's Letter', and writer of Irish verse and short stories, was long known to Gilmore and Stephens, while Quinn, niece of Roderic Quinn, was also a poet of their acquaintance.⁹⁸ The overlap of literary and journalistic work in the careers of the following women is thus clear.

Suggesting that the growing sense of fellowship infused the Society's functions, the following women maintained high profiles, and many of its activities mirrored their strategies and concerns. Gilmore, Stephens and Moore consistently held official posts. Initially elected Vice-President, Gilmore often sat in the chair, and acted as the Society's representative at events held by the National Council of Women, to which the SWW became affiliated in 1927. Later that same year, the Society rejoiced at Dora Moore's success in the Ode to Canberra campaign, and elected her President at its annual meeting, although she requested leave of absence shortly afterwards due to the heavy obligations of her position as acting-president of the Lyceum Club. The Society also appointed Connie Stephens as secretary. As one of her first actions in her new role as President, Moore suggested an impromptu tea for Stephens to celebrate her engagement to a sports reporter, William K. Robertson.

In 1928 David McKee Wright, Red Page editor and the lover to whom Zora Cross dedicated her second volume of erotic verse died suddenly and prematurely. Advised by Dora Moore of the difficulties subsequently experienced by Zora Cross following his death, the SWW executive committee twice discussed possible means of providing some assistance to her. Its conclusions were not recorded. A widowed mother at the age of 38, Cross's plight also directly concerned many of the literary fellows. Brereton, Gilmore,

⁹⁸Bernice May, 'Nora McAuliffe [nee Kelly]', *The Australian Woman's Mirror*, vol.4, no.37, 7 Aug.

Moore, Hungerford and Stephens all discussed her needs. Most forwarded money to her, but they also hoped that more permanent assistance might be offered by literary societies such as the SWW and later the newly formed Fellowship of Australian Writers.⁹⁹ The Society's inability to help says much about its ineffectiveness as an organisation for Australia's writers. All it could do was send a letter of congratulation to Cross when in August 1928 she was advised of the award of a very modest Commonwealth Literary Fund pension.

The activities of the Society of Women Writers in fact consisted chiefly of a combination of this form of collective personal response to the joys and trials confronting its members, in-house squabbling, and regular monthly luncheons with guest speakers. Despite its written aim to 'promote a knowledge of literature and encourage Australian authors', and its ready response to the needs of other related causes or societies when approached, the SWW did not, during this period, initiate any outward-looking schemes. It also hesitated for two years before finally arranging for Lady de Chair, wife of the State Governor, to attend a luncheon, even though she had repeatedly expressed her willingness to do so. This indicates the absence of a sense of missionary zeal on the part of the Society, as well as a self-conscious approach to their proclaimed collective role.¹⁰⁰

Considering the inadequacies of the SWW as an institution to encourage and assist Australian writers, it is no wonder that many of the following women involved started to talk about the need for a new organisation. Another literary organisation, which had a large number of supporters and remained active throughout the decade, was the Australian English Association. Formed in 1923 with strong links to the University, involving Ruth

1928, pp.10, 54; and Axel Clark, 'Quinn, Roderic Joseph', in *ADB*, vol.11, pp.320-21.

⁹⁹ Correspondence concerning Cross and her financial situation may be found in the papers of Brereton, Gilmöre and Cross. See also Len Fox, *Dream at a Graveside: The History of the Fellowship of Australian Writers 1928-1988*, (Sydney: Fellowship of Australian Writers, 1988).

¹⁰⁰ See SWW Records, ML MSS 4222.

Bedford in the integral role of secretary, and Mary Gilmore as Vice-President, it increasingly called on Mackellar, Moore, Gilmore, and others to present their poetry or to talk about other writers. An Australian branch of the English Association, it initially promoted an imperial form of cultural nationalism, and reinforced the idea of cultural custodianship by inviting vice-regal patronage, political figures to vice-presidencies, and the involvement of long-established artistic and literary figures. To Leslie Heath, it served a conservative educational purpose aimed directly at the schools. Although 'Australian content crept into the Australian programming' and the committed endeavours of Brereton, George Mackaness and H.M. Green confound criticisms of the University's limited role in promoting a national literature, the Association did not exist solely for the benefit of the Australian writer.¹⁰¹

In their own way individual fellowing women sought a solution to the problem. The subject had, for example, long troubled Lala Fisher. In 1922, Connie Stephens reported attending the preliminary meeting of a Club arranged by Fisher. '[I]t seemed like a mutual admiration Society', she commented and referred to it (confusingly) as Fisher's 'Minister's Club'.¹⁰² Sometime over the next year it appears that Fisher clarified the purpose of such a club. She asked Connie Stephens to found a 'literary and artistic club in Sydney' and publish a quarterly magazine, Fisher even collected some poems to that end. Doubting that Fisher possessed the ability to manage such an organisation once formed, Stephens wondered whether 'poets [would] com[e] along simply for the glory of listening

¹⁰¹ Heath, 'Brereton, and Australian Literature', p.5. Heath has written in greater detail on both the Australian English Association and the role of the trio of Sydney University writers and educationalists. For more information consult her thesis, Lesley Heath, 'Sydney literary societies of the nineteen twenties: cultural nationalism and the promotion of Australian literature', PhD Thesis, School of English, University of New South Wales, 1996.

¹⁰² Whether or not this was the same club that Fisher had in mind when she sent out the previous circular is uncertain. Other events mentioned in Stephens' letter to Gilmore about Fisher's intentions indicate that the literary club was formed before September 1923, but neither Fisher nor Stephens had said anything suggesting that it would involve ministers. See Stephens to Gilmore, 25 May 1922, in MGP, vol.17.

to each other's verse'.¹⁰³ Later, Fisher herself posted a circular which announced her intention to start a club: 'A number of Australian writers have found a quiet meeting place in Sydney for the exchange of ideas, and wish you to join the little "Club" if you care to do so'. Subscriptions would not be collected, the club running on a kitty basis after the first three months.¹⁰⁴ It appears that at least one meeting was held, Bartlett Adamson later recalled attending a meeting at Fisher's flat at which the 'formation of a writer's organisation was the subject of discussion'.¹⁰⁵ Neither Fisher, Stephens or Gilmore referred to the proposed club in their correspondence after that date, nor did Adamson attend any other meetings. Its significance no doubt lies in the need its brief existence demonstrated for a permanent organisation for Australian writers.

The need also weighed on Gilmore's mind. Aside from playing a central role in the Authors' and Composers' Society of which little is known, Gilmore wrote repeatedly and effectively in the papers about the needs of the Australian writer. Writing to the *Worker* editor, Gilmore pointed to the rise and fall of the sun of Australian literature that had taken place decades earlier: its rise linked to the courage and conviction of *The Bulletin* and newly established booksellers and publishers. '[A]fter this period descended the indefinite twilight almost of an eclipse', she wrote. Yet the national literature could regain its prestige if newspapers and booksellers united to help Australian writers. If they would not, the writers needed to form an association, 'and start publishing and selling for [themselves]'.¹⁰⁶ Although her understanding of the conditions that contributed to the emergence and later decline of a particular school of Australian literature may have been limited, yet Gilmore's appreciation of the need for writers to support their own kind

¹⁰³ Connie Stephens to Gilmore, 4 April 192[?], in MGP, vol.17.

¹⁰⁴ Lala Fisher, circular, n.d., in MGP, vol.22 A3273 (CY1857).

¹⁰⁵ Bartlett Adamson to Gilmore, 25 Jan. 1945, in MGP, vol.19 A3270 (CY1853).

¹⁰⁶ Mary Gilmore, 'The Australian Writer's Problem', in *The Worker*, 18 Aug. 1926, cutting in MGP, vol.19.

unconsciously hinted at the need for a more personal, mutual approach to the promotion of Australian literature: a form of self-help. In an annotation, Gilmore noted that she had published the article 'to interest people preparatory to founding [the] F.A.W. [Fellowship of Australian Writers]'. Although she actually placed more emphasis on the business side of the outcome of forming a writers' organisation, the article nevertheless saw clearly the need for consolidation of the writing community from within.

Other writers also felt the need. They had done so since the first of the funerals of the poets of the 1890s. The assorted Henry Lawson committees had theoretically absorbed the needs expressed in 1922 for an organisation for writers. However, the inadequacy of the Henry Lawson Memorial Committee as a rallying point quickly became clear. Although it had invited Gilmore to become an additional member, it primarily consisted of people with diverse civic and public positions. In fact, Robert Darby, writing about the committee's attempts to save Henry Lawson's childhood home near Mudgee, noted that the:

committee was at pains to make clear that it represented 'all classes in the community – professional men, business men, and workers; all states of political opinion, Conservative, Nationalist and Labor'; their common bond was that they were all Australians who recognised Lawson as 'the national writer'.¹⁰⁷

This was, perhaps, the committee's problem. Henry Lawson was the Australian writer's adopted prophet, not yet that of the nation.

Conscious of its inadequacies, the Memorial Committee reorganised and refocussed itself a number of times. However, the funds raised towards the memorial were still inadequate by 1926, and it had not provided for as strictly speaking it had never intended, a coming together of literary people. Instead, the Henry Lawson Literary Society, quite likely modelled on the successful one launched in Footscray, Victoria

immediately following Lawson's death, was formed. It inaugurated the Waverley Pilgrimage, an annual return to Lawson's graveside to commemorate his passing with a formal program of readings and a speech. It also sought to organise for the 'studying [of] Australian Literature, and the encouragement of writers in Australia; Inculcating a definite Australian sentiment, and a great appreciation of native literature'.¹⁰⁸ The first two Pilgrimages featured presentations by W.H. Ifould and Brereton, respectively. However, none of the office bearers or committee members belonged to that group of writers it theoretically sought to serve. Most, though culturally oriented, were still public servants or in relevant private businesses or professional posts. None of the following women were attached to the literary society and only Brereton at that stage belonged to the memorial committee. Lucy Cassidy (nee Sullivan) did instigate a 'Henry Lawson Day' campaign in the public schools to raise funds for the Memorial and consequently received an invitation to the eventual unveiling of the Memorial in the Domain in 1931. Dora Moore, who read at the 1929 Pilgrimage, received an invitation as well.¹⁰⁹ On all other counts, the Henry Lawson committees seemed to take little notice of the literary fellowship.

Lucy Cassidy, during the same period, had continued activities closely linked to the work and welfare of her soon-to-be husband R.J. Cassidy and Rod Quinn. In 1925, she

¹⁰⁷ Robert Darby, "'A National Literary Shrine': Attempts To Save The Henry Lawson Family Home, 1935-46", *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, no.74, part 3, Dec. 1988, pp.240-58.

¹⁰⁸ Henry Lawson Literary Society, Sydney, flier, no title, 24 Sept. 1928, in Henry Lawson Memorial Fund, Records, 1922-1932 ML MSS 3588, vol.1, p.225.

¹⁰⁹ 'The Henry Lawson Literary Society', n.d., in Henry Lawson Memorial Fund, Records, vol.4, item 4 'Papers re the unveiling of the memorial statue 1931'. Mr and Mrs William Moore, and Mrs R.J. Cassidy are all listed as members of the society. Another list in the same collection entitled 'Invitations to the Unveiling of the Henry Lawson Memorial', contained Gilmore's name. It was crossed out in pencil. This was probably because after his death she befriended and supported Henry Lawson's sister, Gertrude Lawson, who was bitterly opposed to Henry Lawson's wife, Bertha Lawson's claim to Lawson's estate. His daughter, Miss Bertha Lawson served on the committee for both societies, and is likely to have shared her mother's resentment of Gertrude's claims. See also Henry Lawson Literary Society, 'Seventh Anniversary Commemoration', program, 1 Sept. 1929, in Henry Lawson Memorial Funds, Records, vol.4, item 14. Neither Cassidy's Autograph Book, nor Gilmore, Stephens, or Moore's papers contain any reference to the Henry Lawson Literary Society committee members, whereas Brereton, Lawrence Campbell and others

arranged the Rod Quinn Testimonial to raise funds for the needy literary veteran. Within a few years she had married Cassidy, and Quinn had moved in, to be cared for by her for the remaining twenty years of his life. The two men often reminisced about their careers, and lamented, like the fellowing women, the lack of a central organisation for the encouragement and support of Australian writers. They too talked about founding an organisation.

Sometime in 1927, Rod Quinn actually spoke to Gilmore about the urgent need for her to form such a society. Weighed under by work, she procrastinated. On 18 August 1928, Gilmore, finally moved to action by a visit from Lucy Cassidy with a reminder from Quinn, drafted the following circular:

For a number of years a movement has been on foot to give more national & [*sic*] definite recognition to Australian literature, and writers past & present. The steps so far taken have been the pilgrimages to Waverley and the official establishment by the Education Department of Authors' Day, fixed for the 2nd September annually.

It is now proposed to found the movement as a Fellowship of Australian writers and a meeting is called to take place at the Lyceum Club rooms.¹¹⁰

Due to a severe shortage of time, as Gilmore had final proofs to read for her next Angus and Robertson publication, and the avalanche of manuscripts from literary aspirants was at its peak, she gave the draft notice, as well as envelopes and money for stamps to Lucy Cassidy for her to type up and disseminate. In addition Gilmore paid for notices in the papers and arranged for a room in the Lyceum Club for their preliminary meeting.¹¹¹ Cassidy then called in on Winifred Hamilton, who worked at the time for *Wentworth Magazine*, telling her of the details, and inviting her to attend the initial meeting and to

belonging to the Memorial Committee, appear as correspondents in the manuscript collections of a number of women writers.

¹¹⁰ Mary Gilmore, 'First Draft', 18 Oct. 1928, in MGP, vol.19.

¹¹¹ Gilmore, 'Foundation of the Fellowship of Writers', n.d., in MGP, vol.19.

bring Arthur Hoey Davis (Steele Rudd).¹¹² Gilmore claimed that she had prevaricated about sending out the notice, suggesting that others could take on the responsibility of forming the new society. Cassidy had persuaded her, arguing that only Gilmore had the vision to create a society in which both men and women alike could participate equally. This is important, as the defining factor uniting the informal literary fellowship that emerged in Sydney during the 1920s, was the primacy of the needs of Australian writers as a general category. Gender, class, and moral values were all secondary to that aim.

The first meeting took place on 8 November, but according to Winifred Hamilton, it consisted of only 'a handful of enthusiasts ... all so anxious to move motions, resolutions and express ideas'.¹¹³ A sub-committee was thus formed to draw up the 'constitution and rules for the foundation of the society'.¹¹⁴ It included Cassidy, Aiden de Brune, Mr S.A. Rosa and man known only as Mr Porter. De Brune later confirmed that Cassidy took minutes at the first meeting, but they were vague, and never ratified at a later meeting. Nor, in fact, could they be located to clarify the proceedings of the first meeting.¹¹⁵ The second meeting, occurring on 23 November was thus considered the first meeting in the minds of many, where the details of the constitution were clarified, and office bearers and committee members were elected. Cassidy suggested Brereton as president despite his absence from the meeting at the time, while Gilmore, George Mackaness, H.M. Green and Davis were elected its first Vice-Presidents. Marjorie Quinn was elected Secretary; Arthur Crocker treasurer; Cassidy publicity officer; and Deamer, Hamilton, Vera Dwyer, Rod Quinn, Alec Chisholm, Walter Jago, W.M. Fleming, S.A. Rosa, Will Lawson and R.D. Fitzgerald committee members.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Winifred Hamilton to Gilmore, 30 Nov. 1939, in MGP, vol.19.

¹¹³ Hamilton to editor of *Fellowship* (FAW magazine, founded 1944), 8 July 1944, in MGP, vol.19.

¹¹⁴ Gilmore, 'Foundation of the FAW', MGP, vol.19.

¹¹⁵ Aiden de Brune to Gilmore, 8 March 1937, MGP, vol.19.

¹¹⁶ Wilde, *Courage a grace*, pp.256-57.

Conflicting versions of the story of the formation of the FAW suggest different sources for the name. Dulcie Deamer claimed that she used the term when the new committee experienced difficulties trying to decide on its name. Mary Rattenbury, a writer from Queensland who happened to be in Sydney at the time of the first formal meeting related a discussion concerning a suitable name for the 'New Literary Movement'. She recalled Rosa proposing the use of the word 'fellowship'. Considering Deamer's close association with Rosa in bohemian circles, it is likely that between them they agreed on the word, both perhaps voicing their approval. The original draft notice for the foundation of the society also used the word. Rattenbury having not seen it, and Deamer perhaps not recalling or at least not mentioning in her autobiography its original appearance on the circular, it appears that Gilmore did introduce the term.

Initially, the new organisation was partly successful in facilitating the discussion of each other's work, arranging literary events, and providing assistance to needy writers. Its committee meetings were regarded as 'centres of much constructive business'.¹¹⁷ Its inaugural public meeting featured talks by George Mackaness, Mary Gilmore and Dulcie Deamer. While Mackaness spoke on Australian short stories and Gilmore on Dorothy Cottrell, Deamer appears to have given a talk more appropriate to the Playbox Friday night cabarets, suggesting in its course that all men were cavemen at heart.¹¹⁸ The Fellowship involved numerous fellowing women in integral roles. Quinn, as an uncertain secretary, struggled with the aid of advice from Brereton to fulfill her duties. Gilmore, on the other hand, tended to regard the society almost as her own; in Deamer's words she was 'very much the Grande Dame, with a good dash of She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed'.¹¹⁹ Cassidy and

¹¹⁷ Deamer, 'Golden Decade', p.180.

¹¹⁸ See 'Extract from Commonwealth Home', 1 April 1929, in Mackaness, George, Papers, 1908-1952, ML MSS 2374, vol.2.

¹¹⁹ Deamer, 'Golden Decade', p.165.

Nora McAuliffe (nee Kelly) worked to promote its lectures and activities, while Dora Moore looked to it hopefully for financial assistance for Zora Cross. While not all of the fellowing women in fact contributed their time and energy to its various functions, it seemed to fulfill the need they had expressed for a central organisation. They certainly grizzled about its lack of support of playwrights, or bickered over the details of its activities, but they also looked to it as a source of assistance and as a rallying point. It finally gave them something to identify with, even while carrying on with their own particular projects.

Exactly when and how all the literary and fellowing threads came together in the shape of the Fellowship of Writers is in fact a slightly complicated story. The process of telling and re-telling the tale of the formation of the FAW, whereby the veterans of the society have staked their claims as its founders has made the historian's path a hazardous one. However, Gilmore's meticulous gathering of information from most participants, and verification of specific actions, which led, in the end, to her own more moderated account, has provided sufficient grounds to offer a reasonably accurate version of the story. In all the various accounts, a simple fact was consistently overlooked for the sake of personal glory: at the time of the formation, the urge to create a literary society, driven by a growing identification with each other as a body of writers, led to a co-operative effort. Instead, one version of the society's foundation named Gilmore as the sole instigator who reigned supreme over its earliest meetings, while another stated that Roderic Quinn founded the society with Lucy Cassidy as his assistant.¹²⁰ Len Fox, in the official FAW history, steers a course between the two extremes, although some details seem

¹²⁰ See 'Literature and Drama', in *The Countrywoman*, 31 Jan. 1935, cutting in MGP, vol.19; Arthur Crocker, 'Roderic Quinn', in *The Australian Composer and Writer's Guardian*, 1 April 1935, cutting in MGP, vol.19, and Crocker, 'Sixteen years ago', in *Fellowship*, vol.1 no.1, June 1944, p.2, cutting in MGP, vol.19.

inaccurate.¹²¹ Much of the interpretation rests on an inscription made by Gilmore in a book for Lucy Cassidy, which had disappeared by the time the furore erupted. More importantly, the event that triggered the lengthy revisionary process, was the arrival of the communist writer, Egon Kisch, in Sydney. Political division, it appears, had created the project's momentum. It was this politicisation and subsequent debate over the founding of the Fellowship that in effect marked the end of the era of the literary fellowship that led to its formation.

Not all the fellowing women played active roles in the Fellowship of Australia Writers, and yet, through the central link of Gilmore, and the recurrence of patterns of behaviour intrinsic to her type in the course of its formation, the new society seemed to formalise the casual literary fellowship that existed among them. Gilmore was responsible for institutionalising the concept of 'fellowship' in the new literary organisation both in its terminology and symbolically. Yet the spirit of literary fellowship was widely felt; many men and women shared the difficulties of a writer's struggle for recognition in Australia and found strength through fellowship with their own kind. Gilmore, however, as the originator of the term in its literary application, as the personification of the helpfulness, caring and sharing of the fellowing woman, and as the spiritual parent of countless writers, was, perhaps, the patron saint of the literary fellowship. The new Fellowship was not a congregation of sanctified souls; it did, however, represent a symbolic home for the literary spirits of Sydney.

Fellowing women, by contributing to the force of the spirit of fellowship, by informally networking with each other, and by nurturing and caring, acted as cultural agents. They did so in a particularly womanly way. From the mid-1920s modern art was also the object of a feminine form of patronage. Like the fellowing women, key women

¹²¹ Fox, *Dream at a Graveside*.

advocates of modernism alternately nurtured and networked. However, individuals, rather than whole communities, attracted their interest; acceptance of a new range of techniques and styles, and the personal success of a small number of artists constituted their aim. Where following women constituted part of a movement toward the consolidation of the literary community, patrons of modern art interrogated the establishment's understanding of artistic value. Where the established literary community accepted cultural nationalism as constructive and desirable, artistic modernism was anathema to the gallery trustees and art critics. To the contrasting example of a small group of Society women committed to the promotion of modern art this study now turns.



MARY GILMORE.

Photo May Moor

Top left: Mary Gilmore, *The Wentworth Magazine*, June 1926, p.50.

Bottom right: Roderic Quinn, *The Wentworth Magazine*, Aug. 1926, p.38.

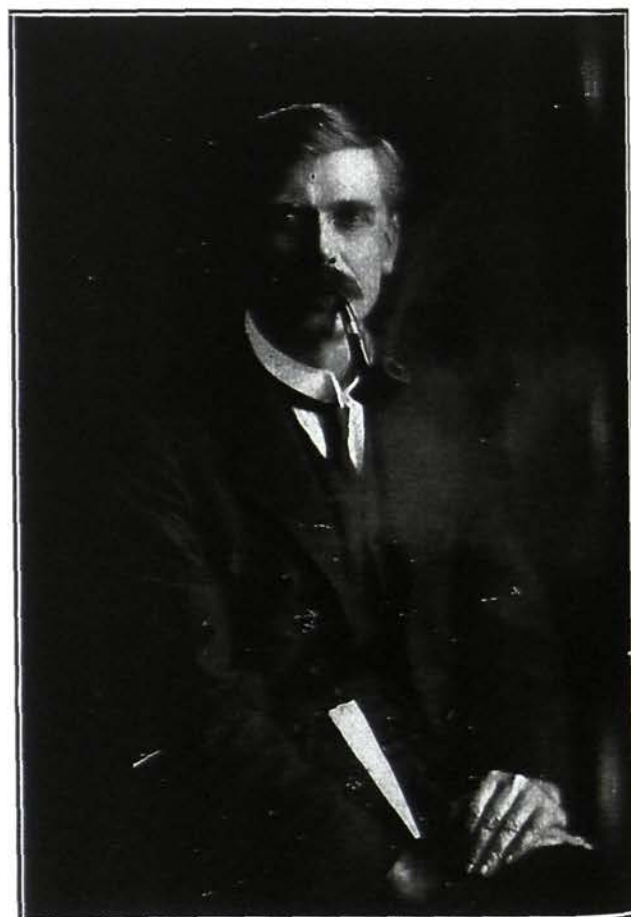
Bottom left: William Moore and Dora Wilcox, both in *The Community Magazine*, May 1931, p.8, and p.2, respectively.



Miss DORA WILCOX



MR. WILLIAM MOORE,
who conducts this page.



RODERIC QUINN,
sweetest singer of Australian verse, beloved by all readers of
the *Wentworth Magazine*,
Photo May Moore.



Miss Dorothea Mackellar, the clever writer, daughter of Lady Mackellar, "Eurlston."



Miss RUTH BEDFORD, whose play, "Murder Next Door" was an outstanding box office success for The Playhouse.

Top left: Dorothea Mackellar, *Society*, Feb. 1922, p.33.

Top right: Ruth Bedford, *Community Magazine*, July 1931, p.5.

Bottom right: Zora Cross, *The Spinner*, April 1925

Bottom left: Dulcie Deamer, *The Wentworth Magazine*, Dec. 1925, p.8.



DULCIE DEAMER.

Photo by Rudolph Buchner



Zora Cross