

-

**THE POETRY OF  
JUDITH WRIGHT:  
INVENTING AUSTRALIA,  
INVENTING THE SELF**

NELA BUREU  
UNIVERSIDAD DE LLEIDA

My first encounter with the poetry of Judith Wright in 1986 was a very special one in the sense that it was the reading of her *Collected Poems* (1971) that put me on the track of poetry firmly and definitely; a track I have not left since then.

I was especially attracted by the honesty and intensity of her vision, by the relevance of her message urging the reader to fight for the values of love and life, and by the clarity of her language and the beauty and transparency of her symbols. But, above all, the reading of some of her poems made me feel the pleasure of recognising aspects of my own experience, which is a very rewarding feeling for poetry readers and, for that matter, for readers in general. Keats put it beautifully when he said that poetry should surprise by a fine excess and not by singularity. It should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts and appear almost a remembrance.

*Woman to Man*, Judith Wright's second collection of poems, published in 1949, had this kind of effect on me. In this volume, a number of lyrics express her most intimate experiences as lover and mother with tenderness

and delicate eroticism but also with fear and anxiety. The poems are firmly set in the matrix of love but the awareness of irreversible change in her own body and life and in the lives of those she loves constitutes an inevitable source of conflict which adds tension and credibility to the lyrics.

*Woman to Man* also reflects one of the most important aspects in the poetry of Judith Wright: the desire to make connections between the random particular and the universal in an attempt to relate man to the cosmos. Judith Wright seldom remains at the immediate level of things. Through a constant effort to crack the moulds of the mind, she endows the physical reality with a transcendental meaning which she perceives as lying beyond it. And she does this because her personal experiences and metaphysical concerns are pressing towards speech, but also because she is a moralist who believes that poetry may rescue our mind from the lethargy of custom and routine by directing it to the wonder and mystery of being. Thus, for Judith Wright, poetry is both an inward journey and a social activity and this blend of classicism and romanticism pervades all the stages into which her poetic development may be divided.

The first stage corresponds to *The Moving Image*, published in 1946. In this first collection of poems Judith Wright introduces us to her country, Australia, through an intricate pattern of trails that take the reader to the visible and unseen realities of her land. In other words, Judith Wright offers us an insight into the face and soul of her country.

The reasons why she chooses to begin her poetic journey by reproducing the most relevant aspects of Australia's past and present as well as her emotional response to them are explained by the poet herself in her book *Because I Was Invited* (1975) a collection of articles in which the writer explains her philosophy and main concerns in life and which, therefore, constitute a valuable aid in understanding her poems.

With regard to the relationship between self and place, Judith Wright refers to Australia as a land which still looms large in the mind of most Australian writers:

Australia is still for us not a country but a state of mind. We do not speak from within but from outside. From a state of mind that describes rather than expresses its surroundings or from a state of mind that imposes itself upon rather than lives through landscape and event. (1969: 301)

And later on, she implies that writing about Australia is a necessary therapy for overcoming conflicting feelings of love and rejection towards the land and, as some poems suggest, a deep sense of guilt for what the white man did to the natives. She believes that writers must achieve reconciliation with their land before they can turn confidently to other concerns:

Before one's country can become an accepted background against which the poet's imagination can move unhindered, it must be first observed, understood, described and, as it were, absorbed. (1965: xviii)

This compulsion to write about her personal background also responds to her own conception of the meaning and value of literature and to her intimate desire to be fully understood:

The real bearing of literature is not in its structure and language, but in the way it emerges from and reflects our total situation, as individuals and as societies. . . . The writer is a human voice, literature a mirror, sometimes even a source of our values and our reactions, our problems and our attempts to come to terms with them.... Academic criticism very often disregards the content of a work, the background of a writer, what, in a word, he is "trying to do," in order to concentrate on those questions. Important as these may be, I think it is the bearing of the work in the context of its time that makes that work more or less worth study. (Wright 1975: viii)

The reading of *The Moving Image* is therefore essential for anyone who desires to gain an understanding of the life and work of this Australian poet. Through the poems included in this book, Judith Wright introduces us to her country providing an appraisal of the exploits of the early European settlers, sounding a note of grief and guilt for the sufferings inflicted upon the Aborigines and setting all this in a landscape of fertile lands and barren soil. Line by line, Judith Wright reproduces the Australian contour and her emotional response to it. Thus, her poems are imbued with moving lyricism while retaining the impact of the physical reality.

"Bullocky" is one of the poems which celebrates the courage and endurance of the European pioneers. This composition is based on an actual person, Jack Purkiss, a bullock-driver who had worked for the Wrights. The poet evokes the past pioneering days and gives those arduous expeditions a

remoteness and a sense of adventure that transforms them into legendary events.

As the poem unfolds itself, we realize that it narrates the progressive insanity of a pioneer brought about by years of suffering and deprivation. Grief purifies the vision of the bullock-driver to the point of a kind of religious delusion which makes him see himself as a Moses leading the Children of Israel into the Promised Land:

Beside his heavy-shouldered team,  
thirsty with drought and chilled with rain,  
he weathered all the striding years  
till they ran widdershins in his brain:

Till the long solitary tracks  
etched deeper with each lurching load  
were populous before his eyes,  
and fiends and angels used his road.

All the long straining journey grew  
a mad apocalyptic dream,  
and the old Moses, and the slaves  
his suffering and stubborn team. <sup>1</sup>

By identifying the bullock-driver with the prophet Moses, Judith Wright endows this figure with a mythical significance which renders him timeless and part of the Australian heritage. And, in doing so, the whole poem becomes a tribute to those whose suffering helped to make Australia fruitful:

O vine, grow closer upon that bone  
And hold it with your rooted hand.  
The prophet Moses feeds the grape,  
and fruitful is the promised land.

In "Bullocky," Judith Wright raises an aspect of Australia's past to the level of myth thereby contributing to a sense of tradition the poet feels is so important for the development of an Australian identity, a task to which she is fully committed.

However, the European pioneers were not the only people whose sufferings helped to fertilize the land for a future vintage. Significantly, Judith Wright incorporates the Aborigines into her poetry as a very important part of Australia's cultural heritage. She believes that by simply ignoring the fate of the natives, white Australians will never be able to rid themselves of an uneasy sense of guilt for what they did to the former inhabitants of Australia. However reprehensible the actions against them might have been, the very fact of recognising and regretting these actions opens a door to a new understanding of and respect for Aboriginal custom and ways of life. Besides, as Judith Wright is deeply concerned about environmental issues, she sees the Aborigines' reverence for the natural world as an example to be followed. Thus, Judith Wright's purpose in reintroducing the Aborigines into the mind of Australians is not so much to recall the violence of the European takeover but to make white Australians realize that the natives are human beings who deserve respect and humane treatment and who may help us find new and more intimate ways of relating ourselves to the physical world. As has already been suggested and as the poet herself confirms, Judith Wright also wants to alleviate a feeling of guilt for what her people did to the former inhabitants of Australia:

I have, I suppose, been trying to expiate a deep sense of guilt over what we have done to the country, to its first inhabitants of all kinds, and are still and increasingly doing. (Wright 1975: 172)

This feeling of guilt underlies "Bora Ring" where the memory of the Aboriginal tribes forced out of their lands pervades the verses. The poet recreates the setting, brings the local colour into focus and draws our attention to the deserted tribal territories with ghostly dances and echoes of ritual chants. The description of an empty landscape full of memories of the Aborigines increases the sense of usurpation and the feeling of guilt is intensified by the Biblical allusion in the last stanza:

The song is gone; the dance  
is secret with dancers in the earth,  
the ritual useless and the tribal story  
lost in an alien tale  
.....  
Only the rider's heart  
halts at a sightless shadow, an unsaid word

that fastens in the blood the ancient curse  
the fear as old as Cain.<sup>2</sup>

A plea for humane relationship underlies this poem, for although the tone is highly accusatory, the final lines also imply that the urgent lesson to be learned is the final unity of mankind.

In an age of appalling brutality and genocide, Judith Wright's plea is, unfortunately, extremely relevant. Very often the magnitude of the issues involved in today's conflicts makes us, writers and teachers of literature, conscious of the triviality of our work. There is hardly any more important task in the world of writing and teaching literature than denouncing and helping to alleviate the atrocities of man's bestial behaviour towards man. In this sense the poetry and prose writings of Judith Wright bespeak an artist torn between her faith in the redeeming power of poetry and the awareness that no significant number of people have yet found it to be so. Hence her desire to convince the reader that we have the power to change the world by changing our ways of seeing and relating ourselves to it. Hence too, her recognition that poetry is a medium through which she tries to come to terms with her own uncertainties and contradictions.:

It may be legitimate to say what I think the general direction of my work is- that is in so far as I know it myself. I am using natural symbols to work out human problems, (my own of course), and to try to cast some incidental light on their relation to the whole modern situation.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, in *The Moving Image*, Judith Wright attempts not only to reevaluate her country's past in order to narrow the emotional gap between Australians and their land, but also to achieve a personal reconciliation with the harshness of the Australian landscape and some of the figures that move in it. In "South of my Days," one of her finest descriptive pieces, the poet seems to be seeking this reconciliation. She revives her childhood and adolescence while reproducing the impact that both the beauty and ruggedness of the land made on her. The lines are studded with contrasting sounds and images which suggest that although Australia is a land in the heart of the poet she is at the same time digesting the sterility of the country and enjoying its beauty:

South of my days' circle, part of my blood's country,

rises that tableland, high delicate outline  
of bony slopes wincing under the winter,  
low trees blue-eyed olive, outcropping granite—  
clean, lean, hungry country, the creek's leaf-silenced,  
willow-choked, the slope a tangle of meddler and crabapple  
branching over and under, blotched with green lichen;  
and the old cottage lurches in for shelter.<sup>4</sup>

The gentle alliterative rhythms of the adjectives "delicate," "low," "blue-eyed," "olive," "clean" and "lean," and the peaceful atmosphere they recreate contrast significantly with the harsh and unfriendly vision brought into focus by the terms "outcropping granite," "hungry," "creek" and "lurches." Once the setting has been described, the poet moves inside the house and her thoughts go to old Dan with "seventy years of stories clutched round his bones," tales of drought and death which affected the sensitive young mind and which "still go walking" in the adult's dreams. Judith Wright recognizes that only when she has reconciled these contradictory feelings

Then will my land turn sweetly from the plough  
and all my pastures rise as green as spring.<sup>5</sup>

As we have seen, she achieves this reconciliation by endowing people and landscape with an extra dimension of reality which gives new significance to the Australian contour. Every presence becomes a symbolic situation to be explored and, on doing so, she not only creates a beautiful Australian symbolism but also transforms her land into an emotionally accepted background from which she can grow confidently as a writer.

*Woman to Man* illustrates this growth in the sense that, at this stage, the poet's concern for the retrieval of Australia's past recedes in her mind and the immediate forefront is occupied by a renewed desire to establish links between the concrete and the remote, the visible and the unseen, the particular and the universal. Consequently, the poems in *Woman to Man* are intensely metaphysical, for apart from the lyrics condensing her most intimate experiences which the poet relates to the sexuality of the universe, the verses in which she expresses her encounter with nature are also permeated by the metaphysical idea of a continuous universal epic of generation. Far from being taken for granted, creation is, for Judith Wright, a new miracle every time it happens. The new-born baby or the budding flower are perhaps for us mere daily observable objects deprived of their magic, but through her poetry,

Judith Wright retrieves these acts of creation from the world of the mundane and elevates them to a higher plane of awareness thereby reawakening the reader's capacity for feeling and emotion.

"Woman to Man," the lyric that gives its title to the volume, is a song to conception, a special metaphysical vision of woman which takes her from the sexuality of the couple to the whole mystery of reproduction. Although in this lyric the act of passion is described delicately but vividly, the emphasis is not upon love-making but upon life-making. The language is intensely metaphorical and it is this metaphoric quality that accounts for the poem's mystery and passionate appeal.

Significantly, in the first stanza, the artist concentrates on the powerful thrust of love or life force breaking its way through darkness. For Judith Wright the concepts of love and life force are inextricably intertwined since she believes and feels that "life is the basis of truth and for life love is the dynamic principle" (quoted by Moore 1968: 77). In the poem, the final triumph of love over darkness, which will eventually culminate in the birth of a child, is advanced by giving the newly-formed cell of life a distinctive human shape and individuality:

The eyeless labourer in the night,  
the selfless, shapeless seed I hold,  
builds for its resurrection day-  
silent and swift and deep from sight  
foresees the unimagined light.<sup>6</sup>

Paradoxically, the child's identity is conveyed through the same terms that express its non-existence. The suffix "less" is more an anticipation of what the seed will later become than an assertion of what is not yet. We visualize the child through the terms "eyeless" and "shapeless" and infer its identity as a human being from the word "selfless." However, the fact of describing the unborn child in negatives is also a way of emphasizing the sovereign independence of the life force, a force which cannot be bridled or tamed by language. Thus, the poet's explicit disapproval of naming implies that this vital impulse she experiences so intensely is beyond language. The quick rhythm of the last two lines reproduces the urgent pressure of the life force striving for itself, and this impression of celerity is intensified by the image of the swift labourer who steadily and diligently gains ground over darkness.

In the second stanza the poet continues to stress the outcome of the act of love more than the act itself and to draw our attention to the existence of a

vital force which works through the lovers. Man and woman play both a passive and active role in the process of conception and in the artist's poetic landscape, this feeling of being artificer and instrument of love is symbolized through a hunting image with the lovers being, at the same time, hunter and prey. Three characters participate in the act of conception: woman, man and the life force:

This is no child with a child's face;  
 this has no name to name it by:  
 yet you and I have known it well.  
 This is our hunter and our chase,  
 the third who lay in our embrace.

In the third and fourth stanzas, the vital impulse continues to intrude with force in the lovers' intimate relationship. That which is physically seen and touched during sexual intercourse captures momentarily the universal unseen. This vision is so powerfully conceived by the poet, the conflict between light and darkness so intensely apprehended in the form of "the blind head butting at the dark" and "the blaze of light along the blade," that she is overwhelmed by this metaphysical experience and looks for shelter in the physical and concrete reality of the embrace:

This is the maker and the made;  
 this is the question and reply;  
 the blind head butting at the dark,  
 the blaze of light along the blade.  
 Oh hold me for I am afraid.

The final exclamation provides a moving culmination for the poet's intense experience of creation. As Andrew Taylor suggests,

Swaddled in metaphor, the origin of the child and the origin of creativity are clearly there in the poem, yet, if we look closely enough they are clearly unseen. (1987: 97)

The same fascination for the generative process as the force of love springing from the grip of chaos pervades the poems where Judith Wright expresses her encounter with nature which is meditative, intuitive and imbued with strong metaphysical searching. The poet sees in the recurrence of the seasons a victory of the life force over death and likens this struggle to man's

creative spirit and the odds against which it manifests itself. Nature offers man a splendid example of the quenchless flame of the life force and of its endless possibilities for renewal.

Invariably, the point of departure for the poet's meditation is her emotional response to some concrete object or event observed in the outside world. A budding flower, a tree in blossom or an animal may spark off a poetic journey from which the poet and the object having departed separately return as if joined by the same desire for being. In the poem "Flame-Tree in a Quarry," the vision of this tree flowering in an apparently barren landscape triggers off the poet's metaphysical projection. She observes the physical object, empathises with it and the tree becomes the symbol of life's fiery spirit defeating an uncongenial environment:

From the broken bone of the hill  
stripped and left for dead,  
like a wrecked skull,  
leaps out this bush of blood.

Out of the torn earth's mouth  
comes the old cry of praise.  
Still is the song made flesh  
though the singer dies—

flesh of the world's delight,  
voice of the world's desire,  
I drink you with my sight  
and I am filled with fire.

Out of the very wound  
springs up this scarlet breath—  
this fountain of hot joy,  
this living ghost of death.<sup>7</sup>

Much of the lyrical intensity of the verses derives from the immediate local reference of the setting. Judith Wright seldom quits the Australian landscape when she writes and this strong link with her immediate reality prevents her from getting lost in metaphysical heights and gives her poems shape and clarity. The intense sense of place also suggests that Australia has a strong hold on the poet's imagination and that she is still engaged in the retrieval of her country by endowing every presence with poetic significance.

Just as in "Flame-Tree in a Quarry," a flame tree and its beautiful scarlet flowers serve Judith Wright as springboards for her metaphysical projection, so in "Conch-Shell" it is an empty shell that lifts the poet above the physical. She picks up the object and it suddenly becomes the symbol of a life cycle since it held the cell of birth and the flesh that died, a whole process she imagines as "the brilliant arch from darkness into darkness." Then, the poet addresses the former inhabitant of the conch and identifies herself with it as sharer of the same life that once animated the animal:

And here, half guess, half knowledge, I contract  
 into a beast's blind orbit, stare deep down  
 the cliffs not I have climbed; your prodigal,  
 probe with my sense your senseless life—  
 since life, the force that leapt between your poles,  
 burns forward in me against the night.<sup>8</sup>

The same pulse of life that beats with force in the last line is heard in another poem, "The Builders," but this time love works through the insects that swiftly and silently build life on the Australian coral reef against the "dark eroding seas." This poem has a special significance for the poet because she played an active role in the defence of the Australian Great Barrier Reef against oil-drilling. As in the other lyrics, the factual account of reality, this time the insects' frantic activity, is only the surface of the poem. Judith Wright strikes deeper to find in the animals' instinctive labour the force of love breaking out of darkness. The emphasis is not laid on the tiny creatures but on "the quick, the sensitive, the lover" who "dares to hold his love against the world." The lower and the higher orders of life become again an imagined whole, partaking of the same impelling drive.

Only love may save man from the bleak encroachment of death, but the love must be active and daring like that of the insects because Judith Wright is a vitalist and the focal point of vitalism is not being but becoming. Reality is a condition of unrest for it is precisely unrest, struggle and contradiction that ensure progress, the alternative being inaction, passivity and stagnation.

There is no doubt that Judith Wright is enamoured of life and fascinated by the incessant turning of the wheel of creation. However, in subsequent volumes such as *The Gateway* (1953) and *The Two Fires* (1955), the dark vision of war leaves the poet stranded in a landscape from which the flow of life has been completely drained away. In the poem "The Two Fires," the artist leaves no door open to the future because love has been defeated in the

battle between the two fires: the ancient, creative, and eternal fire of being, and the modern destructive fire epitomised in Hiroshima and Nagasaki:

For time has caught on fire, and you too burn:  
 leaf, stem, branch, calyx and the bright corolla  
 are now insubstantial wavering fire  
 in which love dies: the final pyre  
 of the beloved, the bridegroom and the bride.  
 These two we have denied.<sup>9</sup>

All the elements which formed the world of the vitalist giving evidence of the existence of a self-perfecting principle or life force are denied one by one. Time, as the frame within which evolution was possible, "has caught on fire," and with it the chances of future life. "The lovelier distance ahead" which sounded so promising in "The Moving Image" has become a cul-de-sac. The idea of annihilation pervades the poem and is intensified by the reference to the destruction of the two great nuclei from which love expands on Earth, that is, the vegetable world symbolized in the leaf, the stem, the calyx and the corolla and the animal world represented by its most evolved creatures, Man and Woman, the bridegroom and the bride. The spiritual communion the poet establishes with nature in previous poems is also destroyed and replaced by a weird and almost macabre relationship. Man has eaten the seed of the creative fire contained in the "yellow wheat," but through hate he has transformed and released this seed as a destructive fire:

and have we eaten in the heart of the yellow wheat  
 the sullen unforgetting seed of fire?  
 And now, set free by the climate of man's hate,  
 that seed sets time ablaze.

In the last lines of the poem Judith Wright identifies the two fires, but no sign of hope springs from this identification:

Look, the whole world burns.  
 The ancient kingdom of the fire returns.  
 And the world, that flower that housed the bridegroom and the bride,  
 burns on the breast of night.  
 The world's denied.

In "The Two Fires" the note sounds inflated and the images seem to have been deliberately sought to make the world's troubles more significant. This style contrasts sharply with the delightful spontaneity of earlier lyrics where poetic vision seemed to spring from the poet's mind effortlessly, already clad in language. However, in spite of this impression of artificiality one does not doubt that the poet's despair is genuine. Yet, at the same time one cannot help missing the stir of feeling that the lyrics in *The Moving Image* and in *Woman to Man* produce. Fortunately, "West Wind" and "Western Star," the poems which follow "The Two Fires," bring back part of the lyrical emotion we find lacking in Judith Wright's long poems. In these shorter lyrics the language sounds less grandiose and her pessimism more real and convincing. In "West Wind," Judith Wright states the causes of her grief. She is not afraid of the evil which is part of the world's harmonious order and which in the poem is symbolized by "the snake in the flowering bush" or "the crow that sharpens his beak for the day." What frightens her is the vision of a world bent on destruction. It would be far easier to cease opposing resistance to death, yield to it, and rest, as the voices of the living dead, the victims of war, advise her to do:

You will find no rest in time or being; forget to be—  
blow as we do down the black wind into an easy grave.<sup>10</sup>

The poet's sorrow is so overwhelming that not even the soothing power of Venus, the star of love, can alleviate it:

Too late, most lovely, most sad,  
you touch our sight.  
Your still small dew cannot quench  
the hellfire blaze of the heart.<sup>11</sup>

About Judith Wright's intense pessimism in *The Two Fires*, the Australian critic Inglis Moore writes:

She has deserted the metaphysical for the social, and social poetry is of its nature ephemeral. . . . It is to be hoped that she will return to the metaphysical in her future development, that the lost traveller in her quest for reality may turn from the time's troubles to some timeless form, as she did in the lyrical richness of *The Moving Image*, and the intense affirmation of *Woman to Man*. (1968: 87)

Moore's hope is not without foundation. The poet's brooding over the world's conflicts is only a temporary emotional state. Her pessimism, although well-founded, is too intense to be emotionally sustained for a long time by a poet who is as forward-looking and forward-urging as Judith Wright has proved to be. As for Inglis Moore's commentary on the poet's change from the metaphysical to the social, it should perhaps be added that this change is not as radical as may be inferred from the reading of the passage quoted above. In "The Two Fires," the vision of the primal creative fire triggered by the ravaging evidence of man's deadly fire suggests that the term metaphysical still fits the work of this artist. What she has abandoned is the metaphysics of love in exchange for the metaphysics of death. Her positive view of a universe animated by a creative impulse stronger than any of the forces opposing it has been replaced by the vision of the forces of chaos defeating the power of love.

However, unequivocal signs of recovery come from the poet's renewed desire to peep through the keyhole of darkness to see the other world, "the secret one, the flower-hearted,"<sup>12</sup> a world which, as Judith Wright reminds us in the poem "For a Birthday," is worth fighting for:

Build though the world be falling,  
that crystal, your truth.  
Its eight sides shall be your dwelling  
though time take your breath.<sup>13</sup>

If we assess Judith Wright's poetic production by her own standards we have to consider both the bearing of her work in her immediate context, Australia, and the relevance of her message to the world's modern concerns. In the first case it must be borne in mind that Judith Wright published the main bulk of her work during the forties and the fifties, a time when Australian literature was beginning to forget that it was adolescent and antipodean. The desire to create a recognizable Australian tradition and its sustaining myths was strong in some artists while many others preferred to remain sheltered, in one way or another, from the problems of identity. In *Because I Was Invited* Judith Wright explains that two Australian literary groups, the Jindyworobacks and the Angry Penguins represented these two attitudes, that is, the confrontation between indigenous values and values of European origin in its purest form.

The Jindy movement, alive from the 1930s to the 1950s, attempted to create an indigenous tradition based upon Aboriginal myth and custom. Although they introduced a new and more positive attitude towards the natives, they overemphasized a culture which was alien to the White man and was, consequently, not accepted as the foundation for the building of his literature. The Angry Penguins stood in opposition to the Jindys' Aboriginal claims but failed to provide any real alternative. Instead they sought to incorporate European movements into the Australian context but did not contribute much to the creation of a distinctive Australian voice.

Against this literary backdrop, Judith Wright's poetry may be seen as an attempt to achieve a balance between the strict regionalism of the Jindys and the bush balladists who concentrated exclusively on local values, and the vision of the Angry Penguins or poets like Christopher Brennan whose work did not invoke any recognizable Australian features. The kind of Australianism she proposes does not fall into either an aggressive regionalism or an excessive dependence on European modes. Judith Wright believes an exalted patriotism narrows the scope for cultural development, but she also realises that the artist cannot ignore his country or its problems since this would mean to neglect a very important part of himself. Her poetry is a poetry of integration which weaves the positive and negative elements of the Australian experience into a richly-textured reality and has had a great influence on the way Australians see their past and, therefore, on the way they inhabit the present.

As regards the relevance of her message to modern concerns, her defence of all forms of life and her belief in the regenerating power of love contribute to the universal appeal of her poetry. But the validity and effectiveness of her philosophy also lie in her ability to convey that the poet is enmeshed in the same net of joys and uncertainties as the rest of human beings. Judith Wright knows what it is to be subject to time, suffering and death. She is aware that it is a love for life which provides human beings with the resilience necessary to overcome all obstacles and to look forward to the future with hope. Provided we give ourselves the opportunity to develop our inner potential, we can transform our world into a more humane home.<sup>a</sup>

## NOTES

1. Judith Wright, "Bullocky," from *The Moving Image* (Wright 1971: 17).
2. Wright, "Bora Ring," from *The Moving Image* (Wright 1971: 8).
3. As quoted by Inglis Moore (1968: 76).
4. Wright, "South of my Days" from *The Moving Image* (Wright 1971: 20).
5. Wright, "For New England," (Wright 1971: 22).
6. Wright, "Woman to Man" from *Woman to Man* (1971: 29).
7. Wright, "Flame Tree in a Quarry" (1971: 62).
8. Wright, "Conch Shell" (1971: 31).
9. Wright, "The Two Fires," from *The Two Fires* (1971: 123).
10. Wright, "West Wind" (1971: 124).
11. Wright, "Western Star" (1971: 124).
12. Wright, "Dialogue," from *The Two Fires* (1971: 127-8).
13. Wright, "For a Birthday" (1971: 151).

## WORKS CITED

- MOORE, Inglis. 1968. *On Native Grounds*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson.
- WRIGHT, Judith. 1948. *The Moving Image*. Melbourne: Meanjin P. Rpt. 1962, 1965.
- . 1949. *Woman to Man*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson. Rpt. 1967.
- . 1953. *The Gateway*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson.
- . 1955. *The Two Fires*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson.
- . 1965. *Preoccupations in Australian Poetry*. Melbourne: Oxford UP.
- . 1969. "The Upside-Down Hut." In *The Writer in Australia*. Ed. J. Barnes. Melbourne: Oxford UP.

- . 1971. *Collected Poems 1942-1970*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson.
- . 1975. *Because I Was Invited*. Melbourne: Oxford UP.
- TAYLOR, Andrew. 1987. *Reading Australian Poetry*. Queensland: U of Queensland P.

a