Man becomes great exactly in the degree in which he works for the welfare of his fellowmen.

--Mahatma Gandhi
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

One can illustrate Plato’s view of literature by a quotation of half a dozen pages, but to illustrate the kind of modern criticism which begins with a study of the elements in a writer’s biography that helped to condition his kind of imagination and proceeds to apply this to each one of his works, clearly cannot be done in such brief compass. (Daiches 335-336).

The present study, which is a critical analysis on a few poems of Wright, is divided into five chapters. The first chapter offers an introduction to Australian Literature and focuses on the history and culture of the land and its native occupants who comprised of the Aborigines, the British convicts and the British officials who controlled the expatriated convicts, the gold diggers and a few free settlers. Further it reviews the origin and growth of Australian literary traditions which began as oral bush-ballads of the Aborigines and came of age with poets like Charles Harpur and Henry Kendell. It also highlights A..D. Hope and Judith Wright as mature and significant practitioners of poetry in the contemporary times.

The introductory chapter also outlines the methodology adopted for the study. Though the main concentration on the sociological approach, there are traces of psychological, history-biographical and moralistic criticisms.
Learning about a society involves a knowledge of their history; for, unless writers are clear about the historical background of a particular society they cannot be social critics nor social reformists. Social critics are expected to have a knowledge of the history of the society which coincides with their life, if they happen to be members of that society. As Wright concentrates more on the liberation of the Aborigines with whom she was living with, naturally a look into her biography is quite essential. For three generations Wright has been experiencing life with the blacks. She has been a keen observer of the arrogance and atrocities of the whites on the natives. As she grew up in such condition, she makes a resolution to free those pitiable blacks from the hard clutches of the whites, and the first step is to voice out her feelings concerning this through her poems. Hence, the biographical approach is essential to learn the truth about her writings.

The application of the moral approach goes side by side with the sociological one, for, if writers want to bring a change in the existing society, they have to moralise; and since the main aim of poetry is to teach and moralise the moralistic approach is also touched upon.

Psychological analysis of the Aborigines should be done because in a society where there is a dominant race, it is natural for another race to be suppressed; and the suppressed ones will definitely be affected psychologically, for whose welfare humanists like Wright were working for.
The second chapter on the realm of reality is on Wright’s early poems, through which she could only show her feelings for the downtrodden Aborigines. Poems such as “Bora Ring” and “Niggers’ Leap” reveal to the reader the actual situation in Australia and how the natives were being dominated by the colonizers. An analysis of these poems also show the mental agitations in Wright.

Indeed, the development of her poetic career is also a development of her mind. She can be compared with the English romantic poet William Wordsworth in this aspect. She not only has affinities with him as a nature poet, but also like him, there is a development of her mind, which is revealed in her poems. Most of her social poems especially poems of aggression, were composed during the third phase of her life. Her poems turn violent only after she plunges into action, where nature conservation and the Aborigines’ liberation are concerned. The poems in the second chapter bring the humanist to reality, who on their path wake up and takes serious steps to shake the stubborn Australian Government against the injustice done to the blacks.

“Into the Heart of Darkness”, the third chapter makes a critical study on poems dealing with humanism. As most of Wright’s poems are social ones, humanism plays a major role. The first and major reason for the whites suppressing the blacks was the colour of the skin. This chapter focuses on those poems where the poet emphasizes various meanings for the colour ‘black’. Darkness can mean the colour of the skin, sorrows, turmoils
or hardships meted out by the natives after the arrival of the colonizers. The poems analysed here are not just lamentations but are more mature and more humanistic. It is in these poems that Wright reveals herself as a supporter for the aboriginal land rights and aboriginal freedom. Though she is criticized by her people she was not deterred from proceeding in her mission.

The fourth chapter on a study of birds is highly symbolical since it is a study on birds of both ‘wild’ and ‘mild’ categories. The wild and aggressive birds represent the colonizers while the meak ones represent the helpless Aborigines. Applying the reader-response theory and the deconstruction theory, a study is made on a few poems dealing with birds and animals.

In this concluding chapter a brief survey of Wright’s poems dealing with topics other than Aborigines are also analysed. One or two poems dealing with ‘mother-child’ relationship and a few on war and destruction are discussed here.

While summing up the theories applied to the poems of Wright in this work it is relevant to mention yet another criticism of Edmund Wilson. According to him, a critic uses what might be called a common-sense mixture of psychology and sociology in his endeavors to demonstrate the conditions, which explain the special nature of a writer’s work. Applying his theory to the poems of Wright, we can see psychologically how the poet was affected by the then social conditions of Australia.
The awareness of social factors is not derived from any rigid system, as is that of the Marxists, but is freely related to the psychological elements in studies of a writer’s feeling about his class, the effect on her, of the treatment of the Aborigines, the kinds of fiction which social conventions had on the Aborigines and so on.

A purely analytic critic might argue that if we go into the biography of a writer to find out what is really being said by a work of art, then the work cannot be successful. (Daiches 335). Background knowledge may assist the reader to read properly, to see the work as it really is. But a work of art has an independent existence once it has been created, and in the course of this existence three different aspects may emerge: the work as ‘intended’ by the writer; the work as read by a given reader; the ‘normal’ work as read by those readers who take every meaning in it in its normal sense. The relation between these three and how the biographical information is relevant in establishing this relationship must be looked into in modern criticism.

We cannot just say that biography of a writer has no role to play in his work; in fact, many writers are induced to bring out master pieces in literature as a replay of instances in their life. We can see this in the works of Charles Dickens. When biography of a writer plays a background to his work, naturally we see a mixture of psychology and sociology. Wilson’s essays on Dickens, tell about the imprisonment of Dickens’ father for debt as a key factor. The imprisonment of Dickens having to go to work in a
blacking factory play a determining factor in the imagination of Dickens, which is seen in his novels. Wilson points out the humiliation which Dickens suffered, his bitter indignation with his mother for having wanted to keep him working at the blacking warehouse, the social dubiety of his origins—all these circumstances are worth knowing and bearing in mind, because they help us to understand what Dickens was trying to say.

Similarly, Judith Wright's poetry captures living moments from the past and enables them to live on in the present. The New England poems preserve the lives of the people, right back to the Aborigines, who were moulded by the country until they became part of it. In "South of My Days" all this history is gathered together in the memories of old Dan, serving Wright's family, as a blanket or a hive of honey as age lurches in around him in his cottage. The winter that makes the bony slopes of the table land wince, is also his age; but that age carries the life of his years and so gives promise of the renewal of further summers in their wave of rambler roses and the lives of those who hear even if they do not listen. For them, the country and its stories will still go walking in their sleep.

While these memories of the past make the country their own for the white inhabitants, the Aborigines remain outside their new consciousness. Like little Josie in "Half-caste Girl", "buried under the bright moon", they are shut out of the present by the stone walls of a history that denies them even succession:
Little Josie buried under the bright sun
would like to open her eyes and dance in the light,
who is it has covered the sun and the beautiful moon
with a wallaby skin, and left her alone in the night? (CP 19)

In “Nigger’s Leap”, the Aborigines remain as a slightly guilty memory hidden by the “night that tided up the cliffs”. That night may have carried the same question for the whites as for the Aborigines, but their death has denied the opportunity to answer it. At the heart of Australian history the Aborigines remain a dark absence. The darkening of the life of the Aborigines has lighted up the lives of the whites. The whites have rooted themselves firmly on the island of Australia:

The orange-tree that roots in night
draws from that night his great gold fruit,
and the green bough that stands upright
to shelter the bird with the beating heart. (CP 87)

The orange-tree with its bright, golden fruits and blooming green branches has its roots in the dark of the soil. The lines “draws from that night his great gold fruit”, is enough to tell the world that it is by darkening the lives of the Aborigines that the English have brightened themselves. Their clan is so strong that no storm can undo their roots in the ‘black soil’.

By the death of the Aborigines, the English are actually separated from nature, from the land that gave the Aborigines life and that their memories still holds. Until this breach is redeemed, the whites cannot make
history and are threatened by the same flooding of darkness and oblivion, leaving not so much as a ‘bora ring’ to keep their possession of the land.

Wright’s concern with this guilt at the heart of Australian history is a continuing theme in her work. In Generation of Man, she tells the epic story of her family’s struggle over three generations to establish themselves in Australia, first in the Hunter Valley, then in Queensland and finally in New England. The book tells of the transplantation of European style to a new country, the harsh testing of that style against the realities of the environment, and the way the Wrights slowly learnt to adjust to the nature of the country until they could use it again to support the elegance of the old order. Yet, at the end, the Wrights remain insecure, threatened by the encroachments of new settlers, needing to jeopardize their achievements to purchase still more land. They are sure in their own achievements, but it still remains infirmly rooted in the land.

This was not the case with the Wrights alone. All English settlers in Australia felt the same. In establishing a replica of the European society, they learnt to use the land, but they still did not belong it. The Aborigines had played no part in their story except as occasionally helpers or problems to the people, displacing them from their lands.

The Wrights treated the natives compassionately, but still they remained incomprehensible. That is why the poet feels that although the land belonged to the settlers, they cannot belong to the land. Their conscience keeps pricking them for having massacred the innocent natives:
We are hope, and you kill us.
You will not forget.
We will haunt all your future
Like regret-like regret.
We are love, which soon dies.

All the years that you live
you may try to forget us
no year will forgive

Let us live! Let us live!
No year will forgive you
that innocence dies. (CP278)

Many years later, Wright wanted to overcome this depression by retelling the story of settlement as it must have seemed to the Aborigines. This made her to bring out the Cry for the Dead. Because the Aborigines left no documents, she has to use the records of the white settlers. Wright uses these writings to show a different picture of the steady progress of the settlers. She shows a society founded on crime and punishment, gaining its wealth by the exploitation and destruction of the land and its people.

Cry for the Dead opens with a description of a country supporting a rich aboriginal life of song and ceremony, trade and social innovation. This life is torn apart, first by diseases and social disorder spread from district already subjected to European settlements and then by the white settlers
themselves and their brutal weaponry. She tells how the Aborigines resisted the destruction of their economy and society, and how the tribes were completely exterminated when they stood in the way of the whites' advance. The act was not just deliberate genocide, but an inevitable consequence of cultural arrogance and incomprehension, driven by greed that disrupts all natural harmony, says John Mc Laren in his essay "A Heightened Reality".

The first two stages of Judith Wright were spent in poetry writing. The third stage, which begins in coincidence with the death of McKinney in 1966 is the stage of involvement in many public causes and debates, and continued till her death in 2000. While her The Moving Image and Woman to Man were published earlier, it was only after the death of McKinney that she took to history, politics, criticism; at the same time she was also holding the reins of poetry.

The third phase represents more than thirty years of Wright’s life history and seems to comprise a double movement; an evolving political activism across a number of issues and at the same time uncovering a personal and national history. With her friend Kathleen Mc Arthur, she founded the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland. This falls on the eco-political side. A wildlife magazine was published in response to mindless exploitation of the Noosa district. The threat to the Great Barrier Reef was checked by her work in the Littorel Society. She was also a founder member of the Australian Conservation Foundation. She worked against damming and wood-chipping in Tasmania. She was against
Australia’s involvement in Vietnam, against sand mining on Fraser Island and also against the flight of the Concorde over Central Australia in the early 1970s. She was active in the early organization of the Women’s Electoral Lobby. She protested against uranium mining, boycotted the 1988 bicentennial celebrations, in solidarity with the aboriginal Australians; she was also a patron of the campaign against nuclear power.

Her work for various aboriginal causes is paralleled by her long and very close friendship with Kath Walker, later Oodgeroo and with Nugget Coombs. She worked for the founding of the Aboriginal Treaty Committee at Makararatta in 1978. Her work for the Literature Board of the Australia Council and for the Copyright Council of Australia is immense. Veronica Brady in her “Biography of Judith Wright” (Mead 3-7) says her contribution to various fields is immense. All this work, much of it in the vein of protest, involved considerable travel, organization, negotiating and public speaking; she carried on with much letter-writing, participating in conferences, publications and lobbying. Even a superficial acquaintance with her poetry would show that her imagination worked equally on two axes: the present and the historical.

Her later poetic sequence “For a Pastoral Family” from Phantom Dwelling shows the ambivalences she felt towards her family’s squatting history. For Wright, it is personal history that generates responsibility.

But one can see obviously that a particular version of humanist ideology underlies all her work. Adapting one of Jung’s title, who was
strong influence on 1950s, one could say that Wright's evolving humanism might be termed "modern woman in search of a soul". (4)

The age was the beginning of the nuclear age, the age of potential global self-destruction. Modern thinking, that is logical, rational and scientific, launched by the Enlightenment, bore within it the seeds of its own destruction, agreed Mc Kinney in his philosophical writings. Both Wright and Mc Kinney thought that the western culture had reached an impasse and the only way to come out of it was 'a change of heart'. They felt that the source of all inhumanity was the debused reason of modernity. They felt that this had to be challenged. The only hope for mankind, they decided was in a revolutionized reason, a new human reason; and this reason was closer to poetic thinking. This new reason should be source of a new Enlightenment. Poems of Wright like "Unknown Water" and the "Two Fires", give suggestions to the thought.

One of the obvious things about Wright is the astonishing completeness of her talent, from the very first poems. They are too much as occasional expressions of self. Wright's own point in her "Foreword" to her Collected Poems, tells that her poems have been written out of events, the thinking and feeling, the whole emotional climate and her own involvements of that time.

About Aborigines in Australian poetry, she points out that little had been done by poets to follow up the ambivalent attempts of Harpur and Kendall to bring the Aborigines and their fate out of the shadow of silence.
Mary Gilmore was an exception. The virtual invisibility of Aborigines in
the cities where the vast majority of Australians lived made a national
repression of consciousness easier. Wright said that one could always look
away, pretend that the Aborigines were not there; and this is what most poets
did.

The most frequent critical comment made about Judith Wright was
that in her poetry she succeeded in creating a satisfying fusion of passion
and intellect. Her poems dealing with themes of love are extraordinarily
dealt with in Woman to Man. This concept of love is very close to the
notion of the Life Force, and can preside without incongruity over
celebrations of making a poem or making a child, two dominant themes in
Woman to Man. The notion of an analogous process in the two makings is
emphasized by the physical proximity of “The Maker” to “Woman to Child”
within the collection, so that our attention is drawn to the similarity of
imagery, which represents both poet and pregnant woman as containing
within themselves a whole universe. (Strauss 74-75).

In “Woman to Child” Wright takes pride in affirming that her child,
though independent is still linked to the poet:

    I wither and you break from me;
    yet though you dance in living light
    I am the earth, I am the root,
    I am the stem that fed the fruit,
    The link that joins you to the night. (CP 28)
A.D. Hope, a contemporary Australian poet, in his discussion of Wright as a love-poet, had said that the center of Wright’s world is not love-making but life-making. That is why in most of her love-poems, she tells about child-birth, the relationship of the child to his maker and the link the child carries with him throughout his life.

Her poems in Woman to Man are also philosophical. The lines “This is our hunter and our chase / the third who lay in our embrace” (CP 27), have plenty of world realities hidden in them.

Wright’s language especially in her usage of words makes her poems memorable. When she says in “Woman’s Song”:

Today I lose and find you
whom yet my blood would keep --
would weave and sing around you
the spells and sons of sleep. (CP 28)

One can experience the anxieties of a mother in labour. Use of binaries ‘lose and find’ will tell the reader so many things: the losing of the child in the womb, yet finding it alive beside her, preparations for lullabies, all hammer around the mother-to-be. And yet when she says, “so move in me, my darling, / whose debt I cannot pay”, the mother reaches the zenith of happiness in motherhood.

Destruction is yet another theme the poet touches upon. It was destruction of the country, Australia, by the white settlers; it was destruction of the Aborigines and also destruction of mankind in general. This was the
effect of the World War through which Wright lived. She loved nature and just as the English Romantic poets were writing on the theme of industrialization and destruction of nature, Wright in Australia wrote about destruction of nature due to the English and their scientific and mechanical equipments. This concern was also shared by other Australian poets of the period, notably Kenneth Slessor and R.D. FitzGerald.

Robert Gray, an Australian poet said that she filled the highest role of poet and become the conscience of the country. He says that there was a blazing quality of integrity about her. She wrote about values, mourning the way the land was being destroyed, the way people were being destroyed. Her environmental poems, loved and studied by generations of Australians seemed to had stopped more bulldozers, which even environmental activists could not do.

Besides these, we can see a lot of poems on war and the destruction it had caused. The strong beats in succession seen in her poems make the poems still more effective. Sometimes strong beats are followed by a weak. In “Jet Flight over Derby”, the beats in the lines “And therefore, when land dies? / opened by whips of greed / these planes lie torn and scared makes one realize the ultimate truth of war”; and the poem ends saying:

I cross this raveled shore

and sigh: there’s man no more.

Only a rage, a fear,

smokes up to darken air.
“Destroy the earth! Destroy.
There shall be no more joy.” (CP 280)

Though Wright is an Australian citizen, she did not have a sense of belongingness for a long time. A nostalgic feeling for England lies in some of her poems. In “Two Dreamtimes” she says to Kath Walker, “If we are sisters, it’s in this – / our grief for a lost country” (CP 316). If they are sisters, the poet says, it is in their common relationship to a lost country. Nonetheless, while both may mourn for a ‘once-loved land’, it is an exchange of ‘separate griefs’. When the speaker says “A knife’s between us”, through a symbolic gesture, she acknowledges her place in the robber group responsible for her friend’s grief.

Many poems in Phantom Dwelling deal with a sense of guilt and fear. In the poem “For a Pastoral Family” the poet feels that the day of wrath may be rapidly approaching. She says to her brothers that they were always a part of the process of destruction. The regional terrors of their forebears have expanded to global nightmares:

The fears of our great-grandfathers –

apart from a fall in the English market –

were of spearwood, stone axes, sleeping

they sprang awake at the crack

of frost on the roof, the yawn and sketching

of a slab wall. We turn on the radio
for news from the USA or USSR
against which no comfort or hope
might come from the cattle prizes at show. (CP 408)

It is worth noting how the ‘crack of frost on the roof’, which had been
a friendly noise in her earlier poem “South of My Days”, is a sinister threat
of attack in this poem. In the poem “For a Pastoral Family” there is a
reference to progress and economics because of the settlement:

Well, there are luxuries still,

including pastoral silence, miles of slope and hill,

the cautious politeness of bankers. These are owed
to the forerunners, men and women

who took over as if by right a century and a half

in an ancient difficult bush. And after all

the previous owners put up little fight,

did not believe in ownership, and so were scarcely human.

(CP 406)

The pioneer is a caterpillar, “gnawing at the f'wing' of the edible leaf
of this country” (CP 406); it does not sound a very positive outcome to the
exploration into regional history that had begun so long before.

Inspite of all this, Wright knows that she is no more English. She
belongs to the new role of Australia and has to accept everything there as her
own and treat the natives as brethren. The poems in her later years deal with
the living things, which are small, unconsidered, voracious or even comical
like the yellow frog. They are accepted by the poet as full participants in a natural life in which all are born of fire and possessed by darkness. It was here, a sense of belonging to the continent that made her campaign energetically in the political world, to redress the historical injustices against the Aborigines, is seen. But before she feels that she could become a citizen of Australia, which has changed her, deprived her, she feels that she should cease to be Europe's. In her article "The upside-down Hut" she says that the English in Australia are the antipodes, the opposites, the under-dogs. She affirms that they still lived in a hut that is upside down. "Only now, gradually, is the love-hate relationship we have with the country beginning to become clear to us. Some day we will be able to think of Europe as our Antipodes. Only then will the theme of exile, sacrifice, hope be finally worked out, and our house be right-side-up at last". (331)

Jennifer Strauss, in "Country that built my heart" says that the theme of a disabling inheritance of guilt as an impediment to loving and being at home in, the landscape is not a major preoccupation in her final poetic engagement with the world, that phantoms dwelling which still claims her heart, because it is 'such a bloody wonderful place, even if no one now seems to realize it. (71)

Edmund Wilson sees the writer as a 'man speaking to men' and is most interested in the human implications of the work of literary art, its origins in human hopes and fears and desires and frustrations. The function of the literary critic, as he sees it, is to enlarge the unit observed by the
reader until it includes not merely the text of a work, or even a group of such texts, but the whole pattern of influence and causations, of action and reaction, of psychological and sociological forces of which the given work is the center.

Tragedy is essentially an expression, not of despair, but of the triumph over despair and of confidence in the value of human life. If Shakespeare himself ever had that 'dark period' which his critics and biographers have imagined for him, it was at least no darkness like that bleak and avid despair which sometimes settles over modern spirit. In the midst of it he created both the elemental grandeur of Othello and the pensive majesty of Hamlet.

If there are people who give into suppression, surely the world will beget all sort of villainous men. Every man should remember that he too is a human, who has got all rights to live like the others.

Poetry is an imitation or representation, and the objects of imitation are "men doing or experiencing something" says Aristotle (n.pag.). One could present characters on a grand or heroic scale; or one could treat ironically or humorously the petty follies of men.

Tragedy deals with men on a heroic scale, men 'better' than they are in every day life; whereas comedy deals with the more trivial aspects of human nature, with characters 'worse' than they are in real life. Epic or heroic poetry is like tragedy in this aspect and satirical poetry is like comedy. (Aristotle 66)
But Wright's poems do not line the epic style; nor do they go behind satire. Her poems aim at naturalism, presenting men neither heightened nor trivialized. Her style is a style of today, but with a few exceptions, it is independent of modern fashions; her lines begin without initial capitals except after a full stop, and she uses half-rhymes as well as regular rhymes, and a freedom of rhythm that is carried to extremes; free verse is rare with her, but she fits into the reign of free verse very aptly.

Wright is a modern poet, and modern poetry needs just facts. The busy modern man doesn't have time to enjoy a satire, nor does he have patience enough to wade through an epic. All works of art, which deserve their name, have a happy end. This is what constitutes them as art; we gladly accept the conclusion, which they reach and would not have it otherwise.

Judith Wright's poems dealing with the Aborigines are not just expressions of helplessness but they actually reaffirm faith in human values and therefore in a way are like religion, with a noble aim of removing the pains of life of the downtrodden caused by the affluent fellow humans.

The study of Wright ceases upon suffering and uses it only as a means by which joy may be wrung out of existence, but it is not to be forgotten that she is able to do so only because of her belief in the greatness of human nature and her faith in human being. She does not believe in God but believes in man. Through her poems and prose works, she repeatedly talks about the freedom of the Aborigines, which did have a
positive effect indeed. The Aborigines, though very few, now live like all other human; they are no more regarded as ‘creatures’.

Wright’s poems replace faith in the greatness of God by faith in the greatness of man; her poems perform the function of religion, to make life tolerable for those who participate in its beneficial illusion. It purges the soul of those who might otherwise despair. In its own particular way, it does what all religions do; for it gives a rationality, a meaning and a justification to the universe. The poems tell no stories except those, which make it still more acutely aware of the trivial miseries.

It can be argued that sociological criticism is most usefully applied to certain kinds of prose works, and less usefully to lyric poetry. The prose novel in English, has until fairly recent times, been largely a public instrument, dependent for its pattern of meaning on agreement between the writer and his public about the significance of human action and the nature of morality, while the lyric poet tends to communicate a more private vision of reality.

Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe, on finding himself alone on the island, did not seek to exploit his loneliness by meditation; he wanted to recreate the civilization he had left behind him. The English novel depended on society and on public agreement about what was worth picking out as significant. One could criticise society like Jane Austen did by exploring the relation between spontaneity of feeling and social conventions or as Thackaray and Dickens did. In every case the society is there, to be taken account of and
accepted as a basic fact about human life even when the author wishes to attack or alter it.

On the other hand, a sociological approach has been brought to bear on poetry by Marxists who endeavor to explain works of literature by relating them to the origins in the individual’s response to the class situation in which he finds himself. It was not only the Marxists, but also such critics as F.W. Bateson, who have brought to bear on poetry the sociological approach in his work *A Critical Introduction to English Poetry*.

Bateson divides the history of English poetry into six consecutive schools - Anglo-French, Chaucerian, Renaissance, Augustan, Romantic and Modern. He also distinguishes six social orders to which they correspond consecutively - the period of Lawyer’s Feudalism, the Local Democracy of the Yoemanry, the Centralised Absolutism of the Prince’s Servants, the Oligarchy of the Landed Interests, the Plutocracy of Business and the Managerial State (Daiches 364). Then he proceeds to relate particular poems to the social organization of their period, showing how attitude, image, state of mind, are in each case related to the poet’s response to the social world of which he was a part. Wright is a modern poet who can be placed in the order of the local Democracy of the Yoemanry.

Another important recent work which endeavors to explain the tone of works of literature with reference to the social context and which enables us to look at a work through reflections of the writer is John F. Danby’s *Poets on Fortune’s Hill*. According to Danby, the Hill has different levels
and different sides. Movements up and down, and around and about, are movements combining both these, are possible. Different views are to be expected from different positions on the Hill. (Daiches 365)

Literature is what happens ‘in’ a man certainly. What can happen ‘in’ him, however, will be partly conditioned by what has happened ‘to’ him in virtue of his place and behaviour on the Hill; literature is addressed by a man from his place to those of his contemporaries on the same Hill, and who are in a position to listen to him, continues Daiches.

Wright and A.D. Hope were on the top of the Hill of Fortune. Each, in an active writing career spanning more than five decades, made a consistent and significant contribution to Australian culture. Often a controversial poet, Hope was at different times known for his satire, his direct treatments of sexual subject matter and his formal conservatism. Wright, on the other hand, was acclaimed for her treatment of Australian landscape and subjects. Although in some regards very different poets, they knew each other well and had high regard for the other’s work. Both died within three weeks of one another.

The Hungarian Marxist Georg Lukacs sees a great writer in one who saw the significant truth about what was happening in society however wrongly he may have interpreted in his own personal political views. And although both A.D. Hope and Judith Wright were great writers of the century, it was Wright who looked into what was happening in society. Hope was a conservative while Wright was a realist, looking into social and moral humanistic problems.
The text of Wright, expresses the writer's mind and is a whole, composed of distinguishable parts. According to Levi-Strauss, a French Structural critic, the text is a 'message', which can be understood only by references to the code. The reader gets the message (parole) only by knowing the code (langue) that lies behind it. Structuralist reading is essentially the quest for the code (Guerin 337-338). Structuralism can show us how to identify a work's characteristic features. Any literary criticism inevitably will be totally subjective, even if a critic claims to be a Freudian or a Marxist. Structuralism is needed to make meanings possible. The author encodes a work and the reader must try to decode it. The reader has a part in creating or actually does create the text. If a text does not have a reader, it does not exist; it has no meaning. It is the reader, with whatever experience he brings to the text, who gives it its meaning.

The poems dealt with in the thesis have a decoded message – the universal message of humanism. Since Wrights' place in the development of Australia has a key role on humanitarian grounds, the poems are looked upon in the same angle.