

al Wahhab (1703–92), the founder of the Wahhabi movement, gave the notion of *holy war* an anti-colonial or Westphobic dimension; Abdullah Azzam, creator of the Arab Mujahedeen Services Bureau in the time of Soviet-occupied Afghanistan, redefined *jihad* as guerrilla resistance against infidel invaders; while the contemporary global jihadist movement, as exemplified by Al Qaeda and now the Islamic State, countenances the direct targeting of civilians in terrorist attacks.

President Obama, captured by the ideology of Identity Politics, refuses to address the ideology of modern-day global jihadism. However, as Sebastian Gorka says: "You cannot win a war if you cannot talk honestly about the enemy." Defeating the global jihadist movement depends upon comprehending the connections between Islam and "jihad by the sword" rather than denying them. Gorka blasts Barack Obama for his self-delusion, which has resulted in his White House coming under the influence of Muslim Brother-associated "malevolent actors" with "an interest in censoring any talk of the religious aspects" of the global jihadist movement.

The details of this disturbing phenomenon are explored at greater length in books such as Andrew C. McCarthy's *The Grand Jihad: Islam and the Left Sabotage America* (2011) and Stephen Coughlin's *Catastrophic Failure: Blinding America in the Face of the Jihad* (2015). Nevertheless, Gorka, who once briefed every agency from the FBI's Counterterrorism Division to the CIA and the National Intelligence Council, makes a number of disturbing disclosures of his own. One is that since 2010 a "system of censoring and monitoring", overseen by the White House, has prohibited "mention of Islam or even jihad" during US counter-terrorism training.

Gorka's *Defeating Jihad*, especially the chapter titled "1979: Annus Horribilis—Modern Jihad Goes Global", exposes the folly of the Obama administration's myopia. For instance, in 1979 the Saudi regime struck a deal with armed Islamist insurrectionists after they seized the Grand Mosque of Mecca: leave the kingdom alone and the Saudis would fund the export of their radical ideology around the world. The global jihadist movement, funded by petrodollars, went into overdrive, spurred on by the *holy war* waged in Afghanistan and establishment of a Shia theocracy in Iran. It was from this combustible mix that Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda emerged and, contemporaneously, the West became plagued by jihadist preachers.

Our mortal foes, in short, are the progeny of Sayyid Qutb. President Obama, a prisoner of PC rectitude, is unable to grasp this because, in the first instance, he wrongly fears that opposing—or

evening naming—global jihadism as the enemy of civilisation is a declaration of war against Islam. Gorka disagrees: "The people most imminently in danger, in fact, are the nonviolent and non-extremist Muslims of the Middle East, such as our allies in Jordan and the modern Muslims of Egypt and the United Arab Emirates." We should help them to fight the jihadists with all the behind-the-scenes expertise we can muster, neither "nation building" like George W. Bush nor unilaterally withdrawing forces from the region as Barack Obama did in 2011.

The most important message in *Defeating Jihad* might be summed up in five words: "Fewer drones, more psychological operations." We need to decode a new totalitarian threat, just as George Kennan and Paul Nitze did in the post-war years, and then prosecute the case on the ideological front with alacrity: "During the Cold War, America established publishing houses with CIA funds, and it needs to do so again against a new foe." It is the creed of freedom versus the doctrine of holy war: "There is no such thing as 'lone wolf terrorism'. All jihadists are connected to the global jihadist movement by their shared ideology."

The free world urgently requires an American president who will not celebrate the Muslim Brotherhood (and all its associate organisations) in the United States but ban it, and so begin the counter-propaganda campaign against global jihadism. Sebastian Gorka, predictably, eagerly anticipates President Obama's looming departure from office.

Daryl McCann, a frequent contributor, has a blog at <http://darylmccann.blogspot.com.au>.

JAMIE GRANT

So Long Bulletin

Idle Talk: Letters 1960–1964

by Gwen Harwood

Brandl & Schlessinger, 2015, 181 pages, \$29.95

It is not uncommon for writers to have their correspondence published after their demise, but the late Gwen Harwood had a collection of her early letters printed under the title *Blessed City* (1990) while she was still alive. Assembled by Alison Hoddinott, this series of letters written during the Second World War and addressed to the then Gwen Foster's friend Tony Riddell amounted to an autobiography in disguise, which is how it was classified by the marketing department of Angus

& Robertson, the publisher. As it happens, I was the author of the positive reader's report that preceded this book's acceptance; the letters seemed to me irresistibly funny and moving, a richly detailed portrayal of life in wartime Brisbane. Though they were written long before Gwen Harwood began to publish her poetry, their wit and energy foreshadowed the kind of writing she was to produce in her maturity.

Six years after the death of the poet in 1995, University of Queensland Press issued a 500-page volume of selected letters, edited by Gregory Kratzmann, under the title *A Steady Stream of Correspondence*. Now Alison Hoddinott and a third publisher, Brandl & Schlessinger, have released the letters Gwen Harwood sent to Hoddinott, her friend, editor and occasional co-conspirator, between 1960 and 1964. The publishing history of these letters resembles somewhat the chequered career of their author's poetry in recent years: volumes of Selected or Collected Poems have appeared under the imprints of Angus & Robertson, University of Queensland Press, Penguin Books, and Black Inc, a seeming restlessness that one would expect from an ambitious author impatient for instant progress were it not for the fact that all the changes of imprint have been made since Gwen Harwood's death.

Some, but not all, of the letters in *Idle Talk* were included in Kratzmann's selection, but it can certainly be argued that there is enough new material here to justify a separate publication. To start with, there is an abundance of the cryptic communications Gwen Harwood referred to as her "Sappho Cards", consisting of Victorian and Edwardian book illustrations to which she added her own cartoonish captions, in a style reminiscent of the once celebrated Glen Baxter. More significantly, these letters come from the period when the "Tasmanian poet-housewife" became "the centre of a literary storm", as the newspapers of the day referred to the incident.

That "storm" was the climax of several years of amusing literary deception (one would not go so far as to use the word *boax*) by the ever-mischievous "poet-housewife". In the 1950s and early 1960s there were all too few outlets for the publication of new poems, and the editors of journals such as *Meanjin* and the Red Page of the *Bulletin* were reluctant to accept too many contributions from the same poet. Thus Gwen Harwood invented two new male poets,

Francis Geyer and Walter Lehmann, and, making use of the postal addresses of friends such as Tony Riddell and Alison Hoddinott, submitted her own poems under these names. Before long Geyer and Lehmann were more highly regarded in the literary world than Harwood herself. In a letter from early in 1961 she recounts Vivian Smith discussing the editorial choices of James McAuley at *Quadrant*: "he agreed ... that McAuley had rejected magnificent works of Gwen Harwood and yet taken the undistinguished Mr Geyer's".

This letter is disapproving about the recent appointment of McAuley to a position at the University of Tasmania, as she claims to "feel depressed too that second-rate polemics & politics should be awarded a Readership"; yet in the letter on the next page she describes meeting McAuley in person, and finding him "reasonably human". The same letter also describes her first meeting with Vincent Buckley, who had annoyed her three years earlier (in Kratzmann's volume) with "a nasty kick in the *Age Lit. Sup.*", and who had also enraged her by publishing an article about the current state of Australian poetry in which the names of Francis Geyer and Walter Lehmann were mentioned admiringly, while Gwen Harwood was entirely overlooked.

Buckley's arrival in Hobart, she wrote to Hoddinott, "nearly caused a savage fight as I was completely captivated by the Irish charm & Bill [her husband, Bill Harwood] didn't like him at all". At his first lecture, "Vin looked like a poetic spiv: black Italian-style hair, greenish eyes, cupids bow mouth, aquiline nose; small, about Vivian's size; old black sweater, spongy shoes." From this point onward in her letters both McAuley and Buckley are mentioned only with affection and admiration, but for readers of this book her initial venomous responses are perhaps more enjoyable. At a dinner a few days after the lecture, referring to Leonie Kramer's editorship of the annual *Australian Poetry* anthology, she reports the following conversation:

Vincent: Someone should send her some fake poems.

Jim: Well I've done my share of that; no more for me after Ern Malley.

Vincent: How about you Gwen?

Gwen: O.K. I'll write yours for you.

Vincent: And I'll write yours.

*These letters come
from the period when
the "Tasmanian
poet-housewife"
became "the centre
of a literary storm",
as the newspapers
of the day referred
to the incident.*

The next evening, at a different place, where "Vin took his shoes off & extended holey socks to the fire", and "the topic was Randolph Stow and Chris Koch", "Vincent suddenly said across the room 'Well, have you got that poem ready yet Gwen?'" In reply she produced from her purse a sonnet titled "Eloisa to Abelard".

The first version of this sonnet spelled out the name VINCENT BUCKLEY if read acrostically down the first letters of each line. Buckley himself wrote a poem called "The Sentry" which Gwen Harwood submitted under her name for consideration in *Australian Poetry*; in the end, it arrived too late for consideration in Leonie Kramer's 1961 edition of the anthology, but instead it appeared in the 1962 edition, edited by Geoffrey Dutton. By this time "Eloisa to Abelard" had been reworked, so that its acrostic now read SO LONG BULLETIN, while a companion sonnet, "Abelard to Eloisa", had been added, with the acrostic FUCK ALL EDITORS in its first letters. Walter Lehmann submitted these poems to the *Bulletin*, and they were promptly accepted and published.

A "gibbering" Desmond O'Grady, acting literary editor of the *Bulletin*, who had first suspected Vivian Smith of being the real Walter Lehmann, telephoned the perpetrator to demand, "Why did you write them?"

Harwood: They're beautiful sonnets, if you read them horizontally.

O'Grady: Well people do usually read poetry horizontally, but these read vertically as well.

Harwood: Purely fortuitous.

O'Grady: (At bursting point) I'll have to believe you.

By this stage Gwen Harwood was writing to Alison Hoddinott, "Walter Lehmann is now dropping right out of the poetic field. I haven't quite arranged for his successor but WATCH ALL SONNETS."

His successor was Miriam Stone, whose postal address was that of the Hoddinotts in Armidale. She was "a lovely lady poet, married (of course, how else would she have any grasp of the world's sorrows?) with child. Nobody will be expecting me to be a lady poet." In a subsequent letter outlining the details of her latest imposture, Harwood was confident that no one would suspect Miriam Stone's true identity: "they won't, as she don't write no acrostics".

The letters in this book certainly contribute to an understanding of Gwen Harwood's motives in the creation of her various pseudonyms. The strongest of all those motives seems to have been

nothing more than pure mischief, and her account of the *Bulletin's* discovery of her acrostics is positively gleeful.

Yet the message in those acrostics referred to two matters that concerned her elsewhere in the letters included here and in Kratzmann's selection. The *Bulletin*, for so many years Australia's foremost cultural and current affairs publication, was in the process of being merged with Donald Horne's newspaper the *Observer*, and she, like many others, feared for its future. Hence SO LONG BULLETIN. As for the editors, it is clear from many of her letters that Gwen Harwood was annoyed by the treatment of her submissions by several different poetry editors, the worst offender being Clem Christesen of *Meanjin*, though Buckley, McAuley, Kramer, Dutton ("whose head is big as a button") and Tom Shapcott all are the subject of unflattering remarks at various stages.

As with Buckley and McAuley, her attitude to these literary figures tends to alter completely once she comes to meet them in person. When a visit to Hobart by Leonie Kramer was announced she writes, "I don't think I'll like Dr Kramer", adding, "Secretly of course I am terrified of Leonie Kramer and will probably cut my arteries on a wineglass & be another victim of capitalist power." Then Kramer arrives, and turns out to be "Real cool": "She is beautiful, with ice-blue eyes that shine like jewels, to coin a phrase; tall, with lovely figure & a 30 gn. suit to enclose it, topped by a velvet silk-lined evening coat."

Resentment of publishers, editors and critics is a familiar theme amid the shop-talk and correspondence of most writers. Some of this resentment, in Harwood's case, is understandable: at the beginning of this selection of her letters she has just submitted the manuscript of her first book-length collection of poems to Angus & Robertson, but more than three years pass before the simply-titled *Poems* appears in print. In the meantime the author has taken to referring to the publisher by the name many other writers used at the time, Anguish & Robbery, elaborated sometimes to Arthritic & Rheumatic ("O the bastards"). "God knows what's happened to the Good Book; it will be out of date," she complains. "There's no time clause in the contract I signed, so I can do nothing but grind, grind, gnash, gnash, gizzle & moan."

For all the entertaining insights into the literary scene in these letters, there are as many lively vignettes of everyday life in the Harwood, Hoddinott and Wright families. Alison Hoddinott, a daughter of the Tasmanian Senator Wright, had been a student of Bill Harwood's in the English Department at the University of Tasmania; her

youngest sister, Janet ("who is a Lovely Girl as well as a prefect"), was born at the same time as the oldest of the four Harwood children, John, known now as an academic and novelist. Alison Wright, after her graduation and marriage to Bill Hoddinott, became an academic at the University of New England in Armidale, and many of these letters express the hope that Bill Harwood, too, will obtain an academic position there: "O I hate Tasmania ... if only we could all be together in lovely Armidale."

That nothing came of these hopes means that instead these letters came into existence, for which readers in general, as well as the intended recipients, must be grateful. No writer has taken more care than Gwen Harwood did to always entertain her audience, whether that be the Hoddinott family or poetry readers everywhere. The letters return the reader to the poetry, so that a single voice begins to emerge across all of her writing, witty, sharply observant of physical detail, mischievous and knowledgeable (she seems better-read and more perceptive about poetry, both at home and internationally, than any of the experts who come to visit Hobart, whether they be poets, critics or visiting lecturers such as John Betjeman, Hal Porter and D.J. Enright). Gwen Harwood was never just a "poet-housewife": even in composing the text of the slightest "Sappho Card" she was a major Australian writer. This book cannot be recommended too highly.

Jamie Grant is a frequent contributor, most recently of three poems in the April issue. His latest book is Glass on the Chimney: And Other Poems.

HAL G.P. COLEBATCH

Romantic Luddites

The Romantic Attack on Modern Science in England and America and Other Essays

by Roger Sworder

Angelico Press, 2015, 172 pages, \$33

I read Roger Sworder's previous book, *Mining, Metallurgy and the Meaning of Life*, with enjoyment, profit and fascination. It remains on my bookshelf and I quote from it quite often.

When I saw he had published another book, *The Romantic Attack on Modern Science in England and America*, I sent off my \$33 for it at once. To call it a disappointment is an understatement. Not that

the subject matter is dull or unimportant. It is very important indeed. The disappointment springs from the fact that in the fight for civilisation the book is loudly on what I believe is the wrong side.

Perhaps as I write this I am not in the best position to be entirely objective. My wife delivered my copy of the book to me in hospital, where I was being treated in an intensive care unit and was being kept alive by machines that manifested themselves as a wall of screens and flashing lights. I did not, at that moment, feel it would have been fair of me to join in the actually now widespread attack on modern science.

The book looks, with plain approval, at three "romantic" English and three American poets, led by the most poisonous fruitcake of them all, William Blake. (It was a particularly delicious fruitcake that had put me into hospital with potassium poisoning.)

Blake is followed by Wordsworth, Coleridge, Emerson, Melville and Edwin Arlington Robinson, though I do not think it is in every case correct to lump the whole canon of their works together. Wordsworth and Coleridge certainly changed their ideas as they grew older. Nonetheless what Sworder appears to be praising in them is their attacks on science and modernity. I propose, for reasons of space, to deal here almost entirely with Sworder's treatment of Blake, as the most representative, and also the most extreme, of the anti-scientists.

Blake, he argues, saw himself as having a mission to totally destroy English culture, as exemplified in his day by the likes of Burke, Newton, Reynolds and Locke, for whom he felt only abhorrence and contempt. Sworder says, "Blake's claim that the purpose of the new science is to destroy the wisdom of the ages to gratify envy makes good sense." No wonder Blake has been a magnet for cranks and even Satanists such as Aleister Crowley (who made Blake, along with himself, a saint in his own very peculiar church).

The term "Romantic" has many, many meanings, and when I use the term here it is to refer to the six broadly similar people dealt with here, not, say, to romantics like Robert Louis Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling, Edgar Allan Poe, H.P. Lovecraft, Lord Dunsany or Rider Haggard, or even my own stories about felinoids flying spaceships or cricket-playing Morlocks.

It does not refer to C.S. Lewis, one of the most important things in whose life was a search for, or knowledge of, an indefinable "joy" and longing, which the German Romantics like Novalis called *die blaue Blume*. And which Lewis came to believe came from God. Lewis wrote a book, *The Great Divorce*, specifically to rebut Blake's *The Marriage of*