I have been unable to hear her voice clearly, though it was something to be able
to hear it faintly. There always seems to be a word or two in each sentence that
I can't hear nomatter [sic] how often repeated, and that rather destroys the
sense of anything she is trying to tell me

—Peter Hopegood.

Like Peter Hopegood, I have strained to hear Olive Hopegood’s voice
in the records of Australian literary history. In 1946 her poetry manu-
script, tentatively titled Voyage to Ithaca, was in the Meanjin office. It
is now lost. Although Meanjin’s editor at the time, Clem Christesen,
had agreed to publish it, the journal was financially troubled and
post-war printing was problematic. But it seems that these delays were
not explained to the poet who was having difficulties of her own. She
was in the process of divorcing Peter Hopegood, who was also a poet
and a good friend of Clem’s. Peter had been the driving force behind
Olive finally submitting her poetry which she had long withheld,
doubtful of its worth. Although the separation was amicable it pro-
duced a situation in which the manuscript became irrevocably caught
between Olive, Clem and Peter. From the web of letters between them
and other mutual friends, it seems the only way Olive could extricate
herself from Peter was to abandon publishing the manuscript.

There were, of course, other factors in play. The manuscript was at
Meanjin for over two years, by which time Olive had despaired and
wanted to be in possession of her work again. In the age before the
photocopier it seems there was only one final copy. As well as this
delay, Clem had continued to negotiate the progress of the publication
with Peter instead of Olive, even suggesting that Peter finance the
venture to speed things along if he wished. Peter refused, admitting
that Olive felt he had interfered too much already. Olive was then diag-
nosed with ‘a spot on the lung’ and saw her necessary removal to the
drier climate of Adelaide with her new husband as providential. Her
second husband, Jan Ebbinge-Wubben, was universally disliked by her family and friends, which seemed to isolate Olive from her old literary cohorts of the time of her marriage to Peter. Clem was part of this set, as were Hugh McCrae, Guy Howarth, Flora Eldershaw, John Harcourt, Donovan Clarke, Kenneth MacKenzie, Tom Inglis-Moore and others. Olive disappeared, taking her poetry with her. None of her relatives knew exactly when or from what she died and they received nothing from her estate. It seems that the only people to have read the manuscript were: Peter Hopegood, who greatly admired the poetry but who is now dead; Clem who no longer recalls the work although in a recent letter he wrote ‘in those days I thought she might develop into a very important poet’; critic Sidney Musgrove (also deceased) whose appraisal of the manuscript for Meanjin was mostly negative, ‘it is a slight work—“little poetry” and therefore worth a little volume’; and, presumably, her husband, Jan, given that he wanted to set some of Olive’s poems to music. Jan seems the most likely candidate for possession of the manuscript, but he has been untraceable.

So Olive drifted into literary obscurity. She has one poem included in the collection The Penguin Book of Australian Women Poets, edited by Susan Hampton and Kate Llewellyn in 1986, but she does not appear in comprehensive new anthologies like Susan Lever’s 1995 The Oxford Book of Australian Women Poets, nor is she listed in the traditional signifier of posterity, The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature. She has eight listings in the Austlit database, naming her poems which appeared in some anthologies from the 1940s and a number of single poems published in Meanjin and Southerly in the same period. So although Olive was not always as unknown as she is now, it seems that after hope of her book being published disappeared, so did her desire to publish in any form. In a letter from 1952, well after this flurry of publishing in the 1940s, Olive writes to her aunt and uncle about the poetry she is working on at that time. She refers to a long poem she has ‘had to grow up to,’ but there are no more records of attempts at publication after Clem returned the manuscript to her.

All that remains outside these published works is a little-disturbed box in the National Archive in Canberra labeled ‘Peter Hopegood.’ The box contains a number of Olive’s earlier poems which she amateurishly bound for Peter herself. As well as being filed under Peter’s name, the inscription on the small volume is disturbingly possessive. It reads:

Poems by Olive Hopegood.
Property of Peter Hopegood solely.
They were written before
divorce and her subsequent
remarriage.

The hand is not recognisably either Olive’s or Peter’s. This is a
telling inscription on Olive’s only book. It is typical of Peter’s consist-
tent admiration for Olive’s poetry, and his belief that the poems
should be published, that he kept this tatty volume. But the poems are
filed under his name, and with an inscription equally illustrative of the
suffocating nature of his desire to publish her work which had long
set Peter and Olive at odds.

The written remains of Olive’s story are also scattered across
archives in Melbourne and Sydney, mainly preserved in Peter’s letters.
He was a prodigious letter writer and knew writers well regarded
enough for archives to retain their correspondences. Olive’s letters are
sometimes included with these and occasionally some of her poems.
But more numerous than her poems are Peter’s promises to send some
of them in his next letter, promises which are only very rarely fulfilled.
In an early letter to Hugh McCrae, the struggle between Olive and
Peter over the dispatch of Olive’s poems is actually audible:

...So although I may be hypnotised by the sound of my own lines, I have
decided to send you a nip or two of the latest vintage, and, as I have at long last
managed to persuade Olive to let me send you some of her poems, I am taking
advantage of the fact before she snatches them out of my hand and goes bush
again which might happen at any moment. WHICH HAS JUST HAPPENED,
SO, AS YOU WERE.

Peter was always a great advocate of Olive’s work, but she seems to
have been very reticent about promoting her poems either with friends
or publishers. In the early stages of her career she only published
under the pseudonym Felix Reb. These poems belonged to a quasi-
romantic genre that is far removed from Olive’s later modernist work
in the lost manuscript.

Compounding Olive’s reserve was the equal and opposite force of
Peter’s exertions with regard to promoting her work. This began in
the earliest days of their marriage and continued despite Peter’s
awareness that Olive did not share his own preoccupation with
external approval. The following was written to Hugh in 1935:

The addenda are not ready yet, When I send them I will enclose some of Olive’s
poems since you have so kindly offered to read them. I am far more concerned
to see them published than she is. However firmly she may deny it, I feel that
she now needs that additional encouragement which publication brings.
The promotional work Peter did for Olive’s modernist manuscript with Clem was the final push in his fifteen-year-long endeavour to convince Olive to publish her work, an endeavour she had resisted from the outset. Olive’s phrase ‘not every piglet makes a Hamlet’ foretells her own resistance to self-promotion and literary status. She seemed to prefer being the little piggy who, to avoid the literary marketplace, ran all the way home.

Perhaps Olive’s silence is attributable to lack of self esteem, a possibility that may well be intrinsically connected to Peter’s role in promoting her work. Peter records that Olive mistrusted his appraisal of her poems: ‘my opinion as to their excellence being discounted in her eyes as naturally prejudiced.’ Because it was Peter who pressured Olive into publishing, if she felt that the delay in the publication after the initial acceptance of her manuscript signified a lack of quality in her work, this would confirm her earlier-held suspicions that Peter had overrated her talent. This doubt was perhaps compounded by the emotionally fraught separation and divorce proceedings during which Olive also seems to be aware that Peter is using the manuscript negotiations as a means of staying in contact with her. She tries to alter this situation when she writes to Clem asking him to negotiate with her:

Mrs J. Ebbingh-Wubben
4 Bambleth Square
Elizabeth Bay, Sydney

Dear Clem,

Peter rang me this morning to say that he had a note for me from you which he had forgotten to forward with the copy of Meanjin I received from him. As he had not your note with him when he rang I have only a somewhat confused version of what it contained but gathered that you received my manuscript.

If, in future, you wish to contact me about this m.s. will you please write directly to the address I have given you as this present indirect system of communication assists in maintaining a situation which is extremely painful and disagreeable to me. That you should be under a misapprehension as to the situation is, more or less, understandable.

Yours Sincerely,

Olive.

But Clem seems to have disregarded her wishes.

In addition to this, Olive is right to be dubious about other people’s perceptions of Peter’s effusive response to her poetry. Perhaps there was something of a boy’s club at work. Clem is a case in point, although his opinion seems to fluctuate between this implied compliment referred to by Peter:
...You, of course, are right about my wife's work. It betrays a new approach to
Life, peculiar to this age, and yet old as music, old as the human heart, itself,
and like the human heart also forever young.  

and a later letter in which Clem writes his own opinion of Olive's
poetry: 'With all respect however I do not agree with your assessment
of her quality.'

It is difficult to know just how Peter's literary friends felt about
Olive's poetry and Clem is not the only such enigma. In the early days
of their marriage, Peter sent some of Olive's poems to Hugh, and
when a response was not forthcoming he reacted with a noticeable
increase of pressure on his new friend:

...I had hoped that you would have written a word appreciative of Olive's 'My
People' of which I think I sent you a copy. Perhaps, viewed singularly, Olive's
individual efforts do not stir the imagination. Viewed collectively however, and
she has done a lot of work in the short time we have been married, I think they
reveal a new method, a new outlook. I hope to send you a batch of her stuff
some time. You will may then see what I mean when I claim that she came out
of a tree, or out of an ocean wave...  

This letter clearly makes it difficult for Hugh to be anything other
than 'appreciative' in his appraisal without offending Peter. However,
Hugh does write about Olive's poetry in a letter to editor H.M. Green
regarding the collection Australian Poetry 1943 in which Olive's
poem 'Feathers' was published:

Olive Hopegood's 'Feather Head' is up in the air and rapturous. I loved

and the white clock's fears
are counted and thrown away
until the house is grey
with wild goose-feathers
while we who are tiger-striped
for night and day
do not care to sing...
we prey.

(the three dots after 'sing' seem better placed than after 'prey'.)
the murmurous stairs
descending into night

reaches perfection.  

Because this letter is an outside correspondence, unable to offend Peter,
presumably Hugh's comments are unguarded, although their friend-
ship may still colour his opinion. However, the candour of his
comment may be measured against his next sentence: 'I am a friend of
Kim Mackenzie, but, cheering his prose, I don't like his poetry.' One
dubious element of Hugh’s praise for Olive’s poem is his addition to the title. Hugh often has jokey names for friends and places so it may just be a pun, but ‘Feather Head’ is a suggestive alteration.

In addition to Peter’s exchanges with Clem and Hugh concerning Olive’s poetry, writer Tom Inglis-Moore is also drawn into Peter’s search for praise of Olive. Peter writes this to Hugh about Tom:

Lastly but preeminently the fact that he induced my wife to surrender some of her poems for his inspection, a feat which I have never been able to bring off...I understand that Tom has written at length and enthusiastically about Olive’s verse to you and that he proposes to hand on the selection for your appraisal before long. This is what I have been trying to engineer for the last two years but Olive has always hung tight onto all her efforts..."  

But there is no letter from Tom in the McCrae archives in the relevant time frame, only this reference to Olive: ‘Peter Hopegood and his wife liked some of the stuff [his own poems] in a way that was encouraging.’  

For a letter written less than two months after the above cited meeting, Tom does not impart the sense that Olive made much of an impression, especially as he only refers to her as Peter’s wife. There is further evidence of Tom’s lack of interest in Olive’s work in his selection of poems for Angus and Robertson’s Australian Poetry 1946 in which he prints two of Peter’s poems and none of Olive’s. In addition, his book, Social Patterns in Australian Literature, which was published much later, in 1971, but that he that claims was begun in the 1930s, has five mentions of Peter but never refers to Olive. Perhaps Tom waxed lyrical about Olive’s poems for Peter’s sake and never intended to write the letter and send the poems, or perhaps the letter and the poems are just lost. Whatever happened, Peter’s sentiments about Olive’s poetry are seldom reiterated with his level of enthusiasm by his acquaintances.

It is unclear how Olive felt about the opinions of her contemporaries, or if she felt that their views were coloured by her (and their) relationship with Peter. Perhaps Peter offers the most adept reading of Olive’s silence when he points to the nature of a marriage between poets. Although he calls them ‘The Hopegood Team’ he also acknowledges that to some degree he ‘crowded her out.’ Not surprisingly, there seem to be numerous pitfalls inherent in the competition between a husband and wife both aspiring to be poets. Lynne Strahan, in her survey of Meanjin’s history, lists Olive as a ‘notable contributor’ saying her ‘gem-like brevity, shown in such poems as “Ithaca”, was unfortunately eclipsed by the anarchic prolixity of her husband, Peter Hope-
good" although Strahan does not elaborate on how she came to this conclusion. The two wrote very differently. Peter's bard-like songs and ballads and his complicated mythological and etymological speculations produced poetry so esoteric that he was compelled to add long explanations, in prose, to his collections. His poems are not really comparable to Olive's on any level. However, while Peter slips further into obscurity in contemporary scholarship, he was certainly more successful in publishing than Olive was when they were alive. It is impossible to gauge the impact that marrying an already experienced writer almost twice her age had on Olive as a young woman poet but Peter writes a letter which may at least give some sense of the complications:

Well Olive has got out of being published once more. The excuse this time is that it will prejudice my chances of help from the Literary Fund if both of us put in simultaneously. I had already thought of this but Gwy Howarth had overruled the objections and persuaded me to have a go while Maconess [sic] is willing. I told Olive I thought it would be expecting too much of them to publish us both at once. But she would not see it. So now I have crowded her out. There is however some sense in what she says. She reckons they'll have less difficulty in understanding my dope which will thus act as a gatecrasher for hers. Whereas if she crowns them with some of her acrostics right at the start, it may put them off the Hoptegood team altogether."

The power exchange between Olive and Peter over who should publish is almost incomprehensible in this letter. Olive 'would not see' that both of them submitting work would jeopardise their chances, but it also seems that it was her 'excuse' not to send her work on the grounds that it will prejudice Peter's chances. However she stood in this debate, Olive eventually decided not to send her work in favour of Peter's more 'acceptable' poetry. Perhaps she felt guilty about rivalling Peter. Conversely, of course, this may have been the outcome Olive wanted, given her usual stance on self promotion. Peter's letter is too muddled to disentangle whose desire was being projected onto whom, but clear enough to illustrate the problem.

What is clearer is that they both feel Olive's poems are less acceptable, perhaps less mainstream than Peter's. The archive collections did not include any actual 'acrostics,' like those that Peter attributes to Olive. He may not be alluding to the notion of word puzzles in the text itself but rather the complexity in Olive's later, disjunctively intertwined imagery, as in 'This Is The Hour':

This is the hour
when the black dog is eating moonstones
and on the dark river
gipsies are singing
of moons made of blood.
This is the hour
when moths speak of insistence
to a flame of white silence
when clocks press the unwanted minutes
into caps of metal.
This is the hour
when Proserpina forgets
to cup the moon
in her hands
and love is a flower of paper
under glass and dust.

(Meanjin Papers 2.2 [1943], 12)

This modernist work is furnished with deliberate complications. Its setting is precariously balanced on the lack of concrete holds created by the variety of metaphors. The ‘hour’ is indecipherable, as is the physicality of place. The poetic voice is audible but disembodied above fears that transmute into images that share a fascination with the inexorable nature of time. Olive refused to interpret the blend of images in this poem for Clem, but Peter is happy to. He says:

I have given your message to my wife, but I doubt if it will have any effects so far as eliciting any interpretations is concerned. For me, of course, the black dog eating moonstones is one with the sun-devouring dragon, only the dog is closer to humanity than the cosmic dragon which I imagine gives a clue to the sort of eclipse indicated in the poem.20

Peter, somewhat egocentrically, reads the poem in relation to his own research into universal symbols in mythology.

Interestingly, this poem also shares some ground with Judith Wright’s first manuscript, The Moving Image, particularly the title poem which has as similar preoccupation with ‘Time.’ Olive and Judith Wright submitted their manuscripts to Clem at Meanjin almost simultaneously. The contemporaneity of these manuscripts, and their authors, invites an examination of what led one poet to success and an illustrious career, while the other toppled into obscurity. Perhaps Wright had filled the young woman poet niche in Australia. In one of Peter’s letters to Clem, he had this to say about the well-favoured Wright compared to Olive:

...Don’t forget about Olive’s poems. You’ve got a winner there also, though not so obvious a winner as Judith Wright. Will take longer to be recognised here perhaps, but if we can get a really first class book to send to England, I don’t think we’ll look back. Olive is another Mallarmé, make no mistake about that,
a Celtic Mallarmé, and one who owes nothing to Mallarmé but is just that way in her own right.\textsuperscript{21}

But Clem was too tardy in heeding Peter’s advice. While Olive was still waiting for a word from him, The Moving Image had been sent to the press.

Despite the thematic connection between ‘The Moving Image’ and ‘This is the Hour’ the works are stylistically disparate. This is perhaps one explanation for the equally disparate receptions for each poet. Wright, in her foreword to Collected Poems, made these comments about her writing:

The poems have been written out of the events, the thinking and feeling, the whole emotional climate of my own involvements of that time [1942 to 1985]. Because of that tide of change, their background and therefore part of their significance will be unfamiliar to many people. Today’s shifts in critical practice have begun to tear texts from their contexts.\textsuperscript{22}

As well as claiming the need for context, Wright illustrates the concrete hold her poems have on the external world of their time and place. Her dictum is not applicable to Olive’s poetry which, with its fantastic dimensions and ungrounded metaphors, is less reliant on the social context to illuminate meaning. Rather than having particular clarity in the time and place in which they were written, what was ‘unfamiliar’ in Olive’s poems remains so because it is created by word play rather than the direct engagement with the external. This is not to divorce her poetry entirely from time and place as it relies, partly, on the conventions of the modernism born of the social upheaval caused by war, but to recognize that the need for context to decode Olive’s poetry is tempered by her stylistic choices. Where the critic Sidney Musgrove complains of Olive’s ‘spasmodic mutations into modernity’ in his appraisal of her manuscript, his review of The Moving Image praises Wright’s modernism as ‘almost never suffer[ing] from the fault of straining after effect, of being too clever by half’.\textsuperscript{23} He likes her ‘naturalness’.\textsuperscript{24}

While John Hawke (in Southerly 61.1) warns against what he regards as the misconception involved in reducing Wright’s oeuvre to landscape poetry, she nevertheless depicts what is solid, and particularly what is solidly Australian, and takes these images as starting points from which to move into more abstract poetry. By contrast, Olive’s later poems are very rarely firmly set in either a definitive landscape or a recognisable place. Her descriptive power is of the psyche, whereas Wright’s is of a physical environment which becomes repre-
sentative of a psyche. When Musgrove reviewed Wright’s collection for *Meanjin*, this sense of locality is an aspect he praises: ‘Her poetry is the true landscape poetry, in which the physical scene becomes, in Blunden’s words, the “landscape of...being”.’ He is equally pleased by the ‘Australianness’ of these landscapes, a topic about which A.D. Hope writes:

> All the poems of *The Moving Image*, except ‘The Company of Lovers’, are set firmly in, and help in turn to set forth, the picture of New England, its landscape, its history, its daily life.26

Olive’s alternative is to manipulate symbols in the reverse, the psyche being illuminated by physical metaphors. But, by this logic, the physical symbols are subordinated to the representation of an inner world; thus the physical images become inconsistent—by design. Hawke quotes Wright’s reading of these kinds of strategies as part of ‘the Romantic-Symbolist approach ...but instead of taking the path of the European “inner exploration”, it was turned outward to explore the possibilities of the country itself and the Australian history and character.’27 Olive seems to have been following the European model which may have served to alienate her work from her contemporaries at this time.

The poem partially quoted above in one of Hugh McCrae’s letters, ‘Feathers,’ epitomises Olive’s technique. It is a meditation on the symbols of the feather and the moon, in what is mostly a nightscape, although the speaker belongs to the ‘we who are tiger-striped for night and day.’ There is an incongruous cast of animals inhabiting this striated landscape including the tiger, the monkey, the pigeon, the night bird, and the wild geese, all of which act as universal symbols in this essentially characterless poem. That these animals are specifically un-Australian prevents Olive’s work from being associated with another popular avant-garde movement in the Australian poetry scene of this era, the Jindyworobaks. This school sought some essential Australian-ness with which to inflect their poetics in order to move beyond the fashion for repeating European motifs. They felt that such motifs were incongruous with both the Australian environment and national psyche. There is very little sense of their ‘Australia’ in Olive’s poetry.

Perhaps the greater stability of Wright’s poetry was more pleasing to the distraught post-war psyches of modern Australians, or at least those in the decision making literary establishment. Wright’s poem ‘The Moving Image’28 is both more personalised and depersonalised in its depiction of time and waste. She is personal in her choice of the
clock that counted through the childhood days in her family home. But the poem becomes depersonalised when madness is made concrete (and perhaps safely removed from the speaker) when it is characterised by Tom of Bedlam, rather than in the ‘us’ who are sent mad ‘again’—this ‘again’ perhaps also retaining the option for returning to sanity ‘again.’ Wright describes:

Poor Tom, in whose blood’s intricate channelled track,
in the unsailed sea of his heart, in his witchball eyes,
in his senses that spoke and mind that shaped a world,passionate terrible love never ceased burning

This array of images is as diverse as those Olive writes, but in Wright they are connected to, and linked around, a single, comprehensible image, that of Tom’s human body; the veins, heart and eyes. They do not float in a landscape devoid of concrete holds like that in which Olive’s images drift and collide.

Olive’s poetic structures regularly use such modernist strategies of complexity, obscurity and discontinuity. For Musgrove, in his capacity as reviewer of Olive’s manuscript, neither the stylistic devices of modernism nor the political biases of feminism were desirable. And Olive’s content is often distinctly feminist. Her poem ‘My Sister,’ which Musgrove would have cut from her manuscript, is a decadent call to personal abandonment.

My Sister . . .

(My sisters, let us go mad for God.—St. Teresa)

My sister, let us drink methylated spirits
out of beautiful pliant glasses
whispering still
of the colour of canals.

That will be a little shout
beneath the plated cover.

Let us tread grapes in the street
’till the red wine runs to the gutter
Let us wear furs against our naked skins
and give to the rain and wind white linen.
Let us toss up our febrile thoughts
against the coloured air
and sway with laughter,
pretending to embrace.

Let us pretend to shout
beneath the plated cover.

My sister, let us be epicene
and run in wooden shoes
across the splintering echoes
of erotic tiles.
My sister, let us do anything
to forget that pain
traces white patterns
on shivering glass,
that Lorca is dead
while we are full of shame
and madness subs in the cafes
and the twisted lanes.

*(Meanjin Papers 2.1 [1943], 15)*

This unbridled song of hedonism is both modernist and feminist. It is
an invitation to join the poet in a drunken revelry that celebrates a vis-
ceral female sensuality. In addition to these ‘sisters,’ Olive’s human
characters, when she uses them, are nearly always women. Her reperto-
ire includes Lilith in dream-like conversation fragment, Beatrice in
the visually dramatic ‘Spring Night;’ Ophelia from a lost poem which
Musgrove mentions, an unpublished poem on Ariadne in the archives,
as well as Proserpina in ‘This Is the Hour.’ In this preoccupation
Olive’s poetry reads as woman centred, in contrast to the non-specific
mix of genders through which Wright extends her poetic voice—for
example the masculine personae of her famous ‘Bullocky’ and ‘The
Remittance Man.’

The tolerance in the literary establishment of the 1940s for such
feminist leanings as Olive’s was minimal. Vincent Buckley’s famous
commentary on Wright, in which he suggests she ought to move away
from ‘uwomanly’ poetry, belongs to this time frame:

> When she [Wright] attempts to be not a woman, but a bard, commentator or
> prophet, she becomes a bit of a shrew—which is the worst and most unwom-
> anly of all things that a woman can become.29

This sexist appraisal resonates with Philip Lindsay’s remark on
Wright’s ‘intense femininity’30 in which Lindsay’s notion of femininity
encompasses notions which are diametrically opposed to the feminism
for which Olive seemed to be striving.

Presumably, Wright’s tracing of Aboriginal culture would have
been an equally unpopular thematic in this period. This begs a ques-
tion about the confrontational approach of Olive’s feminism being
perhaps more alienating than Wright’s deploping of the colonial
destruction of Aboriginal culture. In ‘The Bora Rings,’ for example,
Wright presents Aboriginal culture as already irrevocably lost like
the spear ‘splintered underground.’ Wright’s focus on the tragedy of these losses—although an approach important for drawing attention to the savagery of the colonial practices—is perhaps a more nostalgic and therefore palatable poetic, as compared to the strident tone in which Olive sings in her feminist work ‘My Sisters.’

In Musgrove’s review of Olive’s manuscript, his final remarks compare Olive’s manuscript to another work, also written by a woman, which he had reviewed for Clem. He writes, after reiterating that it is a ‘slight work’ in need of ‘pruning’:

But the whole collection is far more worthwhile printing than the Mary Lisle collection which you sent me some time ago.

This phrase catalogues Olive with another woman, and therefore in a separate sphere to male poets of the period, distinguishing poets and poetesses. There was a propensity for this division between genders at Meanjin in 1946. In issue no.2 Elizabeth Hamil reviewed nine female-authored collections of poetry in the minimal space of less than two pages and was condescending towards, and derisive of, all but Rosemary Dobson’s book. The gender divide extended even to the choice of reviewer—Hamil being the only female reviewer over the four publications of the year.

Musgrove’s combination of anti-modernist and anti-feminist sentiments seems to have been influential in the decline of Olive’s career. Although precisely what caused the delay in publishing Olive’s manuscript is unknown, presumably his lukewarm review of the manuscript was part of the problem—especially given that the difficulties of the time did not prevent Judith Wright’s book from reaching the press. However, Meanjin was also suffering a set of trying circumstances, and 1946 and 1947, when Olive’s manuscript was in Clem’s possession, were two extremely financially difficult years. In addition to this was Olive’s reticence with regard to publishing which seemed to place her manuscript in a precarious position between her and Peter. This situation produced what could be described as a custody battle which required Clem to be not only a publisher but also an unlikely intermediary. The loss of the manuscript may equally have been related to the male dominated poetry scene in which Judith Wright had filled the woman poet niche. Nevertheless, in terms of literary fashions, by spanning both modernism and feminism in her poetry, Olive seemed to double her jeopardy. Strahan’s Meanjin history calls modernism the defining factor in Olive’s eventual silence, numbering her among a ‘catalogue of poets rocketing to oblivion on the infernal
machine of modernism named Harris, O'Dwyer, both Hopegoods, Picot, Vrepont...'. Her guess is as good as mine, and it now becomes the final supposition left to offer about Olive's final literary silence—although, it is perhaps politic at this point to concede that it may simply have been what Olive preferred.

NOTES

1 Peter Hopegood letter to Hugh McCrae, undated, c/o ABC. La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria. McCrae Papers, MS 12831.
2 Peter Hopegood letter to Clem Christensen, 1 April 1950. Meanjin Archive, University of Melbourne.
5 a search of electoral roles, telephone directories, and the memories of surviving friends and family were all unfruitful. Jan was a Dutch immigrant, but, due to privacy legislation, the Department of Immigration could not disclose information on his possible return to Holland.
6 Olive Hopegood letter to Earnest Clucas, undated, postmarked 1952, c/o Adelaide GPO. Private collection of Jade Ricza.
8 Peter Hopegood. letter to Hugh McCrae 7 March 1939, Opua, Bay of Islands. La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria. McCrae Papers, MS 12831.
9 Peter Hopegood letter to Hugh McCrae, 9 December 1935, 'Crecy' Wylde St., Potts Point. La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria. McCrae Papers, MS 12831.
10 Peter Hopegood letter to Hugh McCrae. 21 December 1935, 'Crecy' Wylde St., Potts Point. La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria. McCrae Papers, MS 12831.
11 Peter Hopegood. letter to Clem Christensen. 28 March 1943. Meanjin Archive, University of Melbourne.
12 Clem Christensen letter to Peter Hopegood, undated. National Library of Australia, Canberra. Peter Hopegood Correspondence, MS 8214.
13 Peter Hopegood letter to Hugh McCrae 15 May 1933, Darlington. La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria. McCrae Papers, MS 12831.
15 Peter Hopegood letter to Hugh McCrae, 21 December 1935, 'Crecy' Wylde St., Potts Point. La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria. McCrae Papers, MS 12831.
16 Tom Inglis Moore to Hugh McCrae, February 1936. La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria. McCrae Papers, MS 12831.

17 Peter Hopegood letter to Hugh McCrae, undated, c/o ABC. La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria. McCrae Papers, MS 12831.


19 Peter Hopegood letter to Hugh McCrae Undated, c/o ABC. La Trobe Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria. McCrae Papers, MS 12831.

20 Peter Hopegood letter to Clem Christesen, 7 September 1943. Meanjin Archive, University of Melbourne.

21 Peter Hopegood letter to Clem Christesen, 7 July 1947. Meanjin Archive, University of Melbourne.

22 Wright, Collected Poems 1942-1985 (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1994), no page number.

23 Musgrove, review of Judith Wright’s The Moving Image, Meanjin Papers 15.3 (1946), 250.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid., p.249.


28 Wright, op. cit. p.5.


31 Strahan mentions a: ‘£280 debit for 1946 and hefty loss of £591.13.4 for 1947… Christesen put out feelers to an alternative publisher in the first half of 1946. With several promising manuscripts available, notably Hope’s first assembled poems and Louis Esson’s letter’s to Vance Palmer, he wished to “gradually build up prestige for the Meanjin Press.” While Olive’s manuscript is not listed here, it would have been subject to these same financial and publishing problems.’ Strahan, Just City and the Mirrors: Meanjin Quarterly and the Intellectual Front 1940-1965. (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp.89-90.

32 Ibid., p.64.