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### **'I will have no further alterations to the story or text': An examination of an author's collaboration with his peers and publisher**

#### Abstract:

The collaborative creative process that occurs before a work is published often remains hidden. It can also be defined in different ways. While the role of the publisher's editor usually can be clearly identified, other aspects of collaboration are more nebulous, such as the role of readers and literary agents. However, these processes are pivotal to the development of written works. Through the analysis of archive material, this paper sets out to show how one writer, the mid-twentieth century Australian novelist GM Glaskin, collaborated with his peers, literary agent and publisher. The paper documents how Glaskin wrote, what use he made of other writers and the relationship he had with his publisher's editor. While this is an examination of the writing processes and editing of just one author, the paper sheds some light on the collaborative roles of peers and editors in that process. Through analysis of his works, the paper also seeks to return the works of GM Glaskin to the attention of Australian readers.

#### Biographical note:

Dr Jeremy Fisher is Senior Lecturer in Writing at the University of New England, Armidale NSW. He has extensive experience within the Australian publishing industry where he has worked as editor, indexer and publisher. He was also Executive Director of the Australian Society of Authors from 2004–2009. His particular research interests are the processes of publishing and sources of creative income. His most recent publication is the short story collection *How to tell your father to drop dead* (2013). He gratefully acknowledges the Random House Archives (Rushden, UK), the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives (Melbourne, Australia), the Battye Library (Perth, Western Australia), the Gay and Lesbian Archives of Western Australia (Murdoch University, Western Australia), the Mitchell Library (Sydney, Australia), the National Library of Singapore and the Australian National Archives (Canberra, Australia) for their assistance in the writing of this paper.

#### Keywords:

Glaskin, Gerald Marcus – editorial process – publishing process – collaboration

To date, collaboration in the publishing process has been given little attention, primarily because it is often a hidden process. Editor and biographer Jacqueline Kent has written of the editorial process lying behind publication as 'invisible mending' (Kent 1996). This view of editing is also reflected in the *Australian standards for editing practice* (Institute of Professional Editors 2013). That it is not always invisible is demonstrated through Craig Munro's analysis of the publication of Xavier Herbert's *Capricornia* and the important role played by the editor P.R. Stephensen (Munro 1981) and James Ley's essay on how Gordon Lish edited Raymond Carver (Ley 2010). These works shed some light on how professional authors interact with their peers and publishers. What follows adds to that knowledge and provides some insight into the creative and collaborative practices behind the publication of the majority of the works of a significant Australian writer.

Like many, if not most, authors, Gerry Glaskin (1923–2000) liked to be involved in the production of his books. Letters from him and his literary agent to his publisher show him suggesting illustrations, sending photographs and offering other viewpoints on how his books should be published. For example, his agent Paul Scott of Pearn, Pollinger & Higham Ltd wrote to Humphrey Hare of the publishers Barrie & Rockliff in November 1956 with regard to Gerry's second novel, *A minor portrait* (Glaskin 1957), the story of an older French woman who seduces a teenage boy. Scott noted that Gerry was prepared to make the alterations suggested by his reader (both publishers and agents use readers to assess manuscripts) and enclosed that reader's report (Scott 1956a). A few days later, Scott, acknowledging Hare's reply to his earlier letter, advised that he had received a note from Gerry saying that he had completed the revisions and forwarded them to Hare. It appeared that the publisher required further alterations contained in correspondence that had not been received by Gerry when he wrote to Scott (Scott 1956b). Gerry was adamant that *A minor portrait* be published as is. He instructed Scott not to hand over the manuscript to Hare until a contract was signed and on the condition that it only be edited for grammatical errors 'if any ... but I will have no further alterations to the story or text' (Scott 1956c).

Despite this vociferous response, and the fact that Gerry also attempted to incorporate clauses into his publishing contracts that gave him final say over the design of his books, which provoked his publisher to pencil 'why don't you tell him to go to hell and lump it?' on a letter from the agent asking about the jacket of his fourth novel *A lion in the sun* (Bolt 1960, Glaskin 1960), Gerry was actually prepared to listen to others and take on board their opinions. From an early age he called on the skills of others to assist him in the final presentation of his written work. His schoolteacher aunt, Alma Glaskin, edited his early work (Burbidge in press). He also listened to other writers and readers and acted on their advice. As an adolescent developing his writing skills in isolated Western Australia, he sought out older writers. Around 1938, when he was fifteen, he approached novelist Henrietta Drake-Brockman (1901–1968) to ask her to read a short story. He records in *A small selection* (Glaskin 1962a), his short story collection, that Drake-Brockman told him one of her first writing efforts was set in Venice, while his was set in South America. She counselled him to concentrate on writing about what he knew. His first story, 'Got him', was published in the Perth *Western mail* in 1942 (Glaskin 1942, Hetherington 1962) and is based on

his naval experiences. Drake-Brockman remained his mentor for the rest of her life. He arranged for her to meet his British publisher, claiming it served him right 'for giving me so many stinking jackets' (Glaskin 1961a). After her death he described her as 'a very close and dear friend' (Glaskin 1971).

Drake-Brockman was instrumental in establishing the Fellowship of Australian Writers (FAW) in Western Australia in 1938, and young Glaskin took advantage of the network the FAW provided. He was elected Vice President of the FAW in 1948, after he returned from war service ('Writers; Fellowship' 1948). The Foundation President of the FAW was John Keith Ewers (1904–1978), who also acted as a mentor for Gerry. Ewers was a schoolteacher until 1947, but was very active in Perth literary circles and an associate of Walter Murdoch (1874–1970), who was founding professor of English and later Vice Chancellor at the University of Western Australia and a prolific columnist and journalist. Ewers told Gerry to write while he was young. Gerry claimed it was this advice that made him toss in his position as a spare-parts executive with the Ford Motor Company in 1949 to complete the first draft of *A world of our own* (Glaskin 1978, Glaskin 1955), a story of returned servicemen set in Western Australia.

Gerry wrote quickly completing the 'first monstrous version' of over 1000 pages by June 1949 (Glaskin 1984: 154–155). This manuscript was submitted to the Commonwealth Jubilee Literary Competition in 1951 and commended by the judges ('Australian literature' 1957). Gerry continued to work on it in Singapore, where he had taken up employment until he felt it was finished in 1953.

In April 1953 Gerry commenced six months leave from his work as a stockbroker in Singapore. He was entitled to paid travel to Europe, and he travelled by car through France, Italy, Switzerland and Germany before meeting up with his long-time penfriend Sjoerd Steunebrink in the Netherlands (Glaskin 1984: 155). He had sent his manuscript to publisher James Barrie, later Barrie & Rockliff, in London. There, director Humphrey Hare championed the book, which was published in 1955. The manuscript was severely edited; at least five chapters comprising 50,000 words were deleted (Glaskin 1965a).

Writing his third novel *A change of mind*, a novel about a hypnosis experiment gone wrong, must have taken much of Gerry's attention. The published book contains a note on the final page indicating where it was written: 'April 1957–February 1958. Singapore, Western Australia, Hong Kong' (Glaskin 1959: 232). His dedication to his writing was perhaps behind the turmoil at the stockbroking firm of Lyall and Evatt where junior partners moved against Gerry and his other senior partner, J.R Donnell (who may also have been Gerry's lover). Both left the firm on 30 August, 1958 ('Notice' 1958, 'New partners' 1958). Gerry remained focussed on his book, instructing Paul Scott to tell Bunting he liked the style of the cover of Samuel Astrachan's *An end to dying* (Astrachan 1956, Scott 1958).<sup>1</sup>

Finally a full-time writer at the age of 35, Gerry set to work on novels based on his Asian experiences. The first was *A lion in the sun* (Glaskin 1960). Glaskin's annoyance at the delay in the publication date of this novel was conveyed to Bunting

by his new literary representative, David Bolt, in May 1960, provoking the reaction reported in this paper's first paragraph (Bolt 1960).

Gerry was continuing to write closely from his life experiences. His central characters were even being given names similar to his, with his own initials. Geoffrey Graham features in *A lion in the sun* and George Gransden in the next book, *The beach of passionate love* (Glaskin 1961b). The final page records it as having been written at 'Kota Bharu, Kelantan – Perth, Western Australia. August – October, 1959' (Glaskin 1961b: 285). The archives shed some light on how Gerry gathered his resources. They contain a writing pad with a cover photo of Grace Kelly. 'Puja Pantai' (Worship Beach) hence 'Fishermen's thanksgiving' is written above her head. Most of the pad is blank. The first page gives a list of rites and details of foods along with their Malaysian names. There is also a hand-written one-page description of a circumcision ceremony, an invitation (in Malay, with an English translation attached) to the birthday celebrations for the Sultan of Kota Bharu on 9, 10 and 11 August, 1959, and a booklet in Malay, *Pemberita Rasmi*, about or by 'Duli Yang Maha Mulia Tengku Ibrahim Ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Mohamed IV' and a note from the Sultan's Master of Ceremony giving Gerry permission to take pictures during the festivities. Gerry used all of this material for his novel.

Where they still exist, Gerry's original manuscripts shed light on how Bunting edited them. In the manuscript for *The beach of passionate love* marked up for the typesetter, the origin of the character Harry Lee has been amended to 'born and bred in Manchester' rather than Norfolk, perhaps to disguise the real person on whom the character was based, but otherwise the editing is fairly light (Battye Library [State Library of Western Australia] ACC596/9A/1–4). However, an earlier version of the manuscript has been heavily edited and pages of hand-written editorial notes are attached to it. The main character's surname is first spelled 'Grasden'. This is then 'exed' over and Gransden is typed in.

Another indication of the way in which Gerry worked as a writer is an envelope of negatives and photographs, some taken by his travel companion, 'Paul' Lee Kwok Poh, that he supplied in January 1961 for use in the book he called 'Frontier', but which was published as *The land that sleeps* (Glaskin 1961c). Gerry also collected newspaper articles and brochures as part of his research. Under commission from Doubleday, his United States' publishers, Gerry travelled in a station wagon through much of Western and Central Australia in the second half of 1960. Gerry often permitted an authorial voice to intrude into his fiction, and *The land that sleeps* allowed him significant leeway to vent his strong views on Australia, arguing for massive increases in population and investment for North Australia and enthusing about the asbestos mines at Wittenoom that 'have been established with an astonishing minimum of defacement to the beauty of the place' (Glaskin 1961c: xvi, 51). He and Paul crawled through the dusty mine with no chance of a bath or shower afterwards.

He also supplied a sketch book containing rough maps of Australia for the end papers, and of Western Australia, Northern Australia and the Northern Territory for the text (Battye Library [State Library of Western Australia] ACC5869A/1.4). The published

maps were created by Raphael Palacios in New York, 'one of the world's top cartographers', Gerry (Glaskin 1961d) crowed to Bunting, who hadn't yet committed to a British edition of *The Land that Sleeps*, which Doubleday wanted to reduce production costs.

The final manuscript was hastily prepared and Gerry sent important omissions to his Doubleday editor, James Perkins, by aerogramme. He also suggested that the published edition might contain a small map of Australia overlaid by the United States, and a map of Europe superimposed on Western Australia. These suggestions do not appear to have been taken up (Glaskin 1961e).<sup>2</sup>

Some of the edited version of the manuscript, with light editorial changes penned on it marked up for the typesetter, is a carbon copy. On the title page Gerry's title, 'This is our Last Frontier: A Journey through the North of Australia' has been edited to 'The Land that Sleeps: A Journey through North-West and Central Australia' (Battye Library [State Library of Western Australia] ACC5869A/1.4).

Gerry moved to Amsterdam in 1961. He lived with Edgar Vos in Vos's clothing atelier in Pieter Corneliszoon Hoofstraat.<sup>3</sup> Barrie & Rockliff published *A waltz through the hills* in September 1961 (Glaskin 1961f), a book ostensibly for children. Regardless, Gerry asked Bunting to send two copies to Sydney for consideration for the Miles Franklin award, which is awarded to adult novels (Glaskin 1961g).

By the end of 1961 he had also written the first draft of a trilogy he called 'O love, O life, O loneliness'. David Bolt sent these as three separate novellas, 'O love', 'O life' and 'O loneliness' to Barrie & Rockliff in December 1961. The first draft of the manuscript for 'O life' indicates it was written in Amsterdam 'Mid September to Mid November 1961' (Box 29, *No end to the way* files, Gay and Lesbian Archives of Western Australia, Murdoch University)<sup>4</sup> and is full of hand-written amendments. It appears to be a draft for a typist. Gerry's hand-wrote or rough-typed a draft to be sent to a professional typist, who prepared up to three carbon copies which would be read by other writers and his agent, whose comments would be incorporated by hand. This might be retyped, but that was an expensive process and to be avoided if possible. The manuscript has the author's name inked out in black and 'Jules de Grancie' is handwritten in blue ink, but that has also been inked out. 'Grancie' was the pseudonym Gerry first proposed, as Bunting noted in a letter to David Bolt in November, 1961 (Bunting 1961). However, in later years Gerry liked to claim a pseudonym had been forced on him by Barrie & Rockliff (Cover 1994, Willett 1999).

Gerry always wanted to publish 'O life' as a single volume (Bunting 1962). Barrie & Rockliff were not keen on it. Bunting suggested the David Bolt place it elsewhere. However, the complete trilogy came back a few months later. In May 1962, John Bunting sought advice from Humphrey Hare on what to do. In Bunting's view, 'O life' was quite unpublishable, and 'O loneliness' only just so (Bunting 1962).

Following the rejection of the trilogy, Gerry wrote to Bunting in quite a funk. He indicated that he had completed another manuscript, but he felt Barrie & Rockliff had lost faith in him, which was why they had rejected the trilogy. He argued that Barrie & Rockliff had not lost money on any of his works, including the short story collection, which had now been sold into a paperback edition (to Panther). He

indicated he was still keen on the trilogy, but 'O life' should stand separately with a possible new title (he suggested 'You can't get away from it' or 'You can't always tell') to better reflect its second person singular voice. However, as best-sellers were unpredictable he needed to be prolific to survive as a writer and hence he needed a publisher who supported him 'through the thick and the thin'. He concluded by saying if these works were not published, he'd have to return to Australia and take up some other form of occupation (Glaskin 1962b).

Bunting replied a month later. He reiterated his view that the trilogy was not up to Gerry's usual standard, but noted he would consider any new work. He acknowledged that both parties had irritated each other, but such was 'every author/publisher relationship, when any real personal relationship exists'. He indicated that Barrie & Rockliff regarded Gerry as one of their stars, and had promoted him as such, hoping that he would break through to best-sellerdom (Bunting 1963a).

Gerry replied a week later in a much less histrionic tone. As he suspected the 92,000 word manuscript of 'O life' was at the core of Bunting's rejection of his trilogy he had shelved it. He also suggested that 'O love' and 'O loneliness' be combined in a volume with 'The ice yacht' (a remnant of a scrapped novel titled 'Alicia') and 'The road to nowhere' (Glaskin 1963b). For a time, Bunting worked on the idea of a volume containing the four novellas, but eventually two books were published — *O love, o loneliness* (Glaskin 1964a) and *The road to nowhere* (Glaskin 1967a).

He asked David Bolt to send the manuscript of his new novel *Flight to landfall* (Glaskin 1963a), a narrative about the survivors of the crash in northern Australia of a plane from Surabaya during World War II, to Bunting. He noted 'David and Verbraeck' of the Dutch Book Club considered the first two sections too leisurely, but he was unsure how he might cut, so he proposed he and Bunting meet after Bunting had read the manuscript to 'decide what and what not should or must come out'. He would bring some colour slides of paintings by Elizabeth Durack for consideration for the cover. Durack was later approached about an existing or new illustration for *Flight to landfall* (Wadleigh, R 1963).

Gerry did not shelve 'O life', however. In November 1963 he wrote to Bunting very grateful that the firm was reconsidering 'You can't get away from it'. He noted the strong reactions received from the publisher's readers and declared this was the effect he was hoping for with the book. The readers were K. Wadleigh<sup>5</sup> and John Pattison. Wadleigh's report is quite negative: 'The strongest emotions in the books are jealousy and spite'; 'None of the characters arouses sympathy'; 'I would quickly have abandoned it through boredom. But because it is about a man/man affair I was curious enough to plough through to the pseudo-psychological end' (Wadleigh, K 1963). Pattison (identified as JP) was far more generous. While the book could risk a charge of obscenity, he thought it defensible. The novel was plea for tolerance for the homosexual. It had 'well sketched subsidiary characters' and one of its merits was its depiction of homosexual society. The main characters came over as real people. However, it had many passages that could be cut because they were too didactic and their point was already made in the narrative and other passages were over-written. While he had at first been irritated by the fact that the narrator refers to himself as you

and that the book was written in the historic present, he became used to that. He recommended that Barrie & Rockliff take the book, which he thought would sell 'and not only in the 'special' shops' (JP 1963).

On 18 December 1963, Bunting wrote to Gerry telling him he was working on the volume of four short novels that he wanted to call 'O, love and three other short novels' with typographical emphasis on 'O, love'. He proposed Gerry leave minor editorial tidying up to him. There would be no major alterations or cuts without consultation, but, if Gerry thought there would be major proof corrections, it would be better that he look at the edited manuscript. Then Bunting turned to 'You can't get away from it'. Opinion on it was divided, but Gerry's revisions had improved it. The firm now wished to publish it under a pseudonym, as Gerry had suggested, to avoid jeopardising library sales of books such as *Flight to landfall*. That book, he felt, required more pruning as Gerry had a tendency to 'continue banging the nail when it is already safely embedded in the timber'. Gerry would have the edited manuscript by April marked with suggested revisions and/or cuts. He concluded with a plea to Gerry to refrain from controversial themes and keep to his strengths of 'story telling, plot construction and description'. Bunting felt that there were a good number of writers who could better Gerry in the writing of 'sociological novels' (Bunting 1963b).

Bunting then wrote to David Bolt asking him to prepare the contract for 'You can't get away from it'. He expressed misgivings which he and Gerry's agents had shared 'in confidence'. He trusted that the contract would not encourage Gerry to write more books 'of the same kind'. He sought Bolt's support in steering Gerry back to 'the paths of righteousness!' (Bunting 1963c).

John Pattison, previously at Secker & Warburg, joined Barrie & Rockliff in January 1964. Bunting advised that, while he himself had certain reservations about it, Pattison was championing 'You can't get away from it' and that Gerry would hear from Pattison (Bunting 1963d). In January 1964 Bunting asked Gerry whether 'You can't get away from it' was a good title; he also expressed concern for the jaundice Gerry was suffering (Bunting 1964a). Gerry responded a month later, his usual prompt response delayed because he was seriously ill and had been advised by his doctors to refrain from work. His original title for *A minor portrait* had been 'No ending of the way'. He suggested that title for the forthcoming book (Glaskin 1964b).

John Pattison took over the editing of the manuscript. Gerry corrected the proofs in Mallorca in August 1964, and, because Pattison was on holidays, Bunting took in the corrections. Gerry insisted quotes be used in a manner Bunting was not entirely happy with, but he agreed to the changes and noted 'the book now reads very well indeed' (Bunting 1964b). *No end to the way* would finally be published in January 1965 and would remain in print for 20 years (Jackson 1965). It was and remains a masterpiece of second-person narration as well as the first overtly gay Australian novel. It is set mostly in Perth and concerns the relationship between Ray, an Australian, and Cor, a Dutchman.

Pattison was not so fond of Gerry's next novel, *The man who didn't count* (Glaskin 1965b). Gerry wrote to David Bolt, copying in John Bunting, expressing his frustration at the time being taken to make a decision on publishing the book. He was

very emphatic in his denial of Bolt's request to make major revisions to his manuscript (Glaskin 1964c). Pattison replied on Bunting's behalf. He thought the book 'completely misconceived' and a failed experiment (Pattison 1964). The letter was accompanied by a three-page, detailed reader's report. Gerry responded with a note saying he had sent Pattison a fourth part to the book which he felt tidied up all the loose ends (Glaskin 1964d). This response was effective. The book, a dark spy mystery set in Amsterdam, was contracted and put into production. While he was en route from Amsterdam to Perth in January 1965, and again in early May, Gerry asked when he might receive the page proofs (Glaskin 1965c, d).

Other events impinged on the production of *The man who didn't count*. Barrie & Rockliff were in the process of taking over Herbert Jenkins, and Bunting's attention was diverted from the book (Bunting 1965a). As well, on 5 March, in Perth, Gerry received a letter from John Pattison advising him that *No end to the way* had been banned in Australia. It was the first he knew of it. He was 'stunned' (Glaskin 1965e). He continued to work on 'Canary yellow', an account of his illness and attempted suicide in Amsterdam, sending the finished manuscript to John Pattison in April 1965 (Glaskin 1965d). In June, Bunting advised that he'd made minor cuts and alterations to *The man who didn't count* which could be rediscussed, if there was a problem, when the book was in galley stage. The publication date had been revised to October 1965. He also advised that 'Canary yellow' was 'a rather difficult one' to assess (Bunting 1965b). The galleys were sent out by airmail in August, as Gerry was preparing to leave Perth for Amsterdam. John Bunting indicated that one of the changes made to the manuscript was the address of the character's literary agent from Dean Street to Broadwick Street, the reason being that Dean Street was the address of Gerry's own agent, David Bolt. Lastly, he rejected 'Canary yellow' (Bunting 1965c).

As with 'O life', Gerry refused to accept his manuscript was unpublishable. In April 1966, John Bunting told David Bolt that, due to Gerry's insistence, he would have one of the Herbert Jenkins editors read the manuscript (Bunting 1966). As a consequence, *A bird in my hands: a personal experience* (Glaskin 1967b) appeared under the Herbert Jenkins imprint in late 1967. It was the last Glaskin book published by the firm. Unfortunately, Bunting's opinion of the book should have been heeded. It is an embarrassing whinge and a sad finale to a remarkable publishing collaboration.

## Endnotes

1. Barrie published the UK edition of Astrachan in 1958. The salmon coloured cover featured a charcoal sketch of a boy and a bearded man with a stick, the title (lower case) and author's name (in caps) in white.
2. This letter also documents the sending of the maps.
3. The house at P.C. Hoofstraat 134 is now a Cartier salon; Vos also witnessed the 1968 agreement with Macfadden-Bartell for the United States paperback edition of *No end to the way*.
4. Further references are to this manuscript.
5. Most likely a relative of Barrie & Rockliff's production manager Richard Wadleigh.

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