

J.J. Hilder and the Languages of Art

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Writing in a book published in 1918 in honour of Jesse Jewhurst Hilder (1881–1916), shortly after the artist's tragic early death from tuberculosis, Bertram Stevens declared:

Australia may well be proud of Jesse Hilder, for he is entirely her own by birth and training. His art was intuitive; what instruction he received, and the inspiration he got from other men's work, helped him but little towards self-development. His water-colours show the strong individual note of the true romantic artist; they are not like anything done previously in Australia or elsewhere.¹

Born and educated in colonial Queensland and forced by family circumstances to work in a bank from the age of seventeen, Hilder had few opportunities for a traditional artistic training. These facts underlie Stevens' pronouncement and have led others to posit alternative explanations for the artist's style. For example, D.H. Souter argued in 1909 that: 'J.J. drew his inspiration from Mother Nature direct, and studied sea and sky with a wonder tempered by such art publications as happened to drift his way.' In a subsequent commemorative volume published in 1966, on the fiftieth anniversary of Hilder's death, one of his sons, Brett Hilder, presents an elaborate genealogy of Hilders with artistic talent in order to justify his claim of a genetic basis for his father's art. Another commentator at this time, Edgar A. Ferguson, writing in the Brisbane *Courier-Mail* under the headline 'Great Queensland Painter Honoured', suggests that the environment must have played a role. In other words, in his efforts to reinstate the artist's Queensland origins into the picture, he offers a more contemporary variation of the direct inspiration of Mother Nature trope.²

It must be agreed that Hilder developed early a distinctive personal style, that (in the striking phrase employed by Souter) 'whatever he paints is as unmistakably his as the tailless kitten is the offspring of the Manx cat'.³ However, this style has many affinities with contemporary artistic developments. No artist is self-generated: intrinsic talent, intuition and the environment are all inadequate explanations (although each may play a role). Instead, this article will argue that Hilder's art

demonstrates how closely entwined Australia, including Queensland, was in the ‘networks of modernity’ that existed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Of particular importance was aestheticism, the legacy of James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903).⁴ This involved an interest in the flattened space, asymmetrical compositions and decorative forms of Japanese art, in subtle colour harmonies, and in sketch-like generalisation rather than detail, as seen in Whistler’s views of the Thames or the Venetian lagoon obscured in fog and mist. Also important was a new vocabulary derived from music, promulgated by Whistler in the titles of his artworks (he painted nocturnes and harmonies, not subjects derived from literature or history), and in his writings, most notably his ‘Ten O’Clock Lecture’ (1885, published 1888).⁵ Indeed, both the formal and material characteristics of Hilder’s water-colours and the language his critics used to evaluate and laud them show this debt.

In order to substantiate this argument, I will present a brief outline of Hilder’s early artistic experiences as recounted in various biographical accounts, supplementing this with a discussion of the wider intellectual and aesthetic *milieu* that contributed to his development. Vehicles such as newspapers, magazines, theatrical performances and international exhibitions were vital sources of artistic and aesthetic ideas, even in provincial Queensland. I will then examine Hilder’s subsequent artistic development in relation to the networks of influence that circulated among artists and their students, available to Hilder only after 1906 when he began lessons at night in the studio of Julian Ashton in Sydney. Finally, I will demonstrate the importance of Whistlerian language and aesthetics to Hilder’s critical reception, in spite of the fact that there is very little mention of Whistler himself in this critical comment.

Formation of the Artist

Born in Toowoomba in 1881, Hilder came from a large family with, despite Brett Hilder’s claims about the wider Hilder clan, no special interests in artistic pursuits apart from music (his father was an engine driver). At the age of nine, he moved with his family to Brisbane and between 1895 and 1897 attended Brisbane Grammar School on a government scholarship. Previously he had been educated at state schools in Toowoomba North and Fortitude Valley. At Brisbane Grammar, he studied art under James Cowan who seems to have been an inspirational teacher; another student, William Grant (1876–1951), became one of Brisbane’s leading artists in the first half of the twentieth century. Hilder also received some encouragement from the architect and artist George Henry Male Addison (1858–1922) and the prominent local artist Isaac Walter Jenner (1836–1902).⁶

However, Hilder needed to contribute to family finances so, rather than pursuing a career in art, in 1898 he began work with the Bank of New South Wales in Brisbane. A transfer to the Goulburn branch of the bank in 1901 was the start of his life in New South Wales. The next year he moved to Bega (where he contracted tuberculosis) and in April 1904 he was in Sydney, working at the Waverley branch

of the bank. It was at this stage that he began to make contact with artistic circles in Sydney, at some unknown point in 1906 joining art classes conducted by Julian Ashton in the late afternoon and evening (i.e. after working hours).⁷

Only a few of his early works survive, but one example from 1904 is a small water-colour, *Country Landscape with Homestead, Bega* (sold at auction in December 2005). Another picture dating from the same year is *Sydney Harbour from Fort Macquarie*. Both pictures are characterised by their bright colour, tendency to flattening of the picture plane, and decorative forms. While the former is an interesting picture from a young artist with limited formal training, the harbour scene is especially pertinent to my argument. The choice of a harbour scene with smoking chimneys and hazy distant forms is very Whistlerian, and quite different from the sunny harbour pictures painted by Arthur Streeton, Tom Roberts and others in the 1890s.⁸ Perhaps Hilder's interest in Whistlerian motifs and stylistic traits was reinforced by an important local precedent for the misty harbour view, Charles Conder's *Departure of the Orient — Circular Quay* (1888), purchased by the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1888,⁹ but Hilder's picture is still a noteworthy exception to the general trend in treatment of this subject at the time. Indeed, Brett Hilder remarks that 'it shows the essential Hilder style before he met any artists in Sydney'.¹⁰ How did Hilder develop his talents up until this point?

Hilder's biographers usually stress the lack of opportunities for exposure to art in colonial Queensland. Souter refers to: 'Tiny patches of colour in the souvenir books of his friends, occasional postcards, and six by four bits of landscape pasted in an album intended for snapshot photographs.' While Stevens acknowledges the two artistic mentors mentioned above, he also points to the importance of reproductions of artworks:

[Hilder] pored over a couple of volumes of *Royal Academy Pictures*. Some of the half-tone engravings in these volumes he carefully copied with the pen, suggesting the tone by an elaborate cross-hatching which produced a finer effect than the engraver's mechanical process.

He also notes that Hilder was familiar with Turner, but 'had seen few water-colours of any merit before he came to Sydney'.¹¹

Furthermore, Souter's argument about the direct inspiration that must have been supplied by Mother Nature is bolstered by his conviction that 'art in Queensland is not keyed very high'. While such attitudes might be expected from Sydney-based writers such as Stevens and Souter, Lloyd Rees (1895–1988) has a similar opinion about provincial Queensland during his early years:

People and things moved slowly, the motor car was a rare luxury as were also books on art — a few came in from Europe but virtually none from Australian sources and certainly none in colour.¹²

Nevertheless, art exhibitions did occur in Brisbane.

The Brisbane Art Scene in the 1890s

What Vida Lahey describes as ‘the three official means of propagating art, viz. Art School, Art Society, and Art Gallery’ were all established in Brisbane by 1895 when Hilder began his secondary schooling (the Art School began in 1881 and the Queensland Art Society in 1887, while the Art Gallery was set up in 1895). Contemporary art could be seen at the annual exhibitions of the Queensland Art Society and the Fine Arts section of the Queensland National Association. Although much of the work shown at these venues was conventional and lacklustre, there were some interesting exceptions. In 1896, Sydney (Sid) Long (1871–1955) exhibited paintings entitled *Pastoral* and *Sunlight* at the Queensland Art Society Eighth Annual Exhibition while Tom Roberts (1856–1931) was represented by *Head*. At the September 1899 Eleventh Annual Exhibition of the Society, Hilder (then aged eighteen and at the beginning of his bank career) would have been able to view Long’s *Spirit of the Plains*, 1897. Oil paintings by Albert Henry Fullwood (1863–1930), William Lister Lister (1859–1943), Girolami Nerli (1860–1926), Julian Ashton (1851–1942) and water-colours by Fullwood, Ashton and John Mather (1848–1916) were also included.¹³

Some exposure to international trends in design would have been available the previous year when the Queensland International Exhibition was held from 5 May to 14 August 1897. Despite being disappointingly limited in its international exhibits, it did include British goods at a time when aesthetic and arts and crafts ideas on interior design were influential. Linda Parry notes that ‘by the end of the nineteenth century the Aesthetic style of decoration had crept into the design of many ordinary household items like wallpaper, china and clocks’. And although the list of artworks exhibited in the 1897 Exhibition is not very impressive, it does include *A Nocturne* by Slade School-trained local art college director Richard Godfrey Rivers (1859–1925) and a water-colour entitled *Harmony in Purple and Gold* by M.L. Flockton.¹⁴ Some echoes of Whistler were available to Hilder, even in Brisbane.

Art in Print

If we now return to Hilder’s boyhood collections of postcards and careful copies of half-tone engravings of Royal Academy pictures, it is possible to examine reproductions of some of these works, included in the 1918 book, *Art of J.J. Hilder*. Along with a copy of *The Sisters* by nineteenth-century French realist artist Augustin-Théodule Ribot (1823–1891), the following two English paintings were copied by Hilder: *Pixy-Led* by Fred Hall (1860–1948) (see Figure 1) and *The Pool* by Arthur Douglas Peppercorn (1847–1926) (see Figure 2). The former painted freely handled *plein air* landscapes, in this case with a high horizon, asymmetrical construction and a fanciful subject. The latter was known as the ‘English Corot’, an influence evident in the little landscape chosen by Hilder. Peppercorn was also a supporter of Whistler.¹⁵ The works that appealed to Hilder, and offered him a



Figure 1: J.J. Hilder, pen and ink copy of Fred Hall (1860–1948), *Pixy-Led*

Source: Sydney Ure Smith and Bertram Stevens (eds), *The Art of J.J. Hilder* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1918), plate XXXI.



Figure 2: J. J. Hilder, pen and ink copy of A.D. Peppercorn, *The Pool*

Source: Sydney Ure Smith and Bertram Stevens (eds), *Art of J.J. Hilder* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1918), plate XXX.

chance to develop his talent, were not traditional academic history paintings with smoothly finished surfaces, but more dynamic, contemporary pictures in which forms were built up through tonal contrasts.

The theatre, magazines and newspapers were other sources of contemporary aesthetic ideas. Ann Galbally has demonstrated that in Melbourne there was considerable public knowledge of 'aesthetic attitudes, costumes and interiors' gained through such media from the early 1880s. While Brisbane was not as wealthy or well endowed with cultural institutions as Melbourne, such sources still played a role here. *The Studio* magazine (from 1893) was widely distributed, and Whistlerian motifs were represented frequently in it. The volume produced in 1896–97 included reproductions of paintings, etchings and also photographs that were obviously indebted to Whistler: see Figures 3 and 4 for two examples. Soft-focus art (or Pictorialist) photography was very much in vogue in the later 1890s. Aspiring artists could also keep up to date with both arts and crafts designs and Japanese artistic forms via the pages of the *Studio*.¹⁶

Furthermore, by the end of the century the Queensland Art Society had developed into a more effective venue for what George Addison described as 'that mutual criticism and interchange of thought so necessary to progress in the painter's art'. For a few years, the annual exhibition catalogues incorporated a review section with commentaries on art, and a number of these essays could have provided support for Hilder's developing artistic approach. For example, Godfrey Rivers included 'Decorative Art' as a valid category alongside 'Idealism' and 'Realism' in his discussion of 'Criticism in Art' in 1899. In the same year, D.S. Thistlethwayte contributed an essay on Japanese art, described as 'full of dexterity, of grace, and of ease', while in 1900 Isobel Jacobs endorsed a broad, fluid and forceful style of art, with the end result showing 'no evidence of the struggle' in its final appearance.¹⁷ It is also noteworthy that Art Nouveau design influence is evident in the cover of the 1900 catalogue.

Colour was certainly missing from these sources of information (although the occasional colour plate was included in the *Studio*). While Hilder had a gift for combining colours in subtle, decorative and interesting ways, some inspiration could have been supplied by local artists. Stained glass is another possible source of ideas; it is interesting how frequently the terms 'jewel-like' are used to describe Hilder's early works. For example, Julian Ashton writes: 'In his earlier work he had a gem-like method of mosaic, which placed accurately drawn forms of brilliant colour in juxtaposition with an effect akin to jewellery.' Souter refers to the paintings' 'luminosity of colour, jewel-like almost in its brilliancy; their simple grandeur of design; their audacity of mass and bold originality of method'. And Lionel Lindsay suggests that the early works have 'a certain hardness, and the opposition of colour is sometimes so emphatic as to give them the air of little posters'.¹⁸

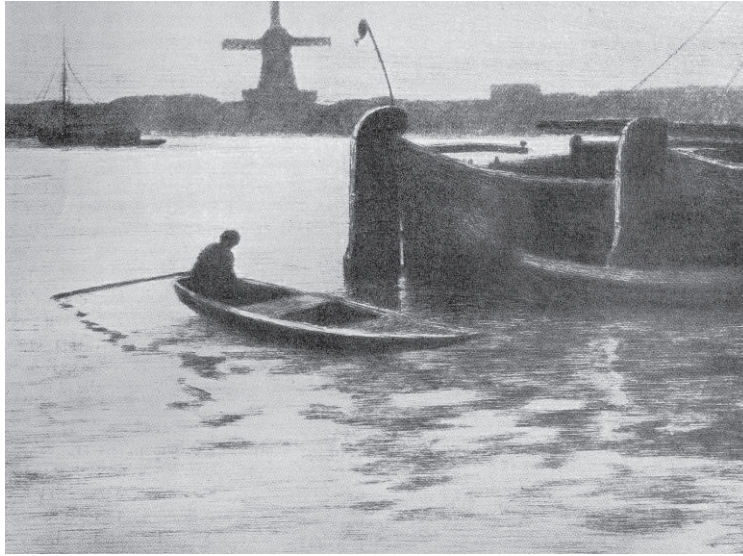


Figure 3: Illustration based on an etching by R. Wytzman, *Le Soir à Dordrecht*
Source: The Studio, 9(45) (1896): 213.



Figure 4: Reproduction of a studio competition prizewinning black and white photograph (*Bosham*) by E.E. Manwaring
Source: The Studio, 9(43) (1896): 80.

Art World Networks

Hilder's transfer to Sydney was an important step for his artistic career. He was able to visit the Art Gallery of New South Wales and view its collection, with the work of Arthur Streeton (1867–1943), J.W. Tristram (1872–1938) and Sid Long particularly appealing to him.¹⁹ Moreover, he came to know other artists personally, including Julian Ashton as I have already noted, although his shy and rather prickly nature limited his friendships. In other words, he was able to interact with members of local artistic networks. Especially significant were the members of the newly reconstituted Society of Artists, pictured in Figure 5, a charming photograph of the Selection Committee for the August 1907 Exhibition hard at work.

Twenty-one of Hilder's works were selected and exhibited that year; they sold well, leading to his decision to leave his bank job. Two examples of his work from around this period show the jewel-like tones already mentioned as characteristic of his early work, and the interesting compositions. Both *Boys Bathing* (1906?)²⁰ and *Coogee* (1907) (see Figure 6) utilise a high horizon that tends to flatten the picture plane. The view from underneath the bridge in the former is a characteristic Whistlerian device derived from Japanese prints.

After the great success of 1907, Hilder's artistic development can be followed more easily. I am more concerned with his early work because of my interest in reinstating his Queensland roots, but his practice after this date is suggestive of his characteristic *modus operandi*. He drew on the approaches of a wide variety of artists, but always in a highly intelligent way, incorporating ideas into his work but producing something new as well. Camille-Jean-Baptiste Corot (1796–1875) is one important (and often cited) influence, as can be seen by comparing Corot's *Bent Tree*²¹ and any of a number of pictures painted by Hilder at Dora Creek in 1915–16 — for example, *Dora Creek* (1916) (see Figure 7). Hilder actually saw the *Bent Tree* in the Melbourne National Gallery when he visited that city in 1914. But this influence was long-standing: recall that the youthful Hilder chose to copy work by Peppercorn, the 'English Corot'. Furthermore, in 1907 he had clipped out a 1906 *Studio* article about Corot.²² Nevertheless, while choosing similar subjects and asymmetrical compositions, he translates Corot's more detailed style into his own technique of simplified tonal contrasts.

Another example is the impact of Streeton's *Fire's On* (1891), seen by Hilder in the Sydney gallery. He developed the themes and light effects of this painting in his own works, including a series done in 1914–15 in a quarry near Hornsby when he was living nearby.²³ He had married in 1909 and had two small sons by this time, but his deteriorating health limited his ability to travel far from home. A series of paintings picture men at work in the quarry and have very interesting flat compositions, looking down from above with no horizon at all, and beautiful, gradual variations in tone — see, for example, *Filling the Truck* (1914) (Figure 8). Pale harmonies in subtle tones are characteristic of his later work, especially after about 1910.

This style has many affinities with the work of Whistler. These Whistlerian ideas may have been conveyed to Hilder directly or through the work of his followers,



Figure 5: Society of Artists, Selection Committee, 1907

Source: William Moore, *The Story of Australian Art*, vol. 1 (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1934), facing p. 171.



Figure 6: J.J. Hilder, *Coogee*, 1907. Pencil, water-colour on ivory laid paper, 21.8 x 25.4 cm

Source: Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales.



Figure 7: J.J. Hilder, *Dora Creek*, 1916. Pencil, water-colour, 22.3 x 25.8 cm sheet
Source: Gift of Howard Hinton 1917. Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales.



Figure 8: J.J. Hilder, *Filling the Truck*, 1914. Water-colour on ivory wove paper, 20.1 x 25.6 cm
Source: Bequest of Dr Sinclair Gillies 1952. Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales.

either abroad or in Australia. Moreton Bay could be depicted in a manner similar to the Venetian Lagoon, as in *Becalmed* (1915) (Figure 9) and *Moreton Bay* (1916), although with brighter tones than those seen in Venice or London. The work of Turner may well have played a role in such scenes as well (as noted above, Stevens suggests that Hilder had some familiarity with Turner even before he left Brisbane). The Brisbane River could be seen from an interesting angle (Figure 10), and figures on the beach could be depicted in a calligraphic manner, as in *Shallow Waters* or *On the Beach, Thirroul* (1915). In this case, Whistler might be percolated through the example of contemporary and fellow Society of Artists exhibitor Elioth Gruner (1882–1939), who painted a highly acclaimed series of beach scenes in 1912–14 that show the influence of Whistler and Japanese art with their high horizons, flattened space and dotted figures, formal features evident also in Hilder's work. Although Hilder always remained close to naturalistic forms, his *Southerly on the Harbour* of around 1914 is as much a variation in tones as Whistler's Chelsea nocturnes. Even an interior scene could become an exploration of subtle colour harmonies and interesting composition, as in the late *Interior of Albers' Home at Gordon*, 1914.²⁴

As the late pictures of Moreton Bay and the Brisbane River suggest, Hilder retained some links to Queensland. Brett Hilder notes that his father visited Brisbane briefly in 1904, 1908 and 1909; however, he only exhibited there once, at the Annual Exhibition of the Queensland Art Society in 1915. His paintings excited local interest, the *Brisbane Courier* stating that

water colours constitute an excellent collection, prominent among them being a series of landscapes by Mr. J.J. Hilder, in which the treatment is uncommon, and not a little artistic. Among them may be mentioned 'Harmony in Blue and Silver, Moreton Bay', a picture of a small white schooner set in a blue sea, with a blue sky.²⁵

While the anonymous reviewer praised the exhibition, artist and critic Henri Tebbitt (1852–1926) was more disapproving in two articles he contributed to the same newspaper. In the first instalment, Tebbitt argued that there had been little progress in artistic expression in Queensland during the twenty years that had elapsed since a previous visit to Brisbane. A 'want of expression of feeling' was the chief lack in the works exhibited, along with a tendency to 'impressionism' that results in a lack of 'the general idea', an over-emphasis on primary colours at the expense of drawing, and overall a 'want of originality'. Such criticisms demonstrate Tebbitt's traditionalism and bring to mind some aspects of Hilder's style, but specific comments on Hilder's pictures in the second article are more circumspect. With respect to the 'very dainty' *Park Gate*, Tebbitt comments: 'It is quite a relief from some of the blues and yellows, and shows what keen appreciation of colour will do for a very commonplace subject.' More ambiguously, *Harmony in Blue and Silver* evoked the statement: 'Wonderful bit of colour, could not do the same to save my life. But all the same I give it up. It is too deep.'²⁶



Figure 9: J.J. Hilder, *Becalmed*, 1915. Water-colour, 37.0 x 42.0 cm

Source: Gift of Howard Hinton 1917. Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales.



Figure 10: J.J. Hilder, *Brisbane River*, 1908. Water-colour, opaque white on buff wove paper, 18.1 x 22.9 cm

Source: Gift of Howard Hinton 1917. Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Tebbitt's opinions about a lack of progress evident in Brisbane art prompted a forthright defence of present-day art in Queensland by Godfrey Rivers. His 'Letter to the Editor' declared a marked difference between the earlier exhibition and the current one: whereas 'in the exhibition of 20 years ago, there was not one single Queensland exhibitor — the Brisbane artists who exhibited had received their art education in Europe, [while] the greater number of exhibitors were from the Southern States' — the situation had changed markedly, with most of the present-day exhibitors being 'Queensland born'. Rivers concludes: 'I think if the two exhibitions can be compared, it speaks well for the advance of art in Queensland.' Although Hilder could not be counted amongst those who had been formally trained in Brisbane, at least his Queensland birth meant that he could be included as a local artist in this skirmish. Furthermore, the opportunity to view Hilder's works in person at the 1915 exhibition, his southern reputation and his early death probably all worked to ensure that, as Lloyd Rees writes: 'By the time I left for Sydney in 1917 Hilder was the most discussed artist in Brisbane.'²⁷

Art for Art's Sake

As the works described above suggest, Hilder was vitally interested in exploring the formal and material possibilities of his chosen medium of water-colour. Although Rees maintains that the idea of a painting being more than a copy of nature was not really established in Australia until the 1920s,²⁸ the idea of art for art's sake was recognised well before that time. Indeed, although subject-matter was never abandoned, the language used to evaluate Hilder's work clearly demonstrates this.

Julian Ashton wrote of 'the breadth and simplicity of his style', at the same time praising his compositional sense. Sydney Ure Smith describes a progression from 'brilliant colour and charming decorative arrangement' to 'grey schemes' and later, 'almost monotonous — reached by a gradual process of refining his colour'. Brett Hilder uses the term 'nocturne' in his description of his father's work, commenting that the later pictures are 'variations of dominant colour, either blue or gold or reddish brown'. But, rather than commenting on artistic sources for these approaches, he notes that a Brisbane doctor attributed this to variations in the artist's mood, depending on his state of health, an interesting variation of the expressive fallacy in art interpretation.²⁹ For Lionel Lindsay, Hilder's work was distinctly different from that of Streeton and Heysen since his 'method was one of elimination'. Lindsay is the only commentator to mention Whistler: 'Like most of the little masters from Whistler downwards, he eliminated all but the quintessential, leaving unelaborated spaces in his works as much for the imagination to complete as for the preservation of unity and repose.'³⁰

As we have seen, Hilder's lack of traditional 'careful training' (to use Souter's terms) gave rise to the various suggestions about the sources of his art surveyed at the beginning of this article. His year or less of drawing lessons with Julian Ashton between 1906 and 1907 could hardly have been solely responsible for

the artist's success in the 1907 Society of Artists Exhibition. It is interesting that Souter describes this traditional training as 'careful', built up from firm foundations in drawing. Instead, I have argued that the metaphor of a network in its various guises is one that is especially productive for understanding Hilder's development and achievements. His posthumous reputation was also ensured by his contacts in the New South Wales art world: Sydney Ure Smith and Bertram Stevens were responsible for publishing the first memorial book in 1916, and in order to do justice to Hilder's elusive colour harmonies it was printed in colour. This is significant, since this booklet was one of the earliest publications with colour illustrations devoted to the life and work of an Australian artist. This was done largely to help the artist's widow and his family, but also to memorialise an artist who fitted into the nationalist genealogies that were so important at this time. This is even more apparent in the expanded 1918 publication. Ure Smith concludes his recollections of the artist: 'I feel sure that the water-colours of J.J. Hilder will be regarded as amongst the finest expressions of the soul of Australia.' Indeed, Hilder cemented his nationalist credentials by providing the illustrations and decorations for an edition of Dorothea Mackellar's 'My Country', published in 1915.³¹ However, while this is indeed a nationalist text, it has also an interesting international flavour. Reinstating the internationalist aspect of Hilder's art also allows for not only his Queensland origins, but also his early experiences in Brisbane, to be reinserted into the story of the artist's life and work.

Acknowledgments

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Notes

- 1 Bertram Stevens, 'Jesse Jewhurst Hilder', in Sydney Ure Smith and Bertram Stevens (eds), *The Art of J.J. Hilder* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1918), 5.
- 2 D.H. Souter, 'J.J. Hilder, Water-Colorist', *Art and Architecture*, 6(5) (1909): 142; Brett Hilder, *The Heritage of J.J. Hilder* (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1966); Edgar A. Ferguson, *The Courier-Mail*, 20 April 1966: 5.
- 3 Souter, 'J.J. Hilder, Water-Colorist': 143.
- 4 A version of this article was originally presented as a paper at a symposium entitled 'The Internationalism of Australian Art: Networks of Modernity', held at the James and Mary Emelia Mayne Centre, University of Queensland, St Lucia on 5 August 2006, coinciding with the opening of the National Gallery of Australia travelling exhibition *An Artist Abroad: The Prints of James McNeill Whistler*.
- 5 For details of Whistler's life and work plus an extensive bibliography, see Robin Spencer, 'Whistler, James Abbot McNeill (1834–1903)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/36855.

- 6 See Bernard Smith, 'Hilder, Jesse Jewhurst (1881–1916)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 9 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1983), 292–93; Stevens, *The Art of J.J. Hilder*, 8 (encouragement of Addison and Jenner); also Keith Bradbury and Ann Grant, *Gwendolyn & W.G. Grant: Their Art and Life* (Brisbane: G.R.M. Grant, 1990), 18–19 for Cowan's influence on Grant.
- 7 Stevens, *The Art of J.J. Hilder*, 13; Ursula Prunster, 'The Delicate Art', in *J.J. Hilder and Contemporaries* (Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1981), unpaginated.
- 8 *Country Landscape with Homestead, Bega* is listed by Deutscher-Menzies as being sold at auction on 7 December 2005 and can be viewed on their website, www.deutschermenzies.com.au/cgi/dmcat.cgi?rm=display_lot&item_id=7804. The water-colour on paper picture is described as being 18.0 x 17.5 cm in size and signed and dated 'JJ HILDER 1904' in the lower left-hand corner. *Sydney Harbour from Fort Macquarie* is illustrated in Hilder, *The Heritage of J.J. Hilder*, plate XXII, 83. For harbour scenes painted by Streeton, Roberts et al., see Jane Clark, 'Sydney Harbour', in Jane Clark and Bridget Whitelaw, *Golden Summers: Heidelberg and Beyond* (Sydney: International Cultural Corporation of Australia, 1985), 150–52; paintings illustrated pp. 153, 157, 161, 162, 163.
- 9 Conder's painting can be viewed online at the Art Gallery of New South Wales website, www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au.
- 10 Hilder, *The Heritage of J.J. Hilder*, 13.
- 11 Souter, 'J.J. Hilder, Water-Colorist': 142; Stevens, *The Art of J.J. Hilder*, 8, 13.
- 12 Souter, 'J.J. Hilder, Water-Colorist': 142; for biographical details of Stevens and Souter, see Ken Stewart, 'Stevens, Bertram William Mathyson Francis (1872–1922)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 12 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1990), 77–78; and Vane Lindsay, 'Souter, David Henry (1862–1935)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 12 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1990), 21–22; Lloyd Rees, 'Foreword', in Hilder, *The Heritage of J.J. Hilder*, 5–7, quotation 5.
- 13 Vida Lahey, 'The Development of Art in Queensland', in *Exhibition of Queensland Art* (Brisbane: Queensland National Art Gallery, 1951), 3; Julie K. Brown and Margaret Maynard, *Fine Art Exhibitions in Brisbane 1884–1916* (St Lucia: Fryer Memorial Library, University of Queensland, 1980), 66, 74–78. For more discussion of artistic activity in Brisbane in the late nineteenth century, see Keith Bradbury and Glenn R. Cooke, *Thorns & Petals: 100 Years of the Royal Queensland Art Society* (Brisbane: Royal Queensland Art Society, 1988), 9–39; and Timothy Morell and Glenn R. Cooke, 'Somewhere Else', in Timothy Morell, *Colonial to Contemporary: Queensland College of Art 125 Years* (Brisbane: Griffith Artworks, 2006), 9–29, esp. 9–12.
- 14 See Judith McKay, *Showing Off: Queensland at World Expositions 1862 to 1988* (Rockhampton: Central Queensland University Press in association with the Queensland Museum, 2004), 12, 48–52; Linda Parry, 'Aestheticism', in Michael Snodin and John Styles (eds), *Design & the Decorative Arts: Britain 1500–1900* (London: V&A Publications, 2001), 358–59; for the list of art works, see Brown and Maynard, *Fine Art Exhibitions in Brisbane*, 37–45.
- 15 See entries in Christopher Wood, *Dictionary of British Art Volume IV: Victorian Painters. 1. The Text* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Antique Collector's Club, 1995), 217 (Hall), 404 (Peppercorn); also www.whistler.arts.gla.ac.uk/bio/Pepp_AD.htm.
- 16 Ann Galbally, 'Aestheticism in Australia', in Anthony Bradley and Terry Smith (eds), *Australian Art and Architecture: Essays Presented to Bernard Smith* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1980), 124–33, quotation p. 128. *The Studio* 9(43) (October 1896), for example, includes the following articles (both copiously illustrated): Josiah Conder, 'Japanese Flower Arrangements', 14–28; and 'The Arts and Crafts Exhibition, 1896 (First Notice)', 50–62.
- 17 G.H.M. Addison, 'Ourselves', in Queensland Art Society, *Annual Review and Exhibition Catalogue* (1898): 5–7, quotation 5; R. Godfrey Rivers, 'Criticism in Art', in Queensland Art Society, *Annual Review and Exhibition Catalogue* (1899), 7–11; in the same catalogue, D.S. Thistlethwayte, 'Some Notes on Japanese Art', 12–16; and Isobel Jacobs, 'A Few General

- Principles of Art', in Queensland Art Society, *Annual Review and Exhibition Catalogue* (1900), 20–25, quotation 23.
- 18 Julian Ashton, 'An Appreciation', in *J.J. Hilder, Water-Colourist* (Sydney: Tyrells, 1916), unpaginated; Souter, 'J.J. Hilder, Water-Colorist', 141; Lionel Lindsay, 'Hilder's Technique', in *J.J. Hilder, Water-Colourist* (Sydney: Tyrells, 1916), unpaginated.
- 19 Stevens, *The Art of J.J. Hilder*, 13.
- 20 Illustrated in Hilder, *The Heritage of J.J. Hilder*, plate XXI, 81.
- 21 This can be viewed online at the National Gallery of Victoria website, www.ngv.gov.au/collection/international/painting/c/ipa00169.html.
- 22 Prunster, 'The Delicate Art'.
- 23 Stevens, *The Art of J.J. Hilder*, 13; *The Deviation* (1913) [illustrated in Sydney Ure Smith and Bertram Stevens (eds), *The Art of J.J. Hilder* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1918), plate XIV] shows a more direct influence, but I am suggesting that the quarry works are a development of this theme.
- 24 *Shallow Waters* or *On the Beach, Thirroul* is illustrated in Hilder, *The Heritage of J.J. Hilder*, plate XXX, 99; *Southerly on the Harbour* is illustrated in Smith and Stevens *The Art of J.J. Hilder*, plate XV; *Interior of Albers' Home at Gordon* is reproduced by Deutscher-Menzies and listed as being sold at auction on 22 September 2005, www.deutschermenzies.com.au/cgi/dmcat.cgi?rm=display_lot&item_id=7476. The water-colour on paper picture is described as being 26.5 x 18 cm in size and signed 'HILDER' in the lower right corner. For Gruner's beach and coastal scenes, see Barry Pearce, *Elioth Gruner 1882–1939* (Sydney: Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1983), 14, 30–35.
- 25 'Queensland Art Society. Annual Exhibition. An Improved Standard', *The Brisbane Courier*, 6 July 1915: 5; in Brown and Maynard, *Fine Art Exhibitions in Brisbane*, 148 the following works are listed in the exhibition catalogue for 1915: *The Park Gate* (No. 36), *Dusk Near Kedron* (No. 44), and *Harmony in Blue and Silver, Moreton Bay* (No. 45). For Hilder's Queensland visits, see Hilder, *The Heritage of J.J. Hilder*, 40.
- 26 Henri Tebbitt, 'Queensland and Art. A Criticism of Exhibition Work. II', *The Brisbane Courier*, 9 July 1915: 6. For the first review, see Henri Tebbitt, 'Queensland and Art: A Criticism of Exhibition Work', *The Brisbane Courier*, 8 July 1915: 6. On Tebbitt and his background, see William Moore, *The Story of Australian Art: From the Earliest Known Art of the Continent to the Art of To-day*, Vol. 2 (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1934), 225–26.
- 27 R. Godfrey Rivers, 'Letter to the Editor', *The Brisbane Courier*, 9 July 1915: 9; for Rees' comments, see 'Foreword', 6.
- 28 Lloyd Rees, *The Small Treasures of a Lifetime: Some Early Memories of Australian Art and Artists* (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1969), 94.
- 29 Julian Ashton, 'An Appreciation', in *J. J. Hilder, Water-Colourist* (Sydney: Tyrells, 1916), unpaginated; Sydney Ure Smith, 'Recollections of Hilder', in *J.J. Hilder, Water-Colourist* (Sydney: Tyrells, 1916), unpaginated. For Brett Hilder's comments on the possible medical explanation for his father's later works, see his 'Introduction', in *Jesse Jewhurst Hilder: Anniversary Exhibition* (Brisbane: Queensland Art Gallery, 1966), unpaginated. On the 'expressive fallacy', the idea that an artist's work is a direct spontaneous expression of their physical and emotional state rather than a deliberate creation of a specific mood utilising a language of form and colour shared by artist and sensitive viewer, see E.H. Gombrich, 'Expression and Communication', in *Meditations on a Hobby Horse and Other Essays on the Theory of Art* (London: Phaidon, 1963), 56–69; Hal Foster, 'The Expressive Fallacy', *Art in America* 71(1) (1983): 80–83, 137.
- 30 Lindsay, 'Hilder's Technique'.
- 31 Souter, 'J.J. Hilder, Water-Colorist': 143; for further information about the memorial book, see Nancy D.H. Underhill, *Making Australian Art 1916–49: Sydney Ure Smith, Patron and Publisher* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 4, 65–67, 116, 137–38. A precursor was *A Consideration of the Art of Ernest Moffitt* (Melbourne: Atlas Press, 1899), but this had black and

white illustrations. Moffitt (1871–99) had a similarly short life and was commemorated by his friends in this volume, including Lionel and Norman Lindsay: see Roger Butler, ‘Moffitt, Ernest Edward (1871–1899)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol. 10 (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1986), 538. James MacDonald’s *Art of Frederick McCubbin*, also published in 1916 (Melbourne: Lothian), is usually credited as the first Australian art monograph with colour plates; Sydney Ure Smith, ‘Memories of Hilder’, in Smith and Stevens, *The Art of J.J. Hilder*, 40; the poem and Hilder’s illustrations are included in Smith and Stevens, *The Art of J.J. Hilder* (inserted between 28 and 29).