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Shirley Hazzard and I: the self, the writer, the nation and the world at 'Australian Literature in a Global World'

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Abstract
"I don't believe that the best of this country's writers will wish to rest on 'identity': that is, to invite the risk that a work will be praised, and even over-valued, for its Australian associations - however striking their effects - rather than for its greater human truth." (Hazzard, Boyoer Lectures, 28)

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Macris’ 1997 novel is well-suited to such a close reading as its politics of literary form works through micro-narratives, micro-descriptions, new chronotopes and an intensification of the mise en abyme to present and negate aspects of cosmopolitan forms that are complicit in ‘global’ neoliberal rationalities.

Michael Christie is a PhD candidate at UTas nearing completion of his dissertation on a sociology of the Grunge and Bildungsroman literary forms focussed through the changes Australian Labourism underwent during the Hawke and Keating governments.

Maureen Clark
University of Wollongong
Janette Turner Hospital: Writing for Nomads

Session 4(C), Tuesday 3.30

Janette Turner Hospital crosses international borders in her personal history and in her art. An Australian expatriate living abroad, the author’s globalised narratives speak of a desire to negotiate and come to terms with constantly shifting intercultural, gendered modes of existence. The settings of her novels include countries as diverse as India, Brazil, El Salvador, Canada, England, the USA and Australia. Turner Hospital’s aesthetics are particularly informed by and connected to the potency of place - to elusive memories of home that seem to have a crucial hold on her creative imagination and attainment of a sense of self.

The psychological appeal of returning to a ‘lost home’ often co-exists in an ambivalent relationship with the wanderer as always in a metamorphic state of separation and rebirth. With a focus on The Tiger in the Tiger Pit (1983), this paper addresses the ways in which this early novel represents ‘home’ as both a nomadic and a transformative concept.

Musical metaphors and elaborate rhythmic prose dominate a narrative which draws heavily upon the aesthetic as a reflection of the individual’s social consciousness and an expression of an ancient human paradox - the desire for freedom and the ties of country.

Maureen Clark teaches literature written in English and media studies at the University of Wollongong, where she is also an Honorary Research Fellow. Maureen has published numerous articles in books and refereed journals on the life and work of black Australian writer, Mudrooroo as well as on the fiction of Janette Turner Hospital. She is the author of the monograph Mudrooroo: A Likely Story, which was published in 2007.

Anne Collett
University of Wollongong
Shirley Hazzard: The Writer, The Nation and The World

Session 1(C), Monday 11.00

“I don’t believe that the best of this country’s writers will wish to rest on ‘identity’: that is, to invite the risk that a work will be praised, and even over-valued, for its Australian associations - however striking their effects - rather than for its greater human truth.” (Hazzard, Boyer Lectures, 28)

When Shirley Hazzard delivered the annual Boyer Lectures in 1984 she was the first novelist and only the second woman invited to do so in the 25 years since the Lectures’ inception. At this stage in her literary and political career she was the author of 3 novels (including the award winning Transit of Venus), 2 collections of short stories, a study of “the self-destruction of the United Nations”, and numerous essays one of which (published in The New Yorker in 1977) recorded her perceptions of the changes that had taken place in Australia during the decades of her expatriation. In the third
Boyer lecture Hazzard qualified her belief in the “immense potential contribution” Australia could make “to the genuine progress of humankind” with the observation that the largeness of perspective that such a contribution required might be diminished by, or indeed come into conflict with, “the long traditions of nationalism here” (38 Boyer) - a nationalism that she claimed was marked by prejudice, derision, violence and “the inability to live without an enemy” (44 Boyer) that she associated with xenophobia and misogyny. This paper inquires into the relationship established in Shirley Hazzard’s work between the writer, the nation and the world; and the impact of her views and her expatriation on the critical reception of her work in Australia.

Anne Collett is editor of Kunapipi: journal of postcolonial writing & culture and teaches in the English Literatures Program at the University of Wollongong. She has published widely on postcolonial women’s writing and is currently writing a comparative study of Judith Wright and Canadian artist, Emily Carr, with Dorothy Jones.

CA. Cranston
University of Madras
From Shanty to Shanti: Teaching Australian Literature in India

Session 6(B), Wednesday 3.30

From February to April this year I undertook an Australian Studies Fellowship from the Australia-India Council (est. 1992) to teach at the University of Madras, in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The Australian Studies section at the University was started ten years ago (1998). As such, this paper aims to address areas suggested by ASAL for discussion, along with some of the similar Governmental aims of the A-IC, such as ‘raising awareness of Australia in India’, and ‘supporting Australian studies in India’. Consequently, the paper will be specific as to what constitutes ‘the world’. Indeed, it will be specific as to what constitutes ‘India’, focusing only on Tamil Nadu in the South.

1) The paper will comment on ASAL topics such as the ‘selling of Australian literature to the world’; the topic raises concerns for developing nations regarding the ‘privileging of consumers’ as text affordability and availability impacts on the OzLit research scope available to local students.

2) The paper will give examples of (an attempt to) ‘Translate the local to the world’, along with subsequent re-readings of canonical 19th c texts by Tamil students which challenge Anglo-centric assumptions.

3) The paper will discuss some reasons why indigenous writing is popular with Tamil students (along with issues raised in #1 and #2),

Carol-Anne Croker
Swinburne University of Technology
Is there such a thing as women’s popular literary fiction: and the rise of transnational women’s genre fiction.

Session 1(A), Monday 11.00

Australia has witnessed changes in the visual, performing arts and literary markets wrought by the demands of globalization. For Australian literature however, the discourse is one of doom and gloom; rhetoric of crisis pervades the popular press and specialist broadsheet supplements. The ‘death of the literary novel’ is touted as a direct result of the push towards globalization of the publishing industry and the dominance in Australia of the big international houses and lists.