

Shirley Hazzard's Australia: Belated Reading and Cultural Mobility

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The complexities of Shirley Hazzard's place in Australian Literature were highlighted when her fourth novel *The Great Fire* won the 2004 Miles Franklin Award. Australian television interviews following the announcement foregrounded what was clearly felt to be in some ways a tenuous claim to this important national prize. Jana Wendt opened her story on the Award with the comment: 'This year's Miles Franklin winner is an Australian who hasn't lived in Australia for more than fifty years', while the ABC's Kerry O'Brien began his interview with: 'Shirley Hazzard, this is your first significant Australian award. Given that you haven't lived here for nearly sixty years, I wonder does it carry a particular significance for you?' Hazzard's response to O'Brien was similarly tentative: 'Of course I was absolutely delighted to have it and also as—although there's an Australian element in it, it's not much rooted in Australia, not much of the action takes place in Australia.' She continued, linking the significance of the award to her biography: 'I thought this was also very generous to include me in that way but, of course, Australia was the first fifteen years of my life and you are already Australian for life by doing that'.

The subsequent commentary moved to consider the Australian content of *The Great Fire*, focusing not on Hazzard's eligibility for the prize so much as on the novel's representation of Australian life. John Slavin suggested that this commentary saw Hazzard's fiction as being out of step with the nation in both temporal and ethical terms: 'Hazzard has been criticized, particularly by Brenda Niall in *ABR* (February 2004) for the recidivist depiction of Australians in her novels as post-colonial vulgarians, as contrasts to the kind of ethical refinement she hyperbolises' (10). Niall's comments were actually somewhat more circumspect, but they do construe a telling link between the subject matter of the novel, and the author in terms of the times and spaces of expatriatism:

Reading this novel in 2004, Australians (and New Zealanders, too) may feel that Hazzard's satiric glances at antipodean provincialism are outdated, forgetting that the Sydney of Exley's boyhood, from which he escaped to pre-war Italy, was the 1930s. Hazzard, now in her early seventies, left Australia when she was sixteen and has spent most of her life in New York. This is an historical novel, as well as a novel about history, and its version of Australia's past has the authority of Hazzard's own experience (33).

Niall's comment, in a generally very positive review, invokes or anticipates an irritated 'Australian (and New Zealand)' refusal of Hazzard's account of 'antipodean provincialism', a refusal that sees that representation as itself outdated, as a function of its own memory lapse.¹ Niall's comment further proposes, however, that this apparent belatedness is signed by Hazzard's own biography. In a sense, Hazzard's expatriatism here takes on a temporality of its own, aligning her with those

'generations of Australians', that she invokes in her 1984 ABC Boyer lectures, who took their 'sensibility' with them overseas in search of culture, a move she noted even then, in 1984, as located in the past: 'In the pre-war and even in those post-war years, talented and intelligent people left this country; spirited and amusing people got up and went, taking their interest and their sensibility elsewhere' (19).

Viewed as an expatriate writer, then, Hazzard is herself consigned to a recent past of departure, with the spatial move of expatriatism reconfigured as a temporality, or more precisely as an anachronism, a redundant displacement, a journey Australians no longer need to make after the birth or arrival of a distinctive national culture in the second half of the twentieth century. Hazzard's own spirited description of such a change in her 1977 'Letter From Australia' for *The New Yorker* magazine dates this arrival sometime in the 1970s, a point supported from a critical perspective by numerous Australian literary commentators.² This move speaks to a nationalist agency that is nascent in the generally critical Australian responses to Hazzard's 1984 Boyer lectures and residual in Niall's more measured commentary twenty years later.

The Boyer Lectures were perhaps the first public occasions where Hazzard's authority to comment on Australia, or to speak as an Australian was challenged. In his *National Times* column 'On His Selection' Don Anderson reviewed the lectures acerbically, commenting that Hazzard's 'American citizenship makes her stature as a "prominent Australian" at least arguable'. While acknowledging Hazzard's profile as 'distinguished', Anderson invokes the dismissal by Peter Pierce of the prize-winning and best-selling *The Transit of Venus* as 'the best dressed women's magazine fiction of its year',³ and then extends the metaphor in his claim that Hazzard's Boyer Lectures '[resemble] nothing so much as a speech-day address by the headmistress of a girls' private school, of, dare I suggest, Queenwood'.⁴ Here the conflation of Hazzard's biography with her critical positionality as authorised speaker works to reinforce a refusal of the categories of expatriate and cosmopolite through a conflation of national identity and class; she is refused as both unAustralian and elite. In class terms, of course, the headmistress characterisation contradicts Pierce's (elitist) dismissal of popular culture; however in the reviews by both Pierce and Anderson, class is being used to anchor and mask misogyny, and both consolidate their refusal through figures of time and occasion.

These gendered tropes of national currency continue to underpin Anderson's rhetoric: 'the most besetting vice of these Lectures, and one against which one can with justice and impunity protest, is their apparent profound ignorance of the very culture which they presume not so much to criticise, as to prescribe for.' Here the ironic invocation of an outdated and hyper-literary style works satirically to repudiate Hazzard's formal modes of thought and speech—the Queenwood headmistress—in order to reinforce a refusal of her capacity for national representativeness. In demanding national representative status configured through fixed habitation, Anderson refutes the explicit appeal made in the lectures to a shared literary inheritance as grounds for shared location; he continues: 'in these lectures about Australian culture ... Hazzard quotes no fewer than 29 British and European writers, as opposed to three Australians', and concludes:

The apparent ignorance of contemporary Australian thought and letters displayed is equalled only by the ignorance of current social and political

events. There is no sense of a political present, no sense of the deep social divisions in Australia that might generate some of the attributes ascribed to our 'immature' culture. There is no sense of an economic present, no awareness how chronic unemployment and the fear of Asia might render Hazzard's high-minded prescriptions less than palatable.

The satiric voice here finds its clear target in the explicit consigning of Hazzard to the category of outdatedness, with the category of the national conversely temporalised by the same mechanism, locked assertively in the present through the determinants of the political, the social and the economic. Thus Hazzard's lack of authority to represent the nation is underscored by her anachronistic appeal to literature, exemplified finally for Anderson by her reference to Yeats as 'one of the last masters in an almost unbroken succession of the great poets in our language', to which he responds: '[i]n effect, and her contrasting of the 1930s and 1980s in Australia bears this out, the world died for Shirley Hazzard in the decade in which she was born.' Here Hazzard's articulation of connection through shared expression and culture is reconfigured by Anderson as a point of rupture, whereby he establishes his own nationalist authority through an explicitly (post-)colonial repudiation.

I want to propose, from a perspective of a quarter century's hindsight, a different response to Hazzard's Boyer lectures, suggesting that in 2009 they provide a useful contribution to recent conversations about the critical location of Australian literary culture in international contexts. Rhetorically, the absence of references to Australian texts in Hazzard's Boyer lectures makes them easy to misread, particularly in the context of 1984, when the rise of post-colonial cultural analysis was beginning to generate a new and enabling critique of colonial forms, including, in Australia, a necessary and definitional process of differentiating Australian texts and voices from those of Britain. In other words, it's not difficult to see why Hazzard's comments were read and criticised almost exclusively within those colonialist and nationalist frames (and this was not necessarily an unproductive exercise).⁵

A delayed reading of the lectures attends also to recent shifts in public perceptions of Australian cultural internationalism, evident at the level of both disciplinary debate and public perception,⁶ and, in permitting Hazzard's readers to attend more minutely to the operations of time and space in her account of her contemporary world, including the 'retrograde' (Gelder and Salzman 118) or 'recidivist' (Slavin 10) depictions of Australians in *The Great Fire*, provides for a more complex understanding of her significance in the contemporary field of Australian literary studies. This field has itself been reconfigured in recent decades by shifts in thinking about international and transnational cultural relations,⁷ in particular through the revitalisation of the concept of cosmopolitanism and the ways it allows readers and writers to re-engage with 'local' categories such as the nation. Robert Dixon in particular has explored cosmopolitanism in relation to Australian literary studies, drawing on the work of Amanda Anderson who has defined it in part as 'the capacious inclusion of multiple forms of affiliation, disaffiliation, and reaffiliation, simultaneously insisting on the need for informing principles of self-reflexivity, critique and common humanity' (Anderson, *Powers* 30-31, quoted in Dixon, 'Cosmopolitanism' 68). Dixon argues for Australian literary readings cognizant of 'a break with the cultural nationalism of the 1970s and 1980s', articulated by a number of contemporary Australian works—Frank Moorhouse's *Grand Days*, Alex Miller's

Conditions of Faith, Gail Jones's *Black Mirror* and Andrew McCann's *The White Body of Evening*, which he argues represent:

a marked contemporary interest in re-discovering the forms of cultural mobility and ethical authority once offered by historically earlier forms of cosmopolitanism. They recognize a value in what we might call 'the negative relation to nationality', insisting on the need for overlapping allegiances and multiple affiliations. (Dixon, 'Cosmopolitanism' 68)

This is very close to the terrain that I want to argue Hazzard opens up for contemporary readers through her complex configuration of time and space across her writing. In particular, Dixon's account of what Graham Huggan has termed (following Homi Bhabha) 'the temporal logic of national narrative' (39) provides a productive way of addressing the shifting geographies of Hazzard's fictional worlds and biographical habitus through its focus on the temporalised nature of these trans- and international exchanges and movements. In the first of the two forms of cosmopolitanism defined by Dixon, we see colonialism determining a 'spatial and temporal lag' in forms of colonial mimicry; it is also seen in the second form: the 'international traffic in culture, personnel, texts, images and ideas', grounded in a sense of 'the circulation of cultural capital as conferring an experience of simultaneity, closing the gap between colony and metropolis' (Dixon, 'Cosmopolitanism' 72). The focus on 'temporal logic' opens up the mobility that is so significant in Hazzard's writing; however I want also to suggest that in its striking presentation of Cold War locations and events, her work stages a decided, if subtle, move away from the specifically colonial frames that organise Dixon's account of Australian cosmopolitanism, and that in this, her work generates a distinctive form of cosmopolitan cultural mobility, and as a consequence a distinctive perspective on Australia.

While Hazzard's fiction explicitly traverses the colonial world, notably in the minutely attentive account of the Bell sisters' Sydney childhood and transportation to the colonial metropolis in *The Transit of Venus*, or the equally meticulous portrait of colonial Hong Kong in *The Great Fire*, the narrative trajectory of both works lurches into a different, albeit related, modality of cosmopolitan modernity: that of the Cold War, seen most directly in the progress of protagonist Aldred Leith from the battlefields of World War II Europe to those of Civil War China. The narrative significance of Caro's journey to London in the early chapters of *The Transit of Venus* is, moreover, displaced not only by the proleptic passage of romance, but also by her literal move to New York, and thence to an ever-shifting globe characterised by political dissidence and bureaucratic dislocation, figured in her sidelong observation of Adam Vail's work representing minority figures from Tunisia (118) and South America (207) and her own work as translator of the dissident poet Ramón Tregear (247-51). This world is defined, moreover, by insistent if passing references to contemporary events such as Indochina (259-60), US involvement in South America (261), leftist and student politics in France (115-18), or British spy scandals (217), tracing the Cold War outlines of a new world then just emerging:

In America, a white man had been shot dead in a car, and a black man on a verandah. In Russia, a novelist had emerged from hell to announce that beauty would save the world. Russian tanks rolled through Prague while

America made war with Asia. In Greece the plays of Aristophanes were forbidden, in China the writings of Confucius. (245)

The ethical and emotional dramas of Hazzard's fictional protagonists are framed by this clearly defined and recognizable politico-historical world, which meshes, moreover with the public purchase of her non-fictional writings.⁸ This context is further inflected with the forms and figures of a larger cultural inheritance, its contours formed in *The Great Fire* not only by the new geographies of post-Hiroshima Japan and Civil War China but also by historical perspectives, whereby past worlds are brought into the present through, for instance, the shared reading of Gibbon and Carlyle by the young protagonists (34, 39-40), and through the metaphors of the 'Great Fire' itself. *The Great Fire* thus tellingly re-locates narrative interest eastwards from Europe to Asia as the locus of contemporary global political events, while continuing to inflect and inform these events with significance drawn from Europe's classical past.

The references to the Cold War as it replaces or reconfigures colonialism at the centre of this cosmopolis provide a lens through which the contemporary world—and contemporary Australia more precisely—might be understood at the points of its emergence and definition. Here we need to return to Dixon's account of cosmopolitanism's 'temporal logic' (whereby metropolis and province are separated by a gap in time, or rendered simultaneous) and to the similar temporal shifts I noted earlier in the ways both Hazzard and her critics account for her expatriatism. The cosmopolitanism of Hazzard's two major novels holds her readers suspended at a point that is temporally as well as spatially significant in two ways: it is the point of the formation of our own world in its micropolitical details, and it is insistently a mobile and shifting locus. By inflecting their present-day events and characters with informed, readerly reflection on past events, Hazzard's novels compress their differentiated historical worlds into a minutely inflected and worldly perspective from which readers proceed to encounter their own location in its larger contexts; that is to say, the novels displace their readers from the stability of their present-day locations. This displacement is produced by means of what Amanda Anderson has referred to as the 'expanded world' generated by older forms of cosmopolitanism. Anderson further notes what she calls an 'awkward elitism' at work in the older sense of the term: 'it frequently advances itself as a specifically intellectual ideal', depending on 'a mobility that is the luxury of social, economic or cultural privilege' (Anderson, 'Cosmopolitanism' 268). This critically inflected and temporally complex cosmopolitanism, itself the product of an earlier century and world view, provides us with a way of addressing the cultural mobility that drives Hazzard's account of Australia through a kind of disavowed expatriatism, locating itself in an 'expanded' rather than a nationally circumscribed world. In other words, expatriatism is not left behind in Hazzard's work, as even her own accounts sometimes suggest; rather it is a figure which enacts the possibilities of in particular female agency, both fictional and biographical, and which is grounded in a shifting sense of time and place.⁹

The belatedness of Hazzard's account of Australia, as determined by her Australian Boyer critics but also through her own agency, is wrapped into this complex and inflected literary-historical world, and into the mobility of her own national affiliations. I want now to move on to consider these a little more closely in order to unpack the ways her biography and her authority to speak about or represent Australia

are bound up with her larger ethical and aesthetic project. Hazzard's own location in the world is effected not only through the mechanisms of expatriation, but also through another form of cultural mobility: the explicit embrace, across her writing, of the project of humanism, understood as a fundamental secular principle of western culture that has enabled its most tangible and enduring products. For Hazzard, moreover, humanism and humanist inheritances are found in their truest forms in literature. Literature provides access to veracity, what she terms 'the testimony of the accurate word' (Hazzard, 'Silence' 11), and it is here that the two dimensions of her writing being considered in this essay—literary fiction and cultural commentary and polemic—come together.

The late work of Edward Said on contemporary modes of humanism is instructive in unpacking the resonances and possibilities of Hazzard's invocations of humanism. Emily Apter observes of Said's work on this topic that:

[while] in *Orientalism*, humanism and empire are revealed in mutual compact ... there are other humanisms that survive the compromise with imperialism: emancipatory humanism, the ethics of coexistence, figural paradigms of onto-genesis in world-historical forms of culture, and the ideal of *translatio* as portal to a universal or sacred language. (35)

I want to foreground two figures: onto-genesis and *translatio*, through which Saidian humanism generates the very ground for an engaged or 'worldly' poetic, of the kind we find in Hazzard's work. I want to focus on the way in Apter's account of Said these figures prioritise the role of time and the forms of diversity in the shifting frames of selfhood provided by humanism.

Apter argues that for Said, humanism 'provides futural parameters for defining secular criticism in a world increasingly governed by a sense of identitarian ethnic destiny and competing sacred tongues.' Further:

At the late stage of his career..., Said was clearly committed to the future of humanism, conceived as a world system that takes account of the vast traffic in inter-national learnedness informing Greek-Arab-Judeo-Christian practices of cultural translation from the early Middle Ages to the present. But I would submit further that Said seems to have been urging humanism, in its prospective guises, to take on not only the history of *global translatio* but also to build on its past tradition as instigator of intellectual fields that de-compartmentalize established discourses and subjects. (45)

For Hazzard, the complex temporalities of humanism constitute a structure of inheritance that overrides claims to contemporaneity. I've argued elsewhere¹⁰ that in Hazzard's fiction, these structures come to replace the social and emotional forms of family life, as we see in the predominance in her novels of orphans, exiles, and adulterers whose lives are taken up with repudiating and escaping parental authority and the constraints of family (which is particularly important in constructing possibilities of agency for young women). Further, through their association with the structures of epic, their knowledge of history, literature and art, these protagonists come to occupy a temporality that is archaic, at odds with the contemporary world

around them, anterior, moreover, to the world of their parents. In this it is their erudition and their humanist alignments that set them at odds with the preoccupations of their own time, working thus to complicate a more rigid temporality.

This invocation of humanist inheritances is likewise a distinctive feature of Hazzard's non-fiction, which characteristically invokes classical comparisons or references to extend the public purchase of the commentary. 'Bread and Circuses', a speech delivered in 1997 to the Sydney Institute, begins:

The title of this talk comes from Juvenal. ... It is nearly two thousand years since Juvenal remarked that the Roman populace, whose immediate forbears had charged themselves with integrity and responsibility, was now in a time of crisis, clamouring only for bread and circuses. They were calling for entertainments, riches and the continual gratification of appetite. They would do nothing against their momentary inclination. Rome was not then in decline. ... The Rome admonished by Juvenal was at a high point of mastery and achievement. The crisis arose from a vicious abuse of imperial power. Juvenal himself, although a moralist, was not a wowsler. It was the trivializing that exasperated him, and the ill-omened discrepancy between the immense power in hand and the spree on which much of it was being squandered. (31)

The references here to waste, self-indulgence, lack of self-reflection and accountability draw on Hazzard's specific millennial context, but speak also to the structuration of humanist reference more minutely. She continues:

The analogy of Rome is irresistible—not because it is historically exact, but because its writers, who hold their mirror up to one's own perceptions and forebodings, chronicle with outrage the overcrowding of towns and traffic, the speculative building of high rises, the destruction of a fair coast and befouling of its waters; the noise, fumes and agitation of city life; the decay of civility and conscience; the indifference to inward existence. As time passes, the tone changes to urgency. We learn of new generations who in their dress expensively imitate the dread barbarians, prompting imperial edicts against the wearing of trousers, long hair, and fur coats by fashionable young Romans within the city walls. It is all busy, self-approving. But overhung with suspense. (31)

Here Hazzard invokes the contemporary world through the lens of classical inheritance, pressing a more complex temporality onto the framework of an implied nostalgia or conservatism, and inflecting the trope of decline with a sense of repetition and familiarity. Her ironic invocation of Juvenal's characterization of youth as long-haired barbarians disturbing the spatial and temporal unities of the Roman state, of course recalls for us the familiar account of western youth through the second half of the twentieth century. This account, itself out-of-date in 1997, is qualified however by another temporal layer: the sense of 'urgency' that she discerns in Juvenal's comments, a quality that meshes more exactly, and possibly without irony, for her contemporary audience.

Hazzard's writings are often characterized by this self-conscious anachronism of the speaking voice. Minutely attentive to the usages and etymologies of human expression, she crafts a perspective on the present and on contemporary events that is always defiantly slightly out of sync. The irony produced invites her audience to share not just her erudition, her familiarity with the languages and literatures of classical and European culture, but also the positionality of attentive critique, tirelessly holding the culture around her to account from a perspective informed by time, as part of the Aristotelian ethos, the ethical proof that confirms the speaker's authority to speak. It is from such a vantage point that her account of humanism is presented in terms of both continuity and loss: 'Humanism is the principle on which Western existence has rested for five hundred years. Humanism set the dignity and singularity of a man or woman above abstractions and inventions. Through generations of the world's fratricidal convulsions, it supplied the fragile continuity of individual civilization. It offered hospitality to thought and art' (29). Here the frameworks of selfhood and interiority speak to a larger order of time. It is also at this point of 'fragile continuity' that Hazzard's cosmopolitanism takes shape as an account of the contemporary world informed by an outmoded and mobile sense of its limits and frames.

Within this rubric, while *The Great Fire* is set in the immediate post-WWII period, it is not so much an historical novel as an argument for a more complex understanding of the ways we encounter fictions and characters from outside our own time¹¹. *The Great Fire*'s cosmopolitanism—its 'expanded world', and the 'awkward elitism' of the forms of cultural mobility it engenders—lies in the ways it draws its readers to encounter our own contemporary world from an unfamiliar perspective—not the other way around. Working backwards to the 1984 Boyer lectures, we can trace a similar density in the ways Hazzard takes up the question of Australia, not through the rubric of the nation, but rather by tracing Australia's relations to an inherited and displaced European culture as part of a shifting and expanding globe. The lectures stage this through the move away from a defining rhetoric of development: the tropes of 'coming of age', adolescence, maturity signalled in the title of the lecture series are complicated as the argument moves into a closely configured and mobile engagement with the geography as well as the history of a wider world. The time of national culture—for Hazzard's critics the time of the present nation—is refuted in favour of a temporality of engagement and learning, activities that are, Hazzard argues, profoundly at odds with nationalist accounts of culture:

To propose something worthwhile of our own requires both objectivity and passion. I think it needs an inner silence into which judgment can enter. It needs persistence and humility, and a long view in both directions—a sense of what has gone before us, and a fellow-feeling for those who are to come. (37-38)

Hazzard argues further that a nationalist understanding of culture rests on a bounded sense of time, a point she critiques through a reconfiguring of the concept of history:

Perhaps Australia even yet has not seen herself as a full participant in the human story; does not quite believe herself a part of history.

Our word 'history' comes from a Greek word meaning 'enquiry'. It embodies the assumption that men and women are curious about life on

earth; that they wish to question the dead as well as the living, and to ponder the present and the future as widely as possible from knowledge about the past. (19)

The sense of history here shifts from a linear temporality of progression, a sequence of events leading to the present, conceived as a vantage point, to a more complex and vulnerable sense of engagement and shared location. The 'maturity' Hazzard promotes in these lectures as absent from Australian culture is constructed according to this more complex temporality; it is not a perspective on time so much as an immersion in it, as can be seen in the account she provides of Australian colonial history rendered continuous with its past through the work of metaphor and imagination:

It was the age of discovery—the three centuries of European navigation inaugurated by the Italian Renaissance—that led to the settlement of Australia. I think that Australians are at present discoverers of their own land. They are coming to know it as if they had not truly lived in it before. (32)

The time of the nation here is not locked into the present. History, like poetry, is a process of engagement across time, 'the mainstream of civilised awareness', not a logic of progression and development within it: thus the metaphors of discovery and rebirth are revived through acts of scholarship and imagination, providing points of reiteration and reconfiguration across time, and across space, 'an infinite distance—even, at last, to ourselves' (33).

Time's linear passage is measured rather by the work of technology:

Technology, by definition, cannot be expressive, as are the arts at their best, of all our innate humanity—of what used to be called our soul. The superiority with which we may look back at the technical deprivations of our ancestors is without ethical or spiritual content. It is comparable, rather, to the advantage enjoyed by a man with weapons over a man unarmed. (36)

The human image here explicitly refuses a teleological account of human change. It is replaced with an ethical appeal, compressing historical periodisation into a figure of engagement, setting us face to face with our human past and possibilities. Within this context, the move these lectures stage from past to present bespeaks generosity and openness—'the gifts and lessons of the past'. This history provides, moreover, for the reconfiguration of Australia's colonial invasion and settlement as a global rather than a national story:

[I]t was when I left these shores that I was first made aware of the body of interest and scholarship directed to Australia's indigenous life and its Pacific setting. It was in Asia and in Britain in the post-war years that I first heard such things knowledgeably discussed, was made aware of the study of Asian and Pacific languages and people, and saw their works of art displayed and appreciated. Some of this interest did exist then in Australia itself; but it was subdued, it was exceptional; it wasn't free. In

the museums of Rome and Florence I was to discover Australian and Polynesian artefacts—many of them bought in the 1780s by Sir William Hamilton from Captain Cook, and presented to the kings of Naples. I was to learn how one of these Bourbon kings exchanged a set of precious papyri from the Herculaneum excavation for a group of live kangaroos. I was to find in the notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci a reference to a weapon, mentioned by classical writers, that was used by German tribes in antiquity: a weapon that could be artfully thrown a certain distance, and recalled at will; and I saw that one of Virgil's modern English translators had rendered its Latin name as 'boomerang'. (51)

In this knowing invocation of her expatriate biography, Hazzard stages a metaphorical theft of a national icon, itself appropriated to the nation through colonialist fiat. The reference to the Virgil's German boomerang constitutes a self-conscious challenge to her Australian audience, configured ironically in the very terms deployed by her Boyer critics, whereby nationality is a property that is either retained or lost by one's location or trajectory in the contemporary world (by virtue of staying somewhere or going somewhere else). In this act Hazzard at once engages with her Australian audience but refutes the time frame that has been proposed for such a conversation—the timeframe that sees her contribution as outdated. In claiming that the boomerang both precedes and exceeds the nation it has been coerced to represent, she calls the stability of that national entity into doubt, while conferring additional metaphorical lustre to the object itself. The times and spaces of the nation are here put into play in the moment of cultural *translatio*, with the figures of expatriate writer and national icon discovering each other, unexpectedly, through a cosmopolitan act of cultural return.

NOTES

¹ A more unequivocal response in these terms can be seen in Gelder and Salzman's recent *After the Celebration*, which consigns *The Great Fire* to the category of cultural and gendered belatedness: '[*The Great Fire* is] frequently concerned with what now seems a rather outmoded notion of uncivilised Australian and New Zealand values, in contrast to the wisdoms of Europe, England, and the East' (118) and '*The Great Fire* reinforces a clichéd notion of antipodean vulgarity and narrowness of vision' (119).

² Graham Huggan has provided a useful account of this in relation to the construction of the Australian literary canon in his recent *Australian Literature: Postcolonialism, Racism, Transnationalism*.

³ Pierce's review further comments that: '*The Transit of Venus* stylishly disguises its origins in soap opera' (110).

⁴ Hazzard attended Queenwood, an elite private girls' school in Sydney. Her visits to the school have been noted in media accounts of her return visits to Australia.

⁵ While Hazzard has observed that there were also positive responses to her lectures, it is clear that Anderson's review was in step with the broad public response, as she explained in an interview with Kate Jennings in 1991: 'There were listeners—and it is

often women who best know how to listen—who discussed these things as they had been verified in their own lives. Life isn't—as we were saying about fiction—only what you experience but also what you observe. I did have remarkable letters, but it seems probable that many listeners, at least on first hearing, disliked what I had to say' (Jennings 26).

⁶ Rupert Murdoch's 2008 Boyer Lectures signal this shift in the public domain.

⁷ Graham Huggan's *Australian Literature* is again instructive here, along with Carter, Whitlock, and Robert Dixon, 'Australian Literature'.

⁸ Hazzard's non-fictional writing is extensive, but I am thinking here specifically of her two UN monographs and associated commentary, for instance the interview she gave to *Blast* magazine in 1994, where she discusses the US/UN involvement in the 1991 Gulf War (Tully).

⁹ A similar point is made in an unpublished discussion of *The Transit of Venus* by Akeel Bilgrami, where he notes the 'keenness and deeply felt efforts to depict women's aspirations in a time (and in characters who lived) prior to what feminism made possible for women's aspirations, which makes for a kind of poignancy in her women characters'. This points directly to the shifting temporal logic of the ethical purchase of Hazzard's fiction, and informs my larger point in this respect. I am grateful to Akeel Bilgrami for his correspondence with me on this.

¹⁰ Olubas 'Visual Art' and 'Anachronism'.

¹¹ I have discussed this question at greater length in "At home in more than one place": Cosmopolitanism in the work of Shirley Hazzard' in *Australian Book Review*, Apr. 2010: 9-11.

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