

The View From Here: Readers and Australian literature

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Dorothy Green is only known to me through her published work which means I have met her in the same way I have met most Australian writers, as a reader. Some years ago a popular Auckland magazine called *Metro* had a running visual joke which became a famous tag phrase. On their social page they ran the usual pictures of celebrities and hangers on consorting at publicity friendly events. There would always be a group shot which featured someone looking particularly unfortunate—their mouth open in a hyena laugh, too many chins, caught in a drunken leer—and in the caption this person would be recorded as ‘a visitor from Hawkes Bay’. Giving the Dorothy Green Memorial Lecture at ASAL makes me feel I am standing in as the ‘visitor from Hawkes Bay’. I hope I will not be caught in a peculiarly unflattering grimace, but I am standing here as the anonymous presence in a room full of celebrities. I mean by this not so much to reflect on my circumstances, but the peculiarity of my category. I am a New Zealand reader of Australian literature. That makes me just about a category of one. The reverse category, an Australian reader of New Zealand literature, is also a rare beast, though perhaps there is a breeding pair in existence.

The flyer for this conference mentions every part of the literary spectrum except readers. What I want to talk about today, in the context of being a New Zealand reader, and the peculiarity of our literary connections, is the role of the reader (or rather roles, because ‘the reader’ is clearly a very diverse creature) and what that might tell us about national literatures and what they are good for. A range of possible readers of Australian literature might go like this—the woman reader, the indigenous reader, the historical reader, the migrant reader, the postcolonial reader, the colonial reader, the white reader, the queer reader, the New Zealand reader, the academic reader, the reader for pleasure, the popular reader, the lazy reader, and the good reader, a category Dorothy Green thought should increase in size. All these readers are actors in ‘Australian literature’ just as much as writers and publishers, and, I suggest, readers are already global. I am not looking at reader response today, or the history of reading, but rather trying to think about how dehomogenising ‘the reader’ re-articulates ‘Australian literature’, and opens lateral spaces which connect across national literatures in different ways. In other words I am contesting the idea of ‘Australian literature in a Global World’ by relating it to the practises of individuals with books, rather than the big ambitions and structures of national literatures and global literary relations.

Few people think about the role boredom has in a national literature. Some years ago I did a regular New Year slot on National Radio in New Zealand about the best books of the previous year. Because I am both a lazy and an easily bored reader, I used to cheat by interpolating new books into the list. A couple of weeks after my first time I ran into a friend who worked at Booksellers New Zealand. She said ‘Boy you caused a stir down there at Booksellers’. I said ‘why?’ Thinking perhaps my only-just-read-this-one-trick had somehow given itself away: ‘You didn’t mention a single New Zealand book!’, she said. Until that moment it had never occurred to me I was supposed to, though after that I did notice most ‘best books’ contributors, in print and on radio, chucked in a New Zealand book or two, and some people used it entirely as an occasion to showcase New Zealand books. What I discovered was that I had a gut resistance to

mentioning New Zealand books just because that's what they were. Something had to grab me, that was the criterion. I found I am not a dutiful reader. This sits at odds with professional practise—I should probably read every New Zealand book published, just as all of you here probably do read every Australian book published. But I do not. The problem I am describing here, if it is a problem, is built into the idea of a *national* literature, a literature to which the reader belongs, which has accompanying obligations, such as the expectation that readers will have a loyal, even patriotic, relation to their own literature, and that their literature will sit at the centre of their experience, identity and belief. This may indeed be entirely reasonable and describe how many readers operate, though my experience of reading tends to be more feral and undutiful than this, but such expectations also have another side, which can operate protectively and exclusively, as in clubbism.

In 1977 Dorothy Green reviewed Robert Drewe's *The Savage Crows* (1976), Craig McGregor's *The See Through Revolver* (1977), Frank Moorhouse's *Tales of Mystery and Romance* (1977) and Ronald McKie's *The Crushing* (1977). First published in the *National Times*, it is one of Green's many acute, witty and penetrating reviews. She notes that all the novelists are journalists and says that "Journalism encourages a strongly coterie view of life, bounded by certain pubs, certain restaurants and the club" (1984 92).

Green goes on to suggest that the writers under discussion operate under an illusion of omniscience, and concentrate on the wrong targets. 'Unfortunately,' she observes caustically, 'in literature a warm heart is not enough' (94). Indeed, in literature a warm heart is not enough, but the point I want to pick up here in relation to a national literature is her point about a coterie. All literatures have their coteries but in the case of small national literatures like Australia's and New Zealand's, coterie-dom and cronyism go with the territory—the publishing networks, editorial influences, marketing teams, literary agents, writers and reviewers are connected, and it is not hard to arrive at the idea that something called 'Australian' or 'New Zealand' Literature is a special club, with rules and obligations, prefects and third formers. Feminism drew attention to some aspects of literature's clubbism, and indigenous and migrant writers as well as critics have attacked its postcolonial manifestations, but the self-policing of literary establishments takes a multitude of forms. One of the obvious places to see this is in the awarding of prizes—both our literatures can produce long historical lists of canon forming bias. This year's fiction shortlist for New Zealand's pre-eminent literary prize, the Montana Book Awards, is only four rather than the usual five titles, and the judges' explanation, that the chosen four are of such quality that adding a fifth title would dilute their excellence, has produced blog-outrage. Here is a summarising quote from an article by Paula Morris, a distinguished young Maori novelist, in the *New Zealand Listener*:

The fiction shortlist of the Montana New Zealand Book Awards, announced on June 10, is all surprises this year: two short-story collections! No men! Nothing from Victoria University Press! All the writers born in the 1960s! One debut novelist! One Maori; One Southlander! Someone from Auckland! Only four books on the shortlist! (June 21-27, 2008)

The authors whose works have not been shortlisted include many famous names, and as you can infer from Morris's remarks, those on the shortlist are relatively unknown and fall into contestable categories. The judges' decision has the air of resisting canon formation but it nevertheless demonstrates the pressures and priorities peculiar to a *national* literature—prizes seldom get literary history right but their contemporary politics reveal much about what, to kidnap a phrase from Fredric Jameson, the 'geopolitical aesthetic' of a nation might be. The Montana Book Awards include a readers' choice prize for example, which is seldom awarded to the same book as the Deutz Medal for fiction—usually there is a gap between the reader who is betting on literary futures and the reader who knows what she likes—which suggests that a critic or a literary judge or a professional reader is weighed down with responsibility for the imagined community of the nation as it is generated in, by, and for print-capitalism. The competing discourses of pleasure and posterity, or pleasure and patrimony, or the 'market' as against difficult high art and resistance to the canon, are inevitably entangled in the high stakes commodity culture of something called a national literature.

Both Australian and New Zealand literatures are to some extent coterie literatures which may partly explain why, as publishers and distributors always claim, they are not interested in each other. Perhaps the indifference of New Zealand and Australian readers to each other's texts is born from a kind of boredom, a boredom which is to some extent generated by the dutiful reader's maintenance of home territory and nationalist expectations. But the reciprocal indifference of trans-Tasman readers is also a marketing truism that blanks out the shifting layers of cultural and historical engagement by readers whose sectoral interests cut across the national literature police, and who display diverse interests, anxieties and transitions. Frank Moorhouse once said that Australia was Switzerland pretending to be Texas (1978). That remark might also suggest something about Australian literature's relationship to the global world in terms of its aspirations and self-conceptions, and in those terms, the 'global world' to Australia does not, and never has, meant New Zealand. But readers, traversing their broad and mixed worlds of print, are less monolithic, more adventurous, less contained and more critical than the category 'Australian literature' might suggest.

As Dorothy Green's collected essays show, readers do not stay within nation-state bounds. One of the interesting things about her essays is how relatively infrequently they draw on Australian texts to make their point, though she is explicitly writing into 'Australian literature'. In her essay 'The Writer' Green refers to Henry Handel Richardson's husband and very fleetingly to Colleen McCullough but otherwise roams freely through the English-speaking world, throwing in Rainer Maria Rilke for good measure (1990). Australian writers she does refer to (I am speaking here of her essays rather than reviews of specific books) stay within a canon of sorts—White, Furphy, Richardson—but are constantly inflected and referenced to the broad world of any reader's textual territory. In Green's case this is a territory of high learning, featuring what she calls 'traditional excellence' a point she applies to her call for more good readers in Australia. As a New Zealand reader, engaging with the problematic idea of a 'national' literature, Green speaks to my own experience, though I have a greater catholicity than she appears to about what gets read. And as a literary scholar, I am interested in the way literary history both shows up broad patterns of similarity and difference in our national literatures, but does not allow me to account for the hostilities and anxieties that are said to move back and forth across the ditch, because readers it seems, go where they want regardless. A nineteenth century settler reader's imagined

community is very different from that of a contemporary indigenous reader, but neither reader would think they had most in common with each other, as ‘Australians’ or ‘New Zealanders’.

W.H.Auden once said that books should in some sense be at odds with the place in which they are read.¹ I am currently writing a study of the reading tastes on a nineteenth century New Zealand farm. The farm was a big community—300 people worked and lived there when it was at its height, in the 1890s—and it was supplied with a library, operated by subscription and subsidized by the farm’s owners. The station library which contained about 2000 volumes was one of two collections on the farm. The other was held in the house and was mostly private family books—also a substantial collection of about 1000 volumes. The station library was 88% fiction, and the majority of the books were works by Victorian novelists. There was also a healthy sprinkling of writers from Australia (Rolf Boldrewood, Ada Cambridge, Mrs Praed, Tasma, Catherine Martin, Nat Gould, Hume Nisbet); the United States (J. Fenimore Cooper, Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Owen Wister and Benjamin Franklin as well as dime novelists); and writers from South Africa and continental Europe. The use patterns of the collection show that the authors who were bestsellers in Great Britain—Miss Braddon, Mrs Henry Wood, Rider Haggard, Walter Besant, Wilkie Collins, Dickens, Trollope, Marie Corelli—are also preferred by readers on the farm who liked adventure novels or metropolitan romances, which bears out Auden’s point and is not really surprising.

The house library on the other hand, which is mostly non fiction and reference works, contains most of the New Zealand books, which are ‘literature’ in the wide sense that Dorothy Green uses when she praises Sir Thomas Browne and Bertrand Russell in her essay ‘The Place of Literature in Society’, that is ‘written work on any subject which might interest a man of taste, intelligence and moderate learning’ (1984 148). These books, which include a copy of the first Maori Dictionary and the New Testament in Maori, are placed in a category and a location which is clearly demarcated from the recreational reading that dominates the common library collection. They represent cultural work of a different kind, and place the ‘national’ and the ‘literary’ at the centre of an historical and imperial project, and in the province of the scholar-gentleman. The difference between these two categories is, I think, germane to what we understand by a national literature.

Part of what is illustrated in the example of the farm is that readers are not naturally more attracted to literature that their taxes subsidise or because they live in the same country as the author. The nationalist politics of literature seldom come from reader choice, though in the case of under-representation or misrepresentation in the canon, as has been shown by feminism and indigenous writing, readers have been drawn to writing that redresses a perceived bias, or their own invisibility in the text. The New Zealand writer Patricia Grace has said she began writing because it was so hard to find books which reflected her experience, and her large readership echoes her imperative, although it is also cultural and ethnically mixed. There are also readers who compose a particular and historical dimension of literary and publishing politics which is sometimes time-bound. The gender-specific readership relied on for many years by feminist presses and women’s book festivals, in New Zealand anyway, has dwindled to almost nothing. Women still make up by far the largest part of literary festival audiences and apparently form the majority of book buyers, but their loyalties are no

longer so clearly sectoral. Perhaps the same thing has occurred with migrant writers and their readerships—no-one would say that the primary reader for Christos Tsiolkas's *Dead Europe* (2005) is a migrant, though there might be a significant queer readership. By the same token, is the reader for *Dead Europe* also the reader for 'Australian' literature?

Being a reader is a primary form of self-fashioning. Dorothy Green's essay 'The Reader' makes this point by starting with Bacon's dictum that 'Studies serve for pastime, for ornaments, for abilities' (81). Her own advice to readers treats them as a category separate from critics, who she acknowledges are sometimes useful for pointing out books you might otherwise not have heard of, but whose principal job, is to discover weaknesses in the texts they examine. Green's distinction between critics and readers privileges readers, who she sees as the vital other partners in a 'great continuous discussion' held through time and space—critics in contrast are parasitic and secondary. I am not going to engage with this distinction here, except to note in passing that one of the many things I like about Australia and its literary habitat is the vigour and depth of critical debate here, but what interests me are the adjectives Green attaches to her reader, which are reflected across the body of her own work. The reader is, or rather ought to be—these are injunctive adjectives—'conscientious', 'good', 'discriminating'.

Although Green agrees with Bacon that the first object of reading is pleasure, her ideal reader, exemplified in her own text, is conscious of the dangers of popular reading which makes 'poor' readers 'gullible, and alert to the dangers of ignorance and debasement of the language. These warnings are rhetorically associated with Australians, who are 'dangerously ignorant of other languages and cultures', and who are 'vandals' in their treatment of them. What I am pointing to here is a decoupling in Green's text of the category 'reader' and nationality. Although Green is writing about the Australian literary scene, and takes her examples of reading failures from Australian schools, theorists and attitudes, 'reader' proves to be too big a category to stay contained within a local frame. Her position is classically humanist descending from Sir Philip Sidney. Readers are embarked on self improvement, they have moral functions and they are keepers of the faith. In Australia, for reasons she ascribes to the education system, what she calls the 'progressive secularisation of culture' (106) and the pluralization of reading publics in a more mobile and image driven world, 'good' readers are becoming scarce.

Green's critical position is a familiar one and in some ways I am sympathetic to it, but the thread of nostalgia which runs through this essay, for a time when children heard Shakespeare at their mother's knee and any school child could have told a 'supposedly well educated journalist' that Manning Clark did not invent the phrase 'put down the mighty from their seats' but borrowed it from the Bible, is also a fiction of the past. The past is a different country even for readers who live in it. But Green's self fashioning as a reader who is somehow not a critic depends on an effortless range of reference and deep textual knowledge that encompasses the literature of her country but is also distanced from it. In this respect she reminds me of Janet Frame, a New Zealand writer who has never been confined by her nationality, and whose place in the national literature has been volatile to say the least.

It is not possible for Frame readers, like Patrick White readers, to engage with her work in ways that make sense of 'New Zealand literature' or in White's case 'Australian

literature'. After dreadful reviews of *The Tree of Man* by Australian reviewers White referred to his 'unAustralian Australian' novels. Without a powerful literary inheritance you could not understand Frame's idea of treasure in her first novel *Owls Do Cry*, or anything about her multiply reflexive self-representations in her autobiography. In the second volume, *An Angel at My Table*, Frame describes meeting the man who became her lover in Ibiza. It is a meeting coded for readers, but has nothing to do with 'New Zealand literature' readers:

We walked along the narrow streets, uphill through a grove of tall cacti with their calloused spiked palms upward. Bernard pointed to the entrances of the caves where some Ibicencans lived. I was aware of myself now making another journey, a first, as I had when Ben and I searched London for a chess set that in spite of the occasional surfacing of dreams and desires remained a literal chess set on which to play a real game of chess. This beach walk with Bernard was recognised by us as an intention like the preliminary movement that birds make when determining their final flight. Bernard and I also laughed and talked and quoted our favourite poets (I was slightly disappointed when he quoted Kipling's 'Gunga Din'), but I was again entranced with him when I learned that he spoke fluent French and Spanish and at once I drew out my favourite quotations, like confections being cooked, shaped and set for tasting. (67)

Frame sets her quotations into the text, like sweets for the other reader who will recognise their importance and delicacy, and will understand the many things they say about Janet. She quotes La Fontaine, Daudet, Victor Hugo:

'...now it was Bernard's turn to impress me.

'What about Auden?' he said.

I was rapturous. 'Oh! Auden!'

I began, 'He disappeared in the dead of winter/ the brooks were frozen...

Bernard responded with a quote from Edna St Vincent Millay while I listened with polite attention, snobbishly aware that *my* poets were 'better' than his, and wishing he would quote long passages of Yeats as I tried to preserve my image of his perfection...' (68)

Green and Frame would have been a perfect fit—Bernard needless to say does not last. The kind of reader Frame, was and Green was, and Walter Benjamin was when he describes himself as a child opening books not to read them through, but to dwell, abide, between their lines, the content and world of the book burning within it, blazing from it, transfiguring and rapturous, is someone for whom reading is living, the printed text their habitat, a habitat in which nationality has only a minor part to play.² One of the interesting things about both Green and Frame is the role of literary distinction. Frame calls it snobbery, Green calls it discrimination, but for both women it is a primary social, emotional, intellectual and cultural capital on which identity rests. Being a reader in a particular place has nothing to do with the primal identification of the self as a reader, though there may be a politics or an anthropology associated with it.

I want to turn now to another category of reader which occupies a powerful locus in the landscape of reading and national literatures and that is the indigenous reader. Perhaps the entire point of a national literature is the shock of recognition. The absence of

Maori and aboriginal writers in Australian and New Zealand literatures until very recently, and their co-option into European cultural forms, problematises the idea of 'literature' as Green and Frame espouse it, as well as its descriptor 'national'. Maori who write in English are on the pae, the welcoming space on a marae which is explicitly between worlds, or, as Witi Ihimaera puts it in his anthology of the same title, they inhabit Te Ao Marama, the world of light created when the creating parents Rangi and Papa were forced apart, where the questions are 'Who was 'us'? who are 'you?' (17). The same mixed space is suggested in Sally Morgan's *My Place*, where the writer acts as medium and transcriber for the oral history of her family but has been criticised for assuming only a minimal Aboriginal identity herself. Mediation between worlds, languages, cultures and literary forms, which is the work of the indigenous writer, is further complicated by the politics of nation—does an indigenous reader feel included in something called Australian or New Zealand literature?

The recent formation of the Native Studies Association in Georgia is the latest step in a growing body of work which crosscuts national literatures in favour of indigenous commonalities. Anita Heiss's *Dhuuluu-yala To Talk Straight: Publishing Indigenous Literature* (2003) is based on analysis of the experience of Aboriginal, Maori and Canadian First Nations authors in the literary marketplace, and shows that Indigenous writers are often better served by infrastructure that is also managed and run by Indigenous people. Since the publication of Keri Hulme's *the bone people* in 1983, Maori texts published in Aotearoa have made no concessions to the non-Maori speaking reader, but just as any Indigenous writer is already making a series of translations in bringing their work to print, so the indigenous reader has to transit between cultural forms and literary institutions. The non-indigenous reader ought to be alert and might also be uncomfortable about the juxtaposition of Australian and Aboriginal or New Zealand and Maori that become obvious when reading indigenous texts. Even when, as Heiss puts it, Indigenous writers are revered in Canada and Aotearoa, they problematise a reader's relationship to the idea of a national literature: who does the text speak for and to? Who was 'us'?

The Native American critic Chadwick Allen is engaged in the work of evolving indigenous methodologies for interpreting indigenous texts. In a recent article he asks, "What kinds of methodologies might help us focus specifically on what is *indigenous* in indigenous texts?". His answer is to juxtapose diverse indigenous texts from distinct traditions, not to force them into 'categories of sameness', but to provoke more complex analyses of specific texts. In order to do this he calls on a category of reader—the 'actively bi-lingual' or 'bi-cultural' reader—and an interpretive movement he calls '*rereketanga*' a term borrowed from the Maori artist and art historian, Robert Jahnke, as a rough equivalent to the English word 'uniqueness'. Allen's essay is called 'Rere Ke/Moving Differently', and in it he unpacks poems by Maori, American Indian and Hawaiian poets, including the Maori hip hop group Upper Hutt Posse. He says:

The 'unique' interpretive movements I trace through these juxtapositions are linked by a focus on analysing how the presence or absence of indigenous language functions in each text. (47)

Allen opens out the work of these poets in a cultural and linguistic reading that, as he puts it, creates 'different kinds of meaning for different audiences through a combination of visual and aural cues' (58). The commonality of his readings of poems

from three national literatures is the way they point the reader to what lies behind or inside English—rich bi-lingual punning, intersecting or contesting paradigms, especially to do with Christianity, ‘tribal’ sound patterns and rhetorical forms. Not all work by indigenous writers will lend itself to this kind of reading, but part of what Allen is resisting is critical methodologies which focus on single works or authors, categories of genre, gender, sexual orientation, major themes and so on. In other words he is developing a textual methodology as an ‘actively bi-cultural and bi-lingual reader’. The importance of what Allen is doing is that it forces the reader to move beyond the tired categories Indigenous writers occupy in national literatures and in postcolonial theory. Allen’s meticulous attention to the literary aspects of the poems he discusses allows him to develop textual scholarship of indigenous work which in turn illuminates a political, cultural and linguistic seismology. By starting with the literary, he unfolds, or perhaps excavates, something much more profound and paradigm-shifting, which he describes as a ‘focus on the intellectual and artistic *sovereignty* of indigenous writing in English’ (69, my emphasis).

This seems to me to be germane to the idea of Australian Literature in a Global World. The titular nation is only one of the categories any work of literature might acquire, and is itself a shifting and uneasy category. For the ‘actively bi-lingual’ reader, whether of indigenous or other bi-lingual texts, it will only be one half of the cultural knowledge brought to bear. But Allen’s point, that a literary work is a textual artefact *first* will not only bring it into a wider conversation, as Dorothy Green pointed out, but in the cases he discusses, shows an appropriation of English by the jokes, double meanings, rhetorical forms and aural presence of another language. The reader of the indigenous text also becomes the non-English reader.

I want to finish with my own experience as a reader and teacher of Australian literature, a role that shifts through the categories child reader, popular reader, professional reader and New Zealand reader. Australian literature was not a category I was aware of growing up in New Zealand. I read Mary Grant Bruce’s Billabong books avidly, but the category they occupied for me could be more aptly described as horse-books than Australian books. I was aware of course that they took place in Australia but I read them because I was in love with horses. Then I read *A Town Like Alice* (1950). Nevil Shute did seem to me to ‘be Australian’ and I did think I was reading an Australian novel. Shute emigrated to Melbourne at the age of 51, the year he published *A Town Like Alice*. Shute was one of the best-selling novelists of the twentieth century. In 2003 *Alice* figured on a list published by the BBC of Britain’s 100 best loved books. According to Steve Meacham, writing in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 2003, there is a global network of devoted Shute readers called ‘the Shutists’ who have monthly newsletters and annual meetings. But when Angus and Robertson conducted a similar survey about the 100 favourite books of Australians, Nevil Shute did not appear.³ Like Colleen McCullough, Shute sits uneasily next to something called ‘Australian literature’. But in a global world he has been, and to some people still is, the purveyor of Australia.

As a New Zealand reader I encountered Australian literature properly when I lived here in the early 1980s, and what interested me about it then, and still does, is precisely the fact of a national literature. I read it partly to understand the Australia I was living in, and to get a sense of the differences that prevail between our literary nationalisms. There are of course a number of them, as there are many resemblances, but I’m not

going to rehearse them here. When I taught Australian literature in New Zealand the course became so popular I had to restrict the course number. The students were surprised by Australian literature. They experienced what I experienced, a thrill of the familiar but so different. They grumbled about reading *Capricornia* (1956) but once they'd set themselves to the task they were glad they had, they enjoyed making comparisons and being shocked about some things and dazzled by others—they were shocked by *Coonardoo* (1929) for instance. The bulk of their degrees were in British Literature, which was not and is not taught as a 'national' literature—it sorts itself into other categories—and their own geopolitical differences resonated with Australian literature. For many of them it was the first time they had crossed the Tasman. Ross Gibson's 1994 essay 'Ocean Settlement' describes the first thirty years of settlement in Australia as a 'zone of mutability', where 'many men were vocationally engaged with boundless systems: the ocean, the weather, time, crime and nature'. He said that 'the maritime culture which dominated the town of Sydney, at least until the late 1830s' had a 'mentality of boundlessness, that flourished despite the tight intentions of the rulers' (670). I like to imagine that as a reader I live in a zone of mutability and have a mentality of boundlessness. But everyone reads from *somewhere* and as Miles Franklin said:

Without an indigenous literature people can remain alien in their own soil. An unsung country does not fully exist or enjoy adequate international exchange with the inner life...a country must be portrayed by those who hate it or love it as their dwelling place...or remain dumb amongst its contemporaries. (1956 3)

Janet Frame may not have been referring to New Zealand literature when she competed with Bernard in Ibiza, but she was producing it. My life as a New Zealand reader has been changed by that, just as reading Australian literature has intersected and cross cut the place, national and global world my reader self inhabits. But the spectrum of taste and choice, the mesh of cultural economies that inflect and moderate the choices you make and the pleasure you derive from it is not often governed by geographical considerations *unless* you are an academic reader developing a field of study. It is a distinction to remember. Though readers live in a global world which offers the illusion of boundlessness and the opportunity to fashion and refashion the self, the entangled economies that animate a national literature are necessary to the cultural and intellectual work of being a citizen.

Notes

¹ W.H.Auden, 'Letter to Lord Byron', in *Collected Longer Poems*. London: Faber, 1968.

² Walter Benjamin, 'The Cultural History of Toys', Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith eds, *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Volume 2. 1927-1934*. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001. The essay was originally published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, May 1928.

³ July 25, 2003: <http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/07/24/1058853193968.html>

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