

Graham Huggan. *Australian Literature: Postcolonialism, Racism, Transnationalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp xxi, 187. \$36.00.

This is the fifth book in the Oxford Studies in Postcolonial Literatures series. Graham Huggan is Chair of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Literatures at the University of Leeds, and one of the leading “overseas” scholars of Canadian and Australian literatures: his previous books include *Territorial Disputes* (1994) and *The Postcolonial Exotic* (2001). He offers a timely reminder that Australian literature is no longer—if it ever was—the exclusive plaything of Australian critics; that “Australian literary studies today . . . needs to be more attentive than it has been to institutional locations other than Australia’s own” (150).

As Huggan was completing this book in 2005, “race riots” took place at Cronulla in Sydney and Christos Tsiolkas’s “hallucinatory” novel, *Dead Europe*, was published. Both of these events, Huggan believes, defy explanation merely in terms of the nation: the Cronulla riots were not just a national phenomenon but an effect of the complex transnational networks of social relations that structure our contemporary world; *Dead Europe* is neither European nor Australian, but a “global novel” (vii). Working outward from these events, Huggan invokes the category of “the postcolonial” as an overarching methodology for Australian literary studies. The term, it must be said, is not precisely defined, but serves as a “codeword for a continuing critical sensitivity to the global dimension of local cultural issues and debates” (xiv). It is just this sensitivity that Huggan maintains as he moves through the issues that organize his four chapters: national literatures and the “politics of location”; settler societies and literary history; race and whiteness; and multiculturalism.

In arguing that Australian literary studies is “hindered by its reliance on national(ist) tropes,” Huggan advocates a “return” to postcolonialism as a way of “re-energizing” the field (ix). As he hastens to admit, there is nothing new in this. As early as 1940, E. Morris Miller described his foundational bibliography as “a modest contribution towards a comparative study of Imperial literature” (vii). In 1999, when *Australian Literary Studies* published a forum on the eve of the new millennium, there were again calls to adopt a comparative, postcolonial approach. Leigh Dale argued that “the isolationism seen as necessary to the foundation of the discipline has been perpetuated long beyond the time of its usefulness” (134), while Gillian Whitlock, in a passage quoted by Huggan, regretted that Australian scholars “remain deeply attached to representations of Australia as a nation apart” (154). While en-

dorsing these views, Huggan is rightly concerned that not all of the recent work by *Australian* scholars of Australian literature is as international as it claims to be, and he reaffirms that the discipline has much to gain by going “beyond the nation” (145).

Consistent with thinking in terms of a “transnational imaginary,” Huggan begins by asking not what Australian literature *is*, but how and where it might be culturally and politically *located*. Adapting Tom O’Regan’s formulation for an Australian national cinema, he defines it as “a medium sized English-language national literature that exists in semi-permanent tension with its larger British and American counterparts” (6).

So what might an “Australian-centred postcolonialism” look like? Huggan reminds us that one of the foundational texts of postcolonialism, *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), was written by three Australians—Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin—and that it locates Australian literature in the comparative context of settler literatures. He surveys the work of subsequent postcolonial critics, from Hodge and Mishra (1991) to Dixon (1995 and 2001) and Sheridan (1995), concluding that postcolonialism has been valuable for its “capacity to effect transnational understandings of social, cultural, and political processes which, while relocalized within the context of the nation, supersede the national frameworks within which they are usually explained” (xii). And yet, as I have argued elsewhere, postcolonialism’s own estimate of its role in internationalising Australian studies probably exceeds the reality, not least because Australian work on colonialism has been influenced from elsewhere: by the new historicism, the new imperial history, histories of race relations, the anthropology of colonialism, and Indigenous writing (Dixon 121).

In his second chapter, “Beginning Again,” Huggan looks at Australian literature as a cultural-nationalist institution, attempting both to identify and to evade its normative effects by playing off the national against the transnational imaginary. The best literary histories, he believes—such as the Penguin (1988) and New Oxford (1998)—are effective because they see the national culture as being formed by a series of inter- and transnational relations (38). This means that when Huggan turns to the canon, he sees it as reflecting a regime of literary values this is both local and global in its causes and effects. He peels back the layers of nationalist rhetoric to reveal Marcus Clarke’s *For the Term of His Natural Life* as “a Victorian novel pretending to be an Australian novel pretending to be a Victorian novel” (52). In Lawson’s stories he finds nothing quintessentially Australian, apart from their settings, describing Lawson simply as a “modernist” among other late nineteenth-century exponents of the form (57).

Huggan's book is situated at the convergence of not one but two critical moments: a recognition of the need to refresh national perspectives by a (re) turn to postcolonialism, and the potential to refresh both by incorporating critical race theory and debates about the social construction of "whiteness" as they have developed in North America, which to date have proceeded in parallel with literary postcolonialism, especially in its Australian iterations. In his third chapter, "Interrogating Whiteness," Huggan is attentive to whiteness as a privileged, racialized identity, and again the strength of his argument is its advocacy of an international perspective. Seen in this light, the dismantling of the White Australia Policy "owed not just to internal reformist pressures but to the global decolonization and emancipation movements of the 1960s," while contemporary forms of xenophobia like the Cronulla riots "are not necessarily or even primarily national" (75). From these perspectives, Huggan offers new readings of canonical twentieth-century writers, including poets Bruce Dawe and Les Murray, playwrights Ray Lawler and David Williamson, and novelists Christina Stead and Patrick White, as well as contemporary indigenous writers Sally Morgan and Kim Scott. While revealing that "ostensibly progressive" modes of Australian modernism remain "uncannily beholden" to colonialist discourses (88), Huggan also questions postcolonialism's valorization of hybridity as "part of the very white-colonial racial imaginary it is often called upon to dissolve" (96). In a fourth and final chapter, "Multiculturalism and its Discontents," he argues that the concept of multiculturalism, a theme of some of the most important Australian and Canadian criticism of the 1980s and 1990s, has now lost a good deal of its social urgency and force, though he remains sceptical about more recent theoretical formulations such as "interculturalism" and "transculturalism."

Huggan's work is both a plea for an authoritative "overseas" criticism of Australian literature and a demonstration of what that criticism might look like at its best. While shrewdly avoiding the excesses of what he calls "global-loney", he makes a compelling case for seeing Australian literature in both national *and* global perspectives; for recognizing that it has always been shaped as much by external forces as by its "internal" commentators (6).

Works Cited

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Robert Dixon

Peter Holland, ed. *Shakespeare, Memory and Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006. Pp. xx, 357. \$99.00 cloth.

Remembering what one has read or seen (on stage or screen) seems to be an ordinary part of our intellectual labour. What does it entail, however, to remember or forget Shakespeare, a performance, or both? The practical and theoretical implications of this question lies at the heart of *Shakespeare, Memory and Performance*, edited by Peter Holland, a collection of imaginative and bold essays by senior scholars in the field. This pioneering volume seeks to redefine the terms of such important topics of debate in performance and literary studies, including cultural memory, the act of forgetting, and the politics of archiving performances. Readers of *ARIEL* may be familiar with classic studies such as Peggy Phelan's *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories* (1997), Edward Casey's *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (1987; 2000), and Marvin Carlson's *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (2001). However, none of these books address explicitly the issues of memory and Shakespearean performance. As the first book-length study of the topic, Holland's volume aims to contextualize and theorize ideologies of preserving performances (xx), "creatively inaccurate" memories (3), and the cultural memory enacted in theatrical, cinematic, textual, and museum spaces. Taken as a whole, the volume addresses, in fresh perspectives, the paradoxical situation where "the memories of Shakespeare and performance and their intersections are less reliable, most vulnerable, at exactly the points at which they appear most secure" (19). The thirteen essays—complemented by 51 illustrations—aim to examine "the concerns of memory" as they move from "the acts of remembering within the plays" to "the acts of remembering the plays themselves in performance," among other issues (2). This goal is achieved with grace. In the wake of the volume emerged two special issues of *Shakespeare Bulletin* 25.3 and 25.4 (2007) on relevant topics, co-edited by Barbara Hodgdon and Peter Holland.

Shakespeare, Memory and Performance is neatly organized in five thematically related parts, each containing two or three essays. The "Introduction" connects the memory of performance to the performance of memory, arguing that "the act of verification may confirm and order memory but it cannot confirm both