‘Only for Love’: Expatriatism, Amateur Reading and Shirley Hazzard’s Post-War World

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Shirley Hazzard’s expatriatism is something of an uncertain proposition. As she put it to one interviewer, ‘I’m not even sure which country I’d be an expatriate of’ (Gordan and Pasca 45). If her (Australian) origins are obscure(d) (perhaps wilfully) within the public story of her life, the larger trajectory of that life is possibly overdetermined as expatriate narrative, most obviously in its ties to high European culture. Of her arrival in Italy, in Naples in December 1956, Hazzard said, taking a leap beyond literal geography, ‘It was a great revelation. It was like going to heaven’ (Garrett 38). In this essay, I want to complicate Hazzard’s already conflicted expatriatism in light not so much of her Europhilia, what we might call, after Saikat Majumdar in a different context, ‘blood ties to imperial culture,’ but rather her deep and equally affective, but not as well-known or as frequently invoked connections to Asia, specifically to China, (including Hong Kong where she lived after the Second World War, when it was still a British colony) and to Japan, to which her ties were intellectual, cultural, and utterly personal, drawing on the briefest of visits and on two substantial and long-term friendships with preeminent scholars of Japan. Through these connections she built a significant understanding of the contemporary politics of China and the history and literature of Japan, and these continued to inform her location within metropolitan Anglophone literary circles as well as to inflect the colonial provincialism she sought to discard. In this essay I want first to trace some of these influences in her writing, and the intimate friendships from which many of these influences derived, in order to suggest the complexity of her engagement with the world beyond the Euro-Anglosphere. I will then use the relations out of which these influences emerged to propose the idea of a habitus of disconnection as an alternative to the idea of expatriation: a mode where Hazzard continually separates from and reconnects with different locations and traditions, not through social frames or contexts, nor necessarily through actual locations, but rather in the course of relations with particular figures—writers, mostly, and with their texts—through which she learns, again continually, about the post-war globalising world in which she lived.

In the post-war period, Hazzard occupied a position that was at once provincial—literally, by virtue of her Australian citizenship and beginnings—and cosmopolitan, in the sense defined by Amanda Anderson as a now-antiquated form of global mobility that ‘frequently advances itself as a specifically intellectual ideal,’ and that depends on ‘a mobility that is the luxury of social, economic, or cultural privilege’ (268). Within this already complex and mobile scene, she was also something of an autodidact. She left high school in Sydney at sixteen without completing her formal education and after the war was sent to secretarial college instead of university. Fiercely intelligent and instinctively intellectual, she took on a project of belletristic self-education with alacrity, first through extensive reading of English, French and later Italian literature—outside the classroom and on her own initiative—and later, when she moved to New York, by immersing herself in contemporary politics (in the first instance through the lens of the United Nations, and its immersion in McCarthyist US politics), classical music and pre-modernist European art. Once established in the metropolis, her autodidacticism became a joint project; her marriage to the Flaubert scholar, translator and biographer, Francis Steegmuller, was marked throughout by her commitment and that of her husband to what Timothy Duffy has

called 'the highly idiosyncratic and individualized' traditions of literary amateurism and belles-lettres (92). While Steegmuller maintained close connections through his life with his fellow Columbia University alumni, his career and reputation were based firmly outside the academy, as a private scholar of French literature, with extensive interests in the performing arts and music, a course he was able to pursue thanks largely to the considerable financial legacy of his first wife, Beatrice Stein Steegmuller. If this kind of independent scholarship, pursued, as Steegmuller put it, 'only for love' (Hazzard, 'Lives'), is to readers today no longer even an imaginable basis for professional life, it was already unusual, even remarkable, in the immediate post-war years, when Hazzard and Steegmuller were practising it. There is a certain anachronism—and an un-locatedness—in Hazzard's intellectual life and the cultural projects she pursued; she was not only a provincial who had made her way into the cultural life of New York from the far reaches of the colonial nether-world, but she was doing this through pursuing an intellectual mode that was already being relegated to the past. All this meant that she was operating always to a degree outside the circuits of contemporary cultural life.

In his recent study of the Indian expatriate scholar Nirad C. Chaudhuri, Saikat Majumdar describes a distinctive form of provincial amateur autodidact, observing that 'the aspiration to be intellectually cosmopolitan from within a peripheral location pushes a peculiar kind of colonial subject toward the idiosyncracies of autodidacticism and amateur learning rather than toward the curricular grids of institutional education' (271). This figure provides an apt model for thinking about Shirley Hazzard's intellectual trajectory, despite the significant differences between the provincial contexts of India and Australia, because of what Majumder notes as the ways that his subject, Chaudhuri, sits outside the 'progressivist political vision of postcolonial criticism,' on account of his resistance to nationalist agendas, his 'Anglophilia' and his anachronism. Anti-nationalism and anachronism are both qualities that append, in different ways and registers, to Hazzard as well. In addition to her embrace of belles-lettristic erudition—'In early mornings we read aloud: Shakespeare, Gibbon, Byron's "Don Juan," Clough's "Amours de Voyage," Thucydides, Seneca, Auden, Delacroix's journals, Leopardi's "Canti"' ('Lives')—Hazzard was consistent about her rejection of nationalism: 'my temperament is not a very national one' (Evans). There are other points of similarity: the 'reference-peppered prose' (273) of both, and their commitment to a 'universal humanism' (276). There are important distinctions also to be made: in addition to the vastly different relations obtaining between Hazzard as a white colonial subject in Manhattan and Chaudhuri as Indian in Oxford, Chaudhuri did complete a BA with Honours in History at Calcutta University, while Hazzard, as noted, had little formal education. With that caveat, I want to draw from Majumdar the point that: 'A provincial genealogy . . . hinders a smooth insertion into the metropolitan institutions of colonial higher education. Autodidacticism, therefore, becomes the most visible form of provincial self-making,' (273) and to propose that Hazzard's provincial, that is to say Australian, origins become legible precisely in the ways she re-made herself through her post-war acquisition of the elevated cultural capital of amateur scholarship, and that her expatriate story bears directly on this.

Hazzard's often-stated hostility to academic literary criticism is part of this process (it is often a theme in her letters to the scholars I consider later), as is the invocation of those authors whose commentaries on literature have moved or enlightened her. In a diary entry in July 2004, amidst the great revival of public interest after she received the Miles Franklin Literary and US National Book Awards for *The Great Fire* (2003), Hazzard wrote: 'Thinking—how these reviewers, interviewers and critics stick ever close to home—How can they know my secret/sacred "influences"? Even the literary detection—it is eternally Henry James (and now Patrick White). Never Henry Green or Graham [Greene] even or Conrad. These interest them

less because I have indicated them; nothing there for discovery. And then—my hero—what about SEGALEN?' (Diary n.p.). I will return to Segalen's significance for Hazzard shortly, but wish to focus first on a brief visit to Hiroshima and the port of Kure she made with her family in 1947, as they were sailing from Australia en route to China. That fleeting visit provided material for pivotal events in both her major novels *The Transit of Venus* (1980) and *The Great Fire*. The reference to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in the latter's title works, in a characteristically oblique and layered manner, to set the event at the heart of the novel's historical, political and ethical preoccupations. It also works, more urgently, to align the event of the bombing to other historical conflagrations, to a global history of war and decimation; to move, that is, its reference from the novel's present to the larger sweep of human history. Despite the eponymity of the bombing in *The Great Fire*, the novel's action nonetheless takes place outside the wrecked city, in the port of Kure, a few years after the bombing. Attention is thus shifted away from the immediate mechanics of war to its consequences, associations, shockwaves; to the shock, in fact, of peace. In *The Transit of Venus*, we find a direct encounter with the more immediate aftermath of the bombing. The protagonist Ted Tice recalls his post-war visit to Hiroshima, in a story recounted as an explicit analepsis, that is to say, it provides information that, we are told, will help clarify his later motivations. For Ted, the bombing is more than just an historical or a political event; it is a measure of his capacity to comprehend and to make moral judgments about the world. His coordinates for such understanding are henceforth grounded from a point outside the conventional perspective of the west:

> In the past, the demolition of a city exposed contours of the earth. Modern cities do not allow this. The land has been levelled earlier, to make a city; then the city goes, leaving a blank. In this case, a river amazed with irrelevant naturalness. A single monument, defabricated girders of an abolished dome, presided like a vacant cranium or a hollowing out of the great globe itself: Saint Peter's, in some eternal city of nightmare.
>
> A catastrophe of which no one would ever say, the Will of God.
>
> It was now that Ted Tice's life began to alter aspect and direction. (53)

This perspective is very close to Hazzard's own, as outlined in an opinion piece she published a year after the novel (1981). The metropolitan authority towards which Hazzard directs her 'provincial self-making' includes the lessons of Hiroshima as urgently as those of colonial London or imperial Rome, or indeed the New York literary and intellectual world in which she lived and worked for most of her life. The ethical project set out in *Transit of Venus*, the imperative of engagement with the contemporary world, is deeply informed by a sense of the world beyond her own world.

China too, provided a significant cultural and political reference point across Shirley Hazzard's writing life. Before arriving in London in 1950, she had already experienced the metropolis of Hong Kong, where she had felt connected to the significant action of the world: 'One thing I had felt in the East was the consciousness of being in a great land, this vast place that was China, in a great land that wasn't looking to anywhere else. They didn't feel the tyranny of distance[1]—they wondered why anybody else should be alive. That was the centre of the earth. That I had felt very much when I was there. They weren't wanting to be somewhere else, they were at the centre' (Murdoch n.p.). She made only one visit to mainland China, a weekend to visit a family friend in what was then Canton, experiencing little beyond the city's illusive topography:

> The Pearl River, which at Canton is approaching its estuary, is of a precariously alluvial colour and a consistency sometimes closer to that of flowing land than to water. Before it reaches the sea, the river must in fact pass through a narrow, steeply banked channel, but here at Canton one can easily imagine that it has completed its course and that the ocean is at hand, so great is the sense of a harbour. (Hazzard, 'Canton' 164)

(If the reference to 'harbour' here recalls the Sydney Harbour of her childhood, as it surely does, there is still the sense that this conveys not only the idea of 'home' but also, always, of departure.)

This flying and inconsequential visit and the apparent failure of her career in espionage notwithstanding, Hazzard did nonetheless develop a detailed understanding of the complex political world of China through this period, through work done in the British Combined Services office where she held a lowly administrative post. Her more senior co-workers in the office were closely involved in monitoring the progress of the civil war taking place on the Chinese mainland, and some years later she provided a fiercely engaged account of their work, its significance, and the fact that it was ignored for political reasons in both Britain and the US. From the office, she wrote: 'crucial reports on conditions of the civil war in China went every two weeks to Whitehall.' However, 'because the USA, in its total post-war power, was hell-bent on supporting Chiang-Kai Shek's derelict regime, and deluding itself that Mao would not prevail,' these reports 'of the contrary reality' were ignored. The principal contribution of her BCS co-workers was:

> [t]o talk secretly with certain credible leaders of large factions in China that, if grouped even loosely together, would have acted as a brake on Mao's total power when the crunch finally came, at the end of 1948. Some of these factional leaders had been educated abroad, in Britain, France, or the USA: Li Tsi-shen, Tsai Ting-kai. A 'faction' in China can be tens of millions of people, of whom Mao would have had to be aware. Whitehall evidently sent our despatches on to Washington. As a result of that, our small office was 'investigated' as possibly 'Communistic.' . . . Mao prevailed; and the US went on to pretend for a quarter-century that mainland China did not exist. (Hazzard to Vedeniapine n.p.)

These recollections indicate the detail and intensity of her engagement with the larger political history playing out around her in China, even while she had no direct role (she was sixteen and seventeen years old at this time), as well as to the fact and the complexity of China as an emerging global force through the post-war period.

The Great Fire includes accounts of a journey made through China by the novel's hero, Aldred Leith, who describes coming across, in the province of Yunnan, the remains of an RAF aeroplane, wrecked in 1942, its crew of nearly fifteen buried nearby by the locals. The image speaks eloquently of other temporalities, other great fires: 'On a third sharp peak, the stripped remains of a Halifax bomber: the Ark on Mount Ararat, or the ribbed cradle of a stranded quadrireme' (52). The scene was drawn from an account provided by one of her BCS co-workers, but other aspects of Leith's journey through China were drawn from the work of Victor Segalen, as Hazzard explained in a 2005 interview: 'my hero walks through China rather in an atmosphere derived in part, perhaps, from the writings of Victor Segalen—*Les Immémoriaux* and, particularly, *Chine: La grande statuaire*. This last book stayed on my desk while I was writing *The Great Fire*. Congenial company' (McClatchy 181). It is worth looking

a little more closely at the figure of Segalen, whose image and 'atmosphere' were so central to Hazzard's depiction of a China she never visited. Segalen was a French naval officer, a noted polymath, who visited and wrote extensively about the Pacific and China through the early decades of the twentieth century. His work, while in important ways displaying a conservative aestheticism, read in some quarters as orientalist, was nonetheless taken up by Francophone thinkers across the twentieth century including, notably, Martiniquan Édouard Glissant, who 'discovered Segalen in 1950s Paris, using his work as what has now become a recurrent point of reference in a reflection on creolisation and the persistence of cultural distinctiveness in an increasingly connected world' (Forsdick and Murphy 168). More broadly, Segalen's work represents, for French theorists at least, 'a distinct divergence from the intellectual orthodoxies shared by his contemporaries in relation to the universal applicability of Western cultural assumptions, the civilising potential of French overseas expansion and the role of diversity (and of its decline) in contact between cultures' (168). Segalen's work has also been read with care and interest in China, primarily by scholars with a connection to French studies, according to Bai Yunfei, first in the 1930s, and in a revival of interest, from the 1990s, with critics and translators examining Segalen's 'Sinophilia' in light of its clear embeddedness in western metaphysics, particularly Symbolist traditions, as Qin Haiying has argued (Bai Yunfei 62). Chinese scholars have also considered Segalen's influence on Glissant, particularly through Segalen's concept of the 'Diverse.' As Huang Bei argues, '"Instead of drawing a line between the you and the I" (buzaishi xieshide niwo fenming), Glissant "puts greater emphasis on the interchanges and the hybridity in his 'Diverse' (qiangdiao duoyuan zhongde jiapliu yu hunxue)," which is evidence of an even more progressive vision' (Huang Bei quoted in Bai Yunfei 63). Hazzard may or may not have been aware of such debates around Segalen; what is interesting for my project of thinking through the particularities of her engagement with China and other non-European destinations is the diversity of her sources of information, both predictable and arcane, and her insistence on the 'congeniality' of tracing information, in keeping with the amateur project, reading 'only for love.'

That Segalen is read by French as well as Chinese scholars as both orientalist and as a source for questions of cultural distinctiveness and diversity makes him a useful figure for thinking about Hazzard's relation to a Chinese world that, even as it remained intensely important to her, was only ever apprehended in fragmentary and shifting ways, and, ultimately, from within western traditions of reading. I want to use the linguistic and topological complexities that persist around Segalen's work and location in the world as a way of responding to Robert Dixon's earliest published discussion of Hazzard, his critique of *The Great Fire*'s orientalist depiction of Japan and Hong Kong. I've written previously about the knowing self-consciousness—to deploy an adjective Hazzard used elsewhere to configure her engagement with the maritime East: 'Conradian'—of the novel's depiction of colonial Hong Kong:

> Hazzard's deployment of a Conradian perspective sets the highly compromised Cold War colonial presence in the East at the heart of the novel's ethics and . . . the 'Asia' imagined in the novel is certainly colonialist, on the one hand, but nonetheless simultaneously metropolitan, on the other—not least in its inflected and vexed importance to the neocolonial Cold War politics playing out within its borders. Further, the novel insists on its sense of the vitality, the complex history, and the present demography of Hong Kong in the shifting geography of mainland China, itself in the throes of civil war, and, finally, in the collapsed and devastated city of Hiroshima and the management of its port, Kure, by a conflicted coalition of British, American, and Australian instrumentalities. (Olubas 224)

More recently Michelle de Kretser has written compellingly of the attentive and nuanced depiction of the Eurasian world of the novel and of the figure of Rita Xavier in particular, commenting that this treatment is 'one of the things that marks [Hazzard's] narrative distance from colonial disdain for Eurasians—a disdain largely shared, it should be noted, by the colonised who identify as racially pure' (85). Alongside Rita Xavier, I would also set the mixed-race Dutch-Indonesian captain who invites Exley to lunch on board his ship in an expressly 'Conradian' scene of long conversation on boats.[2] While I depart from Dixon's argument about the novel's orientalism, his reading nonetheless provides productive insights into Hazzard's relation to Hong Kong and Japan that I want to take up here. Dixon contextualises *The Great Fire* in terms of the ways that in the post-war period, specific '"places" like Japan were turned into social laboratories where specialists from Europe, the US and Australia came to do fieldwork'; 'In its main characters and events, *The Great Fire* depicts [the formation of] area studies in the immediate post-war period in US-occupied Japan and British Hong Kong' (266). He notes the significance of the OSS—Office of Strategic Services, forerunner to the CIA—which actively recruited from the academy through the war and post-war periods:

> The purpose of the OSS was to mobilise American scholarship for military intelligence purposes, and from 1942 the Research and Analysis branch contracted out research projects to specialised institutes at various universities. This was the model for post-war collaboration between the intelligence and academic communities, including the projects of interdisciplinary research that soon thereafter came to be called 'area studies.' (267)

Dixon's contextualising is particularly useful for consideration of a figure like Hazzard, for whom I propose a position as an amateur intellectual, operating self-consciously outside the ambit of professional and institutional literary scholarship in the post-war period. And there is no doubt that this overlap between scholarly and (both overt and covert) political institutions, and the roles they played in the Allied occupation of Japan after Hiroshima, forms an important part of Hazzard's subject matter in the novel. Her knowledge of that world is intriguingly detailed, suggesting some further overlap between fiction and biography. Dixon does not note—it's not widely known—that Hazzard's husband, translator and biographer Francis Steegmuller, worked for the OSS in Washington, recruited in 1944, from the Office of War Information. In this capacity, he was sent to Paris and Normandy, to report on reverse Lend-Lease aid provided by the French to the US and other Allies, recruited not through the academy, but nonetheless for his expertise in the French language. It is possibly also worth noting that Steegmuller was a friend of Edward Said, who was an admirer of *Flaubert in Egypt* and taught it in his seminal course on Orientalism at Columbia University.

The reference points Dixon establishes for the formal study of 'the East' can be expanded to include some further considerations. He argues that two of Hazzard's characters, the Japanologist Professor Gardiner and the military hero/intelligence maverick Aldred Leith correspond to the main tradition of Western scholarship on Japan: 'Hazzard's Professor Gardiner is a British scholar whose parents, themselves orientalists, had settled in Japan. Like [the historical orientalist] scholars . . . , Gardiner looks back to an originary Japanese civilisation destroyed by the great fire of war and military occupation' (271). Further: 'In their thinking about the past, [Orientalist scholars like Gardiner] aestheticized "the old Japan" while ranking it lower in their estimation than the European heritage' (272). Dixon aligns Hazzard's characters with these figures through their scholarly knowledge and aesthetic appreciation of Japanese culture, and he argues that at the heart of Hazzard's orientalism is her insistence that Leith and Gardiner's humanistic Eurocentric ideals transcend those of the Japan they are

observing. Dixon also notes the novel's account of the suicide of a young (unnamed) Japanese man in the wake of his brutal humiliation by the militaristic Australian Brigadier Driscoll. This criticism of Hazzard's implied Eurocentrism/values should, however, be held in tension with the nature of the ground on which her engagement with Japan is based. While such engagement began with her highly critical commentaries on the UN through which she came into close contact with a number of significant individuals and institutions in New York, it was never institutionally located but rather always personal. It was, further informed by her project of amateur and expatriate self-construction, and I will examine it by outlining her friendships lasting several decades with two important American scholars of Japanese literature, Ivan Morris and Donald Keene.

Ivan Morris was born in the UK in 1925 and moved to the US, studied Japanese at Harvard and then at the University of London. During the Second World War he worked in intelligence in the US Navy, and was one of the first interpreters into Hiroshima after the bombing. He was a major translator of the works of Yukio Mishima (1925–1970), one of the most internationally significant Japanese writers of the post-war period; he was also Mishima's friend and correspondent. Morris was one of the founders of Amnesty International in the US, and served as Amnesty's first US Chair from 1966–1969. It was in this capacity that he met and became friends with Shirley Hazzard, a friendship that deepened in the mid-1970s when she was protesting the United Nations 'censorship' of the work of Soviet dissident Alexandr Solzhenitsyn. It has been suggested that Morris was one of the models for *Transit*'s Adam Vail, philanthropist, activist, and hero-deliverer of Caro, and I would suggest that he is possibly also a model for *The Great Fire*'s Thaddeus Hill, the morally upright, handsome young US intelligence officer who unsuccessfully pursues the heroine. Further, *The Great Fire*'s account of the suicide mentioned earlier drew on Morris's major study of what he calls 'the courageous loser' in Japanese literature—Hazzard's diary-notebooks from the early 1980s record the phrase 'Ivan: Failure' amongst other notations and drafts of passages from the novel. Morris argues in *The Nobility of Failure: Tragic Heroes in the History of Japan* that 'the Japanese . . . since ancient times have recognized a special nobility in the sincere, unsuccessful sacrifice' (n.p.). The nobility of failure also would seem to inform the very particular failure of Ted Tice in *The Transit of Venus*, through the figure Morris presents of 'another type of hero in the complex Japanese tradition [who] represents the antithesis of an ethos of accomplishment. He is the man whose single-minded sincerity will not allow him to make the manoeuvres and compromises needed for mundane success' (n.p.). It is important, as Alan Stephen Wolfe points out, that the concept of noble failure not be 'confused with the Western romantic concept of the hero as loser . . . but rather, in that inverted orientalist mode, it is to be opposed to "our red-toothed, red-clawed world" and its worship of success' (43). Hazzard draws on her friend Morris's scholarship to complicate the world of forms within which her characters move. The gesture draws a line of connection between the English astrophysicist and the youthful suicide in a manner that troubles any sure sense of the Eurocentric grounding of Hazzard's work.

The second friendship I want to consider is that with Donald Keene, another Columbia University Japanologist. Significantly, Keene's friendship with Hazzard began with Ivan Morris; Morris died prematurely in 1977 and the first letter from Keene to Hazzard was written after the funeral. Donald Keene died in 2019 aged 96. He lived for many years for most of the year in Japan. After the 2011 tsunami he applied for Japanese citizenship, which was granted (an exceptionally rare honour, which speaks to the esteem in which he was held in Japan). He remained a great admirer of Shirley Hazzard and wrote to me: 'She is one of the most extraordinary people I have known.' A few years older than Morris, Keene was a friend, translator and correspondent of Yukio Mishima, and also served as an intelligence officer in

the US Navy during the Second World War. In a 2011 interview, Keene recounted the decision he had made to move permanently to live in Japan in terms that I think are resonant of Hazzard's writing. In other words, he sounds like one of her characters: 'I was very ill in a Japanese hospital and I thought I might die . . . . And I thought, "What would I do if I lived? I'd stay in Japan."' The announcement of his decision to apply for Japanese citizenship, in the wake of the tsunami was received with enthusiasm and affection by the Japanese public: 'Suddenly I was a hero.' The formal politeness of his Tokyo neighbours changed: 'Now, suddenly, I'm one of them. They say, "Good morning," and "Take care of yourself," . . . It's been a thrilling experience' (Pilling n.p.). Keene continued, in a later interview, 'What I did, which was something minor and personal, became something of great importance . . . I became a famous person in a sense. And the Japanese were extremely grateful. I gave them what I could give them' (Moritsugu n.p.).

This exchange of gifts has its roots in Keene's scholarship in Japanese language and literature, which began with the war. At the age of eighteen, Keene had come across a translation of the eleventh-century Japanese novel, *The Tale of Genji*:

> It was a time when I was extremely unhappy. . . . It was the conquest of Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Holland, half of France. And then the Battle of Britain. Every day in the newspaper was something more terrible. I was a pacifist. I couldn't think of any way of stopping this except by using force. . . . I was involved in a terrible self-contradiction, and nothing seemed to help me to forget. (Pilling n.p.)

He took the book home, 'not expecting too much, and then I started to read . . . I was captivated. It was about a world where there was no warfare. It was a world where people had likes and dislikes and sometimes did unpleasant things but they were not evil.' The translation, by a scholar who would go on to become one of Keene's mentors, Arthur Waley, was 'a thing of magic, something beautiful.' So Donald Keene, pacifist, enrolled in the US Navy in order to learn Japanese. In the interview he continues: 'We did not learn one thing about the Navy . . . . They wanted interpreters' (Pilling np). His first assignment was to interrogate Japanese prisoners in Honolulu, and in the course of this he discovered the prisoners' diaries. He later wrote a series of essays on them, and in the midst of this labour, in the 1980s, he wrote to Hazzard that it was through the intensive reading of these diaries that he 'first became aware of Japanese as people in a specially intimate sense. One might say that the first Japanese people I ever knew were all dead before I made their acquaintance through their diaries' (Keene to Hazzard 17 Dec 1983). In the interview he explains, 'I was lucky. I read diaries and interrogated prisoners with most of whom I became friends. In a few cases the friendships lasted after the war.' In the diaries, he learnt of 'the pathos of Japanese soldiers, scared, often idealistic, and far from home.' That work on the prisoners' diaries reverberates across Keene's later scholarly work. In the study he made in the 1980s of the work of poet Jun Takami (1907–1965), Keene also read Takami's diaries. He focused on one passage, written in 1944 during the bombing of Tokyo. In the passage, Takami is trying to get his mother out of Tokyo to safety in the countryside. At Ueno station, Takani observes, and Keene quotes him, 'Everybody is quiet, everybody's just moving slowly and no one is trying to get ahead of anyone else.' In the face of this deep civility of the Tokyo residents, this concern for each other's welfare, Takami thought, according to Keene, 'I want to live with these people, I want to die with these people.' And, Keene continues, 'And that is what I thought in January, when I was in hospital: "I want to live with these people. I want to die with these people"' (Pilling).

There is a sympathy here that speaks directly to a faltering engagement between Japan and the Anglo-West, pressing it beyond the confines of orientalist or 'area' studies; a sympathy grounded in lived intimacy and shared civility, that, for Hazzard and Keene, would provide a much-needed alternative to the language of bellicosity or of exploitation or of governance. It is a sympathy familiar to Hazzard's readers in both its sensibilities and its diction: the seaming together of memory, loss, war and poetry in a moment of supreme inwardness, and in literature's capacity for consolation. Keene's story also recalls Hazzard's own account of literary and linguistic self-fashioning in the provincial outer limits of the Anglophone mid-century, in Wellington, New Zealand, where, aged seventeen and suffering from a broken heart, she discovered the Italian Romantic poet Leopardi in translation and began to learn Italian in order to read the poems in the original. Just as Keene took up Japanese citizenship, after spending a half-century living between Manhattan, Capri and Naples, Hazzard was herself made an honorary citizen of Capri in 2000. Hazzard and Keene's twinned tales highlight literature's affinity with, and proximity to, translation and expatriation. For both, those moments of poetic identification are realised primarily in displacement. In a letter to Hazzard, in the wake of the massive 1980 earthquake at Eboli which killed nearly 3000 people, Keene wrote, from Japan:

> My thoughts have been very much with you as more and more reports come in about the earthquake. . . . I am writing from my room in a building overlooking the sea. It is dusk and the mountains are dark against the bluish-grey sky. It is one of the loveliest places in Japan I know and I have bought a tiny apartment on the ninth floor of a building recently erected on one of the hills overlooking the bay. Today has been clearer than I have ever seen it here. The islands that are normally concealed by mist, sea-spray or whatever it may be, are clearly visible even now. But there is a terrible irony in all this: Japanese seismologists have predicted that the next major earthquake in Japan will be here. (Keene to Hazzard 26 November 1980)

And Hazzard drew on Keene's understanding of his complex location in Japan as she began to articulate her own relation to Italy. She wrote him in 1980:

> I remember your saying—writing—in your 'meeting with Japan' that you came to depend on Japan for your happiness and thus to be sure that Japan could console you also for unhappiness. There are many for whom such a place does not exist even in fancy, and part of my own conscious joy in merely being in 'my' chosen land is the sense of luck that Flaubert describes on the Nile: of gratitude that one is able to realise all this and look on with that awareness. I think that you, like me, came to this after you were quite grown up, and having enjoyed other places meantime, though not with this particular calm exultation. In my case, the sense of place was scarcely existent in childhood, and was perhaps saved up for the intensified adult pleasure later on. (Hazzard to Keene 29 Dec 1980)

So Shirley Hazzard's friendship with Donald Keene traces the tenuous lines of expatriate connection, with all their serendipity, the unanticipated good fortune following the accident of reading (whether an eleventh-century Japanese novel, Japanese soldiers' diaries or Italian Romantic poetry), and their capacity to displace but also to return readers to earlier or imagined scenes through the labours of erudition. This is a point made compellingly in Hazzard's memoir *Greene on Capri* (2000), where she recalls her youthful excitement at reading an essay by

Graham Greene on Renaissance drama, an essay that Greene later observed had been written, as Hazzard recounted, 'on board ship, in a wartime convoy circuitously moving, over weeks, towards West Africa—without reference books or light at night, and between turns at submarine and aircraft watch'—an eloquent account of the amateur scene of writing. She recalls buying the book with Greene's essay in it: 'in 1946—smuggling it home to avoid trouble, since it had cost thirty-two shillings of saved pocket money, and the flourish of independence was bound to cause a fuss.' The book, as yet unrelinquished, recalls the past matter of reading:

> Turning the pages now, with their clear print and smell of good paper, and their knotted threads drawn from a stitched spine, is to relive the hot morning in the bookshop, the teetering stacks on mahogany tables, the trip home on the ferry; and an ecstasy of reading that dazzled the eyes. Those pages exude, also, the mildewed and still Conradian Orient to which, within months, that book and others accompanied me—the essayists shedding, even yet, flecks of pressed flowers from a hillside in south China. (67)

The expatriate, amateur scene of reading is also, always, an archive, a dialogue between writers and readers that never quite leaves home, wherever that may be.

NOTES

[1] Hazzard is making use of Geoffrey Blainey's memorable phrase here. She was an admirer of the 1966 book and referred to it in many of her writings on Australia.
[2] See Olubas 232–36 for discussion of the intricate account of mixed-race figurations in this novel.

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