Front Matter

Antipodes Editors

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About the cover

“Woden Waiting”
John Cattapan
1992-93
oil on linen
195 x 330 cms

“Woden Waiting” is part of a cycle of works that has developed from my obsession with urban identity and its attendant darker side. The painting was done in 1992 while I was living in Canberra, a constructed capital city that has been superimposed on the Australian bush. Canberra as a protected vision of planned, dense, urban containment was overtaken earlier this century by the automobile. Cars and flawless highways became important signs of expansion. And so the Woden Valley is one of a number of interconnected satellite suburbs. The office buildings, shopping malls, and perfect rows of tiered car parks present themselves as competition to the rich spectacle of the surrounding Brindabella Mountains.

“Woden Waiting” is, in essence, a commentary on the effects of a pristine, ordered, but alienating environment on its inhabitants. One thing that everyone who lives in Canberra feels is the horror vacui of so much open unattended, manicured space—Canberra has the largest green acreage per person of any Australian capital city. The notion of a “chance encounter therefore is improbable.

The image of an accident in Woden Waiting” stands first as a metaphor for a desire for the unexpected—literally a chance encounter. Second, the accident scene represents the idea of disruption or indeed derangement—the surreal urban disaster of the foreground takes place as a disembodied, nocturnal vision.

Drifting across the surface are cryptic hieroglyphic-like markings. They stand for an unseen, spontaneous “atmosphere” of information—a kind of automatic transmission. Blown up from doodles, the markings are, like the narrative of the painting, a stage intervention that reinforces the desire for “something (anything) to happen.”

John Cattapan
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This issue brings Antipodes into its tenth year of publication. Trying to think of a way to tie this fact into the "Editor's Notes," I decided to take a sentimental journey back to March 1987, the date of Volume 1- Number 1 of Antipodes. It had been a long time since I had looked at the Inaugural Issue, and I feared that I might shudder with embarrassment. Much to my surprise it didn't look all that different from the December 1995 edition.

Certainly the fiction and poetry selections were impressive, including stories by Thea Astley, Barbara Martre, Gerard Windsor, and B. Wongar, along with a chapter from a novel by Thomas Keneally. Poets represented included Kevin Hart, Les Murray (Les A. Murray in those days), A.D. Hope, Fay Zwickley, Alan C. Gould, and Philip Mead. Of course, many of these writers have published in subsequent issues of the journal and some have been the subjects of essays.

There were three articles focusing on the theme of "Australian/American Literary Connections." Brian Kiernan talked about "Connections and Disconnections"; Carolyn Bliss discussed how Australian writing could be "naturalized" for Americans; and Jack Bennett compared Willa Cather and Henry Handel Richardson. All three of these essayists are still active members in the AAALS, with Carolyn Bliss assuming the Association's presidency this year. The interview with Shirley Hazzard was conducted by Dennis Danvers, who has had two novels published since. With great optimism I submitted the first issue to the Council of Editors of Learned Journals' Annual Contest to be entered into the "New Journals" division. Of course, it didn't receive a prize. One of the judges found the whole project distasteful, objected to the overuse of rules (lines), and predicted an early death for Antipodes, noting that "it was obviously very expensive produced," then adding that "it would be difficult to sustain interest in so obscure a subject." The other twojudges, I recall, rather liked the journal.

Antipodes probably still uses too many rules, and it is too expensive to produce—back then we didn't even have a four-color cover and perfect binding, just staples. But the journal has survived, all the while making its subject less obscure. Edward A. Clark Center for Australian Studies—University of Texas at Austin.

E n d w o r d s

American Association of Australian Literary Studies

The American Association of Australian Literary Studies is a professional organization whose members are drawn from North America, Australia, Europe, and Asia. The AAALS was organized in 1986. An invitation to membership is extended to all those interested in Australian literature. Dues for one year include subscriptions to Antipodes, the official journal of the American Association of Australian Literary Studies, is published by the Association twice a year, in June and December. Antipodes is published in cooperation with the Edward A. Clark Center for Australian Studies at the Ransom Center—University of Texas at Austin.

- Essays on any aspect of Australian literature and/or culture are invited; comparative studies are especially encouraged. The essays should not exceed 5000 words and should conform to the MLA style, be double spaced, contain internal documentation, and include a list of works cited. Submissions of short fiction, parts of novels, drama, and poetry by Australian writers are invited. All submissions should be accompanied by a return, stamped envelope. International postage coupons are requested in order to return overseas mail. Otherwise manuscripts will not be returned. Antipodes publishes only fiction, poetry, articles, and interviews that have not appeared in other publications. All material is subject to editing to conform with Antipodes style. The Editors and Publishers of Antipodes assume no responsibility for contributors' opinions. Antipodes is indexed in the annual MLA International Bibliography and in AUSTRALIT (Australian Defense Force Academy Library). Copyright of fiction and poetry lies with the authors. Permission to reprint critical material must be obtained from Antipodes, and full credit given.


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