

July 27, 13:30~15:00: Session (II-1) Room 1-102

Xiaoying, ZHU, East China Normal University, Shanghai, China.

## **“Writing back while travelling away: Shirley Hazzard as an expatriate humanist”**

### **Key Words**

Shirley Hazzard, expatriate, humanist

### **Abstract**

Shirley Hazzard (1931-), a major internationally literary figure in contemporary Australian literature, is one of Australia's most significant expatriate authors, and “one of the great writers of movement, passage, transposition and transit”, as was described by Olubas. As the winner of the 2003 US National Book Award, the winner of the 2004 Australian Miles Franklin Award, and the shortlist candidate for the 2010 Lost Man Booker Prize, Hazzard, an Australian who left Australia at the age of fifteen and has since then been dividing her time between Naples and New York, wrote Australia with a sense of ambivalence, expressing both an awareness of split subjectivity (as an Australian) and a desire for wholeness (as a world citizen). “I'm not even sure which country I'd be an expatriate of,” Hazzard claimed in an interview, and she admitted at the same time that “Australia was the first fifteen years of my life and you are already Australian for life by doing that,” in spite that “The Australia of my childhood was a place that one might want to escape from,” and that “I was not alone in this--thousands of Australians felt it.” (from *the Paris Review*) This self-contradictory dilemma of her own for Australia has been imposed on her characters, especially in her representative novel *The Great Fire* (2004), as is observed by Gelder, Salzman, Slavin, and some other critics, her ‘retrograde’ or ‘recidivist’ depictions of Australians have provided the prospect of a fluidity of identity and made ‘home’ the transformative habitation of boundaries. By writing back, Hazzard has rectified and repaired her sense of colonial displacement, national disruption and personal disturb in humanistic contemplation and retrospection. While crossing borders and travelling away, Hazzard has opened up the horizon of place and engaged readers with the international arena, directing them to the broad and cosmopolitan web of humanist inheritance. “It's good to be at home in more than one place”, as she happily said so, she was conveying this humanist stance. It is human nature instead of Australianness in Shirley Hazzard's novels that has provided for a more complex understanding of her significance in the contemporary field of Australian literary studies.

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ZHU Xiaoying is a professor of English in East China Normal University in Shanghai, China. She received her doctorate in Australian literature and women's literature studies from ECNU. Her recent publications include: "Alice Munro: Gothic Castles in Southern Ontario of Canada" (*Foreign Literature and Art*, Jan. 2014), "The 2013 Miles Franklin Award: An All-Women Shortlist" (*Foreign Literature Development*, Jan. 2014), *A Critical Study of Helen Garner* (Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Languages and Education Press, Oct. 2013), "Women's Stories on Men's Stages: Contemporary American Women Playwrights and their Pulitzer Prizes" (*Foreign Literature Development*, June 2012), and *From Transgression to Transcendence: Helen Garner's Feminist Writing* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Teaching and Research Press, March 2010). Her current research interests are women's literature in English-speaking countries and feminisms across nations.