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The Englishness of English literature had been expressed in Chaucer, Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Sir Walter Scott, those writers whose works seemed best to embody the spirit of the place or the spirit of its folk. In what writers or works would the Australianness of Australian literature be discovered? (David Carter 1997)

This first literary Reader on Australian studies from India not only investigates this central question but explores many other facets of Australian literature and especially Australian cross-cultural relationships with India and Asia. Taking a broad view of what Australian literature is, this Reader explores the dimensions of Australian literature (national, Aboriginal, multicultural, ecocritical, postcolonial, modernist, comparative, feminist, and popular) in its varied genres of drama, poetry, autobiography, explorers' journals, short stories, literature of war, travel writing, Anglo-Indian fiction, diasporic writing, mainstream novel, nature writing, children's literature, romance, science fiction, gothic literature, horror, crime fiction, queer writing, and humour. Each paper in this Reader presents different ways of "reading down under" and "performing Australianness." Juxtaposing the varied critical perspectives of nearly 60 critics this Reader hopes to create a constructive dialogue in the fight against the dominance of an Anglo-American academic approach.

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Reading Down Under follows a very short but distinguished line of Critical Readers in Australian literature, perhaps the closest being Laurie Hergenhahn's New Literary History of Australia (1988). It is, no doubt, the job of Prefaces to say nice things about books, but I know of no collection of essays to match this Reader in depth and comprehensiveness. Fifty-two articles of impeccable scholarship, from many of the best scholars in Australia and India, has resulted in an analysis of Australia's multivalent culture that is unparalleled in Australian Literary Studies—incisive, comprehensive, informative, but above all, *interesting!*

Bill Ashcroft, Preface

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Reading through this collection of essays on Australian Literature, edited by Amit Sarwal and Reema Sarwal, has led me to reflect on the complex intersections between the nation and the individual, between history and autobiography, between what gets documented and what so often remains unsaid precisely because it merely appears to be self-indulgently autobiographical. Situated in this context, questions I am sometimes asked can be answered.

J. V. D'Cruz, Foreword

Australian
Literary
Studies
Reader

Reading Down Under

Edited by
Amit Sarwal
Reema Sarwal

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