The Colonial Journals
And the emergence of Australian literary culture

Ken Gelder and Rachael Weaver

What was the literary landscape like in the early days of colonial Australia?

Ken Gelder and Rachael Weaver show that writers and publishers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries produced a vast number of journals and magazines that helped create an exuberant literary culture.

They were filled with lively contributions by many of the key writers and provocateurs of the day — and of the future. Writers such as Marcus Clarke, Rolf Boldrewood, Ethel Turner and Katharine Susannah Prichard published for the first time in these journals.

In The Colonial Journals, Gelder and Weaver present a fascinating selection of material: a miscellany of content that enabled the ‘free play of intellect’ to thrive.

Matched with wry visual design, these publications made attractive artifacts that demonstrate the role this period played in the growth of an Australian literary culture.

• Includes 50 colour image plates of ‘vintage’ journal covers created across Australia (including WA, QLD, VIC, NSW, TAS).

• Shows the long lineage of distinctively Australian literary publishing, which is often not acknowledged.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Ken Gelder is Professor of English at the University of Melbourne. He has published extensively on genre fiction, popular culture, subcultures, and the Gothic, co-written two Australian literary histories, and (with Rachael Weaver) co-edited four anthologies of colonial Australian popular fiction. His books include the co-authored Uncanny Australia: Sacredness and Identity in a Postcolonial Nation (MUP, 1998) and After the Celebration: Australian Fiction 1989–2007 (MUP, 2009). His most recent book is New Vampire Cinema (BFI/Palgrave, 2012). Rachael Weaver is an Australian Research Council Research Fellow in English at the University of Melbourne. She worked on an ARC Discovery Project with Ken Gelder which has involved developing an extensive digital archive of popular colonial Australian literary texts — ‘Colonial Australian Popular Fiction: A Digital Archive’ at the University of Melbourne Library. She is author of The Criminal of the Century (Arcadia/ASP, 2006), and co-editor with Ken Gelder of four anthologies of colonial Australian popular fiction published by Melbourne University Publishing.

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