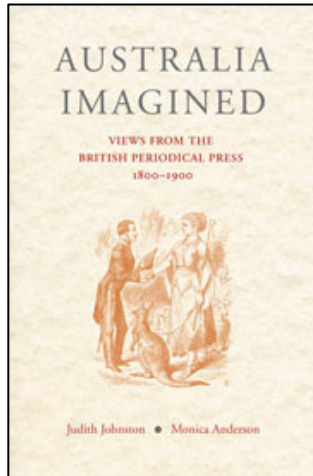


Australia imagined: Views from the British periodical press, 1800-1900 edited by Judith Johnston and Monica Anderson. Crawley, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 2005, pp. XI + 243, A\$38.95, paperback, ISBN 1-920694-45-5.



This collection of printed primary source material contains a number of abridged extracts from nineteenth-century British periodical articles relating to Australia. It is illustrated by a modest selection of cartoons from *Punch*. The collection begins with an introduction by the editors, which presents the material as relevant primarily to the study of cultural and political identities (British, imperial, Australian and Aboriginal) and adopts a resolutely literary/postcolonial approach. The selected texts are then arranged thematically into chapters, dealing in turn with: discussion of the system of convict transportation; settler and visitor impressions of Australia; arguments about the nature and capacities of Aborigines; debates over British migration; letters home; life in the colonies; women; men; the Chinese; and the federation movement. The texts selected are by no means primarily literary in nature; rather, they cover the chosen topics from a range of perspectives, and include contributions to a number of different political, social and cultural debates.

The selections are short, generally one or two pages each, and seem to have been chosen primarily for teaching purposes – they are a good length for classroom study and discussion. Most of the extracts are preceded by a short paragraph by way of editorial introduction, telling us a little about authorship and context. Used in conjunction with a good, detailed textbook, the collection would constitute an admirable sourcebook for teaching courses on Australian literature and history. It also provides a handy assortment of printed primary source material on Australia for those teaching and studying British and imperial history, which is certainly to be welcomed.

SIMON POTTER
National University of Ireland, Galway
5 January 2006