

The 2020 AUHE Prize in Literary Scholarship Announced

Congratulations to Paul Sharrad, winner of the 2020 AUHE Prize for Literary Scholarship for his study *Thomas Keneally's Career and the Literary Machine* (Anthem Press). The judges commented:

Paul Sharrad's *Thomas Keneally's Career and the Literary Machine* is a highly engaging, deeply researched and richly sourced analysis of Keneally's multi-faceted career and its shifting reception in Australia and abroad. As Sharrad suggests, Keneally actively courted both commercial and critical success that would test Australian readers' fondness for 'Our Tom' and an understanding of what constitutes literary greatness. Working at the interface of celebrity studies, literary history and literary biography, Sharrad's unpacking of Keneally's career persuasively demonstrates that Bourdieu's theories of the field and literary values cannot be wholly transposed to modern Australia. Sharrad reveals a complex and often contrary development of a writer and his reputation, not only troubling critical presumptions of connection or cohesion between textual output but also illuminating the other, more elusive sides of the literary machinery that shapes the way we value and use literature.

The judges also praised the extremely strong shortlist with the following comments:

Ken Gelder and Rachael Weaver's *The Colonial Kangaroo Hunt* (The Miegunyah Press) investigates the prominence of the kangaroo in the colonial imaginary and how its textual and material pursuit informed settler-colonial understandings of the animal, the country, and the Aboriginal people. Elegantly synthesising a wide range of written and visual material, Gelder and Weaver track the role of the kangaroo as novelty, as fulcrum to shifting settler-Aboriginal relations, as source of sport and amusement, and as Romantic trope of sympathy and melancholy. The study tracks how fiction (across all genres) and art navigated the importation of European hunting practices, making the kangaroo hunt a touchstone in understanding colonial erasure, education and economy.

Focusing on the under-explored millennial years, Emily Potter's *Writing Belonging at the Millennium: Notes from the Field on Settler-Colonial Place* (Intellect) examines the role of the novel in navigating non-indigenous forms of belonging in Australia at the turn of the current century. Potter argues that literary texts were performatively active in shaping the ways in which non-indigenous Australians related to place and inhabited it. Potter suggests that their spatialized imaginaries both debate and trouble colonial logics and practices while providing a means for social and political alternatives to emerge. Potter further demonstrates how cultural anxieties and dissonances intersected in these novels with an awareness of the limits of narrative and its conventions. Potter impresses that stories alone cannot undo the damage of settler-colonialism or develop new conditions but that they remain important in acknowledging patterns of thought and the complicity of poetics, as well as contributing to unfolding a more sustainable and ethical future.

Locating Australian Literary Memory (Anthem Press) investigates how the commemoration of writers contributes to the mythos of Australian identity. Through place-based research and extensive archival work, Brigid Magner analyses the relationship between literary place and the real, discussing how Australian literary heritage has developed out of European models and cultural nationalism. Magner's study is particularly important in demonstrating the role of communities of readers and literary organisations in sustaining the memory of Australian imaginary through material traces and monumental forms, and performatively through ritual. As Magner explores, this process is tied to the settler-colonial project and

focused on quite narrow forms of legacy. Her study undertakes valuable groundwork to reconceptualise and decolonise cultural memory.

In *Christina Stead and the Matter of America* (Sydney University Press), Fiona Morrison argues that Stead's American novels reveal her as one of the greatest political women writers of the mid-twentieth century. Despite the critical attention that has been paid to Stead off and on over the past forty years, Morrison's monograph is the first to substantially focus on Stead's engagement with the United States. While demonstrating how five of Stead's major novels navigate the relationship between gendered experience and the modern economy, Morrison also examines a paradigmatic shift in Stead's aesthetics from modernism to a reconceptualised social realism. Morrison also persuasively argues that through reading Stead's work, we may better understand the broader transnational relationship between Australia and America, particularly in terms of gender and colonialism.

In *J.M. Coetzee: Truth, Meaning, Fiction* (Bloomsbury Academic), Anthony Uhlmann posits that Coetzee's works can be viewed as a series of philosophical provocations and that Coetzee's method might itself best be understood as a provocation, in that it leads to thought, insight, or gestures towards that which is otherwise excluded. Uhlmann unpacks Coetzee's understanding of fiction as a means to truth but also how there may be fictions of the truth, with the very telling of the story creating truths. Uhlmann also considers Coetzee's exploration of creative intuition. Carefully reading Coetzee's approach against major philosophical approaches to knowledge and form, Uhlmann tracks the development of Coetzee's writing methodology from the days of his dissertation and engagement with Beckett's archive. He then journeys through Coetzee's oeuvre to analyse the author's methodology in action.

The judges also commended Joseph Cummins for *The 'Imagined Sound' of Australian Literature and Music* (Anthem Press). With a great deal of interdisciplinary innovation, this monograph analyses the soundscape of post-World War II literature and music. Cummins persuasively demonstrates the role of sound in creating resonances within geo-imaginaries while also considering the diversity of sound and forms of listening.