the Third Text Reader demonstrates clearly the pioneering role the journal has played in challenging the Eurocentrism of the Western art establishment.

— Llewellyn Negrin, Art, University of Tasmania


This is a timely collection which surveys a broad cross-section of policies and programs which administer culture in Australia. The collection is original to the Australian book market in that it is not limited to one single field of culture; rather, we find in this collection essays about museums, heritage, cinema, popular music, the visual arts, cultural tourism, literature, television, new media and sport. Essays in the collection discuss a range of ways of thinking about identity in relation to culture; there are essays dealing with gender, youth, Indigenous Australians, social class, rural and regional identity, and ethnicity. Finally, essays in the book critically discuss a wide range of some of the more pressing policy ‘problems’ of the last 15 years: multiculturalism; competing constructions of nationalism; globalisation; commercialization; the representation and usage of Indigenous Australian heritage; challenges posed by new media technologies; and, of course, the reduction in government subsidy for the production of Australian content.

While this book may seem to some to be too broad in its coverage — recently some Australian academics have argued that the new ‘creative industries’ have replaced the ‘old arts’ in a teleological story of better cultural management — it is in fact this variety of cultural objects, programs and constructions of identity which informs Culture in Australia’s main contribution to Australia cultural and media studies. What is clear here is that, whether one is analysing sport, new media, visual art or museums, the central problem is always to do with the relations between government and culture and the ways in which those relations fashion or facilitate particular forms of identity and not others. This is the theoretical centre of the book and makes it much more than a series of discussions of 1990s cultural policy in Australia. Rather, its parts make up the most comprehensive discussion of government/culture relations and their articulation to different forms of identity in Australia which has been published to date.

This comprehensiveness will make Culture in Australia an essential addition to undergraduate and postgraduate courses on Australian cultural and media studies. In addition, the book will be invaluable to those working within the cultural and media fields, as academics, administrators or practitioners. This is particularly because the specificity of analysis and therefore sophisticated argument developed in each individual essay demonstrate, as Tony Bennett and David Carter point out, that the ‘wide array of diverse economic, institutional, technological and cultural tendencies’ which affect that relations between government, culture and Australian identities ‘must be critically examined and disaggregated rather than lumped together into simple negative or celebratory generalizations’ (p. 1).

— Lisanne Gibson, The Australian Centre, University of Melbourne


Early in this book, Bignell claims that semiotics ‘always has to struggle against other discourses to make its case’ (p. 39). With a clear and concise introduction to the field, Bignell himself makes a solid case. Applying semiotic analysis to various media forms, he critically assesses the strengths and weaknesses of the approach, while also recognising the theoretical discourses that have contributed to its development. Systematic and instructional in tone, each chapter begins with a brief outline of its focus and objectives and concludes with an annotated list of ‘sources and further