

Australia has long been thought of by Europeans as an exotic and mysterious land. During the nineteenth century, it was envisioned much as the moon and Mars are today: a distant and uncharted place with hidden possibilities for explorations and adventures. The continent captured the imagination of European writers in the 1800s, and with its settlement, Australia became the setting for tales of lost worlds and ancient civilizations. Australia has since developed a rich national literature, and perhaps because of its novelty and wilderness, it has inspired numerous science fiction writers. This book provides a critical survey of the history of Australian science fiction from its nineteenth century origins to the present. The volume proceeds chronologically, with an introductory section on the origins of Australian science fiction before 1925. It then turns to the rise of traditional science fiction in Australia from 1926 to 1959, with discussions of such writers as James Morgan Walsh, Norma Hemming, and Wynne Whiteford. A section on the period from 1960 to 1974 examines the growing national recognition given to such Australian science fiction writers as David Rome and Jack Wodhams, while a section on science fiction between 1975 and 1984 reviews the rise of small presses and the growth of literary criticism of the genre in Australia. A final section addresses the maturation of Australian science fiction from 1985 to 1998 with attention to Aussiecon Two. Extensive bibliographic information concludes the volume.

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