USES OF ABORIGINALITY

Popular
Representations of
Australian
Aboriginality

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Abstract

This is a study of representations of Aboriginality. It focuses upon representations produced by non-Aboriginal people and is concerned with both fictional and non-fictional representations. The focus is upon popular texts. These texts are categorised according to three representational strategies: primitivisation, problematisation, and spiritualisation or texts, such as New Age or Christian texts, that emphasise the religious or the numinous. Most of the texts examined have not previously been the subject of any extensive scholarly analysis. The study is concerned with the ways in which these texts use Aboriginality instrumentally to promote positions, ideas and values that are external or even antithetical to Aboriginal interests. It shares with much of the academic work in its field strong concerns about the implications of such representations for Aboriginal people.