

Work-in-Progress SEMINAR SERIES

1 - 2.30 pm, Friday 6 November, 2009

Theatrette, Old Canberra House

THE CENSOR POETS: WRITERS AS CENSORS IN MENZIES' AUSTRALIA

Dr Nicole Moore, Senior Lecturer in English, Macquarie University

Who were Australia's censors? This paper takes a slice through some pivotal years for Australian literary censorship, the late 1950s and early 1960s, to examine exactly who was responsible for prohibiting titles on behalf of the nation. It reveals some respected Australian writers in surprising double roles. Combining literary expertise and knowledge of the world's *ars erotica*, censors were paradoxical figures, employed as national readers but reading secretly, and privy to material that would not circulate elsewhere in Australia at all. Usually literary scholars from Canberra – suspect books could not be sent through the post, so all censors had to be located here – writers were also sometimes drawn into the role, and conflicts could arise.

Part of a larger new history of Australian literary censorship, this paper explores the impulses, practices and effects of the endeavour, drawing out the implications for the circulation of meaning in specific readerly contexts, and asking sociological questions as to the work of the literary in the world.

Nicole Moore is a senior lecturer in English at Macquarie University and a contributing editor to the Macquarie PEN Anthology of Australian Literature. Banned in Australia, her bibliography of books prohibited in the twentieth century is hosted by Austlit Gateway and a new history of Australian literary censorship, The Censor's Library, will be published by Miegunyah Press in 2009. She is also review editor of Australian Feminist Studies.

All Welcome

Convenors: Ken Taylor and Stephen Foster

ALL WELCOME

Venue: Old Canberra House, Lennox Crossing, ANU

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