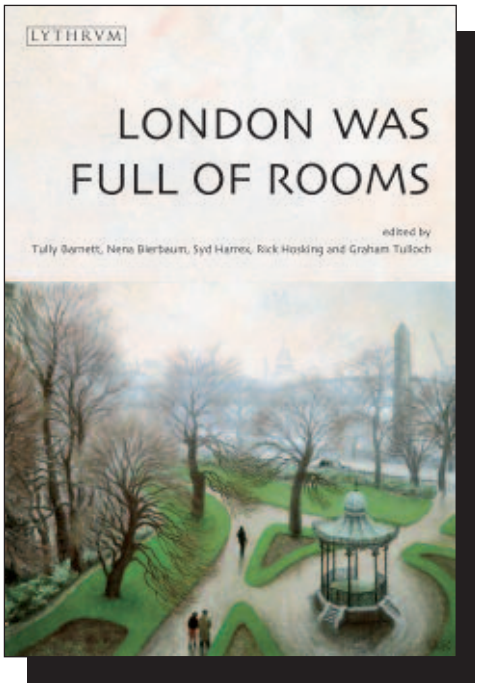
LONDON WAS FULL OF ROOMS



edited by
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Rick Hosking and Graham Tulloch

Using the experiences of Lee Kok Liang – especially as recorded in his novel *London Does Not Belong to Me* – as a focal point, this collection gathers a wide range of responses to the gravitational pull of London, the great imperial centre. When Lee was a law student in London in the early 1950s he concluded that he would always remain the outsider, and his view has been echoed to a greater or lesser degree by subsequent 'colonial' writers and artists, who nevertheless were fascinated by London's cultural pull.

The essays and poems in *London Was Full of Rooms* range from early colonial responses, typified by Henry Lawson and Catherine Helen Spence, to contemporary postcolonial interactions. The ambit is broad, from the negative perceptions of London as being 'polluted with the diseases and vices of centuries', to the bemused – 'everyone I met in London came from somewhere else', to the positive – 'everyone's doing it', and even the comic/ironic interactions represented by the work of Bruce Petty or the 'adventures' of Barry McKenzie.

The collection examines how Australians, especially, reacted 'when London called', and reflects the complex and evolving attitudes of visitors to the great metropolis.

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