

'my little book is with the arms of reaction': Sir Lionel Lindsay, Handmade Culture and Mechanical Reproduction

From *A Consideration of the Art of Ernest Moffitt* (1899), through other limited editions he authored, illustrated or compiled, to *Discobolus and other Verse* (1959), artist, writer and collector Sir Lionel Lindsay (1874–1961) was instrumental in establishing and sustaining Australian fine publishing – inspiring his brother Norman and nephew Jack's emprise with the famous Fanfrolico Press. Inspired himself by 'my Australian nostalgia for antiquity', Sir Lionel's aesthetic pertained to a reactionary modernist revival of 'the intimacy of craft direct from the artist's hands', opposed to 'mechanical reproduction', 'machinery – the god of the Soviet', and 'the Red Army of art that has trampled upon the great tradition we inherit from the Greeks'. His work was lauded by cultural conservatives at 'Home' – England – where he published *A Book of Woodcuts* (1922), Charles Keene: *The Artists' Artist* (1934) and *Addled Art* (1946; first published in Australia, 1942). Lindsay identified 'with that permanent minority, which, evading the market place, continues from generation to generation the perpetuation of culture'. Yet for years he made journeywork for 'the market place', pouring out cartoons, illustrations and advertising copy in mass-circulation newspapers, magazines and paperbacks. To adapt the terms of F.R. Leavis' influential 1930 pamphlet, Lindsay was an elitist practitioner of minority culture and, notwithstanding his philippics against 'Humanity in the mass', 'mass' society and machinery, a prolific roundsman for mass civilisation. His romantic anti-capitalist and anti-communist perspective intersected with Q.D. Leavis' prophecy of the extinction of true literature by a flood of cheap trash, although he actually contributed to the inundation of 'ersatz' he denounced. This paper outlines Lindsay's career in book production and analyses the technologies and transmission of his publications, 'high' and 'low', to examine relations between 'minority' and 'mass' print cultures.

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