

**ANALYSEN / ANALYSES**

Oliver Haag

## German Paratexts of Indigenous Australian Literature

This article builds on my previous studies about German translations of Indigenous Australian books which are as follows (Haag 2009; Haag 2011a; Haag 2011b). Between 1981 and 2008, 27 books co-authored and authored by Indigenous Australian writers were translated into German.<sup>1</sup> Slightly more than 40 % of the German publishers of these works were trade publishers that disseminate these books broadly across a wide range of readers, including Rowohlt and Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag. As far as the publishers are concerned, translated Australian Indigenous literature has thus not been marginalised, and, apart from the German translation of *Auntie Rita* (Huggins and Huggins 1994), *Die Stimme meiner Mutter* (2010), none of the translations have been published by a press with focus on esoteric literature. However, some of the esoteric presses publish German literature about seemingly Indigenous content, like *Traumzeit* (Engl. Dreamtime) (Lindner 2004). Such titles make these books appear 'authentically' Indigenous, as this article will discuss.

The present essay is a follow-up study that has its analytical focus on the blurbs, cover illustrations and introductions of these translated books. The texts surrounding the actual text, or what Gerard Genette calls the publisher's paratexts, are designed to influence how the actual text is interpreted and read (7-16). They thus proffer an ideal means to analyse parts of the publishers' marketing strategies. This study seeks to explore some aspects of the marketing endeavours used by German publishers, as well as the modes through which Australian Indigenous cultures have thus been constructed. It considers the ways these books are being

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<sup>1</sup> This article understands German in the sense of German-speaking, thus includes German-speaking Austria and Switzerland. All translations from German (except from Endriss and Scherer) are mine.

advertised and marketed to the German reader, how cover pictures relate to the blurbs and introductions, and how the Australian contexts of race and racism are being translated into the German context.

### **The Context of Reception**

The broader – that is, non-academic – interest in Indigenous cultures, particularly those of North America, has a long tradition in the German-speaking countries that has increased since the nineteenth century (Lutz 39). This interest is also evident in the case of Indigenous Australian cultures. In the second half of the twentieth century, their reception in the German-speaking countries has been framed by two opposing discourses, which I call *exotic* or *romantic* discourse, and *politicised* discourse (Haag 2009). The *exotic* discourse portrays Indigenous societies as fundamentally different to (white) German society. For instance, Indigenous cultures are seen as spiritual, whereas German cultures are considered rational. The exotic discourse has different characteristics. It can go hand in hand with New Age and esoteric images, attributing a higher sense of spirituality to Indigenous persons; it can also portray Indigenous cultures as linked to nature and Indigenous people as the ‘true’ environmentalists, living healthy lives, free of the scourges of so-called civilisation. The exotic discourse tends to represent Indigenous cultures and people as unchangeable, thus ahistorical, and constructs a particular kind of Indigenous person, who is seen to be representative of her or his race. Indigenous people are mostly depicted in German publications as half-naked, dark-skinned, decorated with body paint and holding artefacts like didgeridoos and boomerangs in their hands (see Figures 1-3). Correspondingly, only ‘classical’ Indigenous designs, such as dot-style painting, are portrayed on the book covers. By ‘classical’ designs here, I do not mean authentic pre-contact designs (that is, designs and art forms used before the arrival of the Europeans) but designs that are broadly associated in the German-speaking countries with Indigenous designs (Gigler 57) and thus constructed as ‘pre-contact’ or ‘classical’; these are often dot-style designs, images with

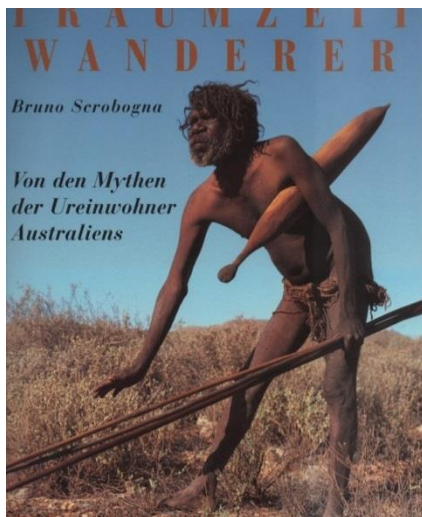
hatchings resembling rock-art figures, or images of the rainbow serpent (in 'dotted' formats). As the findings of this research will show, images not reflecting Indigenous artistic expression (for example, watercolour techniques and photographs) are not used as cover illustrations.

There are many examples substantiating this discourse, ranging from artefacts sold in German 'ethno'-shops to German books about Indigenous cultures. One such book is Bruno Scrobogna's *Traumzeit Wanderer* (Engl. Dreamtime wanderers), which revolves around Pintubi Dreaming Stories. The book reflects romantic visions of Indigenous cultures: in the introduction it is said that the Pintubi led a paradisiacal life up until the arrival of the Europeans (13). While the coming of the Europeans is interpreted as a caesura, European colonisation is not challenged as such – rather it is described as the coming of 'civilisation', thus having been a logical consequence of historical progression. Indigenous people, the author claims, possessed a "particular key to spirituality", which "we Europeans have lost over time" (19). The blurb in turn says that for the Pintubi, "the leap from the stone age into the atomic age meant a progression into nothing" (*ibid.*). This 'nothing' is substantiated by the claim that Pintubi cultures are nowadays vanishing, with the word "dying" being employed. The cover illustration shows the picture of an Aboriginal man in so-called traditional outfit (see Figure 1); it serves as a ready marker underpinning the Indigenous content of the book. While this book is relatively contemporary, it shows continuity with other non-academic German books about Indigenous cultures (e.g., Adler; Strehlow; Cerny). They share the following characteristics:

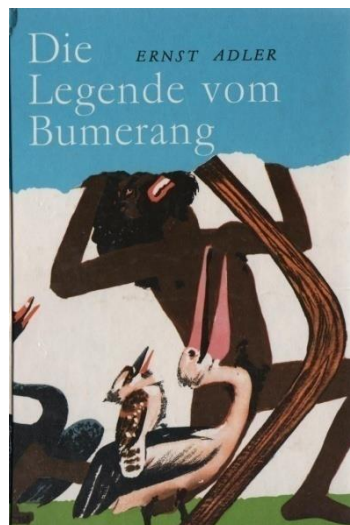
(a) Indigenous people are presented in a frame of timelessness; (b) the cover illustrations often show either photographs or drawings of Indigenous persons in classical appearance, wearing nothing except loincloths; (c) titles pander to romantic visions of Indigenous cultures, being captioned, for one, 'Desert Dance', 'Legacy of the Dreamtime' and 'Legend of the Boomerang'; (d) Indigenous people are thus linked and reduced to nature; (e) Indigenous cultures are

constructed not only as 'old' but also as 'pre-modern' – German readers, by way of contrast, are positioned as modern, willing to 'learn a lot' from 'pre-modern' societies; (f) Indigenous cultures are seen as nearly extinct, and the respective German author is legitimised as an intercultural broker who presents the 'marvellous' stories to the world. For example, the German book, *Wüstentanz* (1996) by Wighard Strehlow, the grandson of Carl Strehlow, purports: "the present book tells of the beauty of the sagas, fairy tales, myths, dances, songs and ceremonies of the Aborigines, which the German missionary Carl Strehlow collected one hundred years ago before the entire culture was lost forever" (16).

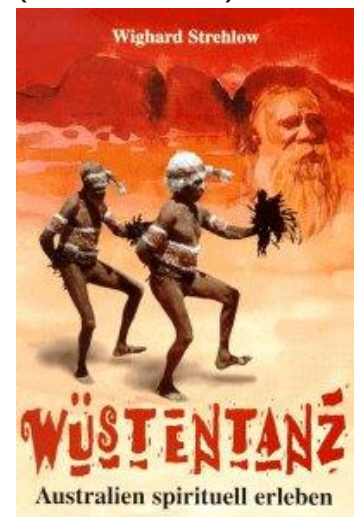
**Figure 1.** Cover illustration on German book about Indigenous Australian cultures (Scrobogna 1999)



**Figure 2.** Cover illustration on German book about Indigenous Australian cultures (Adler 1966)



**Figure 3.** Cover illustration on German book about Indigenous Australian cultures (Strehlow 1996)



The other so-called *politicised* discourse is focussed on contemporary political issues of Indigenous suffering and injustice. In its present form, it emerged in the 1970s with the rise of the then Australia-wide Indigenous protest movements and gained broader currency in the 1990s after the publication of the 'Stolen Generations' report in 1997. Significantly, many German TV documentaries, newspaper and online articles have drawn attention to the historic and present suffering of Indigenous Australians (see Haag 2009). Often they use confronting terms to refer to Australian interracial history, such as 'genocide' and 'mass murder'. For example, in response to Prime

Minister Kevin Rudd's official apology for the forcible abduction of Indigenous children from their families, one German newspaper article criticised the apology, on the grounds of the lack of financial compensation, as a "cheap apology for a history of murder, rape, and persecution" (Wälterlin 2009).

What I call the *politicised* discourse is seldom observable in the German literature *about* Indigenous cultures – academic literature exempted. This is in sharp contrast to the German translations of Indigenous books by Indigenous authors, most likely because translators of this literature are usually well acquainted with Indigenous cultures and politics, have lived in Australia and/or sustain direct relationships with Indigenous authors (for example, Juliane Lochner in the case of Jackie Huggins and Gabriele Yin in the event of Sally Morgan). Yet both the exotic and the politicised discourses coexist and, despite being contradictory, sometimes fuse with one another as happens with the German translations of Indigenous literature.

### **Indigenous Translations – Cover Illustrations and Titles**

The analysis of the 27 books under study reveals that in marketing Indigenous literature, all books are clearly advertised as 'Aboriginal' either on the blurb or on the cover illustration. This labelling classification certainly has its merits in pointing out the Indigenous ownership of the respective stories; however, it also discourages readers from considering Indigenous literature beyond the purview of Indigeneity. By contrast, for example, the German translations of Patrick White are marketed neither as 'gay' nor, in most instances, as 'Australian' literature, let alone as 'white' literature (Haag 2010). This freedom of non-categorisation does not apply to the German publications of Indigenous Australian literature. In an interview about Indigenous autobiographical writing, Frances Peters-Little expresses resentment about this over-categorisation. To her, categories may foster the popular misconception that individual writers are automatically representative of their community, race, or generation:

Australian Anglo-Saxon women are seen as just being individuals. That is a luxury that Indigenous people do not afford. So I think when Aboriginal people are writing autobiographies, I would like to see a time when we feel that we can write autobiographies without considering ourselves in the whole social, political and economic and cultural context of ourselves and that we do come to a point, where we can have freedom of individual rights and story-telling. (F. Peters-Little, personal interview, 13 August 2004)

Furthermore, the translations exhibit differences between the cover art, titles, and genre classifications on the one hand, and blurbs and introductions on the other hand. In most instances these translations employ classic illustrations and 'exotic' titles that do not fully correspond with the often highly socio-critical content of the books – neither do they fit the more political orientation of the introductions and forewords. There are three broad ways in which the translated books perpetuate exotic images of Indigenous cultures: through (a) titles; (b) genre classifications; and (c) cover illustrations. More precisely, 44 % of the German titles contain the terms 'Aborigine' and 'Dreamtime', or make reference to nature and fauna in order to advertise the respective book as 'Indigenous'. The word 'Dreamtime' in particular is used as a ready marker for the Indigenous content. Another 18 % of the translations have the genre-specific term 'fairy tale' in their title or subtitle. For example, an audio book about Dreaming Stories (Noonuccal 2000) is advertised as '*märchenhaft*', which has two divergent meanings: 'fantastic' in the sense of 'extremely beautiful' and 'fairy-tale-like'. Yet the genre of the fairy tale is not an accurate description of Dreamings as it implies something entirely fictional, directed to children. In the German cultural context, such genre designation denotes a romantic story, thus indicating the exotic discourse of a harmonious counter-world to the west.

The cover illustrations, in turn, serve as the most immediate signifiers of Australian Indigenous cultures. Table 1 draws on the distinctions between the politicised and romantic/classic discourse and uses the terms 'classical', 'political', and 'neutral' to describe the style of representation used by the respective translation. 'Classical' refers to the representation of Indigenous cultures solely according

to seemingly pre-contact and/or 'traditional' imaginings, while 'political' denotes references to contemporary political themes like oppression. The rubric 'neutral' applies to those instances invoking neither a political nor a classical standpoint:

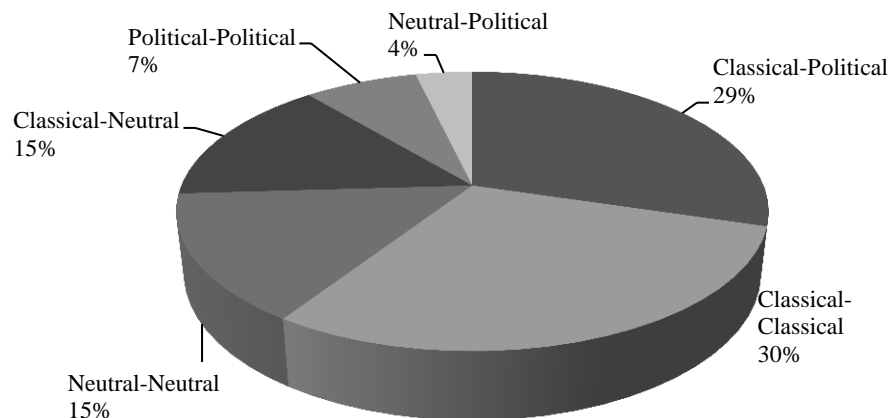
**Table 1.** Cover illustrations, blurbs, and introductions on German translations of Indigenous books.

<b>Author</b>	<b>German Title</b>	<b>Cover Illustration</b>	<b>Blurb</b>	<b>Introduction / Afterword</b>
<b>Löffler</b>	<i>Märchen aus Australien</i>	Classical	Political	Political
<b>Boltz</b>	<i>Wie das Känguruh seinen Schwanz bekam</i>	Neutral	Neutral	Political
<b>Papunya Tula Artists</b>	<i>Ureinwohnermalerei</i>	Classical	Classical	Nil
<b>Boltz</b>	<i>Märchen der australischen Ureinwohner</i>	Classical	Classical	Political
<b>Treize</b>	<i>Der Riese Turrumulli</i>	Classical	Classical	Nil
<b>Sykes</b>	<i>Revolution, Liebe, Menschen</i>	Classical	Neutral	Neutral
<b>Wolf</b>	<i>Australien erzählt</i>	Neutral	Neutral	Political
<b>Morgan</b>	<i>Ich hörte den Vogel rufen</i>	Classical	Political	Nil
<b>Grawe</b>	<i>Frauen in Australien</i>	Neutral	Neutral	Political
<b>Hawthorne</b>	<i>Australien der Frauen</i>	Classical	Neutral	Political
<b>Yin</b>	<i>Der mit der Sonne kam</i>	Classical	Political	Political
<b>Endriss</b>	<i>Land der goldenen Wolken</i>	Neutral	Neutral	Political
<b>Markmann</b>	<i>Neue Traumzeiten</i>	Classical	Political	Political
<b>Mudrooroo</b>	<i>Die Welt der Aborigines</i>	Classical	Neutral	Political
<b>Noonuccal</b>	<i>Stradbrokes Traumzeit</i>	Classical	Neutral	Political
<b>Morgan</b>	<i>Wanamurraganya</i>	Classical	Political	Nil
<b>Mudrooroo</b>	<i>Flug in die Traumzeit</i>	Classical	Classical	Nil
<b>Haviland</b>	<i>Rückkehr zu den Ahnen</i>	Classical	Political	Political
<b>Zimmermann</b>	<i>Schwarzaustralische Gedichte</i>	Classical	Neutral	Political
<b>Lucashenko</b>	<i>Außen eckig</i>	Political	Political	Nil
<b>Weller</b>	<i>Der Mondredner</i>	Neutral	Neutral	Nil
<b>Noonuccal</b>	<i>Märchen und Mythen aus der Traumzeit</i>	Classical	Neutral	Nil
<b>Doring</b>	<i>Gwion Gwion</i>	Classical	Classical	Nil
<b>Roe et al.</b>	<i>Gularabulu</i>	Classical	Classical	Nil
<b>Pilkington</b>	<i>Long Walk Home</i>	Political	Political	Nil
<b>Gilbert</b>	<i>Mary Känguru</i>	Classical	Classical	Nil
<b>Unaipon</b>	<i>Mooncumbulli</i>	Classical	Classical	Nil

**Annotation:** titles and author names are shortened; only books co/authored by Indigenous persons and anthologies where the Indigenous owners of the stories are acknowledged are included in this Table. Sykes and Mudrooroo are included despite the discussions about their Indigeneity because German publishers, at the time of publication, had no reason to assume that both authors might not be of Indigenous heritage. For the complete bibliography, see Haag (2009).

Figure 4 shows six different relations between cover illustrations and blurbs-introductions ranked by frequency: classical-classical; classical-political; neutral-neutral and classical-neutral; political-political; and neutral-political.

Figure 4. Relations between cover illustrations and blurbs/introductions



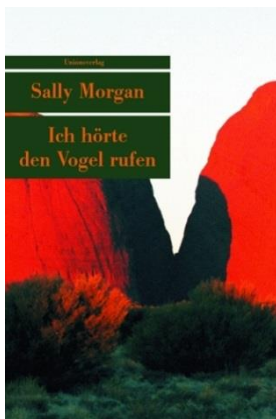
As this distribution substantiates, most books (74%) have classical designs on the cover. The use of classical designs such as dot-style paintings and photographs of places with cultural significance – like Kata Tjuṯa – suggest two main purposes: firstly, the pictures function as a means to authenticate the book as Indigenous, and secondly, they indicate to the German target reader that the book is about Indigenous Australia. While employing classical designs is not inappropriate *per se* – ‘dotted’ styles and bark painting designs are part of the diversity of Indigenous cultural expressions – they are nevertheless problematic if used as representative markers of Indigenous arts and cultures as such. This is because the dominance of classical designs (a) suggests that Indigenous cultures had not changed after contact and would not offer contemporary artistic expressions; (b) constructs German readers as being primarily interested in Dreaming Stories; (c) elides contemporary issues of socio-political relevance; and (d) fosters stereotypes that Indigenous cultures were homogeneous. The latter is discernible on Morgan’s book cover that shows a picture of Kata Tjuṯa (Figure 5), without neither Sally Morgan being a member of the traditional owners of Kata Tjuṯa nor the narrative plot revolving around this particular place. Although Kata Tjuṯa, and particularly Uluru, have become



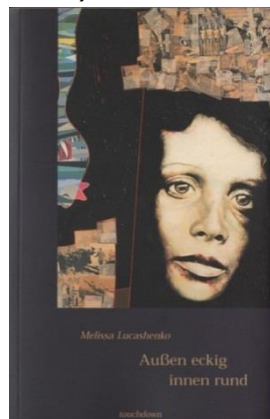
Australia-wide symbols of Indigeneity, in the context of the German target culture it nonetheless tends to construe cultural homogeneity.

Yet not all cover pictures make use of classical symbols. Aside from the neutral images, there are two cover illustrations making direct reference to political issues. Among them is Melissa Lucashenko's *Außen eckig, innen rund* (2000). The cover art, designed by two German illustrators, is entirely different from the original, which shows the plain title. The German version, by way of contrast, has a picture with a sad face in the right corner (Figures 6-7). It is surrounded by much smaller pictures showing, among others, four emaciated children and military equipment. The overall impression of the picture is ominous, reminding of the horrors of war. Particularly the weapons and the emaciated bodies evoke the association with concentration camps and the Second World War.

**Figure 5.** Cover illustration on translated Indigenous literature (Morgan 2007-edition)



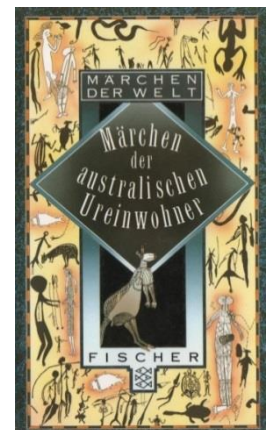
**Figure 6.** Cover illustration on translated Indigenous literature (Lucashenko 2000)



**Figure 7.** Excerpt from Lucashenko (2000)



**Figure 8.** Cover illustration on translated Indigenous literature (Boltz 1989)



The blurb in turn tells of a young Aboriginal female trying to escape from a cycle of booze, violence and poverty. The text highlights contemporary social problems and dispenses with any romantic vision of Indigenous cultures, but rather suggests a nexus between these problems and Indigenous cultures: the fact that the protagonist is introduced as Aboriginal and the contemporaneous

mention of excessive alcohol consumption and internecine violence connects racial origin with social problem, or, in other words, racialises the very problem. Overall, however, the cover illustrations and titles are in most instances kept in 'classical' fashion and thus designed differently from the often politically charged blurbs and introductions.

### **Indigenous Translations – Blurbs and Introductions**

The reception of Indigenous literature in German translation, I argue, is influenced by the history of racial politics in the German target culture. This in particular applies to the themes of race and oppression in Indigenous literature. The reception of these themes becomes evident in the blurbs and introductions. Here I identify three major yet at times contradictory strands of this reception. They relate to (a) burdened terminology; (b) the establishment of cultural continuity; and (c) the stress laid on oppression. While the focus on oppression bears similarity to Australian discourses about interracial history, the specifics of German discourses about race play a vital part in many introductory texts.

Both countries, Germany and Australia, share a history of interracial violence. Yet in the two countries racism has – at least at policy level – functioned in fundamentally different ways. After the first years of violent displacement in Australia, racial policies against Indigenous people took shape at a bureaucratic level in the so-called Aboriginal Affairs policies, that is, the policy of segregation whereby Indigenous people were deported from their traditional lands and put into reserves and missions, which was followed by policies of biological and cultural assimilation. The latter aimed at absorbing Indigenous people into white Australian society. The main aim was to eradicate differences – by bringing up Indigenous children as whites and by enforcing interracial marriage. Partly as a reaction against these policies, self-determination tends to affirm Indigenous difference from settler society.

In Germany, by way of contrast, racial politics exhibited different forms, especially during the Nazi period and before. Particularly Jewish people, a religious group, were invented as a 'race' of lower rank and ultimately murdered. That is, with the rise of Social Darwinism and bio-anthropological research, a once religious group was re-categorised as 'racial'. The aim of such racial ideology was not to eradicate but to establish difference. The two main differences, the establishing and the eradication of difference, have thus several implications relevant to the reception of Indigenous literature.

First, the specifically German experiences of racial segregation have a bearing on the usage of particular terms in the context of Indigenous literature – particularly 'race'. Especially during the Nazi reign, the concept of 'race' served as a means to overcome class divides in German society – in making all members of a particular 'race' equals, 'race' had a strong unifying force (Aly 230-231). Especially in the aftermath of its misapplication by the Nazis, the classification of biological races has rendered the concept of *Rasse* (Engl. race) unacceptable. The term *Rasse* carries an exclusively essentialist connotation and thus exhibits an undoubtedly racist meaning. Correspondingly, the German equivalent of the term 'race' is no longer applied to humans but only to animals and has similar significance as the English term 'breed'; consequently, it is not used in the books under study. Instead of 'race', the words 'Aborigines' and 'ethnic'/'ethnicity' are used – both of these have different meanings than 'race'. Thus, 'race', a marker for deciphering racism and highlighting the perceived normalisation of whiteness (Cowlshaw and Morris 1997; Moreton-Robinson 2004) and which is often used in Indigenous literature, is rendered invisible instead of being explained to the German readers.

At the same time, while the oppression of Indigenous people is mentioned throughout the introductions, it is seldom referred to as a product of 'racism'. Thus, while the German introductions focus on violence, they do not contextualise this violence as based on racial disadvantage or as effects of racial politics. Instead, due to the

lacking contextualisation of racial politics, introductory texts ascribe this violence implicitly to cultural, ethnic, or economic 'injustice'. Moreover, concepts of Indigenous sovereignty – which ground on narratives of race – are left unexplained to German-speaking readers.

The approach to historically charged terms can also be observed in the special emphasis on 'culture', and this is an astonishing way. Indigenous cultures are praised as highly sophisticated, thus classified as 'high cultures' (e.g., Löffler 244, 253; Yin 9). One text describes Indigenous cultures as being highly developed because their economic system and material artefacts, like spears and boomerangs, are "perfectly tailored to the environment" (Boltz 10). This mention of the high development of cultures is not explained within a larger context yet clearly presupposes such a context, that is, the long held evolutionistic belief that Indigenous cultures were/are 'uncivilised' or 'stone age' but able to achieve a level of higher development. The text thus gives a contrast to this belief, which was as much established in Germany as it was in Australia. The term 'culture' should in this context also be understood as an antonym of 'nature', which has a burdened significance in German history; the German equivalent to 'primitive people' is, significantly, *Naturvolk* (literally 'people of nature'). The concept of nature, if referred to humans, was used to denigrate so-called illiterate and animistic cultures, seen to be linked to nature (and thus not equipped with reason) rather than to culture. As a consequence, links to 'nature' are not only discarded but, instead, the concept of 'high culture' is employed in the German translations. Yet the emphasis being laid on the high development of culture draws force on a binary understanding of cultures as either 'highly developed' or 'primitive'. The employment of 'high development' – well-intentioned as it is – legitimises the dichotomy of the hierarchical positioning of cultures, and it does not coincide with Indigenous worldviews of land and nature. As the culture-nature divide shows, German terminology does not always fully correspond with the Indigenous contexts of the stories. It seems to be rather an educational approach to German counter-discourses against racialisation.

## **Cultural Continuity**

As a consequence of Germany's history of racial segregation, there is a tendency in German historical discourses to downplay rather than reinforce (racial) differences, especially by emphasising 'common humanity'. This emphasis on commonalities can be observed in the introductions to German translations of Australian Indigenous literature. One text, for example, establishes cultural continuity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous story-telling: "Australia is a continent of story-telling. Aboriginal people have been telling mythical Dreamtime-stories long before the first whites discovered Australia. The white settlers only followed this tradition" (Wolf 225). In a similar fashion, another book, containing writing by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous women, translates the Indigenous past into a common past for all Australian women: "Australian women have more than a forty thousand year long history" (Hawthorne and Klein 1992, blurb). This focus on commonalities does not entirely coincide with Indigenous concepts of sovereignty, intellectual ownership and cultural property. In fact, establishing such continuity would be criticised in Australia as a form of appropriation, whereas the German reception, I argue, is less a product of appropriation than one of forging a form of common humanity by presenting a seemingly 'positive' picture of Aboriginal cultures.

## **Focus on Oppression**

In nearly half of the translations (41%), the blurbs and introductions are decidedly political, that is, they draw attention to socio-political disadvantages and oppression. In many instances, the editors have adopted controversial terms to refer to the historical fate of Indigenous Australians: "slave trade", "forcible conquest", "mass rape", and "genocide" to mention but a few (e.g., Grawe 170; Boltz 17-18; Yin 10). The political ambitions are at times so dominant that they obstruct any view of Indigenous agency: In saying, for instance, that "the inhabitants of the island of Tasmania were already exterminated by the middle of the last century" (Boltz 17-

18) the editor conjures up the historical myth of the complete extermination of the Indigenous Tasmanians after Trugannini's death. This neglects the cultural continuities and survival of Indigenous Tasmanians. Furthermore, the text homogenises settler Australians as a bunch of callous criminals, implying that all settlers were killers: "The massacres [of Indigenous persons] lasted up until the 1930s and only came to an end when the Australian settlers began to fear the extinction of their cheap workers and when humanitarian voices began to grow louder the world over" (*ibid.* 18). Finally, the introduction concludes that the "remaining survivors had been evicted from their lands" and thus "lost their traditional lifestyles" (*ibid.*). Another introduction suggests in a similar sense that Indigenous cultures are on the brink of disappearance:

Because of the contact with the whites, the majority of the Aborigines are alienated from the culture of their forbears, and now they have to live in poor conditions on the fringes of civilisation; only few can manage to live a better life. For many, the escape from misery and hopelessness is an escape to alcohol, for they have lost the link to the Dreamings and myths that once regulated the life of their forbears. The perishing of a highly-developed tribal culture is outlined on the following pages. (Löffler 243-4)

In a similar vein, the blurb on *Wanamurraganya* lumps together all white fathers of Indigenous children, advertising the book as "evidence of the exploitation of Black women and the cynicism of white fathers" (Morgan 1997). This engenders the impression that there was not a single white Australian father who was caring or loving.

This sole focus on oppression and destruction is problematic for three reasons. Firstly, it renders Indigenous people the passive victims of history, obscuring their active part in shaping present-day Australia. Secondly, it does not acknowledge the survival and continuity of Indigenous cultures. Significantly, one text draws a distinction between the "Australian Aboriginal people" and their "urban progeny" (Zimmermann and Noonuccal 1), implying that because of the destructive impacts of colonisation urban Indigenous people are somehow 'less' Indigenous. In this instance, the

overemphasis on destruction reinforces the stereotypical differentiation between the 'real' Indigenous persons living in remote areas, still connected with their Dreamings, and the urban dwellers who are assumed to have lost the links to their cultures. Thirdly, it homogenises white and Indigenous Australians – not in any cultural or linguistic sense, for the cultural and linguistic diversity of Indigenous Australians is stressed in most paratexts, but in the sense of attributing to them particular human qualities. In one text, for example, white people are uniformly portrayed as the exploiters of nature, whereas Indigenous people are seen as its protectors: "For the white newcomers the earth was seen as a commodity to be exploited. They laid their network of roads and railroad tracks and began to mine ore primarily to make the land arable and to render it accessible to humans" (Endriss and Scherer 1995, n.pag.). Thus, Indigenous people are attributed 'good' human qualities whereas whites are seen as 'morally corrupt'; one group are the true environmentalists and poor victims, the others are the destroyers and bad fathers. The politicised approach thus presents a great danger of simplification: in overemphasising the violent impacts of colonisation, Indigenous cultures are portrayed as being in decay, which reinforces, ironically enough, the 'dying race' dogma.

Yet there is one remarkable exception to the overemphasis on oppression, namely, a bilingual anthology which does not dwell exclusively on negative events. "It reports on the strength, the courage, and the confidence of the Australian Aboriginals yet also on the pain and suffering caused by the colonialists" (Markmann and Rika-Heke 1996, blurb). The foreword reflects a similar strategy: the text mentions colonial oppression but subsequently avoids focusing on 'destruction', going on to stress that "Aboriginal Australia is nevertheless not dead" (*ibid.*, 9). This book is one of the few examples testifying to the survival of Indigenous Australians.

Overall, in the German translations, the descriptions of Indigenous cultures are markedly sympathetic towards Indigenous people yet do not always represent the specific contexts of race and racism within Australia. Not clearly describing the issues of race, overemphasising

oppression, constructing notions of 'high cultures' and establishing continuities of action between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians are all phenomena reflecting the target culture's own historical discourses of race rather than mirroring the cultural contexts of the source culture. As this article has shown, the German translations construct four major types of Indigenous persons: (a) the victim of white oppression; (b) the spiritual being; (c) the environmentalist; and (d), far more seldom, the survivor.

## Conclusion

The analysis of paratexts gives the following results: Firstly, the contexts of reception are fundamentally different between the popular German literature *about* Australian Indigenous cultures and the German translations of Australian Indigenous literature. The latter dispenses with references to nature, draws more attention to contemporary social inequities, and appeals far less to esoteric interests. Secondly, the translated books are marketed differently by the German presses – their cover illustrations often show classical designs that do not correspond with the more political contents of the blurbs and introductions. Thirdly, the rendering of cover illustrations as classical is a marketing strategy evinced by the German publishers to advertise their products; classical designs, it is thought, are better suited to inspire German customers to read Indigenous books. Fourthly, the introductions and blurbs are different from the cover illustrations insofar as they engage in decidedly political issues, and this political emphasis often has more to do with racial discourses in the German target culture than with the realities concerning Indigenous Australians. For example, terms like 'race' are simply dropped, there is an emphasis on cultural similarities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and the often one-sided focus on oppression renders Indigenous Australians the passive victims of history.

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