

Abstracts

Australien – ein verwundbarer Kontinent

Boris Braun

Abstract: Australia is an ecologically vulnerable continent with severe environmental problems. 220 years of economic activity have significantly changed the continent's natural environment and have destabilized many ecosystems. Newly introduced species of plants and animals have caused immense damage to endemic wildlife and biodiversity. Soils are getting degraded by salinity and erosion. Many problems cannot be attributed to the vulnerability of the natural environment alone. They are also the result of unsustainable farming activities, resource-consuming lifestyles and the specialisation of the Australian economy towards mining and energy-consuming manufacturing processes. Australia has for a long time been a laggard in international climate policy. It was only very recently that Prime Minister Kevin Rudd ratified the Kyoto Protocol. Greenhouse gas emissions per capita are still among the highest in the world. However, the Australian public is getting more and more sensitive to climate change and environmental degradation. Moreover, Australia's political system seems to be well prepared to induce the necessary changes.

Auswirkungen der Trockenheit in Australien 2002–2009

Reinhold Grotz

Abstract: Australia is the driest continent on earth and has an extreme variability in rainfall both across the continent and from year to year. Therefore, droughts lasting several years characterize life in most regions. The present drought began in 2002 and has continued into 2008-2009. It is the most or second most severe drought since Federation. There are many signs that this is intensified by a climate change. The south and southeast of the continent with rural areas of high productivity suffer most. As the rivers carry only little water, irrigation in the Murray-Darling Basin had to be reduced drastically. Since irrigation leads to a great loss of water by evaporation and leakages, the use of water is inefficient. Effects of the drought not only reduced harvests and sheep numbers but also doubled farm debts within seven years and led to many farm sales. The water supply in metropolitan areas is in danger, too. Urban residents have faced severe water restrictions for many years and the construction of expensive sea water desalination plants is under way. Water prices continue to rise and will soon reach European levels. Water shortages have become such a problem that – despite Section 100 of the Australian Constitution – federal governments are increasingly involved in problem solving strategies and measures.

In Search of Terra Australis Incognita – an Overview for Teachers

Sabine Liebig

Abstract: Terra Australis, the unknown Southland, was an imaginary continent and appeared on European maps between the 15th and 18th centuries, although its size and shape were vague. It was supposed to be a large landmass, a rich land where immense wealth could be found. Many explorers tried to find the continent and in some instances they were nearby without knowing it. The Dutch were actually first, but did not realize they had found the continent. In the end, James Cook (1728-1779) succeeded on a secret mission to look for it when he was in the Pacific, but again, he did not understand what he had found. Matthew Flinders (1774-1814) circumnavigated Australia from 1801-1803 in order to investigate the coastline. From a European perspective, some questions are of major interest: Since when have people thought about the continent of Australia? Which conditions had to be fulfilled to go on such long and dangerous journeys? Who went in search of this famous continent, and what did it mean for Europe when the continent was finally discovered by European explorers? This article concentrates on the European perspective on this continent and its discovery – "discovery" as seen through the eyes of the white man.

The Apology – and Beyond

Peter Read

Abstract: In this article I trace first the context which led up to the federal government apology to Aboriginal people who were removed from their families by successive state and national Australian governments. A typical scenario of a family suffering from the policy demonstrates the devastating effect on parents, children and communities. After outlining my own role as a historian in uncovering the history of removal, I discuss the rationale of removal before moving to the Apology itself, in February 2008, by Prime Minister Rudd. The article concludes by observations on the lack of other forms of restitution by the government.

Die Religion der australischen Aborigines – Grundlagen für den Religionsunterricht

Corinna Erckenbrecht

Abstract: So much is different in Aboriginal religion in comparison to other religions – so much that the British colonists at first doubted whether the Australian Aborigines had anything like a religion at all. Today, however, there is no question that the Australian Aborigines have a religion in the full sense of the term, which, moreover, fascinates the world with its mythology, its ritual and its rock art. This contribution aims to give a basic overview of the most important features of Aboriginal religion like dreamtime and songlines, totemism and totemic ancestors, secret-sacred objects

and sacred sites, mythology and ceremonial life as well as initiation. The references list several useful films, books and articles including a selection of the relevant anthropological literature.

Wesen und Erscheinungsformen indigener Kunst in Australien – eine Einführung

Elisabeth Bähr

Abstract: "Painting is our foundation. White man calls it art." This often cited statement by Galarrwuy Yunupingu, member of an extended family of artists, propounds that painting is a fundamental need of indigenous Australians and simultaneously hints at the gap between indigenous and western European art. The conceptual content of art, which can be denoted in the Warlpiri language by the term 'Jiikurrpa' and by the word 'Aboriginality', will be discussed and illustrated with a few examples from the range of multi-faceted artistic expressions; always remembering that just as there is no such thing as the German Art or the French Art, there is no such thing as the Australian indigenous art. Whether art is labelled contemporary or traditional, whether it belongs to the category of so-called Ethnographies or to so-called fine arts, and indeed whether the western categories of art nomenclature apply at all, will be discussed. Finally, the most important points to cover in school courses will be noted.

Australian English – The Third Reference Variety between Emancipation and Global Pressure

Ulrike Altendorf

Abstract: Australian English has come of age. As a former colonial variety of British English, Australian English has developed its own norms, codified in its first national dictionary, the Macquarie Dictionary (Butler 2009), and practiced in "high functions of language use" (Görlach 1988, 133), such as the educational system and the media. The current linguistic make-up of Australian English reflects its history of emancipation from the British English model as well as its current status as a variety of English in a global context. The present article will explore the possibility of raising students' awareness to a selection of linguistic variables which are symbolic of this double status. It will also discuss why such a metalinguistic approach is useful within a cultural approach to Australia as well as from the point of view of language pedagogy.

An Introduction to Australian Literature

Gerhard Stilz

Abstract: The following pages are intended to provide a minimum of basic information along with a few suggestions for further reading to be used when preparing a teaching unit on Australia. Its focus will concentrate on aspects that might be made accessible in Germany through the subject of English on a secondary school level. Depending on the time available, teachers may choose to emphasize one or several of the twelve points and texts rendered below.

Australian Popsongs and Lyrics in the EFL Classroom – More than a Song and a Dance

Bärbel Turner-Hill

Abstract: Although modern textbooks for teaching English in German secondary schools offer a great variety of well illustrated texts and comprehensive tasks within the area of Australian cultural studies it is a motivating challenge for both students and teachers to explore new horizons by integrating language material which has not been adapted for teaching purposes, e.g. songs and their lyrics. The present article aims to give an insight into working with contemporary Australian songs and lyrics that deal with relevant topics of Australian culture and identity, such as environmentalist issues and indigenous minorities, as an enriching and fruitful opportunity in the teaching and learning of language and culture.

Australia's Dominant Identity Constructions and Their Impact on the Perception of Mass Culture and Digital Games

Jens Schröder

Abstract: If one compares the perception of digital games in Germany and Australia, one can find significant differences. While the discourse in Germany is dominated by a rhetoric of prohibition, Australian states subsidise potentially violent games within the framework of media support mechanisms. This article explores the reasoning behind Australia's attitude towards digital games by examining dominant discourses of Australian identity with regard to the perception of mass culture. It also shows how Australia's cultural context confronts the popular with different forms of resistance that reduce debates about fundamental cultural values to a simple national conflict. For a better understanding and demonstration of those aspects, this is followed by an examination of Australia's media history. Conclusions are drawn to the way digital games are dealt with, which, in line with the treatment of former forms of mass culture, is defined by a largely uncomplicated relationship with Australian society.