

Australia and Its German-Speaking Readers: A Study of How German Publishers Have Imagined Their Readers of Australian Literature

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Australian literature is marketed not only to a national audience but also to an overseas readership, who consume it both in English and in various languages of translation, of which German seems to be the most common.¹ The publication of translated Australian books thus undergoes marketing processes similar to those in Australia. One of the most immediate publishing mechanisms is the physical appearance of a book, or what Gerard Genette terms the ‘publisher’s peritexts’ (16); that is, the texts that ‘surround’ the actual text, such as book covers. Dust jackets in particular establish the first act of engagement between an author—or more properly, the author’s words—and his or her prospective readers: ‘Your potential reader will form an impression of your book while looking at the cover—before they even decide to look inside’ (Masterson 161). Thus, in making a particular book palatable for a prospective readership, publishers² shape the story with a vision of the reader in mind: first, they advertise the text through its cover illustration and blurb, both of which usually reflect and summarise the content; secondly, in so doing, publishers develop an image of prospective readers. They evaluate readers’ tastes and assess their target readers, including their age, level of education, and gender; then, based on such assessments, they develop strategies for marketing a book to this particular group of intended readers.

Furthermore, Genette argues that such practices are ‘made up of a heterogeneous group of practices and discourses of all kinds and dating from all periods’ (2). Thus, the publishers’ peritexts or dust jackets reflect images and discourses that are both time- and place-specific. By studying such peritexts, it is possible, I contend, to observe both the changes in envisioning German-speaking readers and the changes in German imaginings of Australia. Both the construction of the reader and the construction of Australia are closely related. For Australian literature, although translated and therefore existing in ‘international literary space’ (Casanova 135), is nonetheless also received as *Australian*. As this study demonstrates, German-speaking publishers have often, though not always, advertised Australian literature as specifically Australian. As a consequence, the understanding of the construction of German-speaking readers requires an understanding of the construction of Australia. Hence, this article has a dual focus on both the construction of the reader and of Australia.

This study, consequently, does not engage with ‘real’ readers (i.e., it does not rely on interviews), but instead examines readers as they are understood by publishers. While there are certainly other ways in which German-speaking readers of Australian literature are positioned—through reviews, author tours, and book fairs—the design of the book is still the most immediate way to encourage potential readers to buy a book. Consequently, this study excludes from view all forms of advertising not occurring on the dustcover itself, including

the history of the German reviews of Australian literature. Neither is this paper concerned with Indigenous literature, partly because the overseas reception of this literature has already been analysed elsewhere (e.g. Haag, 'Indigenous Australian Literature in German'; Di Blasio) and partly because the contexts of its marketing in German-speaking countries are too different from those of the non-Indigenous literature. The analysis of German-speaking readers of translated Indigenous Australian literature is the subject of a separate forthcoming study (Haag 'Indigenous Australian Literature and German Publishers').

The present article falls into three major, and at times conflating, parts. First, a methodological and theoretical outline; second, a discussion of the construction of Australia; and third, a scrutiny of the construction of readers.

SELECTION OF SOURCE MATERIAL AND CHANGES IN DUSTCOVERS

Given the necessity of restricting the material to a manageable scope and the want of a complete bibliography of German translations of Australian books, I cannot analyse the German translations in their entirety. This would require a comprehensive bibliography. To my knowledge, there are approximately 800 non-Indigenous Australian books translated into German.³ However, I am anxious to include a statistically representative number of books, both in the quantitative and in the qualitative sense. Having analysed 401 hardbacks and paperbacks by 181 authors, ranging from the first book-length translation in 1821 to the latest books issued in 2009, I can affirm that the amount of selected material (50.1% of the estimated body of translations) makes it possible to detect general tendencies in the German-speaking marketing of Australian books. In addition, the sample represents a range of different genres. It also includes a wide spectrum of authors: (a) 'canonical' authors mentioned in literary compendia and reference guides such as *The ALS Guide to Australian Writers* (Duwell and Hergenhan), *A History of Australian Literature* (Goodwin), and the 'Australian Classics Library'⁴ series; (b) emerging authors mentioned either in recent Australian scholarly literature (e.g. Ensor) or in author catalogues published both online and as pamphlets by Australian presses; and (c) authors that are economically less successful at home than in German-speaking countries, particularly Arthur Upfield (Hetherington). German lists of translated publications (Spies; Wolf, *Die Rezeption*) have been consulted along with Australian databases ('AustLit') and bibliographies (e.g. Gerber). The sources thus reflect a range of literary quality and themes: here, Australian literature is not reduced to necessarily Australian themes. However, all authors included are referenced in the 'AustLit' database.

While it is possible to discuss only a select number of books in the present text, Table 1 (see Appendix) presents fuller information on all books under study. It employs two analytical criteria used in this essay—'Australia-specific' and 'neutral' criteria—applied to both blurbs and cover illustrations. In the case of an 'Australia-specific' text, by looking at the dust jacket, one should be able to recognise that the book is part of the canon of Australian literature and hence that the book is being marketed as part of Australian literature and/or as being about Australia. Acknowledgement of the author being born in Australia is not in itself sufficient to qualify a book as 'Australia-specific'; rather, the acknowledgment of an author as an 'Australian writer' or the book as 'Australian' literature, even if the story does not revolve around Australia, makes the blurb 'Australia-specific'. The term 'neutral', in

contrast, can be used in all instances in which it is not immediately evident that the book is part of ‘Australian’ literature. The same applies to cover illustrations; even if the interpretation of the images is, to a certain extent, necessarily individualistic, the following criteria can be considered objective: all pictures are classified as ‘Australia-specific’, which show widely recognisable symbols of Australia (e.g. the Sydney Opera House, Uluru) or that, in connection with an Australia-specific blurb, use pictures that one should associate with Australia (e.g. dry and red-coloured landscapes).

There is widespread agreement in literature that dust jackets, consisting of blurbs and cover illustrations, principally serve a marketing purpose (Phillips; Janzin 327; Smart 12-13). This, however, was not always the case. Modern dust jackets, an invention of the nineteenth century and broadly used in the twentieth century, once had the primary purpose of protecting the book’s cover during distribution and sale; often, early dust jackets for both English and German books were not printed but transparent and were disposed of after purchase (Mazal 324-325). As a result, early translations of Australian books (from the nineteenth century until the 1920s-30s) no longer have dust jackets and thus do not have any blurbs. Bindings at this time neither served advertising purposes nor demonstrated an explicit relation to the content contained therein (Pickwood; Ehmcke 8). For example, the books published by Engelhorn—such as Fergus Hume’s *Verwehte Spuren* (1905, Engl. *Carbuncle Clue*) and Iota’s (K.M. Caffyn’s) *Eine Gelbe Aster* (1896, Engl. *A Yellow Aster*) (see Figure 1)—have Art Nouveau embellishments that are not related to the books’ contents. Mostly, the covers of the early Australian translations do not show figure drawings at all but instead have monochrome or marbled cover designs (see Figure 2). Consequently, in the case of these early books, the analytical focus rests on either the book covers (provided that they show any form of illustration) or the title pages and internal page design.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF AUSTRALIA

In a recent essay, Elizabeth Webby described how she was struck by the lack of exotic elements in the cover illustrations of US and British editions of select Australian books: ‘One might be tempted to assume that an emphasis on the more exotic aspects of Australia’s past is designed to appeal to international audiences but ... British and American publishing houses are usually concerned to play down the origins of their Australian texts’ (69). Does Webby’s observation also apply to the German-speaking presses? Not in all cases. Generally speaking, with a few exceptions like Tim Winton’s *Der singende Baum* (2004, Engl. *Dirt Music*), the majority of translations show different cover pictures than the originals; this is true in the case of books marketed as ‘Australia-specific’ as well as those conceived of as ‘neutral’. 45.4% (182) of the books under study use ‘Australia-specific’ elements in either the blurb or the illustration. In addition, 15.7% (63) of the titles and subtitles employ references to Australia’s geographical distance from Europe and terms referring to Australia, including ‘emu’, ‘Dreamtime’, ‘wide world’, ‘boomerang’, ‘paradise’, ‘the other side of the world’ and ‘eucalyptus’. The most frequent words are ‘Australia’ and ‘Australian’ (27 times), followed by ‘adventure’ (6 times), and ‘paradise’ (5 times). To provide but one example, the blurb on Nevil Shute’s *Im fernen Land* (1953, Engl. *Far Country*) describes Australia as ‘far-away’, being ‘home to the kangaroos and the model for the teddy bear, the koala bear’. The author, it is said, tells of lots of oddities on Australian farms. Australians are described as ‘childishly trusting people’; it is said that ‘here, the towns, mountains, cities, and springs have beautiful

female names like Adelaide, Alice, Alexandrina, Annie, Blanche, and Charlotte. Free from fear, its inhabitants lead a hardworking and sunny life'. Australians are described as innocent (trusting) and immature (childish), apparently because their history and nationhood are considered far too short for them to have become corrupted and serious. Australia here is equated with nature: sun-blessed, with kangaroos and koalas. It is not seen as a cultural, intellectual and urban place.

This view of Australia is not uncommon, either in the books analysed or in broader German discourse about Australia. However, it is far from being the only mode of promoting Australian literature: upon closer examination, I identify two major groups of books that are marketed differently by the German translation presses: books that I class as 'neutral', that is, where references to Australia are omitted, and 'Australia-specific' books that are marketed as Australian.

The neutral category applies to books that either conceal any references to Australia or that merely mention (in passing) that the author is Australian. The former includes books in which even the biography of the author does not mention that the author is Australian and/or was born in Australia. In some cases, the author may even be—usually unintentionally—associated with another heritage. For example, Jean Chapman's book *Die Wunschkatze* (1969, Engl. *Wishcat*) is marketed as being written by an Austrian, not an Australian. However, such cases are rare and point to mistakes rather than to actual marketing 'strategies'. Nevertheless, there is one remarkable exception: Morris West's book *Der zweite Sieg* (1966; Engl. *Backlash*), a detective story that takes place in Austria's post-war years. Its cover picture bears the Austrian coat of arms in the upper right corner printed in the republic's national colours of white and red (see Figure 3).

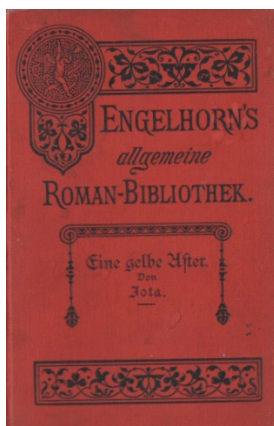


Figure 1

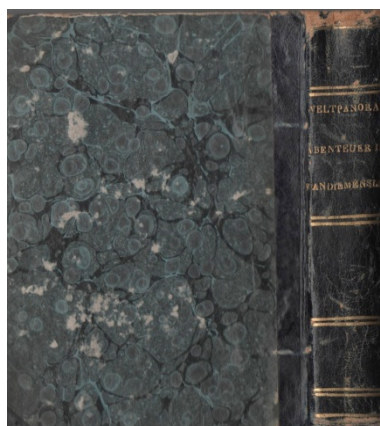


Figure 2 (Rowcroft 1845)



Figure 3

The cover illustration on *Der zweite Sieg* reminds one of an official document, like a publication reporting a commission's findings. The salient point here is that this is West's only book without any reference made to Australia and with the author's nationality concealed. This, I think, was almost certainly an editorial stratagem; the publisher might have feared that Austrian readers would boycott a book about Austria's post-war years written by an Australian (or any outsider), particularly so in the 1960s when Austria's National Socialist past had first become critically questioned in the public domain (Pelinka and Weinzierl).

In contrast to these isolated cases, however, most of the books advertised as neutral contain at least a short reference to Australia. Such a reference is observable either in the author's biography or in a passing mention of the fact that the story takes place (partially) in Australia, but without the book in question being designated as Australian. Thus, in these instances, readers do not get the impression that the book is part of Australian literature—either from the blurbs or from the cover illustrations (see Figures 4-6).



Figure 4



Figure 5

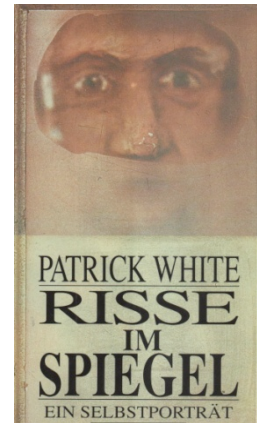


Figure 6

The 'neutral' promotion of Australian literature applies mostly but not exclusively to those books that do not have Australia-specific content—that is, where the plot does not involve a theme predominantly connected with Australia. Among these are the books by James Aldridge, Alan Villiers, Sumner Locke Elliott, and the two most frequently translated authors, Catherine Gaskin and Morris West. All of their books are marketed as either romance novels or thriller novels, while no mention of Australia is made except in the casual note that the authors were born in or used to live in Australia. Neither do the cover illustrations of these books make any reference to Australia. Interestingly, as Figure 21 shows, this marketing category applies particularly to the material issued between the 1930s and the early 1980s. The 'neutral' category, as has become apparent, is distinguished by a considerable variation.

Such variation also applies to the 'Australia-specific' category. First, there are those books with plots that are not set in Australia, but that are nevertheless marketed as being part of the canon of Australian literature. This is true of the books of Helen Garner, Christina Stead and Dorothy Porter. Secondly, there are those books advertised with reference to another, more general theme that is, however, linked to Australia—a strategy that I term the 'double marketing strategy', directed toward those readers expected to be primarily interested not in reading Australian literature but rather in reading literature of a particular genre, such as adventure, romance, or thriller novels.

Many books fall into this category. To give but one example, Colleen McCullough's *Haus der Träume* (2006, Engl. *Angel Puss*) is marketed as a 'novel for women', that revolves around a well-to-do and married woman who, despite living an ordered life, suffers from boredom and consequently decides to escape from her daily routine, leaving for Sydney. The idea of 'leaving everything behind' and 'starting a new life' may as such already be appealing to many readers; this desire is additionally advertised in the blurb, which, toward that end,

stresses the beauty and freedom of Sydney. For German readers, the ‘escape’ theme plays out here in two ways: it depicts an individual who acts on her craving for an escape to another life, and at the same time, it focuses on a place (Australia) whose geographical distance itself compounds this idea of escape; from the German perspective, Australia more generally represents escape to a better life or even paradise. In this instance, cover illustrations use Australian scenery to underline the content of the story and to give it an additional romantic and exotic touch (see Figures 8-9 as additional examples). In addition to the mention of Sydney, the German cover illustration on *Haus der Träume*, which is glaringly different from the original, shows the picture of Sydney in a red- and orange-lit sky (see Figure 7). The employment of these colours further corroborates the Australia-specific marketing strategy evinced in the blurbs, for red and yellow colours are usually considered to be ‘authentically Australian’ (Webby 65). Significantly, on many Australia-specific cover-illustrations under study, Australian nature is presented in the colours red and orange, which are thought to represent the dryness of the continent. As a study of German media coverage on Australia has shown, there are two major clichés dominating the German imaginings of Australia, that is, red-coloured landscapes and Sydney’s skyline with the Opera House and Harbour Bridge (Schleuning 76). The cover illustration on *Haus der Träume* thus employs the two clichés in one.

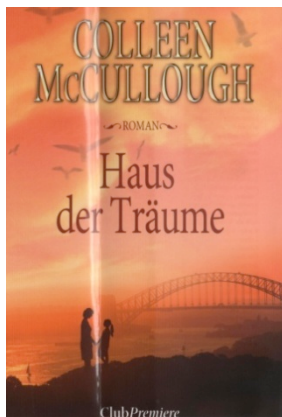


Figure 7

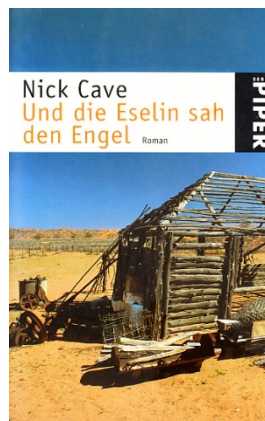


Figure 8

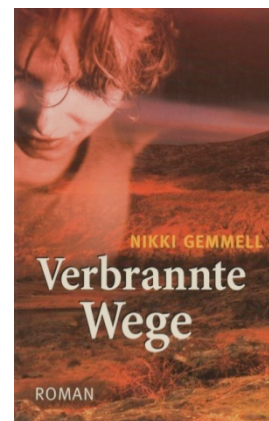


Figure 9

Many Australia-specific books are thus marketed with an indirect reference to Australia. The indirect strategy uses Australia as an ‘instrument’ to advertise a story as particularly romantic or adventurous. In this, it is different from the direct marketing that establishes Australia as central. In these instances, ‘Australia’ itself serves as the prime marketing tool. The German version of Peter Carey’s *Illywhacker* (1990; Engl. *Illywhacker*), for one, directly addresses the German reader by saying, ‘You’ve never been to Australia? Read “Illywhacker”. There’s nothing better to [help you] grasp the atmosphere of this continent’. In a similar way, Tim Winton’s *Der singende Baum* (2004, Engl. *Dirt Music*) is directly advertised with reference to Australian nature, which is the central focus of the blurb: ‘Where the hostile red desert meets the incredibly beautiful and wild coastal landscape, there lies Western Australia’. The book is advertised as a love story set in the beautiful and unique landscape of Australia. Both the content (love, romanticism, frustration) and the setting (Australia, red landscape, nature) are central to the advertising in the blurb. Australia here is equated with nature, which, in fact, is a common trope: Australia is frequently advertised as ‘vast’, ‘wild’, and ‘lonely’. In

the cover pictures, Australian nature is established as synonymous with desert scenes, showing dry and vast landscapes and/or typically Australian fauna (see Figures 10-12).

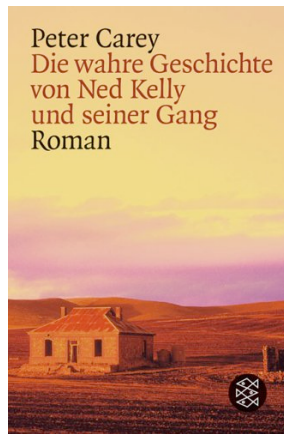


Figure 10

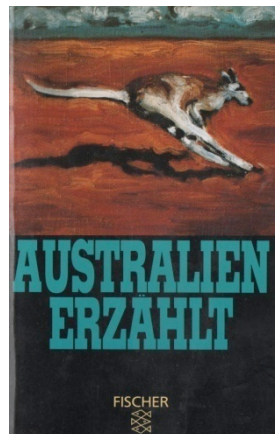


Figure 11

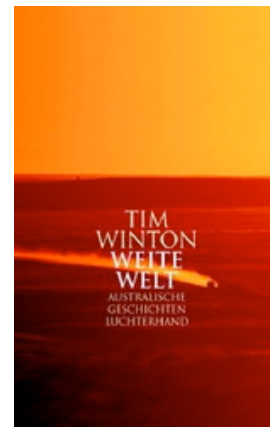


Figure 12

German publishers often use these landscape images to further elaborate on the romantic and exotic character of their stories. Significantly, Australian literature is often advertised as ‘exotic’, with the German reader constructed as interested in exotic literature; as the blurb for Patricia Shaw’s *Der Traum der Schlange* (1996, Engl. *Fires of Fortune*) reads, ‘Australia is always good for an exotic story’, with its history described as ‘rich in adventures’.

In summary, Australian literature, if advertised either indirectly or directly as Australian, is often marketed using references to ‘nature’; the tropes of ‘wilderness’, ‘geographical distance’ and ‘vastness’ serve as a means of underlining the romantic and exotic character of the story. Furthermore, Australian literature is often advertised to German-speaking readers as a form of journey—that is, purportedly one can make a ‘literary’ journey to Australia by reading an Australian book.

However, the imagining of Australia has not remained static throughout time. The truth is quite the reverse: during the nearly 190-year history of German translation of Australian literature, the vision of Australia has changed significantly. This applies to the increasing importance of Australia as a marketing brand and the transformative connotations of Australian nature.

The marketing of Australian literature to German-speaking readers has included three broad phases. In the first phase, from the nineteenth century to the 1930s, many books were directly advertised as ‘Australian’ and, at the same time, as part of ‘English’ literature. Nearly all books from that period show neutral bindings (e.g. Figures 1-2), but there are often ‘Australia-specific’ drawings on the title pages and interior design; these drawings, as Figures 13-14 substantiate, either are neutral or make reference to pioneering and adventures in the bush. In a similar vein, nearly 30% of subtitles and titles from this translation period carry the terms ‘Australia’, ‘wilderness’, ‘adventure’ and/or ‘bush’, a phenomenon that later would no longer occur.

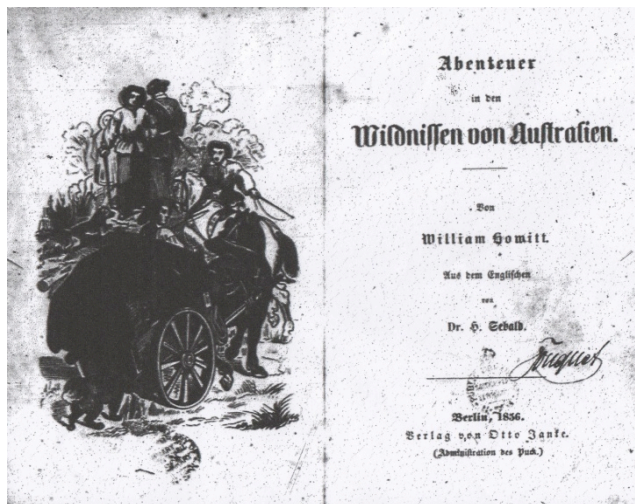


Figure 13

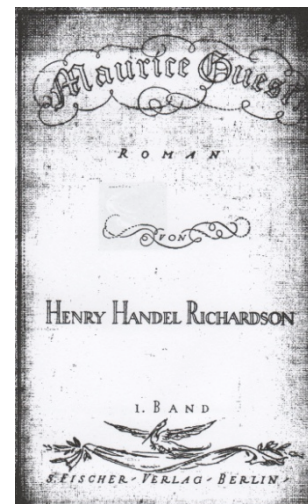


Figure 14

At the same time, however, Australian literature was usually classified as English—revealing, as one introduction purports, a ‘typical English sense of humour’ (Gunn and Schalek 3). This corresponds to the German reviews of the time. For example, Wolfgang Schaumburg, writing at the close of the nineteenth century, said that for one to speak of an Australian literature, the confederation of the colonies first had to be accomplished, and thus, that ‘there are many Australian authors today whose works, however, are still an intrinsic part of English literature’ (166). So, while Australia was often marketed as a central feature of the story during the first phase, Australian literature as such was instead advertised as English. Interestingly, neither of the World Wars had any noticeable effect on the advertising on the book covers and the resulting vision of German-speaking readers. While the National Socialist period in particular had a disastrous effect on authors and publishers (Wittmann 329-357), there is no disruption discernible in the design of Australian dust jackets directly before versus after the war.

In the second phase, between the 1930s and the early 1980s, many books were not directly advertised as Australian. As Figure 21 substantiates, the bulk of items (64%) were advertised as ‘neutral’, with German-speaking readers construed as not being interested in specifically Australian literature. A number of reasons for this development can be suggested. It may well have reflected, in part, possible shifts in readers’ tastes as well as a decreasing interest in nature and wilderness during the so-called *Wiederaufbaujahre*, the German post-war period of the 1950s-60s that was characterised by reconstruction, new technology and industrialisation. Innovation rather than adventurism and romance became dominant discourses. Another cause was certainly the socialist influence on those translations published in the German Democratic Republic, particularly by the East Berlin-based publisher Volk & Welt (Barck and Lokatis). Promoting the adventurous, liberal, and/or romantic elements of Australian literature might have spawned too much interest in Australia on the part of East German readers, as it was a country most of them were forbidden from visiting. Significantly, only two of the 11 books under study that were published by Volk & Welt carry ‘Australia-specific’ elements in their cover illustrations, titles and blurbs. The GDR-covers are either ‘neutral’ or reflect socialist ideals (see Figures 15-17).



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17

Judith Wright's *Schweigen zwischen Wort und Wort* (1990; bilingual edition), for one, has a neutral cover-illustration, without any reference to nature (see Figure 17); even in the epilogue, there is not a single mention of nature but rather only discussion of the 'reality of exile' that exerted a powerful sway on Australian writers: 'Since the beginning of her short history, Australia has meant more than a mere environment or land for her new inhabitants' (135). This is an exceptional gesture as compared to West German marketing at the time.

In the third phase, from the early 1980s onwards, there can be seen an increasing tendency towards more direct marketing of Australian literature as Australian, even in cases where Australia is not a central theme of the story, as with some of the books of Elizabeth Jolley, Helen Garner and Thomas Keneally, for example. Such books have in the third phase increasingly been advertised as part of the 'canon of Australian literature' without being about Australia. For instance, Marele Day's *Die Bräute des Himmels* (1998, Engl. *Lambs of God*), which does not deal with Australia, is advertised as 'one of this year's literary discoveries from Australia'. Another example is Thomas Keneally's *Schindlers Liste* (1983, Engl. *Schindler's Ark*), which is marketed as a thrilling though nightmarish story. Interestingly, Australia itself is only mentioned when Keneally is described as an Australian author; the fact that books like *Schindler's Ark* are designated as Australian is a sign that Australian literature is becoming increasingly less restricted to the purview of nature and Australian settings.

Yet another historical shift in constructing Australia relates to the different imaginings of nature. In the German translations, Australia has often been advertised with reference to nature. However, the connotations of Australian nature have changed: up until the early 1980s, most books described Australian nature as 'horrible' and 'hostile', which was also a means of underpinning the adventurous character of many stories, particularly those of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Since the early 1980s, however, Australian nature has also been advertised as 'beautiful'. For example, Venero Armanno's *Am anderen Ende der Welt* (1999, literally: 'on the other side of the world'; Engl. *Strange Rain*) is praised as 'an atmospherically dense novel reflecting the harsh beauty of the Australian landscape'. The analysis of 'post'-1970s dust jackets shows that Australian nature has become less likely to be used to underpin the adventurous, but has rather become a foundation for stories of a romantic character. These changes have exerted a considerable influence on the construction of a specifically gendered readership.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF GERMAN-SPEAKING READERS

The different approaches to advertising Australian literature and thus conceiving Australia thereby influence the imagining of several types of German-speaking readers, including the following: (a) readers thought to be interested in exotic, romance and/or adventure stories. Particularly with the conception of Australia as a place of adventurism and nature, German-speaking readers were construed as being interested primarily in Australian landscapes and fauna, which have been used to project the exotic fantasies of ‘vastness’, ‘loneliness’ and ‘adventurism’; (b) readers thought to be interested in Australia, including its literature; (c) readers interested in a particular genre and/or kind of writing, not necessarily connected specifically with Australia; (d) readers uninterested in Australia; and (e) the (East German) socialist reader who was assumed to be well educated and primarily interested in the literary aspects of Australian literature. Frank Hardy’s *Reise in die Zukunft* (1953, Engl. *Journey into the Future*), for example, expresses an undoubtedly ‘educative’ message to the socialist reader. The cover shows a drawing of workers in front of Moscow’s Lomonosov University building (see Figure 15); the book is advertised as a novel about the author’s travel experiences in the Soviet Union. It references technology, indicates aspirations towards a bright future, and touts socialist knowledge as reflected in the university building, which bears the red star. Socialist society and Stalinism are portrayed as highly positive, with no mention that the book is a product of Australian literature; the blurb merely remarks that the Australian authorities confiscated Hardy’s passport on his return to Australia. Hardy is thus essentially presented as a peaceful man, with socialist readers conceived as being equally peaceful.

As has become evident, the construction of the German-speaking reader is closely related to the construction of Australia. However, the imagined types of readers have not remained the same; for with the changes in the construction of Australia, the categories of readers, too, have changed. These changes can be observed in the following two instances: the general shift in target readers and the emergence of the ‘erudite’ reader that came about with the increased advertising of Australian literature as ‘quality’ literature.

The first major change concerns the construction of target readers. This applies to the conception of a new reader thought to be interested in specifically *Australian* literature. This change emerged with the rise in ‘Australia-specific’ marketing since the early 1980s. The increasing presence of Australia can be observed, for example, in a ‘Bicentennial sticker’ on Nancy Cato’s *Der ewige Baum* (1988, Engl. *Forefathers*). The detachable sticker, printed in German and directly addressed to a readership specifically interested in Australian themes, reads: ‘200 years of Australia: The exciting portrayal of a continent’ (see Figure 18). These changes towards a more direct confrontation of German-speaking readers with ‘Australia’ are likewise evident when one analyses the different re-editions over time: for instance, the first edition of Arthur Upfield’s *Bony und Bumerang* (1966, Engl. *Barrakee Mystery*) has a neutral cover illustration showing a dark-skinned woman (see Figure 19); the 2005 fifth edition, in contrast, shows an intense purple- and red-coloured picture, thus exhibiting a very direct reference to Australia and its lonely landscapes (see Figure 20). Similarly, the subtitle of Upfield’s *Die Leute von nebenan* (Engl. *An Author Bites the Dust*) was in the 1957 first edition ‘a detective story’, whereas it became ‘an Australian detective story’ in the 2001 edition.



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20

Another change in the construction of readers applies to gender, for with the shift from adventurism to romanticism, target readers, too, have changed. While only a few books have been overtly targeted to a particular gender, the adventure novels have nevertheless been indirectly addressed to a generally male and juvenile readership. Significantly, many of these translations contain title words referring to the harshness of nature, words like ‘adventurous’, ‘wild’ and ‘dangerous’. For instance, Frank Kellaway’s *Daniel und der Goldschatz* (1964, Engl. *Quest for Golden Dan*) is marketed as ‘thrilling’ and directed particularly to a young male readership: ‘The history of the pioneer time in Australia is incredibly thrilling’.

The romantic undertones, in turn, have been used to market books to a predominantly female readership. This in particular becomes evident in the use of romantic titles like ‘Fire in Paradise’ and ‘Storms of Life’ (both translated literally) as well as titles containing words like ‘love’, ‘heart’ and ‘lover’. Sometimes, such books are even directly marketed as novels for women. *Die Ladies von Missalonghi* (1987, Engl. *The Ladies of Missalonghi*), for instance, is marketed as both a ‘female novel’ and an ‘Australia-novel’ (McCullough). Correspondingly, since the early 1980s, the most popular (and economically successful) Australian authors translated into German have been women (not feminists) writing about romance and love affairs in beautiful settings, such as Catherine Gaskin, Colleen McCullough and Tamara McKinley. In short, German-speaking readers have, since the early 1980s, been constructed as increasingly ‘female’. This incidence might reflect a broader trend: as figures from the US reveal, the majority (60%) of general book-buyers are female (Dessauer 124); a similar trend emerges in the UK market (Phillips 20-21). Such a construction of female readers, however, does not in any way critically question or challenge androcentric and white gender relations. Instead, it stabilises them and homogenises both female and male readers.

Significantly, only Germaine Greer’s books and an anthology of Australian women writers (Hawthorne and Klein) are explicitly advertised as potentially appealing to a feminist readership. Aside from the anthology, these books are, however, not marketed as ‘Australian’. For example, in the blurb of *Der Knabe* (2003, Engl. *Boy*), Greer is hailed as one of the most ‘influential female intellectuals in the Anglo-Saxon world and beyond’. Thus, Greer is considered not a primarily ‘Australian’ writer (though her Melbourne birthplace is always mentioned) but instead an ‘Anglo Saxon’ theorist more broadly. All her books, praised as ‘classics of the modern women’s movement’ (Greer, *Der weibliche Eunuch*; Engl. *The Female Eunuch*), are decidedly marketed to a feminist readership interested in gender

relations and the construction of femininity. This explicit advertising of feminist themes is a rarity in the context of German translations.

Unlike the body of feminist readers, the queer and/or GLBT readership is not addressed at all, even though Dorothy Porter's *Die Affenmaske* (1997, Engl. *Monkey's Mask*) is counted among translated queer/lesbian Australian literature. The book is marketed on two levels: first, in terms of its genre; and secondly, with regard to plot. In the blurb, readers are directly addressed: 'Do you like crime thrillers? And does it not bother you if the text is made up of poems? Excellent—then go ahead'. This is followed by a brief synopsis of the content, which revolves around murder and rape: 'Sex and crime, yet still literature'. Underlying this advertisement is the suggestion that the themes of sex and crime may not be considered 'good' literature, but instead seem trivial. Readers are addressed in a jovial and easy-going fashion ('Excellent—then go ahead'), and the language in the blurb is decidedly immediate and 'young', with short sentences, direct speech, and English terms that are fashionable among a younger German-speaking generation. For example, the book is advertised as offering a good deal of 'drive' without using the German equivalent. The book is marketed as a thrilling crime story, even though it is made up of poems; poems, which are difficult to sell, are thus marketed through a different genre. The target audience is imagined as young but well educated. However, the fact that the main protagonist, Jill, is lesbian; that the poems are quite eroticised; and that the book is part of queer literature are not mentioned in the blurb, probably in order not to narrow the primary readership.

The second major change refers to the invention of the 'erudite' reader of translated Australian literature. The analysis of dust jackets reveals that since the early 1980s, many German publishers have been trying to promote Australian literature as high-quality international literature. According to Pascale Casanova, national literature and writers become part of international literary space particularly through translations and the awarding of internationally prestigious literary prizes (133, 135, 154). Such an internationalising 'effect' can be observed with regard to translations since the early 1980s. The publishing strategy has been threefold in this respect:⁵ (a) the mention of literary prizes awarded to the author in question, with international and even Australian literary prizes cited in the blurbs; (b) reference to the many languages into which a particular book has already been translated; and (c) comparison with internationally renowned authors of both German and non-German provenance, like Alfred Döblin, Doris Lessing and Gustave Flaubert—a strategy that I term the 'incorporation' of Australian literature into world literature. For example, the blurb for Richard Flanagan's *Goulds Buch der Fische* (2002, Engl. *Gould's Book of Fish*) hails the book as 'great world literature', praising it as 'a Tasmanian version of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*' and 'Rimbaud's *A Season in Hell*'. There is evidence that, of late, Australian authors—particularly Patrick White—are being cited in such comparisons.

Such an advertisement constructs the author in question as 'renowned' and 'laurelled'; at the same time, it imagines readers as looking for quality literature. German-speaking readers have thus been conceived as interested not only in quality literature but also specifically in Australian quality literature that is advertised as being part of world literature. This testifies that German-speaking readers have been positioned as 'global' readers and that the reception of Australian literature has entered into a new phase: It is at the centre of contemporary world

literature, such that Australianness is no longer considered an ‘obstacle’ to promoting Australian literature to a German-speaking readership.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Australian literature has been differently marketed to the German-speaking readership. In those cases in which Australian literature has been either indirectly or directly marketed as ‘Australian’, a particular image of Australian nature has often been used as an advertising tool—that is, the image of dry, vast and lonely landscapes. Up until the early 1980s, this employment of Australian nature served to underpin the adventurous character of the stories in question. From the early 1980s onwards, Australian nature has been used to underpin the romantic character of particular books. Australian literature has thus been increasingly advertised to a readership construed as primarily interested in romantic stories set against the backdrop of an equally romantic landscape. However, there are also a few other ways in which Australian literature has been promoted to the German-speaking readership, with neutral advertising being the most obvious. This paper has identified the construction of eight broad types of German-speaking readers of translated Australian literature:

- 1) The (particularly male) reader interested in adventures.
- 2) The (particularly female) reader interested in romance.
- 3) The reader interested in making a ‘literary’ journey into wild and unexplored landscapes.
- 4) The ‘erudite’ reader looking for quality literature.
- 5) The German-speaking reader as a ‘global’ reader.
- 6) The ‘specialist’ reader interested in Australian writing.
- 7) The socialist reader.
- 8) The reader interested in a particular genre of literature (like detective stories not connected with Australia).

Significantly, there are also categories of readers that are not often the focus, particularly the feminist reader and the queer reader, the latter of which is completely omitted.

This study has aimed to provide an overview of how Australia and its German-speaking readers have been constructed by German presses over time. While it certainly leaves open many questions, it identifies the following issues for follow-up research: (a) case studies of particular books and/or periods, such as analyses of the socialist readers of Australian literature; (b) the role of German reviewers and book fairs in imagining German-speaking readerships interested in Australian literature; (c) engagement with ‘real’ readers (particularly through interviews and questionnaires); (d) authorial influence on the design of German dust jackets; and (e) comparative analyses of the German translation market with those of other major translation languages, foremost among them French and Dutch, as they may exhibit differences from the German-speaking context.

NOTES

¹ While ‘AustLit’ is the definitive database of Australian literature, there exists as yet no comprehensive bibliography of German translations of Australian books. The exception to this is a bibliography of translated children’s literature (Gerber) and of Indigenous literatures (Haag, ‘Indigenous Australian Literature in German’). The bibliography published in 1982 by Volker Wolf is in a few instances faulty. All translations from German are mine.

² The nature of translation presses requires further in-depth research but, as can be ascertained at this stage, the bulk of presses—children’s publishers excepted—are ‘mainstream’ publishers, not focussing on a specific region, genre or gender (they might be compared with ‘trade’ publishers; however, the distinction made between ‘independent’ and ‘trade’ publishers cannot be transferred one-to-one to the German-speaking markets). The proportion of Austrian and Swiss presses seems to be small.

³ The number of translated Indigenous books (27) is known (Haag ‘Indigenous Australian Literature in German’). ‘AustLit’ provides 1,823 entries for ‘German’ books (as of 19 Aug. 2009). However, these include articles and German originals. Thus, depending on the definition of Australian literature, a total of about 800 books might be more realistic.

⁴ The German translations of the writing of most authors in the ‘Australian Classics Library’ series have been published as articles/contributions edited by German scholars.

⁵ These can be observed in books by Thomas Keneally, Tim Winton, Dorothy Porter, Brian Castro, Christopher Koch, Catherine Helen Spence, Gail Jones, Patrick White, Peter Carey, Christina Stead, Frank Moorhouse, Richard Flanagan, Lily Brett, David Foster, Les Murray, Roger McDonald, Kate Grenville, Andrew McGahan and Elizabeth Jolley, among others.

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