From the editors of this issue

Australia is often deemed a European "outpost" in the southern hemisphere, treated like an island surrounded by Asian neighbours. This self-conception as insular combines geography with narratives of a stable and homegrown culture. As the first stanza of the national anthem, *Advance Australia Fair*, suggests in praising: "Our home is girt by sea". Although historically reductive – think of ancient relationships between Yolngu and Macassan cultures – this view has nonetheless produced ethnocentric and racialised ideas of the Fifth Continent: Australia as an ostensibly white nation came to be defined by principles of whitened hegemony, as with the White Australia Policy or Aboriginal affairs policies of assimilation. Contemporary perspectives seem to be increasingly inclusive of Asian-Australian encounters, thus letting Australia appear to be shaped less of solely European influence. Yet "Asia" seems to be in such constructions similarly homogeneous as "Europe", especially so if it comes to mutual cultural exchange.

In reality, cultural influences are far more fluid, complex and intricate than oppositional views suggest. This issue of the *Australian Studies Journal* looks at pivotal aspects of cross-cultural histories that break with any dichotomist and oversimplified notion of opposing Europe with Australia. As integral part of the Pacific Rim, Australia offers unique opportunity to explore the encyclopaedic field of cross-cultural exchange. Oliver Haag's extensive research and in-depth analysis offers a colourful and outstanding introduction to this issue as the author integrates European and Oceanic perspectives. Haag evaluates the multilingual outcome of the Indigenous Oceanic book publishing industry. His biblio-statistical study traces the complexity of European interest in, and reception of, Indigenous Australian literature. By comparing the publishing history of European translations of the Indigenous literatures of Australia, the Pacific and New Zealand, Haag shows how much European involvement in translations have differed regionally but also how much it has produced similarities and occasional overlapping. Neither has Australia been insular in this event, nor can Europe be regarded as a singular entity. Complexities are at work and more transnational and transregional analyses are needed to better understand the histories of cultural exchange between Europe and Oceania (of which Australia is as much an integral part as with Asia).

This complex field of research is followed by Regina Ganter's fascinating study about cross-cultural curiosity. The prominent scholar describes how a German missionary in Australia dedicated his life to an ethnographic project of immense size and complexity, for it dealt with sensitive information on Indigenous beliefs. At the edge of Indigenous and European life-worlds Pastor Georg Reuther tried to compile a cross-cultural encyclopaedia in the face of encounter – but also in the face of adversity. Together with Regina Ganter, a proven expert on this issue, we cross the red line between Indigenous spirituality and European science as we learn that Pastor Georg Reuther's deep commitment to the spiritual world of the Indigenous people failed in the end. As the author concludes: "Reuther's struggle with ethnography was a result of a preoccupation that, in his own estimation, brought him to the brink of insanity as he probed into the innermost secrets of the life-worlds of the peoples of the Coopers Creek area near Lake Eyre".

Alexandra Ludewig's article analyses the highly personal and often non-linear biographies of German émigrés – like Isaac Steinberg's – to Western Australia. German-Jewish claims to colonies in the Kimberleys were complex and involved different ethnic and racial categories in a transnational setting: Indigeneity, racialised ideas of Jewishness as much as whiteness. The displacement of people is a cross-cultural experience. Ludewig's article illustrates this very clearly. However, plans of resettlement in a new homeland may not justify the displacement of others. In plain words: The lack of an own homeland in the case of one ethnic group cannot be adjusted by violating the right to exist of another group – regardless of whether the *Displaced* (persons) are in immediate distress or driven by eclectic ideas of "chosenness". In a rather unexpected way, Ludewig's extremely well researched article is a lesson in human rights policy.

The last two articles deal with a highly abstract issue – although both authors work out the subject in a most illustrative way: the decoding of cultural codes. Stefanie Affeldt's essay, "'Making Black White': Sugar Consumption and Racial Unity in Australia", "looks at the processes of everyday 'production' and 'reproduction' of 'race' as a social relation. This regards not only the so-called White Australia policy but also a comprehensive white culture that stimulated participation of broad sections of the mainstream population", as the laureate of the GASt Dissertation Prize 2016 explains. Her analysis offers an amazing history of Queensland's sugar industry during a period of social transformation at the beginning of the 20th century which – quite literally – melted the traditional concept of *white* cane sugar harvested by people of colour and transformed it into an Australian icon, produced by white men in Queensland. The new concept, laid into every Australian consumers' mouth, reflected the idea that Queensland sugar should attain "a *double whiteness* – chemically and, most notably, ideologically".

In his essay, "'The Majesty of Concrete': Hume Dam and Australian Modernity", GASt award recipient Daniel Rothenburg, explores the ideology behind the far-reaching structural change of Australia's archaic landscape during modern times. Rothenburg outlines a vivid picture of the age of hydro-electricity by decoding the cultural code of a "civilized landscape". He argues that "the Hume Dam can prove useful to understand the promises, hopes, and fears – in short: the ideology – invested in the expansion of hydro-engineering for irrigated agriculture and hydro-electricity in twentieth century Australia". Moreover, he constructs a theory that "a highly specific and radical Australian blend of 'High Modernism' [existed which] amalgamated the settler nationalist dream of populating the arid inland with the modern confidence in the continued mastery of nature". Once again, readers will learn that Australia is a vivid example for the clash and harmonization of cultural beliefs: The 'social utopia' of "harnessing the waters and developing the 'useless' Australian land" may be defined as an European ideology but there were Indigenous people long before who followed own concepts of using water which allowed them to survive on a seemingly dry continent – girt by sea.

As editors of the journal, we continue in our effort to get into contact with Australianists in Europe and overseas. In cooperation with the newly established *Centre for Australian Studies* at the University of Cologne we foster the practice of Australian Studies as a multidisciplinary and transnational endeavour. The *Zeitschrift für Australienstudien | Australian Studies Journal* is a crucial forum for exchanging innovative

scholarship. Our policy to encourage interdisciplinary research and submissions by emerging scholars has led to a perceptible increase in interest to publish with this journal. We appreciate this continuing interest and strongly encourage future submissions in both German and English language. We are also delighted to welcome Helen Idle as a new member of the editorial advisory board. Helen's research interests relate, *inter alia*, to displays of Indigenous Australian art in Europe and theories of ego histoire. The online submission form and the availability of articles and reviews for free have exerted an impact on the reach and diversity of our readers. We could sense increasing interest in this new format at institutions. The *Zeitschrift für Australienstudien | Australian Studies Journal* continues to combine different disciplines to engage with Australia in intellectually multifarious ways. Our Association also issues a bi-annual electronic Newsletter which presents news, reports and debates on Australia's current affairs. Australianists can visit the *e-Newsletter* on **www.australienstudien.org**.

The production of this issue would not have been possible without the efforts of our authors, reviewers and anonymous referees. We wish to thank all of them. In particular, our gratitude goes to Professor Beate Neumeier, Victoria Herche, Dr. Stefanie Affeldt, who created the journal's brand-new layout, and Dr. Guido Isekenmeier who – once again – helped in the final steps towards completion of the online and print versions.

Henriette von Holleuffer & Oliver Haag (December 2017)