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## **Declaration of Authenticity**

I hereby declare that the present paper was conceived and composed all by myself. Verbatim quotations as well as any ideas or passages borrowed and paraphrased from the works of other authors are truthfully acknowledged and identified in the paper. References to primary and secondary sources are all fully and clearly stated in the bibliographical section.

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Andrea Hennerbichler



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# 1. Introduction

The English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom is predominantly associated with teaching syntax, lexicon and phonology, albeit comprising much more. A further objective of language teaching is to enrich students' knowledge of foreign cultures and customs and to develop their intercultural awareness as stated in the Austrian curriculum (RIS 124). Hence, it is the role of the teacher to introduce students to the English language as well as to the target culture (Genc and Bada 75).

Therefore, this paper will touch upon challenges encountered when teaching culture in the EFL environment including the risk of reinforcing prevalent stereotypes, the importance of distinguishing between teaching 'cultural knowledge' and 'cultural awareness', and the issue of deciding which culture of the target language to teach. Speaking of *the* target language proves to be problematic, since English as a first language is spoken in several countries, also known as the inner circle, comprising Great Britain, the United States, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand and Australia (Crystal 60). In English Language Teaching (ELT), high priority is given to the British and the American culture neglecting cultures of the other four inner circle's countries and hence, the thesis aims at finding reasons for this development.

Second, the paper will focus on promoting one of these four often neglected cultures, namely the Australian culture. Due to the lack of teaching resources available, the thesis will advocate the use of literary texts in order to teach Australian culture. Moreover, since Australian culture is such a broad term, I will narrow it down and concentrate on the aspect of teaching Australian cultural identity (ACI). To this end, the paper will scrutinise the term ACI and provides a brief history of Australia as migrant nation.

Third, the practical part of the thesis focuses on the research question: "In which ways can Australian cultural identity be taught through literature in upper secondary Austrian EFL classrooms?". By drawing upon the Australian curriculum and interviewing scholars from the field of Australian literature (AustLit), the paper attempts to offer ideas, methods and approaches on how to incorporate ACI in Austrian classrooms. Further, it provides an in-depth comparison of the Austrian and the Australian upper secondary English curriculum. Based on these findings, I will apply the learning outcomes stated in the Australian curriculum to present hands-on

activities for three literary texts. The works selected were composed in different periods of Australian history, reflecting how ACI was shaped in the course of time. The first text, which is considered as the first Australian writing, is “Letter to Mr Philips, Lord Sydney’s Steward” by Woollarawarre Bennelong, the second text is “The Drover’s Wife” by Henry Lawson and the third text, *Does My Head Look Big in This?*, is a young-adult novel set in modern day Australia written by Randa Abdel-Fattah. The activities created are intended for teachers to use in Austrian EFL classrooms to give students an insight into ACI.

## 2. Teaching Culture in EFL Classrooms

Until the 1980s, the EFL classroom focused predominately on teaching grammar, lexicon and phonology. The cultural component of language was commonly neglected and if it was taught, it was generally treated as “mere information conveyed by the language, not as feature of language itself” (Kramsch, *Context and Culture* 8). Due to advances in empirical and conceptual research on teaching culture and due to an increase in publications and in the development of university courses regarding cultural learning, Byram et al. concluded that during the latter 1980s and the 1990s “theorists and practitioners of language teaching have become aware of the importance of cultural learning” (2).

While cultural learning was long regarded as an educational objective itself, authors nowadays agree that *language* and *culture* are interrelated concepts (Kramsch, *Language and Culture* 3, Tseng 13, Tang 86, Brown, *Teaching by Principles* 189-190, Kuang 75, Ardila-Rey 335). We communicate our ideas, beliefs and experiences through language and at the same time, language is always embedded in a certain cultural context. Kramsch views language in context of communication as being closely connected with culture, since language *expresses*, *embodies* and *symbolises* cultural reality (*Language and Culture* 3ff.). Similarly, Brown stresses the interdependence of language and culture by stating that “language is a part of culture, and culture is a part of the language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture” (189). Moreover, Tang goes even further and equates language with culture by stating that “culture is language and language is culture” (86), as we have to be able to think in the target language in order to express ourselves well.

As we can see, the concepts of language and culture are strongly interrelated and separating them is impossible. This also applies to foreign language teaching (FLT) where language learning cannot take place without acquiring cultural knowledge of the language learnt. In other words, language teaching needs to link “the teaching of language to that of culture” (Kramsch, *Language Learning* 236). Thus, the question is not whether culture *should* be taught in EFL but rather *how* it should be taught. In the following, three main challenges regarding teaching culture in EFL classrooms will be outlined and suggestions of how to tackle these problems will be provided.

## **2.1. Challenges in Teaching Culture in EFL Classrooms**

### **2.1.1. Reinforcement of Stereotypes**

Although theory advocates the importance of teaching culture when teaching a foreign language (FL) (Kramsch, *Language Learning* 236), in practice this is not always the case. The main problem of omitting teaching culture is caused by the limited time available in the classroom, as revealed by Arabski and Wojtaszek (10). The problem of time constraints also leads to the fact that teachers provide their students with a mere overview of the culture instead of going into detail. However, this should not be misinterpreted: The problem is not the provision of a cultural overview itself, but the problem is that a cultural overview often entails the risk of teaching prevailing stereotypes and of creating generalisations instead of enabling learners to controversially analyse cultural systems and structures.

So, we have to ask ourselves: How can we, as teachers, avoid the reinforcement of stereotyped cultural beliefs? As a first step, it is necessary to know which meanings the broad term of culture actually implies. There are various definitions of the term and Colin Sowden explains that “culture tended to mean that body of social, artistic, and intellectual traditions associated historically with a particular social, ethnic, or national group” (304f.). Like Sowden, Brown views culture as attitudes, values, arts, and tools characterising a distinct group of people in a distinct period of time and at the same time, culture functions as “glue” that binds people together (188). The National Standards for Foreign Language Learning suggested three areas that contribute to the notion of culture (43). The three areas are divided into:

- The philosophical perspectives including meanings, attitudes, values, and ideas
- The behavioural practices including patterns of social interactions
- Tangible as well as intangible products of society including books, tools, foods, laws, music, and games (The National Standards for Foreign Language Learning 43).

Moreover, it is argued that the concept of culture consists of two components, namely big-C Culture and small-c culture. In order to better grasp the difference between big-C and small-c culture, I will draw upon Zofia Chlopek's definition:

The big-C part of a given culture is usually easy to study, as it constitutes factual knowledge about the fine arts such as literature, music, dance, painting, sculpture, theatre, and film. Small-c culture, on the other hand, comprises a wide variety of aspects, many of which are inter-connected, including attitudes, assumptions, beliefs, perceptions, norms and values, social relationships, customs, celebrations, rituals, politeness conventions, patterns of interaction and discourse organization, the use of time in communication, and the use of physical space and body language. Needless to say, language is also part of what we call culture, and it also reflects and interprets culture. (Chlopek 11)

According to Chlopek, factual cultural aspects form big-C Culture and conversely, non-factual cultural components constitute small-c culture. Especially in regard to language and culture teaching I believe that this distinction is highly appropriate and therefore, I will use Chlopek's definition throughout the paper to refer to the notion of culture.

Concerning teaching, we can notice that most EFL textbooks employ factual knowledge when dealing with English-speaking countries and its cultures. Further, Bowers claims that textbooks contain too much factual knowledge, which should always be dealt with cautiously (118). The problem with factual knowledge depicted in textbooks is that it does not paint a holistic picture of culture, but rather presents selected facts.

These facts often accommodate the reproduction of stereotypes, whereas the aim of school education should be the exact opposite: enabling students to deconstruct stereotypes and to question prevailing ideas. This challenge was also discussed by Susan Bassnett, who asserts that "[f]oreign language teaching has often utilized stereotypical knowledge, and much guidebook literature is constructed around the

stereotyped expectations of a given readership” (xx). Likewise, John Gray in his study about EFL teachers’ attitudes concerning cultural aspects in EFL reading materials found out that the representation of cultural items in teaching materials frequently reinforced stereotypes (276). What is more, the depiction of factual cultural aspects in the material was according to the participants of Gray’s study often stereotypically represented and besides, inappropriate, outdated and sexist (J. Gray 276).

In order to teach unbiased culture in EFL classes, it is crucial to expose students to features of big-C Culture as well as to features of small-c culture. Learners are in need of factual knowledge regarding the country, for example, but also need to acquire non-factual aspects to understand people’s behaviour and consequently, to be able to successfully interact with speakers of the target language. When it comes to teaching components of big-C Culture, it is important to bear Bowers’ advice in mind of taking them with a grain of salt (118). If a stereotypical representation is encountered, it is worth taking the time to make students aware of the inappropriate depiction and eventually to use it as a stepping stone for a re-consideration of their own stereotypes and attitudes.

Besides, it is also essential to explain aspects of small-c culture such as beliefs, customs, celebrations, rituals, and politeness conventions. When teaching non-factual knowledge, one should take into consideration that these cultural components “should be clearly identified and systematically treated as a regular feature of the language lesson” (Tomalin and Stempleski 7). In order to achieve a balance of big-C and small-c culture, it is the teacher’s responsibility to review and evaluate teaching material from a cultural viewpoint to provide unbiased factual and non-factual knowledge.

### **2.1.2. Distinction between ‘Cultural Knowledge’ and ‘Cultural Awareness’**

In addition to teaching cultural knowledge, it is equally important to enhance learners’ cultural awareness in order for them to move into the direction of fully understanding a culture. In regard to cultural education, Elspeth Broady distinguishes between ‘cultural knowledge’ and ‘cultural awareness’ and highlights the significance of the latter by claiming that “‘teaching culture’ has to be ‘teaching cultural awareness’, since ‘understanding culture is a process of learning rather than an external

knowledge to be acquired” (68). The reproduction of cultural facts does not enable learners to grasp foreign attitudes, values and beliefs. In contrast to cultural knowledge, cultural awareness can rather be viewed as a competence or a skill that enables learners to interpret and evaluate a culture. This interpretation and evaluation of culture is also promoted by Lafayette who asserts that cultural aware learners should be able to “[v]alue different peoples and societies; [e]valuate validity of statements about culture; and [d]evelop skills needed to locate and organize information about culture” (125-126). This highlights that teaching culture should not merely scratch the surface, but should also reinforce reflexive thinking.

Additionally, Tomlinson stresses that cultural awareness is not only the grasp of mindsets and beliefs, but also the conception of cultures’ equality, the increased understanding of one’s own culture and of other people’s cultures, and a positive interest in how cultures relate and differ (Tomlinson qtd. in Tomlinson and Masuhara 3). Besides valuing and being interested in distinct cultures, it is essential that learners comprehend that there is no superior culture or people. This process of internalising culture equality and evaluating positive as well as negative aspects of cultural differences defines Kuang’s notion of cultural awareness.

Kuang described four levels of cultural awareness, starting with the first level where people are only aware of their own culture and their own lifestyles and neglect the influence of cultural differences (76). At the second level, they become aware of different ways of approaching things although they are still convinced that their approach is the best (Kuang 76). Hereby, cultural differences are regarded as a source of problems, and those problems are often ignored or their significance reduced. At the third level, people acknowledge their way of doing things as well as others’ and they usually opt for the best way depending on the situation (Kuang 76). This stage allows people to grasp the benefits as well as the disadvantages resulting from cultural diversity and people exploit this diversity to create solutions and new opportunities. The fourth level of cultural awareness unites people from distinct backgrounds to generate a common culture of shared meanings (Kuang 76). Joint dialogue at this level is necessary to produce new cultural meanings and principles to deal with specific situations. Following these four stages of cultural awareness postulated by Kuang (76), the individual advances from “cultural ignorance” to “cultural competence”.

To conclude, I believe that teaching components of big-C and small-c culture can be used as a solid basis from which one should go deeper into fostering cultural awareness. Thus, by enabling students to deal with another culture and another people, the teacher helps them to raise their cultural awareness and to strengthen their intercultural competence, or in other words: “by giving learners greater insight into another way of life, there will be a reduction of simplification and stereotyping” (Byram et al. 30).

### **2.1.3. Whose Culture should be Taught in EFL?**

The question “Whose Culture should be taught in EFL?”, constituting another challenge when teaching culture in the EFL classroom, will form one of the thesis’ central question. Usually, languages are associated with distinct countries – for instance the Finnish language is identified with Finland, the Lithuanian language with Lithuania, the Japanese language with Japan, and so on – English should consequently be identified with a country as well. Thus, international English Language Teaching (ELT) theorists and practitioners advocated Great Britain and the United States as the sole countries of the ‘target cultures’ of the English language. Clearly, this view has received much criticism within the last few years (see Wandel 265).

Since the focus of culture teaching in EFL is on America and Great Britain, it is often neglected that other countries where English is spoken as a first language (L1) exist as well. These countries are known as the inner circle and constitute of the US, the UK, Ireland, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (see Crystal 60). Moreover, the outer circle refers to post-colonial countries such as South Africa, Singapore, and Pakistan where English is not L1 but plays an essential role in education and governance, for example (see Crystal 60). The expanding circle involves countries like China, Sweden, and Poland, which recognise the importance of English as a lingua franca but do not assign English an administrative status (see Crystal 60).

Besides people from the inner circle, also many people from countries of the outer and the expanding circle speak English as first (L1) or second language (L2). According to Crystal, the outer circle constitutes of 300 to 500 million English L1 and L2 speakers and another 500 to 1,000 million English speakers from the expanding circle (60). As can be seen, the world of English is a multifaceted and complex one,

especially because speakers of the outer and the expanding circle do not simply copy the English language but exploit it for their needs, which means that the English language is constantly reinterpreted, reshaped and redefined (Nault 316).

However, it is not only the English language that is being reshaped but also “the ‘culture of English’ is constantly in flux, exceptionally diverse, and above all, international” (Nault 317). Hence, there is “[t]he need to recognise the existence of other cultures beyond a monolithic Great Britain or US” (Nault 317). In the same vein, Wandel emphasises the importance of broadening the cultural and geographical scope of EFL teaching and of dealing with other English speaking nations and their cultures (73). Certainly, this does not mean that aspects of the British or American culture should be banned from the ELT curriculum. In contrast, removing these cultures from EFL classrooms would entail a negative impact, since learners would not be able to fully understand the English language and culture. Instead of abolishing teaching American and British cultures, *further cultures* should be *added* to the ELT curriculum. This view is also expressed by Derrick Nault:

However, English teaching professionals would do well to question the overwhelming dominance of British and American culture in their field, demonstrate more sensitivity toward students’ cultures, and include room for other cultures within the language classroom. It should not be automatically assumed that America and Great Britain represent all English speakers, and the ELT curriculum should not uncritically focus on and promote Anglo-American norms and values at the exclusion of all others. (Nault 318)

Nault clearly reinforces the significance of including additional cultures into ELT. Due to the fact that scrutinising all cultures of the inner circle would far exceed the thesis’ limits, it will solely focus on one culture, namely the Australian culture, and will offer approaches of how to integrate Australian culture in the Austrian EFL classroom. However, before doing so, I will analyse some of the reasons why Anglo-American cultures have hitherto prevailed in the ELT context and why the Australian one has repeatedly been overlooked.

During my thesis’ research, I have conducted several interviews and one of them was with Lindsay Williams, head of English in Queensland. Williams has been teaching English in schools for 35 years, has been involved in curriculum writing and assessment committees in Brisbane and he is currently teaching English teachers how to successfully incorporate reading and writing into schools. When he was asked

to outline reasons for neglecting Australian culture and literature in overseas classrooms, he highlighted that they are multi-factorial.

First, Williams pointed out that the cultural cringe influenced the popularity of Australian literature considerably, because people felt that “what is produced in Australia isn’t as good” (Williams) as literature from the ‘mother country’ Britain. Linked to that is the idea of the canon, which means that there “is this set of books that everyone should read” (Williams) and those books stem mainly from Great Britain and America and as obvious examples he mentioned Shakespearean plays and *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Williams). This idea of the canon goes hand in hand with the problem that teachers have to face: the limited amount of time dedicated to literature in the classroom (Williams). Thus, teachers always have to confront themselves with “the question of what you exclude and what you include” (Williams), aligning with the consideration of “what moves out and what is gained and lost in transaction”. Certainly, works considered as literarily important are more likely to be included than lesser known works.

Besides those intertwined reasons of the cultural cringe, the literary canon and the limited amount of time, Williams identified another reason for disregarding AustLit in the EFL classroom, which he calls the problem of ‘invisibility’. What he means by this is that there are great secondary resources available for British and American texts but hardly any for AustLit. However, the problem is not only with getting hold of secondary material but also with Australian texts and novels themselves. Williams emphasises that this is not only an issue overseas but also within Australia, because local authors’ books are difficult to find in stores. He mentions that he was trying to find Australian young adult fantasy novels and in the bookshops, he could not get hold of any books of the six authors who talked at the conference “Teaching with Fantasy” on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February at the University of Queensland.

Williams explains that the reason for this problem lies in the fact that booksellers stock what sells, which is “the stuff that publishers push” and apparently “publishers are not pushing Australian novels. So, if publishers are not pushing it, people will not find out about” (Williams) and the books remain ‘invisible’. According to Williams, this problem of books’ invisibility might even get worse, because there is the ongoing argument whether to change

government's copyright provisions so that it would be easier to bring in cheap imports from America. And of course the cheap book imports from America won't be Australian writers. So, we've actually got a situation which isn't good to begin with and if the copyright laws are changed in the way they want to, it's going to be pretty devastating for the Australian literature scene. (Williams)

In order to counteract this unpromising outlook, it is more important than ever to promote AustLit on a national as well as on an international basis. Therefore, the thesis will look at these two arguments brought forward by Lindsay Williams in more detail and will present approaches to curb this adverse trend.

#### **2.1.3.1. Lack of Familiarity**

An obvious reason for teaching Anglo-American cultures in the EFL classroom is their prominence in contrast to other cultures of the inner circle. Many people including EFL teachers are not familiar with Australian culture and its literature. Also when English teachers are asked to name Australian writers, they are usually not able to come up with any authors.

This development can also be traced back to the education of teachers on the university level. The University of Vienna, for example, offers mandatory literature and culture courses with topics on the UK and the US and optional courses to extend this knowledge on American and British cultures or to develop knowledge concerning the Irish, Canadian, New Zealand, or Australian culture. The mandatory introductory lectures, "The Introduction to the Study of Literature" and "Literature Survey 1 and 2", aim at acquainting students with literary genres and literary terminology and provide a historical overview and understanding of major developments in English literature by employing landmark texts of English poetry, drama and narrative fiction. Moreover, the content of the compulsory lecture "Literatures in English" depends very much on the professor and its content varies considerably, ranging from postcolonial literature and children's literature to race in English literature.

Besides the lectures' set topics for each semester, students have the freedom to choose from a variety of courses to complete their "Proseminar Literature", their "Literature Seminar" and their "Literature Course". In order to highlight the great diversity of courses offered at the University of Vienna, I would like to name the titles of literature seminars that are taught during the summer term 2018:

- “Prairie Literature in the USA and Canada”
- “Size matters. Analysing the contemporary British short story”
- “Home and Homeland in the British and Anglophone Novel”
- “Neo-Victorian Biofiction”
- “Shakespeare’s Tragedies”
- “Heteroglossia, Polyphony, Multiple Points of View”
- “The Postcolonial Caribbean Woman’s Historical Novel”
- “Women’s Voices, Feminist Visions: The American Tradition”
- “Refugees and the Experience of Flight in North American Literature”
- “Pacific Fictions: Imperialism to Decolonization”.

As can be seen, the topics of the courses vary greatly and highlight the many fields of expertise prevalent at the English department of the University of Vienna. One could even say that students are spoilt for choice, as they can only choose one of the courses for the “Studienplanpunkt” “Literature Seminar”. However, it does make sense that students have the freedom to opt for a seminar topic that sparks their interest, since they have to thoroughly engage with the subject for an entire semester.

Due to this freedom of choice, it is not unusual that university students often focus on American and British literature/culture and do not familiarise with those of other English-speaking countries in the course of their studies. Moreover, considering the “Literature Seminars” taught at the department of English in the summer term 2018, it becomes obvious that literatures from the US and the UK are more prominent when scrutinising the quantity of courses offered regarding Anglo-American topics compared to non-Anglo-American topics. This lack of familiarity inevitably leads to the fact that teachers prefer teaching Anglo-American cultures with which they are acquainted instead of employing a diversity of cultures in their teaching. Besides, it is particularly regrettable that there is not a single course taught on Australian literature this term, reinforcing the argument that the courses’ topics are determined by the lecturers’ interests and fields of research.

The problem of international underrepresentation in regard to AustLit was also pointed out by David Carter, professor of Australian Literature and Cultural History at the University of Queensland, who was one of my interview partners in the course of

my thesis' research. Carter mentioned that one of the reasons for AustLit being marginalised in Austria's educational system, including secondary and tertiary level, is because – on an international scale – AustLit “doesn't have any form of sustaining institutional support in the way that American or British do”. In order to achieve this sustaining, one has to go through a list of measures that need to be taken, according to Carter. In this regard, he first highlights the importance of AustLit's “presence on university courses” and second “a body of critical writing about Australian literature” (*Interview*) in order to improve its popularity. Carter adds that in Australia, tertiary courses and critical writing on AustLit are present – although still not sufficiently according to him –, in contrast to Europe where they are dispersed all over the continent.

Thus, it would be advantageous if prospective teachers became aware of the various cultures of the target language that they are studying. But how is this drawback to be tackled? – A first step towards raising awareness of the manifoldness of cultures within the L1 English speaking world has to be achieved on the tertiary level, which was also suggested by Carter (*Interview*). This should be an overall goal in the Lehramtscurriculum and is particularly important in the area of literature studies, which will be outlined later on, but also in other spheres of tertiary teaching like cultural studies, didactics, linguistics, and language competence.

With regard to pronunciation, for instance, tertiary students at the English department in Vienna have to choose between “Received Pronunciation (RP)” and “American English” and are supposed to become proficient speakers of this variety. This is the case, although it is “no longer *only* distinguish[ed] between British Standard English (BrSE) and American Standard English (AmSE), which are only spoken by a minority of people in Britain and the Unites States” (Bieswanger 31 [emphasis added]). In fact, there is a multitude of other standard national varieties of English as well as numerous geographical and social varieties (Bieswanger 31), which are marginalised. Therefore, courses regarding the language competence pronunciation should strive for a more inclusive approach allowing more English varieties. However, I will not analyse the arguments for teaching different varieties of English in EFL here and refer instead to Bieswanger's article “Varieties of English in current English language teaching”.

Another approach to heighten tertiary students' awareness for the diversity of cultures of the English-speaking world would be to employ a variety of cultures and literatures in the didactic courses, especially in "Literature and Culture in the EFL Classroom". This course provides an extraordinary opportunity to make university students aware of the vast possibilities of teaching culture in the EFL classroom.

Another approach would be to introduce a lecture series regarding literatures and cultures of the inner circle. In practice, this could mean that academics each with a background from one of the six countries of the inner circle lectures on his/her expert culture. Considering that a semester has twelve weeks equalling twelve classes, this implies that every two weeks a different scholar informs university students about one of the inner circle's culture. This could be achieved in the lecture "Literatures in English" whose topic now depends primarily on the lecturer. In so doing, prospective teachers are provided with an overview regarding English cultural studies on which they can further develop their knowledge and they might develop specific interests.

However, at the same time, providing an overview of cultures always runs the risk of reinforcing existing stereotypes, as delineated in 2.1.1. Lecturers would have to be aware of that and to avoid the reinforcement of generalisations they should not attempt to press aspects of an entire culture into two classes but rather focus on a minority of essential aspects that are outlined in more detail. In regard to the Australian culture, this means, according to David Carter, to discard Australia's cliché as sunshine and beach nation and to call attention to Australia's complex cultural identity instead (*Interview*).

The lack of teachers' familiarity with Australian culture and literature is not only due to the limited encounters in university courses but also due to the lack of Australian-based EFL teaching resources, which will be discussed in the following section.

### **2.1.3.2. EFL Teaching Materials**

Given that the focus of Austria's ELT is primarily on American and British culture, EFL teaching materials for secondary level are further evidence for this fact. This was also pointed out by Markus Bieswanger, who asserted that although the significance of teaching other cultures besides the American and the British one is increasing, it is

still only marginally reflected in ELT curricula and teaching material used in the German-speaking world (38).

The following section provides examples of encyclopaedias, guides, and course books regarding teaching British and/or American culture designed for the school context and underlines their prominence. The books aim at EFL teachers and EFL students from around the globe and are used in Europe as well as in Asia and I also read a book review on *Discovering American Culture* written by a Brazilian professor, reinforcing the books' international availability and usage. However, I cannot provide data showing how extensively the books are employed in Austrian EFL teaching. But as they are internationally recommended when teaching American and/or British culture in the EFL school setting, I assume that the books are used to a certain amount in Austria as well, also if only specific units or selected themes are drawn upon.

One of those books is *The Oxford Guide to British and American Culture* published by Oxford University Press in 2005. This guide aims at English learners and teachers and provides cultural background knowledge including aspects of small-c and big-C culture like British and American history, literature, places, sport, education, humour, industry, and politics, just to name a few. Similarly, the Cambridge University Press published *The Cambridge Companion to Modern American Culture* in 2006. Even though this guide is not explicitly designed for English learners, it "offers a comprehensive, authoritative, and accessible overview of the cultural themes and intellectual issues that drive the dominant culture of the twentieth century" (Bigsby ii) in America.

Apart from these encyclopaedias, there are also a number of books for EFL teachers that provide ideas and information concerning how to design lessons to introduce students to American or British culture. Janet Giannotti and Suzanne Mele Szwarczewicz's *Talking about the U.S.A: An Active Introduction to American Culture* teaches facts about America's culture and offers structured activities as well as grammar and vocabulary tasks. This book is not the only one in its branch and similar books, for instance, are Michael Carl Raines' *Designing a Curriculum to Teach American Culture in the ESL Classroom*, and Cheryl L. Delk's *Discovering American Culture*. These guide books for teachers can be compared to manuals offering ready-

made units that allow students to understand American values and behaviours and that include activities on vocabulary, listening, reading, and writing.

Additionally, there are numerous guidebooks that scrutinise British culture for teaching, such as *What's It Like? Teacher's Book: Life and Culture in Britain Today* by Joanne Collie and Alex Martin and *Encyclopaedia of Contemporary British Culture* edited by Peter Childs and Mike Storry. In addition to guidebooks for EFL teachers, there is also a broad range of course books available for English learners, which can be used in class to study American and British culture. For example, Wendy Ashby's *What Makes America Tick?*, Myra Shulman's *Cultures in Contrast*, Susan Earle-Carlin and Colleen Hildebrand's *American Perspectives: Readings on Contemporary US Culture*, Karen Blanchard and Christine Baker Root's *American Roots: Readings on US Cultural History*, all offer an introduction to American culture in a student-centred format.

This extensive list of encyclopaedias, guides, and course books regarding teaching British and/or American culture demonstrates again the prominence of these cultures in EFL classrooms around the globe, including the Austrian one. Additionally, it shows that other cultures of the inner circle are often overlooked and as a matter of fact, hardly any hands-on course books or guides of the same nature for teaching Australian culture exist. There is, for instance, *The AustLit Anthology of Criticism* edited by Kerry Kilner which is a selection of material designed to support teaching Australian literature on secondary and tertiary level. However, the problem with this is that besides being very theoretical, it targets primarily Australian teachers who have dealt with Australian literature before and are aware of Australian culture. Furthermore, there is a general database called "AustLit", a non-profit collaboration between a network of researchers from Australian universities and the National Library of Australia, led by the University of Queensland, which advocates teaching Australian literature in schools. "AustLit" is an extensive collection of data that provides full texts, exhibitions, and online content on Australian literature including biographical information. Moreover, it is a subscription service, a partner and collaborator in scholarly research, and a publisher of scholarly research. This database functions as a good source for materials for international EFL teachers, but, nevertheless, it still mainly aims at teachers from within Australia.

Hence, it would be beneficial, if there were guides or databases that go beyond, addressing teachers who have not dealt with Australian literature or culture before. Exactly this is the goal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature (ASAL), which “promotes the study, discussion and creation of Australian writing [...] [and] seeks to increase awareness of Australian writing in the wider community and throughout the world” (AustLit). Although there are steps into the right direction, of attempting to provide other countries with sources and guides to Australian literature, it still requires certain effort to obtain suitable material in order to successfully teach Australian culture in the EFL classroom.

This challenge was also brought up in the interview with Kerry Kilner, director of AustLit and UQ Research Fellow in the School of Communication and Arts. She disclosed that “the biggest barrier that I hear from academics and teachers internationally is the availability of texts and the fact that it’s really hard to get hold of representative samples of Australian literary texts for their classrooms” (Kilner). On the other hand, Kilner also mentioned that this situation is slowly improving due to the increasing digital development, facilitating the accessibility to representative samples of Australian literary texts (Kilner).

The popularity of teaching American and British cultures is not only revealed through the amount of guides and course books available, but becomes also apparent when scrutinising Austrian EFL textbooks, which contain very limited information on Australia. The textbook *The New You and Me 4 Enriched Course* (Gerngros et al. 6-20), for instance, includes one brief unit portraying the country of Australia. Also more recent schoolbooks *More! 4 General Course* (Gerngross et al. 72-81) and *More! 4 Enriched Course* (Gerngross et al. 58-65), which are the most commonly used textbooks in Austria’s lower secondary, contain solely one chapter each about Australia. Besides, the textbook *Make Your Way to the Matura* (Davis et al. 55-62) features a listening comprehension on opal mining in the Australian outback.

If Austrian lower secondary teachers strictly followed the course content of the schoolbooks provided, there might be the chance that some Austrian EFL students are merely exposed to one unit of Australian culture during four years of English language learning. Moreover, it could be the case that Austrian students do not get into contact with the Australian culture throughout their entire time in upper secondary, which means that they are eventually exposed to the Australian culture

just once throughout their school days. Evidently, the Australian culture is still under-represented in Austrian EFL classrooms.

Nevertheless, at this point it has to be said that although Australian culture is only marginally reflected in ELT, it has already improved in comparison to the 1990s. In general, if the textbooks of the series *The New You and Me* and of the series *More!* are *briefly* compared – as there is no room for an in-depth school book analysis –, it is observable that there is a trend towards including a greater variety of cultures into EFL teaching. However, there is still a long way to go.

To summarise, it can be said that theorists as well as EFL teachers became more aware of the importance of teaching cultural aspects in the language classroom. This development, which began in the late 1980s, was also welcomed by theorists whose overall claim is that language and culture are strongly interwoven and that they cannot be taught separately. This means that language cannot be taught without teaching culture and vice versa. Nevertheless, the restricted time at hand in school frequently forces teachers to provide learners with mere overviews of the culture instead of deeply engaging with the subject. These time constraints and the shortened overviews often lead to the reproduction of stereotypes and creation of generalisations. Therefore, when teaching culture, it is the teacher's responsibility to critically assess cultural knowledge, to expose learners to aspects of big-C as well as small-c culture, and to foster their intercultural awareness.

Moreover, the teacher should not only employ cultures of the US and the UK but should aim at incorporating cultures from other nations. As we could see, omitting Australian culture is often not the conscious choice of an EFL teacher but an indispensable course of events caused by the lack of teaching material. Therefore, it is necessary to ask the question: How can material be obtained to teach Australian culture in the EFL classroom? Precisely this question is going to be tackled in the following section.

## **2.2. Australian Culture in the EFL Classroom**

As pointed out above, EFL teachers have to face the absence of appropriate material to teach Australian culture in the classroom. Hence, alternatives are required. The most suitable and authentic alternative is to use Australian literature and also many

scholars have promoted the use of literature to teach culture (see Lazar 2, see Kramsch, *Context and Culture* 130, see Carter and Long 2). Besides, numerous academics (see Collie and Slater 4-5, see Thaler 23-24, see Carter and Long 3-6), have stressed general benefits of teaching literature in the classroom and have argued for the inclusion of literature in the EFL classroom. However, due to the limited scope of the paper, I will not repeat these arguments here and treat them as common ground. This chapter will focus on literature as a source for teaching culture and examines how Australians analyse their national literature.

Lazar (2-3) emphasises that literature enables learners to engage with the people's culture whose language they are studying. This view is also outlined in the cultural model defined by Carter and Long (2). Generally, they define three models which can be regarded as purposes for teaching literature in the EFL classrooms, namely the cultural model, the language model, and the personal growth model (Carter and Long 2-3). In regard to this paper, the cultural model is of particular importance and will therefore be briefly delineated.

According to Carter and Long (2), the cultural model allows learners to deal with literary work in relation to the target culture, which means that they engage with the social, political, and historical context of a text. Moreover, the cultural model enables students to deal with the cultural background of a text and to transfer the gained knowledge to understand other literary works (Carter and Long 2). In so doing, the students are encouraged to grasp distinct cultures while assessing their perceptions and feelings of their own cultures (Carter and Long 2).

Apart from the advantages of the cultural model, it was also exposed to some criticism claiming that the model is not always reliable. Gillian Lazar (16) criticised that the majority of literary works are fiction and thus, not based on correct facts, which indicates that they represent an illusion of reality. In other words, fiction-based plays, poems and novels cannot be used reliably to draw conclusions about the target culture (Lazar 16). This opposes the view of Collie and Slater who acknowledge the created world of fiction but highlight that it still provides a certain context in which characters from different milieus are portrayed (4).

Lazar relativised her claim by asserting that in general, literature employed in the English classroom does entail advantages, as students learn how members of

various backgrounds depict or evaluate their lives and circumstances (17). She underlined her point with an example: “[a] description of a farm in the outback [...] in a short story by an Australian author might familiarize students with the typical scenery and social structures to be expected in such a setting. More interestingly, it could provide them with insights into the possible relationships, emotions and attitudes of the inhabitants of the farm” (Lazar 17). This shows that students can imagine the lifestyle and the situation in which the fictional characters are placed, although the text might not provide an accurate insight into the author’s culture (Lazar 17).

As this concise outline demonstrated, the employment of literature in the language classroom is regarded as cultural enrichment. However, there is still the question of what literature, or in this case, what *Australian literature* means and *what kind* of AustLit should be used in ELT. Let us start with the first question: What is Australian literature?

### **2.2.1. Australian Literature**

Henry Turner and Alexander Sutherland attempted to provide an overview of AustLit and were finally wondering about the question “How is a national literature to be expressed that has no nation behind it?” (24). This question was posed in 1898, when Australia had existed - speaking from a colonial perspective - for a bit more than a century. It was assumed that AustLit only started with the arrival of white settlers, who brought the English language with them (Heiss and Minter 8), and hence, by 1898, there was not sufficient literature present which could have been called a literary canon.

Unlike Turner and Sutherland, McLaren highlights that Australian literature has existed much longer, since it goes back to the time when Aboriginal people invented stories which were passed down from generation to generation not only orally but also through song and dance (ix). This view is shared by Van Toorn, who points out that “AustLit begins before 1788 with pre-invasion communication systems and early interactions between Aboriginal peoples and white textual technologies” (*Early writings* 52). Instead of using alphabetic script, Aboriginal people used different graphic signifying systems like sand drawings, cave paintings or tree carvings to communicate their narratives (Van Toorn, *Indigenous Texts* 19-20). According to Van

Toorn, AustLit dates back far beyond European colonisation and there is no need for an alphabetic script in order to have – what is called – literature (*Indigenous Texts* 19-20).

Forty years later, Australian Literature was – against Turner's and Sutherland's reservations – viewed as a national literature, albeit not yet independent. Green identified AustLit in his book *An Outline of Australian Literature* as "a branch of English literature, and however great it may become and whatever characteristics it may develop, it will remain a branch" (9). Despite the fact that this view is outdated nowadays (Pierce 5), it indicates AustLit's firm roots in British literature. The process of rethinking began in the 1950s when the urge for an independent literature became more prominent but despite its increasing awareness, it was still "a long way to travel towards literary independence" (Miller 10).

Another 70 years later, the idea of AustLit as a dependant and subordinate literary canon was obsolete (Dale 405) and Huggan argues that "the patronizing view of Australian literature as merely a branch of English literature is clearly to be avoided" (5). Similarly, Ruth Feingold again stresses AustLit's roots in the British canon, but at the same time highlights that sharing a common language is no barrier to create distinct literatures or distinct national communities (61). This reinforces the view that AustLit is an independent, national literature, which is not part of a larger British canon. Huggan goes even further by stating that "Australia's literature is a distinctively, even a defiantly national achievement" (2-3) embodying an Anglophone alternative. While various researchers (Huggan 5, Feingold 61, Birns and McNeer 1, Carter, *Australia/Post* 104) concur that Australian literature can be classified as national literature, there is less consensus when it comes to the question of what it is that makes AustLit distinctively Australian.

According to Kramer, a national literature can easily be identified through the treatment of local subjects, ideas and landscape and that it is an "unself-conscious expression of its own sense of place and identity" (12). Moreover, Kramer asserts that the topics dealt with are particularly decisive in order to assign a literature to a country (14). This conception was especially prominent in the 1870s and 1880s when Australian authors enjoyed admiration for portraying explicit Australian content (Birns and McNeer 4). A reason for dealing with distinct Australian themes was the compulsion for an own national literature as outlined above and therefore, numerous

literary works have direct references to life in Australia, rendering them clearly Australian (Jose 4).

Conversely, Miller (10), Goodwin (4) and McLaren (249) claim that it is not the content of literary works which accounts for being classified as AustLit. In the same vein, Birns and McNeer advocate that an essential factor of AustLit is not content but context (13). They further state that “Australian literature is not a body of work that can be approached [...] without a sense of context” (Birns and McNeer13), illustrating that the text – regardless where it is read – never travels without its context. The set of circumstances, the background, the environment, etc. establish a certain context in which the text is written which makes AustLit so unique and distinctive compared to other literary canons.

Adrian Mitchell also disregards the notion of content when defining AustLit and advocates on Encyclopaedia Britannica that AustLit comprises all literary works - orally and written - produced in Australia. Mitchell’s concept of AustLit also includes literary works which are regarded as less prestigious like oral Aboriginal literature and records of early Australia done by explorers, surveyors, scientists, visitors and administrators who did not accentuate literary quality. It is these kinds of texts which are often neglected when it comes to defining AustLit and instead, priority is given to works representing high culture (Webby, *Cambridge Companion* 3, Huggan 7, Carter *Interview*).

This elitism is often criticised, for instance by Huggan who condemns that academic definitions of AustLit are inclined to ignore the casual reader, and neglect that the majority of Australian best sellers are not intended for university curricula and examination structures (7). These best sellers include non-fiction regarding sports, cooking and pets as well as criminal romans and children’s books, however, they are often considered as low-prestigious and unworthy of serious study (Webby, *Cambridge Companion* 3, Huggan 8). On the one hand, Mitchell’s definition of AustLit defeats the elitist claim drawing solely upon burgeoning discipline of AustLit, but, on the other hand, his concept limits itself to literature produced in Australia. Hence, the question arises how to treat literature composed outside of Australia by people who have lived there - is this not-Australian then?

This question goes hand in hand with the question posed by Miller already in 1940: “Who can reasonably be classed as an Australian author?” (9). Miller attempted to characterise an Australian author and came up with the explanation that

... an Australian author is one who, born in Australia, has written in this country one or more books either without exception, or prior to or subsequent upon writing elsewhere; or who, born here, has written one or more books elsewhere, and has either commenced his writing in Australia or left the country at an age that did not render him entirely independent of his Australian training, experience and contacts; or who, born elsewhere but domiciled here for a substantial period of time, has written, or commenced to write, in Australia one or more books. (Miller 9)

Although this definition dates back to 1940, it is still valid to most extent, except that it does not need to be a book that has been written. Instead, it would be more appropriate to substitute the term ‘books’ with ‘literary works’ in order to include a broader range of texts. Huggan agrees with Mitchell’s perception since he also states that “[i]t is not necessary for a writer to live in Australia to be an Australian writer” (11). This thought is also reinforced by Carter who suggests that Australian writers might be a long-term visitors rather than being born in Australia or they might have begun their career in Australia and expatriated themselves to England or the US, for example (*Interview*). Generally, he argues that “any writers who have some sense of significant connection to Australia” classify as Australian writers (Carter, *Interview*). Like Carter, Kerry Kilner highlights that Australian authors do not necessarily have to be Australian citizens but have certain affiliation with Australia in some way or another (*Interview*).

In conclusion, looking at various scholars in the field of Australian literature has shown that its definition is not clear-cut and has changed considerably over time leading to differing interpretations. The diversity of definitions also reflects the manifoldness of Australian literature itself and indicates that different researchers have focused on different aspects when defining the concept of AustLit. However, as I will regularly refer to AustLit in the course of my diploma thesis, I am in need of a working definition and hence, I came up with the following: Australian literature comprises all literary works – oral and written – which need to be approached with a sense of Australian context, produced by people who lived at least partly in Australia and whose works were impacted by their time spent in the country.

After discussing the first question what is meant by the broad term of Australian literature, we could now turn to the second question: What kind of Australian literature should be taught? Section 2.2.1.1. has shown that there are no specific topics or texts that are prescribed in order to teach Australian culture. However, it is necessary to break down the notion of Australian culture to focus on specific aspects, as it is sheer impossible to teach all aspects of a target culture in a classroom setting. Thus, this thesis will scrutinise the concept of Australian cultural identity (ACI).

### **3. Analysing the Concept of Australian Cultural Identity**

The thesis' aim is not to provide an alternative but an extension to teaching American and British culture in the language classroom. The question is, however, with what aspects of the nation's culture to start. Teaching culture should not mean portraying one cultural element after the other and thereby ticking them off the list. Conversely, students should be exposed to a larger whole that is broken down in order for them to detect distinct cultural elements. In consideration of a larger whole in regard to teaching culture, this thesis will analyse the cultural identity of Australia.

ACI depicted in literature always reveals something about the author and his/her experiences and circumstances and comprises features of small-c and big-C culture. As Corbett framed it: Teaching culture "is the assertion, negotiation, construction and maintenance of individual and group identities" (20). This reinforces the argument for employing the concept of Australian cultural identity to teach culture in EFL classes.

To better understand the concept of ACI, a bottom-up approach is used to explain this term. First, the notion of identity, then of cultural identity, and finally of Australian cultural identity is clarified, whereas the last discussion is the most extensive one as it will include a historical outline to discern how ACI has emerged and developed over the years in order to be able to understand the contemporary complexities within the nation.

#### **3.1. Identity**

Identity "is a difficult term: more or less everyone knows more or less what it means, and yet its precise definition proves slippery" (Lawler 1). Lawler's attempt in defining the concept of identity already reflects its elusiveness, which can also be traced back

to the concept's complexity and numerous scholars have tried to define the notion of identity (Gronold 16). It is not surprising that many definitions are prevalent, since 'identity' plays an important role in various different disciplines like psychology, sociology, philosophy, etc. and hence, needs to be mapped and explained.

One of the first psychologists who engaged with the concept of identity was Erik Erikson. Erikson distinguished between the self, the personal identity and the social or cultural identity and emphasised social relations as crucial factor to form and manifest one's identity (Erikson 20ff.; Gardiner 349). In this section, the *social* character of identity will be discussed, since this will be of great importance when it comes to (Australian) cultural identity.

The definition of identity provided by the Oxford English Dictionary reads as follows: "the sameness of a person or thing at all times or in all circumstances; the condition or fact that a person or thing is itself and not something else". At first glance, this definition seems to be ironic, as it deals with two opposing concepts: *sameness* and *difference*. Nevertheless, when studied more closely it becomes apparent that this dichotomy cannot be neglected and that both concepts are necessary to characterise identity. This is also reinforced by Balibar and Wallerstein who state that "[i]ndividuals never identify with one another [...], nor, however, do they ever acquire an isolated identity, which is an intrinsically contradictory notion" (94). In the same vein, Lawler argues that "Western notions of identity rely on these two modes of understanding, so that people are understood as being simultaneously the same and different" (2). The question, nonetheless, arises: What does it mean to be *same* and *different* at the same time?

According to Lawler, we are not only identical with ourselves – that is, the same from birth to death – but we are also identical with others (2). This means that "we *share* common identities – as humans, say, but also, within this, as 'women', 'men', 'British', 'American', 'white', 'black', etc." (Lawler 2 [original emphasis]). This concept is taken up by Richter and Song who assert that identity "seeks out sameness and constancy, a core of continuity, in the face of change" (92), highlighting its social character. In other words, identity formation is dependent on people's shared experiences and commonalities. Further, Lawler emphasises once more that "identity needs to be understood not as belonging 'within' the individual person, but as produced between

persons and within social relations” (8), concluding that “identity, far from being personal and individual, is a deeply social category” (143).

The other part of the paradox of identity, beside sameness, is *difference*. Albeit identical in terms of identity-categories and common characteristics, we are concurrently unique and different (Lawler 2). Stuart Hall shows that not only similarities but also differentiations play an important role when it comes to identity formation:

Precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies. Moreover, they emerge within the play of specific modalities of power, and thus are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of an identical, naturally-constituted unity – an ‘identity’ in its traditional meaning. (Hall 4)

Hall emphasises the ongoing process of identity formation, which does not exist in isolation and is always dependent on discourses, positions and practices. This view is also shared by James Martin who claims that “[c]losure and unity are effects produced by differentiation, by the raising of a symbolic barrier of meaning to distinguish one thing from another” (99). In order to make the concept of difference regarding identity more understandable, Martin mentions ‘male’ identity opposing to ‘female’ identity and ‘English’ identity in contrast to the ‘Irish’ or ‘French’ one (99). These markers give meaning to the concepts by excluding other things that do not comply with the markers’ characteristics. Thus, boundaries between different markers are created in order to mark out the limits of identity by referring to what it is not, and, thereby, producing coherence by framing distinct features (J. Martin 99).

As can be seen, sameness as well as difference are *both* necessary to define the concept of identity. Further, identity formation is bound to a social setting and is always attached to a collective character, or to put it in Lawler’s words: “identities are lived out relationally and collectively. They do not simply belong to the individual; rather, they must be negotiated collectively, and they must conform to social rules” (143). Like Lawler who emphasises that identities are “formed *by* the social world” (7 [emphasis in original]), Müller asserts that they are “formed through the social conditions in which individuals live” (8) and also Brah states that they are “constituted in and through culture” (21). Precisely this significance of culture in regard to identity formation will be delineated in the following section.

### **3.2. Cultural Identity**

As outlined above, we constitute identity in relation to others. While we compare ourselves with others in search for identity, we are situated in a certain cultural context. As individual subjects, we identify with cultural factors like distinct customs, social values, collective symbols, etc. assisting our process of identity formation. This identification reveals that cultural context plays a major role in creating identity and that generally “culture and identity are inextricably linked concepts” (Brah 21). In contrast to the term identity, which has already been discussed, there is still the need to clarify the notion of culture. In order to do so, I will draw upon Brah’s definition describing culture as “the whole spectrum of experiences, modes of thinking, feeling and behaving; about the values, norms, customs and traditions of the social group(s) to which we feel we belong” (17).

While the concept of identity is primarily based on the individual, the notion of cultural identity scrutinises the identity which is shared by many different individuals who are connected through the same cultural context. This feeling of culturally belonging and of being bound together with others through a shared culture provides people with a sense of security and confidence (Barth 15). Factors that contribute to cultural identity are language, social values, religion and history (Huntington 21, Larrain 27, Friedman 89, Du Gay 60f.). Further, cultural identity is characterised by joint ideas and beliefs (Larrain 194) and created through common history and ancestry (Hall 3f., Friedman 79, Larrain 158, Du Gay 26) and maintained because it stabilises, fixes and guarantees an “unchanging ‘oneness’ or cultural belonging” (Hall 4).

In order to understand the concept of cultural identity better, Stuart Hall (4) and Paul du Gay (26) emphasise that it is crucial to situate the debate within historically specific developments and that time is an essential factor to establish social relations and cultural identity. Likewise, Brah states that cultural identity embodies “the chronicle of a group’s history” (18). Nevertheless, this does not mean to merely look at the past, but rather to view cultural identity as an ongoing process that re-develops constantly. Especially globalisation and the process of migration have strongly influenced the relatively ‘settled’ character of many populations and cultures. While people are moving back and forth all over the world, cultures mingle, identities mix and new cultural identities are created. This is also acknowledged by Brah who claims that

[s]ince the group histories of different sections of society differ in important ways, their 'cultures' are correspondingly different. Further, group histories are inextricably linked with the material conditions of society, so that cultures are marked by the social and economic conditions of a group at the various stages of its history. Cultures are never static: they evolve through history. That is why the process of cultural reproduction is, in part, a process of cultural transformation. (Brah 18)

Due to migration and societies' internationalisation, cultural identity has become more and more complex. This complexity, however, embodies at the same time diversity from which we can profit for the future, since distinct "identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not 'who we are' or 'where we came from', so much as what we might become" (Hall 4). The concept of cultural identity accepts this diversity; it "accepts that identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions" (Hall 4).

The acceptance of diversity in the concept of cultural identity plays an integral role – particularly when looking at Australia's cultural identity. Australia is a country that is marked by migration and is made up of many different identities which are combined in cultural identity embodying the feeling of "cultural belongingness underlying all the other superficial differences" (Hall 4).

### **3.3. Australian Cultural Identity**

As introduced above, ACI is a prime example of numerous distinct identities combined in one national identity that people feel affiliated to. Australia is characterised by its multiculturalism resulting from continuous migration, which has contributed to society's cultural diversity growth, especially in the latter decades of the twentieth century.

To stress the impact of immigration, a closer look has to be taken at Australia's population which rose from 5,200 to 15.6 million between 1800 and 1985, whereby a third of the total increase can be traced back to immigration (Docherty 81). In addition, the number of migrants coming from different parts of the world increased considerably after the second World War and led Australia from "being a nation

whose population was predominantly British-derived in 1945 to one where citizens came from over 220 countries in 1990" (Elder 129). With people coming from around the world, cultures and identities were brought to Australia and new ones developed.

Due to the fact that history is of utmost significance when scrutinising cultural identity (Friedman 79, Larrain 158, Du Gay 26) and in order to better understand Australia's multiculturalism, I will provide a historical overview of Australia's cultural identity formation.

### **3.3.1. Aboriginal Inhabitants**

Long before European settlers set foot on Australia, the country has already been inhabited. Australia has sustained a people and a culture tens of thousands of years old and it is assumed that the earliest settlers, whom we know as Aboriginal Australians deriving from the Latin term *Ab origines* meaning "those who were here from the beginning" (Macintyre 5), arrived through island-hopping journeys from South East Asia to northern shores of Australia about 40,000 to 60,000 years ago (Macintyre 4). This assumption is specified by Clarkson et al. (306) who claim that first evidence of humans in Australia is 65,000 years old. After their arrival in Australia, they spread all over the continent and established themselves in different regions resulting in distinctive peoples and cultures (Rosenfeld 60).

By the time white settlers arrived in Australia, it was estimated that there were about 500 different tribes spread over the country, whereas each tribe numbering from between 100 to 600 people (Cameron 77). Regarding population numbers, there are no adequate records available and speculations range between 300,000 to 750,000 natives living in Australia around 1788, the year of the arrival of the First Fleet (Rowland 228).

However, as soon as white settlers disembarked on Australia's coast, the number of Aboriginal inhabitants decreased severely and according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the recorded Australia's Indigenous population has decreased to 93,000. There are several reasons which are used to explain the rapid decline.

First, one reason causing the devastating decrease in population was the atrocities done to Aboriginal people. Violent conflicts often resulted in a high death toll on the

Aborigines' side, partly because of their technological disadvantage (Dennis et al. 12).

Second, natives escaping the massacres frequently had to deal with imported diseases like smallpox, measles, and influenza, which were the main reason for the high death rate of Aborigines according to Blainey (313). This view is also shared by Docherty (17) and by Morgan (20) who state that smallpox had cost the lives of approximately half of the Aboriginal population in the Sydney Cove region in the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Third, due to the seizure and devastation of lands, native plants, and animals, Aborigines were no longer able to hunt and gather food as they used to, entailing starvation and malnourishment (Rowland 228).

From the beginning onwards, the relationship between settlers and native peoples caused unease which was reinforced by the effects of killings, ravages of imported diseases, social disruption and malnourishment. In order to reconcile with Indigenous people, measures like protection, reservation, conversion or assimilation of Aborigines were established, which was moderately successful (Macintyre 275). The process of reconciliation, which I cannot describe in more detail due to the limitations of the paper, started in the latter period of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is by no means complete.

According to Ponniah's article on BBC news, there were 649,171 Aboriginal people living in Australia in 2016, amounting to 2.8% of Australia's total population. In the course of the reconciliation process, the awareness towards Aboriginal culture has risen and the aim to integrate Aboriginal identity into the national identity has been reinforced (Carter, *Dispossession* 178). Especially since the 1990s, "urban and rural Aboriginal people are active politically and culturally, finding modern expressions for their identity in writing, art and social movements" (Keen 68).

### **3.3.2. British Colonisation**

Aboriginal history is frequently neglected and 'real' history commenced at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with the arrival of white settlers in Australia. Although Portuguese, French and Dutch expeditors had already sailed to Australia in the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, a lack of interest prevented them from populating the country. Hence, it was

the English naval lieutenant James Cook who claimed possession of Australia's eastern part in the name of his monarch, naming it New South Wales (Macintyre 1).

This was particularly convenient for Great Britain, because the loss of the United States, where convicts were deported previously, caused overcrowded gaols and the fear of disease outbreaks (Fletcher 87). Therefore, it was decided to send British convicts to Australia and establish the colony of New South Wales. On 26 January 1788, Arthur Phillip and eleven vessels of the First Fleet, having on board thousand officers, troops, civilian officials and felons, landed in Sydney Cove marking the arrival of the first European settlers in Australia. The notion of Australia as convict country was a problematic issue up until the 1960s and 1970s, since people felt ashamed of their history. However, it is often neglected that numerous "convicts raised themselves up from an unpromising start in Australia to become respectable members of society" (Morgan 16).

### **3.3.3. Immigrants of the Gold Rush**

While the population growth was relatively low within the first period of white settlement, more and more free settlers came to Australia from 1815 onwards – not seldom attracted by the prospect of finding gold.

The gold rush began in 1851 and transformed the convict colonies into prospering cities. In the gold-mining areas, hopeful 'diggers', as they were called, worked together regardless of their origin and contributed to an increase in the scale of economy. Within this context, which was characterised by mateship, respect between diggers, and collective resistance to authority, a unique national identity emerged (Australian Government, *Mateship*). In addition, the gold rush resulted in an influx of free immigrants mainly from Great Britain but also from France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Hungary, North America and especially China (Macintyre 89, Barrett 94f., Jackson 171, Morgan 37). The population's increase is also revealed when comparing the population of 437,655 in 1851 to 1,151,947 in 1861 (Caldwell 23). This shows that within a decade, Australia's population has more than doubled.

Up until 1850, the majority of immigrants was formed by people with Anglo-Celtic background (Morgan 18), but the gold rush attracted immigrants from other countries as well, most notably from China (Macintyre 89). The problem was that the sudden

influx of 'foreigners' did not only lead to comradeship, but also threatened the Australian population and caused "ugly outbreaks of racial violence" (Macintyre 89).

At that time, the Australian population consisted mainly of British and Irish people indicating that the "Australian national identity was almost inseparable from British national identity" (Moran 82). Similarly, Docherty describes Australia as a "transplanted British society" (18) until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Australians with their roots in Great Britain feared that their identity could be replaced with the Asian one, and Asians were generally seen as a "racial and cultural threat" (Morgan 22). Hence, in order to ensure Australia's identity, the Commonwealth of Australia, uniting the six separate British self-governing colonies, was established and a common immigration policy known as *White Australia policy* was introduced.

### **3.3.4. White Australia Policy**

The term White Australia policy comprises various policies that refused non-European people immigration to Australia. The first two acts to ensure a white Australia were the *Immigration Restriction Act* in 1901 and the *Pacific Island Labourers' Act* in 1902 (Morgan 22). These acts met the fear of racial mixing and aimed at excluding Asian people and Pacific Islander from settling in Australia (Macintyre 149).

According to the leader of the Protectionist Party in 1903, Alfred Deaking, White Australia "'is not a surface, but it is a reasoned policy which goes to the roots of national life, and by which the whole of our social, industrial and political organisation is governed'" (Deaking qtd. in Macintyre 148). In other words, White Australia policy tried to avert the danger of foreigners coming to the country, 'devastating' the country's prosperity, establishing their customs and initiating poverty and conflict.

Besides excluding non-Europeans from immigrating to Australia, people with an Anglo-Celtic background were preferred as immigrants (Docherty 147). According to Docherty, White Australia policy was based upon several premises including "the superiority of the white races; the expectation that the Aborigines [...] would eventually die out; and the need to protect Australian workers' living standards from low-cost Asian workers" (147).

Later on, during the Second World War, Prime Minister Charles Bean reinforced White Australia Policy by characterising it as a “vehement effort to maintain a high Western standard of economy, society and culture (necessitating certainly, at that stage, however it might be camouflaged, the rigid exclusion of Oriental peoples)” (5). The objective behind the policies was to oblige immigrants to assimilate Australia’s culture and to abandon their own values and belief systems (Macintyre 220, Kabir, *Edge* 1282). Through White Australia policy, the country uncompromisingly mastered “to produce and reproduce itself as a ‘white nation’, primarily through the exercise of racially discriminatory immigration policies” (Moran 10) reinforcing the picture that people with a non-Anglo-Celtic background are not entitled to settle in Australia.

Although White Australia policy received a predominantly positive echo within the country, not everyone approved Australia’s discriminatory immigration policies. Additionally, the continent was often referred to as “Fortress Australia”, since only a very limited number of people was allowed to enter (Allon 67, 72). Despite the expressed criticism, White Australia policy was only slowly dismantled between 1949 and 1973 opening up to a more multicultural society (Australian Government, *White Australia policy*).

### **3.3.5. Multiculturalism**

As a consequence of the Second World War, Australia’s population was reduced to a relatively small number of 7.4 million inhabitants (Rowland 223). Due to the low numbers, the aim was to increase national population growth, leading to the implementation of policies, which could be summarised with the words of Billy Hughes, minister in the United Australia Party’s Lyons Government at that time: “Australia must [...] populate or perish”.

Hence, the Australian government attempted to attract British people to migrate but due to the lack of support from the British government, Australia had to turn to continental Europe to promote immigration. This measure bore fruits and in the following years, not exclusively people from Great Britain but also from Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia settled in Australia (Macintyre 198). The relaxation of the strict immigration policy is also reflected in the population numbers, as “between 1947 and 1972, Australia’s population almost doubled, from seven-and-a-half to thirteen million” (Moran 107).

However, at the same time, non-European war refugees coming from Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines were sent back to their home countries. Only in 1949, Prime Minister Harold Holt entitled 800 non-European refugees to apply for residency, marking the first step towards opening up White Australia policies (Australian Government, *White Australia policy*). In the following decades, the restrictions were loosened and in 1973, White Australia policy was finally abandoned in accordance with the implementation of amendments that intended

to remove official discrimination against non-British migrants and prohibit all forms of discriminatory treatment on the basis of race and ethnicity. Assimilation was abandoned as incompatible with an increasing diversity that was now celebrated of its enrichment of national life. As monoculture yielded to multiculturalism, so the recognition of difference became an aid to the removal of disadvantage. (Macintyre 232)

The abolishment of White Australia policy enabled people from all around the globe regardless of their race or their origin to obtain Australian citizenship after three years of permanent residence (Morgan 23).

This led to an influx of Asian immigrants who constituted 40 to 50 percent of the annual intake by the middle of the 1980s (Castles and Miller qtd. in Moran 107). According to Morgan, this percentage has not much changed and he states that nowadays the largest group of Australia's immigrants predominantly originate from China, Vietnam, Malaysia, India and Indonesia (26). Scrutinising the aftermath of the abrogation of Australia White policy, it is revealed that the post-war immigration program has led to a tripling of the continent's population, which means that Australia's population had risen since the 1950s to around 21 million in 2010, with people coming from 200 different countries (Australian Government, *About Australia*).

When dealing with Australia's history, it becomes apparent that migration has always been a crucial part of the nation's development. Even though early migration policies have prescribed immigrants to assimilate, this changed successively, especially since the 1970s when restrictions were eased, and people started to bring their own cultures, identities and ideas along with them (Carter, *Dispossession* 230). The final relegation of White Australia policy was followed by policies advocating 'integration' and then even 'multiculturalism', which was in strong contrast to previous immigration policies. Koleth states in her research paper reviewing Australian policy statements: "the focus on 'assimilation' was replaced by a focus on 'integration', and then on to

'multiculturalism' in recognition of the challenges facing migrants in settling into Australian society and acceptance that new arrivals may not want to lose their cultural identity" (3).

In 1975, the *Racial Discrimination Act* was introduced prohibiting racial discrimination and promoting multiculturalism, which was presented as "the basis for migrant settlement, welfare and social-cultural policy in Australia" (Koleth 3). While a few years before, the assimilation principle was at the core of Australia's immigration policy, it was now replaced by cultural pluralism, which was "based on the principles of social cohesion, equality of opportunity and cultural identity" (Australian Ethnic Affairs Council 3). Moreover, the Australian Ethnic Affairs Council stated in a submission to the Australian Population and Immigration Council in 1977 that

[i]n our view, an acceptance of the multicultural nature of Australian society implies that government and established institutions acknowledge the validity of ethnic cultures and respond in terms of ethnic beliefs, values and customs. [...] What we believe Australia should be working towards is not a oneness, but a unity, not a similarity, but a composite, not a melting pot but a voluntary bond of dissimilar people sharing a common political and institutional structure. (Australian Ethnic Affairs council 14)

Moving away from a unified culture to cultural diversity was not welcomed by everyone and also stirred negative emotions in Australia. Albeit multiculturalism being a predominantly positively connotated concept, it had to face harsh criticism, as it was not only seen as an enrichment to society but also as a "threat of the outside world" (Moran 31). Many Australians were still convinced that assimilation was necessary for a functioning society and that cultural diversity would create "a divided, multicultural society with an increasingly fragmenting [sic] sense of identity" (Moran 114). Particularly the historian Geoffrey Blainey expressed his criticism on multi-ethnic policies by referring to Australia as being anti-British and a cluster of tribes (Blainey qtd. in Koleth 28).

Nevertheless, successive governments were not dissuaded from their multicultural immigration programs and endorsed the need of respecting multi-ethnic diversity and of assisting new immigrants to settle in the country. Despite the success of the multicultural immigration program, critical voices remained. These vocal critics of multiculturalism were also present in the Australian electorate like Prime Minister John Howard or Independent candidate Pauline Hanson, who generated anxiety of an Asian invasion in the 1990s (Koleth 29).

In the early 2000s, the Howard Government aimed to foster national unity by revising the process for acquiring Australian citizenship and thereby provoked a debate about Australia's core values of multiculturalism (Koleth 32f.). However, Koleth revealed that conversely to "public and political rhetoric of the time, two national studies about multicultural Australia, commissioned by SBS [=Special Broadcasting Service] and published in 2002 and 2006, found that there was an overwhelmingly positive response to Australia's cultural diversity among a majority of the participants" (Ang et al. qtd. in Koleth 34f.). Moreover, she asserted that the studies' findings imply that "public concerns about multiculturalism contrasted with and distorted the lived experience of intercultural relations in Australia" (Koleth 35).

These two contradicting sides of multiculturalism can be summed up with David Carter's words who asserted that Australia is actually both: "more and less multicultural than it thinks it is". On the one hand, Australia is

less multicultural than the government sometimes projects. Governments like to have this picture of Australia as this harmonious multicultural family. That leaves out the account completely in which there is still a dominant Anglo-Australian culture. So in that sense, we are less multicultural than that popular, official version. On the other hand, I think we are more multicultural than what lots of people think. Lots of people tend to think there is a kind of Australian culture and then we have a few little minority groups around the fringes. But that's not the way it happens here. The levels of intermarriage, integration and so on are very high. Some people make the distinction between official multiculturalism and ordinary multiculturalism. And ordinary multiculturalism might be the fact that your next door neighbour is Chinese or that your son has a Vietnamese girlfriend or your work colleagues are Greek, Italian, or whatever; in ways that we hardly notice. It's almost a non-issue in some ways. (Carter, *Interview*)

Clearly, the Anglo-Australian culture is still paramount, which is often disregarded by the government for the sake of praising Australia's hybridity (Carter, *Interview*). However, at the same time, Australia *is* in fact multicultural, which becomes apparent in ordinary life referring to daily interactions of an ethnically diverse society (Carter, *Dispossession* 351). Yet, it does not strike people, because it is perceived as natural to interact in everyday life with "Greek, Vietnamese, English, Chinese, Kiwi and Turkish neighbours or colleagues" (Carter, *Dispossession* 352).

One reason why cultural diversity often does not stand out is because of migrants' ongoing assimilation. Although Australia has moved from an assimilation to a multiculturalism policy – as outlined above –, there is still a certain expectation

prevalent that immigrants should assimilate to the Australian way of life. Murray Goot revealed in his article “More ‘relaxed and comfortable’: Public Opinion on Immigration under Howard” that Australians endorse both assimilationist as well as multicultural perspectives (50). In other words, migrants should adopt the Australian lifestyle while not feeling the pressure of abandoning their own culture (Goot 50). He stresses that successful integration and the endorsement of specific values of one’s native culture are not an irresolvable paradox (Goot 50).

As we can see, Australia has always had an immigration background, starting with human migration to the continent around 65,000 years ago when Aboriginal ancestors arrived from South East Asia (Clarkson et al. 306). After European explorations of the continent in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, first British settlements were established in 1788. The gold rush in the 1850s did not only attract people from Great Britain but also from continental Europe and China. However, in order to prevent non-Europeans from coming to Australia, the government established the White Australia Policy, which was only abolished after the Second World War paving the way for Australia’s multiculturalism. This plurality of cultures has also had a great impact on the definition of Australia’s cultural identity. While ACI was regarded as thoroughly British in the beginning of the colonial period, this view has become obsolete, particularly since the post-Second World War immigration. People from different backgrounds migrated to Australia and brought with them distinct cultures, belief systems and identities that shaped the country’s national identity. In order to understand ACI, it is essential to understand its multifaceted nature, as outlined by Carter. He affirms that in order to grasp Australian cultures and identities, it is important to become aware of “the dynamic between Indigenous, settler, and immigrant cultures and populations” (Carter, *Interview*), implying that the different cultural identities and their interplay continuously contribute to form Australian cultural identity.

With all the different cultures prevalent in the country, “Australian national identity [...] has become more complicated, even multifaceted” (Moran 125). Instead of perceiving ethnic diversity as a threat that undermines the feeling of cultural belonging, Moran believes that multiculturalism “does not mean the death of national identity, but [...] its realignment” (126). In other words, multiculturalism should not be

understood as dissolution of ACI, on the contrary it should rather be seen as an enhancement.

Especially in the 1980s and 1990s, this stance was promoted by the government, which was characterised by “strong efforts to place multiculturalism within a nationalist narrative where cultural diversity and tolerance were part of Australian national identity” (Koleth 11). Besides multiculturalism, senator Jim Short, shadow Minister of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, identified other elements like egalitarianism, a non-discriminatory attitude and tolerance as elements that assist in discerning an “Australianness, an identity if you like, that distinguishes Australia as a nation and its inhabitants as Australians, despite our different backgrounds, including ethnic racial or religious backgrounds, different tastes and beliefs” (Short). Although multiculturalism was introduced as an immigrant policy, it affected all Australians and became “a pillar of Australia’s nation-building narratives” (Koleth 54). Policies of multiculturalism enabled people from around the globe to settle in Australia for decades and “today there are multiple generations of Australians of various cultural backgrounds who have grown up in societies marked by diversity, and growing global connectedness, and who as a result have increasingly complex claims of identity and belonging” (Koleth 54).

As shown, claims of belonging are often not straight-forward due to a variety of identities that one feels culturally akin to. Nevertheless, Australia’s cultural identity aims to provide a sense of nationhood and cultural belonging that every Australian is able to relate to, as his/her culture is also reflected in and has contributed to the concept of ACI. As Carter puts it: “Although we will never meet or even hear about more than a tiny percentage of other Australians, somehow we feel or ‘imagine’ that we share something fundamental with them – a national identity – and that we belong to the same community” (*Dispossession* 7).

#### **4. From Theory to Practice**

So far, we have seen that many books and EFL teaching material are based on American and British culture and often neglect inter alia Australian culture. As already discussed, it is impossible to teach all aspects of a culture and therefore, the thesis’ topic was narrowed down to teaching Australian cultural identity, which was thoroughly explained in section 3. Due to the lack of resources, teachers often have

to create their own teaching materials and the most accessible source for materials constitutes literary texts. This means that it is necessary to review ways how Australian literary texts can be integrated into language classrooms.

To this end, we will look at this matter from another perspective, namely how Australia treats teaching culture and literature in upper secondary. Hence, the Austrian and the Australian curricula are compared in order to review what the legal framework concerning teaching literature in Austria looks like on the one hand, and to draw upon ideas from the Australian curriculum that could be convenient for the Austrian EFL classroom when it comes to teaching ACI and Australian culture and literature, on the other hand.

After comparing the two curricula, I will use the input to create hands-on material concerning teaching ACI, which aligns with the guidelines and restrictions outlined by the Austrian curriculum. This facilitates teachers' preparation, as they do not have to create materials themselves, but are provided with ideas regarding which texts to use, with some background information on the texts, and with specific activities that can be used in the classroom straightaway.

#### **4.1. Comparing the Austrian and the Australian Upper Secondary English Curriculum**

Due to the shortage of guidelines and resources concerning Australian culture and literature available to EFL teachers in Austria, it is essential to consider alternative ways to obtain ideas and materials. One of these alternative ways is to scrutinise the Australian curriculum, to review what or which aspects Australian teachers incorporate into their English lessons and to take over ideas that could be integrated into Austrian EFL teaching. Before treating the Australian curriculum in detail, however, the Austrian curriculum is examined in order to point out the legal frame for teachers and to reveal what they are supposed to do in FL teaching with special regard to intercultural education.

In order to analyse the Austrian curriculum, I will draw upon the website of the *Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research* ("BMBWF: Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung"). For the Australian one, I will use the website *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority* (ACARA), which

offers curricular prescriptions on a national basis to be implemented in schools by state and territory curriculum and school authorities. Ultimately, it is the school authorities' responsibility to incorporate the guidelines of the national curriculum and to decide about the extent and the timing of the intended Australian Curriculum into their curriculum experienced by learners (ACARA). This means that the realisation of the national curriculum in schools varies from state to state and sometimes even from school to school. Conversely in Austria, the national curriculum constitutes the necessary guidance for schools in order to ensure standardisation and permeability within school systems. In other words, the Austrian national curriculum functions as an authoritarian foundation that is specified for different school types and leaves only limited options for adaptation.

First, the thesis scrutinises the Austrian curriculum – or to be more precise – the syllabus for FL teaching and discusses the four competences reading, writing, listening, and speaking, as well as teaching principles and didactic principles. Second, an analysis of the English learning area of the senior secondary Australian curriculum will be given, before drawing upon its four subjects including English, Essential English, English as an Additional Language or Dialect, and Literature, upon two cross-curriculum priorities, and upon the general capability intercultural understanding.

#### **4.1.1. Austrian Curriculum**

In Austria, there are various syllabuses designed according to the different school types and the different levels of learners. Due to the limited scope of the paper, this thesis will concentrate on the general upper secondary (“Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule”). There is a distinct syllabus for each subject taught in Austrian schools and although critically reviewing the entire curriculum would be of high interest, the limited word count of the paper will not allow this, which is the reason that this paper will focus on the syllabus of foreign languages (FL).

As the name already suggests, all foreign languages regardless whether they are the first or the second foreign language learnt are comprised in one syllabus. This implies that the requirements and contents of the foreign languages English, French, Italian, Russian, Spanish, Czech, Slovene, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Hungarian, Slovakian, and Polish are treated the same. The syllabus for FL provides a general

overview of teaching principles, contributions to education sector, didactic principles, educational remit, and competence levels. Given that the thesis provides an approach of teaching Australian cultural identity through literature, it will predominantly focus on the competence of reading and components of intercultural education will be specifically analysed. In so doing, we will be able to see what has to be taught in Austrian FL classrooms from a legal perspective and the teacher's possibilities and restrictions when teaching culture. Additionally, positive points of the FL syllabus as well as drawbacks will be highlighted and suggestions for improvement will be offered.

#### **4.1.1.1. Basic Competences**

The overall goal of foreign language teaching in Austrian schools is stated at the beginning of the syllabus. It says that students should be enabled to deal with basic communicative requirements of the social life in the target language and that they should have obtained sufficient competences in listening, reading, speaking and writing in order to linguistically and culturally master various private, professional and public situations (RIS 124). Speaking of those four core competences, they are described in more detail at the end of the foreign language syllabus, whereby a distinction between first FL and second FL is made. Moreover, the description of the competences is divided into the four learning years with a separate explanation for each semester.

In regard to reading competence, it is stated that already in the 5<sup>th</sup> form students should be able to grasp the basic meaning and to understand the main points of simple literary texts whose topic they are familiar with (RIS 128). The reading competence's outline of the 6<sup>th</sup> form is relatively similar and the 7<sup>th</sup> form states that learners should be able to read literary texts individually and to understand them even if they are more complex (RIS 128). In the 8<sup>th</sup> form, students should be capable of dealing with a broad variety of texts, including literary works, and of grasping the main idea of the text as well as its implicit meanings. For teaching literary texts in the FL classroom this means that in the 5<sup>th</sup> form literary texts employed should be fairly simple and that learners need sufficient supervision when dealing with it and by the end of the general upper secondary, students should be able to deal with literary texts on their own and should understand the meaning behind.

#### 4.1.1.2. Teaching Principles

Apart from the four basic competences, the Austrian curriculum highlights teaching principles and inter alia stresses the importance of *intercultural competence*. The BMBWF states that on the basis of intercultural topics, students should be encouraged to foster their awareness of different cultures and lifestyles (RIS 124). To this end, it is crucial that cultural stereotypes and prevailing clichés are dismantled, that similarities and differences between cultures are recognised, and that students critically deal with personal experiences and with the circumstances in Austria (RIS 124). The paragraph on intercultural competence in the FL syllabus is kept rather short. The reason for this might be that essential teaching principles like intercultural competence which apply to all subjects are already outlined separately and are, therefore, not dealt with in detail in each syllabus.

Since this paper advocates teaching values and aspects of cultural identity, it is beneficial to take a closer look at the principle of intercultural education. The principle of intercultural education was introduced in the Austrian curriculum with the explanation that the social, cultural and linguistic plurality in our globalised and individualised society leads to an increasing heterogeneity of lifestyles, which is also reflected in the classrooms (BMBWF). Intercultural education grounds on an open-minded and diverse concept and enables teachers and students to engage with different cultures that shape the identity of the individual and of groups (BMBWF). Moreover, it is a holistic concept which allows teachers and students regardless of their social background, age, gender, etc. to deal with plurality in a multicultural society and it enforces the view of a heterogeneous group instead of a notion promoting “we and the others” (BMBWF). The principle conveys a dynamic concept of identities, questions stereotypes and generalisations, encourages respect and contributes to an anti-racist attitude (BMBWF).

Even though intercultural education was implemented in the curriculum already in 1992, it becomes increasingly relevant every day. Especially in the last few years, the changes in society due to migration movements from the global south to Europe and due to extensive emigration from the countryside to cities provoked pertinence regarding the issue of intercultural education. This superordinate teaching principle should always be born in mind when teaching foreign cultures in the Austrian EFL classroom, as it can be used to respond to challenges as well as opportunities that

result from plurality and to convey essential values like respectful contact with each other.

The aspect of intercultural education is not only embedded in general teaching principles, but also in the BMBWF's interdisciplinary competences. Interdisciplinary competences link teaching principles with their claimed competences; in this case, intercultural education is linked with intercultural competences (BMBWF). The BMBWF provides a map of competences regarding interculturality ("Kompetenzenlandkarte Interkulturalität"), which explains in detail what this competence embodies:

- to *acquire, reflect, and transfer knowledge*, which means to discover similarities between cultures, to view migration as a multifaceted phenomenon, to analyse one's own living situation and possibilities to change it, to question pre-existing attitudes and perspectives, to be aware of stereotypes and to evaluate measures concerning migration policy;
- to *develop an own attitude*, which means to show respect and appreciation towards other people with different backgrounds and lifestyles and to understand that everyone should be treated equally;
- to *evaluate, decide, and act*, which means to take a stance regarding other positions and to argument them, to provoke conflicts and realise at the same time that the reason for these conflicts does not necessarily have to have a cultural background, to react to racist and Eurocentric stereotypes, and to develop civil courage and raise one's voice for disadvantaged people<sup>1</sup>.

This list nicely summarises the skills regarding intercultural competence that students should acquire. Although teaching this competence is substantial across all disciplines, it is of major importance in FL teaching, since FL teaching is based on the extensive engagement with another culture. Intercultural competence starts with the teacher who has to take these aspects into consideration when teaching, which ties in with avoiding stereotypes and fostering students' cultural awareness as outlined in section 2.1. It is the teacher's responsibility to set a good example which

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<sup>1</sup>cf. "Kompetenzen: Interkulturalität – Leben in der Migrationsgesellschaft" ([https://bildung.bmbwf.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/uek/interkult\\_kl\\_25729.pdf?61ecj4](https://bildung.bmbwf.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/uek/interkult_kl_25729.pdf?61ecj4)) Auszug Interkulturalität – Leben in der Migrationsgesellschaft aus der Kompetenzlandkarte für Unterrichtsprinzipien und Bildungsanliegen (BMUKK 2013), korrigierte Fassung November 2016

can be foremost achieved by not labelling students and by professionally handling the heterogeneity of the students.

Moreover, the BMBWF points out that intercultural learning is often regarded as a contribution to the harmonious cohabitation of locals and migrants. However, this often leads to the fact that one establishes implicit notions of a majority culture and of a minority culture which are treated as opposite poles. Following this logic, especially students with migration background are often assigned to a certain culture of origin although they might not even be familiar with it (BMBWF). This fosters the tendency of viewing students as representatives of certain cultures instead of perceiving them as individuals and positively highlighting cultural similarities and specifics (BMBWF). Although it might seem obvious that treating students equally regardless of their origin, cultural background, etc. is fundamental, it is good that the curriculum highlights this point and reminds teachers of its importance.

Apart from functioning as a role model, it is also resilient that teachers *actively* pass on intercultural competence to students. This begins with minor things like making students aware that all behaviour or action is culturally influenced. For example, everyone has to eat but how and what we eat is strongly influenced by the cultural context that we find ourselves in. Further, it is natural that people have certain feelings, but again it depends on the culture how we express sadness, anger, and happiness.

In addition, teachers should employ specific activities that aim at the development of students' intercultural competence. The goals of these activities can range from encouraging students to deal with their cultural attitudes to sparking controversial discussions. A list of prototypical activities was designed and published by the BMBWF<sup>2</sup>. These activities vary in length, aim at different age group, and can be employed in various subjects. The first activity presented in this list is "What do we have in common?" and it can be used for younger and older pupils equally. With this activity, all students receive a table with statements concerning preferences and experiences and they have to find other students who match those statements. The activity aims at revealing that every person albeit being unique has a lot in common with others. Another activity trains students to dismantle racial prejudices and

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<sup>2</sup>cf. [https://bildung.bmbwf.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/uek/interkult\\_pa\\_25733.pdf?61ecj4](https://bildung.bmbwf.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/uek/interkult_pa_25733.pdf?61ecj4)

prevailing clichés against people with migration background and to react and answer adequately.

These activities created by the BMBWF constitute very good hands-on material to foster intercultural awareness, which can be used in various subjects including the English classroom. However, not all areas of the Austrian curriculum provide such clear guidelines. This is also the case with FL didactic principles, as discussed in the following.

#### **4.1.1.3. Didactic Principles**

The syllabus lists didactic principles that should be achieved in FL teaching (RIS 125ff.). One of these principles is called *countries and cultures* and states that on the basis of insights into society, civilisation, politics, media, economy, culture, and art of the target language areas, a basic inter- and trans-cultural understanding should be obtained (RIS 126). Since this description does not aim at one specific foreign language, it is obviously not mentioned which language areas to include into teaching.

For the English subject, this means that “the target language area” can be any country where English is spoken and it is not even clarified whether it needs to be an area where English is spoken as L1. Because of the description’s vagueness, it is up to the English teacher to decide which countries are dealt with in the language classroom. Although there is a slowly increasing trend to include a bigger variety of English-speaking nations in the EFL classroom, the most prominent choices are Great Britain and the United States, as thoroughly analysed in section 2.1.

Furthermore, the syllabus stresses the usage of manifold topics in order for the students to acquire an extensive lexical repertoire, such as “me and my environment”, “work and leisure”, “arts in form of literature, music and fine arts”, and “cultural and intercultural aspects” (RIS 127). However, these topics are not further specified and once again, it depends on the teacher which issues to include in the classroom. The mere hint that we receive is that the different subject areas should be thematised through as many diverse sources as possible, and when using foreign language texts particular attention should be paid to literary works (RIS 127).

However, the curriculum does not provide practical guidelines for how those principles are achieved and neither does it offer, for instance, definite literary works that should be considered when teaching a FL, as it is done in the Australian curriculum (cf. section 4.1.2.). This is not only the case for FL teaching but holds true for other subjects as well. As a result, the syllabus functions rather as a framework or as a point of reference for teachers. On the one hand, this leaves the teacher with a great deal of autonomy and considerable freedom to decide what to include into teaching and on the other hand, this creative freedom also entails an extensive workload for the teacher, as he/she has to come up with topics as well as with teaching materials.

This two-fold nature of the Austrian curriculum is also thematised in the newspaper article of *Der Standard* "Lehrpläne: Viel Freiheit für die Lehrer" written by Lisa Aigner. Eckehardt Quin, chairman of the AHS-Lehrergewerkschaft, describes this freedom as a boon and a ban at the same time (qtd. in Aigner). He uses a metaphor and compares the Austrian curriculum to an extensive buffet where you are provided with an enormous choice and you have to resolve for yourself which areas to focus on in teaching (qtd. in Aigner). This leads to the fact that each teacher has his/her own principles according to which teaching is conducted. However, this is an inevitable course of events, if the curriculum does not offer more restrictive guidelines.

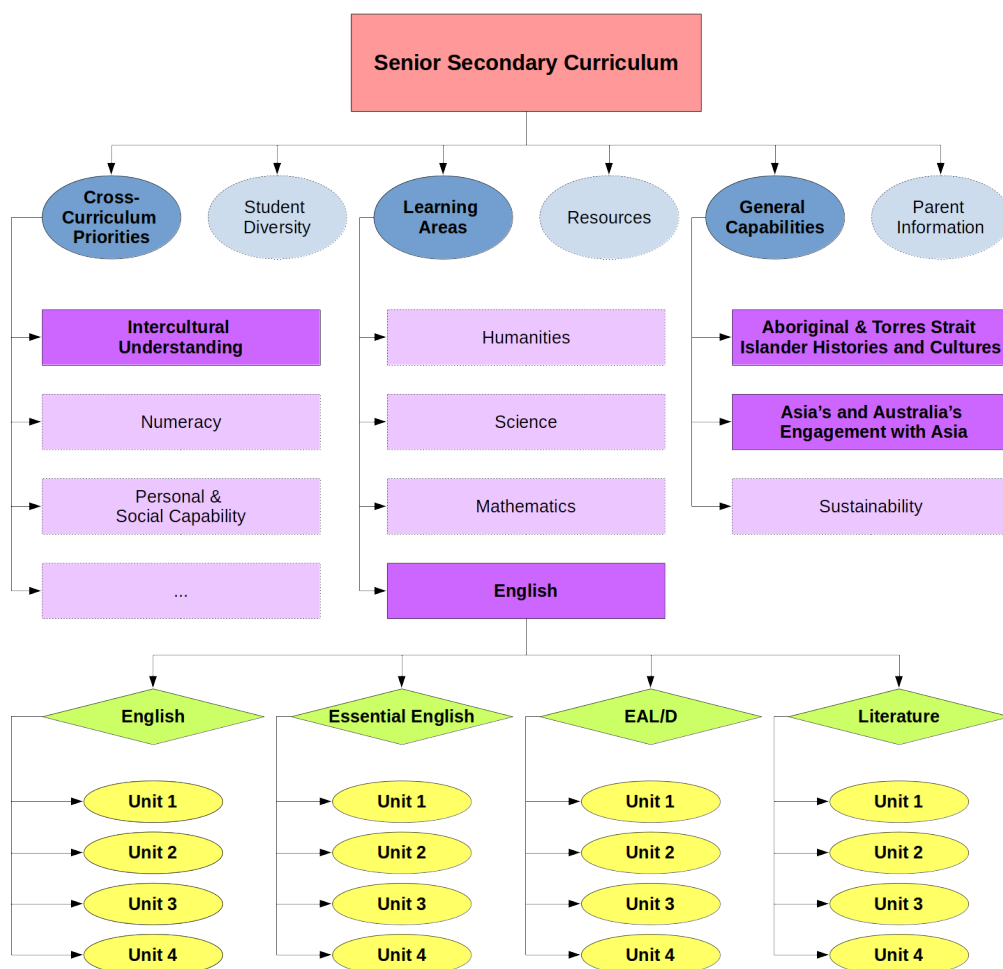
In addition, Quin asserts that through a more definite curriculum which included more content-related aspects students would have more similar prerequisites, especially in terms of the standardised Matura (qtd. in Aigner). In this regard, he refers to France as being a role model, since the French curriculum for the learning area French dictates a certain booklist for each year that has to be read (qtd. in Aigner). However, the idea of prescribing books and employing definite teaching methods are in strong contrast to the current Austrian curriculum, since it takes away the entire freedom of teachers. Hence, the Australian approach of providing suggestive titles of literary works without prescribing them constitutes an advantageous alternative.

Due to the fact that all foreign languages are comprised in one syllabus, it is clear that the statements have to be suitable for each FL and cannot tackle the content of a specific FL. Therefore, it would be beneficial, if the BMBWF established a separate syllabus for each FL, or at least to distinguish between first foreign languages and second foreign languages. By this, more practical guidelines concerning content

could be outlined and the challenges of each FL could be addressed separately instead of formulating the syllabus in a very general manner. Since this is not the case (yet), I will draw upon the Australian curriculum and analyse its aims and goals of teaching, scrutinise its teaching content and eventually use some of its ideas for the Austrian EFL classroom.

#### 4.1.2. Australian Curriculum

On a general note, the Austrian and the Australian curriculum share many common features, bearing great potential for cross-curriculum exchange. In regard to the learning area English, the objectives described in the Australian curriculum are similar to the ones outlined in the Austrian curriculum, albeit offering more detailed information. However, let us take a closer look at the Australian curriculum first.



**Fig.1:** Simplified Representation of the Australian Senior Secondary Curriculum

As Figure 1 shows, the four main learning areas of the senior secondary Australian curriculum are *English*, *Mathematics*, *Science*, and *Humanities and Social Sciences*. This paper will focus on the learning area English, which is presented in four subjects sharing common aspects, namely *English*, *English as an Additional Language or Dialect*, *Essential English*, and *Literature*. Further, each subject is specified for four learning units, whereas unit 3 and 4 are cognitively more challenging than unit 1 and 2. In comparison, the Austrian syllabus for FL applies to all levels from the 5<sup>th</sup> till the 8<sup>th</sup> form equally and the only time when they are treated distinctively is when it comes to the four basic competences reading, listening, writing and speaking. The division into units does not only make the curriculum more lucid but also more practical in terms of usage. The unit's standards and goals are exactly specified and the unit starts out with an overview, followed by the learning outcome that reads "[b]y the end of this unit, students..." (ACARA) and by content descriptions, which are similar to Austrian competence levels. Apart from the structure, the four senior secondary Australian curriculum subjects also share common features regarding their assessment criteria and objectives and they slightly differ in terms of content.

One main commonality is that each subject draws upon a wide range of literature, which is used as main source for teaching English. The texts used as basis for teaching employ everyday language of personal experience as well as complex and specialised language and derive from a variety of contexts including earlier times, popular culture and different cultures (ACARA). Depending on the units of study, on the cohorts and on the level of difficulty, the teacher chooses the form of the text, ranging from novels, poetry, short stories, plays, and (non-)fiction to multimodal texts (ACARA). Further, the teacher might also only use parts of the literary texts (ACARA).

Now the question arises: What is actually meant by 'literary texts'? According to the ACARA, "[l]iterary texts' refer to past and present texts across a range of cultural contexts that are valued for their form and style and are recognised as having enduring or artistic value". Moreover, the curriculum stresses the dynamic and evolving nature of the term literary texts as well as the texts' personal, social, cultural and aesthetic appeal (ACARA). As delineated before, the Australian curriculum advocates literary texts as the main source of teaching material.

Although the Austrian curriculum also mentions the importance of using literary sources in the FL classroom, it is not as prominent as in Australian English classes. In Austrian classrooms, many didactic instead of literary texts are used in order to convey linguistic structures and grammatical features, to provide new vocabulary, or to expose students to a foreign culture. This might make sense regarding younger learners who do not possess sufficient lexical competence to deal with an original text, but in regard to intermediate and advanced learners, it would not be a problem language-wise to use – eventually slightly modified – literary texts. However, it is still common to find didactic texts in EFL textbooks in upper secondary instead of using literary texts to convey didactic aims and at the same time to expose learners to authentic material.

This idea is also asserted by Khatib et al., who affirm that when dealing with literary texts, students have to engage with language aimed at native speakers and thereby become familiar with various linguistic forms, communicative functions and meanings (13). Moreover, Cruz argues against artificial grammar exercises, since they do not have a real-life connection as opposed to literary texts (2). This aligns with Lindsay Williams' perspective who also stresses the use of literary texts to foster students' linguistic competence. At the conference of "Teaching with Fantasy" that I attended on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2018, he gave practical examples of how to use fantasy literature to teach grammar. For example, he promoted using part of Sean Williams' book *The Stone Mage and the Sea* in order to teach modal verbs and to show how these modal verbs create (un)certainities and probabilities in the story.

Certainly, it can be argued that there is a major difference between English classes in Australia and in Austria, since in the latter country English is a foreign language. But this argument can be weakened by showing that the Australian subject English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) also draws its main resources from literature.

Another commonality is that all subjects' objectives involve the ongoing development of students' knowledge, understanding, and skills in listening, speaking, reading, viewing, and writing; the students' capacity to create a variety of texts intended for different purposes, audiences and contexts; and they involve students' understanding and appreciation of distinct uses of language (ACARA).

Besides these core aims shared by all subjects, they also differ in some regards. The differences lie in the focus on how knowledge and skills are fostered and in the contexts in which they are applied (ACARA). In short, each of the four subjects addresses, additionally to the core objectives, distinctive elements of the study of the English learning area. The following sections will briefly touch upon the four subjects and their focuses and will compare them to the Austrian curriculum. Although many objectives will be similar to the objectives stated in the Austrian syllabus, they will be outlined in order to make those commonalities visible and to show the great possibilities of interchangeable contents. Further, the sections will scrutinise potential benefits of the Australian curriculum that could be integrated into EFL teaching in Austria.

#### **4.1.2.1. English**

The focus of the English subject is on the development of students' analytical, creative, and critical thinking and on the amelioration of their communicative skills in each language competence (ACARA). Learners are encouraged to deal with increasingly complex language and texts from their contemporary world, with texts from the past and with texts from Australia and other cultures (ACARA).

In so doing, students obtain the competence to “evaluate the purpose, stylistic qualities and conventions of literary and non-literary texts and enjoy creating their own imaginative, interpretive and analytical responses” (ACARA). This is also summarised in form of three main objectives stating that the English subject aims to enrich students’

- “understanding of the use of language for communication”,
- “appreciation and creation of sustained interpretive, persuasive and imaginative texts in a range of modes”, and students’
- “engagement in critical analysis and reflection” (ACARA).

These objectives are outlined for each unit in more detail. However, they will not be discussed further at this point, as they are considerably similar to the objectives pointed out in the Austrian FL syllabus and do not constitute new ideas for teaching English in upper secondary.

#### **4.1.2.2. English as an Additional Language or Dialect**

English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) is very much similar to English as a foreign language (EFL), as we know it in Austria. According to the ACARA, EAL/D concentrates on language learning and the advancement of language and literacy skills in Standard Australian English (SAE). In other words, the focus of EAL/D lies on explicit teaching of the structure, linguistic aspects and sociolinguistic and sociocultural components of SAE. This can be compared to the language-related communicative competences (“Sprachbezogene kommunikative Kompetenzen”) of the Austrian syllabus for FL teaching, which emphasises teaching of phonological and non-verbal language features as well as orthographic, lexical, grammatical, semantic, sociolinguistic, and sociocultural competence (BMBWF).

Since English is not the first language of EAL/D learners, they will initially explore “how learning in and through English language and literature influences their own and others’ personal, social and cultural identities and thought processes” (ACARA). The attention attached to reflecting how learning English as a FL influences students’ identities would also be a good point to incorporate into the Austrian curriculum. In so doing, students would be able to review what it means for them to learn another language and what impact this will have on them.

Moreover, EAL/D learners are encouraged to use a variety of registers of spoken and written SAE. As a result, they will be able to successively communicate in different situations and for various purposes and eventually become competent cross-cultural English language users (ACARA). The Australian curriculum suggests enabling students to deal with numerous spoken, written and multimodal texts and encouraging them to create texts themselves with distinct audiences and purposes in mind. In other words, the objective of EAL/D is to enrich students’

- “understanding of the relationships between language, texts and ways of thinking and knowing in SAE”,
- “ability to communicate ideas, feelings, attitudes and information appropriately in and through SAE across the curriculum areas”, and students’
- “inferential comprehension, critical analysis and reflection skills” (ACARA).

Again, the objectives are further outlined in the units of EAL/D. However, as the content descriptions are very much alike with the descriptions of competences and principles in the Austrian FL syllabus, they will not be scrutinised in detail.

#### **4.1.2.3. Essential English**

The subject of Essential English is relatively similar to English with the difference that Essential English focuses on the development of literacy and language skills that are particularly useful in everyday, social, and community contexts. Although students analyse and review various oral, written and multimodal texts, the literary resource is still valued but takes more of a back seat in this subject. As this subject aims at the advancement of students' abilities to understand, evaluate and communicate successfully in various situations, it can be regarded as a more practical English course compared to the other subjects (ACARA).

The overall subject's aim is that learners become competent, confident and engaged users of the English language in everyday, community, social, further education, training and workplace contexts (ACARA). Additionally to the core objectives mentioned before, Essential English ameliorates students'

- "capacity to use and apply language and information effectively, confidently and creatively in vocational, community and academic contexts",
- "understanding of the ways in which text structure, stylistic feature and register combine to make meaning and influence responses", and students'
- "proficiency in using and creating multimodal, literary and digital texts" (ACARA).

As can be seen, communicative competence in different modes and contexts is the overall objective of Essential English. This aligns very much with the major aim of the Austrian FL syllabus, which is thoroughly discussed in section 4.1.3.1.

#### **4.1.2.4. Literature**

The fourth subject of the English learning area, Literature, is aiming attention at the engagement with and at the analysis of literary works (ACARA). This subject deals with literary works involving fiction, non-fiction, and poetry and with authors coming from various different countries, including writers from Great Britain (Jane Austen,

Shakespeare, John Keats, T.S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, Edmund de Wall), Canada (Rohinton Mistry, Margaret Atwood), the United States (Amy Tan, Tobias Wolff), Anglo-Ireland (Jonathan Swift), New Zealand (Jane Campion) and of course Australia (Patrick White, Hannie Rayson, Kim Scott, Nicki Greenberg, Gwen Harwood, Romaine Moreton, Ouyang Yu, John Kinsella, Anna Funder, David Marr, Bruce Scates, Trevor Graham). According to the ACARA, students are enabled to deal with a variety of authors and literary texts and are familiarised with many distinct cultures. This variety of texts and authors would also be desirable in the Austrian English language classroom instead of using primarily literature from the US and the UK.

However, when I was attending the conference “Teaching with Fantasy” organised by the AustLit team on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February, I had the opportunity to interview various upper secondary teachers from Queensland who revealed that in practice things differ considerably. They explained that when employing literature in teaching, they mainly use American and British literature as well due to the works’ popularity and availability. This problem was also pointed out by Lindsay Williams, who mentioned that in Australia, they are still “having this difficulty of negotiating a balance between overseas literature and Australian literature”. Moreover, Williams explained that in 2020, Queensland is going to introduce external exams for all year 12 students and in the learning area of English, eight compulsory novels were set, whereby only two of them are Australian and neither of them are Indigenous novels. This reveals that AustLit is marginalised not only overseas but also within its country of origin. Furthermore, if AustLit had already been incorporated into Australia’s teaching to a sufficient extent, there would not be the need for conferences on promoting AustLit in classrooms. This implies that AustLit teaching in Australia has to face similar challenges, also if it might be on a smaller scale.

According to ACARA, literature enriches students’ understanding of how texts shape perceptions of the world and how they allow readers to dive into imaginative worlds. Additionally, it fosters learners’ competence of literary analysis, of critically responding to various texts from different periods and from different countries, and of creating imaginative and analytical texts themselves (ACARA). The definite aims are summarised in form of descriptors saying that the subject of Literature should enrich students’

- “ability to respond personally, critically and imaginatively to a range of literary texts drawn from Australian and other historical, contemporary and cultural contexts and traditions”,
- “capacity to contest complex and challenging ideas in order to form their own interpretations informed by a range of critical perspectives”, and students’
- “capacity to critically reflect on connections, resonances and patterns of language that are shared between texts” (ACARA).

This shows that the subject of Literature aims at educating students in the way that they become independent, innovative and creative thinkers who reflect on literary texts, explore ideas, concepts, and attitudes, review perspectives, challenge ideas and interpretations and develop personal preferences towards genres, authors, and texts (ACARA). Moreover, an extensive part of the subject Literature is also dedicated to creative writing in order for students to create literature themselves. Nevertheless, I will leave aside the aspect of creative writing, which is part of the writing competence in the Austrian EFL syllabus, since the thesis will concentrate on teaching literature.

In comparison, the aspect of literature only plays a minor role in the Austrian curriculum and is not separately outlined but part of the reading competence. The section on reading competence points out the importance of including literary works additionally to didactic texts. However, apart from emphasising the usage of literature, there is not much advice on how literary works should be incorporated into teaching. This is different with the Australian curriculum where the subject Literature – like the other subjects – is divided into four units, specifically outlining the goals that student should achieve.

While the objectives of the first two units are fairly similar to objectives of the Austrian FL syllabus, the ones of unit three and four seem to be more challenging. Especially the third unit is of particular interest for the thesis, since its main objective is that students “understand the relationship between language, culture and identity” (ACARA). This is achieved by encouraging students to critically analyse values and ideas presented in and through texts, to compare texts across contexts, modes and forms, to evaluate their impact on the audience and to create personal and analytical responses (ACARA). This is again summed up in form of learning outcomes and I will

present the most important ones in regard to the thesis, which state that students should be able to

- “evaluate the ways in which literary texts represent culture and identity including
  - how readers are influenced to respond to their own and others’ cultural experiences (ACELR037)
  - the power of language to represent ideas, events and people in particular ways (ACELR038)
  - how cultural perceptions are challenged or supported (ACELR039)
  - the ways in which authors represent Australian culture, place and identity both to Australians and the wider world (ACELR040)” (ACARA) and to
- “evaluate and reflect on how representations of culture and identity vary in different texts and forms of texts including
  - the relationship between significant historical and cultural events and figures, and their representations in literary texts (ACELR041)” (ACARA).

The incorporation of these objectives into the Austrian FL syllabus, or to be more precise into the competence of reading, could be considered a milestone. Hence, EFL teachers would be advised to use a variety of English literature from different countries and cultures.

In chapter 4.2., I will provide further instructions on how these learning outcomes can be achieved. Before, I will draw upon one last aspect of the Australian curriculum which is not part of the English learning area but still contributes considerably to intercultural education, namely cross-curriculum priorities with special attention to the first two priorities which are *history and culture of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders* and *Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia*.

#### **4.1.2.5. Cross-Curriculum Priorities and Intercultural Understanding**

Similar to the Austrian teaching principle *Intercultural Education*, the Australian Curriculum stresses *Cross-Curriculum Priorities* comprising three key areas that need to be addressed in schools to positively impact individuals and Australia as a whole

(ACARA). These key areas which have become priorities in the national curriculum are: history and culture of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia, and sustainability (cf. Figure 1).

The priorities operate on a national, regional and global dimension that “enrich the curriculum through development of considered and focused content that fits naturally within learning areas” (ACARA). Further, they provide learners with tools and language to understand the world at various levels and they facilitate the delivery of learning area content, the development of knowledge and the fostering of skills in relation to the three areas (ACARA). Like teaching principles in the Austrian curriculum, cross-curriculum priorities are addressed through subjects and are not considered as subjects themselves. For example, they are identified when “they offer opportunities to add depth and richness to student learning in content elaborations” (ACARA) and their presence varies according to the relevance of the subject.

Regarding this thesis, the first two priorities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures and Asia and Australia's Engagement with Asia, are of particular interest. The former aims at closing the gap in learning outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students and hence, the Australian curriculum highlights two objectives, namely

- “that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are able to see themselves, their identities and their cultures reflected in the curriculum of each of the learning areas, can fully participate in the curriculum and can build their self-esteem” (ACARA) and
- “that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Histories and Cultures cross-curriculum priority is designed for all students to engage in reconciliation, respect and recognition of the world's oldest continuous living cultures” (ACARA).

This priority is twofold: On the one hand, the curriculum promotes the inclusion of Indigenous students and their background into the school system and on the other hand, it emphasises the appreciation of Indigenous cultures by all students regardless of their ancestries. This provides the opportunity for every student to learn about Australia's history, the country that they feel affiliated to. As mentioned previously, the priorities are not treated as subjects themselves but as cross-

curriculum principles. Thus, the curriculum explains how the priorities can be dealt with in the different learning areas. In English, this is mainly achieved through the employment of literature (ACARA). The employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander literature includes “storytelling traditions (oral narrative) and contemporary literature” (ACARA). This aspect of Australian (Aboriginal) literature will be taken up again in the next section (cf. 4.2.) when hands-on material for the EFL classroom is offered. But before, the thesis will deal with the second cross-curriculum priority, Asia and Australia’s Engagement with Asia, as well as further distinctions and similarities between the Austrian and the Australian curriculum.

Since Asia has had a great impact on Australia in terms of culture, politics and economics, it is important for young Australians to get an insight into the histories of Asian countries, encompassing the common history with Australia, its complex cultures and an understanding of existing challenges and opportunities for the region (ACARA). According to ACARA, it is essential for Australian students to gain an awareness of Asian societies, cultures, beliefs, environments and connections between peoples of Asia, Australia and other parts of the world, which strengthen their intercultural understanding, enhance their lives and enable them to successfully participate in the ‘Asian century’.

The priority of Asia and Australia’s Engagement with Asia consists of three concepts: “Asia and its diversity, achievements and contributions of the peoples of Asia, and Asia-Australia engagement” (ACARA). Like the other priority discussed before, the Asia and Australia’s Engagement with Asia priority should be treated in every learning area. Given the learning area English, the priority is again taken into consideration primarily in terms of literature, since “students can explore and appreciate the diverse range of traditional and contemporary texts from and about the peoples and countries of Asia, including texts written by Australians of Asian heritage” (ACARA). Moreover, students are encouraged to comprehend how Australian culture has been influenced by aspects of Asian cultures and to foster their cultural awareness and intercultural understanding (ACARA).

In addition to the cross-curriculum priorities, the Australian curriculum also advocates general capabilities (cf. Figure 1). General capabilities equip students with knowledge and skills which are required in everyday life and are addressed through the content of the learning areas. They encompass inter alia areas like numeracy, literacy, critical

and creative thinking, personal and social capability, as well as intercultural understanding, which is similar to the Austrian interdisciplinary competence of interculturality. In regard to intercultural understanding, the Australian curriculum states that

students develop intercultural understanding as they learn to value their own cultures, languages and beliefs, and those of others. They come to understand how personal, group and national identities are shaped, and the variable and changing nature of culture. Intercultural understanding involves students learning about and engaging with diverse cultures in ways that recognise commonalities and differences, create connections with others and cultivate mutual respect (ACARA).

Since engaging with people from other countries is part of our everyday life, intercultural understanding is a fundamental capability, as it helps students to become responsible local and global citizens who are able to live and work in an interconnected society (ACARA). The ACARA states that this capability in regard to the English subject is achieved by exposing learners to texts from different cultures. Thereby, students are encouraged to critically view their own cultural perspectives and practices, to analyse intercultural experiences and to build on commonalities and negotiate differences (ACARA). In general, three aspects have been identified as fundamental for the development of intercultural understanding in the Australian curriculum, viz. expressing empathy, demonstrating respect and taking responsibility (ACARA).

To conclude, the main differences and similarities between the upper secondary Austrian and Australian curriculum are summarised. One major difference is that in Austria, one syllabus applies to all FL taught in upper secondary and there is no distinction whether it is the first or the second FL. Moreover, the principles outlined apply to the 5<sup>th</sup> till the 8<sup>th</sup> form equally and only the competences are listed separately for each semester. Due to the broad formulation of the syllabus, teachers have relative freedom in FL teaching which can be an advantage as well as a disadvantage at the same time. This issue was explained by drawing upon the didactic principle *countries and cultures*, which states that insights into the target language's areas should be provided without specifying these language areas further. This reinforces the fact that teachers themselves choose which English speaking nations to include or not to include into their teaching. Therefore, a first step

to counteract this situation would be to establish distinct syllabuses for each FL, or at least to distinguish between first and second FL.

Conversely, the Australian learning area English is divided into four subjects and each subject is subdivided into four units instead of having one syllabus applying to all learning years. Although the focuses of each subject are slightly different, they have one essential commonality, namely that the main resource of teaching is constituted by literary texts. The emphasis on using literary texts as the foundation of teaching English definitely stood out. That is different in Austria, where many *didactic* texts are employed in teaching. However, the question arises: Why not use more material from 'the real world'? If literary texts are well prepared, they can also serve the purpose of teaching students linguistic structures, new vocabulary and foreign culture.

The English subject's focus of the Australian curriculum is on the development of students' analytical, creative and critical thinking as well as communicative skills in each language competence (ACARA), which is also part of the Austrian FL syllabus. Moreover, EAL/D engages with the explicit teaching of linguistic aspects and sociolinguistic and sociocultural components of Standard English (ACARA), which is also a major aim to be achieved in Austrian EFL teaching. In addition, the objective of Essential English, namely communicative competence in different modes and contexts, is also outlined in the Austrian FL syllabus. However, beneficial learning outcomes that should be implemented into Austrian FL teaching are emphasised in the subject of Literature. The objectives of evaluating "the ways in which literary texts represent culture and identity" (ACARA) as well as assessing and reflecting on "how representations of culture and identity vary in different texts and forms of texts" (ACARA) should be integrated into Austrian FL teaching. This could be achieved by incorporating them into the competence of reading, for example. Generally speaking, when comparing the learning outcomes of the two curricula, many commonalities were revealed, which facilitate the exchange of content between the curricula. Moreover, the detailed objectives outlined in the Australian curriculum offer great potential to use in the Austrian school setting.

Another similarity between both curricula is that they stress cross-curriculum principles like intercultural education as well as general capabilities like intercultural competence. In Austria, the priority *intercultural education* describes what is

understood by the term and its goals. However, practical guidelines for how those goals are achieved are missing, in comparison to the Australian curriculum, which states definite implementation guidelines for each subject. It would be beneficial, if the BMBWF disclosed more hands-on instruction regarding the integration of intercultural education in the classroom. What has to be noticed, though, is that the syllabuses for the individual subjects do contain small paragraphs regarding intercultural education.

Another difference between the two curricula is that while Austria does not mention any particular culture that should be dealt with in class, Australia states the targeted cultures specifically. The two of the three cross-curriculum priorities engage with the culture of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and with the Asian culture. In consideration of Australia's cultural history (see section 3), it is comprehensible that those cultures which were neglected for a long time need to be dealt with and processed more carefully. Thus, it is important that this process already starts in school and that students become aware of those two cultures that form an essential part of Australia's cultural identity.

Raising awareness towards other cultures and the review of own cultural beliefs and values is mainly achieved through the general capability intercultural understanding that is applied across all subjects. In the English subject, this capability can be achieved by reading texts from other cultures, for example. Although there are certain differences between the teaching principles in Austria and the cross-curriculum priorities in Australia, it can be seen that in both countries the implementation of intercultural education into school settings is attributed with great importance and that those principles should always be borne in mind when teaching.

By comparing the upper secondary Austrian and Australian curriculum, extensive information and great insights have been collected. Building on this, the following section scrutinises three texts that embody aspects of Australian cultural identity and provides activities that can be used in Austrian EFL teaching.

## **4.2. Australian Texts in Austrian EFL Classrooms**

Deciding which Australian texts to analyse and to use for the Austrian EFL classroom was highly difficult and it came down to the question of what to include and what to

exclude (Williams). The objective of this thesis is to provide an insight into Australia's cultural identity and as depicted in section 3.3., ACI was shaped by migration ever since and this is also emphasised by Williams:

In Australia, there have been these waves of migration and we are very much a migrant nation in modern day Australia, but even the Indigenous Australians arrived at various points in their history. And then obviously, the British arrived and then Chinese arrived through the gold rushes and then after World War I, there was a big influx from the Mediterranean in terms of migrants. In the 70s, it was then Asian people escaping from Vietnam and then obviously, more recently, it's been more people from Middle East to escape wars in the Middle East and there's been Jewish migration even to Australia while World War II. [...] [T]hese wave migrations that have [...] been a big impact on us as a nation, because it's not just simple things that have influenced us, like cuisine and that sort of thing. (Williams)

Clearly, Williams stresses the impact that continuous migration has had on Australia's cultural identity and diversity. In regard to EFL classrooms, the question arising is: "[H]ow do you try to represent that diversity?" (Williams). Hence, I opted to include texts that reflect ACI's history and how it has developed until modern day Australia.

This socio-historical approach for teaching ACI in EFL classrooms was pointed out by Kilner as well as by Williams, who highlight the importance of providing students with historical as well as cultural context. Moreover, Kilner argued that the most suitable approach to teach Australian literature is by "embedding Australian stories in its history" and by introducing "the history of Australia from the arrival of the convicts and then the 60,000 years previous to that". In other words, she advised "to take into account the entire history of this continent" and further she mentioned: "a kind of continental look at the country and then the ways that that continent has been storied over time would be a really interesting approach to take" (Kilner).

Therefore, three Australian texts from different time periods, viz. end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, are presented in order to illustrate the various impacts contributing to Australia's cultural identity. These texts are:

- "Letter to Mr Philips, Lord Sydney's Steward" by Woollarawarre Bennelong (1796),
- "The Drover's Wife" by Henry Lawson (1892), and

- *Does My Head Look Big in This?* by Randa Abdel-Fattah (2005).

As pointed out by Kerry Kilner in the interview, the use of Indigenous texts is indispensable when teaching Australian literature. Following her advice, I will start out with the text “Letter to Mr Philips, Lord Sydney’s Steward”, better known as “Bennelong’s Letter”, which is considered to be the first Aboriginal writing in the English language dating back to 1796 (Jose 60; Heiss and Minter 1; Van Toorn 62). The author of the letter, Woollarawarre Bennelong, was considered to be an intelligent and diplomatic man of the Wangal tribe who connected Indigenous people with the newly arrived settlers. Captured by Governor Arthur Phillip, he was introduced to British customs, learnt the English language and finally went to England from 1792 till 1795 (Smith, *His People* 19). During his time there, he fell seriously ill and was nursed back to health by Mr and Mrs Phillips in Eltham, England. One year after his return to Australia, Bennelong addressed his caretaker Mr Phillips in a letter which is now regarded as the starting point of Australian literature.

Bennelong’s letter should be used in the EFL classroom, because in the wider context, it embodies the first encounters between Indigenous people and white settlers. So, the text provides a window to engage with the pre-colonisation period and the role of storytelling, to examine the arrival of the First Fleet and to discuss the interaction between the two cultures. Moreover, in employing this text, the following learning outcome of the subject Literature will be addressed: Students evaluate and reflect on “the relationship between significant historical and cultural events and figures, and their representations in literary texts (ACELR041)” (ACARA).

However, when using “Letter to Mr Philips, Lord Sydney’s Steward” in the EFL classroom, it is essential that the teacher considers the function of the text, namely to give students an insight into what happened in Australia more than 200 years ago. This indicates the importance of making students aware that this text dates back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which means that society and the treatment of Aborigines has severely changed since then. Further, they should understand how Aboriginal culture in the past and in the present has been contributing to form ACI, since

[b]oth the survival and renewal of earlier forms and the innovative appropriation of new forms of culture have had a profound impact in the political and intellectual fields as well as in the cultural realm. In celebrating Aboriginal land identity, affirming alternative histories, and calling for social

justice, Aboriginal cultural work has forced itself into the nations present and changed how the nation understands its past. (Carter, *Dispossession* 273f.)

As Carter indicates, earlier as well as new forms of Indigenous expression of cultural identity are fundamental to understand ACI. In order for the students to understand the “complex continuing relations between ‘traditional’ and ‘contemporary’ Indigenous cultures” (Carter, *Dispossession* 273) and the development of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, it would be advisable to use more contemporary texts in the EFL classroom as well. In so doing, students are not only provided with a picture of how Aboriginal Australians lived 200 years ago, but are also enabled to imagine the lives of Aborigines in modern day Australia.

For example, books by Kim Scott, such as *True Country* (1993) or the most recent one: *Taboo* (2017), lend themselves well to deal with in the classroom. They tell the story of reconciliation and of moving forward while acknowledging the atrocities against Aborigines of the past. Another example of Indigenous writing that could be employed in ELT is Doris Pilkington's *Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence* (1996). Based on a true account, the book tells the experience of three girls of the stolen generation who walk 1,600 kilometres in Australia's outback to get back home after being forcefully removed from their families. However, due to the limited scope of the paper, I will merely focus on one Indigenous text, which is “Letter to Mr Philips, Lord Sydney's Steward”, but stress at the same time the importance of employing various Indigenous texts when dealing with AustLit in EFL classrooms.

However, let us move away from Indigenous writing to the historical development of white settler literature. As mentioned in section 4.2.1.1., with the arrival of the First Fleet, paper and ink were brought to the continent. Governor Phillip and his officers were required to send regular reports and accounts of the first settlement back to Great Britain (Webby, *Literature to 1900* 15). Besides these formal messages, people expressed their feelings about their new home in form of diaries and letters, which were sent to relatives and friends in England (Webby, *Literature to 1900* 15f.).

Although there was a demanding interest for texts depicting the Australian colonies in Britain, hardly any 19<sup>th</sup> century Australian author was able to sustain a living from writing (Webby, *Literature to 1900* 16). Some of the works were published in local newspapers, but not many received an international recognition (Webby, *Literature to 1900* 17). With the discovery of gold in New South Wales in 1851 (cf. 3.3.3.),

Australia's population increased and so did the number of newspapers and magazines (Webby, *Literature to 1900* 17f.). One of the most famous magazines was the *Bulletin* which started publishing in 1880, which is now claimed "as marking the beginnings of a truly Australian literature" (Webby, *Literature to 1900* 19).

Section 2.2.1.1. discusses the term Australian literature and touches upon the topics of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which addressed "the set of questions around attitudes to land, understanding land, questions of belonging, [and] questions of identity" (Carter, *Interview*). Authors felt the urge to deal with these topics in their literature and to thematise the new and unfamiliar circumstances. In so doing, the distinctive topic of the land and the bush contributed to detach AustLit from the British literature and to establish an own literary canon. In other words, literary autonomy was partly achieved by drawing upon Australia's unique feature of the bush (Webby, *Literature to 1900* 19), which was regarded as representing authentic Australia (Carter, *Dispossession* 144; Carter, *Bush Legends* 45).

Carter explains that "[f]rom the mid-nineteenth century to the present, the bush has been among the most powerful ways of signifying Australia" and it "gave Australians – or some Australians – a sense of distinctiveness and a deep sense of belonging to the land and to a history of providential settlement. It was and remains an enduring national mythology" (Carter, *Bush Legends* 42) and it "functions as a powerful myth of belonging, constituting a thick web of stories relating how settler Australians belong to this unique land and how the land belongs uniquely to them" (Carter, *Bush Legends* 44). Also in the interview, Carter highlighted that the bush and the relationship between the bush and its inhabitants have been essential topics throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and are still reoccurring themes in contemporary Australian writing.

Further, he stresses that "[n]on-indigenous Australians have invested enormously in the 'cultural production' of land and landscapes, for these were ways of claiming possession, of telling stories about nation race, settlement, tradition, and the right to belong" (Carter, *Dispossession* 156). Hence, many works from this period deal with topics relating to the mysteries of the bush like, for example, Henry Lawson's 'The Drover's Wife' and Barbara Baynton's 'The Chosen Vessel', first published in the *Bulletin* as 'The Tramp'. What is particularly interesting about those two short stories is that they both portray the viewpoint of the woman living in the outback in

comparison to other works where the male protagonist is foregrounded and they both paint a rather hostile and unpleasant picture of the bush. However, there is a wide range of other texts depicting the bush's positive characteristics of vitality, wholesomeness, freedom, authenticity, equality, and independence, like Banjo Paterson's poem 'Clancy of the Overflow', for example (Carter, *Dispossession* 144-145). Regardless of depicting the land as "harsh and unrelenting, wholesome and restorative, or challenging and heroic, what was shared by writers, artists and their public was the belief that it was in the country rather than the city or towns that an authentic national character could be located" (Carter, *Dispossession* 146).

I would have liked to examine multiple texts from that period, but due to the limited scope of the paper, I will solely scrutinise "The Drover's Wife", since Carter and Kilner recommended to use this text in ELT. Apart from analysing how this text mirrors ACI, I will focus on how Lawson uses language to portray Australia's distinctive feature, the bush. In so doing, I will draw upon the following learning objective of the subject Literature: Students evaluate "the power of language to represent ideas, events and people in particular ways (ACELR038)" (ACARA).

Since the First Fleet's arrival in 1788, many migrants from all different countries and cultures have settled in Australia (cf. 3.3.5.). Their distinct backgrounds and traditions have shaped Australia's cultural identity, which is also reflected in the variety of literature of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, depicting people from different walks of life, their distinct stories, attitudes, religions, and beliefs. Besides employing literature in the EFL classroom to teach ACI, it would also be a good way to engage Austrian and Australian students in a cultural exchange in form of joint projects like skype sessions or facebook groups to foster intercultural communication and awareness. I suggested this idea to fellow teachers at the conference of "Teaching with Fantasy" in Brisbane and their interest was sparked immediately. We agreed that this transcultural engagement between Austrian and Australian students would be a unique opportunity to introduce them to different world views. We have not set up anything in specific yet, but we exchanged contact details to keep in touch and to organise joint projects. In doing so, we will be able to provide students with first-hand insights into another culture, to arouse their general interest for other countries and to improve their cultural competence, which is defined as general capability that should

be achieved in the course of one's education, as stated by the Austrian as well as by the Australian curriculum.

Moreover, the third literary work chosen stood out to me, as it depicts the inner conflict between having two different identities: a Muslim identity and an Australian identity. This is the reason why I have selected Randa Abdel-Fattah's *Does My Head Look Big in This?* as third Australian text to analyse in the course of the thesis. Abdel-Fattah provides an accurate picture of 21<sup>st</sup> century Australia's multicultural society and shows that having two separate identities is not an irresolvable paradox. In contrast, she reveals that "national and religious identity [...] are not contradictory and that we can be as passionate about our country as we are about our religion" (Ameri 58).

Employing this book in the EFL classroom, inevitably leads to achieve the following learning outcome as stated in the Literature subject of the Australian curriculum: Students evaluate "how cultural perceptions are challenged or supported (ACELR039)" (ACARA). Moreover, the fact that the book is a young adult novel, implying that the language used is simple and easily understandable, is another reason to use it in EFL classrooms. In addition, *Does My Head Look Big in This?* sets the scene to transfer issues like Muslim migration to the situation in Austria and hence, to attain the learning goal of evaluating "how readers are influenced to respond to their own and others' cultural experiences (ACELR037)" (ACARA).

In the following, the paper will discuss these three Australian literary texts in more detail, providing in-depth background knowledge regarding the text's context, and will further offer hands-on material to be used in the EFL classroom. In so doing, Austrian students will be able to evaluate "the ways in which authors represent Australian culture, place and identity both to Australians and the wider world (ACELR040)" (ACARA).

#### **4.2.1. "Letter to Mr Philips, Lord Sydney's Steward"**

Before European colonisers came to Australia and brought the English language with them, Aboriginal people communicated through many different languages. It is estimated that the Australian Aboriginal languages comprise approximately 290-363 languages (Bowen and Atkinson 830), which are based on oral systems of

communication. This implies that Indigenous people transmitted their knowledge, their information and their customs orally instead of using alphabetic script (Carter, *Dispossession* 271; Van Toorn, *Indigenous Texts* 19) and they communicated their narratives through art. These graphic signifying systems range from sand drawings, body scars to cave paintings and tree carvings (Van Toorn, *Indigenous Texts* 19f.).

With the arrival of the British colonisers in 1788, the English language came to Australia (Heiss and Minter 8) and the idea was present that “only literate societies were advanced, civilised and rational, and [the colonisers] took orality to be a sign of the backward, primitive and ignorant” (Van Toorn, *Indigenous Texts* 20). Generally, Aborigines were compared to uncivilised beings that were in need of cultivation and guidance (Clark 11) and “[t]he belief that Aboriginal people had developed only primitive, wild languages and crude modes of speech” (Van Toorn, *Early Writings* 61) reinforced this view. The Aborigines’ incapacity of articulating themselves in an understandable manner and their general inferiority perceived by the colonists were inter alia reasons why Australia was declared as terra nullius (Van Toorn, *Early Writings* 61). This means, Australia did not belong to anyone prior to Britain’s claims of discovery and occupancy (see Banner 13ff.).

During the time when Australia was discovered by the British and the first settlements were established, King George III was ruling and ordered to seize the land and to civilise the people (Tatz 75; Atkinson 33). To follow King George III’s instructions, the first step was to closely observe the Aborigines captured and to analyse their lifestyle, thoughts, and behaviour (Banner 19-20; Smith, *His People* 11). One of the first Indigenous abducted, in November 1789, was Woollarawarre Bennelong. He became an important figure in the colony of New South Wales, since his diplomatic skills enabled him to mediate between the Eora<sup>3</sup> people and the colonisers. The main sources for Bennelong’s biography stem from the journals of the First Fleet’s officers, which are primarily taken as the basis for assumptions about his life.

Bennelong was born in Sydney around 1764 and belonged to the Wangal clan where he had the position of a well-respected man (Smith, *His People* 10). Further, the

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<sup>3</sup>Eora (yura) refers to the original inhabitants of the Sydney coast and means ‘People’ (see Smith, *His People* 10). Eora people are separated into various tribes and those tribes are named after places or totems precious to them, “with the addition of the suffix *-gal*, which meant a clan or extended family group, which might number from 20 to 60 men, women and children” (Smith, *His People* 10).

officers of the First Fleet described Bennelong as a “good looking young fellow, of a pleasant, lively disposition” who “was also mercurial, quick to laughter or anger, a clever mimic and a wily and cunning politician” (Smith, *His People* 11). He was one of the first Aborigines captured and against his initial thoughts of breaking free, he realised soon that alliance with the new arrivals entails certain benefits and might prove safer than rebellion (Fullagar 33).

Bennelong became interested in the newcomers and tried to incorporate them into their traditional kinship system of people. This resulted in Bennelong calling Phillip “Beanga” meaning father and referring to himself as “Dorrow” or son (Smith, *Bennelong* 42; Smith, *His People* 11; Tench 35). The use of the words *father* and *son* mirrors the close relationship that Bennelong and Phillip developed throughout the early colonisation. At the same time, Bennelong enforced his position within his tribe by giving British gifts to his people and by outlining the newcomers’ plans (Fullagar 33). Bennelong also aimed at bringing together the two cultures that he belonged to, which resulted in Aboriginal people coming to British settlements for sharing meals, words and artefacts (Fullagar 34).

Since Bennelong was curious about his “newly acquired” culture, he went to Great Britain in 1792. In England, however, Bennelong and his companion Yemmerawanne did not receive the attention they hoped to obtain (Fullagar 36ff.) and this was also the same, when Bennelong returned home to his tribe in Australia (see Fullagar 31-42, see Karskens 422). The opinions concerning Bennelong’s life after his return from England differ considerably. On the one hand, it is argued that he “returned home in poor health, unable to rebuild relations with his people and out of favour in the colony” (Heiss and Minter 9; also see Clark 145; Stanner 19f.; Mulvaney 96; Clendinnen 266f.) and on the other, the idea prevails that “[a]fter his return from England, Bennelong appears to have reintegrated himself into Eora networks and patterns of life as they had adapted to the presence of the colony” (Dortins 59; also see Karskens 422ff.). However, for a more in-depth analysis of Bennelong’s life see chapter 1 to 3 in *Aboriginal History Journal: Volume 33* edited by Peter Read.

One year after Bennelong returned to Australia, he composes a letter for Mr Phillips, who had nursed him during his illness in England. In the letter, Bennelong described his circumstances, extended amiable greetings and asked for clothing and shoes.

This letter created in 1796 is considered “the first known text in the English language by an Aboriginal author” (Heiss and Minter 1).

Interesting about the letter is that Bennelong did not write it himself, but dictated the words to an amanuensis who recorded the words verbatim and did not reproduce his pronunciation phonetically (Van Toorn, *Early Writings* 62). Van Toorn elaborates on the difference between transcription and dictation:

When a person dictates the exact words that they wish to be written down, they assert a form of authority that is not manifest when their words are merely being ‘collected’ as objects of European knowledge, with or without the speaker’s awareness and permission. With dictation, the scribe is accountable to the Aboriginal speaker. To dictate is to specify the exact words that are to be written down, and the text is usually read back to the author to verify its accuracy. Authority lies with the speaker, not with the amanuensis. (Van Toorn, *Early Writings* 61)

She highlights that the letter is not the observation or the comment of a white European, but it is actually the words of an Aborigine. Since the arrival of the First Fleet, it is the first time that voice is given to an Indigenous person who presents his point of view. Albeit Bennelong being from Indigenous origin, it is important to mention that he had adopted various habits and customs of the colonisers and thus, he embodied cultural entanglement. This means that Bennelong’s letter does not merely represent the Indigenous culture but also hints at the British one.

In order to understand the intricate socio-cultural processes present in the letter, the text is put into broader context by analysing the significance of Bennelong mimicking Governor Phillip’s letter writing and by reviewing the letter’s content. However, what is not going to be thematised in the thesis is the text’s lexical semantics (see Farrell), as this is also not prioritised when teaching Bennelong’s letter in the school setting.

Bennelong spent much time with Governor Phillip and he did not only observe his rituals and behaviours but also started imitating those, which “is traditionally the main mode of learning in Aboriginal societies” (Van Toorn, *Naked* 57). One of the practices often conducted by Arthur Phillip was writing letters and it is assumed that he deliberately exposed Bennelong to those ‘cultivated activities’ fulfilling King George’s order of civilising Indigenous people (Van Toorn, *Naked* 57). From both cultures, Bennelong knew that conveying information and news is an integral aspect of society. While in his tribe this was done orally or through art, in British society it was common to transcribe observations, experiences, encounters, and inquiries.

According to Van Toorn (*Naked*, 58ff.), Arthur Phillip as the Governor-designate of New South Wales wrote three different kinds of letters that presumably impacted Bennelong's writing, namely:

1. letters to report events and incidents to the British Home Secretary responsible for prisons, Lord Sydney, and later, Lord Grenville;
2. letters to personally correspond with Lord Sydney, friend and patron of Arthur Phillip;
3. and letters of enquiry to Evan Nepean, who was in charge of providing the colony with supplies.

Van Toorn (*Naked*, 58ff.) asserts that the different types of letters are also reflected in Bennelong's writing. First, Bennelong describes his current situation of living at the Governor's place and of his wife binding with another man, called Carroway. This already reflects the two worlds that Bennelong feels affiliated with, or even three worlds as Farrell (34) suggests: "the England of Lord Sydney's house, and the two worlds that Bennelong lives in".

The belonging to his 'initial' world is indicated by the reference to Carroway as "another black man" signifying that Bennelong identifies himself as a black man, which is, as Farrell (34) puts it, a "historic moment [...] of differentiation and identity". Additionally, Bennelong reveals to Mr Philips that he is part of a "we" that carries out "murry doings" (Farrell 35) and "we" meaning Bennelong and Carroway or Bennelong's clan in more general. These "murry doings" are contrasted to white doings and throughout the rest of the letter, Bennelong positions himself in the 'white world' distinguishing himself from the previously mentioned "we".

Speaking of "murry doings", it is not entirely clear what was meant by this phrase, but the annotation of "meaning bad" in the surviving transcript of the original letter as visible on page 55 of Van Toorn's *Writing Never Arrives Naked* suggests something negative. This unfavourable "doing" ties in with Bennelong's next sentence saying: "he [Carroway] spear'd me in the back", which was read by Heiss and Minter (9) as an indirect result of him travelling to Great Britain. Despite, Bennelong states: "Not me go to England no more. I am at home now." showing that he has no intention to return to Britain and with the phrase "at home", he presumably means "Australia (or at least the country of the Sydney area), rather than "at the Governor's," or with his

people” (Farrell 35). Generally speaking, Bennelong’s outline of his circumstances and the mentioning of his kin’s well-being resemble the form of a report, as asserted by Van Toorn (*Naked* 58).

Second, Bennelong mimics the amiable relation between Arthur Phillip and his patron Lord Sydney in composing a letter to his patron in England, Mr Phillips, Lord Sydney’s steward (Van Toorn, *Naked* 58). Like Arthur Phillip, Bennelong includes greetings to the addressee’s wife, but instead of referring to her in the third person, Bennelong uses the direct pronoun ‘you’. Apart from addressing Mr and Mrs Phillips, he directs greetings to Lord Sydney and further asks for an unspecified gift.

Third, his greetings mingle with specific requests for gifts indicating features typical for an enquiry letter. The specification of one gift, two pairs of shoes, two pairs of stockings, and some handkerchiefs are, regarding to the listing of goods, similar to the inquiry letters that Arthur Phillip used to write to the under-secretary at the Home Office arranging the consignments for Australia (Van Toorn, *Naked* 59).

Asking for supplies or gifts also played a crucial role in Aboriginal society, as within certain kinship relations it was expected to give and receive gifts (Van Toorn, *Naked* 60; Smith, *Bennelong* 147ff.). In the father/son relationship that Arthur Phillip and Bennelong had, the gifts were in form of “privileges such as extra rations and clothing and valuable items like metal knives, hatchets and fishhooks, in exchange for Aboriginal weapons and artefacts” (Smith, *His People* 11). Although Bennelong and Mr Phillips, his caretaker in Eltham, became relatively close during his time in Great Britain, it is not clear whether Bennelong also called him “Beanga” (father), like he used to call Governor Arthur Phillip. However, due to the letter’s formal manner of address it is more likely that Mr and Mrs Phillips were like an uncle and an aunt to Bennelong (Van Toorn, *Naked* 62).

In order to send gifts, though, Mr and Mrs Phillips do not necessarily have to be the closest family members of Bennelong, since “[t]hrough cycles of giving and receiving, people are constantly creating and discharging obligations to members of their extensive kinship networks” (Van Toorn, *Naked* 62). On the other hand, the direct request for presents does imply a certain familiarity and stands in contrast to the formal use of ‘Sir’ and ‘Madame’. This variability between the forms of register give rise to the assumption that Bennelong had difficulties with “translating kin-based and

place-based codes of oral communication into modes of written address to faraway foreigners who had once been close” (Van Toorn, *Naked* 63).

He faces the challenge of following the British norms of politeness and of showing his affection towards his former caretakers while, at the same time, conveying his message of requesting clothing. This shows again his “bicultural coexistence” (Smith, *Bennelong* 67), as he was attached to his native culture on the one hand but also to the newly acquired British one on the other. Further, his cultural entanglement does not only reveal itself through the absence or through different markers of politeness but also through semantics, according to Farrell who points out that although the English language is used, Bennelong’s sentence structure, for example, is presumably based on Eora syntax (see Farrell 35ff.). Nevertheless, the paper will not scrutinise linguistic components of Bennelong’s letter, as they will not be taken into consideration when providing practical suggestions for the EFL classroom.

#### **4.2.1.1. Classroom Activities**

##### **Investigating Aboriginal Culture**

Considering the historical teaching approach suggested by Kilner, it is advisable to firstly introduce students to Australia’s Aboriginal culture shaped prior to Europeans’ arrival. To this end, I will draw upon a lesson plan intended for the learning areas English and History created by Kalinda Knight, aiming at Australian students in year 3 and 4. The following task will apply to the general capability of intercultural understanding and more specifically to the learning descriptor: “The diversity and longevity of Australia’s first peoples and the ways Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples are connected to country and place (land, sea, waterways and skies) and the implications of their daily lives (ACHHK077)” (ACARA).

First, students are presented with four topics, namely ‘Food’, ‘Clothing’, ‘Living Conditions’, and ‘Art and Music’ and they have to brainstorm how Aborigines dealt with these topics. Their ideas are collected in class and will be touched upon again after the activity in order to analyse whether they were right with their assumptions or whether it was stereotypes that they had in their minds. Subsequently, students are divided into small groups and each group is assigned with one of the four topics including some guiding questions for their research (see 7.1.).

The groups will get sufficient time to work on their topics, to answer the questions and to prepare a small presentation for their colleagues. While informing the others about their topic, every student has to note at least three key points that they learnt with each presentation, reflecting on whether these have altered their initial thoughts about Indigenous people's lifestyle.

Discussing the last topic, 'Music and Art', it is essential to mention that Indigenous people did not use written language and relied on oral methods to pass on their knowledge, which was conducted through songs and storytelling. Thus, the next activity will be an activity on storytelling and on Indigenous' oral traditions.

### **Oral Tradition**

In order to teach Australian cultural identity in this regard, it is necessary to point out Australia's long history and to reveal to students how Aborigines passed on knowledge and information also through narrating Dreamtime stories. According to my definition of AustLit (see 2.2.1.1.), including *oral and written* literary works, this Dreamtime story also forms part of AustLit, albeit being presented in a modern way. This multimodal way of teaching is advocated in the Australian as well as in the Austrian curriculum, where it is said that a variety of teaching methods should be employed (BMBWF).

The aim of the following activity is to highlight oral tradition by exemplifying how storytelling took place over those many years and to show that in so doing, bits and pieces got lost or were additionally invented. After explaining what is meant by the long tradition of storytelling, two students are chosen who have to leave the classroom and wait outside. The remaining students watch the Youtube video "How the moon was made", which is a well-known Aboriginal Dreamtime creation story (see 7.2. for the video's transcription). Afterwards, the applied activity is "Chinese whispers", which means that one pupil is chosen who retells the story to one of the students outside, who again tells it to the remaining student outside. The last pupil who hears the Dreamtime story summarises it for the entire class.

Subsequently, it is discussed how the story "How the moon was made" represented ideas and attitudes of Indigenous people at that time and which status those stories have in modern day Australia. Thus, this activity perfectly matches the Australian

curriculum's learning objective ACELR038, which states that students should "evaluate [...] the power of language" and its use "to represent ideas, events and people" (ACARA). Further, students reflect on the consequences of oral history and how certain elements got lost throughout the process of retelling stories. While analysing the effects of Aboriginal oral history, students are sensitised to Australian culture and to the first literary works of AustLit.

In order to ensure that they understand the significance of story-telling in Australia's history, it is advisable to hook it with Austrian folk tales and sagas. Every region in Austria has a broad variety of folk tales that traditionally explain how certain landscapes were shaped or where mountains and towns got their names from<sup>4</sup>. Students are encouraged to think about Austrian sagas which can be further compared with Australian Dreamtime stories to highlight the similarities of oral tradition between the two cultures.

Moreover, students should grasp that there were no alphabetic scripts in Australia prior to the arrival of the first settlers in 1787 and that back then, it was not one Aboriginal language that exist but that there were approximately 290-363 Australian Aboriginal languages spoken (Bowen and Atkinson 830). Having said that, one of the first Indigenous people to learn the English language was Woollarawarre Bennelong who comprised a letter that is now regarded as the first Australian writing (Jose 60; Heiss and Minter 1; Van Toorn 62), which will be read in class.

### **Early-Colonisation Period and Decline of Australia's Indigenous People**

By now, students should have an idea how Aborigines lived prior to the arrival of white settlers and hence, the focus is on teaching the period of early-colonisation by applying a teacher-centred approach. To this end, a worksheet depicting the convictional history of Australia (see 7.3.) will be distributed.

Further, it is useful to draw a link to the historical context of Europe during the time of white settlement in Australia, by comparing socio-historical developments of the two continents. Additionally, it is essential to discuss the impacts of such major social changes, drawing upon different examples from Europe, especially from Austria.

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<sup>4</sup>For a wide range of Austrian sagas see [http://www.sagen.at/texte/sagen/oesterreich/sagen\\_oesterreich.htm](http://www.sagen.at/texte/sagen/oesterreich/sagen_oesterreich.htm)

Subsequently, in small groups, students are encouraged to analyse the social consequences of Australia becoming a British colony.

Furthermore, students are provided with two numbers:

- 300,000 to 750,00 – which are the speculations regarding the number of natives living in Australia around 1788
- 93,000 – which is the speculated number of Indigenous people living in Australia around 1900

In pairs, students should think about potential reasons for the severe decline of Australia's Aboriginal people during that time, before comparing their assumptions in class.

Furthermore, it makes sense to compare these events with similar incidents that happened in Austria with which students are more acquainted. This means to not only process Australia's dark history of killing thousands of Indigenous people, but also to engage with one's own history, discussing the decline of Austria's population during WWII. In particular, this means to thematise the fate of 100,000 Austrian people who were Jewish and/or rebelled against the regime and died in concentration camps and prisons after Austria's annexation to Nazi Germany (Solsten).

### **Introduction to “Bennelong’s Letter”**

Before reading Bennelong's letter, it is essential that the teacher sets the frame for the text. To this end, he/she recapitulates Aboriginal history as well as the early-colonisation period. These sociohistorical topics – as delineated in section 3.3. – form the basis to understand the context in which Bennelong's letter was written. This general recap of early colonisation plus a brief outline of Bennelong's life function as a contextual introduction to his letter composed in 1796, eight years after the arrival of the First Fleet.

Moreover, it is essential to introduce students to Aboriginal kinship networks. To this end, I will draw upon Lynette Riley's “Kinship Module Project”, which is a “pilot online education program that promotes Aboriginal cultural education” (The University of Sydney). The online module aims at integrating Aboriginal cultural knowledge into the

curriculum and two of its objectives state the following: Students should gain insight into

- Aboriginal Kinship systems and how they operate
- Aboriginal social structures and how these differ from Western societies (Lynette 21).

This is achieved by discussing eight themes revolving around Aboriginal kinship. The topics' key issues are outlined in video presentations and are highlighted in form of narratives recorded by NSW Aboriginal people and besides, the website offers a series of questions and related resources (Lynette 8).

In order to fully engage with Aboriginal kinship, it is advisable to deal with all eight themes. However, due to often occurring time restrictions in school, one has to decide what to include and what to exclude (Lindsay) and in regard to the text dealt with, I would advise to concentrate on theme 2: "Nations, Clans & Family Groups" (Lynette 22). This sector "provides an overview of the range and diversity of the Aboriginal Nations and Clans which exist in Australia; and to provide [sic] an introduction to Aboriginal protocols" (Lynette 22).

After showing the video, the following questions should be asked:

- "What are the important relationships between Nations, Clans and Family Groups?" (The University of Sydney)
- "What is the relationship between people and land?" (The University of Sydney)
- "What is different in Aboriginal culture to your culture?" (The University of Sydney).

Furthermore, Bennelong's belonging to the Eora clan as well as his position between Eora people and the colonisers should be discussed. Thereby, it is important to mention the special relationship that Bennelong had with Governor Phillip and that he included him into his extended kinship, resulting in Bennelong calling Phillip "Beanga", meaning father and referring to himself as "Dorrow" or son (Smith, *Bennelong* 42, Smith, *His People* 11).

## Reading “Bennelong’s Letter”

Before reading the letter in class, it is crucial to outline that Bennelong dictated the words to an amanuensis who recorded the words verbatim (Van Toorn, *Early Writings* 62). Students should think about why Bennelong has not written the text himself and should have a guess on the letter’s content, given the previous events leading up to composing the letter.

As a next step, the letter is distributed and read in class and subsequently, students should discuss its content, summarise it in their own words and try to come up with Bennelong’s intention of writing the letter.

As delineated before, Bennelong spent a reasonable amount of time with Governor Phillip and started imitating his behaviours which included mimicking Phillip’s letter writing. In the text, students should identify and mark the occurrences of three different kinds of letters that presumably impacted Bennelong’s letter, namely:

1. letters to report events and incidents to the British Home Secretary responsible for prisons, Lord Sydney, and later, Lord Grenville;
2. letters to personally correspond with Lord Sydney, friend and patron of Arthur Phillip;
3. and letters of enquiry to Evan Nepean, who was in charge of providing the colony with supplies.

This activity ties in with the descriptor ACEEN001 of the Australian curriculum, which states that when reading a literary text “the relationship between language, context and meaning” should be investigated by “explaining how texts are created in and for different contexts” (ACARA). Although this learning outcome should always be addressed when reading a text in class, it is of utmost importance with this text, since the circumstances of the letter composed were so unique and the text is representative for the beginnings of social upheaval with an Indigenous person expressing himself in the colonisers’ language. This indicates a fundamental change in the history of Aboriginals as they are able to articulate themselves in an, according to settlers, understandable manner. In addition, Heiss and Minter (8) write that “one of the persistent and now characteristic elements of Aboriginal literature – [is] the nexus between the literary and the political”, indicating the relationship between the socio-political setting and the acquisition of the English language (Shoemaker 6).

## Characterisation of Bennelong

As a next step, students should analyse the character of Bennelong in terms of his bi-cultural identity, as he feels a sense of belonging for two distinct communities.

Before that, it should be clarified what is implied by the terms *culture* and *community*. Students are asked to individually think about the meaning of these concepts and then to come up with a definition for each in pairs. Afterwards, the definitions are collected and the class decides on one definition for each word with which they can identify. Otherwise, the teacher could also hand out the definitions of the Cambridge Dictionary on *culture*, which is described as “the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time” as well as on *community* meaning “the people living in one particular area or people who are considered as a unit because of their common interests, social group, or nationality”. Additionally, the students are provided with several statements concerning what a community is (see 7.4.) and they have to agree or disagree with them and justify their answers.

Moreover, Bennelong’s letter reveals his destiny of inter-cultural entanglement resulting in alienation and uncertainty concerning his question of belonging. In order to refer back to the letter, students should highlight the sentence where Bennelong reveals his identity/identities in the text (see “murry doings” in 4.2.1.) and explain how this indicates his affiliation to the Aboriginal people and to the white settlers. Additionally, they should characterise these two communities, depicting the distinctive lifestyles, traditions, values, etc. Afterwards, their ideas are compared in class and the teacher should acknowledge the learners’ answers and elaborate on the two distinct cultures and some of their features.

Further, students should discuss the terms displacement, rootlessness and belonging and think about what it means to experience two cultures at the same time: on the one hand, Eora people who live in close touch with nature and on the other, the cosmopolitan British colonisers who possess extravagant clothes and exquisite goods. Students should try to comprehend that Bennelong embodies the clash of two completely different cultures, not knowing where he is supposed to fit in. Then, the teacher might outline the impact of Bennelong belonging to more than one community and talks about the controversial positions concerning his life after

returning from England: desperate and alienated Aborigine in contrast to the well-reintegrated senior of the Wangal clan.

#### **4.2.1.2. Reflection on Teaching “Letter to Mr Philips, Lord Sydney’s Steward”**

In general, I believe it is beneficial to use “Letter to Mr Philips, Lord Sydney’s Steward” in school. When teaching a foreign language, it is crucial to provide students with background knowledge regarding the country/countries where the target language is spoken and Bennelong’s letter provides an adequate frame to do so. The text reveals complex socio-political dynamics, as it is composed in the early colonisation period representing the impacts of the encounters between settlers and natives from an Aborigine’s perspective.

The activities presented will help students to understand the consequences of white settlement in Australia and its historical and political context, while drawing parallels to similar events in Europe that also entailed major social changes. When employing the text in the EFL classroom, the objective stated in the Austrian curriculum of engaging with different topics such as social, economic and political developments is achieved (RIS 127).

#### **4.2.2. “The Drover’s Wife”**

Henry Lawson’s short story was first published in the magazine the *Bulletin* in 1892 and is now considered as a seminal work of the Australian literary canon (see AustLit). It tells the story of a bushwoman who is exposed to the dangers of the outback from which she has to protect her four children, since her husband is away driving sheep and cattle. To be more precise, it is a snake that threatens her family and the woman stays awake the entire night in order to finally kill it.

Lawson’s short story starts out with depicting a distinct feature of Australian literature at that time: the bush, which was an essential topic in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century writing as outlined in 4.2. Lawson sets the scene of the story: “Bush all round – bush with no horizon, for the country is flat. No ranges in the distance. The bush consists of stunted, rotten native apple trees. No undergrowth. Nothing to relieve the eye save the darker green of a few sheoaks which are sighing above the narrow, almost waterless creek” (266). These lines depict the bush as harsh, sparsely settled, dry

and as isolated as well as isolating. The realistic and detailed style of narration throughout the story renders the dreariness of the bush life very clearly and also reflects the appearance of the protagonist and her children who can be seen as a product of the environment and their experiences.

The following paragraph reveals the threat that the woman has to face in the course of the story: a presumably deadly snake. As brave but cautious bushwoman, she resolves to protect her children because her husband is away driving, to which she is already used to. As time passes within the story, tension builds, and the snake's symbolic danger is revealed through flashbacks as the woman thinks about previous hardships that she had to deal with when her husband was away (AutLit). In form of retrospection and reminiscence of incidents that drive the story through the single night over which it takes place, the variety and violence of life in the bush are depicted (AustLit). The omniscient narrator's references to hardships experienced by the drover's wife help the reader to understand the conditions that the woman has been enduring and how she has been coping with them (AustLit). The arrival of the climax, the killing of the snake, reinforces the image of the strong and fearless bushwoman who protects herself and her children from another dangerous situation.

The bush's threats are also mirrored in Lawson's symbolic language that pictures the outback as an eerie place and he uses visual imagery that invokes "Western notions of good and evil as well as gendered and racial stereotypes" (AustLit). What is particularly interesting about this story is that Lawson gives voice to the woman who is waiting at home, as opposed to the majority of other texts at that time focusing on men living in the outback and their experiences as drovers.

In regard to Australian cultural identity, Henry Lawson's "The Drover's Wife" is a prime example of the challenges that colonisers had to deal with when they settled in Australia and the wife of the drover is regarded as an "archetypal figure in the Australian canon of representative national types" (Vandamme 73). The story shows how people adapted to the new land and it depicts their fears and problems and how they coped with them. Further, Carter pointed out that the relationship between the land and the human population had a great impact on the people, since the environment experienced in Australia was in stark contrast to what European colonisers were familiar with (*Interview*). In other words, it conveys the "ultimate Australian sentiment" (White 107) about the bush and this is also one of the reasons

why it has acquired its popular status within Australia and has been rewritten and adapted continuously (see Vandamme; see Lee; see Magarey, Rowley and Sheridan). However, for a more in-depth analysis of the bush see chapter 7 in Carter's *Dispossession Dreams & Diversity*.

When dealing with a non-contemporary literary work – especially if it is used to teach students aspects of cultural identity –, it is important to compare the accounts provided with current information. In this case that means to ask the question “What does the bush look like nowadays?” and “How many people still live in the bush?” and to eventually relativise the information given. In order to avoid the reproduction of stereotypes and making students believe that the majority of people in Australia still live as described in “The Drover’s Wife”, it is crucial to make them aware that the story takes place in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and hence, does not embody an accurate picture of how Australians reside now. Further, it is necessary to emphasise the fact that there is a limited number of Australians who settle in the outback and that eighty percent of the population now live within 80 kilometre of the coast (Burnley and Murphy qtd. in Carter, *Dispossession* 32-33). This shows that although Australia consists of an extensive landmass, its population concentrates into a small number of coastal cities.

#### **4.2.2.1. Classroom Activities**

##### **The Bush**

Before diving into Henry Lawson’s “The Drover’s Wife”, it is essential to set the short story’s context, which means to establish a picture of the bush. Students should first discuss with a partner about what the bush might look like and which ideas come to their mind when they think of Australia’s outback. Then, their ideas are compared in class, before they read the first three paragraphs of the text “The Drover’s Wife”.

Afterwards, the students are asked to answer the question “How is the reader positioned to perceive the ‘bush’?” and then the passage is read aloud in class. In order for them to find an answer to the question, the strategy of detailed reading is applied and students are encouraged to highlight key words and phrases characterising the bush. Those key phrases might include “bush all round”, “The bush consists of stunted, rotten native apple-trees”, “everlasting, maddening

sameness”, “no horizon”, and “no ranges in the distance” (266). When analysing the phrases highlighted, learners should realise that the bush is portrayed as a rather remote, harsh, dry, bleak and uninviting place to be rendering a rather negative depiction.

Moreover, it is important to discuss with the students why they believe that the topic of the bush has featured in so many Australian stories, why there has been such a great interest in writing about it, and why European settlers felt the urge to identify with the environment.

In the same vein, students should be asked whether they can think of key elements in the Austrian landscape with which Austrian people can strongly identify with. In so doing, a comparison between the Australian bush and the Austrian Alps, for instance, can be drawn. Further, students should discuss the following questions with their partner:

- What are key elements in the Austrian landscape?
- Do you have a certain connection to the Austrian environment?
- Can you imagine that Australians feel the same with the outback/the bush?
- Is it generally important to identify with the landscape of one's home country? Why/Why not?

### **“The Drover’s Wife”**

After reading the first few lines of the text, students should draw an image or a plan of what the house and the surrounding environment might have looked like in order to picture the setting of the story. Then, they should compare it with their partner and analyse similar perceptions and differences in their drawings. Moreover, another important step before continue reading is to clarify the job of a drover and to discuss the potential difficulties arising when being married to a drover.

As a next step, students read the rest of Lawson’s short story applying the reading skill: identifying the key message and the gist (Hedge 195). In so doing, learners should get the main idea of the text and be able to summarise the story’s plot in their own words.

After recapitulating the story's content, the next task is to characterise the protagonist of the "The Drover's Wife". Thus, students should underline phrases or words that reveal qualities of the woman including personal character traits as well as attributes of her outward-appearance. Those phrases can range from "gaunt sun-browned bushwoman" and "she is not a coward" to "she is used to being left alone" and "her girlish hopes and aspirations have long been dead". Further, these qualities should be grouped into various clusters to better analyse the female heroine of Lawson's short story. First, students work on their own, before comparing and categorising the qualities with their partners. Then, the results are reviewed in class by visualising them on the blackboard. It is discussed which qualities are more dominant than others and how the environment has impacted the woman's personal make-up.

Moreover, it is interesting to examine why she still appears to be content with her life although rendered as rough and draining. On the basis of the information gathered, students should get together in pairs to role play a conversation with the drover's wife about her feelings and her experiences in the bush. To this end, students are encouraged to write a script and to perform it in class afterwards.

Next, students are asked to apply their close reading skills in order to analyse the other characters in the story, viz. the drover, the four children, and the dog, and how they represent settlers' life in the bush in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. While discussing Anglo-Australians' living conditions during that time, it is also essential to draw parallels to the socio-cultural environments of 21<sup>st</sup> century Australia. As a last step, students interpret the ending of the story and come up with ideas what the boy's promise to his mother means.

### **Reflection on "The Drover's Wife"**

To wrap-up the discussion of "The Drover's Wife", students take into consideration why Lawson's work has acquired immense popularity and what it says about Australian cultural identity during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and nowadays.

Besides, there should also be space for the students to express their opinions on how they liked or did not like the short story and to argue their stance. In so doing, their critical thinking and their argumentative speaking skills are enhanced.

#### **4.2.2.2. Reflection on Teaching “The Drover’s Wife”**

In general, I believe that when teaching “The Drover’s Wife” in the Austrian EFL classroom, there are certain challenges that have to be taken into consideration. Although the text is regarded as seminal work in AustLit and was recommended by David Carter and Kerry Kilner for teaching in secondary education, I have certain reservations towards teaching the text, which are important to bear in mind when considering employing Lawson’s text in the EFL setting.

First, the language used in the text is fairly complex for students to understand. Specific lexical expression, Australian vernacular and the syntax employed do not facilitate the process of fully comprehending the text. Further, the figurative language, the irony and the specific sense of humour might lead to the fact that students do not get all the references and the meaning behind certain phrases. However, part of this problem can be tackled by looking up words and explaining their meaning in the context.

Second, the structure of the text including several flashbacks and recollections is intricate and could cause difficulties in grasping the storyline.

Third, besides the lexical and structural challenges, Lawson’s work might entail textual problems when using it in the EFL classroom. The text’s content is relatively complicated, as it thematises several topics, ranging from the depiction of settlers’ lives in 19<sup>th</sup> century Australia, the personification of the harsh bush, the topic of man versus nature, to the tension between resignation and acceptance, the significance of fate, gender roles and feminism, and the relationships within the family. As can be seen, the wide range of topics addressed impedes the process of fully grasping the content and the significance of the text, especially for students with an EFL background.

However, “The Drover’s Wife” lends itself very well to familiarise students with one way of depicting Australia’s harsh landscape. Thus, the first activity works well to compare the Australian and the Austrian environment and to analyse their relevance in each country. The second activity enables the students to get a good overview of the text and the occurring themes. However, I am aware of the fact that the tasks provided merely scratch on the surface and do not provide an in-depth analysis of the text. If there is more time to dedicate to the text, further aspects could be analysed.

This means, for instance, that language features, text structures and conventions could be explained or imagery including figurative language could be evaluated and analysed in terms of what they reveal about the text. In so doing, students would benefit, as they would receive a better understanding of the text and its context.

The problem with this work is twofold: on the one hand, a detailed analysis of the text consumes a considerable amount of time and on the other hand, it might not even be of real interest for the students. With having that said, it would be wise to *either* dedicate more time to discuss “The Drover’s Wife”, applying appealing tasks and methods *or* to draw upon other literary works that serve the purpose of sparking students’ interest in Australian culture better.

#### **4.2.3. Does My Head Look Big in This?**

*Does My Head Look Big in This?* was Randa Abdel-Fattah’s debut novel and was released in 2005. The young adult novel tells the story of a 16-year-old Australian-Muslim girl and her struggles when she decides to wear her hijab full-time. The novel is multifaceted and covers numerous topics which could be analysed in very much detail focusing on aspects like feminism, eating disorders, racism, etc. However, in regard to the thesis’ topic, I will scrutinise the topic of identity, or to be more precise, the topic of Australian cultural identity, and how it is constructed in the novel.

In order to better understand the context of the book, I will provide a very brief digression about Muslims in Australia. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the number of people identifying themselves as Muslims in Australia constituted 604,200 in 2016. In other words, 2.6 percent of Australia’s population declared that their faith is Islam, while 52.1 percent stated to be Christians and 30.1 percent stated to have “no religion” (Australian Bureau of Statistics). There are Muslims from more than 60 countries living in Australia with the majority originating from Bosnia, Lebanon, and Turkey, but also from Albania, Algeria, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Palestinian territories, Malaysia, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, among others (Kabir, *Edge* 5-6).

The protagonist of Abdel-Fattah’s novel, Amal, has her roots in Palestine where her father, Mohamed, and her mother, Jamila, come from. However, Amal was born and raised in Australia and she and her parents live in a prosperous suburb of Melbourne.

In regard to their cultural identities, they “have carved out distinct identities for themselves, blending Middle-Eastern roots and their Islamic faith with mainstream Australian culture” (Lochte 1). Like many other immigrant families, they attempt to combine the different influences in their lives by assimilating to the Australian lifestyle as well as by upholding Muslim cultural and religious values (cf. section 3.3.5.).

Amal engages with her religious and cultural values at the beginning of the book and ponders whether she should become a full-timer, implying that she would wear the hijab, a visible marker of her religion, at all times. Amal is insecure whether it would be the right step to do in order to engage more consciously with her religion. Abdel-Fattah provides the reader with an accurate picture of Amal's inner struggle, because to some extent, Amal feels that her

passion and conviction in Islam are bursting inside me and I want to prove to myself that I'm strong enough to wear a badge of my faith. I believe it will make me feel so close to God. Because it's damn hard to walk around with people staring at your 'nappy head' and not feel kind of pleased with yourself – if you manage to get through the stares and comments with your head held high. That's when this warm feeling buzzes through you and you smile to yourself, knowing God's watching you, knowing that He knows you're trying to be strong to please Him. Like you're both in on a private joke and something special and warm and extraordinary is happening and nobody in the world knows about it because it's your own experience, your own personal friendship with your Creator. I guess when I'm not wearing the hijab I feel like I'm missing out. I feel cheated out of that special bond. (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 7f.)

By wearing the veil, Amal would signify her religious identity and affirm her devotion to Islam. Further, she is convinced that wearing the hijab would assist her in improving and maintaining her relationship with God and in pursuing her goal of “commit[ting] more completely to her faith” (Lochte 1). Amal is sure that when she publicly expresses her Muslim identity, she will “improve her piety as a young Muslim” (Majid 121) and she will “feel closer to Allah by making such a public sacrifice for him” (Lochte 1).

As accurately as Abdel-Fattah depicts Amal's excitement about wearing the veil, she also outlines the protagonist's concerns and doubts. Before attending MacCleans Grammar School, Amal attended Hidayah, an Islamic college, which provided space to “pray and fast and wear a hijab and get on with being a teenager without having to answer questions or defend yourself against new headlines” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 12). Hidayah promoted Australian values, for example, by singing ‘Advance Australia

Fair' every morning at assembly and at the same time, it aimed to foster Muslim identities by obliging girls to wear the hijab, which was part of the school uniform. Back then, Amal did not appreciate wearing the veil, as she thought it was itchy and impractical during sports. In the course of her time at Hidayah, she met other girls who were wearing the hijab full-time and she envied them for their determination and their courage. At that time, Amal did not possess the confidence to wear the veil outside school, which has apparently changed, since the reader is confronted with a 16-year-old teenager who contemplates whether to wear the hijab also to her new school.

Generally, Amal is characterised as "an Australian youngster like any other Australian teenage girl [whose] lifestyle, interests, likes and dislikes [...] define her as an Australian girl" (Ameri 59). With her friends, she talks about boy crushes, clothes, shopping, diets, classmates, etc. and she seems to be an ordinary 16-year-old teenager in modern Australia society except for that extra edge of having a Muslim background. As it can be assumed, status matters a lot in Amal's world – as usual in lives of high school students –, and it plays a major role "[w]ho one is friends with, who one eats with, who one dates[...]. Status is gained by conforming to social norms and by one's associations" (Milner qtd. in Ali 523). Clearly, Amal is insecure about becoming a full-timer, since wearing a veil does not necessarily make her appear 'cooler' and she fears that she might be "doomed to the non-cool list" (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 14) due to being a "nappy-head" (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 7).

In the novel, Abdel-Fattah reveals teenagers' self-doubts and struggles resulting from the importance attached to appearance and to conformity, determining one's reputation and degree of inclusion (Ali 523). According to Abdel-Fattah's depiction, it is essential to adhere to social norms and not to stand out in order to be socially accepted or even popular in "a snotty grammar school" (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 14) and Amal knows that the hijab will disjoin her from her non-Muslim friends in some ways. In general, Amal is well aware of the negative perceptions towards her religion by the public, reinforcing her anxiety and her reservation of wearing the hijab full-time.

However, the questions arise why Islam has such a negative connotation and why Muslims are even regarded as Australia's public enemy number one (Moran 191). There are several intertwined reasons for Islamophobia in Australia, and I will try to give a brief insight in order to better understand Amal's anxiety of wearing the

hijab. However, for a more detailed analysis see Nahid Kabir's book *Muslims in Australia*.

One of the reasons for Islamophobia is that Muslims are perceived by Australians as being 'too different' (Kabir, *Muslims* 295) and are viewed as 'the other'. There is the fear of a "clash of civilisations" (Huntington qtd. in Aly and Walker 206), because it is presumed that Muslims stick to their cultural values and are unwilling to assimilate (Kabir, *Muslims* 295, Woodlock 395). Australians tend to view Islam "as culturally incompatible" (Humphrey 10) and want Muslims to integrate, because "[t]otally independent cultures within Australian society are frowned upon for encouraging cultural fragmentation, and women and girls, it is believed, would be better off if they did not wear *hijabs*" (Kabir, *Muslims* 277 [italics in original]). Moreover, this picture of the unassimilable Muslim is also reinforced by media and politicians (Kabir, *Muslims* 250-251), which does not enhance Muslims' integration process.

Furthermore, terrorist attacks "committed by a variety of state- and non-state-based Muslim actors" (Woodlock 393) have influenced Western people to link Islam with fear, terrorists, guns, and jihad (Kabir, *Muslims* 251, Milton-Edwards 34-35). Especially the 9/11 bombings in the United States in 2001, the Bali bombings in 2002 and 2005, the Madrid train bombings in 2004, as well as the London bombings in 2005 have enhanced Australians' fear of Islam (Kabir, *Muslims* 151, Woodlock 393). These internationally recognised acts of violence also had repercussions on Muslims in Australia, since many Australians' were reassured in their pre-existing concerns about Muslims (Kabir, *Edge* 1284) and those concerns were transferred to honest, law-abiding Muslims who have nothing in common with fanatic, radical Muslims. Due to biased media coverage and generalisations, Muslims have been stigmatised and continually become objects of hate as well as victims of hostility (Kabir, *Edge* 1284, Celermajer, Yasmeen and Saeed 4).

Against these backdrops, Amal still decides to become a full-timer regardless of what her peers, her family, or society in general might think or say. It is a decision that she chooses for herself by her own volition, it is a decision that is "coming from [her] heart" (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 25). She regards wearing the hijab as a religious command and aims for a closer relationship with Allah (Majid 200) and while standing by her decision, she wants to become a strong and determinant Muslim woman. It is an informed decision, as she has taken into consideration the eventual burdens of

wearing the hijab. She knows that publicly revealing her Muslim identity takes a lot of courage, because many people might view her as a “racialized other” (Ameri 131), increasing the chances of becoming the target of discrimination. Nevertheless, Amal still prioritises her desire to declare her loyalty to Islam and she overcomes her insecurities.

Despite her courage and her determination, her decision remains a personal struggle and in the course of the novel, Amal is confronted with a variety of different positive and negative reactions from her family, her friends, and her classmates, amongst others. The reader learns a lot about common prejudices and stereotypes regarding veiled Muslim females and about Islamic faith and Arabic culture in general. On the basis of certain characters’ reactions, the thesis will analyse the distinct cultural identities in modern Australia as depicted in the novel.

Amal’s parents – much to the surprise of Amal and probably of the reader – are not excited about Amal’s idea to wear the hijab at all times. Although or maybe because Amal’s mother wears the hijab herself, she has presumably experienced struggles and challenges and therefore, cautions her daughter. She makes Amal aware of the fact that “it’s a big decision” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 24) and asks her whether she is “ready to cope with such a huge change in [her] life” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 24). The reaction of her parents shows that they are more concerned about Amal’s well-being and her integration into Australia’s society than whether she is wearing the veil or not, indicating their rather liberal Muslim attitude and that they are not forcing anything upon her. Abdel-Fattah accentuates that Amal independently opts to wear the veil and depicts the hijab as “an empowering tool of self-expression through which women increase their relationship with their own faith and culture” (Taha and Bahar 256). Amal is sure about her decision and reacts to her parents’ confrontation with de-emphasising their anxieties by stating that the veil is merely “a piece of material” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 24), knowing that it has a much deeper meaning and that it is connotated with – often negative – cultural symbolism.

Amal’s friends strongly support her decision of becoming a more devout Muslim. Her Muslim friends Leila and Yasmeen, whom she knows from her previous school, encourage her as much as her non-Muslim friends Simone and Eileen, who support her in speaking up against bullies. Nevertheless, Simone has certain hesitations concerning Amal’s decision in the beginning. However, Amal emphasises her desire

to wear the veil, the “symbol of [her] faith”, and she reassures Simone that she really “want[s] that identity” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 24), indicating her dedication and self-confidence.

When Amal is wearing the hijab to school for the first time, she feels highly nervous. Likewise, her classmates are insecure about how to react to Amal’s hijab and they look at her like UCOs (Unidentified Covered Objects), turning “Muslim girls from an ‘us’ into a ‘them’” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 38). Abdel-Fattah highlights the issue that people often associate veiled women and girls as ‘the other’, consciously distinguishing themselves from Muslims (Yegenoglu qtd. in Pearce 59). This issue is also raised by Khoo who outlines that female Muslims wearing the hijab are frequently perceived as “the embodiments of this dangerous otherness” (584).

Thus, it is interesting to take into consideration where this fear of veiled Muslim women stems from. The hijab is regarded as “one of the most essentialised and overburdened cultural symbols of our time” (Dreher and Ho vii) and is likely to trigger negative emotions. For many people, the hijab represents misogyny, implying women’s oppression by Muslim men (Ho 54). Moreover, the hijab reinforces the stereotypical thought that women are forced to wear the veil (Ho 57; Aly and Walker 208). In other words, the veil is perceived as “a signifier of female imprisonment and difference” (Pearce 59). Besides misogyny, the hijab is also often seen as the symbol of resistance to integration (Poynting 384). This is due to the fact that people tend to neglect that Muslims are able to do both: integrating into a new society and at the same time preserving cultural values. Particularly in such a secular country like Australia, publicly exposed religious symbols are frowned upon, since religion is treated as a private matter (Dreher and Ho v). Hence, showing the Islamic faith through religious symbols like the hijab is perceived as a threat to Australia’s secularity and stirs a – even if unsubstantiated – fear of an “Islamification of Australia” (Aly and Walker 210).

In the novel, the prevalence of these misconceptions, unfounded fears and stereotypes is revealed through utterances of Amal’s classmates. It takes them a week until they have enough self-confidence to approach and to confront Amal about her hijab. It seems that Amal is genuinely happy that they finally pepper her with questions, as she could not endure the silence and the tension anymore. Clearly, her peers have certain clichés in mind and ask questions like: “Did your parents force

you?” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 69) or “Do you wear it in the shower?” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 70) and they even contemplate whether Amal became “some fanatic” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 145). This reveals that Amal’s peers have not engaged with Muslim ideas before and this lack of knowledge leads to misinterpretations and generalisations. Although they are interested in the subject, their initial reservations towards approaching Amal indicate the sensitivity of the issue in Australia, especially after the terrorist attacks 9/11 and the Bali bombings.

Aside from stereotypes and genuine interest that Amal encounters, she also has to face Islamophobic comments from some of her peers like Tia and Tia’s friends. After a biased newspaper article reporting a crime probably committed by “people of Middle Eastern appearance” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 151), Tia makes use of this situation and exposes Amal by asking her whether she feels ashamed for these Muslims. Another time, Tia brings up an article about Muslim women being circumcised in Nigeria and sardonically questions Amal how her situation is “down there” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 168). These and other remarks like: “It must feel awful knowing you come from such a violent culture” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 152) reveal the Islamophobia, the fear of and hatred against Islam (Runnymede Trust 1), which Amal has to endure on a daily basis. She is fretful about her classmates’ attitudes and their way of associating her with perpetrators and fanatics with whom she does not share any commonalities.

What upsets Amal the most regarding these comments is that some classmates view Muslims as a homogeneous group and ignore the fact that Muslim people embody an enormous diversity, coming from many different countries and cultural backgrounds. Amal voices her resentment towards her peers’ insensitivity stating that Muslims are “not a plural, or some big bloc, all acting and feeling and saying the same things” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 143), emphasising the individuality of Muslim people.

In order to accentuate the heterogeneity of Muslims, Abdel-Fattah employs distinct characters who interpret Islam in diverse ways, as remarked by Lochte:

Amal’s aunt and uncle, who live secular lives and have worked very hard to assimilate into Australian culture her friend, Yasmeen, whose White British mother converted to Islam after meeting her Pakistani future husband; and Amal’s friend, Leila, whose mother worries that her daughter is being corrupted by Australian culture but who turns a blind eye to her son’s drinking and drug use. (Lochte 2)

As Lochte outlines, one way of showing the diversity of Muslims is through Uncle Joe and Aunt Mandy, born as Ismail and Aysha, who distance themselves from the Muslim identity and prioritise the Australian lifestyle. Their reaction to Amal wearing the hijab is everything else than enthusiastic and they tell her that she does not have “hope of a future if [she] continue[s] to wear the hijab” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 104), since they believe that “in today’s climate Muslims are better off retreating and concealing their identity not only because they need to assimilate but also to get ahead in society” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 104). In fact, it seems that Joe and Mandy intend to discard their religious beliefs in order to feel welcomed in Australia. They believe that their Muslim background hinders them from becoming fully-accepted members of society and it increases the chance of getting harassed and discriminated. By creating non-cliché Muslim characters “whose behaviours and views are provocative in regard to identity issues” (Ameri 59), Abdel-Fattah depicts the distinctive ways of coping with one’s cultural and religious background.

Moreover, another example to indicate Muslims’ heterogeneity is through the character of Yasmeen’s mother, Cassandra. She is originally from England and converted to Islam, because her prospective husband was a Muslim from Pakistan. From her outward appearance – except for the veil she is wearing –, one would not think of her as a Muslim, since she has “blue eyes, pale skin, freckles, blonde eyelashes and light eyebrows” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 132).

Compared to Uncle Joe and Aunt Mandy, the other extreme of dealing with one’s heritage is the figure of Leila’s mother, Gulchin. Gulchin originates from a working class family, is portrayed as rather uneducated and her life “goal is to find Leila a suitable husband, and she aims to marry her off at a young age” (Majdu 124). For her, cultural values and tradition are extremely important and as a consequence, her attitudes lead to major tensions with her daughter, who has a progressive outlook on life, studies hard and intends to become a lawyer. With creating those two characters, Abdel-Fattah exemplifies the often occurring generational conflict within migrant families, whereby the two generations “have different starting points and different givens” (Radhakrishnan 123).

The generation conflict is further explained by Brah who states that

the relationship of the first generation to the place of migration is different from that of subsequent generations, mediated as it is by memories of what was

recently left behind, and by the experiences of disruption and displacement as one tries to reorientate, to form new social networks, and learns to negotiate new economic, political and cultural realities. (Brah 194)

Gulchin, as representative figure of the first generation, grew up under different conditions and was used to different customs compared to Leila. By moving to Australia, Gulchin geographically distanced herself from her home country, but she still upholds certain cultural values in her new environment. Further, she also expects Leila to adhere to these norms, unsurprisingly leading to discrepancies. Leila feels restricted through her parents and their rules imposed on her. Moreover, she cannot relate to all their cultural traditions, which results in her feeling unable to “fulfil the exalted duty of cultural reproduction and maintenance” (B. Gray 34). Aware of her opportunities, Leila aims to study law after finishing school and this idea differs considerably from that of her mother. Hence, Leila feels misunderstood as well and she cannot believe that her mother wants to marry her off instead of supporting her to pursue her dreams.

The generational conflict cumulates in Leila running away from home after feeling too oppressed by her parents. Leila’s disappearance agitates Amal, who criticizes Gulchin for being narrow-minded and for using Islam to legitimise her restrictive way of raising Leila, albeit not having read the Koran (Hajdu 96). Although Amal might be right in pointing out that Gulchin has not sufficiently engaged with readings of Koran, there is, according to Majdu, a certain irony in this confrontation, because “despite the fact that Amal views Gulchin as having an inferior understanding of religion and the world around her, Gulchin is the one who is more able to understand the relationship between religious practices and moral behaviour – a lesson that escapes Amal’s understanding” (125). In other words, Gulchin is aware of the fact that religious practices encompass values like pious disposition and are not solely symbolic acts (Mahmood 128). This implies that religious symbols themselves should not be paramount and instead, more importance should be attached to the motifs and intentions behind wearing those symbols.

With the persona of Gulchin, Abdel-Fattah raises awareness that there are Muslims, like her, who are “more into following social customs” (*Head* 149), stressing the distinction between religion and culture in Islam. In so doing, Abdel-Fattah agrees with the idea that Islam historian Marshall Hodgson postulated in *The Venture of*

*Islam* stating that it is crucial to differentiate between Islamic religion and culture. In a nutshell, Marshall Hodgson argues that the terms 'Islam' and 'Muslim' should solely be used in conjunction with religion as opposed to social and cultural values upheld by Muslim people that are summarised in the definition 'Islamicate' (qtd in Lawrence). Lawrence explains that the

-ate is much more than an added syllable: it is a stark challenge to rethink all that is meant by Muslim and Islam. It is the social and cultural palette that emerged from Islamic rule, encompassing and influencing non-Muslims as well as Muslims. Islamicate, with the -ate tacked on to the end, adds oddity and resonance to what becomes the heritage of Islam for world civilization. (Lawrence [italics in original])

In the novel, Gulchin's cultural traditions are inherited from previous generations, but these tenants of Islam are not necessarily based on Koran and should be viewed as cultural or political interpretations of it (Lochte 2).

Analysing the novel according to Hodgson's idea, Abdel-Fattah aims to emphasise that circumcision, arranged marriages, oppressing and withholding women from education, etc. are not commands of Islam but outcomes of culture, politics, and ethnic codes. In the same vein, Marafi points out that these issues are "attributed to Islam when actually [they have] nothing to do with it. It's all about making Islam seem to be the problem when it's all about culture, tradition, and the wrong-doings of the people. People make Islam an excuse to cover up what they believe in; what they think is right, they relate to Islam" (13). This reinforces the importance of treating those two concepts of culture and religion as distinctive, albeit intertwined, since culture does influence the practice of religion and vice versa.

In addition, cultural practices also vary from country to country and as mentioned before, Australian Muslims migrated from many different regions. In *Does My Head Look Big in This?*, Abdel-Fattah illustrates the diversity of countries that the Muslim characters stem from, for example, Amal's family from Palestine, Leila's family from Turkey, and Yasmeen's family from Pakistan and England. In so doing, Abdel-Fattah stresses that even though they all share the same religion, their cultural values and traditions might differ. Nevertheless, it is crucial to note that there are, of course, certain aspects that most Muslims have in common. This is stressed by Nahid Kabir in her book *Muslims in Australia*, where she acknowledges that "a person's religion and culture are two different things" (8), but at the same time she argues that

Muslims share common cultural characteristics, “which can sometimes be identified by their names, dress code, eating and drinking habits. That is, Muslim women who wear hijabs or veils, and Muslims who refrain from drinking alcohol and eating pork, can be easily identified by their religion” (8 [italics in original]). In general, Abdel-Fattah makes a great effort to emphasise the distinction between religion and culture in Islam and she also highlights the problem that people tend to neglect that Muslims come from distinct backgrounds and countries of religion and therefore, have diverse ways of interpreting their faith and their cultural customs.

To sum up, *Does My Head Look Big in This?* is a story about diversity and cultural identity in Australia told from the perspective of an Arabic-Muslim-Australian born girl who tries to come to terms with her bi-cultural identity. The message of the book is twofold: on the one hand, it shows that Amal is like every other Australian teenager, sharing common experiences and attitudes regardless of religion and culture and on the other hand, it shows that Amal has a certain cultural background that should not be neglected, as it makes her different to her peers in some ways, but these differences should be respected and not feared (Rochman qtd. in Majid 117). It is the diversity of ACI embodied in

the ‘wogs’, the ‘nappy heads’, the ‘foreigners’, the ‘persons of Middle Eastern appearance’, the Asians, the ‘oppressed’ women, the Greek Orthodox pensioner chain-smoker, the ‘salami eaters’, the ‘ethnics’, the pom-turned-curry-munchers, the narrow-minded and the educated, the fair-dinkum wannabes, the principal with hairy ears. (Abdel-Fattah, Head 350)

Exactly these people and Amal’s encounters and struggles with them helped her to understand her identity and to grasp that she is a “colourful adjective” (Abdel-Fattah, Head 350). Indeed, with her identity as young Australian-Palestinian-Muslim she is a “colourful adjective” (Abdel-Fattah, Head 350) contributing to ACI.

#### **4.2.3.1. Classroom Activities**

The following classroom activities are partially based on Melissa Kennedy’s ideas that were presented in the literature course ““Surviving the Teenage Years: Youth Identity Issues in World Fiction” at the University of Vienna in the winter term 2016.

### **General Recap of *Does My Head Look Big in This?***

It is assumed that everyone has read the novel and as a first step, it is summarised by using the method 'pass-on-the-ball-summary'. Before the activity starts, the teacher encourages the usage of linking words like 'then', 'subsequently' and 'afterwards'. Then, every student gets up and the teacher commences with retelling the beginning of the novel within one sentence and afterwards, passes on the ball to another student who continues the story. The re-narration of the story should be rather detailed, since every pupil should get the chance to contribute to the summary.

Afterwards, students are encouraged to think about their reading experience. To this end, they read the first as well as the last page of the book again in order to memorise their feeling when starting and finishing reading. Afterwards, students should position themselves according to a line in the classroom ranging from 'I really loved the book' via 'It was alright' to 'It was a waste of time'. Students are asked for their opinions why they (do not) like the novel and also whether they have changed their mind while reading, which means whether their interest increased or decreased.

This activity ties in with the learning objective ACEEN009, as stated in the learning area English of the Australian curriculum. The objective highlights the importance to analyse and evaluate how students' responses to texts are influenced by their "personal, social and cultural context" (ACARA). Thus, it is essential to discuss the factors which influenced students to like/dislike the novel and the aspects which they find fascinating, odd, unusual, amusing, or thought-provoking.

### **Quotations Regarding Wearing the Hijab**

The most essential question in Abdel-Fattah's novel is whether to wear the hijab or not. In order for the students to engage with this issue in more depth, quotations from the book revolving around the debate of wearing the veil are discussed. Examples thereof are as following:

- "I guess when I'm not wearing the hijab I feel like I'm missing out. I feel cheated out of that special bond" (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 7f.).
- "What are you trying to do to yourself? Isn't it hard enough with a surname the length of the alphabet? Now you want people to wonder if you're batting for Osama's team? Stick with anonymity, girl!" (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 21).

- “What’s the big deal? It’s a piece of material” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 24).
- “[T]here is more to this hijab than the whole modesty thing. These girls are strangers to me but I know that we all felt an amazing connection, a sense that this cloth binds us in some kind of universal sisterhood” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 28).
- “Too many people look at it as though it [the hijab] has bizarre powers sewn into its microfibers. Powers that transform Muslim girls into UCOs (Unidentified Covered Objects), which turn Muslim girls from an ‘us’ to a ‘them’” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 38).
- “Muslims are better off retreating and concealing their identity not only because they need to assimilate but also to get ahead in society” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 104).
- “Sure, I sometimes feel a strong temptation to retreat and to withdraw to the safety of anonymity. With the flick of a safety pin my hijab will fall off my head and I’ll look like an unhyphenated Aussie” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 104).
- “Ever since I wore the hijab I’ve been feeling pretty scared” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 218).

The quotations are printed on A4 sheets of paper and are hung up in the classroom. Sufficient time should be given to the students to walk around and to read and briefly think about all the quotes. Afterwards, they should stick with one that struck them the most and discuss it with students who have chosen the same one. In those groups, they should consider *who* uttered these words, in *which* situation, and explain *why* they opted for exactly this quotation.

Subsequently, the groups are asked for their opinions, summarising their thoughts on the quotation in class. In another round, students should choose a quote that they least identified with and justify their decision again. To wrap up the activity, space is given to the students to reveal what they found particularly interesting or distressing about the novel and to review other opinions on that.

### **To Veil or Not to Veil**

Considering the contemplation of whether to wear the veil or not, students work in pairs to reflect about the pros and cons that Amal came up with before deciding to

become a full-timer. Moreover, they should put themselves into Amal's position and try to comprehend her thoughts and her final decision. Further, they should analyse the significance of religion in regard to Amal's identity and as a next step, also think about the importance of religion in regard to their own identity. Subsequently, their ideas and thoughts are compared in class.

As a next task, the different reactions to Amal's decision to wear the hijab full-time are scrutinised. To this end, the class is divided into six groups and three 'research' topics are distributed, namely

- Reactions from Amal's family, including her parents and Uncle Joe and Aunt Mandy
- Reactions from her Amal's friends, including her Muslim friends Leila and Yasmeen and her non-Muslim friends Simone and Eileen
- Reactions from people at school, including Adam, Tia and her friends, and Mr Pearse.

In those small groups, they analyse the reactions of their characters assigned. Afterwards, students rotate to listen to the findings of the two other groups, whereby one 'expert' of the group stays to inform the others.

Besides Amal, there are various other women portrayed in the novel who wear the hijab. In order to outline how differently they cope with wearing it, the students' task is to examine their character, their cultural heritage, their potential motivation, and their treatment of religious and cultural values. In pair work, the following figures should be analysed: Amal, Jamila (Amal's mother), Leila, Gulchin (Leila's mother), and Cassandra (Yasmeen's mother). When comparing the characterisations in class, it is important to touch upon certain prejudices that are associated with the veil like misogyny, women's oppression by Muslim men, and symbolising resistance to integration. In the same vein, the positive aspects of wearing the veil should be discussed like the hijab as a tool of empowerment.

### **Culture vs. Religion**

When the findings are compared in terms of characters' cultural heritage and cultural norms and values, it is the teacher's responsibility to raise students' awareness of the differentiation between Islamic religion and culture, drawing upon ideas from Marshall

Hodgson's and Najebah Marafi (cf. 4.2.3.1.). Furthermore, the teacher should emphasise that although those characters share the same religion, they come from different countries of origin, which influences their cultural customs and traditions. This can also be transferred to the situation in Austria, where the majority of people identifies with Catholicism. However, Austrian Catholics differ considerably from Catholics in Burundi, Columbia, Ireland, Spain, etc. in terms of their culture.

To further highlight this distinction, students, in groups of two, should differentiate between culture and religion in one of those two passages:

- Leila's parents come from Turkey and brought their culture and traditions as well as the Islamic faith with them, which are two distinct concepts. Abdel-Fattah outlines that Gulchin, Leila's mother, is "more into following social customs" (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 149) – such as marrying off her daughter –, which is not necessarily stated in the Koran, the foundation of Islam. Hence, Amal accuses Gulchin of using Islam to legitimate her behaviour and her way of parenting.
- After the terrorist attack in Bali, the school captain, Lara, asks Amal whether she could give a speech on the topic of Islam and terrorism in order for fellow students to better understand why this attack was committed. In return, Amal asks Lara, who is Christian, if she would then give a speech about the Ku-Klux-Klan, since "[t]hey were really religious, so obviously what they did was textbook Christianity, right? And how about those Israeli soldiers bombing Palestinian homes or shooting kids? [...] And while we're at it, maybe somebody else could talk about the IRA" (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 243).

### **Muslims in Australia**

A more teacher-centred approach is taken into account when informing students about the history and the current state of Muslims in Australia (cf. 4.2.3.1.). Further, the novel says a lot about modern day Australian society, about Australia's cultural diversity. This multiculturalism is perfectly expressed within a paragraph in the last chapter of *Does My Head Look Big in This?*:

It's been the 'wogs', the 'nappy heads', the 'foreigners', the 'persons of Middle Eastern appearance', the Asians, the 'oppressed' women, the Greek Orthodox

pensioner chain-smoker, the ‘salami eaters’, the ‘ethnics’, the pom-turned-curry-munchers, the narrow-minded and the educated, the fair-dinkum wannabes, the principal with hairy ears who showed me that I am a colourful adjective. It’s their stories and confrontations and pains and joys which have empowered me to know myself, challenged me to embrace my identity as young Australian-Palestinian-Muslim girl. (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 350)

Students are asked to engage with this quotation, to think about its meaning and to answer the following questions:

- How did these people shape Amal’s identity?
- What is meant by the phrase “a colourful adjective” (Abdel-Fattah, *Head* 350)?
- What does this passage reveal about Australia’s present-day society?

Moreover, this passage – and the novel in general – should serve as an introduction to Australia’s history, cultural identity, and multiculturalism.

### **Immigration in Austria**

Finally, by comparing the Australian immigration situation to the Austrian, a parallel between the two countries is drawn. As a first step, factual knowledge should be fostered. To achieve this objective, students engage with actual numbers of immigrants in Austria and find out more about the immigrants’ countries of origin, their first languages, their cultures, etc.

Moreover, the aspect of intercultural awareness is also a crucial component of the FL curriculum, stating that “Wenn sich im Klassenverband Schülerinnen und Schüler befinden, denen Fremdsprachen als Muttersprachen bzw. als Zweitsprachen innerhalb der Familie dienen, sind deren besondere Kenntnisse und Fähigkeiten [...] in der Klassengemeinschaft zu nutzen” (RIS 124). Thus, the novel provides an excellent opportunity to thematise students’ cultural backgrounds by comparing cultures’ similarities and differences. To this end, students are encouraged to inform their peers about their country of origin, their L1, and characteristics of their culture – eventually including religion. In so doing, an intercultural exchange is fostered and students notice and understand the variety of cultures prevalent in their own environment, heightening their cultural awareness.

#### **4.2.3.2. Reflection on Teaching *Does My Head Look Big in This?***

In general, the novel lends itself perfectly for the Austrian EFL classroom. First, the text matches the students' level of English, as the lexicon and syntax used are fairly simple. Second, since the novel is young adult fiction, told by the perspective of a teenager, providing the possibility to identify with the protagonist, it will probably appeal to the majority of students. Third, considering that the novel is a contemporary text, it gives students a glimpse of Australia's society, politics, and cultures and conveys an inter- and transcultural understanding (RIS 454) ("Durch entsprechende Auswahl der Unterrichtsmittel ist für grundlegende Einblicke in Gesellschaft, Zivilisation, Politik, Medien, Wirtschaft, Wissenschaft, Kultur und Kunst des betreffenden Sprachraumes zu sorgen" RIS 454).

The activities presented include various approaches and methods to thematise the controversial topic of immigration, especially in regard to Muslims. Moreover, students do not only deal with Australia's immigration politics and its policy of multiculturalism, but are also encouraged to review the immigration situation in Austria. The engagement with the tasks will increase students' sensibility for the topic and will generally heighten their (inter-)cultural awareness.

In addition, dealing with the topic will dispense a common prejudice that not all veiled women are forced by men to wear the hijab, but decide to do so of their own volition. Further, the activities highlight the difference between culture and religion, which I believe many students are not aware of.

Although the discussion of the book requires a considerable amount of time, I am convinced it is worth investing the time, considering the achievable learning outcomes.

## **5. Conclusion**

In comparison to the quantity of British and American culture prevalent in the Austrian EFL classroom, "it is always going to be an up-hill battle" (Carter, *Interview*) to sufficiently implement Australian culture in Austrian ELT. However, as a short analysis of Austrian English schoolbooks has shown, there is a slowly increasing trend towards including a broader variety of cultures in EFL teaching.

In the interviews conducted during the paper's research, two main reasons for the longstanding marginalisation of Australian culture in Austrian ELT in upper secondary were revealed. As banal as it may sound, but the first reason why ACI is rarely taught at secondary level, is because it is only partially taught at tertiary level. In other words, it is a vicious circle, because if prospective teachers are not exposed to Australian culture throughout their studies, the chance that they will teach it in school is relatively small. In order to raise teachers' awareness of the manifoldness of cultures within the L1 English speaking world, the thesis argued for a more inclusive approach in the Lehramtscurriculum – including more varieties of English in different areas like cultural studies, didactics, linguistics, language competence and foremost in literary studies.

The second reason for omitting Australian culture in Austrian ELT is the absence of suitable FL teaching material for secondary level. It was revealed that the marginalisation of Australian culture is often not the conscious choice of an EFL teacher but an indispensable course of events caused by the lack of hands-on material in form of encyclopaedias, guides, and school books to teach Australian culture in the classroom. Therefore, this paper advocated the use of literature as most suitable and authentic alternative to teach Australian culture in the EFL classroom.

This idea was also supported by the results of the in-depth comparison of the Austrian and the Australian English curriculum for upper secondary. The analysis showed that the main resource for teaching material in Australian English classrooms comprises of literary texts. Thus, Austrian ELT could take an inspiration from that and instead of using majorly didactic texts, employ a broader variety of literary texts to teach additionally to linguistic structures and new vocabulary a foreign culture. However, the Austrian curriculum does not offer any suggestions concerning which literary texts to use. This is not surprising, since *one* syllabus applies to *all* FL taught in Austrian upper secondary and no distinction is made between first or second FL. Due to its broad formulation, it implies relative freedom for structuring teaching, being an advantage as well as a disadvantage at the same time, since teachers are not restricted regarding the texts to use. To counteract this situation, it would be beneficial to establish distinct syllabuses for each FL, providing a more definite

curriculum. However, as this is not the case yet, it depends on the teacher to decide which texts to use when teaching ACI.

In order to fight in the “up-hill battle” (Carter, *Interview*) of integrating more Australian literature in the Austrian EFL classroom, I chose a socio-historical approach to teach ACI to learners who presumably have no or very limited prior knowledge. Further, the paper offers hands-on material to be employed in Austrian ELT, so that learners are able to review “the ways in which authors represent Australian culture, place and identity both to Australians and the wider world (ACELR040)” (ACARA).

The first text, “Letter to Mr Philips, Lord Sydney’s Steward”, is thoroughly authentic and indicates the social upheaval going on in Australia after the arrival of white settlers. The activities presented can be used to scrutinise the clash of the two cultures and to thematise the meaning of social changes, especially in the context of Australia being colonised.

The second text, “The Drover’s Wife”, is considered a seminal work in Australia’s literary canon, but might not be the best choice, if the aim is to spark students’ interest in ACI. The work lends itself well to thematise the depiction of the bush and Australians’ relation to the distinct landscape, while comparing it to the Austrian environment and to people identifying with the Alps, for example. However, in consideration of time-constraints and learning outcomes, there are more suitable texts to choose from when teaching ACI in the Austrian EFL classroom.

The third text, *Does My Head Look Big in This?*, can be classified as a must-read when employing AustLit in upper secondary. The contemporary young-adult novel dealing with a controversial topic of Muslims in Australia definitely appeals to students. Further, the engagement with the activities provides a good insight into modern day Australia and its multiculturalism.

All in all, teaching literature is a crucial part in Austrian ELT and it will remain difficult to decide which texts to use in the EFL classroom, coming back to the question of what to exclude for the sake of what to include (Williams).

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## **7. Appendix**

### **7.1. Research Questions to Investigate Indigenous Culture <sup>5</sup>**

#### **Food**

- What types of food did they eat?
- What were the roles of men and women in terms of supplying food?
- How did they catch animals?
- If you lived in the middle of Australia, what would you cook for dinner?
- What are some Aboriginal names for the food they eat?

#### **Clothing**

- What materials were used to make clothes?
- What clothes did the women and men wear?
- Where there any other ways they decorated their body?

#### **Art and Music**

- Where did they paint their symbols and artworks?
- What did they paint them with?
- What materials were used to make paint?
- What does Aboriginal artwork look like?
- Who are famous Aboriginal artists?
- What musical instruments were used?
- What were they made from?
- When would music be played?
- What celebrations were important to them?
- Who would play the instruments?

#### **Living Conditions**

- What were shelters made from?
- How did they protect themselves from the sun?
- Was shelter different for those living in the middle of Australia and those living near the ocean?
- What was the main form of transport?
- Were there any forms of transport that the Aboriginal people built? What were they made from? (Boats?)

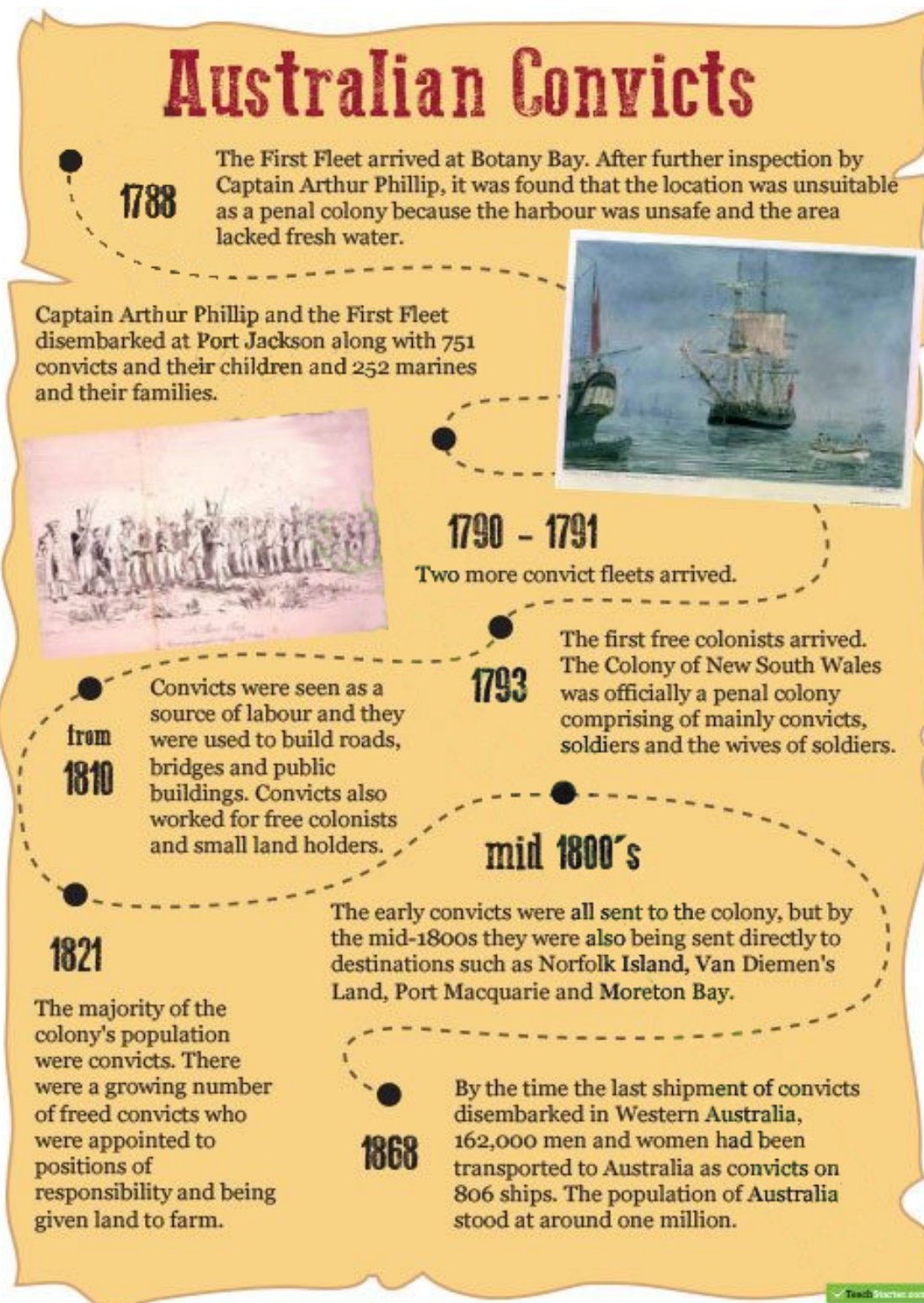
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<sup>5</sup>Taken from <https://www.australiancurriculumlessons.com.au/2013/09/03/aboriginal-culture-investigation-lesson-year-34/> and edited by Andrea Hennerbichler

## **7.2. Transcript of the Video “How the Moon was Made”**

Brolly Bird, the crane, loved to dance. Cranes are the best at dancing! She danced and danced... Long into the night. During her dance, she lost her precious necklace. She was so enthralled that she did not notice it first. So, she asked Cloudskipper, her friend, to help her find it. They searched...and searched...but it was too dark to see. The tide would surely take it before the light returned. So Cloudskipper decided to visit the wise old cloud for help. He gave some cloud to Cloudskipper, who shaped it with his magic. He let the cloud drift into the sky, where it became the moon. The moon lit the world, and Cloudskipper found the necklace. Brolly Bird was overjoyed! She danced under the moon, to thank her for her help.

### 7.3. Worksheet on Australia's Early Colonisation<sup>6</sup>



<sup>6</sup>Taken from <https://www.teachstarter.com/teaching-resource/australian-convicts-timeline/> and edited by Andrea Hennerbichler

#### **7.4. Quotes Concerning the Term *Community*<sup>7</sup>**

Do you agree with the following quotes? Discuss with your partner and justify your answer.

- Communities should only include people who are friends and who like each other.
- Communities are sometimes made up of people who are not working towards a common goal.
- Members of a community feel responsible to one another.
- Communities are a kind of group. But not all groups are communities.
- Our classroom is a community.
- A community has certain rules about membership. Not everyone can belong; some people must be excluded in order for a community to exist.

#### **7.5. Interviews Conducted with Scholars of the Field of AustLit**

The transcription of the interviews conducted with academics of the field of AustLit at the University of Queensland followed the transcription system of the selective protocol described by Mayring (45). The selective protocol is

an economic procedure for transcription. The researcher defines those parts of the (audio recorded) interview, which are relevant for the research question. Interviews often contain extensive introductory parts, motivating the person or explaining the research question, excurses which are important for maintaining a good climate and the compliance of the interviewee. But those parts sometimes are not necessary for the text interpretation. Or the interview has an open, narrative character and the researcher is only interested in specific topics. The researcher formulates a clear selection criterion and the transcription regards only those passages. (Mayring 45)

As the focus of the interviews was primarily on the content level, the above stated transcription system was applied to match the goals of the paper.

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<sup>7</sup>Taken from <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/identity-and-community/what-community> and edited by Andrea Hennerbichler

### 7.5.1. Interview with David Carter

**Hennerbichler:** Thank you very much, Mr Carter. I am glad that I am here with you today and that I am able to interview you. As a first step, could you please introduce yourself and tell us your name again, your profession, your teaching area?

**Carter:** My name is David Carter. I am professor at the University of Queensland in the School of Communication and Arts and possibly there is some significance in some of those titles as well. My official title is Professor of Australian Literature and Cultural History and probably says something my approaches to literature as well. So, being here since 2001 at this university.

**Hennerbichler:** You, as an expert on AustLit, could you please define what means AustLit for you. Or define it in your own words what AustLit is.

**Carter:** That probably depends a little bit on the context. In the classroom, say the undergraduate university courses, I probably have a more conservative definition of AustLit. In the sense that, we would tend to use as our set readings books that are written by people who we can strongly identify as Australian authors and we probably, in our AustLit courses, set books that are in some ways explicitly about Australia or are explicitly Australian. Because we want to raise questions about that interplay between literature and other social and cultural meanings: questions around identity, understandings of history, race relations, things like that. In my own research, I have probably a more generous and open definition. I recently finished a book about Australian authors published in the USA from the 19th century through to the 20th century. And there, we have a very flexible definition: any writers who have some sense of significant connection to Australia. So for the 19th century, many of them are long-term visitors rather than people born in Australia. For the 20th century, many of them are people who were born in Australia, began their career in Australia, but then expatriate themselves to England, or the US, or somewhere else.

**Hennerbichler:** This already leads nicely to the next question: What do you think makes AustLit special? What is special about AustLit that distinguishes it from other countries' writings?

**Carter:** I think clearly there are important similarities with what people call other white settler societies with Canada in particular, with New Zealand, with the US in a slightly different way. And then in some contexts that is very important. You mentioned in the beginning that it is often difficult for Australian or perhaps even Canadian literature or New Zealand literature to get noticed on the international stage. And one of the things that I often do when I am overseas is talk to people who think themselves of experts in say American literature and I tell them that this is a fantastic background to start understanding AustLit, because many similar questions arise. But for Australia itself, I think that the dynamic between Indigenous, settler, and immigrant cultures and populations is very important for understanding Australian cultures and identities. [...]

**Hennerbichler:** Do you think that there are certain topics or reoccurring themes that have to be part of AustLit in some way to classify as AustLit?

**Carter:** Again, it depends a little bit on the context. Because on one side, I want a very broad definition of AustLit or it might be called writing in Australia that would

include people writing fantasy novels, science fiction novels, romance novels, detective novels, etc. right through to the capital-L Literature kinds of works. On the other hand, we do tend to organise our courses and probably a lot of critical articles that academics write about our literature, I definitely think there is a core group of themes. Some of the ones that might be of particular importance to Australia – it is there in other countries – but I think it is some kind of essential importance here that it is not quite in other countries and that is the question of the land: the relationship of the human population to the land, the environment. There are a number of reasons for that, I think. One is because of the question of Indigenous belonging. We are on someone else's land in this country. I think, in that sense it is stronger in Australia than in some of the other countries. It's still a minority of the population. But it is something that is present in different ways, in a lot of our most important literary texts that question of "I feel I belong here and I am a white Australian", "I feel I belong here but I am conscious that my belonging in this land in some ways is at the expense of someone else's belonging". So, in some ways I think this is certainly the case for me personally but I think it is something that we do often in our literature. The more intense feeling of belonging that you have, you also have an intense feeling of ambiguity or not-belonging or that belonging being compromised or doubled in some ways. I think that set of questions around attitudes to land, understanding land, questions of belonging, questions of identity that feeding into questions of relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, that feeding into questions of how we understand our history, that set of questions there are versions of it in other postcolonial literatures, but it is particularly intense in Australia. There are many other things which have been important: themes around gender and sexuality have been important in Australian writing since 70s and 80s and in fact going back to colonial literature in many ways. You could put together a very interesting series of Australian works on the theme of something like damaged masculinities. We do a good line in damaged masculinities in a lot of our literature and that's probably the other side of the coin of having the image of the perfect white Australian male figure that literary writers have often explored.

**Hennerbichler:** Do you think that there is a period of Australian history or literature which is particularly important?

**Carter:** It's difficult to say that, because to pick out one is almost, you immediately start producing a kind of biased picture in some ways. In my own research the period I am most interested in is really the period between the two wars, so 1920s/1930s. And that's not a period that people write about all that much these days, if you look at the academic journals, they tend to be dominated by earlier and later, so 19<sup>th</sup> century and the contemporary period. I am interested in this period partly because for a long time it was seen as a period where not much happened. We had the exciting period of the late 19th century with Henry Lawson and others. And then by the 20th century is all seemed to have collapsed. It's hard to point to major books appearing in that period. If they did, they were produced by someone like Henry Handel Richardson who lived in Europe or England and seemed as much influenced by European literature as by things happening in Australia. But it seems to me if you go down a level and look at the world of magazines, what was happening in the pages of newspapers and so on. [...] The historian Alan Atkinson, who's written this really fascinating big three volume thing called *Europeans in Australia*. In the first volume of that, he talks about the ways in which writing was central to the settlement colonisation of Australia in ways it wasn't to the US. So, in the sense what made it

possible and plausible and the ways in which a writing culture has come to dominate in Britain. And I think that way; and the way in which Indigenous Australians learnt that culture from very early on. You know, this is a really important part of the story. One of the things that tends to happen, I think, is that changes the ways we understand our contemporary culture which leads us to re-evaluate the past. The fact that we are now more alert to non-Anglophone cultures in Australia and other ethnic minority communities that can actually lead to going back in history and realising that those groups were present in talking and writing right through our history. It is not something that happened in the last ten years. And something like that is happening in Indigenous cultures too. We often see it as something that just started suddenly out of nowhere in the last twenty years or so, but once we look into it, there is a much longer history. I think people are kind of recuperating things like Bennelong's letter and other petitions and so on from Aboriginal groups and are wanting to bring them in to the canon is part of that process. I quite like the idea of being kind of an unsteady borderline happening there between what we can think of AustLit and the broader field of writing or even what I sometimes call print culture in Australia. I think we can sort of have a narrow definition of AustLit in the more traditional sense of novels, short stories, poetry, drama. And then the broader definition that would include non-fiction, letters, petitions, etc. I don't think there is a right answer. It's more that we can learn more about potential between them and what do they share. [...]

**Hennerbichler:** Moving away a bit from AustLit itself. As I said before, in Austria we have in the classrooms high priority given to Britain and to America. And I wanted to ask whether you can think of certain reasons for neglecting the Australian literature and Australian culture when teaching foreign languages or when teaching English in foreign language classrooms.

**Carter:** I think it's just where the power resides in the international market. It's difficult for Australian authors to achieve a kind of international recognition that American authors rather can. And even if they do, it is very difficult for them to sustain that kind of reputation. So when you start looking at the international reception of Australian books, what is very often surprising is how well they are received. You know, people admire these books, they praise them very strongly. I think it's often that there is no perhaps institutional structure to support them. So in the sense, what you need is that books and authors are present in the educational system, people writing books about them. You know, American literature has the power to command that in some ways. It's quite difficult for Australia, even if you had one novel or one author or two novels and two authors that can make an impact for a short amount time. It is very difficult to sustain that. It collapses after a while. When we did our study of Australian books in the US, what we found is that Australian authors being rediscovered every five or ten years, as if it has never happened before. So, people writing in 1930 – we are discovering this wonderful, unknown continent of AustLit and then ten years later, people are writing in the same newspaper, in the New York Times, saying we have never heard of anything coming out of Australia. Then a few years later, it is rediscovered again. It's just because it doesn't have any form of sustaining institutional support in the way that American or British do. minute 38 [...] It's difficult, because outside there is a very small group of fans and enthusiasts and supporters to form that sustaining. It is kind of a network. You could almost go through a list of what you would need. You need presence on university courses, we only have that a little bit; a body of critical writing about Australian literature, yes we have that a little bit, but it is kind of dispersed across Europe rather than strong concentration. We

need, you know, what are the opportunities for someone to make a career in Austria as an expert in AustLit? You know it would be a very courageous decision, you know. What you would do, would be to become an expert in American or British and have Australian as your second string. What would be the opportunities to have something Australian taught in secondary school level, almost zero probably. But it is probably not completely out of the question to have an English novel or an American novel appear in certain context. People who are not attached to the universities but read the weekly book review pages in the major newspapers. What would be the chances not just to be encountering one Australian novel or two a year but at getting some ongoing feeling for. I often compare it with another sort of province which in the sense has been successful and that is the idea of the Latin American novel. [...]

**Hennerbichler:** Apparently, you think it is important to teach Australian literature and culture also in other countries?

**Carter:** Well, I have spent a lot of my career, probably I had some dual-track career. As I have done a lot of work in Australian studies rather than just in Australian literature. And as part of the Australian studies work, I have done a lot of work with Australian studies overseas, particular in China and Japan, but also a bit in Europe. So, I do think that it is really important - partly because it is always going to be an uphill battle for us. You know, Australia has what I sometimes call a kind of reputational deficit, even it is reputation as positive as it often is around the world, it's not the kind of reputation that means or that translates into a sense of cultural depth or complexity. So the cliché version of this is that we are famous for sunshine and beaches but not for having a complex culture. And you know, I think that's wrong. I do have a kind of missionary feeling that, you know, we have a hell of a lot to educate people. [...] Australian culture is rather exemplary than supplementary. What I meant by that was that by studying Australia you kind of have a compressed miniature of a lot of the major problems that are happening around the world. And sometimes the other version is that it is a kind of country that has escaped the major problems of the world. We are kind of an innocent country; we don't have those serious problems. You know, it is true. It is a privileged place to live in so many ways, in Australia. But, you know, on the other hand, when you think about it, what are the core, unresolved issues in some ways or ongoing questions for Australia? The question of Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations that is a question that is shared in significant ways by lots of other countries; a question of multicultural society and immigrant society. And that's becoming more and more permanent. The questions of land and environment that I mentioned before. In many ways, Australia has them in a kind of extreme form, because of the nature of our geography. It is an exceptionally fragile environment in so many parts of Australia. So, there are many of the issues that affect other countries that you can find sort of compressed and entangled in Australia in quite interesting ways. I mean I think they are brought together in ways in Australia that are distinctive, that are unique. But at the same time, there is a side of me that wants to resist making Australia too exceptional. [...]

**Hennerbichler:** You were talking about Chinese people in Australia and about Indigenous people in Australia. And do you think this is all represented in the Australian cultural identity?

**Carter:** Again, it's an area where we have a real conflict and contradiction because on the one hand, there is a very powerful discourse in Australia of singular white

Australian identity and in many ways that has got stronger over the last ten or 20 years. It's got stronger partly because it started to disappear or it was under threat and people on the more conservative end of politics launched quite deliberate campaigns to preserve this more traditional view of Australian culture. So, the Prime Minister had big campaigns around the Australian flag or of those more traditional versions of patriotism and identity and so on around Australia Day, ANZAC Day; these kinds of things. On the other hand, one of the quite liberating things about Australia is that we have no idea what our identity is at all. It's completely, if you talk about traditions and so on, we don't know what our relationship is to all sorts of traditions. My family comes from England and Scotland five or six generations ago or something and I have no relationship to any of that at all. It is just completely remote for me. The kind of multiculturalism in Australia is really interesting. Sometimes Australia is both: more and less multicultural than it thinks it is. In some ways it's less multicultural than the government sometimes projects. Governments like to have this picture of Australia as this harmonious multicultural family. That leaves out the account completely in which there is still a dominant Anglo-Australian culture. So in that sense, we are less multicultural than that popular, official version. On the other hand, I think we are more multicultural than what lots of people think. Lots of people tend to think there is a kind of Australian culture and then we have a few little minority groups around the fringes. But that's not the way it happens here. The levels of intermarriage, integration and so on are very high. Some people make the distinction between official multiculturalism and ordinary multiculturalism. And ordinary multiculturalism might be the fact that your next door neighbour is Chinese or that your son has a Vietnamese girlfriend or your work colleagues are Greek, Italian, or whatever. In ways that we hardly notice. It's almost a non-issue in some ways. There are always flashpoints. You know, a lot of stuff that you can imagine around Muslim people in Australia and so on. They used to be Vietnamese and then it kind of shifted to Muslims. So, we shift targets. I mean look at the names of the leading Australian tennis players. [...] I just watched this nice story on the news last night about the Australian ice-skating figure pairs, it's a Russian-Australian woman and an Indigenous-Australian guy as a pair representing Australia. So, there is lots of stuff like that. We as conservative politicians, I mean it's only the extreme right who say that they don't like multiculturalism, but I think the conservative version of multiculturalism is the version I said before. They imagine that there is a core Australian culture and there is a few sort of migrants wearing ethnic costumes so around the fringes and it hasn't gone much further than that. As the Prime Minister said the other day, but my granddaughter is Chinese. And it's true, his son is married to a Chinese woman and his granddaughter is Chinese-Australian. So, literature in some ways is probably still catching up with that in some ways. There is probably still some gap there between mainstream AustLit and ethnic Australian literature. It is probably the writer who has gone furthest in a sense to mainstream that kind of thing is Christos Tsiolkas, the Greek-Australian writer with the Slap and Barracuda. What I like about them is that they make ethnic diversity banal rather than a big issue of identity politics.

**Hennerbichler:** If you want to teach, for instance, this Australian cultural identity through literature in other countries like Austria. Do you think that there are certain cultural peculiarities that teachers have to bear in mind when teaching another cultural identity.

**Carter:** Yeah, I think that is important. I think it would be very important to convey the ways in which Australia is not just the kind of a shadow England or a shadow USA. It's got its own particular history, its own particular dynamics. And our literature has tended to be very finely attuned I think to some of those things: sometimes negatively, sometimes positively. But I think what our writers and artists and intellectuals have learnt to do is how to value that difference: How not to see it as somehow falling short at these other countries. It is rather a way of saying: "No! This is what makes us distinctive!" Yes, we don't do it the way they do it in London, New York, and Paris, but: we have our own forms of maternity, identity, cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism, etc.

**Hennerbichler:** Concerning distinctiveness of Australian people or Australian cultural identity, do you think that there are certain literary works that should definitely be taught in other countries. So where you think like this is really representative of Australian cultural identity?

**Carter:** I found that often short stories are good for doing that. With poetry it's well, but it can be harder for certain classrooms or certain students to deal with poetry, if they are not in the habit of reading it. [...] I taught AustLit largely through pairs or sometimes three stories for each class looking around themes or ideas or question from different periods. So, we looked at a couple of 19<sup>th</sup> century women's short stories which in different ways were talking about the opportunities for women in colonial society and really talking about the trap of marriage and the ways in which the world was organised very much in a masculine world and the options for these women were very limited in that world. Then we looked at a couple of other stories that were engaged with the Australian bush or landscape in that late 19<sup>th</sup> century period when many writers celebrated the bush as the distinctively Australian landscape. But when you look closely, a lot of the short stories give very bleak, negative, hostile version of that landscape. For example, The "Chosen Vessel" was one of the stories that we looked at or even some of Henry Lawson's "The Drover's Wife" or "In a Dry Season". Those kind of stories where the landscape or the bush make Australian landscape unique, but it's by no means a simple celebration of that in a kind of romantic pioneering. [...] And then we had a series at the end, looking at some of those linked questions of land and identity, Indigenous; some of David Malouf's short stories and then we had some stories by migrant or ethnic minority writers, some Indigenous writers.

**Hennerbichler:** And do you think it is also possible to take them from courses based on a university level to use them in upper secondary? Or do you think that would be too difficult?

**Carter:** No, I think it would be possible to do it in an upper secondary level, absolutely. No, I think that is possible. [...] And the students were in fact doing literary analysis without knowing it. Cause you just ask them if they notice some strong impact or an effect in the story; "How do you think did the story manage to do that?" and they start talking about its structure or its perspective without even realising that these are literary concepts. [...]

**Hennerbichler:** Thank you very much.

### 7.5.2. Interview with Kerry Kilner

**Hennerbichler:** Thank you for giving me the opportunity to conduct an interview with you. Could you please introduce yourself, your name, your profession and your teaching area maybe?

**Kilner:** Sure. So, I'm Kerry Killner, I am the director of *AustLit*, and I am what's called a UQ Research Fellow in the School of Communication and Arts. I have a sort of unusual teaching history in that prior to coming to UQ, I taught Australian literature and Australian drama at Monash University and came here nearly 20 years ago to work on developing the *AustLit* resource and since then I have taught research methods, humanities research methods and digital humanities perspective and I now convene internship courses which allow students to spend semesters with cultural organisations including *AustLit* to undertake research and assist. So I convene that and supervise students.

**Hennerbichler:** Very interesting. As an expert on Australian literature, I would like to ask you for your definition of Australian literature. So, how would you define it?

**Kilner:** Okay. So, *AustLit* to me is literature that is written by Australians about Australia; potentially about Australia by not necessarily Australian citizens or people, but literature written by people who are affiliated with Australia in some way or another. So, that's the kind of definition that we have in *AustLit* when we record information on literature that relates to Australia across all types of writings. So, I have a very broad perspective of what *AustLit* is.

**Hennerbichler:** How do you think *AustLit* differs from other countries' writings?

**Kilner:** Well, I think that is an interesting question, it's got a very interesting history which has meant that because of our population and our cultural heritage it's quite diverse and it's multilingual. I think culture is incredibly important to the way *AustLit* is written and our history and the cultural experience of Australians is very crucial to the way that our literature has formed itself. So, I think that multiculturalism, the Indigenous heritage and the history of colonialism und settler culture coming here has had a huge influence on the way that our literature now presents itself to the world. So, I think that's quite distinct, not necessarily unique, because obviously New Zealand, Canada, the US – have a similar colonial heritage, but I think there is a distinctiveness about Australia in that. There was much more of ignoring of Indigenous reality and the fact that we had the policy of Terra Nullius all the way up to 1992 is evident in that way. I think that that sort of attitude has influenced Australian literature in ways that it hasn't influenced Canada and New Zealand, for example, and America where treaties etc. were implied.

**Hennerbichler:** Do you think that there is something typical for *AustLit*, like reoccurring themes or something? Or do you think that is not so important or this is not what specifies *AustLit*?

**Kilner:** I think that's a very temporally specific question. I think in the 19<sup>th</sup> century you could see themes that would be recurring because of the settler culture and the control of the publishing industry by the settler culture. So, I think that you would have to take that from a perspective of what was being published in that particular area rather than kind of overarching thing. Because a lot of people would say "Oh,

you know, Australian literature's key theme is the bush or the outback", but I actually don't agree with that. I think you could certainly find periods in our development where you could say: yes, there is a lot of stories that relate to the outback, to the colonial enterprise and that frontier, but it's not persistent across time. [...]

**Hennerbichler:** Do you think that there is a period of Australian history which is particularly important for AustLit?

**Kilner:** No, I don't think I could say that. It would also depend on the genre or on form. [...]

**Hennerbichler:** Now moving a bit away from defining AustLit. As I said, like in Austria, in the EFL classroom we have a lot of American and British literature but not so much from Canada, New Zealand, Ireland, or Australia. But do you think that it is important that AustLit and culture are also taught in other countries, and overseas, or Europe, or especially in Austria?

**Kilner:** I think it's very important to be able to teach a wide variety of predominantly Anglophone cultures and literatures in an EFL class, because I think otherwise students will get an incorrect perspective or understanding of what an Anglophone country is and what their cultural and political identities are and I think Australia is a really interesting place to study and our literature is quite popular internationally as well. So, if you think of storytelling through film and there is a lot of literary adaptations that have happened in film and Australian actors and Australian producers are very well-known and popular internationally. So, to have that literature taught as well as the exposure to English language films would be really great.

**Hennerbichler:** And can you imagine certain challenges that appear when Australian literature and culture is taught in other countries?

**Kilner:** The biggest barrier that I hear from academics and teachers internationally is the availability of texts and the fact that it's really hard to get hold of representative samples of Australian literary texts for their classrooms. So that is a big challenge. Although I guess the digital revolution is helping and it is much cheaper to buy books for kindle, electronic versions for books. So availability on that level is becoming better, but I think it's the availability of representative samples that is the issue.

**Hennerbichler:** And when teaching Australian literature I would like to teach literature that conveys Australian cultural identity. And I wanted to ask whether you could define Australian cultural identity. So what this term would mean for you.

**Kilner:** Right. I think you would see a lot of variation in answers to that question. You know, you would have traditionalists saying that Australian cultural identity is defined by the sense of a fair go, the egalitarian notion that anyone can become successful in Australia and there are no barriers. And I would thoroughly disagree with that. I think Australia actually has a quite confused cultural identity, because we haven't faced up to our history as well as we should have. And I think that there is sometimes and quite often recently a comparison drawn with the way that Germany and I'm not sure about Austria, but certainly Germany has confronted its own history and how the reality of its history has enabled it to look at what happened, to look at how it has influenced who they are and to step forward through that. I mean obviously these recent events challenge that. But I think Australia has a lot of silences in its cultural

identity and so, we are not necessarily as honest as we should be about who we are. And so that idea of the egalitarian Australian, you know, the Crocodile-Dundee-type of bloke who could do whatever they like and all that sorts of things is a façade that is to me, covers over a lot of our reality of our cultural identity and that is not being recognized or honestly dealt with.

**Hennerbichler:** When in Austria, for instance, Australian cultural identity is taught, do you think that there are certain cultural peculiarities that teachers have to bear in mind when teaching?

**Kilner:** I think the relationship that postcolonial or settler identity is the big issue here that would need to be problematised in the classroom. So, teachers should be aware of the importance of the settler identity in Australia, so that would be something that I am recommending and the complexities of that.

**Hennerbichler:** Also, we touched upon this before: when we teach AustLit, there is such a big range of literary works and genres especially and which works do you consider particularly important when teaching AustLit?

**Kilner:** Well, I think Indigenous authors' texts, contemporary Indigenous authors' texts are absolutely crucial to understanding Australia now. And that's where I would add that additional period of AustLit from 2000 on. I think that that's where there's a lot more honest reflection around who we are and what our history means to us. That book up there, *Taboo* by Kim Scott, I think should be a text that is taught in every single school that wants to understand Australia, because I think it is one of the most powerful books that I've read in the recent past, during the last 20 years and it's a real exploration of both sides of the coin. And it's a real text of reconciliation and of wanting to move forward with a new understanding of what Australia is, where we've come from, where we should go. So, it's really great to read, it's a really gripping story as well. So, I think that would be a text that I would certainly recommend. I mean I think there is some fabulous poetry as well, there is some very excellent 21<sup>st</sup> century stories that are really terrific. So, I mean it's a hard one, really, to define. But I would certainly say that Indigenous authors' texts give readers an incredibly interesting insight into Australia in ways that white authors' texts especially pre-2000 period don't. I think there's been a confluence of improved educational outcomes, raising awareness around the historical reality of settler Australia and the improvement in opportunities for Indigenous writers which is meant that our literature has just really transformed over the last 20 years in ways that it's just surprising and amazing and wonderful.

**Hennerbichler:** Could you give me some more specific examples for Australian novels, poems, or short stories that would lend itself well for teaching in other countries?

**Kilner:** Certainly Tony Birch and anything that he has written. So, Kim Scott rather. And Tony Birch is another Indigenous writer and he is an absolute master for short story writing. Kate Grenville is an Australian writer with settler ancestry who has looked at who we are in a range of different books that are really important. Again, it is about what you are trying to do, if you are wanting a survey, a collection of survey literature, then you could certainly collate something that would be very useful for short stories ranging from 19th century through to the 21st century which would give

a really rich perspective on the development of the Australian identity through literature. So, I mean I have to think about that. I could certainly come up with a list.

**Hennerbichler:** And is there a certain approach that could be used to introduce Australian cultural identity to Austrian upper secondary students who do not have a lot of background knowledge about Australia?

**Kilner:** Hmm an approach. Well, I think, embedding Australian stories in its history is definitely the way to do that. You know, to introduce the history of Australia from the arrival of the convicts and then the 60,000 years previous to that. I mean, you have to take into account the entire history of this continent, so a kind of continental look at the country and then the ways that that continent has been storied over time would be a really interesting approach to take, because then you could almost do this wonderful full circle, if you began 60,000 years ago. [...] So I could imagine this fabulous approach, starting 45,000 years ago [...], going through that history and then returning to how these stories are now being told in the 21st century. And you could map that beautifully.

**Hennerbichler:** Do you think there are some Australian authors that should be included in teaching AustLit overseas as well?

**Kilner:** Yes, I certainly could give you a list of people that I think are important. Kim Scott, certainly. I'd have to think about it. [...] If we are talking upper secondary, there is a range of people that I could recommend.

**Hennerbichler:** Is there anything else that you would like to add that hasn't been mentioned previously?

**Kilner:** I think the role of the digital in teaching is very important these days and the opportunities that resources like *AustLit* allow. I mean it's quite an unusual resource, as it's got such a wide range of content. So, I think that that is a really useful resource for teachers. [...] I think the national library and the museums in Australia have really rich digital resources that could assist with the teaching of Australian culture and English as a foreign language, because you would be able to get students to use these digital sources that are available, to explore the ways literature is represented or stories are represented in Australian culture.

**Hennerbichler:** Alright, thank you very much for your time and all the information. I am very glad you took the time.

**Kilner:** Thank you, it was a pleasure.

### 7.5.3. Interview with Lindsay Williams

**Hennerbichler:** Could you maybe introduce yourself, your name, your profession, your teaching area?

**Lindsay:** My name is Lindsay Williams and my background is that it is my 35<sup>th</sup> year as a teacher. I was in the classroom until 2006, I think it was. And I have been head of English for many years. In that time, I also was in a lot of curriculum writing committees and assessment committees in one of the districts in Brisbane. So, I have a lot of experience with a lot of stuff of English. In the last years, I have been

teaching teachers how to teach reading and writing in schools, but doing also just casual teaching of people who become English teachers. [...]

**Hennerbichler:** As I said, we tend to use British and American literature. But do you think that this is the case in Australia as well? That Australian literature is rather at the edge compared to British and American literature?

**Lindsay:** Yeah, I think it has changed a lot. I think that lots of schools try to use a balance of literature. Interestingly though is that we are introducing external exams in Queensland where every subject is centralised and people sit the exam at the same day. And for English, they've actually got a year 12, where they set up a set of eight novels that are compulsory novels that are assessed under that. And there are five or six of those that are from Britain and one is from Canada and there are only two Australian novels on the list and I think disgracefully neither of the Australian novels is actually an Indigenous novel. So, that was a bit of a shame. I mean you think that argument would have been won, but still, we are having this difficulty of negotiating a balance between overseas literature and Australian literature.

**Hennerbichler:** When was the exam? Was it this year?

**Lindsay:** No, it is not till 2020. This is the first year where the exam will happen. [...]

**Hennerbichler:** What do you think are reasons for neglecting Australian culture and literature?

**Lindsay:** You know it's like everything. It's multi-factorial. The cultural cringe is part of that. You know so we think what is produced in Australia isn't as good. Linked to that is the idea of the canon. There is this set of books that everyone should read. And there is the additional problem that teachers have: we've only got a certain amount of time. And the question of what you teach is like the question of what you exclude and what you include. So, teachers have to make selections. And I can tell you as a head of English that it is very difficult to exclude a Shakespearean play from study in school. And so, I think those three things are working together. There is another problem too. The Australian literature is not always that visible. The website *AustLit* that you have probably seen tries to make available resources. So that teachers use the books in their classrooms, because the fourth factor: a lot of the texts that teachers use are *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Shakespearean plays, there is lots and lots of resources for those. And so they try to make sources available that teachers are actually able to use them. This has to do with the problem of visibility. I hadn't even realised this fantasy writing scene in Australia until Kerry [Kilner] invited me. And I actually like fantasy but I didn't know about these Australian fantasy writers. But when I went to the bookshop, I couldn't get one of the authors' novels at the bookshop. It seems that what comes on the shelves is all English and British literature. So, if you try to find an Australian fantasy writer on the shelf, it's extremely difficult. But the problem is that booksellers will only stock what sells, which in turn will be the stuff that publishers push. And there has to be somewhere the problem that publishers are not pushing Australian novels. So, if publishers are not pushing it, people will not find out about. And publishers will keep pushing new stuff, so the old stuff doesn't get pushed anyway. So, there has been a big argument for a long time now that changes the government's copyright provisions so that it would be easier to bring in cheap imports from America. And of course the cheap book imports from America won't be Australian writers. So, we've actually got a situation which isn't

good to begin with and if the copyright laws are changed in the way they want to, it's going to be pretty devastating for the Australian literature scene. [...]

**Hennerbichler:** So, we've talked about Australian literature and getting hold of it in Australia. And regarding overseas: Do you think it is generally important to teach Australian literature in other countries as well?

**Lindsay:** Well, we'd hope so. It will be the same problem that you have to decide what to include and at the same time what to exclude. If you are using Australian literature, what moves out and what is gained and lost in transaction. And you know for me that's always what you have to consider. We might move this out but what's gained by introducing this text instead and do the gains outweigh the losses?

**Hennerbichler:** What do you think are certain benefits if we use Australian literature in Austria, for instance?

**Lindsay:** Well, I think number one depending on what you choose, you really got the opportunity to introduce people to a very different sort of world view. For instance, it would be good to include an Indigenous perspective to be out there in the world and make people more aware of Indigenous culture. It is an interesting way to start with cultural identity and it's something that [...] is very much in a state of flux. You know we've gone from a stand pushing back political correctness and what they mean is that the days of middle-aged white men have been in positions of power are fading. It is not that they have never been there; it's just that there are lot more voices coming in and challenging that. [...] But then you have the whole migrant population, the refugees; how does an EFL course manage to represent this diversity? So you've got choices to make, what part of Australia and Australia's identity am I going to represent and how can I indicate that this is not all there is? [...]

**Hennerbichler:** Is there a certain approach that you have in mind how to introduce Australian literature?

**Lindsay:** Well, from an EFL perspective you are doing it differently from what we would do from an Australian perspective. Because we are doing it from an Australian perspective, we look at what does the book allow us to teach in terms of what's in the syllabus.

**Hennerbichler:** However, our students probably have no prior knowledge about Australia in general. So, there is still the need to introduce them to the Australian context.

**Lindsay:** Yes, maybe you do need some context even historically and culturally as well. In Australia, there have been these waves of migration and we are very much a migrant nation in modern day Australia, but even the Indigenous Australians arrived at various points in their history. And then obviously, the British arrived and then Chinese arrived through the gold rushes and then after World War I, there was a big influx from the Mediterranean in terms of migrants. In the 70s, it was then Asian people escaping from Vietnam and then obviously, more recently, it's been more people from Middle East to escape wars in the Middle East and there's been Jewish migration even to Australia while World War II. So, I introduced this context of us as very much of a migrant nation. Indigenous people, certainly, a lot of them would talk about us as invaders and at some point, the invaders become settlers. [...] And then,

there are these wave migrations that have probably been a big impact on us as a nation, because it's not just simple things that have influenced us, like cuisine and that sort of thing. [...] There was some material impact, but it also shaped our nation. Through these wave migrations some of the tensions occurred and it is those tensions that are solved in some of the literature that is created. A lot of the modern Indigenous literature like Anita Heiss etc. While their stories are very much from the Indigenous perspective, their Indigenous perspective is always bashing up against how do we negotiate with this culture which has just come in. Yes, we are small numbers now, because of British culture that came in and made us a small number through disease, through massacre, all that sort. So, if I was teaching overseas, it would be some complexity that I would wanna bring out. And put those books within the context of how those books reflect some of the negotiation of culture that is occurring in Australia. [...] And that hasn't happened really that we start using it in schools probably till the 2000s and to reflect that diversity at all. And for us that is a challenge as well, even writing textbooks that are gonna be used in schools and trying to build in that diversity is really difficult, because you've only got limited space, so how do you try to represent that diversity?

**Hennerbichler:** This is also one of the main problems that I face when trying to come up with ideas for the classroom, because you've only got a very limited amount of time to dedicate to literature and then from teaching literature, you still want to include British and American as well as Australian and other countries. And then when you focus on Australia, for instance, and you want to bring in this variety, it's just difficult at the same time not to reinforce stereotypes, because you've only got a limited scope. So how do you try to present a variety but not cliché ones?

**Lindsay:** It's all about inclusion and exclusion. I think you are right, though. What you are trying to do is spark an interest and starting from that point, you know, I have to think about stereotypes of Australia and what it might be. Maybe Australia for these kids is just a strange place that they don't even think about. I don't know. I mean, what's usually?

**Hennerbichler:** Usually, when I ask them: "What's the first thing that comes to your mind when thinking about Australia?" it's a lot of bush culture and outback and Aborigines and it depends on the kids, but if they are into sports they might say that Australia is good at swimming or there is Australian Rules Football. But usually they also don't know that it is so multicultural and as you said as well, it's such a big part of Australia and of Australian culture and they are not really aware of that. So, I think this is one of the things that I would like to show them and how it impacts society.

**Lindsay:** And I think that's right, being able to start from that: what we think. [...] It's easy for any of us to 'normalise' things and think things in the way we've always thought of them. But it's good to challenge those perspectives and you know that might be a good way to surprise the kids: Oh wow, it's actually not that at all and they might be more keen to come to Australia. [...]

## 7.6. English Abstract

In Austrian upper secondary EFL classrooms the main focus of culture teaching is on British and American culture and other regions where English is spoken as L1 are often marginalised. Therefore, the present thesis engages with the implementation of Australian cultural identity in Austrian ELT on secondary level.

The starting point of the paper embodies an analysis of the aforementioned development and outlines two main factors that contribute to this situation. These are the lack of familiarity of Australian culture and literature on the tertiary and secondary level and their weak representation in international EFL teaching material and Austrian schoolbooks.

In order to enable a discussion of how ACI can be implemented in Austrian ELT, the thesis summarises theoretical background information indispensable for further analysis. Besides providing a detailed account on Australia's cultural identity, the paper compares the English curriculum of Austria's and Australia's upper secondary. The comparison reveals that Australia's syllabus is based on the use of literary material and provides more practical ideas as well as more specific learning objectives, whereas Austria's syllabus applies to *all* FL taught in upper secondary and leaves the teacher with considerable freedom in regard to ELT.

Due to the lack of appropriate teaching resources, alternative material has to be established and hence, the paper advocates teaching Australian cultural identity through literature. On the basis of three Australian texts, "Letter to Mr Philips, Lord Sydney's Steward", "The Drover's Wife" and *Does My Head Look Big in This?*, it is shown how teaching ACI in Austrian English classes could be implemented. The three works are discussed thoroughly and alongside hands-on material is created. Further, the texts and tasks are critically examined on a meta-level and their advantages and potential drawbacks when using them in class are outlined.

## 7.7. German Abstract

Im österreichischen Englischunterricht der Sekundarstufe II wird das Hauptaugenmerk auf die Vermittlung der britischen und der amerikanischen Kultur gelegt und andere Kulturkreise, wo Englisch ebenso als Erstsprache gesprochen wird, werden oftmals marginalisiert. Daher beschäftigt sich die vorliegende Diplomarbeit mit der Einbindung australischer kultureller Identität in den österreichischen Englischunterricht der Sekundarstufe II.

Der Ausgangspunkt der Arbeit bildet die Analyse der oben genannten Entwicklung und erläutert zwei wesentliche Gründe, die zu dieser Situation beigetragen haben. Diese sind die mangelnde Bekanntheit der australischen Kultur und Literatur im sekundären und tertiären Bildungsbereich sowie die fehlende Repräsentation in internationalen Unterrichtsmaterialien für Englisch und in österreichischen Schulbüchern.

Um eine fundierte Analyse bezüglich der Einbindung australischer Kultur in den österreichischen Englischunterricht zu ermöglichen, widmet sich ein Teil der Arbeit einer Darbietung des theoretischen Hintergrunds. Neben der Diskussion des theoretischen Konzepts in Bezug auf australische kulturelle Identität vergleicht die Arbeit das Englischcurriculum von Österreich und Australien der Sekundarstufe II. Der Vergleich zeigt, dass sich der australische Syllabus sehr stark auf die Verwendung literarischer Werke bezieht und mehr praktische Anleitungen sowie spezifischere Lernziele darlegt, wobei der österreichische Syllabus gleichsam für alle Fremdsprachen, die in der Oberstufe unterrichtet werden, gilt und somit der Lehrperson viel Freiraum in Bezug auf den Englischunterricht ermöglicht.

Aufgrund der fehlenden Lehrmaterialien müssen alternative Ressourcen gefunden werden, um australische Kulturidentität im Schulunterricht zu vermitteln und daher fördert diese Arbeit die Verwendung australischer Literatur. Anhand von drei australischen Texten, "Letter to Mr Philips, Lord Sydney's Steward", "The Drover's Wife" and *Does My Head Look Big in This?*, wird gezeigt, wie australische kulturelle Identität im Unterricht vermittelt werden kann. Die drei Werke werden umfassend erläutert und passende Aufgabenstellungen werden präsentiert. Zudem werden die Texte kritisch analysiert und auf einer Metaebene deren Vorteile und potentielle Schwächen erläutert.