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Die kayserliche Bibliothec [in Wien], aus: Happel, Eberhard Werner, Grösseste Denkwürdigkeiten der Welt oder so genannte Relationes curiosae, in welchen eingeführt, erwogen und abgehandelt werden allerhand historische, physicales, mathematische und andere merkwürdige Seltsamkeiten, II. Theil, Hamburg: Wiering, 1685; Kupferstich bei Seite 300.
A Mind-Map of a Nation: The Australian Encyclopaedia
Or Why Sharks Are More Important than Tigers

1 A National Order

Australia at the end of the 19th century is an especially interesting case for research on encyclopedias. Significant social changes were taking place. For the first time, a national self-image was developed in Australia and on 1 January 1901, the Commonwealth of Australia was proclaimed in Centennial Park, Sydney. A new nation was born. The nation has something essentially in common with general knowledge: it is not natural, but constructed. In his famous book about nations and nationalism Benedict Anderson argues that the nation is «an imagined political community». I claim that there are connections between the two constructed concepts of «knowledge» and «nation». In this essay, I would like to show that the Australian Encyclopaedia, as a container for knowledge, stands under strong suspicion of being propaganda for the new Australian nation.

Already in 1912, Sydney based publisher Angus & Robertson had projected an Australian encyclopedia as a historical and biographical record [...] when the outbreak of war in 1914 temporarily halted its progress. It took a long time for the encyclopedia finally to be published. The first volume of the encyclopedia, originally called The Illustrated Australian Encyclopaedia, was edited by Arthur Wilberforce Jose and Herbert James Carter in 1925, the second volume in 1926. Carter was an entomologist, and he was responsible for the scientific side of the Australian Encyclopaedia. The rest of the editing work lay in the hands of Jose. He had been an editor at Angus & Robertson from the 1890s and had worked with Australia’s national poet Henry Lawson on While the Billy Boils. Apart from his editing work, Jose wrote books himself, including histories of Australasia, the British Empire and the Australian Navy. Interestingly, Jose was a confidant of Alfred Deakin, a leader in the Australian federation movement, and for a couple of years the two men corresponded regularly. After George Robertson had employed Jose full-time on the encyclopedia in 1919, «relations between the two became increasingly strained» and in 1925, Jose left Angus & Robertson before the second volume of the encyclopedia had been edited.

See: Macintyre, A Concise History, 130f. and 137.

Anderson, Imagined Communities, 6.

Jose/Carter (Eds.), The Australian Encyclopaedia, vol. 1, preface, v.

See for example: Letter of George Robertson on 6 March 1917 to Arthur Wilberforce Jose, MLMSS 314/41. And: Letter of Arthur Wilberforce Jose on 12 May 1917 to George Robertson, MLMSS 314/41.

Pagliaro, A. W. Jose, 42–47.
In the National Library of Australia (Canberra) and in the Mitchell and Dixon Libraries Manuscripts Collection of the State Library in New South Wales (Sydney) there is a wide range of documents on the *Australian Encyclopaedia*, including: letters by the authors and by the editors Jose and Carter; suggested amendments and corrections; a list of recipients of complimentary copies; letters of acknowledgement of receipt; a transcript of a radio broadcast on the *Australian Encyclopaedia* of 1925; and printed materials and cuttings.\(^6\) This huge stock of sources is unique: There is nothing comparable on European encyclopedias from the 19th or 20th century.

The *Australian Encyclopaedia* differs from contemporary European encyclopedias in another significant way, the selection of material and its organisation is not according to cultural ideas or scientific terms, but is clearly national. Robin John Tillyard, one of the authors of the encyclopedia, wrote in a letter to Jose: *Personally, I have read most of the articles in it with intense enjoyment, and my mental vision of Australia as a whole has been greatly stimulated and intensified by them.*\(^7\)

The *Australian Encyclopaedia* might be defined as a ›mental vision of Australia‹ or, and this is what I claim, as a mind-map of the Australian nation. In the following, I would like to demonstrate this thesis on a macro as well as on a micro level.

## 2 Respected Australians, Birds and Fish

What kind of terms were included in the *Australian Encyclopaedia*? The following table gives an overview:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animals</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plants</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2629</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table shows, the encyclopedia contains 2629 lemmata in total. About a third of these are people – apart from 19 women all are men – about a quarter are animals and a quarter plants. This means, that people, animals and plants take up more than 80 percent of the encyclopedia. The original aim of Angus & Robertson to produce a biographical but also a historical record (see above) doesn’t seem to have been fulfilled.

### 2.1 People: Of National Importance or Not?

All of the people listed in the *Australian Encyclopaedia* had strong connections with the Australian nation. Of 20 randomly chosen people\(^8\) contained in the encyclopedia, all 20 were either born in Australia, had

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\(^7\) Letter of Robin John Tillyard on 13 of October 1925 to Arthur Wilberforce Jose, ZML A7273.

\(^8\) ›Agnew, Sir James Wilson‹, in: Jose/Carter (Eds.), The *Australian Encyclopaedia*, vol. 1, 40; ›Bagot, Charles Harvey‹, vol. 1, 119f.; ›Corretti, Bonaventure‹, vol. 1, 250; ›Daley, Victor James William Patrick‹, vol. 1, 354; ›Eardley-Wilmot, Sir John Eardley‹, vol. 1, 393–394; ›Forbes, Sir Frances‹, vol. 1, 480; ›Hassall, Rowland‹, vol. 1, 603; ›Irvine, Sir William Hill‹, vol. 1, 676f.; ›Kavel, August‹, vol. 1, 692; ›Lord, Edward‹, vol. 1, 761; ›Mikhuho-Maklay, Nikolai Nikolaevitch‹, vol. 2, 82; ›Norman, Sir Henry Wylie‹, vol. 2, 211; ›Perry, Charles‹, vol. 2,
migrated to Australia or at least stayed there for quite a long time. For the encyclopedia makers, the most important aspect of the listed people seems to have been their contribution to the Australian nation. This can be seen in sentences like *Daley’s work was unique in the Australian poetry of his time* [...] *his work at its best is probably the best done in Australia*, or *He initiated in Australia the modern practice of government through an assembly composed partly of clergy and partly of laymen elected by the parishes*, or *He [...] was the most important – and often the only – Catholic priest in Australia*.

No matter how famous someone was, if a person didn’t have a connection with Australia, they weren’t considered to be worth an entry. For example there is an entry on the son of the poet Lord Tennyson but not on the poet himself. The reason for this is simple: The poet didn’t have anything to do with the Australian nation, whereas his son was governor of South Australia for a while and later even the second governor-general of the Commonwealth.

The only person who stands out of the 20 chosen people – military, politicians, jurists, scientists, priests, artists and poets – is James Hardy Vaux, a convict who was deported to Australia three times. It is quite extraordinary to find an entry on a convict in an encyclopedia that was produced at a time when most Australians were still ashamed about any convict ancestry. But who could deny that convicts belonged to a mind-map of the Australian nation?

### 2.2 Animals: No Tigers Allowed

As we have seen about half of the *Australian Encyclopaedia* consists of animals and plants. This could arouse the suspicion that the encyclopedia is indeed shaped by the terms of the biological scientist. But this is definitely not the case as the editors only included Australian animals and plants – or at least animals or plants that had been introduced to Australia. For example, one looks in vain for a *tiger*, a *moose* or a *tulip*.

Interestingly, more than 60 percent of the animals in the encyclopedia are either birds or fish. On one hand, this can be interpreted as the mirror of a truly big range of native birds and fish in Australia. On the other hand, the encyclopedia makers must also have had a special interest in birds and fish, otherwise there would be a large number of entries on marsupials too, considering that there are more than a hundred different kinds of marsupials in Australia.

It seems that one of the purposes of the encyclopedia was to show the reader how abundant and beautiful the Australian nature was. Australians could be truly proud of their country. The display of Australian wildlife and plants is supported by numerous coloured (and black-and-white) illustrations. How detailed the entries are can be demonstrated 287; *Rawson, Sir Harry Holdsworth*, vol. 2, 375; *Strickland, Sir Gerald*, vol. 2, 502; *Therry, John Joseph*, vol. 2, 548; *Vaux, James Hardy*, vol. 2, 611–612; *Verdon, Sir George Frederick*, vol. 2, 617; *White, Samuel Albert*, vol. 2, 666; *Young, Blamire*, vol. 2, 740.


10 *Perry, Charles*, in: *Jose/Carter (Eds.), The Australian Encyclopaedia*, vol. 2, 287.


12 *Tennyson, Lord*, in: *Jose/Carter (Eds.), The Australian Encyclopaedia*, vol. 2, 546.
with the example of the perch. There is not just an entry ›perch‹, but also ›Banded Sea Perch‹, ›Estuary Perch‹, ›Freshwater Perch‹, ›Giant Perch‹, ›Golden Perch‹, ›Macquarie Perch‹, ›Orange Perch‹, ›Pearl Perch‹, ›Red Perch‹, ›Silver Perch‹ and ›Yellow-mouthed Sea Perch‹. Sometimes the rationale for the choice of the entries is not so clear; for example, there are numerous entries on different kinds of sharks – such as Hammer-headed Sharks or White Sharks – but many other types such as the Grey Nurse, the Blue Pointer or the Whaler are missing. Why did the editors find Hammer-headed sharks worth an entry but not Blue Pointers?

It is characteristic that animals and plants – or in other words nature – play such an important role in the encyclopedia. Obviously, the editors wanted the Australian nation to be seen as being closely bound to nature. With this, they were continuing the bush legend which was widely propagated in late 19th century in nationalist literature.13

2.3 The Rest: Australia Everywhere

The following table shows that the remaining 18 percent of the lemmata cover a wide range of subjects concerning the Australian nation.14 The reader truly gets ›a mental vision of Australia‹:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Lemmata (examples)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>Adelaide; Australia, Geography of; Climate; Geology; New South Wales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>Aborigines; Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>Australia, Discovery of; Chronological Table; Convicts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics and State</td>
<td>Colonial Office; Federation; Police; White Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>Australian Imperial Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>Anglican Church; Baptists; Jews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Education, Public; Libraries, Public; Universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Agriculture; Bee Farming; Farming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>Brewing; Mining; Paper Making; Shearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work life</td>
<td>Eight-hour System; Pensions; Strikes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy and Commerce</td>
<td>Commonwealth Bank; Currency; Geography, Economic; Trade and Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommunications, Transport and Technique</td>
<td>Irrigation and Water Conservation; Harbours; Lighthouses; Overland Telegraph-line; Pacific Cable; Rails; Septic Tank</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13 Russell Ward described the bush legend in his book ›The Australian Legend‹. He failed to see though that the bush legend was just one source of Australian national identity. See: Archer, Situating Australian National Identity, 29f.

14 The table only lists examples.
The lemmata above are not always on the same level. For example we find ›gemstones‹ as well as ›diamonds‹, ›opal‹, and ›sapphires‹ in the encyclopedia. But ›diamonds‹, ›opal‹ and ›sapphires‹ are hyponyms to ›gemstones‹ and therefore one would rather expect them to appear as examples in the article on gemstones and not as separate entries. In fact, they are mentioned in the article on gemstones, where they are described as the most important gemstones in Australia.15 This of course explains why there are separate entries on these gemstones, but for example not on amethysts or moonstones:16 Diamonds, opals and sapphires seem to have been far more important for the Australian nation than any other gemstone.

3 Waving the Flag for Australia

It is also visible on a micro level that the Australian Encyclopaedia is a mind-map of the Australian nation. Lemmata like ›Bushranging‹, ›Federation‹, ›Lawson, Henry Archibald‹ or ›Museums‹ are surely most interesting in the context of nation building. But it is more harmless-looking lemmata like ›drama‹, ›pigs‹, ›music‹ and ›bread‹ that prove best that treatment of the material follows national lines also on a micro level. All of these lemmata are very general terms and could easily be treated with no reference to Australia. But this is not the case.

3.1 An Australian History of Drama

At the beginning of the article ›drama‹ one would probably expect to get a short definition or a general history of the term, however, it is presumed, that the reader is familiar with it. The entry starts immediately with the history of drama in Australia. It quickly becomes obvious that not the term ›drama‹ is the centre of attention but Australia’s connection with drama. Even the first sentence starts with the words The first play connected with Australia was […].17 and through the article plays written by Australians are emphasized proudly.18

After a short introduction the article is divided into three paragraphs, titled: Theatres and Productions, The Repertory stage and Australian actors and plays. In the first paragraph the history of theatre houses and

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Lemmata (examples)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mineral Resources</td>
<td>Coal; Diamonds; Gemstones; Gold, Discovery of; Oil; Opal; Sapphires; Steel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Art; Drama; Literature; Museum; Music; Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>Cricket; Football; Golf; Racing; Tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Bread; Butter; Cheese; Coffee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15 ›Gemstones‹, in: Jose/Carter (Eds.), The Australian Encyclopaedia, vol. 1, 501.

16 Strangely, the entry on sapphires only refers back to the articles ›gemstones‹ and ›mineralogy‹.

17 ›Drama‹, in: Jose/Carter (Eds.), The Australian Encyclopaedia, vol. 1, 380.

18 For example: It [the repertory theatre, N.H.] was responsible for the production of 57 good plays, 13 of which were written by Australians. ›Drama‹, in: Jose/Carter (Eds.), The Australian Encyclopaedia, vol. 1, 383.
companies in various Australian cities and states is summarised, the second – as the title says – deals with the history of the repertory theatre and the third one gives a list of Australian actors and a short history of Australian plays. All aspects of drama in Australia are treated, and one could therefore say that the article on ›drama‹ is a small mind-map inside a bigger mind-map, or a mental vision of the Australian drama inside the mental vision of Australia as a whole.

3.2 ›The Improved Type‹

The article on pigs is a real touchstone. Pigs are not native Australian animals, but were introduced by the first white settlers. Does the author nevertheless observe the national orientation strictly? The answer is yes. There is no single word on pigs anywhere else than in Australia. What is more, the author stresses that pigs in Australia do very well:

*The pig succeeds admirably in Australia and, with the exception of a few rare local outbreaks of preventable sickness, is remarkably healthy. He has made himself perfectly at home in the continent, running wild in many areas, such as the Macquarie marshes and the ›watercourses‹ in the north-west of New South Wales, the interior of northern Queensland, and the northern portion of the Northern Territory. In some places his appearance has reverted to that of his ancient progenitors, but for the most part the improved type has been preserved to a remarkable degree, especially in the Northern Territory, where food is abundant and easy to obtain. The wild pig’s choicest delicacy is the root of the water-lilies which abound in the lagoons and billabongs. Although extremely wild when at large, when brought in he fattens well for market purposes.*

3.3 The Musical Nation

Just like the article on drama, ›music‹ is a subordinate mind-map treating a whole set of aspects of Australian music: Musical Development, Musical Societies, Grand Opera, Comic Opera, Visiting Celebrities, Visiting Choirs, Musical Training: Conservatoria, Examinations, Musical Competitions, Australians distinguished in Music, Australian Composers, Aboriginal Music, Papuan Music. The most interesting part of the article, though, is the introduction, where high praise of the musicality of the Australian nation is expressed:

*Music is a department of artistic activity in which Australia has shown a peculiar interest and bids fair to take at least its full place in the world. Whether the reason be the climate and the livelier and more expansive temperament encouraged by it, or merely the social conditions, the fact itself can hardly be denied that the Australians are a ›musical people‹. Whether in the formation and progress of their own musical societies and orchestras, or the crowded welcomes offered to visiting artistes and choirs,*

19 *Pigs*, in: Jose/Carter (Eds.), The Australian Encyclopaedia, vol. 2, 298.
they display a zest which contains nothing of the factitious. Such visitors, including the greatest, have frequently attested their appreciation of this substantial recognition by repeating their visits, in spite of the distance to be travelled and the loss of time incurred. The placing of great, and even sumptuous, organs in town halls, and the provision of recitals (gratis) for citizens, are another indication of the same spirit. Whatever else the climate may do, it certainly tends to produce vocalists, and native-born singers – to name here only Dame Nellie Melba and Ada Crossley – have won an international distinction.

3.4 Better than in Europe

Nations are a form of community. Developing this sense of community is made much easier if one can dissociate oneself from other nations. This is exactly what the author of the article on bread does: In the first sentence he makes it clear that bread made in Australia differs from that made in Europe. According to the article, in Australia the bread making system is quicker and involves less handling and the flours used are of better quality so that they rise better, hold more water, and make a larger loaf from the same quantity of flour. This means that the author is not just claiming the Australian bread to be different from the European, but also better. Once more, the encyclopedia gives the Australians a reason to be proud of their nation. All of the articles mentioned above could be said to be advertising the Australian nation.

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A strong expression of national pride. This map was printed on the first page of the second volume of the Australian Encyclopaedia without a comment.


21. See also: Anderson, Imagined Communities, 7.

4 Propaganda for the Nation

In conclusion, the content of the *Australian Encyclopaedia* could be visualised with the following picture:

![A Mind-Map of Australia](image)

**A Mind-Map of Australia**
Portraits of James Cook by Josef Selb; portrait of Alfred Deakin, The Swiss Studios, Melbourne 1900; portrait of Henry Lawson by Lionel Lindsay, 1919.
All portraits by permission of the National Library of Australia. All drawings of animals and plants © Paul Kavanagh. All pictures apart from animals and plants cropped.

The reader is provided with a "mental vision of Australia" as a big community of interesting and talented people, enjoying a beautiful natural environment and an advanced civilisation. Every single article is advertising the Australian nation (see flags).

The production of the encyclopedia reached 10 000 copies. This is a very high number considering the fact that – according to the *Australian Encyclopaedia* – there were not even six million people in Australia at that time. It becomes obvious that the encyclopedia could provide an important means of propaganda for the young nation.

lic. phil. Nadine Hagen | University of Zurich

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24 According to the encyclopedia, in 1921 the population reached 5 435 734 people and in 1925 it was still estimated less than 6 million. See: 'Population', in: Jose/Carter (Eds.), *The Australian Encyclopaedia*, vol. 2, 315.

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Résumé

Vers la fin du 19ième siècle, l’Australie a pour la première fois développé une image de soi nationale. Précisément comme le savoir général, la nation n’est pas un phénomène naturel, mais une construction. Un lien entre les deux concepts se manifeste très bien dans une mémoire de savoir classique: la *Australian Encyclopaedia* de 1925/26.

Environ un tiers des entrées de l’encyclopédie sont des personnes, environ un quart des animaux et un quart des plantes. Seulement les hommes qui étaient jugés importants pour la nation australienne...
obtenaient une entrée. Les plantes et animaux cités croissent ou vivent tous en Australie. Mais c’est également au niveau des différents articles que le modèle d’ordre national est clairement visible. Un Mind-Map de l’Australie est présenté aux lectrices et aux lecteurs de l’encyclopédie. Si l’on considère que l’édition de l’oeuvre s’est élevée à 10 000 copies, on comprend qu’un moyen de propagande potentiellement important a été mis à la disposition de la nation australienne.

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**Secondary Sources**


All you need to know. Proceedings of the international congress on knowledge transfer and encyclopaedic ordering principles: Prangins, 18–21 September 2003

»General knowledge« is a social construction. All its aspects, ranging from the need for it, to its content and its forms of organisation, are invented. But who are the protagonists in the process of transferring knowledge, education and information and what is their role in society? This volume discusses the issue »general knowledge« using the example of an apparently stable and supposedly consistent form of knowledge: encyclopaedias. Questions like how these medias of cultural transfer change through time, how they deal with the dilemma of reproducing stable and at the same time current knowledge are treated through a wide range of examples, including non-European and non-modern texts. Encyclopaedias contribute to the popularisation of values and ideas in everyday life, and research on encyclopaedias can reveal notions about social and political order. The articles are designed to be interdisciplinary and comparative on a global scale. They examine publishing dynasties, enquire about the influence of civil societies and deal with the role of political rulers in efforts to »educate« societies. The interests of nation states in the production of encyclopedias in India and Australia are debated along with ideas dating back to the ancient world on how knowledge should be organised. Mechanisms of censorship in 18th century France and ways of collecting and organising knowledge in democratic and totalitarian systems of modern times are considered just like the question, through which deontological principles the search for knowledge is regulated.

Les labyrinthes du savoir. Actes du congrès international sur la transmission du savoir et les principes d'ordre encyclopédiques, 18–21 septembre 2003 à Prangins

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