



Internationale Vortragsreihe

'A UNIVERSAL, UNIFORM HUMANITY' THE GERMAN NEWSPAPER 'DER KOSMOPOLIT' AND ENTANGLED NATION-BUILDING IN NINETEENTH CENTURY AUSTRALIA

Vortragender: Dr. Dennis Mischke

While the history of German settlement in Australia is a well-researched topic, the colonial ramifications of German intellectuals writing in the tradition of a German 'Kulturnation' (cultural nation) are not. This paper investigates the ambivalent notion of cosmopolitanism as an expression of both imperial Germanness and marginalized Australianness in the 19th century newspaper "Der Kosmopolit: Deutsche Zeitung für Australien" (1856 – 1857). As the newspaper illustrates, the idea of cosmopolitanism as a universal human condition has not only been appealing to philanthropists and intellectuals from the 18th century onwards; it has, paradoxically, also been attractive to those who sought to universalize nothing but their own particular interests: missionaries, merchants and colonial explorers. For many Germans, the frontier societies of the fifth continent were first of all an attractive arena to practice their own supposedly 'cosmopolitan right' of 'Freihandel' in both of its meanings: free trade and free agency. In my contribution I investigate the self-perception of German settlers as expressed in one of the first German newspapers.



Dr. Dennis Mischke ist wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter am Lehrstuhl für Amerikanistik und neuere Englische Literatur der Universität Stuttgart.

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