AUSTRALIA: A JOURNEY TO THE LAND DOWN-UNDER

travel log

Aubrey Thomas

Before I came to Australia, I had a vague idea of what to expect on the other side of the world. The American view of Down Under is a land full of kangaroos, wide brimmed hats, boomergangs, and men who tackle crocodiles on a daily basis. What I have learned in a little over a month is that this view is extremely distorted by the media, and that Australians themselves are finding it hard to define who they are to this day.

The past month has given a new challenge for Australians as their Prime Minister Kevin Rudd made an apologetic speech toward the Aborigenal people. One issue is that some Australians wonder if they should even call themselves Australians when the Aboriginauls have resided here for an estimated 60,000 years, and everyone else has only lived here since the end of the eighteenth century.

Australians have changed a lot from its first convict settlements. Today it has a population of 20 million, and is highly urbanized because most people live along the coast in the big cities. Therefore, Australians are mostly city people who probably wouldn’t have a chance surviving in the "bush." Most of my Australian friends are from smaller towns in Western Australia, but they seem to like Perth (the city) more than anywhere else in the state. They don’t wear wide-brimmed hats, and certainly don’t identify themselves as "bush" people.

I have found certain characteristics that in fact do separate me from my Australian comrades. For one thing, there is definitely an insatiable love for Vegemite. When I put together a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, most seem to turn their faces in disgust. The young men in my flat all sit around and watch cricket every Sunday, which can easily drag on for ten hours or more. They also enjoy rugby and Aussie Rules Football. Most of my Australian friends are extremely laid back, and they seem to never brag about anything. They may say they “did all right” on an assignment, and have a nearly perfect score. These are just a few of the many things that I have come to love about my Australian friends.

What I have concluded is that although Australians may be having a hard time at the moment accurately defining who they are as a separate nation from the rest of the world, I can see that seemingly wonderful lifestyle will continue on throughout the country. Even with the similarities to the U.S., they are certainly not the same as Americans, and seem to have a better understanding of the world around them and how to make the best of life. Hopefully I will leave this country with a more open perspective on different values and worldviews. I think that Americans could learn a lot from this misinterpreted country.

“Hopefully I will leave this country with a more open perspective on different values and worldviews. I think that we as Americans could learn a lot from this misinterpreted country.”

HONORS PATHWAY

The Honors Pathway was a crucial step in my assimilation process of becoming a college student. I quickly learned that one is expected to contribute to class discussion, ten books is really a small number when it comes to assigned reading, and “liminality” is a word, though Microsoft Office seems to disagree. Now, I find myself in the second session of Betwixt and Between, expecting to find what I am looking for. The syllabus is atypical, containing graphics, quotations, and reading that is somewhat self-paced. It is encouraging to see a reading list of literary pieces that all seem relevant to the course and our central focus. The Penelopeid by Margaret Atwood, A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius by David Eggers, and Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison, are just a few of the texts that guarantee to excite the imagination. But, one must ask, how is Megan Ruggiero going to find herself when she is spending what seems like forty hours a week with her head bent over a book? Not only is it refreshing to unite with the same students who shared my enlightening experience with me freshman year, I expected to contribute to class discussion, ten books is really a small number when it comes to assigned reading, and “liminality” is a word, though Microsoft Office seems to disagree. Now, I find myself in the second session of Betwixt and Between, expecting to find what I am looking for. The syllabus is atypical, containing graphics, quotations, and reading that is somewhat self-paced. It is encouraging to see a reading list of literary pieces that all seem relevant to the course and our central focus. The Penelopeid by Margaret Atwood, A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius by David Eggers, and Invisible Man by Ralph Ellison, are just a few of the texts that guarantee to excite the imagination. But, one must ask, how is Megan Ruggiero going to find herself when she is spending what seems like forty hours a week with her head bent over a book? Not only is it refreshing to unite with the same students who shared my enlightening experience with me freshman year, I
ENGLISH, BIOLOGY, AND CHILDREN’S LITERATURE
the honors contract

Noah Richard
class of 2009
As I looked for classes for this semester, some of my friends and I were asked to enroll in ENG 218 Perspectives in Children’s Literature. Since the class didn’t count one way or the other towards my Biology Major, I decided that this would be a good chance to create an Honors Contract.

David Elliott teaches the class and does a fantastic job of covering many of the different aspects of children’s literature. As a writer, taking a course on a genre of books that are not my typical topic for it.

Much of my contract has not yet been determined. I will read a wide array of easy readers in order to learn about their vocabulary and structure. Then I will be coming up with a topic and beginning to structure my own easy reader. I have high hopes of completing a good quality book for children that somehow brings in science.

“...the honors contract allows me to combine English and Biology…I have high hopes of completing a good quality book for children that somehow brings in science.”

Noah Richard
class of 2009

As a writer, taking a course on a genre of books that are not my typical genre has been amazing. For my Honors Contract, I agreed that I would write a children’s easy reader book, somehow based around science.

When in designing my Honors Contract, we agreed that I would write a children’s easy reader book, somehow based around science. An easy reader is simply a book slightly more advanced than a picture book. A great example of an easy reader would be many of Dr. Seuss’s books, such as The Lorax. The Honors Contract allows me to combine English and Biology, which will be an interesting combination as I sit down and devise a topic for it.

I have high hopes for my second go at Between and Between. I expect every one of us to compose an Opus that is thought-provoking, powerful, and pleasing to the ear, full of voice and magnitude. I look forward to finding myself with the people that I met when I first arrived on campus, the people that will be so difficult to let go of in less than two and a half years!

(continued from page 1)

As a Graphic Design major, I find the impractical concepts of science difficult to understand. In order to put science into terms that were familiar to me, I created an Honors Contract that linked art history with the concepts studied in CES 201 – Water Resources. This survey of master artwork focused on trends that have developed around the relationship of human society to water as a natural resource. Through these trends, it is possible to trace a dramatic shift in public consciousness as well as the development of ecological issues.

For example, in the works of the Hudson River Schoolpainters, development and human expansion are key themes. Thomas Cole addressed development and expansion directly, while Albert Bierstadt’s work reflected ideas of manifest destiny through a spiritual representation of the western territories. When American settlers moved west, they brought with them eastern lifestyles that have ultimately proved incompatible with the landscape. This is an important idea when addressing the agricultural practices of the Great Plains. In Cole’s Oxbow, we see typical New England agricultural land, developed along a river floodplain in a relatively humid environment that supported the crops and techniques used. Settlers to the dry, arid lands of the Plains later applied these same practices. When precipitation failed to meet the crops’ water needs, farmers drew on groundwater sources extensively.

“By reviewing trends throughout art history, it is possible to trace the evaluation of an idea, and how that idea reflects upon society.”

Continuation of these practices, combined with extreme drought and groundwater depletion resulted in the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. Dorothea Lange captured the suffering and devastation of the Dust Bowl in her photography. It is important to note that Lange worked in a society that was quickly becoming aware of its inherent ecological impacts and issues. Whereas the society of the Hudson River painters was not necessarily. Ideals of westward expansion and Manifest Destiny also drew prospectors for silver, gold, other ores, and oil. The failed ambitions of these individuals inspired Robert Smithson’s work on entropy in his “Earthworks.”

Each relationship reflects developments within and between the societies represented. The forces that drive these developments are part of the society and are reflected in the theory of each artist. Industrialization, urbanization, mechanization and all the accompanying shifts in economic and agricultural patterns had profound effects on society throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Increased human population placed unprecedented demands on natural resources, particularly water. As time progressed, humanity has developed a greater ability to impact the environment on a very large scale. All of these issues have led to a shift in public awareness, social conscience, the development of ecology as a science, and the development of government legislation. The variation of styles in this survey are the result of shifts that have occurred as artists developed increased independence from their patrons (traditionally the government) and were able to address the public at large.

By reviewing trends throughout art history, it is possible to trace the evolution of an idea, and how that idea reflects upon society. When the evolution of water as resource is traced, a pattern develops: water as an element within a spiritual landscape, water as a mode of transportation and for economic means, a passive element in the landscape to be studied, a force of destruction and rebirth, a force to be conquered, and a force that conquers. These constant shifts and fluctuations reflect upon the society that created them.

TRACING SOCIAL, ECOCLOGICAL, AND ARTISTIC TRENDS
the honors contract

Elisabeth Ryan
layout editor
class of 2009

As a Graphic Design major, I find the impractical concepts of science difficult to understand. In order to put science into terms that were familiar to me, I created an Honors Contract that linked art history with the concepts studied in CES 201 – Water Resources. This survey of master artwork focused on trends that have developed around the relationship of human society to water as a natural resource. Through these trends, it is possible to trace a dramatic shift in public consciousness as well as the development of ecological issues. Each time and each culture have a way of capturing their society and culture in their work, which is then passed on to subsequent generations. It is therefore possible to use works of art to determine trends throughout history.

For example, in the works of the Hudson River Schoolpainters, development and human expansion are key themes. Thomas Cole addressed development and expansion directly, while Albert Bierstadt’s work reflected ideas of manifest destiny through a spiritual representation of the western territories. When American settlers moved west, they brought with them eastern lifestyles that have ultimately proved incompatible with the landscape. This is an important idea when addressing the agricultural practices of the Great Plains. In Cole’s Oxbow, we see typical New England agricultural land, developed along a river floodplain in a relatively humid environment that supported the crops and techniques used. Settlers to the dry, arid lands of the Plains later applied these same practices. When precipitation failed to meet the crops’ water needs, farmers drew on groundwater sources extensively.

“By reviewing trends throughout art history, it is possible to trace the evaluation of an idea, and how that idea reflects upon society.”

Continuation of these practices, combined with extreme drought and groundwater depletion resulted in the Dust Bowl of the 1930s. Dorothea Lange captured the suffering and devastation of the Dust Bowl in her photography. It is important to note that Lange worked in a society that was quickly becoming aware of its inherent ecological impacts and issues. Whereas the society of the Hudson River painters was not necessarily. Ideals of westward expansion and Manifest Destiny also drew prospectors for silver, gold, other ores, and oil. The failed ambitions of these individuals inspired Robert Smithson’s work on entropy in his “Earthworks.”

Each relationship reflects developments within and between the societies represented. The forces that drive these developments are part of the society and are reflected in the theory of each artist. Industrialization, urbanization, mechanization and all the accompanying shifts in economic and agricultural patterns had profound effects on society throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Increased human population placed unprecedented demands on natural resources, particularly water. As time progressed, humanity has developed a greater ability to impact the environment on a very large scale. All of these issues have led to a shift in public awareness, social conscience, the development of ecology as a science, and the development of government legislation. The variation of styles in this survey are the result of shifts that have occurred as artists developed increased independence from their patrons (traditionally the government) and were able to address the public at large.

By reviewing trends throughout art history, it is possible to trace the evolution of an idea, and how that idea reflects upon society. When the evolution of water as resource is traced, a pattern develops: water as an element within a spiritual landscape, water as a mode of transportation and for economic means, a passive element in the landscape to be studied, a force of destruction and rebirth, a force to be conquered, and a force that conquers. These constant shifts and fluctuations reflect upon the society that created them.

Art majors, minors, causal class-takers, doodlers, everyone! We are looking for artwork to display in the honors suite. Do you have work you have always wanted to display? Send photos to Professor Stecker for review! We are hoping for a wide range of styles and mediums so send those pictures in!

call out
ARTWORK NEEDED

Art majors, minors, casual class-takers, doodlers, everyone! We are looking for artwork to display in the honors suite. Do you have work you have always wanted to display? Send photos to Professor Stecker for review! We are hoping for a wide range of styles and mediums so send those pictures in!

call out
ARTWORK NEEDED

Art majors, minors, casual class-takers, doodlers, everyone! We are looking for artwork to display in the honors suite. Do you have work you have always wanted to display? Send photos to Professor Stecker for review! We are hoping for a wide range of styles and mediums so send those pictures in!

call out
ARTWORK NEEDED

Art majors, minors, casual class-takers, doodlers, everyone! We are looking for artwork to display in the honors suite. Do you have work you have always wanted to display? Send photos to Professor Stecker for review! We are hoping for a wide range of styles and mediums so send those pictures in!

FEVERUARY OPEN HOUSE IN THE HONORS SUITE
room to breathe

Kimberly Walleston
The new Wesson Honors Program's latest achievement. Throughout first semester, students, faculty and staff volunteered their time toward painting and decorating the three study and lounge areas. At the Open House, the fruits of our labor were finally revealed. An impressive number of students and faculty turned out to show their support for the Program and offer their congratulations on this great achievement. President Galligan dropped in to admire the transformation the space had undergone. The space will now be open 24 hours to Honor students, and Thursday nights from 9-11 to all students. It will function as a quiet study area, group-meeting location, or relaxing spot to read or enjoy a cup of complimentary coffee. Faculty are also welcomed and encouraged to take advantage of the space’s conference areas to hold classes and meetings.

3 Colby-Sawyer College