

9 Worksheet on Visual Literacy – Answer Key

Related texts: "Bush Boys" and *No More Boomerang*, from: Martin Arndt/Karl Sassenberg, *Australia and New Zealand*, Viewfinder Topics (München: Langenscheidt, 2010), pp. 13f. and p. 20.

C TASKS

1. Look closely at the cartoon. Describe in detail everything that you can see:

- Who are the people?
- Where are they?
- How are they characterized?
- What are they doing?

You can see:

- two couples, one white, one coloured – walking along a street in the city.
- the white couple dressed elegantly, in formal attire
- the Aboriginal couple is wearing virtually the same clothes but they have been torn to rags. They do not seem to realise that stockings and shoes are missing.
- The coloured girl is proud of her new dress and her umbrella. She is laughing and enjoying herself. She looks directly at the reader.
- The white woman avoids looking at the Aborigines, hides her face behind a veil. Her attitude is subdued.
- The coloured man is also proud of his new attire, his baton and his pipe. He looks at the reader from the corner of his eyes.
- The white man looks rather sternly, reproachfully at the Aborigines.
- The white couple seems to walk slowly, majestically whereas the Aborigines seem to be dancing along the street.

2. When do you think this cartoon was published?

The colour and form of the cartoon suggest that it was published in the late 19th or early 20th century.

3. What does the cartoon suggest about the four people who are presented? Which reaction is it supposed to provoke in the reader?

The whites are presented as well-respected citizens, probably taking a walk on a Sunday afternoon. The Aborigines in their funny dresses look out of place in the city. They are like children playing with rags, imitating the adults. The white reader of the newspaper is supposed to sneer at their silly behaviour.

4. What is the message the cartoon tries to convey? How does the title support this message?

The message is that Aborigines are of a “minor race” trying to imitate the behaviour of the superior white people whose culture they do not understand. The relationship is rather that between ignorant children and adults suggesting that Aborigines have to be educated. The title “Native Dignity” is sarcastic as it stands in contrast to the way in which the Indigenous couple is presented. It helps to ridicule them.

5. What does the cartoon reveal about the cartoonist?

The cartoon and its message clearly show that the cartoonist was a racist convinced of the superiority of his white culture.

(Karl Sassenberg)