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THE ANGLO-INDIANS AS A MIXED RACE IDENTITY IN AUSTRALIA

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This paper further explores how the ambiguous identity of 'Anglo-Indians' described in the article by James (2010) was shaped by migration and settlement in a multicultural Australia. In particular, the focus is how the Anglo-Indians' aspirations for and accumulation of white identity evident in the context of colonial and postcolonial India are refigured on migration to the settler-colony society of Australia. This paper therefore engages in the question of how Anglo-Indians negotiate and rework their identity claims in the context of Australian whiteness and multiculturalism.

There exists 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' on the basis of 'race' within Australian structures of power (Moreton-Robinson 1988, 1998; Jamrozik, Boland & Urquhart 1995; Gale 2000; Moran 2005c). Further, drawing on Hage (1998), Cochrane (1995), and Schech and Haggis (2001 & 2004), Australian national identity is governed by constructions of the dominant white, Anglo-Celtic culture prevalent in contemporary multicultural society (Jupp 2002, 2004; Jamrozik, Boland & Urquhart 1995, Jamrozik 2004). In this context, given that the Anglo-Indians know how to blend into Australian Anglo-Celtic society, they are already equipped for their assimilation into Australian whiteness. Multiculturalism in Australia also provides an entry for those Anglo-Indians deemed 'not white enough' by the host society. While the dominant Anglo-Celtic core remains central and those from non-Anglo-Celtic backgrounds who get accepted within Australian multiculturalism continue to be positioned on the margins of Australian society (Moreton-Robinson 1998, p. 11; see also Jamrozik, Boland & Urquhart 1995; Cochrane 1995). This combination shapes the Anglo-Indians' identity making process in Australia.

This paper draws connections between the background information about the Anglo-Indians discussed in James (2010) in the context of whiteness theory. The Anglo-Indians have a long history of being positioned awkwardly in terms of dominant whiteness. Moreno's 1908 (cited in Varma 1979, p. 220) poem captures the essence of how the Anglo-Indians were located within the discourse of race, whiteness and colonialism in India that shaped their identity as a mixed-race entity. He captures 'the dilemma of identity' and marginalised status of this community, especially for those Anglo-Indians who are dark-skinned in complexion when he writes:

> He is not wanted by the merchants
> His skin is rather dark
> He is not pure European
> Nor is he a *Babu* (Indian man)
> He is termed what's called East Indian
> As a blending of the two.

Moreno's poem illustrates essentialist constructions of 'race' and outlines how 'white race prejudice' is articulated through constructions that position people as members of racial categories by virtue of their skin colour (Perkins 2007; D'Cruz 2007; Hooks 1997; Moreton-Robinson 1998, 2004; Morgan 1990).

The discussion of colonial India in an earlier paper demonstrated that the Anglo-Indians' mixed-race status and identity dilemma was not just about embodiment (James 2010). As Roediger (1994, p. 2) points out, "the idea of race is given meaning through the agency of human beings in concrete historical and social contexts, and is not a biological or natural category". The Anglo-Indians' identity was constructed in reference to British colonial white identity. Moreno's depiction of the Anglo-Indians as 'not pure Europeans', is another way of describing them as half-caste people or people of hybrid heritage, reflecting how constructions of 'race' and 'racial prejudice' are defined by the inclusion and exclusion of people into racial categories expressive of purity. In particular, the 'inclusion' or 'exclusion' of races by members of the dominant culture affects their constructions of mixed-race identity and generates prejudice and discrimination against the 'other'. In focusing on the social constructions of whiteness, I draw from Frankenberg (1993) who defines the

dimensions of whiteness in terms of identity making through life histories:

> First, whiteness is a social location of structural advantage. Second, it is a "standpoint," a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others and at society. Third, "whiteness" refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed. (Frankenberg 1993, p. 1)

In Frankenberg's (1993) terminology, whiteness, like any other racial construction, is not an isolated concept but is situated within a relational and contextual framework. Frankenberg (1993) argues that whiteness varies depending on the time and space the person lives in. Hence, as it can differ in different spatial locations, it takes on a relational dimension of being socially constructed within a diversity of transformed racial and cultural factors. For example, in Britain whiteness was not always accorded to the British working class (Bonnett 1998) or the Irish who became 'black' (Hickman & Walter 1995). Thus, one of the prominent debates that have concerned whiteness studies has been about the inclusion and exclusion of races on the basis of heritage and skin colour.

Bonnett (1998, p. 327) writes that from being marginal to whiteness in the nineteenth century the British working class came to adopt and adapt to this identity in the twentieth century. The discourse on whiteness, as a theoretical notion, attempts to uncover the way in which invisibility operates as a form of power. The works of Bonnett and Frankenberg seek to analyse how European whiteness has been constructed as a norm, not just for Europeans, but also for the whole of humanity (Bonnett 2000a; Bonnett 2000b; Dyer 1997). In doing so it promotes the understanding of race and racism and the inferior positioning of the 'other'. Other scholars have used the concept of hybridity to challenge whiteness as a static and unchanging notion and as a dominant identity (Bhabha 1986, p. 96). Hybridity allows for those that are gazed upon to gaze back and challenge normative constructions of identity. It also allows for the possibilities to select or accumulate aspects of whiteness that are necessary to engage and access opportunities, which lead to certain privileges. In this way hybridity as an identity paradigm challenges the white

gaze (Bhabha 1990).

In post-war Australia, we see the shift from biological racialisation to cultural difference as a mechanism of racialised inclusion (partial and selective) and exclusion (Anderson 2002). The structures of racialisation and the understanding of identity-making in relation to home, nation and belonging were explored by Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992, p. 14) and others who cautioned against the premise that contemporary racism can be studied on the basis of biological notions of race. This shift occurred in the 1980s, which led to a crisis in representation in relation to the construction of race (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, p. 16). As a result, discourses about race and nation are intricately linked to social constructions of identity (Jackson & Penrose 1993, p. 1) and informed the 'new racism'.

Tucker (1987, p.18 cited in Wadham 2004, p. 20) argues that in Britain, 'new racism' operated through the endorsement of homogeneity as a pre-requisite of a harmonious society. Through this process difference from whiteness became a form of new racism (see also Markus & Rasmussen 1987). Stratton (1998, pp. 13-14) points out how this contemporary 'new racism' in Australia was exemplified in Australian politician Pauline Hanson's calls to reinstitution of white Australian cultural dominance. In her Maiden Speech delivered in the Australian Federal Parliament in 1996, Pauline Hanson, leader of One Nation Party, advocated policies "in favour of national protection" and " an ethnically homogeneous Australia" and "mobilised voters on race and ethnic issues" (McNevin 2007, pp. 616; see also Gale 2000, 2005; Jupp 2001, 2002). In other words, she sought to exclude and discriminate against other cultures that she considered would not be able to be assimilated into the dominant Anglo-Celtic Australian national culture (Gale 2005, p. 7). These views exemplify Hanson's role in 'new racism' evident when she influenced public opinion and mainstream voters to oppose 'otherness' resulting in a resurgence of anxieties to maintaining maintain ethnic homogeneity in a 'white Australia' (Ang 1999, pp. 189-190; Jupp 2002, pp. 130; see also Betts 2002). This new politicised form of racism was based less on biological constructions of race than on migrants' and Indigenous peoples' assumed inability to assimilate (Moran 2005a; 2005b; Langton 1981). The racialisation of the 'other' is based on their difference from those who were 'same' in white Australia (Lattas 2001, p. 108).

Clearly, the adoption of multiculturalism in the 1970s did not necessarily end the racialised nature of the Australian immigration policy. As a number of scholars have argued, multiculturalism as a policy framework was "designed to manage a variety of white cultures all of which were presumed to share the same moral assumptions" (Stratton 1998, p. 10). The Anglo-Indians who migrated to Australia during the White Australia policy era were affected by an overtly racist migration policy while those Anglo-Indians who came later were facing less overt racialisation in the context of multiculturalism. However, from both time periods, the Anglo-Indians who experienced racism in Australia were of dark skin colour despite the fact they had internalised the morals and values of whiteness.

Ang (1996) looks at the ambivalent location of 'Asians' in Australian multicultural social space. She writes that Australia's desire to be a tolerant culturally pluralist society is utopian. This aspiration avoids the reality of the racist history of Aboriginal annihilation and the White Australia Policy, which did not permit non-whites, especially 'Asians', to enter Australia. She is concerned with how this debate suppresses the reality of these ongoing processes of racialised and ethnicised 'othering' in contemporary Australia. She suggests that the processes have evolved into an ambivalent and contradictory process of 'inclusion by virtue of othering' (Ang 1996; see also Moreton-Robinson 1998). In the light of Ang's argument, embodiment could affect the Anglo-Indians' constructions of identity formation. In particular, some fair skinned Anglo-Indians could pass as English or Australian and might not be classified as the 'other'.

The 'inclusion' or 'exclusion' of people on the basis of their embodiment affects constructions of mixed-race identity and so-called prejudices and discrimination against the 'other' (Young 1995; Perkins 2007; Brah & Coombes 2000; Ifewunigwe 1999). Cochrane (1995), Jamrozik, Boland & Urquhart 1995, Stratton (1998) and Hage (1998) argue that Anglo-Celtic culture remains at the 'core' of Australian multicultural society. Within this 'core' the "British (English) cultural [colonial] inheritance" (Jamrozik, Boland & Urquhart 1995, p. 1) is the dominant point of reference for the Anglo-Indians, rather than the Indigenous Australians' culture (Jordan 1988).

While the concept of assimilation in Australia is concerned with adopting the 'core' culture, there are limitations to this process. As Hage (1998, p. 62) argues, no matter how many attributes of the dominant culture they might accumulate, Australian migrants may still be recognised as a Third-World-looking because they have merely acquired these attributes and were not born with the 'essence' of whiteness which the national aristocracy possess. There are examples of Australian immigrant Muslims who are stereotyped as 'terrorists' and who are not included or admitted entry into Australia (Imtoual 2004, p. 82; see also Batrouney 2000; Saniotis 2002; Hage 2002; Gale 2004, 2007; Moran 2005a; 2005b).

I propose that some mixed-race Anglo-Indians are positioned within Australian whiteness as either 'less dark non-whites' or 'paler non-whites' but 'never white enough'. They share this positioning with the Southern Europeans who did not "receive the very same privileges to British nationals" (Vassilacopoulos & Nicolacopoulos, 2004, p. 76), while other Anglo-Indians pass as white. In essence, James (2009) explored whether Anglo-Indians possess aspirations and choices to capture and retain white identity either given or withheld from them in the past. Underlying all these choices is the notion that whiteness is not fixed and is a socially constructed fluid and variable category (Bonnett 1998; 2000a & 2000b; Frankenberg 1993 & 1997; Brodkin 2000: Jacobson 1998; Roediger 2005 & Ignatiev 1995). However, while many critical whiteness scholars write about people of white skin colour who struggled and were accepted into 'the white race', Hage (1998) differs from these authors by pointing out that even non-whites can claim whiteness by virtue of their accumulation of whiteness and governmental belonging in multicultural Australian society.

According to Hage (1998, pp. 58-59), although even the Third World-looking migrant can accumulate percentages of whiteness, there are limits to 'culture', whiteness and accumulation of whiteness. Hence, physical characteristics like skin colour are not the only factors to be isolated, due to the fluid nature of whiteness. Hage's (1998) point applies to migrant Anglo-Indians. As transnational migrants (Caplan 1998), the Anglo-Indians have located themselves within the Australian nation. Many Anglo-Indians, as discussed in James (2010) migrated from India because there was a

sense of being an insecure minority threatened by the dominant Hindu majority (Anthony 1969; Gaikwad 1967; Gist & Wright 1973). In contrast, their easy assimilation and integration into Australian white society is articulated within their 'Australian national identity' and the progressive accumulation of whiteness in their new 'home'.

The Anglo-Indians in South Australia accumulated whiteness in Australian society and thereby claimed white identity. Their community is linked to their own aspirations for and accumulation of Australian white identity in terms of Hage's (1998) terminology. The oral histories collected for James' (2009) thesis of some Anglo-Indians who came to Australia during the White Australia Policy reveal the processes of cultural inclusion and exclusion evident in the practices of whiteness. Respondents who migrated in the 1960s and 1970s when multiculturalism became popular passed into whiteness more easily.

Arguably, Australia is 'home' for these diasporic Anglo-Indians who lay claim to their 'Anglo' heritage (James 2008; 2010). However, while some Anglo-Indians have undoubtedly been economically successful (Gilbert 1986) it is unclear whether Anglo-Indians have reached the end of their search for identity or their sense of belonging in Australia. The white locations that they live in are essential to the understanding of the accumulation of whiteness and the beliefs of the subjects regarding the rules of inclusion and exclusion of whiteness, identification with their 'Anglo' heritage, identification with their Indian heritage and with their relatively new Anglo-Australian identity. By situating them within the Anglo-Celtic culture and space through the structures and institutions in their daily life, the choices that they make between their identification as an Australian, Anglo-Indian, Indian or English person is dependent on their experiences.

Thus, this paper linked how whiteness shapes the Anglo-Indians as a mixed-race identity formation. More specifically, it focused on the relevance of the concept of whiteness in explaining constructions of white identity making among the respondent Anglo-Indians as a transnational and diasporic entity. With their migration and settlement in Australia their pre-migration claim for 'Britishness', is fulfilled while their claim 'Australian whiteness' within multicultural Australian society.

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