STEFANIE AFFELDT

CONSUMING WHITENESS
AUSTRALIAN RACISM AND THE ›WHITE SUGAR‹ CAMPAIGN

LIT

RACISM ANALYSIS   STUDIES 4

Stefanie Affeldt

Consuming Whiteness

RACISM ANALYSIS

edited by Wulf D. Hund

Series A: Studies

Volume 4

Stefanie Affeldt

Consuming Whiteness

Australian Racism
and the ›White Sugar‹ Campaign

LIT

Cover: Stefanie Affeldt and Wulf D. Hund
using photographs of cane cutters from Italy (left)
and the South Sea Islands (right)

Layout and image editing: Stefanie Affeldt

Contents

1. Introduction

»[Y]ou cannot have a White Australia in this country unless you are prepared to pay for it. One of the ways in which we can pay for a White Australia is to support the sugar industry of Queensland«.[1]

When William M. Hughes, the Australian Prime Minister, spoke these words in the early nineteen twenties, the two-way ›whitening‹ of Australian cane sugar had reached completion. One hundred and forty years after their foundation stones were laid in the course of British invasion, ›white Australia‹ and ›white sugar‹ were inextricably linked. While during this time, the continent had been taken from its original inhabitants and declared the refuge of the ›white‹, predominately British, ›race‹, the cultivation of sugar cane had been extricated from its traditional workforce and made into a symbol of nationalism and ›white‹ supremacy and has, not least due to its share in everyday consumption, contributed to the permeation by ›whiteness‹ of politics, legislation and culture of Australia.

That the equation ›sugar + culture‹ = »sugar culture« has to be historically specified is self-evident. Only its mere earthy side is »agri-culture« and has historically and socially taken on most diverse shapes. In the occidental history of an ›oriental‹ plant, sugar's »plantation culture« and the »colonial culture« shaped by it are most prominently featured.[2] This eventually led to the juxtaposition of »white consumption and black labour«: »slavery enabled the culture of taste«.[3] When Roland Barthes pleads for the analysing of »sugar« not only as a »foodstuff« but also as an »attitude«,[4] this historically includes the overlapping of »sugar« as both a

---

[1] ›Mr. Hughes in Queensland‹, in: Argus, 11.11.1922.
[2] Keith A. Sandiford: The Cultural Politics of Sugar, pp. 24 (›culture‹), 73 (›agri-culture‹), 40 (›plantation culture‹), 2 (›colonial culture‹).
[3] Simon Gikandi: Slavery and the Culture of Taste, pp. 110 (›consumption‹), 111 (›slavery‹).
[4] Roland Barthes: Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption, p. 23.

»product of slave labour« and one of the »first democratic luxuries« and attributes the sweet attitude with the bitter taste of racism.[5] ›White‹ consumption of sugar was contingent on its mass production and its concomitant conversion into a product that was accessible in all spheres of society.

It was only by such a class-spanning, everyday pattern of identity building that ›whiteness‹ could be constructed as a social relation. Racistly shaped consumer culture was a central binding agent of modern, capitalist production of commodities and societies based on individual freedom. On the one hand, this was based on the »wealth of bourgeois society« of which Karl Marx, not least under the impression of the ›Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations‹ in the ›Crystal Palace‹ in London in 1851, had written that this cornucopia »at first sight, presents itself as an immense accumulation of commodities«.[6] Insofar as it took on the form of a commodity, the societal wealth was principally accessible on all sides (though practically it was only at the disposal of financially strong demanders). Its all-round presentation (from its display in shops to world exhibitions and in particular as a theme in the swiftly increasing commodity advertising), in turn, had the effect »that it offered to compensate the have-nots with a vision of what the haves had«.[7]

During the imperialist climate of the second half of the nineteenth century, the advertising of commodities has been charged with racism. Stereotypical pictures of colonial others who as subservient workers cultivated, harvested and served primary products, as solicitous servants offered various and sundry services, or as ›savages‹ received the blessings of civilization flanked not only the advertisements of products from colonial materials such as coffee, cocoa, tea and tobacco. They also promoted soap, spot remover, shoe polish, musical instruments, toothpaste, baking mixtures and many more.[8] Altogether this »commodity racism« »not only exuded promises of use value charged with diverse exoticisms but also supplied the spectators of its messages with the chance to ascribe themselves to the ›white race‹, which thereby was not only reproduced by the conformations of science, the expositions of museums, the displays of world's fairs, and the spectacles of human zoos but also by compliance or purchase reconstructed in everyday action and behaviour«.[9]

---

[5]   Roberta Sassatelli: Consumer Culture, p. 40.
[6]   Karl Marx: A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, p. 269.
[7]   Thomas Richards: The Commodity Culture of Victorian England, p. 61.
[8]   Cf. David Ciarlo: Advertising Empire; Jan Nederveen Pieterse: White on Black; Anne McClintock: Imperial Leather; Anandi Ramamurthy: Imperial Persuaders.
[9]   Anne McClintock: Imperial Leather, p. 31 ff. (›commodity‹); Wulf D. Hund: Advertising White Supremacy, Capitalism, Colonialism and Commodity Racism, p. 59 (›exuded‹).

In this setting, sugar played a prominent role. It »became the first mass-produced exotic necessity of a proletarian working class«. This low-priced mass product with a high nutritional value became sort of a lubricant for the capitalist development. Its »extra calories, together with the need for money to satisfy the desire for sweetness, contributed to a more disciplined labour force in early industrial Britain«.[10] Even though »tea and sugar« had at that time turned into a »poverty diet« of the lower classes,[11] it was the very products from ›brown‹ and ›black‹ labour in the colonies whose indulgence enabled the lower classes of the metropolis to understand themselves as ›whites‹ and thereby count themselves as having an identity that was only possible to be developed in contradistinction to others. Using the British tea and sugar ceremony as an example, Stuart Hall has laconically noted: »The notion that identity has to do with people that look the same, feel the same, call themselves the same is nonsense. As a process, as a narrative, as a discourse, it is always told from the position of the Other«.[12]

The sugar equation is furthermore solved historically in an antipodean corner of the Empire, far away from the mother country – in Australia. Arriving as a heterogeneous group divided along the lines of punishers and punished, guards and convicts, officers and ostracized, the colonial Australian situation offered those banned to the lower end of the societal scale a chance for participation which they would not have experienced in Britain. This manifested, on the one hand, on the occasion of land-taking to which the convicts, and later the free workers, actively contributed. Into history this was introduced as »an almost Arcadian view [...] of the settlement of Australia, a view of a colonial frontier frequented by heroic pioneers (usually men) battling Australia's harsh environment«.[13] Even more than fighting nature, the experience of hunting and murdering with impunity the indigenous people of Australia facilitated the construction of a colonial ›other‹, in distinction to whom even the convict could feel a belonging to a higher-valued group.

On the other hand, on the colonial frontier there was the possibility of sharing in on a food culture which in the mother country was still uncommon for the lower classes. Long before the successful institutionalization of the sugar cane plantation economy in Australia, consumption of sugar

---

[10] Sidney Mintz: Sweetness and Power, p. 46 (›exotic necessity‹); David Brion Davis: Inhuman Bondage, p. 112 (›extra calories‹).

[11] John Burnett: Liquid Pleasures, p. 55.

[12] Stuart Hall: Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities, p. 49.

[13] Ian J. McNiven: Torres Strait Islanders and the maritime frontier in early colonial Australia, p. 177.

had already become an element of identity, initially of the convicts and of the afterwards gradually emerging working class. In this way, sugar consumers were able to count themselves not only as members of the imagined community of ›whites‹ that is based on racist exclusion of ›others‹ but could also consider themselves part of a consuming community in which users had an allegedly equal access to this sweet product of desire. In doing so, they contributed to the production of a social place which they shared with others. They also produced both the demand for sugar as food and for new attempts of cane cultivation.

Plantations in the subtropical and tropical parts of Australia then became the mode of production. With the renewed attempts of and eventual success in cane cultivation and due to shortages of ›white‹ labourers after the end of convict transportation, the logical consequence seemed to be the introduction of workers from the Pacific Islands to Queensland for the menial tasks. This provoked the sugar consumers coming from sundry social and political positions to predominantly ›white‹ reactions, i.e. agitation against a purported introduction of slavery into Australia and demands to employ ›white‹ workers in the cane fields. Against the backdrop of sugar cane traditionally being a plantation crop, whose cultivation drew on ›black‹, unfree labourers, and with no aspiration by the ›white‹ workers to engage in the sugar industry, the demand by the labour movement to substitute the Pacific Islanders with European labourers remained an ideological postulation until several discursive strands combined favourably in the notion of ›white Australia‹ at the end of the nineteenth century.

In the course of these developments various dimensions of social action have historically entangled and overlaid which in research have been discussed from different perspectives. They are all directed at an analysis of socieetal cohesion and repulsion and are dealing with processes of social differentiation as well as social inclusion and exclusion. The development of ›white‹ self-consciousness was of such centrality to this that I here give special prominence to it in order to carve out ›*whiteness*‹ as a central identification pattern in the formation of the consciousness of ›Australianness‹ and as a focus of my analysis. ›Whiteness‹ was the conspicuous expression of common exclusionist patterns in contemporary ›*racism*‹, whose modes of operation I investigate afterwards and, in doing so, advert to the relevance of the analytical categories ›racist symbolic capital‹ and ›wages of whiteness‹ for my investigations. The subsequent accentuation of ›*intersectionality*‹ does, in particular owing to the research of feminist scholars, not only belong to the standard repertoire of discrimination studies; it is also and first and foremost necessitated by the circumstance that

›class‹ and ›gender‹ had played an unmissable role in the formation of the Australian self-consciousness which was shaped by ›race‹ and its expression in the process of ›nation‹ building. The closely related ideological messages found everyday as well as practical expression in ›*consumerism*‹, for the examination of whose functional principle I put particular emphasis on the specific manifestation of ›commodity racism‹ associated with the production and consumption of sugar. Following this, I provide an indication to the central ›*literature*‹ dealing with important sub-areas of my investigation, introduce the ›*subjects*‹ which my analysis addresses and comment on the related methodological question; whereupon I supply a concluding overview of the ›*structure*‹ of my argumentation.

Whiteness

The foundation of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901 resulted in an intensified consideration of ›whiteness‹ as an element of the national identity. The processes of invasion and occupation of the Australian continent and the unfolding of the ›white Australia‹ ideology happened before a backdrop of intensifying discussions and manifestations of ›whiteness‹. In this context, the production and consumption of sugar increasingly became synonymous with ›white Australia‹ culture combining the ›racial‹ purification of the society and the moral justification of nationalist consumerism with eugenic policies of land settlement. The intensified debate about the thinly populated northern climes of the continent, the ›empty North‹, necessitated populating the area with settlers who could be employed to advantage in the defence of an allegedly imminent invasion by the Asian ›surplus population‹. The presence of ›non-white‹ labour in one of the future states of the Commonwealth of Australia was not only regarded as an economic thorn in the flesh of other industries which saw their existence endangered by possible undercutting. Socially, a substratification of the society by ›black labour‹ was also seen as a bête noire in the idea that equality and fairness should prevail in the Australian society. Biologically, concerns about ›racial‹ purity and miscegenation solidified and saw in the Chinese, Japanese and other ›non-whites‹ – and thus also in the Pacific Islanders of Queensland – originators and carriers of diseases and vices which would spread and threaten the healthiness of the ›white Australian‹ ›racial‹ corpus.

›Whiteness‹ was in this process as much the central norm as an endangered and fought-over possession. Hence it was not at all self-evident and

invisible, as its exploration using other examples has occasionally hastily generalized.[14] Considering colonial history at large and the Australian history in particular, »whiteness [...] has been explicitly named and highly visible«.[15] By historicizing the category, it becomes obvious that ›whiteness‹ itself was not only far from being invisible but also not an unambiguous and static description. For a start, ›whiteness‹ had to be ›experienced‹ in a long process shaped by colonialism and slavery which in England extended far into the seventeenth century. Thereafter, it had to be ›invented‹ as a concept and ›constructed‹ as a theory to which in particular the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century made a significant contribution. In order to function as the centre of a social relation it had to be ›popularized‹ in the course of the nineteenth century, only to already be considered ›endangered‹ and accompanied by calls for its ›defence‹ at the turn to the twentieth century.[16]

In Australia, ›whiteness‹ was a concept not yet fully developed at the time the first convicts and settlers arrived down under. That it was also not a vested right guaranteeing admission to the society for everyone evidenced the ostracism of the lower classes in Britain. The initial ›mingling‹ of yet undifferentiated skin colours was continued on the convicts' way to and their life in Australia. Not much thought was given to distinguishing the skin colours of those sent to the colony. This manifested itself in the outwardly definition of the convict society as ›our‹ people in distinction to ›their‹ people as the native population. Admittedly, not as ›white‹ but as members of a ›white‹ society, juxtaposed to the ›black‹ indigenous, upward social movement was thus even possible for convicts with African roots. After the end of transportation, the consolidation of the working class was paralleled with their formation as ›whites‹. Similarly, in the following, becoming ›white‹ continued to be a matter of contradistinction from an ›other‹. On the goldfields of southern Australia, the British and other European diggers successfully practiced their distancing from the Chinese diggers whom they deemed ›racial‹ and social inferiors. Being ›white‹

---

14 For literature on ›whiteness‹, see Simon Clarke, Steve Garner: White Identities; Mike Hill: Whiteness. For the invisibility of ›whiteness‹, see Richard Dyer: White; Steve Garner: Whiteness, esp. pp. 34 ff., nonetheless, he talks about ›white Australia‹ (pp. 68 ff.) and recognizes the »lack of solidity and stability« of ›whiteness‹, p. 72; Birgit Brander Rasmussen, Eric Klinenberg, Irene J. Nexica, Matt Wray: The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness; Ruth Frankenberg: White Women, Race Matters. For information on ›whiteness‹ as the invisible norm in today's Australian society, see, for instance, Aileen Moreton-Robinson: Tiddas talkin' up to the white woman.

15 Ann Curthoys: White, British, and European, p. 5.

16 For this line of thought and ›becoming‹, ›being‹ and ›staying‹ ›white‹ in the following, see Wulf D. Hund: Die weiße Norm.

was substantiated by the politics of the day, art and literature, mainstream talk and newspaper coverage. It found expression in the benefitting from a ›coloured‹ substratification in the sugar industry which caused a lift effect for ›white‹ workers, but it was also experienced by the joint venture ›Federation‹ – supported and promoted by all societal strata – when, at the end of the nineteenth century, ›whiteness‹ reached a peak in the Australian society. Overlaying social differences, the shared membership in the ›white race‹ was the catalyst for the consolidation of the Australian colonies as the Commonwealth of Australia. The initial legislation was motivated by the striving for ›racial‹ purity and cultural homogeneity.

However, even within the largely European-Australian society, ›whiteness‹ was not a vested right for every European immigrant and even less for members of every societal sphere. Italians and other southern Europeans were seen as ›Africanized‹, and ›whiteness‹ was denied to them until far into the twentieth century.[17] The city-youth formation known as larrikins in the eighteen eighties were seen as »dissolute elements« which threatened »civic and moral order«, challenged definitions of European-Australian ›whiteness‹, and were described as the »greatest deviations« from the »future white body« of Australians desired by the national hygienists.[18] »[R]anked beneath the rest of the white Australians on the evolutionary scale«, and based on their low social prestige, they were »often lumped in with black peoples« and »dark-hued vocabulary« used to describe them.[19] City dwellers in general came under the suspicion of not living up to the standards of ›whiteness‹ as a larger accumulation of people meant an increased concentration of »disease and degenerate types« and seemed to contribute to a »physical and spiritual deterioration« which in turn urged deliberations in terms of eugenic population management.[20]

Staying ›white‹ then became a question of societal cohesion. It was outwardly created by the invocation of the special location as the outpost of western civilization in the Far East in which Australia saw itself. This was intensified by the sheer mass of China's population and by the em-

---

[17] Cf. William A. Douglass: From Italy to Ingham; Gianfranco Cresciani: The Italians in Australia; Helen Andreoni: Olive or White; Toula Nicolacopoulos, George Vassilacopoulos: Racism, foreigner communities and the onto-pathology of white Australian subjectivity.

[18] Warwick Anderson: The Cultivation of Whiteness, pp. 62 (›dissolute‹, ›order‹), 171 (›deviations‹, ›body‹).

[19] Melissa Bellanta: The Larrikin's Hop, p. 135 (›ranked‹); id.: Leary Kin, p. 688 (›lumped‹), 679 (›dark-hued‹). This did not lead to them sympathizing with ›non-white‹ people; rather, they were the greatest supporters of minstrelsy in Australia and known to agitate violently against Chinese, Aborigines and others – see ibid., p. 688.

[20] Cf. Warwick Anderson: The Cultivation of Whiteness, pp. 171 f., 171 (›disease‹, ›deterioration‹).

phasizing of Japan's perilousness, which was substantiated by its imperialism and by its victory over Russia in the sea battle at Tsushima which the western world perceived as a shock. Both threats found expression in the stereotype of the ›yellow peril‹ for which one particular author with an Australian background became one of the most important cue givers.[21] In the light of this scenario of external danger, it seemed all the more important to counteract tendencies endangering the internal ›racial purity‹. That the related ambitions were not only directed against others labelled ›yellow‹, ›brown‹ or ›black‹ but also targeted those who allegedly were not ›white‹ enough hints at the social and cultural character of ›whiteness‹ in particular and racism in general. ›White‹ in this context was always connected to naturalist ascriptions, which in the case of ›racially‹ suspicious Europeans had to be supplemented with curious references to their origin from districts which under Roman rule were said to have had contact with and underwent contamination by African slaves or under Arabic and Ottoman domination experienced assaults by and mixture with ›non-white races‹. Commonly in these cases, however, purely cultural patterns of argumentation emphasizing the undeveloped and irrational mode of the others' life were sufficient.

Racism

Even though it takes its name from the purportedly natural human ›races‹, racism is also a form of cultural discrimination. With the help of ›races‹ modern racism has attempted to implement »the social construction of natural disparity«.[22] When, at the turn to the twentieth century and particularly in the aftermath of national-socialist racial policies, this category was increasingly delegitimized, it did not have a problem at all with divesting itself of the ›races‹ and developing into a ›racism without races‹.[23] In doing so, it could draw on earlier forms of racist discrimination. They have

---

[21]   See Charles H. Pearson: National Life and Character. For the relations of Australia with China and Japan, see Timothy D. Kendall: Ways of Seeing China; Charles Ferrall, Paul Millar, Keren Smith: East by South; Janeen Webb, Andrew Enstice: Aliens & Savages, esp. pp. 130-214; David Walker: Anxious Nation; id., Agnieszka Sobocinska: Australia's Asia: From Yellow Peril to Asian Century; Henry P. Frei: Japan's Southward Advance and Australia. For a broader overview, see also Marilyn Lake, Henry Reynolds: Drawing the Global Colour Line.

[22]   Cf. Wulf D. Hund: Rassismus (1999), subtitle.

[23]   Cf., for the beginning of the delegitimizing, Elazar Barkan: The Retreat of Scientific Racism; and, for ›racism without races‹, i.a. Etienne Balibar, Immanuel Wallerstein: Rasse, Klasse, Nation, esp. pp. 23 ff.

found expression in a series of dichotomies by which »[h]istorically and systematically, racism has orientated the construction of its categories to different opposites. People were thus either human or monstrous, cultivated or barbaric, valuable or worthless, pure or impure, chosen or cursed, civilised or savage, white or coloured«.[24] These contrastive pairs designated historical stages in the development of racist discrimination (insofar as in the course of European history in antiquity ›barbarians‹, in the middle ages ›sinners‹, and in the beginning of the colonial era ›savages‹ were concerned); but are at the same time patterns which complemented and overlapped each other and existed in different eras in various shapes (which, for example, in the eugenic discourse spanning from antiquity to modernity were directed against ›inferiors‹ or, in combination with other imputations, were addressed to various groups of ›impures‹).

Theoretically, patterns of racist ascription and techniques of racist stigmatization were frequently referred to as ›ideology‹ and have been followed up in all kinds of manifestations from group prejudice to governmental practice.[25] Definitions of racism are in this context not at all bound to the classic modern variants. Benjamin Isaac, for instance, explained in his investigations into antiquity that »[t]he essence of racism is that it regards individuals as superior or inferior because they are believed to share imagined physical, mental, and moral attributes with the group to which they are deemed to belong«.[26] Or Theodore W. Allen who in his study on the discrimination against the Irish maintained that »racism among Europeans is not limited to their relations with non-Europeans« and characterized it as »the social death of racial oppression«, whose main function it was to reduce »all members of the oppressed group to one undifferentiated social status, a status beneath that of any member of any social class within the colonizing population«.[27] The conditions which developed in Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were characterized by elements that were highlighted in different definitions of racism. At its centre stood the formation process of a ›white‹ society that found well-nigh paradigmatic expression in the conflicts and debates about the sugar industry. In this context its evolution substantiates racism as a social relation whose formation was not complete until it acquired what is seen as its substance: to have a group of humans understand themselves as ›ra-

---

[24] Wulf D. Hund: ›It must come from Europe‹, p. 71; for the following, see id.: Rassismus (2007), esp. pp. 34-81.
[25] Cf. Robert Miles: Racism, pp. 42 ff. (›ideology‹); James M. Jones: Prejudice and Racism; David T. Goldberg: The Racial State.
[26] Benjamin Isaac: The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity, p. 23.
[27] Theodore W. Allen: The Invention of the White Race, pp. 29, 32.

cially‹ equal and thus constitute a community. This was not at all agreed upon during a large part of the nineteenth century in the British mother country. It was entirely possible to apply the racial theories, developed and propagated at the colonial peripheries by the scientific elites, to the own lower classes.[28] This was, on the one side, owed to the class struggle, rapidly aggravated by the development of capitalism, and the concomitant miserable situation of large parts of the working classes, which induced the young Friedrich Engels to the simile that the working class and the bourgeoisie had become »two radically dissimilar nations, as unlike as difference of race could make them«.[29] On the other side, it found expression in an alarmist discourse on degeneration that interpreted the hardship of the lower classes as a sign of ›racial‹ deterioration and gave rise to far-reaching eugenic considerations which targeted the socially weak and even enjoyed substantial popularity with leftist social powers and the Fabian Society.[30] Only with the connection of imperialist supremacy and capitalist mass production, the situation was changed so much that »racial thinking« turned from an »élite ideology« to a »part of popular culture« and with this could develop into a »property of the many«.[31]

In an extension of Pierre Bourdieu's deliberations on social distinction, Anja Weiß has suggested to understand this form of ideological property as ›racist symbolic capital‹. While economic and cultural capital locate an individual within a societal context, racist symbolic capital allocates a social validation: it »translates into economic and cultural capital, but [...] is not identical to it« and it »is a collective resource which can however be emphasized and utilized by individuals as representatives of a group«.[32] Racist symbolic capital allows for the inclusion and exclusion from societal interaction and the entire respective society. It can be accumulated and can be drawn upon by individuals but has to be conceded by others. As a social relation, racist symbolic capital also has to be constantly regenerated or anew accumulated by open discrimination or the tacit consent to it.

The examples of world's fairs and exhibitions show how the working classes were able to accumulate racist symbolic capital by visiting the

---

28 Cf. Kenan Malik: The Meaning of Race, esp. pp. 91-114.
29 Friedrich Engels: The Conditions of the Working Class in England, p. 135. For the social conflicts, see i.a. Martin Hewitt: Class and the Classes, p. 311; Trygve R. Tholfsen: Working Class Radicalism in Mid-Victorian England, esp. pp. 25 ff.; Andrew August: The British Working Class 1832-1940, p. 39 ff.; still pertinent is Edward P. Thompson: The Making of the English Working Class.
30 Cf. Sören Niemann-Findeisen: Weeding the Garden; Daniel Pick: Faces of Degeneration.
31 Kenan Malik: The Meaning of Race, p. 116.
32 Anja Weiß: Racist Symbolic Capital, p. 47.

ethnographic sections where science assured them that they were on the
›right‹ side of the ›colour line‹ and contrasted indigenous ›primitivism‹
with European progressiveness. As such, accumulated racist symbolic
capital provided the means for a blurring of boundaries in terms of ›class‹
and ›gender‹ in favour of the imagined community of a superior ›white
race‹ which, of course, could only be constructed by the degradation of
others. In settler societies like Australia, this process of inclusion of the
lower classes began with their integration into the ranks of the ›civilized‹
in contradistinction to the ›savages‹ of the forcefully appropriated colo-
nies. Convicts, expelled by the British mother country and sentenced to
work as unfree labourers on the other side of the world, experienced ad-
mission to the colonial society in their ›racial‹ distinction from Aborigines.
Their murdering of the local inhabitants went largely with impunity, and
the free settlers frequently saw these approaches and other genocidal mas-
sacres as benefitting the cause of occupying the continent and putting it to
better, i.e. European, use.

The symbolic character of such social integration became explicit to
those concerned on the goldfields half a century later, when the ex-con-
victs and emancipists were confronted with the insight that their being
members of the ›white‹ invading community had little impact on their re-
muneration or even employment. With the alleged competition by Chinese
mine workers, the Europeans' ›whiteness‹ proved not to be convertible
into economic benefits. The social conditions did not lead to the realiza-
tion that racism as an ideology was not sufficiently characterized; none-
theless, it provoked social action that was targeted at an alteration of the
structures and geared towards utilizing ›whiteness‹ as a means of leverage
in labour conflicts. But even with the repatriation of the Pacific Islanders
as part of the ›white Australia policy‹, the creation of jobs remained an act
of conceding racist symbolic capital which – due to the unchanged labour
conditions in the sugar industry – were in fact indeed only symbolical
because they did not constitute jobs worthy of ›white‹ men. It was only
when industrial action pressed for higher wages, that the sugar workers
were able to translate the racist symbolical capital conceded to them into
actual ›wages of whiteness‹.

This material dimension of racist societalization has been examined
in detail by David Roediger.[33] He demonstrates how Irish-Americans ac-
complished to find admission to the ›white‹ Northern American society by
their putting emphasize on their distinction from African-Americans and

[33]   See David Roediger: Wages of Whiteness, esp. pp. 133 ff.

Chinese. By positioning themselves in contradistinction to their foreign co-workers, thus validating their own ›whiteness‹, and drawing on the consensus of ›white supremacy‹, they were able to earn tangible honouring of their ›racial‹ upward revaluation. While initially »it was by no means clear that the Irish were white«, about a decade later it was noted that their discriminatory agitation had led them to become »greater enemies« to the African-American population »than any portion of the population in the free states«, opposing abolition and rejecting any equation with ›black‹ Americans. This eventually effectuated the »making of the Irish worker into the white worker« with the Irish »themselves [...] insist[ing] on their own whiteness and on white supremacy«.[34]

In Australia, the ›white‹ European workers were by law assigned high-skilled jobs in the cane sugar industry in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Enforcing the confinement of Pacific Islanders to unskilled, agri-cultural labour and employing Europeans in higher-paid jobs eventuated in the virtual establishment of a rigid ›colour line‹ dividing skilled and me-nial tasks. This, however, was restricted to the overseer tasks and affected only few European workers. On the occasion of the ›Sugar Strike‹ in 1911 the demand for conversion of racist symbolic capital into actual ›wages of whiteness‹ was expressed in greater dimensions and eventually led to the awarding of higher wages and improved working conditions to the ›white‹ sugar workers. By claiming their ›racial‹ and cultural distinction from the, already deported, Pacific Islanders and the, numerically inferior, Chinese and Japanese workers, they validated their ›whiteness‹ and exacted their economic compensation.

That industrial action was necessary for the enforcement of this po-sition does indeed indicate that social differentiation and stratification as well as the unity of ›race‹ cannot be casually summarized; rather they are located in a complex relationship of tension. Hence, formulations that »racism [...] originates a mindset that regards ›them‹ as different from ›us‹ in ways that are permanent and unbridgeable« or that »[t]he more the con-cept of race evolved, the more it became a means of distinction between the powerful and the weak, between *us* and *them*«,[35] which in the defini-tion of racism do repeatedly surface, register not an implicitness but rather mark a problem because the by-definition-imputed ›us‹ is in fact a society marked by internal power relations and social inequality.

---

[34] Ibid., pp. 134 (›by no means‹), 135 (›enemies‹, ›than any‹), 137 (›Irish‹, ›white‹).
[35] George M. Fredrickson: Racism, p. 9; Rotem Kowner: Between Contempt and Fear, p. 93 f.

Intersectionality

The unity founded on the category ›race‹ cannot be reached without con-
flicts about the patterns of social differentiation, which are at the least
distinguished by ›class‹ and ›gender‹. The »main axes of difference«, »the
›Big Three‹ of race, class, and gender« have thus to be contemplated joint-
ly.[36] If only due to the circumstance that the workers and their unions –
who in numerous strikes have acted against employment of ›coloured‹
labourers and emphasized their ›whiteness‹ – were willing to underscore
their opinions by voting accordingly, without the support of the labour
movement, ›white Australia‹ would have never been possible;[37] and the
program of the Federal Labor Party, which »expressed a racist vision of
Australian democracy that excluded all, but whites«, further substantiated
this.[38] A historical investigation into the processes which led up to the Fed-
eration and continued to be the basis of Australianness afterwards uncov-
ers the dynamic of the three social categories. This historical background
alone already makes it clear that it has to be complemented by ›nation‹ as
the fourth; a category whose significance for the analysis of ›racialized
boundaries‹ has been emphasized early on in the modern racism discus-
sion.[39] This includes the realization that ›gender‹, ›class‹, ›nation‹, and
›race‹ are not stationary entities. They are »not fixed and discrete catego-
ries« but »overlap, intersect and fuse with each other in countless ways«.[40]
They undergo constant reshaping and transformation through discourse
and performance.

Accordingly, being ›white‹ in Australia was not a vested right and by
no means static. It was a matter of incessant discussion as to who is count-
ed amongst the ›whites‹ and who is excluded. Their geographical posi-
tion put southern Europeans under the suspicion of actually being ›black‹.
›Black‹, on the other hand, was not only a ›racial‹ category comprising
Aboriginal Australians and Pacific Islanders; it was also a social ascription
for workers supporting Australian capitalists as strike breakers as well as
for capitalists who valued their profit over ›racial‹ purity and employed

---

[36]   Jan Nederveen Pieterse: Others, p. 263.
[37]   Cf. Humphrey McQueen: A New Britannia, p. 53; Raymond Markey: Australia, p. 604;
       Jim McIlroy: The Origins of the ALP, p. 52; James Jupp: From White Australia to
       Woomera, p. 9.
[38]   Frank Bongiorno: The Origins of Caucus, p. 16; for the Australian Labor Party and the
       ›white Australia policy‹, see ibid. pp. 14 ff.
[39]   Cf. Floya Anthias, Nira Yuval-Davis: Racialized Boundaries; for a more recent overview
       of several options formulated in this context, see Iris Wigger: The Interconnections of
       Discrimination esp. pp. 554-557.
[40]   Michael Omi, Howard Winant: Racial Formation in the United States, p. 68.

›coloured‹ workers. It was also the expression of the continuous fear about degeneration based on the suspicion that work which had been ideologically and historically seen as menial tasks performed by ›coloured‹ workers – like sugar cane cultivation and harvest – would entail a social as well as physical decline until the workers would become ›black‹ in all their characteristics but their actual skin colour.

›Whiteness‹ developed in contradiction to the surrounding cultural counterparts. In this context, ›yellow‹ was reserved to demarcate the ancient but allegedly degenerate cultures China and Japan, though the population of the latter was also occasionally categorized as being ›brown‹.[41] A colour they shared, inter alia, with the Indian ›coolies‹ and which was connected to servility and servantry. ›Class‹ is a category with particular fluidity in Australia as initially there were high possibilities for upward social mobility. Ex-convicts, immigrants and free workers were able to become part of the landed economy, the end of convict transportation divested the landed classes of their unpaid workers, and education gave workers the opportunity for a political career in unions.[42] ›Class‹ was furthermore decisive in the case of the up-valuation of individuals like Chinese businessman based on their economic power, when its overwriting of ›race‹ allowed for their wholehearted inclusion into Australian communities. The boundaries of ›gender‹ were no less blurred. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, male Australians were increasingly under the suspicion of becoming effeminate while women claiming freedom in political activities and employment and thus challenged the male dominancy.

The interplay of these categories created repressive systems of inequality, but the interaction between the categories also contributed to the perpetual remodelling of the same. As such it is not only intersectionality as means to analyse »interlocking systems of oppression«[43] which deserves further investigation but also the dynamics between the social categories which are elementary to it and the ways in which they conflicted and connected. Nation, gender, class and ›race‹ are not mutual exclusive categories; they do not stand on their own. As attributions and self-desig-

---

[41] As Henry Lawson, the renowned Australian writer, did in 1906 when he wrote about seeing the »brown and yellow rule« and the »brown masters of the dawn« who will take over the county – ›To Be Amused‹ by Henry Lawson, cited in Noel Rowe: The Misty Ways of Asia, p. 78.

[42] Cf. Philip McMichael: Settlers and the Agrarian Question, pp. 79 f.; Humphrey McQueen: A New Britannia, p. 231.

[43] Ann Russo: The Future of Intersectionality, p. 310. For more information on intersectionality, see Michele T. Berger, Kathleen Guidroz: The Intersectional Approach; Vera Kallenberg, Jennifer Meyer, Johanna M. Müller: Intersectionality und Kritik; Emily Grabham, Davina Cooper, Jane Krishnadas, Didi Herman: Intersectionality and Beyond.

nations they overlap and overwrite each other, they interact and interfere with each other. All can be applied with relative certainty – one either is or is not a worker – but its unambiguousness is affected by the liaison with other attributes.

Queensland cane sugar is one of the manifestations of historical intersectionality in Australia. By consuming cane sugar, ›white‹ Australians from all classes established the self-assurance that they were not only members of the ›white race‹ but also willing to bear the financial and moral burden of defending the ›whiteness‹ of their nation. The latter ensured the feasibility of the transformation from a ›black‹ to the globally unique ›white‹ cane sugar industry. It was the labour movement which initially fought for the creation of jobs and governmental legislation that expedited and secured the ›whitening‹ of the labour market and also provided the necessary subsidies. After the accomplishment of the conversion, the sugar capitalists, who initially valued their financial gains over the ›racial‹ homogeneity of the nation and had to be forced to forsake their employees from the Pacific Islands by legislative means, soon commenced to draw on the ›white Australia‹ ideology to justify the support of their industry and legitimize the necessity of its existence.

With the change in the sugar workforce, the perspective on ›gender‹ in the case of the cane workers changed. In the case of the Pacific Islanders ›race‹ overwrote ›gender‹ in the recruiting process and in employment. Even though women were initially also employed in northern Australian households, with the confinement of Pacific Islanders to the cultivating part of the sugar industry, the assignment of women to work in the cane fields was not a problem. With regard to the production process, ›gender‹ was upstaged by the ›racial‹ suitability of ›blacks‹ in plantation work as it was in the Americas where economic profits blurred femininity.[44] It was only when ›white labour‹ entered the sugar stage, that ›gender‹ in Queensland became an issue.

In the light of the thinly populated northern climes, the presence of ›white‹ female settlers was indispensable. ›White‹ women were one of the pivots in the discourse on the eugenicist policies of northern settlement. As biological multipliers, they were crucial to the proliferation of the Australian ›race‹; as social educators, they were responsible for the ideological equipage of the future ›white‹ Australians. They were needed to organize and feed the family and run the household. In the position of the latter, the

---

[44] Cf. Teresa L. Amott, Julie A. Matthaei: Race, Gender, and Work, p. 146; Rebecca J. Fraser: Courtship and Love Among the Enslaved in North Carolina, p. 26; Gayle T. Tate: Unknown Tongues, p. 26.

›white‹ Australian women in the early twentieth century began to raise their voices. Taking an economic perspective, they criticized the protectionist policy which hindered the import of beet and cane sugar from overseas and hence secured an, in their eyes, too expensive Australian sugar. In their social role as purchasers, they were thus able to contribute to the discourse on ›white‹ sugar and, united and politicized in Housewives' Associations, they advocated the import of less expensive sugar cultivated in countries which continued to employ ›black‹ workers, since after Federation the engagement of Pacific Islanders in the Queensland sugar industry, and with this inexpensive sugar, seemed out of the question. This was not the only aspect that made the ›white‹ women an interference factor in the harmony of ›white Australia‹. Their alleged lasciviousness and susceptibility to Chinese temptations – opium, sexual intercourse and gambling – jeopardized the moral and ›race‹ hygienic immaculateness of the nation. Their weak condition challenged their suitability for life and work as well as their ability to maintain decency and ›racial‹ standards in the tropics; this could only be overcome by recruiting Aboriginal women as domestic help.[45]

The bourgeois female city dwellers, on the other hand, showed too much vigour and came under the suspicion of challenging the men's social and political position by demanding the right to education, vote and work, instead of enacting their role as housewife and mother. As in other western countries, the ›new woman‹ in Australia, too, put into question the validity of contemporary gender roles by allegedly unruly and mannishly behaviour and was depicted in the newspapers as »an untidy amalgam of all the feminist demands for change«.[46] Their partial unwillingness to support ›white Australia‹ by buying ›white‹ sugar was therefore only one part of their endangerment of the ›white‹ nation.

For some time, however, it was not even certain, how this ›white nation‹ was supposed to come about. Geographically, the outer boundaries of the future Commonwealth at times included all the Australasian colonies: the Australian continent, Fiji and New Zealand.[47] The Australian contemporary colonies were New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and Queensland – but at the end of the nineteenth century there was disunity even about the actual composition of the conti-

---

[45] Cf. Warwick Anderson: The Cultivation of Whiteness, pp. 153 f.; Victoria Haskins: Gender, Race and Aboriginal Domestic Service, p. 157.

[46] Audrey Oldfield: Woman Suffrage in Australia, p. 191. See also Susan Magarey: Passions of the First Wave Feminists, pp. 42 ff.

[47] Cf. Helen Irving: The Centenary Companion to Australian Federation, p. xvii; id.: To Constitute a Nation, p. 32; Gary R. Hawke: The Making of New Zealand, p. 119.

nental members. It was the question of ›black labour‹ that was the focus of the debate about the northern state becoming a member of the Federation. The southern colonies argued against this based on the substratification of the labour class in Queensland by ›black‹ Pacific Islanders and by the allegedly unfair economic advantages it would have over the much smaller cane sugar industry of New South Wales which had a substantially higher proportion of ›white‹ workers. A future without Federation was also considered in the northern part of Queensland.[48] Economic deliberations and stagnation in industrial development based on the distance from the capital of the colony led to movements demanding the separation of Queensland into two or three parts. The certainty that with the federation of the Australian colonies the days of the workforce from the Pacific Islands were once and for all numbered, confirmed the sugar capitalists' fears of a demise of their industry and the vision of an autonomous North Queensland urged them to support the separation activism. Though claiming to unite all classes, separationism was mainly supported by the capitalists, had been condemned by other to be »a device for a planter-dominated ›slave-state‹ or ›coolie colony‹«,[49] and was eventually overruled by motivations based on ›race‹ and the decision against the continuation of the Islanders' employment supported by the votes of the working class. The Federation referendum was then not least influenced by the labour movement's racism and pro-Federation agitation,[50] and the confidence that the Commonwealth would solve the ›black labour‹ question in the sugar industry in favour of ›white‹ employment brought forth the vote for Federation.

Consumerism

The conflict about sugar production in Queensland was one of the central locations of the debates surrounding ›race‹ and ›nation‹ in Australia. The fact that the product concerned was at the same time the object of mass consumption by all social strata and groups referred to the importance of everyday action for the production and permanent reconstruction of ›whiteness‹. Its intensive usage from breakfast to afternoon tea to dinner did virtually hold on the boil the closely interconnected topic of ›racial‹ identity. Nutrition, and at this not least the discrimination between ›raw‹ and ›cooked‹, has been described by Claude Lévi-Strauss as the central

48   Cf. Helen Irving: To Constitute a Nation, p. 141.
49   Raymond Evans: A History of Queensland, p. 141 (›device‹).
50   Cf. Helen Irving: The Centenary Companion to Australian Federation, p. 107.

marker of culture. Already the old Chinese, ancestors to those vilified as
›yellow hordes‹ in Australia, used it to distinguish »[t]wo categories of
barbarians«: »The shengfan, literally ›raw barbarians‹, were considered
savage and resisting. The shufan, or ›cooked barbarians‹, were tame and
submissive«.[51] In Australia, appropriate for the contemporary racism, the
colour of sugar took the place of the preparation of the dishes.

Politic-ideologically charged to a high degree, sugar consumption did
not only serve the reproduction of bodily ability but was also always an im-
portant part of the (re-)production of racist attitudes. Comparable to those
everyday strategies which Michel de Certeau named »*another* production,
called ›consumption‹« and in this context saw consumers not as inactive
receivers but active designers of their surroundings, the Australians were
engaged in the daily production of ›whiteness‹ when consuming their sug-
ar and with their »tactics of consumption [...] lend a political dimension
to everyday practices«.[52] It becomes apparent that the ›white‹ Australians
combined their ›racial‹ prestige (which was manifested in contradistinc-
tion to the indigenous Australians from the colonization onwards and, at
the end of the nineteenth century, to both the ›non-white‹ workers within
and the ›non-white‹ races exterior to the country) with their claimed right
to sugar (constituting an imagined community as beneficiaries of the sweet
and real consequences of colonialism). As consumers of sugar produced
in Australia, their consumption would then reproduce a globally new and
unique form of sugar: doubly ›white‹ sugar which initially was nothing but
an ideological phantasm.

Under the special conditions of Australia – as the last ›white bastion‹,
with geographical remoteness but cultural and ideological closeness to
Britain and geographical closeness to and therewith endangerment by its
Asian neighbours – the consociation of diverse interest groups and lobbies
in conjunction with the alarmist narrative of the ›empty North‹ and the
›yellow peril‹ – which entailed the alleged invasion by the numerically
superior Chinese and Japanese – intensified by population political and
eugenic concepts of the ›white race‹ in Australia, eventually made this
phantasm come true. The consumers, in turn, also functioned as actual
producers of the foodstuff they wanted to consume – their engagement
in the workforce of the sugar industry held out the prospect of cane sugar
manufactured as a socially ›white‹ product. Their unions emphasizing the
›white‹ workers' ›racial‹ prestige then led to the additional ›whitening‹ of

[51]   Frank Dikötter: The Discourse of Race in Modern China, p. 9; see Claude Lévi-Strauss:
       The Raw and the Cooked.
[52]   Michel de Certeau: The Practice of Everyday Life, pp. xii (›production‹), xvii (›tactics‹).

work conditions and wages. Broad support by other unions, and thus by more sugar consumers, evidenced the success of their promotions. This implicit consumer consent to the payment of ›white wages for white workers‹ constituted the final stage of the labour movement's realization of their racist program and, at least on the field of sugar, succeeded in converting their ›racial‹ prestige into actual monetary manifestations.

The planters, on the other hand, who, based on economic interests, initially rejected the idea of doubly ›white‹ sugar, started to jump the bandwagon when they appropriated themselves of the ›consuming white sugar for white Australia‹ campaign in order to justify governmental support and consumer-paid taxes for the preservation of the Queensland sugar industry. In the newspaper campaigns of the nineteen twenties and thirties, they made themselves out to be the agents of the governmental ›bio-power‹ which conditioned both the individual as well as the population to behaviour beneficial to their ›race‹: the sugar capitalists joined their forces in order to employ ›white‹ workers and thus enabled ›white‹ settlement in the north.[53]

Culture in the most proper sense – i.e. the cultivation of the soil, in this case the sugar cane fields worked by ›white‹ labourers – was the (cane-ified) expression of a prolonged ideological process which again and again put sugar consumption at the centre of attention. The Australian consumers well-nigh demonstratively increased their sugar consumption when, as a means of national support, they had to pay for their ›whiteness mania‹ instead of reducing it in the light of the allegedly overpriced sugar. It was only within this cultural framework that the ›white‹ sugar workers were finally able to successfully fight for the improvement of their financial and working conditions and in the process could count on the understanding and broad support by other unionists as well as members of the public, who willingly granted them participation in ›white Australia's‹ allegedly comparably higher standard of life.

Consuming ›whiteness‹ in the form of sugar eventually became the day-to-day producing and reproducing of ›white Australia‹. This latter is a process so trivial and elementary that it permeated the whole culture. Invasion novels and theatrical pieces told stories of hostile takeovers and warned of the ›empty North‹. Songs and the anthem sung the original inhabitants out of history and the invaders into purportedly rightful posses-

---

[53]   See Michel Foucault: The Will to Knowledge, pp. 140 ff. Australian bio-power facilitated the disciplining of the individual (in terms of miscegenation) and the general populating (regarding the thinly settled ›empty North‹) via policing of sexuality, law-making, medical debates about tropical fitness and tactics of increasing ›white‹ employment.

sion of the soil and its treasures. Taking a look into the daily newspapers not only provided the readers with information on the politics of the day or gave them occasion to join in on the debate in letters to the editor. The newspaper campaigns initiated by the sugar industry allowed them to imagine themselves as fulfilling their ›moral s‹ to Australia when sweetening their foods and beverages with the Queensland product. Later advertisements for national consumption in the context of a ›Great White Train‹ and ›Buy Australian-Made‹ campaigns fell into line with the reasoning drawn upon by the sugar industry: fostering local employment increases ›white‹ population and strengthening local industries enhances Australia's economic independence.

A means for class-barriers-bridging racist societalization presented the colonial exhibitions and world's fairs which came into fashion in the second half of the nineteenth century. It was only with »this shift from scientific racism to commodity racism« that the elitist notions of difference and equality that constituted ›races‹ became approachable for the broad masses and ›racial‹ characteristics could become the class-spanning foundations of shared identity.[54]

As opposed to the previous chiefly biological racism, this form of racism turned away from the taxonomy of skin colours, phrenological brain classification, measurement of body parts, and its dissemination to academic audience and tied in with the nascent consumer culture of the latter nineteenth century. As the »transformation of the home itself into a kind of temple to consumption« progressed in the nineteenth century, mass-produced commodities surpassed home-made goods in importance.[55] Simultaneously, advertising transformed from »the self-definition of the one class«, the bourgeoisie, into a medium reaching all households, until the »experience of consumption had become all-encompassing, inseparable from the knowledge of the self«.[56] With advertising then becoming »the primary beneficiary of, and vehicle for, the commodity spectacle« and with its increasing graphical representation that was advantaged by changes in the financial situation of the newspapers, consumerist invocations and images of colonial products experienced a wider dissemination than ever.[57] The advertisement-based ›commodity racism‹, seconded by ›scientific racism‹ and embedded in jingoism, evolved in this societal climate

---

[54]   Anne McClintock: Imperial Leather, p. 34 (›shift‹).
[55]   Celia Lury: Consumer Culture, p. 125.
[56]   Thomas Richards: The Commodity Culture of Victorian England, p. 7.
[57]   Ibid., p. 5. For the repeal of taxes, in particular the removal of the advertising duty in Britain in 1855, see Mark Hampton: Visions of the Press in Britain 1850-1950, pp. 33 f.

during the latter half of the nineteenth century and eventually became a manifestation of racism which found entrance into the broad masses and was easily approachable for the lower and the working classes as well.[58]

›Traditional‹ commodity racism draws on the discrimination between workers (in the colonies) and consumers (in the metropolis) along a ›racial‹ line. Its racist potential unfolds commodity racism by applying the findings of ›race‹ science (inferiority of ›non-whites‹) and existing cultural stereotypes (›black‹ subservience and servitude, foreign exoticism) in a socio-economic framework. Being a ›white‹ consumer entailed being an accomplice in the exploitation of ›coloured‹ workers, being in a privileged position to partake in the expansion of the Empire and being a member of a society which had left the alleged ›primitivism‹ far behind. The spread of sugar consumption in the British society was exemplary for this possibility for the lower classes to benefit from the mass-produced colonial products; this fact was not least due to its controversial discussing during the attempts to abolish the slave trade and slavery well-known in all societal spheres.

The bringing together of consumerism and ›racial‹ differentiation under the perspective of ›white‹ superiority became part and parcel of the societal inclusion of formerly ostracized parts of the society: the working classes and the poor. The world's fairs and exhibitions were not only »creating an ideal taxonomy of things«,[59] but also contrasted the progress of the ›white race(s)‹ with the alleged backwardness or even regress of the natives in the respective colonies. Admission to these favourable comparisons of European technological and scientific knowledge was not only granted to the societal upper strata, but the part-taking of members of the working classes was moreover explicitly desired and fostered. The latter's absorption into a community of consumers promoted the consolidation of a society inside its national boundaries.

Of course, Australia was no stranger to commodity racism in the ›traditional‹ form. Newspaper advertisements for tea, coffee, cocoa, and other colonial products from overseas were promoted by drawing on stereotypical images of its cultivators and workers in the other colonies. It was taken for granted that goods were imported from British possessions like ›Ceylon‹, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Mauritius, Natal and New Guinea but also

---

[58] Cf. Anne McClintock: Imperial Leather; Anandi Ramamurthy: Imperial Persuaders; Celia Lury: Consumer Culture, pp. 108 ff. See also Wulf D. Hund, Michael Pickering, Anandi Ramamurthy (eds.): Colonial Advertising & Commodity Racism.

[59] Thomas Richards: The Commodity Culture of Victorian England, p. 32.

from the Philippine Islands, Java, China, Chile and Peru.[60] International and national colonial exhibition, on the other hand, displayed productional and technological achievements of the western and imperial world. The other side of colonialism was also lauded. Australian dioramas located the Aborigines in their ›natural‹ surroundings, providing information on the spectrum between physiognomical exhibits and empirical evidence of their daily ›habits‹. At the exhibitions abroad, indigenous Australians' »[s]kulls, weapons, and products were not only attractive ornaments; they were also useful currency for Australian commissioners« who traded them for European objects. National exhibitions provided evidence for the allegedly rightful inheritance the ›white‹ Australian came into.[61]

The discrimination between ›white‹ and ›coloured‹ stood in the centre of attention in Australia. The ›new Britain‹ in the antipodes was founded with common British colonialism and understood itself as ›white‹ on the inside of society. While the original population posed less of a problem (they were considered being on the brink of extinction), the geographical remoteness from Europe and the topographical closeness of its Asian neighbours facilitated a special situation in which late-nineteenth-century ›white Australia‹ became the location of an incessant anxiety of overt or clandestine hostile invasion. Furthermore, having as a negative role model the United States of America, the Australians were determined to solve their ›black labour‹ question by deporting the workers from the Pacific Islands. Like the plantation economy cultivating cotton and tobacco in the United States, Australia had a crop – sugar cane – which could have (and had) been cultivated by ›non-white‹ workers. Nevertheless, Australia decided to go the opposite way: imports from overseas – even from the countries employing ›black labour‹ – were generally tolerated if necessary, while the presence of ›non-whites‹ in the country was meant to be forestalled.

In the case of Queensland cane sugar, it is neither the exploitation of ›black labour‹ nor the actual advertising of sugar but rather its consumption and embeddedness in a broader ideology of ›white Australia‹ that hints at a connection to commodity racism. Firstly, Australian commodity racism did not fully evolve until the turn of the nineteenth century and was significantly influenced and fostered by the political and ideological framework of the ›white Australia policy‹. Secondly, it emerged at a time when ›white supremacy‹ was no longer as self-evident as it used to

---

[60]   Cf. Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia (1908), p. 500.
[61]   Cf. Peter Hoffenberg: An Empire on Display, pp. 148 ff., for the quotation, see p. 149.

be. Scientific deliberations like those by Charles H. Pearson and Lothrop Stoddard questioned the unchallenged survival of the ›whites‹ and warned of the proliferation of ›black‹ and ›yellow‹ people. Stoddard even declared Australia in need of special defence, as the »true bulwarks of the race« – along with North America – and the last keeper of the »race-heritage«.[62] Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War on the global political level and the triumphs of a ›non-white‹ sportsperson in a one-on-one fight seemed to substantiate the anxieties in practice and inflicted further harm on the ›white‹ self-perception.[63]

Even though, prima facie, Australian commodity racism appears to be nothing more than a reversion of its western counterpart, a closer inspection shows that it actually fits neatly into the inner logic of traditional commodity racism. The newspaper campaign installed by the sugar capitalists presented sugar as a product which – after having emancipated from the initial necessity of exploiting ›coloured labour‹ – enabled the preservation of ›white supremacy‹. Instead of employing stereotyped advertising characters, the promotion of the Queensland sugar industry was prevailingly based on nationalist and racist propaganda which evoked the vulnerability of the ›white continent‹ in the light of a ›rising tide of colour‹ close to the Australian shores. In this context, consuming ›white‹ sugar was not the ›devouring the other‹ of common commodity racism but rather a tonic for the ›white‹ Australian self. For the Australian consumer, the ›white people's burden‹ was not so much the civilizing of the ›others‹ but the exclusion of ›black‹, ›brown‹ and ›yellow labour‹ by the gender-spanning, class-bridging consumption of products and purchase of manufactured goods that were favourable to nation and ›race‹ and endorsed the ›white Australian‹ ideal.

However, simultaneously to the insistence on ›white‹ sugar and, later, Australian-made products to benefit the Australian nation in terms of ›race‹ and economy, colonial goods, like tea and coffee, were imported from the otherwise shunned ›black labour‹ countries. Though opposing voices were heard, the general community of Australian consumers adhered to the shared inner logic of ›traditional‹ and Australian commodity racism which endorsed ›white supremacy‹ in its respective exclusionist methods of consumption. The one drew on the exploitation of ›coloured

---

[62] Lothrop Stoddard: The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy, p. 225 f.
[63] For Tsushima, see Geoffrey Jukes: The Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905; David Wolff, Steven G. Marks, Bruce W. Menning, David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, John W. Steinberg, Yokote Shinki: The Russo-Japanese War in Global Perspective. For Jack Johnson, see Theresa Runstedtler: Jack Johnson, Rebel Sojourner; Randy Roberts: Papa Jack.

labour‹ – thus consenting to the ›racially‹ divided patterns of consumption which had emerged in Europe – and provided for a geographical as well as ›racial‹ demarcation of producers and users while consolidating the latter to an internally diverse but externally homogeneous, i.e. ›white‹, community. The other promoted ›white supremacy‹ at a time and place when it seemed at its most vulnerable: the proximity of Asian ›surplus population‹, which was purportedly finding its relief in the unpeopled vastness of the Australian north, necessitated the populating of the tropical parts of the country. This, of course, included the reasoning that ›non-white‹ workers were replaceable by Europeans, because the latter's capability to accomplish tasks would surmount the formers in any case.

While, therefore, the consumers by consuming Queensland sugar acknowledged the special situation of Australia, the consumption of tea, coffee, cocoa and other products maintained the validation of the Australians standing in the ranks of ›white‹ consumers within the British Empire. This consumption was motivated by the same driving power as it was in the western world: ›white‹ superiority. But whereas commodity racism in the ›traditional‹ sense – i.e. in the understanding of McClintock and others – was constituted by advertising employing racist stereotypes, the campaign for ›white‹ sugar in Australia overrode the ›distinctional behaviour‹ of individual producers and found its expression as political propaganda. This had initially been started by the labour movement and subsequently found expression in the advertisement campaigns by the association of sugar capitalists, who drew on the significance of the ›white‹ sugar industry for Australia. Ideologically, their justification of moral and financial support by the whole nation linked together the fears resulting from the geographical closeness and cultural remoteness of its neighbours with the status of ›whiteness‹ in their contemporary society.

Literature

Despite its dissemination in everyday life, its contested history, symbolical status and relevance, the subject of ›white sugar‹ has attracted little attention in the analysis of Australian conditions until now. Nonetheless, there are extensive studies for separate, associated areas. Many of them deal with the ›white Australia policy‹ but are generally confined to the consideration of the political organizational level.[64] Some address the cultural

---

[64]   See Sean Brawley: The White Peril; Jürgen Matthäus: Nationsbildung in Australien von den Anfängen weißer Besiedlung bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg; Gwenda Tavan: The Long,

history of the Australian nation.[65] Others concern themselves with the processes necessary to ›whiten‹ Australia and its subsequent implications.[66] Critical research has also been done on the tensions within the different population groups in Australia and under ›white‹ domination.[67]

Amongst the most impertinent works, ›History of the White Australia Policy to 1920‹ is the earliest publication on this subject. A valuable contemporary study, the work remains largely apologetic. It states the reasons for the adoption of the ›white Australia policy‹ in the »preservation of a British Australian nationality« for which »racial unity« was indispensable but whose reasons were based on cultural reasons: »the antiquity of Eastern civilisation and its dissimilarity to the Western«. Consequently, »[i]n the formation of their policy the leaders of the people were not actuated by any idea of the inferiority of the mentality or physique of the excluded people« but by their »dissimilarity«.[68] ›Creating a Nation‹ explores the gendered construction of Australia's foundation myth and the European women's »complicit[y] in an imperialist, civilising project that saw the near-destruction of Australia's indigenous peoples« and yielded »a unity, composed of people of different sexes, sexualities, races, ethnicities, class interests, experiences and desires«.[69] ›Nationsbildung in Australien von den Anfängen weißer Besiedlung bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg‹ uses a wealth of primary sources to identify the political processes which led to the foundation of the Commonwealth of Australia but concentrates its »analysis on the [hi]story of the victors« and leaves the »victims – Aborigines, Asian immigrants but also white outgroups« – and the cultural dimension of ›white Australia‹ largely underexposed.[70] ›Legacies of White Australia‹ follows the pre-history of the nation building through to its end in 1973 and is further interested in its effects on the recent history. It sees ›white

---

Slow Death of White Australia.

[65] See Raymond Evans, Clive R. Moore, Kay Saunders, Bryan Jamison: 1901; Patricia Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, Ann McGrath, Marian Quartly: Creating a Nation; Verity Burgmann, Jenny Lee: A Most Valuable Acquisition; John Rickard: Australia; Deryck M. Schreuder, Stuart Ward: Australia's Empire; Richard White: Inventing Australia.

[66] See Aileen Moreton-Robinson: Whitening Race; Ghassan Hage: White Nation; Charles A. Price: The Great White Walls Are Built; Elaine Thompson: Fair Enough.

[67] See Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders, Kathryn Cronin: Race Relations in Colonial Queensland; Andrew Markus: Australian Race Relations; id: Fear & Hatred; Tim Rowse: White Flour, White Power; Alexander T. Yarwood, Michael J. Knowling: Race Relations in Australia.

[68] Myra Willard: History of the White Australia Policy to 1920, pp. 189 (›preservation‹, ›unity‹), 190 (›dissimilarity‹), 191 (›formation‹).

[69] Patricia Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, Ann McGrath, Marian Quartly: Creating a Nation, p. 1 (›project‹). 2 (›unity‹).

[70] Jürgen Matthäus: Nationsbildung in Australien von den Anfängen weißer Besiedlung bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg, p. 10 (›victors‹, ›victims‹).

Australia‹ as the result of »racial policies that received near unanimous support throughout Australia in 1901«; this comprised the »peopling of the continent« as a point of issue between labour and capital and the »creation of a racially pure continent« focussed on ›whiteness‹ and exclusion.[71] In a similar vein, ›The long slow death of White Australia‹ begins with the Federation and investigates into the social and political processes during the timespan until its abolition, which nonetheless left a »legacy in terms of current attitudes towards immigration issues«. The legislative measures of ›white Australia‹ were motivated by the »desire of the Australians to build a strong and prosperous society founded upon the principles of racial and cultural homogeneity« which focused on »racial whiteness, ›Britishness‹, and ›Australianness‹«.[72] ›Creating White Australia‹ historicizes ›whiteness‹ and investigates into the understandings of it in the pre-history and wake of Australia's Federation, showing that while being »crucial to the constitution of the new Australian nation«, »whiteness was never, and indeed is not, a stable or monolithic concept«.[73] ›The White Australia Policy‹ is a revisionist work which declared most of the preceding studies »little short of bizarre« and attempted to demonstrate that the policy was the outcome of »economic and political reasons«. In the authors opinion, »Australian nationalism [...] was not based on race« but on »civic patriotism«; it was only »an intellectual elite [...] which was anti-imperialist, republican, socialist and unequivocally racist«.[74]

The fixation of the analysis on the ›white Australia policy‹ has rather fragmented the associated ›white Australia‹ culture. Nevertheless, there are a couple of studies which are concerned with partial aspects of the subject matter. One of the largest sections is dealing with fictive stories of hostile takeovers of the Australian continent emerging in the last decade of the nineteenth century. ›Anxious Nation‹ investigates into narratives of mainly Chinese invasion as a »part of [... a] much broader discourse on the relationship between national strength, military capacity and the patriotic spirit« which were influenced by the contemporary scientific racism and social tensions within the society.[75] ›The Yellow Peril‹ identifies the »three successive phases« of writing about invasions which comprise

---

[71]   Laksiri Jayasuriya, David Walker, Jan Gothard: Legacies of White Australia, pp. 1 (›racial‹), 3 (›peopling‹), 4 (›pure‹).

[72]   Gwenda Tavan: The Long Slow Death of White Australia, pp. 4 (›legacy‹), 11 (›desire‹), 13 (›whiteness‹ etc.).

[73]   Jane Carey, Claire McLisky: Creating White Australia, pp. ix (›crucial‹), xiii (›monolithic‹), xiii, xvii.

[74]   Keith Windschuttle: The White Australia Policy, pp. 3 (›bizarre‹), 8 (›reasons‹), 5 (›race‹, ›civic‹, ›elite‹).

[75]   David Walker: Anxious Nation, pp. 98 (›discourse‹), 105, 109, 111.

the initial immigration and the subsequent invasion by Chinese, followed
by the »Japanese invasion« and investigates into its alarmist purpose that
elevated ›racial‹ solidarity over class differences.[76] ›Writing the Colonial
Adventure‹ deals with the »paranoid, masculine texts« of invasion that
were published in the first decade after Federation, were brought about by
the »latent paradox in Australia's discursive location between Britain and
Asia«, influenced by the fear for Australian manliness, and interspersed
with gendered metaphors.[77] General studies of literary have focussed in
particular on the long last decade of the nineteenth century as the crucial
phase of nation building.[78] ›The 1890s‹ is concerned with the literary es-
tablishment of Australia as the »Young Country« torn between depres-
sion, the disappearance of rural romanticism, and the emergence of new
political and societal movements.[79] ›Turning the Century‹, like the previ-
ous study, loosely dates the crucial period to the years between 1885 and
1905 and collects snippets of literature and poems without paying much
attention to the racist nation building.[80] Nonetheless, ›bushman ideology‹,
the glorification of rural life with all its challenges and mateship, featured
largely in the literature of the late nineteenth century. Works like ›The
Banjo in the Bush‹ and ›City Bushman‹ investigated into the poets and cir-
culators of bush romanticism and their contribution to the formation of the
Australian identity.[81] Studies of the theatrical scene in terms of ›white Aus-
tralia‹ comprise investigations into blackface and minstrel culture shows,
inspired by British and Northern American theatres, found expression in
a local manifestation of class-spanning entertainment addressing societal
tensions and disseminating stereotypical representations of ›coloureds‹.[82]

The formation of the labour movement and the establishment of the
Australian working class in contradistinction to ›alien‹ labourers has been
more or less the focus of some critical studies.[83] Most notably are ›A New

---

[76]   Neville Meaney: The Yellow Peril, pp. 229 (›stages‹), 230, 237.
[77]   Robert Dixon: Writing the Colonial Adventure, pp. 135 (›texts‹), 153 (›paradox‹), 137,
       139, 149.
[78]   For general literature on colonial to contemporary Australia, see Nicholas Jose (ed.): The
       Literature of Australia; Geoffrey Dutton (ed.): The Literature of Australia; Peter Pierce
       (ed.): The Cambridge History of Australian Literature; Ken Goodwin, Alan Lawson: The
       Macmillan Anthology of Australian Literature.
[79]   Ken Stewart (ed.): The 1890s, pp. 6 (›Young‹), 7, 15.
[80]   Christopher Lee (ed.): Turning the Century.
[81]   For Andrew Barton Paterson, see Clement Semmler: The Banjo of the Bush; for Henry
       Lawson, see Christopher Lee: City Bushman.
[82]   Richard Waterhouse: From Minstrel Show to Vaudeville, pp. xiii, 38; see also id.: Min-
       strel Show and Vaudeville House; id.: The Minstrel Show and Australian Culture.
[83]   See John Faulkner, Stuart Macintyre: True Believers; Brian Fitzpatrick: A Short History
       of the Australian Labour Movement; Robin Gollan: Radical and Working Class Politics;

Britannia‹ and ›Who are our enemies?‹ which concentrate on the racist potential and the expression of class struggle through the exclusion and discriminations of those declared ›non-whites‹. The one finds that »the Labor Party was racist before it was socialist« and argued that »Australia as a frontier of white capitalism« caused both the Australian radicalism and nationalism.[84] The latter concentrates on the conflicts between the Australian working class and »groups defined *socially*‹ as ›others‹ that were based on »both economic and racial fears«; nonetheless, it sees »racism [... as] an integral part of the overall labour ideology« and identifies the »emphasis on the exclusion of non-European immigrants from the work-force« rather than their exploitation as »a distinctive feature of Australian labour«.[85] A relatively large number of researchers have dedicated their attention to the numerically largest group of sugar workers, the Pacific Islanders, and the dimensions of their employment in terms of colonialism, power distribution, (labour) economy and recruitment.[86] Fewer scholars have made any critical assessment of immigration stories in the lights of ›white Australia‹.[87]

The analysis of ›white Australia‹ as having a close connection to the labour movement, defence of the nation and mateship, largely left out the issue of women's social action and political contribution. Fortunately, the increasing differentiation of gender and feminist studies allowed for more detailed and considerate research and historical analysis. Studies like ›Women and the Bush‹ and ›Damned Whores and God's Police‹ follow the role of the woman in Australia from the pioneer women to the ›new women‹ of the twentieth century. While the former decodes the metaphoric relation of the masculine explorer and the feminized landscape and traces the construction and doing of Australian womanhood through the cultural and literary history, the latter is concerned with the dichotomy in the image of the Australian woman as rather criminal and corrupt during the convict

---

Raymond Markey: The Making of the Labour Party in New South Wales; Andrew Markus: Fear & Hatred.

[84] Humphrey McQueen: A New Britannia, pp. 53 (›Labor‹), 17 (›frontier‹).

[85] Ann Curthoys, Andrew Markus: Who are our Enemies, pp. xi (›groups‹), xiii (›fears‹), xv (›emphasis‹, ›distinctive‹).

[86] See Tracey Banivanua-Mar: Violence and Colonial Dialogue; Peter Corris: Passage, Port and Plantation; Edward W. Docker: The Blackbirders; Patricia Mercer: White Australia Defied; Clive R. Moore: Kanaka; Kay Saunders: Workers in Bondage.

[87] See Gianfranco Cresciani: The Italians in Australia; William A. Douglass: From Italy to Ingham; Herbert I. London: Non-White Immigration and the ›White Australia‹ Policy; Charles A. Price: Southern Europeans in Australia; Barry York: Empire and Race; Alexander T. Yarwood: Attitudes to Non-European Immigration.

times and incrementally having a position of morality and social guidance towards the nation building.[88]

There are comprehensive historiographies of the cane sugar industry in Queensland. Albeit, they are focussed mostly either on the agricultural and technological or on the political dimensions of the industry.[89] Other literature concentrates on the historical narratives of individual sugar districts without critically addressing the foreign labour involved or the demographic and organizational changes on occasion of the Australian Federation.[90] Contemporary investigations into the cane sugar industry are, of course, affected by the respective current (political) affairs. Literature on Australian cane sugar, at the times when ›white sugar‹ was a vital ingredient of ›white Australia‹, emphasizes the ability of the industry to maintain and promote the ideal of a ›white‹ nation and underemphasize the Pacific Islanders' and other contribution of non-Europeans to the establishment and success of the cane sugar industry.[91] Others only address the problem of foreign workers in the sugar industry only briefly and overemphasize its time limitation.[92]

In the literature devoted to the history of sugar and its consumption, Australia plays only a minor part, if at all, despite the fact the Australian consumers not only were and continue to be at the top of per capita sugar consumption but also claimed to have established the only ›all white‹ cane sugar industry world-wide.[93] The Australian body of literature on local politics of food and consumption addresses Australian cane and beet sugar only at the sidelines.[94]

All these monographs and anthologies contributed to the investigation into ›white sugar‹. However, complex investigations into the story and history of ›white sugar‹ which take into consideration the political as well as the

---

[88]   Cf. Kay Schaffer: Women and the Bush; Anne Summers: Damned Whores and God's Police.

[89]   See Peter Griggs: Global Industry, Local Innovation (cf. also my review of said book); Diana E. Shogren: The Politics and Administration of the Queensland sugar industry.

[90]   See John Kerr: Southern Sugar Saga; Kenneth W. Manning: In their own hands; Charles T. Wood: Sugar Country.

[91]   See Government Intelligence & Tourist Bureau: Queensland Sugar Industry; The Sugar Industry Organisations: The Australian Cane Sugar Industry.

[92]   See Arthur F. Bell: The Story of the Sugar Industry in Queensland; Hugh Anderson: Sugar.

[93]   See Elizabeth Abbott: Sugar; Marc Aronson, Marina Budhos: Sugar Changed the World; Peter Macinnis: Bittersweet; Sidney Mintz: Sweetness and Power; Sanjida O'Connell: Sugar; Hubert Olbrich: Zucker-Museum.

[94]   Richard Beckett: Convicted Tastes; Michael Symons: One Continuous Picnic; Keith T. H. Farrer: A Settlement Amply Supplied. The latter made up for his shortcoming by devoting a whole chapter to sugar in a subsequent publication: Keith T. H. Farrer: To Feed a Nation, pp. 59-64.

cultural historical and sociological dimensions are virtually non-existent. A historical reworking of the cultural, social and political dimensions of cane sugar in colonial and federated Australia has been, until now, a desideratum.

Subjects

Until the »retreat of sociologists into the present«,[95] the affiliation of sociology and history had gone unquestioned for a long time. The participants of the First German Sociologists' Day did not yet have at their disposal the term ›racism‹, but they would have been surprised if someone had treated a phenomenon – even one understood to be natural, like ›race‹ – with regard to the human society without historical perspectives.[96] The development of sociological racism analysis, on the other hand, makes it obvious that the historical dimensions of the topic did increasingly fade into the background, until two leading representatives of this field of research, John Solomos and Les Back, deplored »a lack of historical reflexivity about the historical background to the emergence of modern racism and a failure to come to terms with the transformations of racial ideologies and practices over time and space«.[97]

Shortly before, John Goldthorpe had vehemently requested sociologists to not jeopardize the advantaged of their science, which could generate ›evidence‹ in the face of a historical scholarship that only subsisted on ›relics‹. It was in particular the theorizing sociological attempts of high-ranking authors (like Barrington Moore, Immanuel Wallerstein, Theada Skocpol, Perry Anderson), whose deliberations were predominately based on historical secondary literature and who would deduce far-reaching theoretical conclusion from this, that were a thorn in his side. What he repeatedly ironically called ›grand historical sociology‹ did thus mean nothing else than »enjoy[ing] a delightful freedom to play ›pick-and-mix‹ in history's sweetshop«.[98]

---

[95] Norbert Elias: The Retreat of Sociologists into the Present.
[96] Characteristic for the time, the German sociologists at their founding congress gave the opportunity to a propagandist of ›racial hygiene‹ to deliver one of the keynote speeches on the subject of ›race‹ – cf. Alfred Ploetz: Die Begriffe Rasse und Gesellschaft und einige damit zusammenhängende Probleme. In the subsequent discussion the participants – except for Max Weber, who formulated a series of critical objections – overall received it favourably (see Wulf D. Hund: Rassismus (1999), esp. pp. 99 ff.).
[97] John Solomos, Les Back: Racism and Society, p. 57.
[98] John H. Goldthorpe: The Uses of History in Sociology, p. 225.

Disposing of the distinctive idiosyncrasy of this critique leaves us at least the instigation to not pursue historical sociology in defiance of the sources. In the case of my investigations, they do not consist of a manageable collection of ›relics‹ but an extensive, mixed lot of written and pictorial materials. These have not somehow haphazardly remained but constitute – especially with regard to the debates led in the contemporary newspaper – an almost entirely surviving, extremely tight collection of statements on the process of events, which as a rule have additionally been provided from differing ideological positions. Working on their analysis has rather reminded me of a sweatshop than make me feel like I landed in a sweetshop. Nevertheless, I regarded these efforts necessary because today's racism-critical researches, with some of them having far-reaching aspirations, do indeed emphasize that they could not be done without taking into account the historical development of their object of study, though in the following they not seldom content themselves with references to highly selected secondary literature or confine their research to a cursory engagement with few, chosen sources.

My historico-sociological study, on the other hand, besides taking up the existing body of secondary literature, places great value on contemporary sources of information. Archival material sheds light on the political decisions of the time and their legislative and bureaucratic implementations. The absence of a systematic evaluation of the image of some non-Europeans or of Europeans not deemed ›white‹ enough necessitates the return ad fontes in individual cases. The popular contemporary media, in turn, were not only multifarious but also steeped in ›whiteness‹. The topic of ›white Australia‹ was addressed in newspapers, magazines, wireless broadcasting, poems, musicals, theatrical pieces, songs, the national anthem, informational pamphlets, flyers, statistics, political debates, and monographs.

Besides the printed dailies, weeklies and magazines, a committed media for the preservation of ›whiteness‹ at the times when ›white superiority‹ threatened to wane were the invasion novels. These identified groups within the Australian society detrimental to the ›white Australia‹ cause – seducible ›white‹ women, allying capitalists, convinced imperialists, wait-and-see politicians, incorrigible anti-militarists. But they located the real foe outside of Australia's borders: Chinese and Japanese but initially also Russians, French and Germans, who were under suspicion to soon assert a claim to the uninhabited or thinly inhabited northern parts or even to clandestinely invade the country and commence a hostile takeover. The (fictive) way out of the predicted doom for ›white Australia‹ was seen in

the consolidation of the ›white race‹, i.e. in the overcoming of internal tensions and the closing of ranks against the common exterior enemy. The analyses of the novels locate them in a close nexus of population politics, public discourse, debates about defence, news and scientific findings regarding the survival of the ›whites‹, and anxieties about the ›yellow peril‹ and the ›empty North‹. The majority of the invasion novels written before the First World War were serialized in newspapers before they were published in book form.

»[T]he novel and the newspaper« of the ›imagined communities‹ »provided the technical means for ›re-presenting‹ the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation«.[99] As such they were the perfect dissemination tools for a shared ideal of a ›white‹ nation. In particular for a nation which had to define itself in contradistinction not only to the communities within itself (Aborigines, Chinese, Japanese, Pacific Islanders and other ›coloured‹ people) but also to all the nations surrounding it. The »newspaper as a cultural product« has inherent a »profound fictiveness« regarding the way it is composed.[100] They are not haphazard accumulations of random reports and messages. The »linkage« of its stories »is imagined« in the way that it serfs an understanding that goes beyond summative commentatorship, a meta-communication about what constitutes the very community the readers think themselves members of and what is at its outside.

»Newspapers were the source of local, metropolitan, interstate and world news« in Australia, which already in the eighteen nineties had »an exceptionally high newspaper consumption«.[101] Compared with the per-head figures of newspapers in Great Britain, Australia had threefold the number of papers per inhabitant, and the number of newspapers and magazines in 1892 in Australia almost reached six hundred. By that time, illiteracy was at its lowest and almost all of the male population was able to express themselves in writing.[102] Newspapers had become mass media by the end of the nineteenth century and were vital sources of information with high distribution rates. They reached almost every corner of the

99   Benedict Anderson: Imagined Communities, p. 25.
100   Ibid., p. 33.
101   John Arnold: Newspapers and Daily Reading, p. 255 – in 1882 »there was one paper per 6722 Australians compared with one paper per 18000 people in Great Britain«. For the problems that arise during the calculation of the circulation for the Australian press, see Henry Mayer: The Press in Australia, p. 11.
102   Cf. Henry Mayer: The Press in Australia, pp. 15, 23. See also Russel Ward: The Australian Legend, p. 210, who links the spread of ›bush culture‹ to the bushmen's ability to forward written records to public multipliers, like the ›Worker‹ or the ›Bulletin‹. For more information on Australian literacy, see Martin Lyons, Lucy Taksa: Australian Readers Remember.

British settlement in Australia, not least due to the high number of small-er newspapers in country towns. The discourse-analytical processing of them proves to be valuable, in particular because they gave their readers a chance to have their say and express their view on political and societal goings-on in, occasionally very spacious, letters to the editor‹. Although not every opinion was tolerated in the respective newspaper,[103] the broad distribution and multitude of newspapers from different states and context provide for a more balanced consideration of the currents of opinions.

The newspapers forked into several categories – some more labour-re-lated, others supporting free trade, almost all nationalist. William Lane, an advocate of the labour movement, founded both the ›Boomerang‹ and the Brisbane ›Worker‹; two newspapers which, like the Sydney-based ›Bulletin‹, strongly opposed the employment of ›non-white‹ workers and supported the implementation of the ›white Australia policy‹ from the perspective of the working class. In Adelaide (South Australia) two city newspapers rivalled against each other: the liberal ›Advertiser‹ advocating protectionism while being sceptical on the Federation and the conservative ›Register‹ favouring free-trade and explicitly supporting the formation of a Commonwealth.[104] Amongst the many smaller local newspapers Mel-bourne (Victoria) had the conservative ›Argus‹ and the liberal ›Age‹, and New South Wales the conservative ›Sydney Morning Herald‹. All of them were rather critical of a sugar industry employing European workers. It was only after the legislatively forced transformation to a ›white‹ sugar industry, that these papers sided with the workers in their claim for ›white‹ wages. Nonetheless, all of them supported finding the solution to the ›black labour‹ question in the deportation of the Pacific Islanders and advocated the notion of ›white Australia‹. In Queensland, the Brisbane ›Courier‹, though »mildly supportive« of the Federation movement,[105] differed from many of the smaller local and decisively from the workers' newspapers in their advocating of the continuation of the Islanders' employment. They were convinced that at the time of Federation a conversion to a European sugar industry would flounder on the absence of willing workers, that the employment of Pacific Islander was vital, and that protectionist measures would be to no avail until the workforce of the industry could change.[106]

---

[103] Cf. Henry Mayer: The Press in Australia, p. 73.
[104] Cf. Helen Irving: The Centenary Companion to Australian Federation, pp. 170 f.
[105] Cf. ibid., pp. 107 (›mildly‹), 117.
[106] ›A National Industry‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 05.06.1901 – »There are few white men, if any, who desire to be associated with coloured aliens, and there could not possibly be a reason for retaining them on any other ground than that their services at this period were indispensable«, »The cane-growers are as anxious as any other class for maintaining the

Most pertinent for the ›white sugar‹ campaign due to its geographical and social location was the ›Worker‹. First published in the year 1890 – the year after the founding of its financial backer, the Australian Labour Federation (an amalgamation of several Queensland unions) – the ›Worker‹ became the mouthpiece of the labour movement and later on the Labor Party.[107] It is a valuable source, not only due to the insights into the working class' perception of ›white Australia‹ and ›coloured‹ employment based on the textual reporting but even more so because of its comprehensive graphical representation of both the ›white‹ workers and their fight for ›white Australia‹ and against all kinds of enemies: capitalists, ›coloured‹ competition and other chimeras.

Racism did not only rely on written texts but was furthermore »a visual ideology based on stereotypes and images«.[108] From very early on, drawings were an important medium to convey academic findings of otherness. Scientific sketches of ›racial‹ features – like Petrus Camper's facial angles and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach's gallery of ›racialized‹ skulls[109] – provided schematic and easy to grasp access to the ›racial‹ hierarchy and paved the way for more elaborate drawings contributing to ›racial‹ taxonomy. Parallel to this, works of art were created depicting colonial situations and metropolitan dreams, putting into contrast ›blacks‹ and ›whites‹ and other Aborigines from all parts of the world.[110] Before the use of photography, artist depiction was the means by which new ›discoveries‹ were fixated and made catalogable.[111] But it was in particular the pictorial turn from linguistic narrations on ›racial otherness‹ to the putting into stereotypical images of the dehumanized, the ridiculed and the discriminated against that contributed to a speedy dissemination of a racist mindset. Graphical representation, similar to the processes of commodity racism, provided

purity of the Commonwealth populace and if opportunity presented itself to provide a reliable substitute for the Kanaka it would be welcomed by one and all«, and »[N]o duty however high, could have any effect if it be not possible to produce the sugar other than by Kanaka labour«.

[107] See James Bennett: Rats and Revolutionaries, p. 48.

[108] George L. Mosse: Die Geschichte des Rassismus in Europa, p. 9. For the history of racist pictorial representation, see Gustav Jahoda: Images of Savages.

[109] For the images, see i.a. George L. Mosse: Die Geschichte des Rassismus in Europa, p. 135 (Camper); Michael Kevak: Becoming Yellow, p. 63; Sabine Ritter: Natural Equality and Racial Systematics, p. 109.

[110] For the history of artworks, see, amongst others, the several volumes of David Bindman, Henry Louis, Jr. Gates: The Image of the Black in Western Art.

[111] See, for example, the drawings by Gaspard Duché de Vancy, who accompanied the expedition of Jean François de Galaup, Comte de La Pérouse, to Oceania, or Sydney Parkinson, who was the artist on James Cook's Endeavour voyage to New Zealand and Australia. For more information on anthropological illustrations, see Jan Altmann: Zeichnen als Beobachten, esp. pp. 44 ff.

for an easy, quickly graspable access to an iconography of racist discrimination which found lasting entrance into the societal archives of racist knowledge and secured interpretational sovereignty. The graphical disparagements of human beings thought inferior at the end of the nineteenth century in Australia built on this tradition of pictorial representation. Most Australian newspapers published political and socio-critical cartoons. With the progress from the expensive and time-consuming wood-engraving to stone lithography to photo-etching the production process of newspaper illustration not only became cheaper and more comfortable for the artists but also more precise and spontaneous, and the cartoons were thus able to comment on situations on a day-to-day basis.[112] These are here evaluated under discourse-analytical, iconographical and ideology-critical perspectives and contextualized with other contemporary images from the Australian societal archives of knowledge and stereotyping.[113]

The pictorial language of the political cartoons, which were overly present in the labourite newspapers, in particular in the ›Worker‹, catered to a dichotomous representation of the workers' struggle. Alarmist images, on the one side, drew a dire picture of the imminent dangers: the ›swamping‹ of the Australian by Asian intruders, the ›degeneration‹ of the Australian gene pool by miscegenation, the dissemination of disease and vice by allegedly culturally inferior immigrants, and the degradation of the ›white‹ labourers' working conditions through the competition by ›coloured‹ workers. On the other side stood the cartoons depicting the ›heroic‹ deeds of the ›white‹ workers and bushmen who fought against the allegedly unfair competition, simultaneously populated the ›empty North‹ and thus forestalled the overrunning of the thinly populated northern climes by the ›yellow hordes‹. The process of nation building and the implementation of the ›white Australia policy‹ was substantially affected and supported by the racist and nationalist propaganda on the cover of the ›Worker‹, the ›Bulletin‹, the ›Figaro‹ and other newspapers, the political value of which the editors were fully aware of.[114]

---

[112] For this development, see Marguerite Mahood: The Loaded Line, pp. 177 f.

[113] For an overview of historical cartoons in the Australian press, see Suzane Fabian: Mr. Punch Down Under; Jonathan King: Stop Laughing This is Serious; Marguerite Mahood: The Loaded Line; Patricia Rolfe: The Journalistic Javelin; Marian Quartly: Making Working-Class Heroes.

[114] These cartoons, like the extensive amount of primary sources that have been consulted, have to be contextualized in their historical, social and political context and located in the contemporary discourse. The need to reprint and critically assess this material in direct quote – in particular newspaper articles and political cartoons but also poems and songs – is largely implied by the place of finding: they are (still today) publicly accessible, or are being made so by those interested in spreading them, for the willing audience, whose uncritical hands are not always the good hands historical sources

The role of early photography in the private area but also soon after in higher-value publications, should not be underestimated. Even though it appeared to deliver a seemingly more realistic depiction of its subjects, undisguised social relations of dominance were frequently made apparent. The pictures on the cover constitute a temporal bridge between the early and the advanced days of sugar cane cultivation. They also forge a historical bridge between a system of indentured labour and of completely voluntary employment, a demographic bridge between a ›black‹ and a ›white‹ sugar industry, a social bridge between discriminated against ›blacks‹ and discriminated against ›whites‹, and a political bridge between a colony of immigrants and the Commonwealth of Australia. Visually, they are the pictures of a gang of Italian cane cutters at Innisfail in the nineteen twenties and a group of men and women from the Pacific Islands working in the cane field at Cairns in the eighteen nineties.[115]

The picture on the left portrays an Italian group of cane cutters. It is a gang of free labourers without overseers. The men are working in an industry which, at this time, was seen to be one with the ideal of ›white Australia‹. Though their employment in the sugar industry was still opposed by the Australian labour movement and trade unions who would rather the employees recruited British workers, they were legally accepted as ›white‹ workers in a ›white‹ industry, and benefitted from the job opportunities, wages and working conditions, won by the unions in the preceding industrial conflicts. In contrast to the other photo, all of the Italians are sitting and standing proudly.

The picture on the right shows a group of male and female Pacific Islanders, with a ›white‹ man in the background. While ›white‹ women were considered endangered by tropical climate until well into the twentieth century, were shielded from hard labour outside, and the number of Eu-

---

should be in. That this does not necessarily take place in the ›nationalist‹ corners of the internet – like the reproduction of several cartoons of the turn of the century in online forums (for more disinformation, see for example http://www.whitenewsnow.com/australian-news-white-australia/15489-white-australia-policy.html) – but on rather ›neutral‹ websites, even further necessitates a critical and historicizing treatment of the material. Consider, for example, the open access online version of Henry Lawson's ›The Song of Australia‹ (see subchapter 5.1 ›Till He Landed On Our Shore‹), which is being commented on with favour by its readers. Not one of them takes any offence at Lawson's history-falsifying assertion, that »no fields of conquest grew red at [Australia's] birth« – this statement not only outright denied the violence against the indigenous people but also dispersed them altogether from Lawson's story of Australia's origin (see ›The Song of Australia‹ at http://allpoetry.com/poem/8446493-The_Song_of_Australia-by-Henry_Lawson).

[115] Pacific Islanders, Hambledon Plantation near Cairns, 1890 (John Oxley Library) – reprinted i.a. in Michael Berry: Refined White, p. 22; Italian canecutters at Innisfail, 1923 (John Oxley Library).

ropean women employed in the cane sugar industry remained low, in the case of women from the Pacific Island (or of the original Australian population), ›race‹ overwrote gender, and there were no hesitations to maintain, that they were capable of the exhausting, and physically demanding, work in the cane fields. The ›white‹ man acts as an overseer. He is sits on a horse and thus above the group of workers. His presence marks labour in the cane fields as, at least partially, unfree labour in need of supervision.

These two pictures are separated by approximately three decades of political and social interference in the sugar industry. From a crop, traditionally associated with unfree and ›non-white‹ labour, sugar cane had been ideologically turned into an Australian success story. Initially cultivated and harvested by workers from the Pacific Islands, cane sugar production in Queensland became the only industry worldwide whose workforce was constituted exclusively by European labourers. The labour movement's agitation and the ›white‹ workers' class struggle led to the transition of the sugar industry from ›black‹ to ›white‹, in terms of demography but also to a reformation of labour policies. All of this was, of course, not an extemporaneous event but was located in a broader process of nation building. The striving for ›white Australia‹ at the end of the nineteenth century both necessitated, as well as enabled, legislative, social and political processes, which not only allowed for this transition but also promoted support for the sugar industry from virtually all Australians.

The composition of this study is framed by the anniversaries of two decisive events in the Queensland sugar industry. The year 2011 saw the centenary of the ›Sugar Strike‹ which depicted a crucial victory of the labour movement. Not only was it one of the most extensive industrial actions of the early twentieth century. It was also a significant moral as well as labour-law related triumph of the sugar workers over their employers.[116] The year 2013 is the sesquicentennial of the South Sea Islanders coming to Australia. It marks not only the successful establishment of commercial cane sugar processing but also marks the beginning of the institutionalized and now officially recognized migration of South Sea Islander – or Pacific Islanders as they were called – to the sugar districts of Queensland.

Like the sugar cane juice in the production line of the vacuum pans undergoes several stages of crystallization, my discussion of ›whiteness‹ in the Australian context is looked at from several perspectives at different

---

[116] See Kim Honan: Centenary of 1911 sugar strike (http://www.abc.net.au/rural/content/2011/s3292749.htm); Natalie Muller: Centenary of Australia's biggest sugar strike (http://www.australiangeographic.com.au/journal/centenary-of-australias-biggest-sugar-industry-stike.htm); Red Soil, Raw Sugar (http://www.creativeregions.com.au/index.aspx?page=125).

stages. It is not a mere historical study about sugar or about the ›evolution‹ of ›white Australia‹ but covers several dimensions. This necessitates a certain amount of overlapping of subjects, fresh grasps of historiographical and topological elements under modified perspectives, and revisitations of showplaces that might have already been examined under a different question. As a consequence – though the inner logic of the work at large follows a timeline from the first occurrences of sugar cane to the recent past – the consideration of issues in detail is accomplished as an analytical portrayal which is also mindful of greater historical contexts, preconditions and impacts.

As this is not a comprehensive history of Australia and sugar between 1788 and the present, it is not a purely historiographical study, and it does not include every historic detail on the cultivation of sugar cane, the production of sugar, or a minute description of all the cultural, social and political events that took place in Australia from the late Pleistocene to the present. Nor is it a purely sociological piece of work since its method of operating and the wealth of primary source material are historically compiled.

It is to be understood as analysing the dialectical processes connected to sugar cane and cane sugar that lead to and supported the ›white Australia policy‹. As a called-for contribution to studies of the »historical formations and [...] manifestations«[117] of ›whiteness‹, it attempts to follow the construction of ›whiteness‹ and racism as a social relation along the history of sugar production and consumption way back until its firm establishment in the (allegedly) globally unique European-worked cane sugar industry. Its investigation period spans from times before Australia was heard of in Europe and the ›ability‹ of sugar to establish a community based on its consumption was still far away via periods of anxiety when ›white Australia's‹ fear of hostile takeover peaked to the days when consumer racism and ›white‹ consumption offered a way to express feelings of nationalism and ›race‹ consciousness.

Structure

With the structure of the study roughly following a timeline from the inception of sugar cane cultivation to the contribution of (cane) sugar to the Australian consumer culture in the nineteen thirties, the story of sugar and ›white Australia‹ divides into five main chapters.

---

[117]   Jane Carey, Claire McLisky: Creating White Australia, p. xii.

Around the World in Ten Thousand Years travelled sugar cane before it arrived in Australia. When sugar cane arrived in the new British settlement in New South Wales, it had accomplished a journey around the globe – from Melanesia via Europe to Africa and back to Oceania. In the course of this circumnavigation of the world, sugar had been socially, economically and politically charged. The connection between slavery and sugar cane cultivation – which had been forged in the early stages of European sugar cane cultivation in the Mediterranean and subsequently fortified on the Atlantic islands – unfolded its full potential when it was taken to American soil and combined with slaves brought from Africa. Here the connection between sugar cane as plantation crop and unfree, ›non-white labour‹ as a workforce was consistently intertwined and became self-evident.

In terms of use and consumption, cane sugar started as an ›exotic‹ rarity, served medicinal purposes and decorated as a luxurious accompaniment the courtly tables. With the increase in production, the desire for sweetness became the perfect vehicle for early consumerism. Swiftly, sugar became a desideratum even for the poorer classes who at times scraped together their last money to purchase a humble amount. However, it was only with its mass production in the sugar islands of the Caribbean that refined sugar became accessible to all strata of the British society at a lower price; until eventually it was a necessary commodity for everyone. Cane sugar was an energy-provider for hard workers in the factories and consoled its consumers for economic and other shortcomings. As a social binding agent, sugar had identity-establishing effects and enabled its users to see themselves as belonging to a community of consumers in contradistinction to its producers in the British sugar islands. It was this potential to racistly[118] discriminate through consumption against the ›black‹ cultivators of the raw sugar in the colonies that enabled this sweetener to develop its unifying and equalizing potential. This was further facilitated by the emergence of ›commodity racism‹ which with its advertising, world's fairs and colonial exhibitions contributed to an atmosphere of ›white superiority‹ in terms of progress and technology, power of order and prerogative of interpretation, and the privilege to exploit the ›non-white‹ workers in the colonies.

The heightening of consumption coincided with cane sugar playing an important role in the political struggles of revolutions in European colonies. While in France the Haitian Revolution laid the foundation for the

---

118 I deploy the term ›racistly‹ as an adverb for racist action, which is urgently required as a means to emphasize its discriminatory potential. For more on the necessity to differentiate between ›racially‹ and ›racistly‹ see Wulf D. Hund: Negative Societalisation, p. 64 (fn. 20) and the examples in Stefanie Affeldt: A Paroxysm of Whiteness, p. 100 (fn. 1).

emergence of the beet sugar industry, in England it affected deliberation about the abolition of the slave trade and slavery. The notion of sugar as a slave-product led to one of the first consumer boycotts, on the occasion of which not only the economic prominence but also the political implication of cane sugar and its production were emphasized, and the necessity of sugar cane being a plantation crop and using unfree labour was challenged.

Simultaneously to the first wave of protest against the circumstances of sugar cane cultivation with slave labour, a fleet with convicts left England and set course for a new settlement on the Australian continent. Not without stocking sugar cane at the Cape of Good Hope first, though. Despite occasional shortages, the consumption of cane sugar spread fast through the emerging society in New South Wales, and soon the British-Australians were amongst the top per capita consumers of cane sugar. Attempts to establish commercial sugar cane cultivation in Australia initially foundered, but once settlement reached the tropics, setts were successfully planted. Remained the issue of a workforce for the emerging industry: with the transportation of convicts abolished, the search for a source of suitable sugar workers was turned to the outside of Australia. The class-based issue of employment thus found its solution in the ›racial‹ definition of the traditional sugar workers.

The Colours of Sugar in nineteenth-century Australia were determined by origins of its cane field workers. Even though the sugar industry was planned as a ›white‹ industry since its establishment, the lack of workers necessitated other solutions. ›Whiteness‹ loomed large at the heyday of the racist foundation of the Australian nation, but its roots lay in the very beginning of the British settlement. Starting as a silent background sound and growing into a thundering roar when the colonies federated to form the Commonwealth of Australia, ›whiteness‹ as a background ›noise‹ was the accompaniment of the British possession taking and populating of the continent. The social equivalent to the acoustic phenomenon masked all differences of gender, class and, to a certain extent, even nationality under the cover of an overwhelming ›racial‹ exclusiveness that enabled Australians with British and European roots to consider themselves ›defenders‹ of the ›white‹ bastion in the southern seas, desperately needed due to Australia being surrounded and interspersed by people who deviated from the cultural and ›racial‹ ›norm‹. Before this backdrop of all-compassing ›whiteness‹, as well as the potential for racist discrimination and stereotyping resulting from it, three ›non-white‹ groups of people were peculiarly entangled with the early stages and the blossoming of Queensland's sugar industry.

The indigenous inhabitants of Australia were manifoldly affected by the emergence of commercial sugar cane cultivation. Dispossessed by a European legal fiction, the Aborigines were banished from their land in favour of British settlement and ›superior‹ soil management. Initially, their construction as ›racial‹ others to all newcomers served as a counterpoise to the social disunity of the British invaders. Over time the spreading of ›white‹ settlement, in combination with their strategies of land-taking by genocidal massacres and the occupation of natural resources, precipitated the decline of the original inhabitants. Resorting to the outskirts of the newly founded towns, the Aborigines were deprived of their traditional food sources and water resources. Largely excluded from equitable or any payment at all, details about the contribution of Aboriginal workers to British industries are only gradually freed from the veils of ›white‹ history writing. They were, at many times successfully, employed by the growers and millers as ›cheap‹ labourers in the local cane sugar production until a more promising workforce was introduced.

The Pacific Islanders tied in nicely with the traditional perception of sugar workers as being both ›black‹ and ›cheap‹. They came to be the main workforce of the sugar industry from its emergence in the eighteen sixties to their deportation in the early twentieth century. The Islanders' initial arrival was accompanied by allegations of slavery and the introduction of slave-trade to Australian colonies. This was a continuing suspicion which over the time of the introduction of Pacific Islanders was never lost. Plans for the abolition of the Islanders' migration to Queensland were thwarted in the eighteen nineties when the sugar industry suffered from the world market's price fall and the lack of an alternative labour source. The consequent reconstruction of the sugar industry brought about the breaking up of plantations into small farms and proved to be a useful contribution to the subsequent ›whitening‹ of the Queensland sugar industry. Their location in the lowermost strata of the work hierarchy acted to the benefit of European, chiefly British, labourers who were then employed in high(er)-skilled and less physically demanding positions like overseers and mill workers. This substratification, on the other hand, conflicted with the ideal of an equitable, ›racially‹ homogeneous society in Australia on its way to Federation. The eventual deportation of the Pacific Islanders was one stepping stone in the completion of ›racist‹ nation building.

The Chinese and Japanese were affected by the other. They were employed as additional workforce in times of shortages but also accomplished to make a name for themselves as successful business people and sugar farmers. In contrast to the Pacific Islanders – who at all times re-

mained manageable with respect to their size of population in Queensland – settlers from Asia were under the constant suspicion of ›swamping‹ the Australian continent by their alleged numerical superiority. Perceived as groups of people who were less demanding in their living and working conditions, the Chinese had been considered ›unfair‹ competition since their migration to the goldfield in the eighteen fifties. On the occasion of the intensifying ambitions to keep Australia as an exclusively ›white‹ refuge in the southern hemisphere, regulations on the immigration of ›non-whites‹ intensified and peaked in legislation restricting the influx of ›undesired‹, in the majority non-Europeans, to Australia. Hidden behind a smokescreen of ›white‹ workers' economic empowerment and social equity, it was with the help of the new Labor Party that the Australian nation was successfully founded on a ›racially‹ exclusive foundation which comprised both social and biological aspects.

Bleaching Sugar for ›White Australia‹ begins with an analysis of the malleableness of ›whiteness‹ with regard to the Queensland sugar industry. With a ›white noise‹ being the background sound which came to overlay all differences in the ›white‹ society at the time of Federation, the interferences in this harmony were the discords sparked in the occasion when ›whiteness‹ and Europeanness were considered to be incongruent and distinction by ›race‹ seemed increasingly insufficient. This was the case with southern Europeans, in particular the Italians and Maltese, who found entrance to the sugar industry in larger numbers after the repatriation of the Pacific Islanders. Legally accepted as ›whites‹ and constituting the largest group of immigrants from southern Europe, the Italians were met with opposition from the labour movement and the unions who pressed the employers to preferably consider British labourers for recruitment. Their division into two ›racially‹ differing groups enabled the distinction of Italians into ›undesired‹, biologically threatening and ›less desired‹, economically competing immigrants. The Maltese, on the other hand, exemplified that being British-born was not per se a reason to be accepted into the ›white Australian‹ society but always allowed for the denial of solidarity based on interpretations of ›race‹. Both discriminated against as ›dagoes‹, they were confronted with allegations of having a sub-standard demand regarding conditions of work and life and thus contributed to the exploitation of the ›white Australian‹ working class by the employers and capitalists. It was only when the focus was shifted to the geographical remoteness of the continent and the supposed threats to ›white Australia‹ through possible Asian invasions, that southern Europeans were included into plans to populate, and thus occupy, the tropical parts of northern Australia.

Initially, it was not the British-Australian labourers who answered the call for labour in the sugar industry. Based on the historical emergence of the Australian working class in contradistinction to ›alien‹ diggers on the goldfields of southern Australia, the connection of sugar cane cultivation with ›non-white‹ and ›unfree‹ labour in tropical climes had detrimental effects on (large-scale) recruitment of European workers. It seemed indispensable to free the cane fields of ›non-white‹ labourers in order to incite the British and European workers to enlist. It became obvious, that being employed in the cane fields would result in being socially denigrated as ›black‹ or even worse as ›nigger‹. Fostered European immigration for the sugar industry remained almost unanswered. Prophecies of doom foretold the demise of the Queensland sugar industry sure to ensue after the employment of Pacific Islanders was prohibited.

Only after a decades-long struggle against the employers of the sugar industry and the political proponents of ›coloured labour‹, the labour movement finally scored a victory in the context of legislation regulating the Federation. On the occasion of an economically but even more racistly, motivated formation of ›white Australia‹, the former sugar workers were banished. In the following, the repatriation of the Pacific Islanders functioned as the necessary entering wedge to a ›white‹ sugar industry relying solely on European workers.

The approach of Federation saw the increase of heated debates about which actually was the real ›white man's industry‹: cane sugar or beet sugar. The former was firmly established in Queensland while the latter was still in a precarious stage of development. Unlike the latter, however, sugar cane cultivation still bore the stigma of slavery, as the beet proponents argued. The argument between cane and beet closely followed the debate about local beet sugar versus colonial cane sugar in early-nineteenth-century Europe. Like in the mother country and its neighbours, this ›sugar war‹ was underhandedly also annotated with perspectives of ›race‹, class and gender. The proponents of beet sugar emphasized its ›racial‹ homogeneity – since planters and workers were exclusively ›white‹ Europeans – and the imponderabilities of the cane sugar's close connections to slavery. What they lauded as gender-neutral employment, opponents of the beet sugar industry declared to be an exploitation of women and children as agricultural labourers. Besides the confrontation of cane and beet, the process of Federation and its abolition of intercolonial tariffs endangered another ›white‹ sugar industry: that in New South Wales. From the start, this industry had been an industry run and borne by Europeans, and it continued to understand itself as this. Judged by its output, it was

by far inferior to its Queensland equivalent, but ideologically it was certainly impossible to sacrifice a sugar industry that had a ›white‹ tradition. This urge to maintain the southern cane cultivation exerted no insignificant pressure on the decisions to ›whiten‹ the Queensland sugar industry in order to keep both industries competitive. The Queensland planters were thus confronted with the prospect of losing their ›cheap and reliable‹ labourers and having to replace them with ›white‹ and selective workers. If before ›whiteness‹ and ›race‹ had overlaid class issues, the release of jobs in the cane fields for future European workers entailed potential for fiercer conflicts between employers and employees.

Towards Federation, at one point the unwillingness of the northern-most sugar growers to give up what they cherished as ›cheap coloured labour‹ almost caused (North) Queensland to lose its admission to the Commonwealth of Australia. At the same time, the colony of Queensland in dispute with its neighbouring colonies was all of a sudden the protagonist in the protection of the Australian continent against supposed actions of incursion by other European powers in the South Seas. The occupation of islands around New Guinea and the New Hebrides caused the political decision to annex parts of New Guinea for the British Empire. Plans to put Australian Papua New Guinea to use as a new Australian colony not only comprised the cultivation of tropical and useful crops. They were also exploited by recruiters on behalf of the sugar planters who tried to find new and less regulated sources of labour. Resulting in a near-revival of slavery and abduction – which had already been ousted in the case of recruitment on the westerly Pacific Islands – engagement of Papuans found a quick end. Nonetheless, the anxiety to occupy part of the islands lying north of Queensland, in order to keep them from German influence, shed an interesting light on the self-assertion of the Australian nation with regard to future invasion anxieties.

The ›Queensland Separation Movement‹ at the end of the nineteenth century pressed for a decision to maintain the independence from the other colonies' pressure instead of doing away with non-European labour in favour of ›white Australia‹. Initially, it was predominantly economic and political decisions that fostered the desire to subdivide the large colony of Queensland, but, facing the presumed collapse of their sugar industry in the event that the employment of Pacific Islanders were abolished with the advent of the Federation, the sugar planters soon weighed in with plans of separation. ›Black labour‹ in the sugar industry was promptly identified as the factor which kept Queensland or parts thereof from joining the Australian Commonwealth. Eventually, though the separation movement

understood itself as a cross-class alliance, a narrow majority constituted
to a significant extent by workers' votes decided against separation and in
favour of Federation.

Advance Australia Fair is the result of the process of national forma-
tion based on interpretation and construction of past history. Narrations of
fictional, historical or shared experiences were written into and conserved
in the collective memory as poems, songs, theatrical pieces, musicals, and
movies. In these emanations of historically justified ›whiteness‹, the con-
tinent was incorporated into ›white‹ or British possession. It was in par-
ticular the national anthem ›Advance Australia Fair‹, that consolidated the
›discovery‹ and occupation of Australia by Cook and his ancestors to the
pertinent history of all Australia and all Australians. The anthem in its ›ra-
cialized‹, gendered and classified form emphasized the contribution of one
population group – ›white‹ men – while singing out of history the others
– women and Aborigines – and even the pre-›white‹-settlement past itself,
and declared it to have been destined for ›white‹ possessors since ›time
immemorial‹. This calls to question the ›fairness‹, referred to not only in
the anthem but also in other contemporary printed material, and opens into
the anxiety of ›white Australia‹ being overrun by ›undesired‹ immigrants.

This hostile takeover was thought to take place via the ›empty North‹.
A northern clime, or rather almost all of northern Australia, remained
thinly, if at all, populated. This was owed, on the one hand, to the myths
of ›white‹ unfitness for the tropics, on the other to inadequate population
policies. In the spirit of the ›yellow peril‹, the geographical remoteness
from Europe was combined with the closeness to the allegedly overpopu-
lated Asian neighbour countries and the Australian demographic structure,
which was seen as having already been ›infiltrated‹ by a superabundance
of immigrants from China and Japan. The invasion novels were then the
literary continuation of the deficiencies in northern population density.
They took the talk on the street, political discourse and newspaper reports,
combined them with the scientific findings of the day, and constructed dys-
topian perspectives on what Australia would look like when successfully
invaded by numerically superior ›Asian hordes‹.

It was in the light of a faltering ›white supremacy‹ at the end of the
nineteenth century, that in Australia, as well as in other European coun-
tries, fictions of foreign intrusion came into vogue. In the Australian case,
these fictionalizations of a dire future under ›alien‹, mostly Asian, over-
lords had a particular appeal. Some of the most renowned statisticians and
authors on the waning of ›white superiority‹ saw in the southern-most (in-
habited) continent the last outpost of the ›white race‹ but also the probable

location of the ›race battle‹ between ›coloured‹ and ›white‹, and urged for eugenic policies of settlement. The novels, however, were more than tocsins to Australians warning them of a pending invasion. They identified the enemies or hindrances to ›white Australia‹ within the society in terms of gender, class, nation and ›race‹: ›white‹ women who succumbed to the luring of Chinese men, ›race‹-betraying capitalists who valued profits over ›racial‹ homogeneity and a ›white‹ working class by employing ›coloured‹ workers, imperialists and nationalists conflicting over the question of separation from the mother country Britain and its policies, and lastly the Chinese and Japanese within the society who were depicted as economic, social and biological threats. The generalized subtext of the narrations was the need for a consolidation of those who could or should legitimately call themselves Australian, i.e. the ›white‹ inhabitants, for a ›higher cause‹: the maintenance of ›white Australia‹. This meant that all social distinctions of class and gender and political differences were supposed to be shelved in favour of defence of shared ›whiteness‹ and, in a broader sense, ›race‹.

This valuing of ›whiteness‹ did, of course, not go unnoticed by the European workers in the sugar industry, who subsequently emphasized their acquired racist symbolic capital to their monetary advantage. After the labour movement and legislation had facilitated the clearance of jobs in favour of ›white‹ workers and increasing numbers did indeed partake in this new area of employment, the work and living conditions in the Queensland sugar industry became a matter of some debate. The conditions in the sugar industry might have been deemed suitable for the Pacific Islanders, the European labourers, however, were by no means satisfied with the current situation. ›White‹ workers deserve ›white‹ wages, they declared. But it was not only the economic improvement of earning the wages of ›whiteness‹ they sought: it was also the acknowledgment of their labour and their culture. The incitement for the transition to ›white labour‹ was to be financed by a system of taxing all sugar consumed in the Commonwealth and paying a rebate to those employing European labourers. This was also supposed to finance the additional labour costs. This system did not remain without criticism, which then came, inter alia, from the planters whom the bounties allegedly never reached.

The last chapter in the ›white‹ workers' fight for ›fair‹ conditions in the sugar industry was reached in 1911, when a state-wide sugar strike was organized. No longer did the sugar and mill workers tolerate to be treated like those who they replaced. They were sure about their ›whiteness‹ and knew about its value – now was the time to monetize it. At this, the working class had to assert their rights, on the one hand, in contradistinction to

the labour political remnants of the already repatriated Pacific Islanders, on the other against the still present Chinese and Japanese sugar workers and planters. Despite this being a class struggle, the workers traditionally consolidated by their ›racially‹ exclusionist union structures successfully affirmed their valorization by ostracizing other groups of workers. Italians, as well as other southern Europeans who were recruited as strike-breakers, were shunned by the unionized workers as ›backstabbers‹ and as weakening the cause of the workers' standpoint. The ›Sugar Strike‹ was not confined to the sugar cane fields but spread to other branches of industry as well. Financial and moral support came from other unions who refused to handle or transport ›black‹ sugar produced by the substitute workers. Eventually, the industrial action proved to be a success for the unionizing of workers and acknowledged both the end of the master-servant relationship in sugar cultivation and the European workers' rights pertaining to labour law.

Consuming ›White Australia‹ was the means by which the ›white‹ nation was maintained during the first half of the twentieth century. While Australia in its exhibition culture and advertising industry did display the ›traditional‹ commodity racism contemporaneously predominating in the mother country and the European neighbours, its nationalist consumption was not based on the exploitation but rather on the exclusion of ›coloured labour‹. Australians were no strangers to the benefits of the low-cost products which were produced by ›cheap‹ labour: they willingly drank coffee and cocoa but even more tea imported from overseas. In this context, they vented their ›white supremacy‹, which lay in the shared benefitting from mass-produced colonial goods manufactured by colonial workers. But under the conditions prevalent in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Australia – striving for ›whiteness‹ on all levels, understanding itself as the last bastion of the ›white race‹, and situating itself within a western atmosphere that foresaw the demise of ›white superiority‹ – the maintenance of the ›white‹ sugar industry was more than an economic advantage. It was the outcome of a long-term ideological conditioning of ›white Australia's‹ history. The invasion of the continent did not only urge the justification in terms of an allegedly rightful ›inheritance‹ from the, purportedly vanishing, original population, but it also necessitated its occupation by settlement. After its reconstruction with the help of the ›racist‹ legislation that provided for the deportation of the Pacific Islanders, sugar cane unfolded its capacity to put into practice the racial hygienist deliberations about the northern Australian population.

The abyss between Europeans and the natives of the respective colonies was ideologically substantiated on occasion of the exhibitions emerging in the latter half of the nineteenth century. ›Whiteness‹ was here advertised as symbolizing not only technological progress in contrast to alleged cultural backwardness of ›primitive races‹. The exhibitions and world's fairs also reinforced the notion of a community of (›white‹) consumers by granting admission to people formerly shunned as despised strata of society: the workers. At the exhibitions, Queensland cane sugar initially only functioned as a promise for possible future prosperity of Britain's southern-most colonies. With the establishment of a commercial sugar industry, Australian cane sugar compared favourably with sugars from other industries and evidenced technological progress and accumulation of knowledge, putting to use the soil of a previously (allegedly) uncultivated country. With the transition of the sugar industry to the globally sole cane sugar production employing virtually none but ›white‹ workers, its international representation testified to the Europeans' ability to conquer the tropics and their supposedly more efficient employment in cane cultivation and processing by the administration of superior and more modern technology.

Another (national) reason for the Queensland sugar industry's presence at exhibitions was the necessity for propaganda. The now ›white‹ industry was shielded from foreign competition by embargoes and duties on sugar imports. Subsidies for the industry were also under the suspicion of being financed by having the sugar consumers bearing the majority of the monetary burden. Allegations of fraud and voices demanding to lift the embargo, in order to allow less expensive sugar into the country and thereby also to benefit the sugar-processing industries, were supposed to be silenced by the sugar industry's campaign, which initiated the publishing of numerous class-spanning and ›white‹-loyalty-invoking ›advermation‹ (informational advertisements) in the nation-wide newspapers. Not only was the Queensland sugar industry's contribution to the economic wealth and autonomy of Australia indispensable. Drawing on anxieties about the ›empty North‹ and the ›yellow peril‹, sugar cane was also lauded as the catalyst of European settlement in the northern parts of Australia and consequentially fostered the complete occupation of the continent, forestalling Asian invasion and seizure.
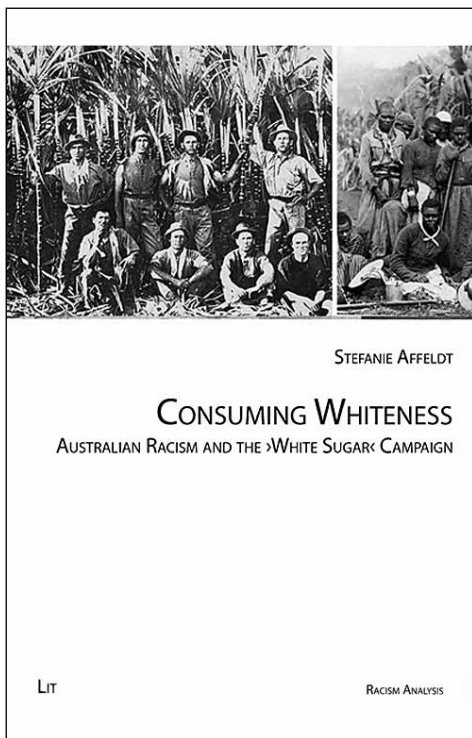
The Australian manifestation of commodity racism established on occasion of the transition from a ›black‹ sugar industry to a nominally ›white‹ and, finally, to a socially ›white‹ cane sugar industry was the role model for an even more consumer-focussed state-wide campaign, which

found nation-wide approval and spawned at least plans of emulation in all other Australian states: the ›Great White Train‹. It toured New South Wales as an exhibition on wheels, claiming to bring country and city closer together and propagating nationalist consumption. Ideologically closely connected to the ideal of ›white Australia‹, the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League not only desired to expand the ›racially‹-exclusive constrains of the Immigration Restriction Act to imported goods and manufactures. In the tradition of the integrative western exhibitions, the events organized around the ›Great White Train‹ were class-bridging and gender-spanning, inviting businesspeople as well as school children. Educative lectures, shopping weeks and practical demonstrations had but one message: buying ›Australian-made‹ supports the national economy, keeps the profit within the Australian society, fosters employment, and encourages further European immigration – thus strengthening Australia's independence and defence capacities.

In the same vein as the ›white sugar‹ campaigns, it was not only a means to strengthen the Australian economy but also a vindication of ›whiteness‹ as an allegedly superior characteristic. In the tradition of the imperial ›commodity racism‹ that made scientific findings about the ›others'‹ ›racial‹ inferiority accessible for the lower classes, the main vehicle for nationalism and racism in Australia at the time of peaking accumulation of national prestige and ›whiteness‹ in politics, culture and the vox populi was consumerism.

Some additional words on money and price quotes in the study: the Australian monetary system followed the British system, i.e.

    1 £ (pound) = 20 s (shilling) = 240 d (pence),
until these were converted into decimal currency in 1966 and

    1 £ (pound) = 2 AUD (Australian dollar).

At the end of the nineteenth century, there was a veritable compulsion towards ›whiteness‹. The federation of the Australian colonies into the Commonwealth of Australia was the endpoint of more than a hundred years of legitimation of British land taking and more than a decade of evocation of the ›white‹ community. The racism imported from Europe was specified and fortified by the alleged ›yellow peril‹, which was springing from the geographical location of the Australian continent. The ensuing ›white Australia policy‹ has so far largely been discussed with regard only to the political-ideological perspective. No account was taken of the central problem of racist societalization, that is the everyday production and reproduction of ›race‹ as a social relation (›doing race‹) which was supported by broad sections of the population.

In her comprehensive study of Australian racism and the ›white sugar‹ campaign, Stefanie Affeldt shows that the latter was only able to achieve success because it was embedded in a widespread ›white Australia culture‹ that found expression in all spheres of life. Literature, music, theatre, museums and the sciences contributed to the dissemination of racist stereotypes and the stabilization of ›white‹ identity.

In this context, the consumption of sugar became, quite literally, the consumption of ›whiteness‹: the colour of its crystals melted with the skin colour ascribed to its producers to the trope of doubly ›white‹ sugar. Its consumption was at the same time personal affirmation of the consumers' membership in the ›white race‹ and pledge to the ›white‹ nation; its purchase was supposedly a contribution to the ›racial‹ homogenization and defence of the country, and was meant to overall serve the preservation of ›white‹ supremacy.

»Consuming Whiteness is an important new contribution to the Australian history of race. [...] It exposes anew the tight hold that white racism maintained upon the entire history of Australian development and self-regard«, ›Cropping it sweet‹, review by Raymond Evans, History Australia, 12, 2015, 2.