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## Whitening Sugar

### Culinary Inclusion and Exclusion in Australia

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In 19th-century Britain, consumption of colonial goods, like coffee, tea, chocolate, and sugar, contributed decisively to the construction of the ›we‹ in contradistinction to ›racial Others‹. Appreciated by all spheres of society, sugar was a social ›binding agent‹ and a tangible manifestation of ›commodity racism‹ that was based on the ideological surplus drawn from the exploitation of ›sugar slaves‹.

This concept of ›inclusion by exclusion‹ was shipped to the farthest corners of the Empire. Ultimately, the Queensland sugar industry became the flagship of Australia's exclusionist policies, which found expression in a well-nigh paroxysm of ›whiteness‹. The establishment of a racially homogeneous nation was consolidated by the national self-perception and fortified by the alleged ›yellow peril‹.

The ›White Australia policy‹ was merely the political-ideological manifestation of a long-term development that included the everyday (re)production of ›race‹ and ›whiteness‹ as a social relation and found entrance into all societal levels and spheres of life. The exclusionist nation building was successfully achieved only because its ideology firmly embedded into a widespread ›White Australia‹ culture. It comprised literature, music, theatre, museums and the sciences, all of which contributed to the dissemination of racist stereotypes and the stabilization of ›white‹ identity against excluded ›coloured races‹.

Against this background, the consumption of sugar became, quite literally, a 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 a moral duty to the ›white‹ nation. Its purchase was considered a contribution to the ›racial‹ homogenization and defence of the country and was meant to overall serve the preservation of ›white supremacy‹ in a time of crisis.