



STEFANIE AFFELDT

CONSUMING WHITENESS

AUSTRALIAN RACISM AND THE ›WHITE SUGAR‹ CAMPAIGN

Stefanie Affeldt

Consuming Whiteness

RACISM ANALYSIS

edited by Wulf D. Hund

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Australian Racism
and the ›White Sugar‹ Campaign

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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 societal 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 against 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*; Toulia 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 colonies. Convicts, expelled by the British mother country and sentenced to work as unfree labourers on the other side of the world, experienced admission 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 massacres 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-convicts and emancipists were confronted with the insight that their being members of the ›white‹ invading community had little impact on their remuneration 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 realization that racism as an ideology was not sufficiently characterized; nonetheless, 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 accomplished 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, agricultural labour and employing Europeans in higher-paid jobs eventuated in the virtual establishment of a rigid ›colour line‹ dividing skilled and menial 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 position 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 concept 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 definition 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 conflicts 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 jointly.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 Federation and continued to be the basis of Australianness afterwards uncovers 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 discussion.³⁹ This includes the realization that ›gender‹, ›class‹, ›nation‹, and ›race‹ are not stationary entities. They are »not fixed and discrete categories« 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 counted amongst the ›whites‹ and who is excluded. Their geographical position 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-design-

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 Graham, 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.

mental 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 important 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 sugar 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 contradistinction 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 pos-

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.

session 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 duties‹ 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 twentieth 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 prevalingly 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 establishment of Australia as the »Young Country« torn between depression, the disappearance of rural romanticism, and the emergence of new political and societal movements.⁷⁹ ›Turning the Century‹, like the previous 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 circulators of bush romanticism and their contribution to the formation of the Australian identity.⁸¹ Studies of the theatrical scene in terms of ›white Australia‹ 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.: *Minstrel 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 workforce« 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 sweatshop. 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 serves 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 smaller 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-related, 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 Melbourne (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‹ skulls¹⁰⁹ – 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).

European 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 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-strike.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 racistically¹¹⁸ 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‹. Against 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 northernmost 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 formation 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 continent was incorporated into ›white‹ or British possession. It was in particular 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 ›racialized‹, 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 overpopulated 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 dystopian 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 countries, fictions of foreign intrusion came into vogue. In the Australian case, these fictionalizations of a dire future under ›alien‹, mostly Asian, overlords had a particular appeal. Some of the most renowned statisticians and authors on the waning of ›white superiority‹ saw in the southern-most (inhabited) 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 constraints 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).

2. Around the World in Ten Thousand Years

The Social Metamorphosis of Sugar

Sugar cane has not always been a plantation crop. A look at the history of sugar cultivation reveals the development of the relationship between sugar, consumption, forced labour, and freedom. This sets the stage for an investigation into ›white‹ sugar in Australia by working out the prerequisites and the progress of sugar cultivation, production and consumption before and during the very early stages of sugar cultivation in Australia. The consideration follows sugar cane on its millennia-long journey from its first origin in the region of Oceania around the globe. During this progress, which was predominantly a westward movement, the cultivation of sugar cane was increasingly combined with slave labour and plantation economy. At the same time, the uses of cane sugar transformed from a curiosity sold in apothecaries via a luxury good to a product of mass consumption. Far from being an incidental historic-cultural development, the story of sugar is an integral component of the world-historical transformation of colonization and capitalism.

Without slaves, no sugar was the almost imperative maxim of sugar cultivation until the early nineteenth century. Starting with the geographical expansion of sugar cane cultivation and processing, both in Europe and its colonies, social aspects of sugar production, i.e. the combination of sugar cane with unfree labour and plantation cultivation, become more pronounced. The Mediterranean sugar industry laid the foundation for the linkage of sugar and slavery and became the harbinger for plantation cultivation. Sugar cane also played an important role early on in colonialism. It accompanied Columbus on his sea voyage to America and was supposed to establish the basis for a plantation economy that from the beginning relied on forced labour. Raw sugar from America was a captured good in great demand by the English professional pirates and, by that, contributed

to the original accumulation. In the course of the latter, the critical mass of material wealth and liberated working force, which enabled the initial spark for modern capitalism, was accumulated.

An opiate of the people, sugar developed into a commodity and indispensable necessity of everyday life. Not only had sugar geographically travelled the world, but it had also undergone a social transformation from a luxury of the upper classes to a daily commodity of the middle classes and increasingly became a part of low-class consumption. Until, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, sugar was a necessary commodity in all parts of the English society. Industrialization benefited from its contribution to the factory workers' new diet: energizing tea sweetened with sugar. With the spread of sugar consumption to all strata of society in the nineteenth century, sugar also became the binding agent for a community of sugar consumers.

Stained with human blood was the raw sugar coming from the plantations of the West Indies in the understanding of those wanting to put an end to slave trade and slavery. Cane sugar was not only embedded in the economic and nutritional development but also in the political and social history of modernity. Sugar spiced up the great revolutions of modern times. Not only were Irish people transported to Barbadian sugar plantations and a fleet was sent to seize the sugar plantations of Jamaica during the English Revolution. On the eve of the American Revolution, the Tea Act and the Tea Party were preceded by the Sugar Act and the Sugar Party emphasizing the desire to become independent from the interferences of the English mother country. In the course of the French Revolution, sugar became a separating agent between the rhetoric of freedom and the exploitation interests: the slaves on the sugar plantations in Haiti brought about their own revolution and freed themselves of racist oppression. At the same time, the abolitionists in England organized a boycott which not only showed that the consumption of sugar had reached all strata of society but also demonstrated the instrumentalization of this consumption as a means of political protest and social change.

An article of real necessity became sugar in Australia at a comparatively early stage. The First Fleet brought to New South Wales, inter alia, convicts, sugar cane and cane sugar. While the convicts were supposed to cultivate sugar cane as part of their social rehabilitation, their partaking in the consumption of cane sugar was initially not envisaged. Nevertheless, once the irregularities in the colonial sugar supply were overcome, sugar became a product of such necessity that the Australian sugar consumers were continually ranked among the highest in per capita consumption.

2.1 ›Without Slaves, No Sugar‹: Sugar and Slavery

Sugar cane is believed to be one of the first crops ever domesticated by humans.¹ First planted more than eight thousand years before the Common Era on the island of New Guinea, *Saccharum officinarum* was taken along by the Melanesians on their journeys around the South Pacific, inter alia to New Caledonia, until a thousand years before the Common Era canes were transported to India and Indonesia.² Sugar cane was cultivated in the Far East, but the technique of extracting the juice was then unknown. It is believed that the first procession of sugar cane in a mill took place in India around 100 CE.³

Initially, the expansion of sugar cane closely followed the expansion of religious movements. While Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam brought sugar, its cultivation, production and use to southern Europe in the seventh and eighth century, Christianity subsequently fostered its dissemination in the southern European countries and to the Atlantic islands. As the biggest leap, sugar cane crossed the Atlantic and arrived in the ›New World‹ when Christopher Columbus made his second transatlantic journey to Hispaniola in 1493. Afterwards, it was planted for commercial purposes in several parts of America, until it arrived in Hawaii in 1835.⁴ This concluded the westward spreading of sugar cane (Fig. 1).⁵ Overall, cane sugar could be seen as one of the first products produced in a global joint venture. Melanesians transported the sugar cane to Eurasia, Indians invented the juice extraction by boiling, Persians improved the process, Arabs brought tech-

¹ Cf. Sidney W. Mintz: *Sweetness and Power*, p. xviii; Peter Macinnis: *Bittersweet*, p. 3. For the history of sugar, see also i.a. Elizabeth Abbott: *Sugar*; Marc Aronson, Marina Budhos: *Sugar Changed the World*; Jakob Baxa, Guntwin Bruhns: *Zucker im Leben der Völker*; Jock H. Galloway: *The Sugar Cane Industry*; Sanjida O'Connell: *Sugar*; Edmund O. von Lippmann: *Geschichte des Zucker*. The word ›sugar cane‹ was recorded for the first time in a poem by John Lydgate in the mid-fourteen twenties: the poet refers to one woman as a »blissful sugre-canne« – Christine F. Cooper-Rompato: *Sugar-cane*, p. 136. Throughout this present book, whenever ›sugar‹ is mentioned, it is meant to refer to sugar produced from sugar cane. Sugar extracted from beets will be called ›beet sugar‹.

² Cf. Peter Macinnis: *Bittersweet*, pp. xix, 19; Mohamed Ouerfelli: *Le sucre*, p. 16. Carl Linnaeus himself provided the taxation for sugar cane in 1753, which he explicitly located in India – cf. Caroli Linnæi: *Species Plantarum*, p. 54.

³ Cf. Sanjida O'Connell: *Sugar*, p. 11; Mohamed Ouerfelli: *Le sucre*, p. 16. Written evidence of sugar manufacturing was found in a Hindu religious document from 500 A.D. – Sidney W. Mintz: *Sweetness and Power*, p. 23.

⁴ Cf. Sanjida O'Connell: *Sugar*, pp. 21 (Columbus), 280 f. (Louisiana), 335 (Hawaii). Sugar cane seems to have been introduced in Hawaii long before via New Caledonia and the Easter Islands, because James Cook encountered cane there in 1779 – cf. Peter Macinnis: *Bittersweet*, pp. 9, 97.

⁵ Author's own creation according to the sources mentioned in the respective footnotes.

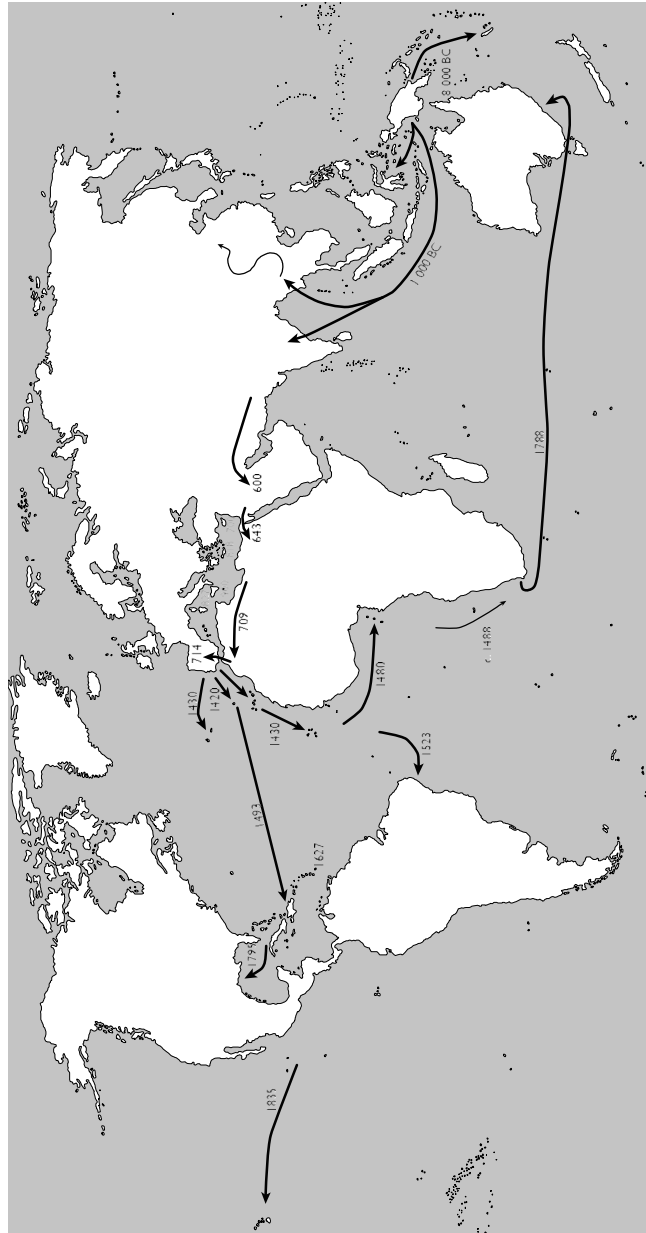


Fig. 1 – No innocent journey:
The voyage of sugar

niques of cane cultivation and irrigation to the Mediterranean, Chinese perfected the cane crushing technology, Europeans structured the labour management and took sugar cane cultivation to their new western colonies, Americans and Africans provided not only their working power but also furthered the knowledge about sugar production.

The first sugar news began to reach western Europe, when in 325 CE one of Alexander's generals talked about his encounter with sugar cane, a sweet »reed« that »brings forth honey without the help of bees«. ⁶ Traveling north from India, the Arabs brought sugar cane to Persia and further westwards to the Mediterranean. Starting in the mid-seventh century, the practice of sugar cane cultivation spread, together with the Islam, to Sicily and Cyprus and along the northern coast of Africa until, at the beginning of the eighth century, it reached Morocco. Sugar canes were planted in southern Spain about a decade later. The Arabs not only introduced the canes but also its cultivation and the technical knowledge of processing the sugar, so that during the ninth century sugar processing took place on almost all the Mediterranean shores. ⁷

In the early sugar production, cane sugar juice was extracted by milling the cane and then crushing the residue. Subsequently, the obtained juice was boiled and the impurities skimmed off from the reduction. Poured into earthenware cones, the syrup crystallized. Better qualities of sugar were made by dissolving in boiling water and recrystallizing the syrup. ⁸ The discrimination of sugar into several grades of value and the desire to improve the purity of the final product accompanied the evolvement of sugar production and even acted as its catalyst. When Persian scholars were seeking better means to refine sugar, it was not only a quest for a chemically purer sugar. A concomitant of this graduation was, of course, the manifestation of difference in the prices of sugar. With this the ambition was created to be able to afford sugar of the highest quality which, in turn, was decided based on its whiteness. Consequently, sugar from Egypt was highly praised based on the fact that it was »whitest and purest« sugar there was. ⁹

In the eleventh century, Venice had become the main point of intersection of trade routes and distributed sugar from the plantations in, amongst others, Sicily, Malta, Cyprus, Egypt, Morocco and Spain to the cities of

⁶ Cited *ibid.*, p. 2; see also Edmund O. von Lippmann: *Geschichte des Zuckers* (1890), p. 60.

⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 142 ff.

⁸ Cf. Jock H. Galloway: *The Sugar Cane Industry*, pp. 37 ff.

⁹ Marc Aronson, Marina Budhos: *Sugar Changed the World*, pp. 15 (for Persia), 18 (›whitest and purest‹).

southern Europe, Egypt and the Levant.¹⁰ It remained the centre of the Mediterranean sugar trade until the production of cane sugar shifted to the Atlantic islands and further westwards to America, and the places of refinery were translocated to northern European cities like first Antwerp and later Amsterdam, London, Hamburg and others.¹¹

Northern Europeans, who initially came into contact with cane sugar following the conquest of Sicily by Normans and the Crusades of the eleventh century, benefitted from their trade routes to the south, and the quantity of sugar reaching northern cities increased.¹² In England, sugar was mentioned in writing as early as the thirteenth century when various kings ordered the acquisition of sugar for royal consumption.¹³ Nonetheless, it was only with the establishment of sugar economies on the Atlantic islands that the first major increase in sugar supplies occurred and the consumption of sugar, at least in the upper milieus of society, was significantly heighten.

The cane sugar from the Mediterranean region was never able to reach the quality and sweetness of the Atlantic islands or the American industries. Its cultivation was limited by the climatic conditions that made the growth of sugar cane dependent on short warm seasons but also by the comparably small size of the plantations. Nonetheless, once sugar cultivation was firmly established, the Mediterranean basin became the crucial place where the intertwining of the enrichment of the planters, the indulgence of the consumers, and the exploitations of the slaves was consolidated. In the fourteenth and fifteenth century, the Mediterranean sugar industry became the harbinger of the sugar industries to come. These were industries dependent on an increasing number of unfree labourers on the Atlantic islands. Even more so this was the case on the plantations in the Americas, where in the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century cultivation and production of sugar reached its developmental peak as a fully-fledged, economically profitable industry employing almost nothing but slave labour.

While on the Mediterranean islands this »link between sugar cane cultivation and slavery which was to last until the nineteenth century became firmly forged«, this linkage was not yet based on skin colour.¹⁴ The ori-

¹⁰ Cf. Edmund O. von Lippmann: *Geschichte des Zuckers* (1929), pp. 287 f.

¹¹ Cf. Jakob Baxa: *Die Zuckererzeugung 1600-1850*, p. 22.

¹² Cf. Jock H. Galloway: *The Sugar Cane Industry*, p. 34.

¹³ Cf. Sidney Mintz: *Sweetness and Power*, p. 82.

¹⁴ Jock H. Galloway: *The Sugar Cane Industry*, p. 42 (>link<). See also Gad J. Heuman, James Walvin: *The Slavery Reader*, p. 32. For sugar cultivation in the Mediterranean littoral, see in particular Jock H. Galloway: *The Mediterranean Sugar Industry*.

gins of the slaves who formed the labour force to produce sugar in Crete, Cyprus, Sicily and eastern Spain were European – amongst others, Armenians, Bulgarians, Circassians, Mingrelians and Georgians.¹⁵ While, therefore, the skin colour of the exploiters and the exploited was the very same, the exploitation was expressed in the suppression of the forced labourer by the planter. As a result, a particular relation developed long before the emergence of the ›race‹ term. This was the very same social relation, which was later characterized by the term ›racism‹ therefrom derived and which basically encompassed these assumptions and processes: the existence of a hierarchically stratified social relationship justified on biological or hereditary ground, the ascription of alleged characteristics turned corporal, the systematic denial of power and self-determination, the disavowal of past and/or future, and the non-belonging to what is declared the benchmark group.

Moreover, the social state of the slave in the different societies is a matter of concern. Slavery as a form of absolute domination coerced slaves into a condition called, following Orlando Patterson, ›social death‹. In the ›intrusive mode‹ of slavery, which was the dominant mode in sugar slavery, the enslaved persons were brought onto the plantations from neighbouring or other countries. Being uprooted from their individual society, they were introduced into new communities as »nonbeing[s]«.¹⁶ The slave not only functioned as the labour force but also served as a means to exhibit the master's prestige and social standing. By modifying this view of slavery as a (momentary) cessation of the slaves' social relations with the element of ›chattel property‹, the animalization of the enslaved people quite literally made beast of burdens of them, while also denying them rational agency. A look at the ›central quality‹ of sugar slavery shows that at the various stages of time and locality, sugar cultivation was differently ›slave-consuming‹.¹⁷ In the Mediterranean, the limitations of plantation size and the relatively short period of cane cultivation did not necessitate an extensive labour force. Whereas slave mortality was high in the sugar regions of Brazil due to the fact that an all-year-round processing of sugar cane provided for a labour demand on almost every day of the year.¹⁸

¹⁵ Cf. David Brion Davis: *Inhuman Bondage*, p. 82.

¹⁶ Orlando Patterson: *Slavery and Social Death*, pp. 39 (›intrusive mode‹), 44, 37 (›non-being‹). The ›social death‹ has been declared a determining criterion for racism by, inter alia, Theodore W. Allen: *The Invention of the White Race*, Vol. 1, pp. 32 ff. and Wulf D. Hund: *Rassismus* (1997), pp. 83 ff.

¹⁷ David Brion Davis: *Inhuman Bondage*, pp. 32 (›chattel property‹), 37 (›central quality‹).

¹⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 116 f. On the British sugar islands, Africans were hardly able to work more than fifteen years in the main sugar gang – cf. Robin Blackburn: *The Making of New World Slavery*, p. 413.

The presence of African sugar slaves in pre-fifteenth-century sugar industries remains a matter of dispute,¹⁹ but on its way westwards from the Portuguese coast to Madeira and the Azores (c.1420s), to the Canary Islands and after that to São Tomé (c.1480),²⁰ the association of sugar and unfree labour became increasingly enhanced by the dimension of colour. Sugar cane brought from Europe encountered African slaves at latest on the Canary Islands, where the latter replaced child labour provided by the children of expelled Spanish Jews, but there are also reports about sugar mills worked by African slaves in Madeira.²¹

While on the Mediterranean islands the majority of slaves have been European, cane sugar from the Atlantic islands that reached European markets in 1450 and 1490 respectively, was definitely grown and processed using Europeans and Africans. In Madeira, the link between sugar and slavery was continued, it was however not deepened since the number of slaves coming from the Cape Verdes was only moderate, and the occupation of the slaves was largely restricted to the clearing of the land and the building of the irrigation systems.²² The plantations never reached the size of American plantations; and, other than the latter, they were not necessarily located near a sugar mill. The small planters who owned the fields had to transport their harvested canes to the mills, which were predominantly situated in the vicinity of Funchal harbour.

The labour force on the Canary Islands encompassed both free and unfree labourers – with African, Berber and Guanche slaves, the majority of which was working in the sugar mills and not on the fields.²³ While Madeira was well-resourced with water, irrigation problems on the island divided the grants of plantation land into those with direct access to water and those which were dry lands.²⁴ The sugar industry in São Tomé was

¹⁹ David Brion Davis: *Inhuman Bondage*, p. 60, mentions a »massive slave revolt«, involving black slaves and probably also sugar cane, which took place in the marshlands of Tigris-Euphrates delta in 869 CE. See also Sidney W. Mintz: *Sweetness and Power*, p. 27. For the possibility of »black« sugar slavery in tenth-century Egypt, see Mohamed Ouerfelli: *Le sucre*, p. 289 f. James Oliver Horton, Lois E. Horton: *A History of the African American People*, p. 12, state that, after the mid-fifteenth century, Italians employed black slaves on their sugar plantations who worked alongside bound and free »whites«. See also Kevin Reilly, Stephen Kaufman, Angela Bodino: *Racism*, p. 124; Imanuel Geiss: *Geschichte des Rassismus*, p. 86.

²⁰ Cf. Jakob Baxa: *Die Zuckererzeugung 1600-1850*, p. 11; Hubert Olbrich: *Zucker-Museum*, pp. 30 f.; Jock H. Galloway: *The Sugar Cane Industry*, p. 59.

²¹ Cf. Jakob Baxa, Guntwin Bruhns: *Zucker im Leben der Völker*, p. 15; Peter Macinnis: *Bittersweet*, pp. 24-27; Sidney W. Mintz: *Sweetness and Power*, pp. 27, 30 f.; Edmund O. von Lippmann: *Geschichte des Zuckers*, p. 403.

²² Cf. Jock H. Galloway: *The Sugar Cane Industry*, pp. 53 f.

²³ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 57.

²⁴ Cf. Alberto Vieira: *Sugar Islands*, p. 45.

the first to employ predominantly slaves taken from Africa – if only, as it seems, due to the closeness of this resource of labourers rather than based on an ideology that necessarily connected ›blackness‹ with enslavement and excluded the employment of European slaves – and abandoned small farms in favour of larger plantations.²⁵

Another change that occurred at the time of the transference of the Mediterranean to the Atlantic sugar industry was the relocation of sugar refining.²⁶ While pre-sixteenth century cane sugar had been refined in the land of its respective production, the building of refineries in Venice and Bologna after 1470 and subsequently in Antwerp followed by other northern European cities fostered the transfer of sugar refining from the producing to the importing country. Relocating the conversion of crude sugar into high quality sugar to the countries of the mainland meant that the creation of value and the resulting bulk of profit hereafter lay in the hands of continental Europe. In the context of colonialism, allocating the sphere of cultivational competence of the raw material in the colonies and that of refinement in the commercial centres of Europe, intensified the ideological dissociation of places of cultivation from places of consumption and followed the logic of contemporary theoreticians, who located the bearers of technical knowledge in Europe.

The closeness of the links between the Mediterranean, the Atlantic and the American sugar industry is embodied in Christopher Columbus. Around 1478, he had earned his living with the transportation of sugar from Madeira to Genoa, married the daughter of a sugar planter in Madeira, and had himself resided in Funchal for a couple of years.²⁷ It seems little surprising, therefore, that he took sugar cane from the Canary Islands with him on his second journey to the ›New World‹ in 1493.²⁸ When he landed in Hispaniola, he might have already had in mind the establishment of a sugar industry, for he subsequently reported to the Spanish king the luxuriating growth of the cane. Nonetheless, the lack of labourers obstructed the continuous cultivation, and soon after the sugar cane died.²⁹ A

²⁵ São Tomé had no indigenous population that could be forced to work, and the two thousand Jewish children sent from Portugal with a few other exiled »undesirables« could not satisfy the demands of a growing industry – Jock H. Galloway: *The Sugar Cane Industry*, p. 60; see also Alberto Vieira: *Sugar Islands*, p. 74.

²⁶ For the following, see Jock H. Galloway: *The Sugar Cane Industry*, p. 40, who recognized the emergence of a »colonial« relationship between the producer and the manufacturer.

²⁷ Cf. Jakob Baxa, Guntwin Bruhns: *Zucker im Leben der Völker*, p. 17; Jock H. Galloway: *The Sugar Cane Industry*, pp. 61 f.; Genaro Rodríguez Morel: *The Sugar Economy of Española in the Sixteenth Century*, pp. 87 f.

²⁸ Cf. Jock H. Galloway: *Tradition and Innovation in the American Sugar Industry*, p. 334.

²⁹ Cf. Edmund O. von Lippmann: *Geschichte des Zuckers*, pp. 415 f.

thriving industry could not be established until sugar cane was introduced a second time at the beginning of the sixteenth century.³⁰

Starting in the mid-sixteenth century, the Portuguese established sugar plantations in northern Brazil using the same plantation system involving slaves that had been tested in the Mediterranean and had subsequently proven successful in the islands of the Atlantic like Madeira and São Tomé.³¹ The connection between sugar cultivation and slavery, which was forged on the southern European islands and fortified in the islands of the Atlantic, was expanded on American soil with most of the enslaved Africans taken to the Caribbean and South America.³²

In Brazil, sugar cane encountered all the factors it required to flourish: a warm climate, large and fertile pieces of soil, and sufficient water and fuel. The sugar production of Brazil in 1614 was ten times that of Madeira in 1507.³³ Thus, it is little surprising that by sixteen hundred the Brazilian sugar plantations were virtually the sole suppliers of the European sugar market. In contrast to the Mediterranean sugar industry, the sugar cultivation in Brazil was less determined by the seasons so that the sugar mills and plantations operated nearly all year round.³⁴ This almost continual cultivating, harvesting and processing of sugar cane necessitated a constant availability of labourers which increasingly were introduced from Africa.

Nonetheless, it took more than half a century for the Brazilian sugar industry to become transformed from a labour force that was comprised mainly of local Indians in the 1570s to one using almost exclusively African slaves in the late 1630s.³⁵ Slaves were engaged on all levels of sugar making: The first African slaves were experienced labourers from Madeira and São Tomé; and they were able to replace the European or even native American sugar masters or take over other skilled sugar making tasks.³⁶ In the seventeenth century, the connection between sugar cane and slaves from Africa was so solidified that a common saying stated: »Without sugar, no Brazil; without slaves, no sugar; without Angola, no slaves«.³⁷

³⁰ Cf. Jakob Baxa, Guntwin Bruhns: *Zucker im Leben der Völker*, p. 18.

³¹ Cf. David Brion Davis: *Inhuman Bondage*, p. 103.

³² Cf. Kenneth Morgan: *Slavery and the British Empire*, p. 15.

³³ Cf. Robin Blackburn: *The Making of New World Slavery*, p. 172.

³⁴ Cf. Stuart B. Schwartz: *A Commonwealth within Itself*, pp. 176 f.

³⁵ Cf. David Brion Davis: *Inhuman Bondage*, p. 101; Stuart B. Schwartz: *A Commonwealth within Itself*, pp. 187 f. See also Robin Blackburn: *The Making of New World Slavery*, pp. 168 f.

³⁶ Cf. Robin Blackburn: *The Making of New World Slavery*, p. 167; Jock H. Galloway: *The Sugar Cane Industry*, p. 72.

³⁷ Stuart B. Schwartz: *Slaves, Peasants, and Rebels*, p. 12.

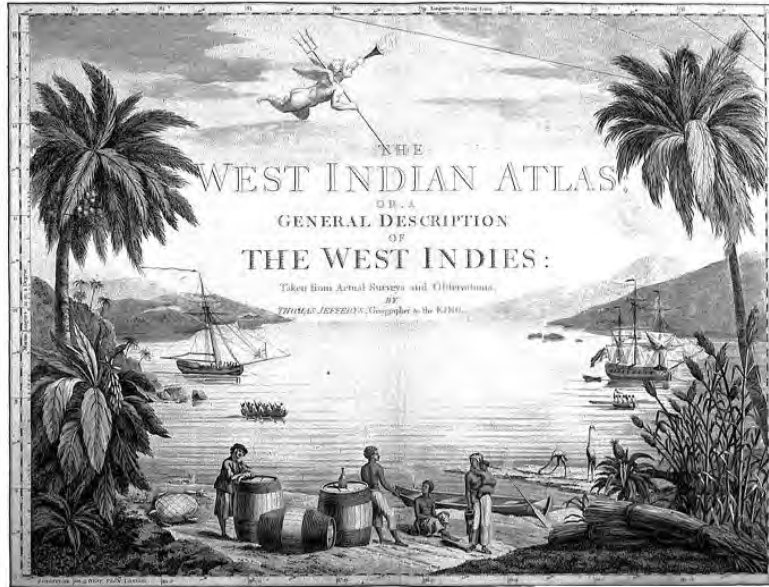


Fig. 2 – False idyll:
Caribbean sugar islands

During the Anglo-Spanish war and before England had profitable sugar plantations of its own in Barbados, Brazilian sugar became the prime target of Elizabethan privateers who got possession of thirty-four ships with sugar cargo worth £ 1 000 000.³⁸ Sugar became an important financial factor when the Atlantic, as well as the Brazilian and Caribbean, sugar islands – »that seat of the most cruel slavery possible to be devised«³⁹ – were financed by European merchant-bankers, who made »enormous profits« on the European market.⁴⁰ In the early seventeenth century, Britain eventually joined the league of sugar-cultivating nations when, island by island, the West Indies became British sugar islands exporting increasing amounts of sugar hogsheads until such scenes – prominently featuring sugar cane on the right-hand side and molasses or rum barrels in the foreground – became representative for the islands (Fig. 2).⁴¹

³⁸ Cf. Richard S. Dunn: *Sugar & Slaves*, p. 60 f. See also Robin Blackburn: *The Making of New World Slavery*, p. 171.

³⁹ Immanuel Kant: *Essays and Treatises*, p. 272. For the original, see id.: *Zum Ewigen Frieden*, p. 216 (»dieser Sitz der allergrausamsten und ausgedachtsten Sklaverei«).

⁴⁰ David Brion Davis: *Inhuman Bondage*, p. 87.

⁴¹ Frontispiece of Thomas Jefferys: *The West India Atlas* of 1775.

Britain became directly involved in slave-grown sugar in Barbados at the end of the sixteen twenties as the first English island to produce sugar.⁴² But it took more than two decades until sugar export became an important feature of the island.⁴³ Starting in the mid-sixteen fifties, political prisoners and Irish people defined as »social undesirables« were transported to the British West Indies in order to help cultivate the sugar cane.⁴⁴ Initially, it was these indentured servants who worked on small-scale farms and became independent at the end of their term of service.⁴⁵ Even before the take-off of the sugar industry, the numbers of African slaves had been high.⁴⁶ Due to this, there was no dramatic import of slaves from Africa to supply the cultivation of sugar. But with the expansion of production, the ratio of servants to slaves on the estates changed.⁴⁷ While in the late sixteen thirties mainly servants from the British Isles cultivated and processed sugar cane, by the sixteen seventies the estates were worked almost exclusively by African slaves.

At this point in time, racism as a social relation expressed in the differentiation and hierarchization of skin colour was beginning to manifest. Though European workers were gradually assigned skilled tasks and supervisory roles,⁴⁸ they were on their way to become ›white‹. In Barbados, after the beginning of the sugar industry, there was a mixed slave population; among this were counted American Indians, Africans and Europeans. In his critique of slavery on this island, the Quaker George Fox did characterize its inhabitants using skin colour and explained that Christ »did [...] die for the blacks and taunies as well as for the whites«.⁴⁹ The

⁴² Cf. Sidney W. Mintz: *Sweetness and Power*, pp. 35 ff., 155. For Barbados and its sugar production, see also Richard S. Dunn: *Sugar & Slaves*, p. 226; Edmund O. von Lipmann: *Geschichte des Zuckers*, p. 499; Peter Macinnis: *Bittersweet*, p. 49.

⁴³ Cf. Russell R. Menard: *Sweet Negotiations*, p. 30.

⁴⁴ Hilary McD. Beckles: *A ›riotous and unruly lot‹*, p. 507. At the end of the eighteenth century, the idea of deporting unwanted population groups to work in the sugar colonies was taken up by a German theologian, who stated that the Jews »would become even more useful if we had sugar islands which from time to time could depopulate the European fatherland« – cited in Jonathan M. Hess: *Sugar Island Jews*, p. 92.

⁴⁵ Cf. Kenneth Morgan: *Slavery and the British Empire*, p. 11.

⁴⁶ At the time when sugar production really took off, the majority of the population were black – cf. Kenneth Morgan: *Slavery and the British Empire*, p. 27.

⁴⁷ For these deliberations, see Russell R. Menard: *Sweet Negotiations*, pp. 31 f. Here Menard challenges former findings that the increase of cane sugar production led to an increase of slave imports in Barbados; for example in Sidney W. Mintz: *Sweetness and Power*, p. 53; Jock H. Galloway: *The Sugar Cane Industry*, p. 81; William Hague: *William Wilberforce*, p. 117.

⁴⁸ Cf. Robin Blackburn: *The Making of New World Slavery*, pp. 230 f.

⁴⁹ Cited in Jerome S. Handler: *The Amerindian Slave Population of Barbados in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries*, p. 55. Here the skin colour of the ›Indians‹ is not yet seen as ›red‹ but apprehended as ›tawney«.

latter, however, did not have an unambiguously differing social position. This group comprised, besides the plantation owners, various groups of the British lower classes that were shipped to the island as convicts⁵⁰ and »a very great part Irish« forced labourers about which a contemporary observed that they were »derided by the Negroes and branded with the Epithet of white slaves«. ⁵¹ ›Race‹ and ›class‹ were not fully differentiated, but the designation of European indentured servants as ›white slaves‹ already contained the predetermined breaking point of their speedy separation. A priori, however, European and African plantation workers initially not only shared the working and living conditions. They also collectively staged protests against them. Repeatedly Africans and Irish rebelled in joint action and later also formed common groups of maroons.⁵²

Jamaica became the top producing British sugar island in the seventeen fifties, with its sugar estates greatly surpassing in size those of Barbados. It had been seized by Oliver Cromwell's troops from the Spanish in 1655 and was the one West Indian island that in the last quarter of the seventeenth century expanded its European population with mainly English and Irish servants.⁵³ Having a large population of African slaves, the labour force on Jamaican plantations was organized in an »elaborate hierarchy«, comprising different kinds of sugar gangs and reflecting European gender stereotypes even twice. On the one hand, the labour division on the plantation arranged for males in upper positions and thus reproduced traditional patriarchal concepts of gender. On the other hand, enslaved women – and in this ›race‹, ›class‹, and ›gender‹ overlapped – were denied the tributes of ›true‹ womanhood.⁵⁴ In the light of economic advantage, »slave owners abandoned notions of female difference and fragility«. ⁵⁵ Even though this negatively affected the desired reproduction of slave population, they were, to a substantial extent, employed in field labour – while at the same

⁵⁰ Cf. Peter Linebaugh, Marcus Rediker: *The Many-Headed Hydra*, p. 124.

⁵¹ Cited in Sean O'Callaghan: *To Hell or Barbados*, pp. 102 f. Gary Taylor: *Buying Whiteness*, p. 169, assumes from this evidence that »inhabitants of the British isles were first called white by darker people« (emphasis omitted).

⁵² Cf. Jerome S. Handler: *Slave Revolts and Conspiracies in Seventeenth-Century Barbados*. When Peter Linebaugh, Marcus Rediker: *The Many-Headed Hydra*, p. 126 write, that »[t]he first recorded group of maroons in Barbados was interracial«, they overlook that at this point in time no ›races‹ existed and involuntarily contribute to the essentialization of this term.

⁵³ Cf. Hilary McD. Beckles: *A ›riotous and unruly lot‹*, p. 508.

⁵⁴ The same held true later on the sugar cane plantations of Queensland, where, in the case of the Pacific Islanders, ›race‹ overwrote ›gender‹ and enabled the employment of female Islanders for cane cultivation while at the same time the possibility of life and work in the tropics for ›white‹ women was questioned. See subchapter 3.3 ›Slavery In Queensland‹.

⁵⁵ Teresa L. Amott, Julie A. Matthaei: *Race, Gender, and Work*, p. 146.

time the ladies of the European upper classes enjoyed a state of leisure and had her portrait painted, flanked by ›black‹ page to underscore her ›white‹ complexion.⁵⁶

Between the sixteen seventies and the eighteen twenties raw sugar was the most profitable venture; in the early seventeen seventies sugar even lead the list of the most valuable commodities imported in Britain.⁵⁷ The annual profit accrued from the sugar cultivation in the British-Caribbean colonies is estimated to be about £ 2.5 million.⁵⁸ The counter-value of the sugar islands can be estimated when looking at the Peace of Paris in 1763 where these islands were considered a possession of higher value than Canada, and as a consequence the ›snow for sugar‹ trade-off between France and England of Martinique, Guadeloupe and Santa Lucia against Canada and parts of Louisiana took place.⁵⁹ A circumstance that, thirteen years later, was acknowledged by Adam Smith who maintained that the profits of »a sugar plantation in any of our West Indian colonies« not only outdid the returns of the tobacco plantations but also rendered higher profits than »any other cultivation that is known in either Europe or America«, thus making »sugar trade [...] the most profitable of any«.⁶⁰

The decision to hand off the three sugar islands almost proved to be detrimental when in 1782 Montserrat, St. Kitts and other islands of the British West Indies were occupied and Antigua, Barbados and Jamaica were the next to be captured by the French. King George III prognosticated that the loss of these sugar islands, and the profit derived from them, forced the discontinuation of the American Revolutionary War for Britain.⁶¹ A planter-historian noted in the last decade of the eighteenth century that the contribution by the West Indies to the wealth of Britain was »the principle source of national opulence«.⁶² Therefore it was little surprise

⁵⁶ Robin Blackburn: *The Making of New World Slavery*, p. 412 (›hierarchy‹); overall see *ibid.*, pp. 411 ff.; for European chiaroscuro, see Kim F. Hall: *Things of Darkness*, pp. 238 ff.

⁵⁷ Cf. Kenneth Morgan: *Slavery and the British Empire*, pp. 34 f.

⁵⁸ Cf. Kenneth Morgan: *Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy*, p. 50.

⁵⁹ Cf. Jakob Baxa, Guntwin Bruhns: *Zucker im Leben der Völker*, p. 57; see also Elizabeth Abbott: *Sugar*, p. 172. Despite their value Britain let go off the sugar islands as a consequence of the parliamentary pressure of sugar planters who feared a further price reduction by a continued competition from too many islands with cane sugar cultivation – cf. Walter S. Dunn: *Frontier Profit and Loss*, p. 140.

⁶⁰ Adam Smith: *An Inquiry Into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Vol. 1, p. 389 (›plantation‹, ›cultivation‹); *id.*: *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, p. 183 (›sugar trade‹).

⁶¹ Cf. Elizabeth Abbott: *Sugar*, p. 172; see also Jakob Baxa, Guntwin Bruhns: *Zucker im Leben der Völker*, p. 60.

⁶² Cited in Kenneth Morgan: *Slavery and the British Empire*, p. 36.

that before the Napoleonic Wars sugar was the only crop that was regularly protected by military powers.⁶³

At the time when sugar eventually constituted »an inextricable link in an economic triangle that entwined the fates, desires, and wealth of people in three continents«,⁶⁴ the plantations of the West Indies had become an increasing source of profit for the European countries. By locating the place of raw sugar refining in the European centres of trade, the separation between sugar capital and sugar labour had created a two-staged process of cane sugar production.⁶⁵ The colonies were assigned the labour-intensive cultivation and production of raw sugar because of their growing conditions and large plantations. The low-cost labour was obtained by the ›employment‹ first of the natives and then of convicts and African slaves. Subsequently, the coarse sugar was exported as a low-value product. England refined the raw sugar and re-exported it as a high-value product. For the colony it meant the loss of control over their colonial product and thus the further fostering of them into colonial dependency.

2.2 ›An Opiate of the People‹: Sugar and Consumption

›Sweet‹ was not an entirely new flavour for the European palate. Before the import of sugar in the seventeenth century, and afterwards as a substitute, honey was commonly used as sweetener.⁶⁶ Even though, in the fourteenth century addition of sugar to food had – at least from the perspective of the ruling classes – become an implicitness,⁶⁷ it took four more centuries until sugar became an everyday commodity for the entire British society. During the subsequent centuries, the habit of sugar consumption trickled with increasing acceleration through the strata of the British society until it reached all households. Refined cane sugar – which was still an inaccessible luxury good for the broad masses in the mid-eighteenth century – had developed into a necessary commodity during the first half of the nineteenth century. This, however, did not take place without the acquisition of new meanings and change of usages. Throughout the centuries

⁶³ Cf. Kenneth Morgan: *Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy*, p. 90.

⁶⁴ Tracey Banivanua-Mar: *Sugar and Labor*, p. 1065.

⁶⁵ Cf. George C. Abbott: *Sugar*, pp. 15, 61.

⁶⁶ Cf. Sidney Mintz: *Sweetness and Power*, p. 92; Raey Tannahill: *Food in History*, p. 219.

⁶⁷ See the cookery books and reports from the court of Edward III, mentioned in Edmund O. von Lippmann: *Geschichte des Zuckers*, p. 363.

of its use, sugar has served as a »medicine, spice-condiment, decorative material, sweetener, preservative« and foodstuff.⁶⁸

In England sugar was mentioned in writing as early as the thirteenth century. In 1243, Henry III ordered the acquisition of three hundred pounds of sugar; forty years later, during the reign of Edward I, royal sugar consumption already amounted to almost three thousand pounds.⁶⁹ Cane sugar coming from Venice remained an expensive article of luxury. Nonetheless, three different kinds of sugar (»bread sugar«, white »caffetin« sugar and »Cypriot sugar«) were traded in London in 1334.⁷⁰ The fifteenth century saw constructions made of sugar as the decoration of courtly tables. With the expansion of the sugar industry to the Atlantic islands, the amount of sugar traded rose steadily, and the rise of Antwerp to the main place of transshipment for north Europe meant an improvement in the British access to cane sugar coming from Venice and Lisbon.⁷¹

During the subsequent overindulgence in sugar at court, Queen Elizabeth's love of sweetness became legendary and likewise foreshadowed Britain's long-lasting place among the top consumers of sugar per capita. Elizabeth's excessive consumption of sugar had such detrimental effects on her dental hygiene that a visitor at court in the last years of the sixteenth century could not withhold a cutting remark about the blackness of her teeth, »a blemish from which many English people are suffering because they eat too much sugar«.⁷² Yet the »black« teeth of the Queen were no drawback to making her a »white« icon and the symbol of Englishness in the contemporary art. Though skin colour was in this context also a symbol of »class« and »gender«, it nonetheless conveyed an impression of the coming »racial« classification of humankind. This found expression in the »first colorphobic documents in English legal history«, which Elizabeth I utilized to banish »Negroes and blackamoors«.⁷³

Up until the sixteenth century, sugar as an »exotic« rarity was sold only in apothecaries;⁷⁴ in the late seventeenth century, sugar remained a luxu-

⁶⁸ Sidney Mintz: *Sweetness and Power*, p. 78.

⁶⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 82.

⁷⁰ Cf. Edmund O. von Lippmann: *Geschichte des Zuckers* (1890), p. 231.

⁷¹ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 249, 263, 274.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 276.

⁷³ Gary Taylor: *Buying Whiteness*, p. 24; for the preceding, see Kim F. Hall: *These bastard signs of fair*, p. 69 (»Englishness«).

⁷⁴ It seems that the common assumption of sugar to initially be almost exclusively a medicine was not as much implied by the usage of it but rather due to the misinterpretation of the term »apothecaries« in the late medieval period. Instead of being mere vendors of medicine, apothecaries were rather traders of spices and other colonial imports and thus the place where one could buy »exotic« ingredients for outlandish dishes. Cf. Edmund O. von Lippmann: *Geschichte des Zuckers* (1890), pp. 235 f., 245; Barbara Fleith: *Arzt,*

ry which only wealthy people could afford. With the translocation of the main cane sugar cultivation across the Atlantic, the expanded influx of raw sugar both lowered the prices and increased the amount of sugar in the shelves of grocery stores. The increase in consumption was additionally fostered by the import of tea, coffee and cocoa to England in the mid-seventeenth century. The first tea house in England was opened in 1640, the first coffee houses in Oxford in 1650 and in London in 1652, and the first chocolate house in London in 1693.⁷⁵

It was only in the latter half of the nineteenth century that coffee and tea were consumed by all classes in both the public and the private sphere. Initially, the consumption of coffee and tea in public was both classed and gendered since it was confined to males of the middle and upper classes. Coffee houses, mostly situated near the exchange, were centres of social interaction for the educated and respectable.⁷⁶ They were the places to obtain the latest trading information, study newspapers and talk politics. Accordingly, not only the less well-off but also the women were hardly found amongst the clientele of coffee houses.⁷⁷ A circumstance against which the women strongly protested; not only by questioning the reputed respectability of the male coffee house visitors but also by stressing its degenerating effects. In their petition of 1674, wives of coffee house customers derogatorily complained about ›these Houses (as at the Springs in Afric) [where] meet all sorts of Animals, whence follows the production of a thousand Monster Opinions and Absurdities‹ and about the consuming of a beverage which caused the men to ›Dwindle[] into a Succession of Apes and Pigmies‹.⁷⁸

The gendered difference in sugared beverage consumption split up into the masculinized coffee house and the feminized tea ritual.⁷⁹ Sweet tea then became the alternative drink of the ladies whenever the gentlemen

Apotheker, Laie, pp. 445 ff. Nonetheless, this does not mean that sugar was not thought to have soothing and purifying effects – see the part referring to Angelus Sala's ›Saccharologica‹ in Jakob Baxa, Guntwin Bruhns: *Zucker im Leben der Völker*, p. 44.

⁷⁵ Cf. Maguelonne Toussaint-Samat: *A History of Food*, p. 536. (tea), Annerose Menninger: *Genuss im kulturellen Wandel*, p. 324 (coffee), Louis E. Grivetti, Howard-Yana Shapiro: *Chocolate*, p. 584 (chocolate).

⁷⁶ A ballad titled ›News from the Coffee-house‹ (1667) made fun of the coffee house's clientele by calling it ›So great a Universitie | I think there nere was any, | In which you may a Schoolar be | For spending of a penny‹ – cited in Edward Smedley, Hugh J. Rose, Henry J. Rose (eds.): *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana*, p. 798.

⁷⁷ Cf. Woodruff D. Smith: *From Coffeehouse to Parlour*, pp. 149, 154 ff.

⁷⁸ ›The Women's Petition against Coffee Representing to Publick Consideration the Grand Inconveniencies accruing to their Sex from the Excessive Use of that Drying, Enfeebling Liquor‹ of 1674, pp. 4 (›animals‹), 3 (›apes‹).

⁷⁹ Cf. Woodruff D. Smith: *From Coffeehouse to Parlour*, p. 159.

retreated after dinner to enjoy their brandy.⁸⁰ The private consumption of the hot beverages was practised in the form of ›rituals‹. These involved not only the silver tea set – including sugar nips, sugar spoon and sugar bowl – corresponding to the occasion.



*Fig. 3 – Sweet imitations:
Artificial sugar work*

With the heightened amount of sugar on the market, other ways of using sugar became more popular, and the woman of the house became the main addressee. For the leisure time of the ladies, guidebooks like ›The Ladies Diary‹ and ›The Whole Duty of a Woman‹ – both from the beginning of the eighteenth century – instructed upper class women in the preservation of oranges, lemons, apricots and other fruits with the help of sugar.⁸¹ Recipe books not only taught the practice of cooking with sugar; they also gave directions to how sugars were coloured with extracts of saffron, spinach and cochineal and turned into decoration (Fig. 3), and described how orange, lemon, cinnamon, clove, vanilla, or ginger-flavoured sugars should be prepared.⁸²

Notwithstanding the predominant consumption as an indulgence, sugar in the nineteenth century was still used for numerous pharmaceutical applications. It was used to »remove the disagreeable flavour« of medicines and as a »remedy for the scurvy«. Its nutritious qualities were not

⁸⁰ It might have been with this feminine audience of tea in mind that the tea critics warned British men about the effeminating effects of tea drinking. Cf. Elizabeth Abbott: *Sugar*, p. 53.

⁸¹ Cf. Anon.: *The Ladies Diary*, p. 24; Anon.: *The Whole Duty of a Woman*, pp. 165 ff.; see also, for example, Elizabeth Grey: *A True Gentlewoman's Delight*, pp. 18 ff. This suggested a gender change in the production of bottled fruits. Fruit preservation with sugar had formerly, i.e. in the fourteenth century, been the prerogative of apothecaries. Cf. Edmund O. von Lippmann: *Geschichte des Zuckers* (1890), p. 236.

⁸² Cf. Charles Elmé Francatelli: *The Royal English and Foreign Confectioner*. The pictures are ›Imitation Minerals in sugar‹, ›Meringue on a Stand‹, ›Imitation Boar Head‹, ›The Royal Crown‹ in: *ibid.*, pp. 292, 281, 291, 281.

only valued in stock farming but also to relieve »weaknesses« and »disorders of the breast«. It was applied to prevent »malignant fevers of all kinds« and »diseases occasioned by worms«. It was even said to cause the »same relief« as »a dose of opium«. Those who warned of injuries to the teeth, on the other hand, were so few that this »opinion« did not »deserve a serious refutation«.⁸³

The production of cane sugar using slavery in the West Indian islands did not only mean that the British market received vast supplies of sugar; it also implied an expansion of tea and sugar consuming, the need for trained sailors, and the flourishing of the ship industry. The British labour market greatly benefitted from the sugar colonies since the islands needed – besides accessories like iron collars, shackles and equipment for the planting and processing of the cane – additional vegetables, dairy products, furniture and home appliances as well.⁸⁴

With the increase of mass production of sugar in the early eighteenth century, sugar gradually turned into a good that even the lower classes could afford to a greater extent. The calculation of an increase in sugar consumption from one pound to twenty-five pounds per capita in the hundred years of consumption up to the seventeen seventies must bear in mind class-specific distortion. However, already Adam Smith could state that in the meantime »sugar and tea [...] have become luxuries of the lowest rank of people« and were now »objects of almost universal consumption«.⁸⁵ At the end of the eighteenth century, not only the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy but also the workers and even the poor were beneficiaries of plantation production. The latter occasionally put sugar in pies and pastries and used it as an energy provider, in particular at breakfast in tea, coffee and spread as jam on bread.⁸⁶

The bitter lives of the African sugar slaves in America thus made for the sweetening of the European workers' lives. Not that life for the Brit-

⁸³ All citations from Alexander Aitchison: *Encyclopaedia Perthensis*, p. 549.

⁸⁴ Cf. Stephen Mennell, Anne Murcott, Anneke H. van Otterloo: *The Sociology of Food*, p. 77. See also Kenneth Morgan: *Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy*, p. 67. They were explicitly included in economic calculations: by looking at the demand for foodstuff, clothing and tools, Eric Williams calculated that one planter and ten workers in the sugar colonies provided jobs for four labourers in Britain, see Elizabeth Abbott: *Sugar*, p. 151.

⁸⁵ Adam Smith: *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, pp. 871 (›luxuries‹), 936 (›objects‹). In this context, Smith differentiated commodities that are deemed ›necessaries‹ (›things which nature [...] and] established rules of decency have rendered necessary to the lowest rank of people«) from those deemed ›luxuries‹ (›all other things«) – *ibid.*, p. 870. See also Kenneth Morgan: *Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy*, p. 21.

⁸⁶ Cf. Sidney W. Mintz: *Sweetness and Power*, pp. 124, 127.

ish workers was an intrinsically pleasant one. On the contrary, as a contemporary noted, they were »the hardest worked, and hardest taxed, and hardest pinched class of people on the face of the earth«, and at the end of the nineteenth century they were still referred to as the »white slaves of England«.⁸⁷

Labour in the factory was energy-consuming and monotonous with not much time for breaks or recreation. Cane sugar as an »opiate of the people« re-energized the body, bridged episodes of hunger pangs, and brought quick satisfaction.⁸⁸ While »the tea« became a social occasion in middle and upper classes, for the working classes tea with sugar was appealing since it quickly satisfied hunger and could replace the more nutritious but also more time-consuming, cooking. Bread and tea became the staple meal of the workers.⁸⁹ Sweet tea as a »wholesome beverage for the industrious« could even be consumed in the streets of London in the early morning hours.⁹⁰ As such, members of the lower classes – carpenters, a prostitute in negotiation with clients, a man in rags carrying a bag and two women selling sweetened tea to workers – set the stage in a city-life guide featuring Tom and Bob, two renowned dandy-esque upper-classers, on their exploratory walk in the slummy theatre district of London (Fig. 4).⁹¹

It was not only the sweet flavour per se but also this soothing ability of sweetness that eased social aggression, stress and mental fatigue after the work day or during short tea breaks and created a drug-like addiction.⁹² The »sugar crash« was felt in the morning when the workers had to face their work again. But they did so regardless; not least because they required the means to replenish their sugar reserves. This was one of the reasons why merchants hardly ever saw a need to advertise sugar in order to maintain or heighten the sales, while for other products – like tea and coffee – they felt compelled to praise their quality or place of origin.⁹³ Like every exhilarating drug, sugar turned out to create psychological and physiological dependencies to such an extent that when the sugar price rose in the eighteenth century and people felt unable to do without sugar,

⁸⁷ William Howitt cited in Paul Langford: *Englishness Identified*, p. 33 (»class«); Peter Macinnis: *Bittersweet*, p. 151 (»slaves«).

⁸⁸ Elizabeth Abbott: *Sugar*, p. 53 (»opiate«).

⁸⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 64.

⁹⁰ Pierce Egan: *Real Life in London*, p. 251 – with paintings by George Cruikshank.

⁹¹ »Tom & Bob taking a stroll down Drury Lane at five in the Morning«, in: *ibid.*, p. 250.

⁹² Cf. Jean-Claude Kaufmann: *Kochende Leidenschaft*, p. 50; Sidney W. Mintz: *Sweetness and Power*, p. 61.

⁹³ Cf. Troy Bickham: *Eating the Empire*, pp. 89 ff.



Fig. 4 – Industry and idleness:
Morning tea at Dury Lane

even the poorest felt compelled to buy a few ounces a week.⁹⁴ The inhabitants of the Nacton poorhouse went even further and spent all the money they were paid on tea and sugar.⁹⁵ It is hardly surprising, therefore, that in the latter half of the nineteenth century, when sugar became affordable in larger quantities, paupers and workers eventually surpassed the sucrose consumption of the wealthy.⁹⁶

Cane sugar in its use as a commodity welded together the people from different classes into a community of sugar consumers.⁹⁷ However, the different qualities of sugar and its areas of application – from molasses to brown and later white sugar as a resource of energy for the workers, high quality and finally pure white sugar as a part of sweet courses and presents – still had the potential to hierarchically divide them.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ In the late eighteenth century, ten per cent of the household budget was spent on tea and sugar. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 76. See also C. Anne Wilson: *Food & Drink in Britain*, p. 299.

⁹⁵ Cf. Arthur Young: *The Farmer's Tour through the East of England*, pp. 180 f.

⁹⁶ Cf. Elizabeth Abbott: *Sugar*, p. 69; Sidney W. Mintz: *Sweetness and Power*, pp. 143, 148; David Brion Davis: *Inhuman Bondage*, p. 112.

⁹⁷ In the case of colonial products, like tea, tobacco, coffee and sugar, initial or all production took place in the countries of origins; this underhanded inclusion by consumption of the »powerful symbols of the empire« furthered the consolidation of the consumers of said products as class-spanning and gender-bridging group of beneficiaries – cf. Troy Bickham: *Eating the Empire*, pp. 74 (»symbols«), 80 f.

⁹⁸ Even long into the eighteenth century, critics railed against the increasing spread of sugar consumption and the lavishness of the »Zuckernarren« [sugar fools] and demanded the confinement of this »luxury article« to the upper classes – cf. Jakob Baxa, Guntwin Bruhns: *Zucker im Leben der Völker*, p. 46.

It was not until the mid-nineteenth century, upon Rillieux's invention of the multi-effect evaporator arriving in Europe, that sugar with the highest grade of purity could be produced in large quantities.⁹⁹ Therefore, in the early nineteenth century, when the stratification of sugar varieties still resembled the societal stratification, one author in the ›Vanity Fair‹ could apply grades of refinement to discriminate between social classes by describing a clerk for whom the purer white sugar was out of reach with the words: »his modest cup of life was only sweetened with the brown sugar«. ¹⁰⁰ Contemporary statements like this one showed that it was not merely the sweetness and nutritional value of (brown) sugar or of the by-products molasses and treacle that the workers desired; instead they favoured the more prestigious white sugar. This certainly evinces that there was more to the sugar consumption than a mere craving for calories, even if the dimensions of imitation and emulation should not suffice as an explanation for the overall increasing consumption and sugar's spreading through society.¹⁰¹

The varieties and locations of sugar usages were also discriminative. Based on the social rituals around it – like socializing in coffee houses, tea drinking and the auxiliary utilization of sugar as decoration, for candied fruits or in desserts – the use of sugar had different social connotations.¹⁰² Also, the consumption of tea, for instance, brought about changes in the overseas trade. Because the common earthen tableware was considered unsuitable for the use in the tea set, the introduction of Chinese porcelain was fostered. This porcelain was traded beyond elite luxury markets; it was produced in large quantities in China and Japan and could be easily shipped as ballast or on top of cargoes of tea. Depending on the quality and ornament, they could be displayed as articles of semi-luxury in European elite households; nevertheless, with a more sober design, they were used in middling or even humbler households.¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Though recognized as the »most sought after engineer in Louisiana« in his days, and despite his pertinent advancement of former procedures of sugar processing that made him »one of the greatest benefactors of the sugar industry«, Norbert Rillieux and his revolutionizing invention remains largely unacknowledged – George P. Meade: *A Negro Scientist of Slavery Days*, pp. 322 (›engineer‹), 325 (›benefactors‹). See also R. K. Aufhauser: *Slavery and Technological Change*, pp. 41 f; Carol Pursell: *A Hammer in Their Hands*, pp. 75-88; Middleton A. Harris: *The Black Book*, pp. 112 f.

¹⁰⁰ Cited in Peter Macinnis: *Bittersweet*, p. 64.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Sidney Mintz: *Sweetness and Power*, pp. 152, 182. For the weaknesses of the ›emulation‹ theory, see also Ralph A. Austen, Woodruff D. Smith: *Private Tooth Decay as Public Economic Virtue*, pp. 104 f.

¹⁰² Cf. Mark Overton, Jane Whittle, Darron Dean, Andrew Hann: *Production and Consumption in English Households*, p. 106.

¹⁰³ Cf. Maxine Berg, Elizabeth Eger: *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 236 f.

In his ›La distinction‹, Bourdieu suggests that the body is the irrefutable signifier of ›class taste‹. Not only could the appropriation of the body but especially the culinary preferences be directly read off it. To eat is thus not only the incorporation of nature but also of culture and results in the formation of the ›class body‹. Bourdieu carves out the discrimination between the taste for ›refined‹ and ›coarse‹ dishes, i.e. between lower and upper-class consumption.¹⁰⁴ This culture of taste is reproduced from generation to generation, and the preference for certain foodstuff or flavours defines the social spaces in which the person is situated, but patterns of preference and aversions are also developed within this space.

When Bourdieu talked about the ›incorporation of distinguishing features and symbols of power‹,¹⁰⁵ he might not have had in mind consumers in a colonial context downing their sugar with tea, coffee or cocoa, or nibbling on scones, chocolate or other sweets. However, the consumption of sugar and sugared articles of food was a way of expressing the distinction to more than just the fellow Britons. In the colony-mother country relation, sugar acted as a binding agent to stick together the (natural) body of the individual with the (artificial) construction of the body politic.¹⁰⁶ With the production of cane sugar in the colonies, the price of sugar decreased steadily. This meant that increasing parts of the society were able to use sugar in their meals. Since it was then no longer confined to upper societal strata, the consumption of sugar provided in particular the working classes with a possibility to feel incorporated into the society of British sugar consumers. Even when they had to invest relatively much money into this chance to take part in the advantages of being European, they did so willingly. The workers were able to profit not only nutritionally but also ideologically from the commodity that was produced with low-cost, ›black‹ labour.

Referring again to Bourdieu, the consumption of sugar can be interpreted as the accumulation of racist symbolic capital.¹⁰⁷ Similar to social capital, racist symbolic capital is a collective resource that is acquired in

¹⁰⁴ Pierre Bourdieu: *Die feinen Unterschiede*, pp. 307 (›class body‹), 301 (›refined, coarse‹).

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 441.

¹⁰⁶ The corporal metaphor of the society is not an invention of early modern Europe but dates back to Antiquity, see Wulf D. Hund: *Rassismus* (1997), p. 92. It contains the assertion of inclusion for all parts of the society and assigns the respective places in the societal hierarchy. Nonetheless, the metaphor also contained a caveat for decontamination: like the individual body, the societal body had to be taken care of and, from time to time, processes of expurgation took place. This was the case when criminals were loaded into convict ships and taken to the colonies to be socially rehabilitated through hard labour.

¹⁰⁷ For the following deliberations and the extension of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capitals with ›racist symbolic capital‹, see Anja Weiß: *Racist Symbolic Capital*. For the practical application of racist symbolic capital in the Australian context, see subchapters 4.2 ›Not

the process of socialization. It functions as a means of inclusion or exclusion. As such it is able to upvalue or, to a limited extent, bridge the lack of economic or cultural capital when it is granted to poor or uneducated members of a socially constructed community. When compared with the wealthy groups of society, the poorer classes were badly off. Here the colonial system of exploitation offered the workers a possibility to expand their frame of reference. In the same vein, Adam Smith had already advised them to face (North) America and compare their situation with that of the ›colonial other‹ in order to find salvation and reassurance in the circumstance that their ›luxury is much superior to that of many an Indian prince, the absolute master of all lives and liberties of a thousand naked savages‹.¹⁰⁸

By eating sugar processed from the sugar cane that was cultivated on a plantation overseas by using the labour of slaves, sugar consumers in Britain could virtually taste their distinction from these ›others‹. Moreover, the sweetness on their tongue gave the workers the confirmation that they were on the ›right side‹ of a boundary that was just at this time being ›racially‹ determined and marked with different skin colours. They were part of the consumer society, and every spoon of sugar they put in their tea or slice of bread they jammed into their mouth re-affirmed their membership in the community of those who were benefitting from the exploitation of people overseas. With their consumption of sugar they got a sweet taste of the inclusionism they were to experience in a broader context in the latter half of the nineteenth century. With social tension and class struggle within the country, a cohesive equilibrium could only be found externally.

The measuring and hierarchization of the ›racial others‹ had been practiced as a scientifically substantiated racism for a while, but its societally inclusive manifestation emerged only with its popularizing via consumption. It was with the transition from ›scientific‹ to ›commodity racism‹¹⁰⁹ that the demarcation between colonial workers and metropolis consumers became accessible even for the British lower classes. ›Commodity racism‹ found expression in advertisements drawing on stereotypical depiction of ›coloured‹ servants and workers, was propagated on the colonial exhibi-

A White Man's Work‹ and 5.3 ›White Wages for White Australian Workers‹ in the present study.

¹⁰⁸ Adam Smith: *Lectures on Jurisprudence*, p. 562. For his reconsideration of the gap between ›European prince‹ and ›industrious and frugal peasant‹ in relation to the gap between the peasant and the ›chief of a savage nation in America‹ see p. 563. Cf. Wulf D. Hund: *Negative Societalisation*, pp. 68 f.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Anne McClintock: *Imperial Leather*, p. 24. See also subchapter 6.1 ›Support A Home Consumption Price for Sugar‹.

tions and world's fairs and united the ›white‹ consumer community in their united exploitation of ›coloured labour‹.

In the end, following the outsourcing of the labour-intensive production of raw sugar to the colonies, the employment of ›cheap labour‹ allowed for the production of cane sugar at a low cost, and the technical developments in sugar refining further catered to the possibility of all strata of society to consume increasing amounts of white sugar. From a rarity before the seventeenth century to a luxury during the eighteenth century, the latter half of the nineteenth century saw the spread of sugar consumption to all societal groups.

For the British economy, the enhancement in value by local sugar refinement and its re-exportation as a high value product, secured the surplus as profit. Factories benefited from energized workers and their consumption of refreshing beverages. The labour market provided sailors, carpenters, fire-fighters, sugar bakers, confectioners, merchants, and others involved with sugar production and retail. Housewives could preserve fruits, produce jams and marmalades, and indulge their family. Thus, »with the crucial exceptions of the slaves themselves, everyone seemed to benefit«.¹¹⁰

2.3 ›Stained with Human Blood‹: Sugar and Freedom

Sugar was not only involved in the economic but also in the political and social development towards modernity. Its increase in popularity in all parts of society coincided with its contribution to the great revolutions of the modern era. On the eve of the American Revolution, the Dighton Sugar Party anticipated the demands of the Boston Tea Party for representation and independence. In the wake of the French Revolution, the sugar slaves of Haiti started a revolution of their own and freed themselves of the racist European oppression. This had dramatic impacts on the sugar market and strengthened their British contemporaries in rethinking their own sugar situation. The voices criticizing the circumstances of sugar productions grew more numerous, and the British abolition movement organized sugar boycotts in order to exert pressure on the politicians to end the slave trade and slavery.

Before British abolitionists availed themselves of sugar as a symbol for the suffering of slaves, sugar preceded tea in being the object of dispute

¹¹⁰ Christopher L. Brown: *Moral Capital*, p. 53.

over British taxation of North America.¹¹¹ Almost exactly a year after the passing of the Sugar Act in April 1764, which placed a tax on »all white or clayed sugars of the produce or manufacture of any colony or plantation in America, not under the dominion of his Majesty«,¹¹² a ship named the »Polly« entered harbour at Dighton, Massachusetts. When the owner paid the tax for the sugar cargo that was reported by the captain, the customs collector became suspicious over the small cargo and ordered an investigation into the actual scope of sugar on board. Upon finding double the reported amount of molasses, the ship and undeclared cargo were seized. Before the vessel could be brought away for safekeeping, a group of locals with darkened faces and clothes in rags clandestinely entered the ship and discharged all of the shipment along with several other items of their interest.

The people from Massachusetts and Rhode Island were no strangers to avoiding taxation: the evasion of duties under the predecessor of the Sugar Act, the Molasses Act of 1733, had been practiced for a good thirty three years by then.¹¹³ In a same vein the acts of off-loading molasses into small boats and illegally landing them near the cities contributed to the closing of ranks against British tax policies. This was not least mirrored during the occasional trials – the judges as well as the juries were locals who sympathized with the bypassing of these British laws.¹¹⁴ Therefore, it is not surprising that the subsequent attempts on the side of the customs collector to take the culprits into custody were prevented by a mob of locals assembling to vent their displeasure.

Equally attentive of the monetary consequences of the 1764 Sugar Act, but more theoretically committed, were the anonymously published »Considerations« of the same year. The author reflected how especially »the northern colonies will be greatly and essentially injured by the said Sugar Act« since both the price of slave introduction into North America as well as the »charge of maintaining« the slaves would increase, thereby causing harm to the commerce of the whole country. At that, he did not criticize the system of slavery but feared that the act could actually inflict damage on it.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ For the following events in Dighton, see Edmund S. Morgan, Helen M. Morgan: *The Stamp Act Crisis*, pp. 45 ff.

¹¹² For the quotation and a transcript of the act, see http://ahp.gatech.edu/sugar_act_bp_1764.html.

¹¹³ Cf. Robert Middlekauff: *The Glorious Cause*, p. 59. Furthermore, the Molasses Act, which was the first step of levying sugar, was instigated by the British West Indies planters, a fact that underpins their influence in parliament.

¹¹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 61, 65.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Anon.: *Considerations upon The Act of Parliament*, pp. 7 (»injured«), 14 (»charge«).

Damage was indeed inflicted, when the Haitian Revolution seized the sugar plantations in St. Domingue. In the last decade of the eighteenth century, free people of colour made up more than forty per cent of Haiti's free population. In the context of the French Revolution, they increasingly labelled themselves as both »creole and French«.¹¹⁶ This, however, clashed with the recent French legislation, which undermined a ›white‹ self-identification of the free coloured and caused the indignation of the slaves on the sugar plantations about a possible exploitation by a ›black‹ instead of a ›white‹ elite.¹¹⁷ It was not until their insurrection that the movement became a revolution, in whose course the Haitian industry, which yielded the highest profit from sugar cultivation for France and had an export of sugar comparable to that of Jamaica, Cuba and Brazil together, was virtually destroyed.¹¹⁸

Not only did the Haitian Revolution influence other uprisings in Northern America, but it also »became an international symbol for the dangers of reckless and unplanned emancipation«.¹¹⁹ This did not least affect the discussion about slave emancipation in England. In the course of this, the possibility of »exterminating« the ›blacks‹ or »deporting them to Botany Bay (in Australia)« was debated.¹²⁰ The accrual of ›moral capital‹ for the abolitionist movement was intermittently slowed down but in the long run not stopped by this.¹²¹ In the wake of these proceedings, consumption of sugar was added another dimension.

In the British society of the late eighteenth century, cane sugar was already far more than a product imported for mere consumption. Of course, it was a nutritional crop – providing energy, sweetening food and preserving foodstuff – and an economic crop – creating wealth for the planters,

¹¹⁶ John D. Garrigus: *Colour, Class and Identity on the Eve of the Haitian Revolution*, p. 20. For the Haitian Revolution, see David Brion Davis: *Inhuman Bondage*, pp. 157 ff.

¹¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 21 (self-identification).

¹¹⁸ Cf. Carolyn E. Fick: *The Making of Haiti (revolution)*. For Haiti, see Gad Heumann, Trevor Burnard (eds.): *The Routledge History of Slavery*, pp. 235 (free), 226 (slaves); Junius P. Rodriguez (ed.): *Encyclopaedia of Slave Resistance and Rebellion*, p. 234; Robin Blackburn: *The Making of New World Slavery*, pp. 158, 433; Jakob Baxa, Guntwin Bruhns: *Zucker im Leben der Völker*, p. 85.

¹¹⁹ David Brion Davis cited in Olwyn M. Blouet: *Slavery and Freedom in the British West Indies*, p. 626. Watkin Tench, captain-lieutenant on the First Fleet, remarked in his account about the new settlement in New South Wales, how the French Revolution »with all the attendant circumstances [...] succeeded to amaze« the colonists. He was also no stranger to the West Indies and commented derogatorily on the »wretched Africans« in the British »sugar colonies«. Watkin Tench: *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson*, pp. 46 f. (›amaze‹), 110 (›Africans‹). The news about the »affairs of St. Domingo« reached Australia via London – here for example (Untitled), in: *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 01.07.1804.

¹²⁰ David Brion Davis: *Inhuman Bondage*, p. 166.

¹²¹ Cf. Christopher L. Brown: *Moral Capital*.

jobs in the mother country and revenue in the form of taxes. But it was also a ›colonial‹ crop that had helped to symbolically and literally colonize foreign countries (almost) all over the world. At this very time when sugar proved highly profitable and began to reach the lower classes of society, i.e. in the last decade of the eighteenth century, a »linkage of sugar to morality« was emphasized in the course of the campaign to abolish the slave trade.¹²²

The pleas were occasionally drastically connected to the everyday life of the British people. It was cane sugar that provided an exemplary commodity the British could easily relate to. The rhetoric of abolitionism attempted to link the producer of the sugar cane to the consumer of the cane sugar by shedding light on the circumstances of cane sugar cultivation and processing. They elucidate the gruesomeness of sugar use hidden behind the veil of geographical distance. Furthermore, the anti-slave trade campaigns, both graphically and textually, likened the consumption of sugar to the consumption of slaves. Some cartoonists went as far as actually showing depictions of the ghastly acts. A slave is boiled in a sugar vessel by a West Indian planter (Fig. 5).¹²³ The caption refers to a report read in Parliament in 1791, stating that an English slave driver had punished a slave, who claimed to be too sick to work, by immersing him in a vat of boiling sugar.¹²⁴

In this, the abolitionist rhetoric drew on an upside-down stereotype of African cannibalism.¹²⁵ In a similar vein a poem recounts the allegedly true story of a slave committing suicide by dissolving himself in the very product of his: »Then, from each relation parted, | Heat, and cold, and toil we bore; | Oft my back with scouring smarted, | And my limbs were stain'd with gore. | Thus tormented, wild, despairing, | Every hour my bosom wrung, | T'espace worse torture, blindly daring | O'er the cauldron's verge I sprung. | In the boiling sugar sinking | Cruel man! Thou did's't me see; | But the cup thy slaves are drinking | After death awaits for thee«. ¹²⁶

¹²² Sidney W. Mintz: *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom*, p. 71.

¹²³ ›Barbarities in the West Indies‹ (1791) by James Gillray, reprinted in William Hague: William Wilberforce, p. 266d.

¹²⁴ Cf. Kay D. Kriz: *Slavery, Sugar, and the Culture of Refinement*, p. 113. Deidre Coleman: *Conspicuous Consumption*, pp. 349 ff. offers an analysis that focuses on the ›miscegenation‹ perspective. The perception that the sugar vat also serves as a melting pot for ›black‹ and ›white‹, ties in neatly with the abolitionists' rejection of miscegenation and their deliberations to translocate ›blacks‹ to Africa, particularly in the context of the Sierra Leone scheme.

¹²⁵ For ›comical‹ depictions of African cannibalism, see Jan Nederveen Pieterse: *White on Black*, p. 113 ff.

¹²⁶ ›Select Poetry, Ancient and Modern, for March, 1792‹, in: *Gentleman's Magazine* (UK), 62, p. 260.

Cane sugar in England was thus utilized as a weapon of the abolitionist movement. In the consequence of the growing demands for the abolition of the slave trade, Thomas Clarkson wrote his epoch-making essay at the Cambridge University in 1785. A year later, it was published in book form and made accessible to the broad public.¹²⁷ William Fox published



Fig. 5 – Reverse ›cannibalism‹:
Barbarities in the West Indies

his ›Address‹ in 1791 and sparked an upsurge of pamphlets against the use of sugar.¹²⁸ This, in turn, caused the publishing of apologetic works foreseeing, probably in reflection of the St. Domingo events, that ›leaving off using sugar‹ would only allow the African slaves to ›live idly and un-

¹²⁷ Cf. Thomas Clarkson: An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species.

¹²⁸ See, for example, Andrew Burn: Second address to the people of Great Britain; Richard Hillier: A vindication of the address to the people of Great Britain on the use of West India Produce; Anon.: A short account of the African slave trade and an address to the people of Great Britain on the propriety of abstaining from West India sugar and rum; Anon.: An address to her Royal Highness the Dutchess of York against the use of sugar; Anon.: Considerations addressed to professors of Christianity of every Denomination on the impropriety of consuming West-India Sugar & Rum. For an earlier reasoning against the treatment of sugar slaves, see James Ramsay: An essay on the treatment and conversion of African slaves in the British sugar colonies, on which Ramsay had commenced work as early as 1768. Cf. Christopher L. Brown: Moral Capital, pp. 229 f.

profitably, and be at liberty to raise rebellions against their Masters, might cut their throats, and usurp their lands and fortunes«.¹²⁹

Fox granted the consumers' crucial responsibility in slavery by stating that the »slave-dealer, the slave-holder, and the slave-driver, are virtually the agents of the consumer« who is »the original cause, the first mover in the horrid process«, thus exposing the veiled part of sugar cultivation. He addressed the English sugar consumers with a deterring calculation: a family that for twenty-one month abstains from consuming its usual ration of five pounds sugar a week (with the addition of rum) will by this »prevent the slavery or murder of one fellow-creature«. Extrapolated to almost forty-thousand people this would mean the total prevention of slave trade for England. He summed up his calculations by stating that »in every pound of sugar used, the produce of slaves imported from Africa, we may be considered as consuming two ounces of human flesh« and by citing »a French writer« who reported that one »cannot look on a piece of sugar, without conceiving it stained with spots of human blood«.¹³⁰

Pamphlets were printed to underpin the responsibility of the consumer for the circumstances of raw sugar production.¹³¹ One staged a fictional conversation between an English gentleman and Cushoo, a freed African slave from Jamaica.¹³² The subsequently unfolding dialogue and additional footnotes equip the reader with knowledge about the atrocities in the production of slave-grown sugar in the West Indies, make the case for the feelings of the Africans, and maintain that leaving off rum and sugar would cause the slave trade to deservedly cease. Nonetheless, the style of writing

¹²⁹ John Scattergood: *An antidote to popular frenzy*, p. 9. See also William Innes: A letter to the members of parliament who have presented petitions to the honourable House of Commons for the abolition of the slave trade.

¹³⁰ William Fox: *An address to the people of Great Britain on the propriety of abstaining from West India sugar and rum*, p. 4.

¹³¹ Indeed, similar reasoning could be observed in France. »[N]ot a barrel of sugar arrives in Europe that is not stained with human blood« wrote Claude A. Helvetius in »De l'Esprit« in 1758 (»[I]l n'arrive point de barrique de sucre en Europe qui ne soit teinte de sang humain. Or quel homme, à la vue des malheurs qu'occasionnent la culture & l'exportation de cette denrée, refuseroit de s'en priver, & ne renonceroit pas à un plaisir acheté par les larmes & la mort de tant de malheureux? Détournons nos regards d'un spectacle si funeste, & qui fait tant de honte & d'horreur à l'humanité« – Claude Helvetius: *De l'Esprit*, p. 25n) and by calling on his readers to »renounce« this »pleasure« bought with the tears and deaths of so many unfortunates, he repudiated the statement of his contemporary Montesquieu who argued that »sugar would be too dear« were it not the product of slave labour (»Le sucre seroit trop cher, si l'on ne faisoit travailler la plante qui le produit par des esclaves«, Charles-Louis de Secondat Baron de Montesquieu: *De l'Esprit des Lois*, p. 69).

¹³² »Cushoo: Ah! Massa, poor Negro worse use den dog. Mr. English: What have I to do with that, Cushoo? I am no planter. Cushoo: But you drinke Rum and Sugar, Massa. Mr. English: Well! And what of that? Cushoo: Poor Negro make Rum and Sugar« – Anon.: *No Rum! No Sugar!*, p. 3.

allows predominant stereotypes of the Africans to shimmer through. Cushman, whose family name remains unmentioned, is portrayed as incapable of sophisticatedly expressing himself with more than Pidgin English.¹³³ His name is an obvious allusion to the biblical Cush, the son of Ham, who played a major figure in the religious justification of slavery.¹³⁴ While acting in favour of the abolishment of slave trade and slavery, the abolitionists were seemingly having a hard time to break with the prevalent perceptions of Africans.

The first British sugar boycott peaked in the early seventeen nineties. On the consumer side, about three hundred thousand persons abstained from the use and consumption of slave-grown sugar from the West Indies.¹³⁵ This suggests the ›class‹-based question of who actually abstained in the last decade of the eighteenth century. The secondary literature suggests that »both well-to-do and working class« left off sugar, which would present the abstention movement as class-uniting.¹³⁶ Others see the concentration of abolitionist in the ›white‹, predominately provincial, middle class and are of the opinion that lower classes were not willing to reduce their sugar consumption, especially not by substituting it with the more expensive (because taxed) East Indian sugar.¹³⁷ The theory that large portions of the working class abstained from the use of sugar would also seem opposed to the growing sugar consumption in the lower classes in the course of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century.¹³⁸

Besides a boycott on actual consumption, there were grocers and merchants who were sympathetic to the abolitionist movement and refrained from selling slave-grown sugar. One grocer ran an advertisement telling his customers, that »being impressed [...] with the Sufferings and Wrongs of that deeply-injured People« he now »discontinued selling the Article of *sugar*«. As a »Dealer in that Article, which appears to be a principal Support of the Slave Trade« he has »disposed of the Stock [he had] on Hand« and would refrain from restocking until he could »procure it

¹³³ Not least Frantz Fanon demonstrated how, in present times, language as a cultural tool still functions to socially position a person in society or outside thereof. ›Pidgin English‹, or, as in Fanon's case, ›petit-nègre‹, is used to infantilize and subordinate the ›other‹. Cf. Frantz Fanon: *Peau noire, masque blanc*.

¹³⁴ For the ›Curse of Ham‹ see David Brion Davis: *Inhuman Bondage*, pp. 64 ff.

¹³⁵ This is the figure that Thomas Clarkson gives in ›The History of the Rise Progress, and accomplishment of the Abolition of the Slave-Trade by the British Parliament‹, p. 334. Some secondary sources give improbably high figures, e.g. Charles Tilly: *Social Movements*, p. 33, claims that »300,000 families« abstained from the slave-grown sugar.

¹³⁶ Elizabeth Abbott: *Sugar*, p. 241.

¹³⁷ Cf. John R. Oldfield: *Popular politics and British anti-slavery*, pp. 7, 125; Charlotte Sussman: *Consuming Anxieties*, p. 113.

¹³⁸ Cf. Sidney W. Mintz: *Sweetness and Power*, pp. 152 ff.

through Channels less contaminated, [...] and less polluted with Human Blood».¹³⁹ Others advertised their stock of East India sugar by stating that it is made »by free people« and clear of »circumstances of cruelty and oppression«.¹⁴⁰ Sugar refiners in London held a meeting to consider »what further steps should be taken to relieve the country from the West-Indian Monopoly of Sugar«.¹⁴¹ This suggests that pro-abolitionists did not back away from their cause, even though they had to sacrifice financially or nutritionally.



Fig. 6 – Politically correct consumption:
Anti-slavery decor

In 1823, the ›London Society for Mitigating and Gradually Abolishing the State of Slavery throughout the British Dominions‹ was formed. This time more class-specific pamphlets were circulated. Three examples are ›What Does Your Sugar Cost? A Cottage Conversation on the Subject of British Negro Slavery‹, which aimed at »working-class women«, and ›Pity the Negro; or an Address to children on the Subject of Slavery‹, which was

¹³⁹ (Untitled), in: General Evening Post (UK), 03.-06.03.1792.

¹⁴⁰ ›East India, or Benares Sugar, in: Diary or Woodfall's Register (UK), 17.03.1792.

¹⁴¹ (Untitled), in: Star, 14.03.1792 (UK).

directed at younger sugar consumers, while ›Reasons for Substituting East India Sugar for the West‹ addressed the »higher classes«.¹⁴²

The pamphlets condemning the consumption of sugar from the West Indies advocated the substitution by East India or other sugar grown by free people.¹⁴³ Additionally, buyers interested in antislavery-themed sugar bowls had the choice between Wedgwood china and other receptacles with slogans against slavery. The prominent display of the kneeling slave waiting for his ›white‹ master to free him was now joined by a female version (Fig. 6).¹⁴⁴ The Wedgwood seals were also used on hair pins and brooches and catered to the women's sense for fashion, emphasizing their importance as advertisers but also as bearer of the abolition cause.¹⁴⁵ Albeit, the iconography of the Wedgwood medallions made clear that the campaign against slavery indeed harmonized with the contemporary racist image of humanity. The medallions did not portray ›blacks‹ and ›whites‹ as equals. The Africans are removed from their original context by slavery (symbolized by the chains around their ankles); they are kneeling and patiently waiting for the ›white‹ (mostly male) to approve of their plea to be accepted as human and be liberated. After the approval, the slaves are freed in an act of generosity and humanity, which, in turn, makes the ›white‹ a hero and leaves the ›blacks‹ as their debtor.¹⁴⁶

The immediate story of Australian sugar began shortly before the first peak of sugar abstentionism with two fleets leaving England into two different directions. A convoy of ships set sail to Sierra Leone in April 1787, followed closely by the First Fleet which headed for the future penal settlement in New South Wales in May. The eleven vessels of the First Fleet

¹⁴² Elizabeth Abbott: *Sugar*, pp. 251 (›women‹), 252 (›pity‹); Claire Midgely: *Women against Slavery*, p. 61 (›higher‹).

¹⁴³ The import of East Indian sugar did not become an actual surrogate for West Indian sugar until this second wave of sugar abstention, since the labour capacities in East India were not sufficient to satisfy a heightened demand of British consumers. Cf. John R. Oldfield: *Popular Politics and British Anti-Slavery*, p. 57.

¹⁴⁴ Reproductions of the medallions can be found, inter alia, in John R. Oldfield: *Popular Politics and British Anti-Slavery*; Simon Gikandi: *Slavery and the Culture of Taste*, p. 23. The sugar bowls were reprinted, amongst others, in *Museum in Docklands: London, Sugar & Slavery*, p. 27.

¹⁴⁵ Thomas Clarkson remarks that at the height of the anti-slave trade action in the 1790s »the taste for them [the cameos] became general; thus fashion, which usually confines itself with worthless things, was seen for once in the honourable office of promoting the cause of justice, humanity, and freedom« – Thomas Clarkson: *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the Slave-Trade by the British Parliament*, p. 282.

¹⁴⁶ Josiah Wedgwood and the New South Wales colony came in close contact, when Governor Phillip sent specimen of clay from Sydney Cove to Joseph Banks, who forwarded them to Wedgwood to manufacture the Sydney Cove medallion. Cf. <http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/collection/blog/index.php/tag/governor-arthur-phillip/>; see a copy of the medallion at <http://www.nma.gov.au/collections-search/display?irn=73354>.

cleared the port of Portsmouth for their journey to ›New Holland‹ with 785 convicts, »two years' provision, and all sorts of implements for the culture of the earth«.¹⁴⁷ What the fleets had in common was not only that both were meant to establish new settlements and form self-sustaining societies on other continents but also that both fleets arrived at their destination with ready-to-plant sugar cane in the hold and those to cultivate it on board.

The desire to grow slavery-free sugar was explicitly expressed in the case of the Sierra Leone settlement when some newspapers held high hopes of an African sugar that could compete with slave-grown West Indian sugar. More pressing, though, was the need to rid London's streets from an allegedly ever growing number of ›black‹ people and the want to secure new areas of sugar growing. A mere quarter of a century earlier – in the aforementioned ›snow for sugar‹ trade-off as a result of the Peace of Paris – Britain had restored France's possession of Guadeloupe and Martinique and thus also lost its lucrative sugar plantations.¹⁴⁸

However, both kinds of sugar cane, on the way to Sierra Leone and to New South Wales, showed the strong perception of sugar as a plantation crop – they were to be cultivated by discriminated labour. In the first case, free ›black‹ labourers were supposed to yield a non-slavery sugar. Though it was the product of abstentionism and the abolition of slavery, it was not free of problems. For the abolitionists it was clear that there was no plant more appropriate to be planted by ›repatriated‹ Africans than sugar cane.

Furthermore, their Sierra Leone plans revealed another dimension of abolitionist thinking: those who were to cultivate sugar cane at the new location were deported in order to purify the streets of London from their sight and keep the society of London from the alleged consequences of miscegenation. Therefore, considering the British lower-class women's presumed fondness of African men, for the abolitionists it seemed only logical to free the British society of Africans as a ›nuisance factor‹ as well as such ›white moral impurities«.¹⁴⁹ This shows, once again, that racism as a social relation was detachable from slavery without too much ado. The

¹⁴⁷ (Untitled), in: *London Chronicle* (UK), 14.09.1786. For the gathering of the convicts and the departure of the First Fleet, see Manning Clark: *A Short History of Australia*, pp. 14 ff.; Cassandra Pybus: *Black Founders*, p. 77. For the expedition to Sierra Leone, see Adam Hochschild: *Bury the Chains*, pp. 150 f.; Richard S. Reddie: *Abolition*, p. 160.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Elizabeth Abbott: *Sugar*, p. 172. For the general desire of the abolitionists to counteract the increase of numbers in ›black‹ population, and the notion of Africa as a continent to be colonized, instead of being enslaved, see Deidre Coleman: *Conspicuous Consumption*.

¹⁴⁹ Jonas Hanway, chair of the Committee for the Relief of the Black Poor, for instance, was a mover of the Sierra Leone project because he strongly disliked the »unnatural connections between black persons and white; the disagreeable consequences of which

abolitionists were promoting thoughts of emancipation and equality but at the same time also fanned concerns about ›racial‹ mixture.¹⁵⁰

In the sugar cane ›bound for Botany Bay‹, on the other hand, the knowledge that the same plant could also be combined with (predominantly ›white‹) convict labour found expression. The discrimination, which clung to the Africans even if they were freed, was one that English convicts were met with as well, even though they were Europeans.

At a time when sugar cane was still cultivated and processed with the help of slave labour, sugar cane cultivation in New South Wales was supposed to be a measure of social rehabilitation for those of whom the English society had ridden itself. Not only did this comply with the sentence of hard labour the convicts had received, but this would also allow for the supply of cane sugar to the free settlers. This meant that seemingly the producers of the sugar were not planned to be identical with the consumers of the sugar. There was also cane sugar on board of the First Fleet, but convicts as well as marines and settlers were not apportioned any.¹⁵¹ The sugar taken aboard during the journey was mainly or solely used as a pharmaceutical. This had been based on legacy medical findings: not only the surgeons of the First Fleet knew of the medicinal application of sugar, but, already well before, seafaring men, like Captain Cook, had recommended sugar as both an antiseptic agent and a preventive measure against scurvy.¹⁵²

2.4 ›An Article of Real Necessity‹: Sugar and Australian Appropriation

Cane sugar in Australia was initially a highly sought after product. The shortages of supply in the first years of the new settlement left the society devoid of the precious sweetness. It was not until private traders provisioned the colony with supplies that a constant consumption pattern of

make their appearance but too frequently in our streets« – John Pugh: Remarkable Occurrences in the Life of Jonas Hanway, p. 211.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Kathleen Wilson: *The Island Race*, pp. 56 f. In the same vein, Thomas Jefferson opposed slavery in North America but simultaneously emphasized that emancipated slaves could not remain in the country: »Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate than that these people are to be free. Nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government« and »[w]hen freed, he is to be removed beyond the reach of mixture« – Paul Leicester Ford: *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, Vol. 1, p. 77 (›certainly‹); *ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 59 (›mixture‹). Cf. Joe R. Feagin: *Racist America*, p. 69.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Peter Griggs: Sugar demand and consumption in colonial Australia, p. 76.

¹⁵² Cf. Peter Macinnis: *Bittersweet*, p. 77 (medical use); Charles Hutton, George Shaw, Richard Pearson: *The Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, p. 404; Johann R. Forster: *Observations made during a voyage round the world*, p. 632.

sugar could be established. Not long after this happened, sugar consumption matched and then outdistanced British consumption, until – once the Queensland sugar industry was firmly established – Australians crested the list of the top per capita sugar consumers in the world. Notwithstanding the British-Australians sweet tooth, the permission for partaking in colonial sugar consumption not only depended on the supply but also on social status.

The First Fleet dropped anchor at Sydney Cove on a sunny Saturday in January 1788. It had on board, besides other provisions and items necessary for the founding of a settlement, several sugar cane setts.¹⁵³ They were loaded onto the ships at the Cape of Good Hope and, after a voyage of five thousand nautical miles, sugar cane eventually returned to the Pacific region.¹⁵⁴

Then again, it has to be interjected that it had never actually left its area of origin but had acquired different social forms there. Captain Cook mentioned the encounter of sugar cane in the Easter Island group and the New Hebrides, and the first expeditions of the new settlers to the islands near Fiji showed that their vegetation was »abounding« with sugar cane.¹⁵⁵ The history of sugar cane in the Pacific and Asian region shows that its cultivation was not per se a matter of large plantations and unfree or slave labour: in China sugar had always been a product of small farms and peasants or tenants, cultivated without the use of slaves.¹⁵⁶

Nonetheless, when this very sugar cane purchased in Africa and abundant with European addenda arrived in Australia, its Pacific sweetness had been forfeited a long time ago. Far from being an »innocent« plant now, it had become the prototype of the very plantation crop which not only fos-

¹⁵³ The First Fleet reached today's Sydney on 26 January 1788. Before that, Captain Arthur Phillip had considered the first landing point, Botany Bay, »in the highest degree unfavourable« and removed the whole fleet to Port Jackson. Arthur Phillip: *The Voyage of Governor Phillip to Botany Bay*, p. 44. On the first day of arrival, the surgeon of the First Fleet wrote down noted that »the evening was bright, and the prospects before us such as might justify sanguine expectation« – Watkin Tench: *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay*, p. 59.

¹⁵⁴ Cf. David Collins, Philip G. King, George Bass, Maria Collins: *An account of the English colony in New South Wales*, p. 6; see also Fredrick C. P. Curlewis: *The Australian Cane Sugar Industry*, p. 2; Richard Beckett: *Convicted Tastes*, p. 16, Charles T. Wood: *Sugar Country*, p. 2, Peter Macinnis: *Bittersweet*, p. 78.

¹⁵⁵ David Collins, Philip G. King, George Bass, Maria Collins: *An account of the English colony in New South Wales*, p. 269 (»abounding«). See also Edmund O. von Lippmann: *Geschichte des Zuckers*, p. 651. The New Hebrides (Vanuatu) and Fiji were the very same places the Queensland sugar planters were later recruiting their labourers from.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Christian Daniels, Nicholas K. Menzies: *Agro-Industries*, pp. 64, 93; Jock H. Gallo-way: *The Modernization of Sugar Production in Southeast Asia*, p. 3.

tered the development of modern capitalism but also, initially, anticipated its consumer culture based on mass production and mass consumption.

On board the First Fleet were, besides the cane setts, those who were supposed to plant the sugar cane: the convicts. Though Captain Arthur Phillip, the leader of the expedition and subsequently the first Governor of New South Wales, stated that ›there can be no slavery in a free land‹, he nevertheless assumed that the convicts were to serve the time of their sentences with hard labour to lay the foundations of a new colony.¹⁵⁷ The almost phlegmatic handling of this source of unfree labour was revealed when, for example, the documentation of the convicts' sentences was not completed at the time of the First Fleet's leaving of Portsmouth harbour and, therefore, the convicts who were not otherwise pardoned had to remain part of the bound work force until the official records confirming the expiry of their sentences arrived with one of the subsequent ships.¹⁵⁸

The first convicts were predominantly British city-dwelling male re-offenders who had committed property crimes.¹⁵⁹ However, eleven of the five hundred and forty-three male convicts who were the first to be unloaded at Sydney Cove had a dark skin colour.¹⁶⁰ Some of them were former slaves from America. But though ›racial‹ slavery was still in practice, and even the slave trade was yet to be abolished, the connection of sugar with oppressed labour in the Australian context was initially one that did not rely on skin colour at all.¹⁶¹ With that, all convicts were considered able to plant sugar canes because they were repressible outside the context of ›racial‹ slavery.

Even if they had not been slaves as such, the criminals from the mother country were nonetheless convicted to hard labour and seen as an exploitable labour force. Only a few years after the convict transportations to New South Wales ceased and British slavery had been abolished for over a decade, deliberations whether convicts from British prisons could be

¹⁵⁷ Manning Clark: *Select Documents in Australian History*, p. 42 (cit. Arthur Phillip ›free land‹).

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Cassandra Pybus: *Black Founders*, pp. 77, 91, 103, 114. Some convicts of the First Fleet were already two years beyond the expiry of their sentence when the records reached the settlement in 1791 – cf. *ibid.*, p. 120.

¹⁵⁹ Cf. Robert Hughes: *The Fatal Shore*, pp. 159 f.; Marjory Harper, Stephen Constantine: *Migration and Empire*, p. 44.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Cassandra Pybus: *Black Founders*, p. 90. For the biographies and the story of the first black convicts, see in particular pp. 183 ff. See also Ian Duffield: *Martin Beck and Afro-Blacks in Colonial Australia*, pp. 9 f., who estimates that over three hundred seventy male and seventeen female ››Afro-Black‹ convicts‹ were landed in New South Wales in the years from 1788 to 1842.

¹⁶¹ The Slave Trade Act was passed in March 1807, followed by the Slavery Abolition Act in 1833.

sent to work on West Indian sugar plantations resurfaced in England. The author attempted to falsify the theory that ›whites‹ were not able to work in the tropics by referring to the employment of ›white‹ labour on sugar plantations in St. Christopher and St. Kitts and pointed out the economic advantages when using convict labour.¹⁶² In this context, ›class‹ overlaid ›race‹, with racism based on skin colour initially playing a minor role within the convict society and the division between unfree workers and guards outweighing it.

Though explicitly mentioned as a suitable plant for the new colony,¹⁶³ the cane setts planted at the Port Jackson settlement – which later became Sydney – initially did not grow well, if at all.¹⁶⁴ The first attempts to plant sugar in the Botanic Gardens were in vain. On Norfolk Island, on the other hand, sugar cultivation went well, but it was too limited in size to sustain a colony. It was only when sugar cane and plantations went further north that first successes were made. Following the expansive motion of the colonial society, cane cultivation took place at every outpost of the penal settlement along the East Coast and availed itself of the cheap labour force.

Not only sugar cane but also refined cane sugar – bought at the Cape of Good Hope and Rio de Janeiro – arrived with the First Fleet in the colony of New South Wales.¹⁶⁵ Even though the allocation of sugar was initially regulated along class-specific lines, under colonial conditions these boundaries dissipated earlier and faster than in the mother country, and sugar consumption began to infiltrate all parts of society. When the sugar provisions were exhausted in July 1788, surgeon John White demanded the restocking of this and other ›essential and absolutely necessary‹ articles for the use of the Sydney hospital.¹⁶⁶ As early as September 1789 six

¹⁶² Cf. James Window: *Reasons for the Employment of convicts in the British Sugar Growing Colonies in the West Indies*.

¹⁶³ Cf. James M. Matra: *A Proposal for Establishing a Settlement in New South Wales*, p. 36.

¹⁶⁴ Though in South Africa, where the cane setts were brought on board the First Fleet, sugar production was only just emerging in the late eighteenth century, a sufficient amount of sugar cane could be accumulated with the help of plantations and slaves in Mauritius in order to stock various expedition ships – cf. David Lincoln: *The Historical Geography of the Southern African Development Community's Sugar Protocol*, pp. 117 f.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Peter Griggs: *Sugar demand and consumption in colonial Australia*, p. 76. Only five years after the First Fleet, sugar arrived a second, symbolic time at the new settlement: the convict ship ›Sugar Cane‹ discharged Irish convicts in September 1793, and subsequently made its way to China to pick up tea for the British trade. Cf. Darrell T. Tryon, Jean-Michel Charpentier: *Pacific Pidgins and Creoles*, p. 98; Barbara Hall: *A Nimble Fingered Tribe; ›Early Australian Days‹*, in: *Barrier Miner*, 12.04.1911.

¹⁶⁶ ›Surgeon White to Governor Phillip‹, in: *Commonwealth of Australia: Historical Records of Australia*, Vol. I, p. 59. Six hundred pounds of coarse sugar were then ordered to be purchased at the Cape of Good Hope, 3,000 pounds of brown sugar followed in August 1789 – *ibid.* pp. 89, 130.

ounces of sugar a week became part of the general ration.¹⁶⁷ But the loss of a store ship forced to cut back rations again, until in 1792 additional supplies arrived.¹⁶⁸ Sugar (pooled together with oil as one item in the official statistics) appeared for the first time on the official table of supplies for the settlements at Sydney, Parramatta and Norfolk Island in May 1793.¹⁶⁹

The mere consumption of sugar temporarily seemed to cease being a means of social distinction when in 1794 six hundred pounds of sugar explicitly for the »use of Convicts on their passage« were shipped on board of the ›Surprise‹ on its way to New South Wales.¹⁷⁰ The subsequent year, saw an increase in the cane sugar supplies, which were imported from the Cape of Good Hope, English colonies or re-imported from England, and it was granted to convicts in the same amount as the »civil, military, and free settlers«. ¹⁷¹ At this point in time, sugar was already considered an article »absolutely necessary« for the convicts and was also issued as a replacement for salted meat or rice. It was officially issued for the first time in October 1795.¹⁷²

This, however, did not exclude the ceasing of sugar allowances in times of shortage – as was the case when wheat replaced sugar for civil military and free people, maize for convicts in November 1796.¹⁷³ Furthermore, it became common practice to pay »for all extra labour« performed by convicts and the »weekly stipends of the clerks, overseers and constables, principally in spirits and sugar«. ¹⁷⁴ There were occasionally shortages in the sugar supply before private traders regulated a steady supply with sugar and other commodities to the colony at the turn of the century and for some time afterwards.¹⁷⁵

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, each convict consumed nineteen and a half pounds of sugar a year – compared with a concurrent British per-capita annual consumption of eighteen pounds. However, there were voices of dissent in regard to convict rations. Because of its medi-

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Peter Griggs: Sugar demand and consumption in colonial Australia, p. 76.

¹⁶⁸ Cf. James Bonwick: Geography of Australia and New Zealand, p. 23.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Commonwealth of Australia: Historical Records of Australia, Vol. 1, p. 437.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 465.

¹⁷¹ David Collins, Philip Gidley King, George Bass, Maria Collins: An account of the English colony in New South Wales, p. 280.

¹⁷² ›Captain Paterson to the Right Hon. Henry Dundas‹, in: Commonwealth of Australia: Historical Records of Australia, Vol. 1, p. 530 (›necessary‹), 679.

¹⁷³ Cf. Commonwealth of Australia: Historical Records of Australia, Vol. 1, p. 702. See also, for example, ›General Orders‹, in: Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 03.07.1803.

¹⁷⁴ John T. Bigge: Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry into the State of the Colony of New South Wales, p. 46. See also Raphael Cilento: Triumph in the Tropics, pp. 91 f.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Peter Griggs: Sugar demand and consumption in colonial Australia, p. 76.

nal value some argued that convicts should not be assigned sugar at all, but instead it should be restricted to the hospitals. Such arrangements, in turn, provoked muggings of hospitals in times of sugar shortages.¹⁷⁶

During the times when the »price of sugar [had] again taken wing, and its flight [was] not likely to be arrested until an arrival clips the pinion«, the community of sugar consumers became very exclusive. As soon as the next load of »sugar of a very fine quality« and »sugar candy in tubs« from the Cape of Good Hope reached the colony, the first to be provided with it were the military personnel.¹⁷⁷ Nonetheless, sugar was clearly an important foodstuff for the whole New South Wales settlement because an article in the »Sydney Gazette« eventually considered sugar »an article of real necessity«.¹⁷⁸ As an ingredient it could be found in cakes, sweetmeat, as a condiment for tea, in the distillation of rum, the brewing of beer and the preparation of vinegar with currants.¹⁷⁹

In the first decade of the nineteenth century, each worker in New South Wales consumed about one hundred and ten pounds per year, and in the eighteen forties a calculation suggested a yearly consumption of sometimes as much as one hundred and sixty pounds.¹⁸⁰ The working classes of this time had a »vastly higher standard of living« than their British counterparts and notes that »even convicts [...] ate more and better food than did labouring people at home«. Compared to this, British consumption of about nineteen pounds on average per capita was by far outstripped.¹⁸¹

In the eighteen twenties, Governor Brisbane abolished the regulation that to convicts »no other article of luxury or indulgence [could be granted] than those of tea and sugar«.¹⁸² No longer did the law require convicts

¹⁷⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 79 f., 84; for information on British consumption, see Sidney W. Mintz: *Sweetness and Power*, p. 67; for raids on hospitals, see, for example, »Judge Advocate's Office«, in: *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 21.08.1803; also »Examinations«, in: *ibid.*, 09.10.1803.

¹⁷⁷ (Untitled), in: *ibid.*, 04.09.1803 (»pinion«); Advertisement for the »Sale of The Castle of Good Hope's Cargo«, in: *ibid.*, 05.03.1803 (»quality«, »tubs«); for a notice about newly arrived sugar, see, for instance, »Notice«, in: *ibid.*, 31.07.1803.

¹⁷⁸ »Sydney«, in: *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 31.07.1803.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Michael Symons: *One Continuous Picnic*, pp. 119 f.; »Directions for making Vinegar«, in: *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 02.04.1803.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Peter Griggs: *Sugar demand and consumption in colonial Australia*, p. 80. In comparison to these figures, in Britain the average sugar consumption did only rise to about ninety pound in 1901 – see Sidney W. Mintz: *Sweetness and Power*, p. 143.

¹⁸¹ Russel Ward: *The Australian Legend*, p. 34 (»higher standard«, »convicts«). While Mintz claims that in 1850 sugar consumption was firmly established in all parts of British society (*Sweetness and Power*, p. 148), Griggs claims that sugar became an item of British mass consumption only in the later decades of the nineteenth century. See Peter Griggs: *Sugar demand and consumption in colonial Australia*, p. 75.

¹⁸² John T. Bigge: *Report of the Commissioner of Inquiry into the State of the Colony of New South Wales*, p. 183.

to be provided with sugar rations, as was the case with servants. Employers soon used its distribution as a means of reward for good behaviour and its non-distribution as a means of punishing disobedience and insubordination. In the districts where attempts in the eighteen twenties were made to grow sugar cane with the help of convict labour the allocation of sugar varied. At the Moreton Bay penal settlement the convicts received from one to two ounces of sugar a week, in Norfolk Island one ounce and at Port Macquarie none at all.¹⁸³ Nonetheless, with changing politics and an increase in sugar supplies, a convict wrote from Van Diemen's Land in the eighteen thirties that »[a]s for tea And Sugar I almost Could swim in it«.¹⁸⁴

Sugar in connection with the soon emerging national beverage tea became omnipresent. A contemporary observer remarked in 1841: »If you go into a cottage at any hour, the first thing you are offered is a quart of tea with brown Mauritius or Java sugar and damper«.¹⁸⁵ Of course, in combination with the hot beverage, cane sugar played a role in the legend of the nomad ›bushman‹ when the swagman reminisced about how »[m]y mate and myself often used a pound of tea and six pounds of sugar between us in a week«.¹⁸⁶

Owing to an increasing demand for sugar, attempts to cultivate sugar cane and produce sugar in the new settlement were made relatively early on. Despite all this impetus to foster local production, these plans were upset by nature. The planters found the climate too unfavourable, and attempts to plant sugar cane drove the settlers up the East Coast of Australia until they reached the tropics (Fig. 7).¹⁸⁷ Bearing in mind sugar's close connection with unfree and cheap labour, it is not surprising that attempts to cultivate sugar were predominately made at the same places where penal settlements were erected – first at Norfolk Island (1788), then at Port Macquarie (1823) and finally in Moreton Bay (1824). Philip Gidley King, first Commandant and later Lieutenant-Governor of Norfolk Island,

¹⁸³ Cf. Peter Griggs: Sugar demand and consumption in colonial Australia, p. 80.

¹⁸⁴ Cited in Hamish Maxwell-Stewart: *Like Poor Galley Slaves*, p. 54.

¹⁸⁵ Cited in Richard Beckett: *Convicted Tastes*, p. 40.

¹⁸⁶ A record of the everyday bush life between 1826 and 1841, cited in Michael Symons: *One Continuous Picnic*, p. 30 (›mate‹).

¹⁸⁷ The map shows the arrival of cane setts from the Cape of Good Hope with the First Fleet in 1788, and the northward-bound intra-Australian route taken by subsequent attempts to cultivate sugar cane on the Australian mainland. The depicted boundaries are today's state boundaries. New South Wales was the first colonial state, Queensland separated from it in 1859, Western Australia was renamed from Swan River in 1832, South Australia was founded in 1834 and Victoria in 1851, and Tasmania was renamed from Van Diemen's Land in 1856. The Northern Territory separated from South Australia in 1911, in the same year the Australian Capital Territory was established. For the expansion of sugar cane to Mackay, see Kenneth W. Manning: *In their own Hands*, p. 2; for Ingham (Herbert River) and Cairns, see Charles T. Wood: *Sugar Country*, p. 14.

The cane was reported to »flourish[] luxuriously« at the Port Macquarie penal settlement. Cane setts were brought there, either from Norfolk Island or the Sydney Botanical Gardens, in an attempt to establish the first farm-scale cultivation in Australia. Reportedly, seventy tons of sugar and some rum were produced four years later, but the climate was again found to be too cold to grow cane in a sufficient amount for commercial use. The ideological closeness of slaves and convicts was emphasized by a Scottish naval surgeon and landowner when visiting the settlement. »Convicts may be made to do quite as much as ever I saw accomplished by slaves«, he reasoned and even thought them an improvement over slaves since the latter had to be »previously purchased«, while the labour force of the former could be »furnished free from any primary outlay of capital«. Major-General Lachlan Macquarie showed himself satisfied that the settlement »is every way calculated for the purpose for which it was intended: the soil is capable of every valuable production [...] such as sugar, coffee cotton«.¹⁸⁹

While at Port Macquarie cane cultivation ceased due to climatic conditions eight years after the first attempts, sugar cane at the penal settlement of Moreton Bay thrived for a while and was moved to the site of present-day Brisbane. The cultivation was abandoned when British government regulation prohibited it in the early eighteen thirties. It was not until ten years later, when free settlers came to the district, that sugar cane cultivation on small patches of land was re-established.¹⁹⁰

In the eighteen forties the Australasian Sugar Company was founded and brought to Australia knowledgeable sugar labourers and materials, as well as Edward William Knox, who founded the Colonial Sugar Refinery in 1855 which initially refined the raw sugar imported in Australia.¹⁹¹ Efforts to establish a sugar refinery in New South Wales started as early as September 1841, but the first sugar refinery was actually built in Sydney a year later.¹⁹² It refined raw sugar imported initially from Batavia (today:

¹⁸⁹ (Untitled), in: Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 04.11.1824 (›flourish‹); Peter Macinnis: Bittersweet, p. 149 (›convicts‹); Lachlan Macquarie: Report by Major-General Macquarie in the colony of New South Wales, p. 38 (›production‹). For Port Macquarie, see also ›Address of the President of the Horticultural and Agricultural Society‹, in: Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 06.10.1829; Andrew Markus: Australian Race Relations, p. 55; Eleanor H. McSwan: The Sugar Industry on the Lower Clarence River, p. 1; Keith T. H. Farrer: A Settlement Amply Supplied, p. 222.

¹⁹⁰ For Moreton Bay, see Ted Henzell: Australian Agriculture, pp. 178 f.; Kay Saunders: Workers in Bondage, p. 47; Peter Griggs: Global Industry, Local Innovation, p. 26 f.; Arthur F. Bell: The Story of the Sugar Industry in Queensland, p. 8.

¹⁹¹ Cf. George Bindon, David Philip Miller: Sweetness and light, p. 173.; ›Ship News‹, in: Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 14.07.1840.

¹⁹² Cf. ›Refined Sugar‹, in: Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 09.09.1841.

Jakarta), Calcutta (Kolkatā), Madras (Chennai), Mauritius or re-exported from England; from the eighteen fifties onwards the raw sugar came from Java, the Philippines, and after that gradually increasing from the sugar mills established in New South Wales and Queensland.¹⁹³

After almost eighty years of experimentation, the first successful cultivation of sugar cane for commercial purposes was accomplished by Louis Hope – the »father of the sugar industry« – in 1862 at Ormiston, near Brisbane.¹⁹⁴ After this, sugar cultivation »was no longer a mere experiment [...] but had been proved to be a matter of fact that sugar could be grown here as well as in any other part of the world«.¹⁹⁵ Hope's plantation became the flagship of the young sugar industry, disproving »the theory that Queensland must always be dependent upon its pastoral resources«.¹⁹⁶ In 1865, Hope built the first commercial sugar mill at Redland Bay.¹⁹⁷

Notwithstanding its quality, by the late eighteen sixties, Queensland sugar had become a regular article on the markets.¹⁹⁸ Even more than this, it was an article which then and henceforth enjoyed great popularity with its consumption being »largest in Australia, where the European population uses about 100 lbs. per head; whilst in England 36 lbs. and in Russia only 2 lbs. per head are consumed«.¹⁹⁹ Australia maintained a high level of sugar consumption until, by the mid-eighteen seventies, it became the global leader in sugar consumption per capita – a condition which remained unchanged at the beginning of the twentieth century.²⁰⁰

Even before the very cane for the sugar consumed at that time commenced to grow in Queensland, Australian businessmen came up with the idea to establish a commercial plantation on the near-by island of New Guinea.²⁰¹ With this they returned to the very plant that had started its tri-

¹⁹³ Cf. »The Sale of The Castle of Good Hope's Cargo«, in: Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 05.03.1803; »Ship News«, in: *ibid.*, 15.04.1804; »Ship Mersey from Calcutta«, in: *ibid.*, 22.04.1804; Peter Griggs: Sugar demand and consumption in colonial Australia, pp. 84 ff.; Raymond Evans: A History of Queensland, p. 77.

¹⁹⁴ Arthur F. Bell: The Story of the Sugar Industry in Queensland, p. 8 (»father«); see also Fredrick C. P. Curlewis: The Australian Cane Sugar Industry, p. 3; Keith T. H. Farrer: A Settlement Ample Supplied, p. 222; Ted Hensell: Australian Agriculture, pp. 178 f.; Kay Saunders: Workers in Bondage, p. 49.

¹⁹⁵ »Queensland Sugar Company«, in: Brisbane Courier, 14.06.1864.

¹⁹⁶ (Untitled), in: Brisbane Courier, 31.10.1864; »Reflections – To Our Sydney Friends«, in: *ibid.*, 17.05.1865.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Keith T. H. Farrer: A Settlement Ample Supplied, p. 222; Ted Hensell: Australian Agriculture, pp. 178 f.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. »Queensland«, in: Daily News, 13.09.1867.

¹⁹⁹ William T. Brande, George W. Cox: A Dictionary of Science, Literature & Art, p. 327.

²⁰⁰ Cf. Peter Griggs: Sugar demand and consumption in colonial Australia, pp. 74 ff.

²⁰¹ See, for example, Clive Moore: New Guinea, pp. 116 f.; Robert S. De Ricci: The Colonization of New Guinea, pp. 14 ff.; Fredrick M. Bailey: Report of Visit to British New Guinea, pp. 13, 20; »A Visit to New Guinea«, in: Brisbane Courier, 12.02.1885. For

umphal procession westward almost three thousand years prior and during that journey had developed into the model plant for colonialism. Until this time, several species of sugar cane had been cultivated in the form of small-scale gardening in New Guinea.²⁰² With its transformation into a plantation crop, the cane demanded for a good deal of dependent labour. Resistance against these developments led, amongst other things, to movements expressing hope for a better life in the adoption of a consumption-oriented social utopianism. They imagined a near future in which ships and airplanes loaded by godly ancestors with all the comforts of life would arrive and make obsolete, once and for all, working for the ›white‹ masters.²⁰³

In 1919, in the Australian-ruled south east of the island, a prophet announced the arrival of a ship that would bring goods in affluence. Associated with the vision of the good life to come was not only ›food in abundance – white man’s food, such as limes, oranges, water-melons and also sugar cane and bananas‹ but also the belief that rifles were on board. One Australian scientist considered these happenings madness and speculated to what extent it was ›racial‹ and ›pathological‹. At the same time he knew very well, like one of his colleagues, that the movements they called ›cargo cult‹ were ›the reaction of the peoples of Guinea to white rule‹.²⁰⁴

Even though the hoped-for goods did not arrive, an airplane appeared in the skies over New Guinea in 1928. It was flying across the island in the matter of sugar. The plane did not have it on board, though but was searching for variants of sugar cane with which the overused plantation crop could be hybridized and immunized against susceptibility to diseases.²⁰⁵ The expedition collected 164 cuttings of sugar cane and ›discovered‹ the wild-growing original plant of *Saccharum officinarum*.²⁰⁶ ›Ecological im-

early schemes to establish sugar plantations on the islands, where sugar cane is available for ›commercial purposes‹ and ›natives‹ for ›work on sugar plantations‹, see ›New Guinea as a Field for Colonialism‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 03.07.1878. See also ›The New Guinea Expedition‹, in: South Australian Register, 28.12.1875; ›The Colonization of New Guinea‹, in: Rockhampton Bulletin, 18.01.1876.

²⁰² Cf. ›New Guinea Sugar-Cane and Maize‹, in: Clarence and Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser, 07.03.1876.

²⁰³ For the ›cargo cult‹ in the Pacific region, see i.a. Aletta Biersack: Word Made Flesh; Frederick Errington: Indigenous Ideas of Order, Time, and Transition in a New Guinea Cargo Movement; Holger Jebens: Cargo, Cult & Culture Critique; Charles H. Long: Cargo Cults as Cultural Historical Phenomena; Peter Worsley: The Trumpet Shall Sound.

²⁰⁴ Francis E. Williams: The Vailala Madness and the Destruction of Native Ceremonies in the Gulf Region, pp. 343 (›food‹), 342 (rifles), 339 (›racial‹ etc.); Lucy Mair: Australia in New Guinea, p. 64 (›reaction‹).

²⁰⁵ Cf. Joshua A. Bell: Sugar Plant Hunting by Airplane in New Guinea.

²⁰⁶ The expedition was a joint venture by Colonial Sugar Refining Company of Sydney, the Celotex Company of Chicago, the Hawaiian Sugar Planters Association and the Administration of the Territory of Papua, and had been organised by the United States Depart-

perialism²⁰⁷ merged into bio-piracy. It was not until much later that these and similar actions were associated with the perception of ›cargo cult‹ and related to the ›western way of life‹ under a culture-critical perspective. At the end of the twentieth century, an author in the ›Age‹ claimed that »[o]ur so-called ›revolution of rising expectations‹ was cargo cult writ« on a »gigantic scale of irrationality«.²⁰⁸

ment of Agriculture. Before this trip, expeditions from Queensland (in 1875, 1892, 1893, 1895-96, 1908, 1912 and 1921) had returned with New Guinean specimen to improve the local cane breeding. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 39 f. (joint venture), 37 (fn. 5) (earlier expeditions).

²⁰⁷ Cf. Alfred W. Crosby: *Ecological Imperialism*.

²⁰⁸ Cited in Lamont Lindstrom: *Cargoism and Occidentalism*, p. 52.

3. The Colours of Sugar

From Dispossession to Deportation

The issue of colour has a very long tradition in the history of sugar. For one thing, it described the chemical purity of sugar, acted as a means of pricing the different kinds of sugar, and located its consumer within a socio-economic hierarchy of the respective consumer society. For another thing, sugar was ascribed a deterring colour – blood red – in the times of the abolitionist movements. Produced with the use of unfree labour it was said to figuratively and literally contain blood of the ›sugar slaves‹.

As a reference for the chemical purity of a foodstuff that became increasingly pure over the centuries, the chemical whiteness of the sugar crystals was for a long time decisive for the price of sugar. At the top of the sweet hierarchy was, of course, white sugar. From the first time it was boiled to the invention of the vacuum-pan and through to the latest technologies of refinement, which removed almost all impurities until sugar consisted of 99 per cent of sucrose, the continually striven-for and finally perceived colourlessness was the criterion of the level of pureness.

Artificial colouring for culinary arts excluded, the production of the various sugar industries of the eighteenth and nineteenth century comprised several chemical varieties. The merchants knew manifold shades and states of sugar. A lexicon of goods from the end of the eighteenth century catalogued a broad diversity of sugar varieties: »Raw Sugar or Muscavado«, »Strained or brown Sugar«, »White Sugar in powder«, »Soft«, »Moist«, and »Powder Sugar«, »Earthed or clayed sugar«, »Royal« and »Refined Sugar«, »Sugar in lumps«, »Sugar in loaves«, »Bastard or ground Sugar«, »Sugar candy«, »Sugar sticks«, »Sugar cinnamon«, »Sugar scum«, »Treacle« but also »White, yellow, and red« sugar.¹

¹ English terms for sugar products in Philipp A. Nemnich: *Waaren-Lexicon in zwölf Sprachen der Hamburgischen Commerz-Deputation*, pp. 42 f.

Muscavado was a raw brown sugar that still contained most of the impurities from cane sugar production, while clayed sugar or Cassonade, though also a raw sugar in need of further refinement, had a lower percentage of dirt particles.² Red sugar was either low-quality refined sugar or resulted from the processing of juice from beetroots. Yellow or ›baster‹ sugar was a honey-coloured, low-quality refined sugar. »[Y]ellow sugar generally costs a little more than the red«, while white sugar was worth twice as much as red and yellow sugar.³

White sugar was refined sugar but could even be further purified by dissolving and boiling it again and again, until the residual contamination was as small as possible. The price increased with the percentage of sucrose contained or with descending grade of impurity.⁴ Inherent in the sugar production was the aspiration to obtain sugar with the least imperfections and contaminants. The whitest of the white, the French »sucre royal«, had the highest sales value due to it being »very pure and marvelously transparent« and only produced in very small quantities.⁵

At the same time in colonial Australia, the establishment of production came before perfection. It was only with the commencement of commercial cane sugar production that prospects for a steady and self-sufficient supply with sugar increased. When the first commercial Australian-made sugar was produced by Louis Hope in the early eighteen sixties, its quality seemed questionable compared to that imported from Britain or other countries. »The sugar in those days«, reported a Queensland politician and squatter, »was the dark, treacly kind, that left a stain on the floor like blood«.⁶ A contemporary account made by the later Premier of Queensland disparagingly recalled of the first sugar put up for auction in Brisbane, that it »was black as my hat«.⁷ Likewise, the inmates of the Moreton Bay Penal Settlement derogatorily nicknamed it »coal tar«, and a traveller gave account of »basins of black sugar« on the tables of country inns.⁸

² Cf. Robert L. Stein: *The French Sugar Business in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 8.

³ Her Majesty's Stationery Office: *House of Commons Papers*, Vol. 65, p. 49.

⁴ See, for example, prices in Europe for several varieties of sugar in Jakob Baxa, Guntwin Bruhns: *Zucker im Leben der Völker*, pp. 307, 311 ff.

⁵ Robert L. Stein: *The French Sugar Business in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 125 f. (›sucre royal‹, ›marvelously‹).

⁶ Edward Palmer: *Early Days in North Queensland*, p. 178.

⁷ Robert Philp cited in Edward W. Docker: *The Blackbirders*, p. 43. Besides having been Premier, Robert Philp and his shipping company had also been involved in both the introduction and repatriation of the Pacific Islanders who worked in the Queensland sugar industry – cf. W. Ross Johnston: *Philp, Sir Robert*.

⁸ Peter Griggs: *Sugar demand and consumption in colonial Australia*, p. 84; but the description ›coal tar‹ is also used for imported sugar from Sydney in 1837 – cf. Constance Campbell Petrie: *Tom Petrie's reminiscences of early Queensland*, p. 241.

In this way, Australian consumers re-enacted a development which had taken place about a decade before in British consumption culture. When the quantity of sugar consumed ceased to be a marker of social distinction in British society, it was replaced by the quality of purchased sugar.⁹ The degree of its whiteness was a proof of the sugar's extent of refinement, purity and value but also a symbol of modernity and increasing technical knowledge. With the augmented availability of white sugar, the ideological connection between chemical whiteness and social status led the working class to strive for this kind of pure sweetness, which has formerly only been affordable for the upper class, instead of the more impure, and therefore less valuable, brown or even black ›ration‹ sugar.¹⁰

In a similar manner as the consumption of ever-whiter sugar was a marker of social status in England, the quality of sugar – and thus the colour – became a means of social distinction once the sugar supply in Australia became steadier. A description of a homestead store in the mid-nineteenth century explained that underneath the shelf with groceries there were different »compartments for black ration sugar, a lighter sort and white sugar for the head station«.¹¹ Still, it took over a decade and some technological advancement until Australian sugar refineries were able to produce a purer and whiter sugar that, as a mass product, was less expensive. And it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that »even the working man would take nothing but purely white sugar«.¹²

Furthermore, the association of sugar with colour – blood red in this case – for political reasons peaked during the heights of abolitionist activities in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.¹³ Abstention from sugar became a way of expressing the opposition to both slave trade and slavery. Sugar in the depiction of the abolitionists was no ›innocent‹ product but now sprinkled or even tinted by the blood of the unfree cultivators. Examples like the following can be found in numerous contemporary poems and newspaper articles.

A ›humorous‹ author poked fun at the ways of those abstaining from the use of sugar as a form of protest against human enslavement. After an anti-slavery meeting, the female protagonist of the tale stopped her con-

⁹ Cf. Stephen Mennell: *All Manners of Food*, p. 33. For class-specific consumption patterns, see also Edward P. Thompson: *The Making of the English Working Class*, pp. 319 f.

¹⁰ Cf. Elizabeth Abbott: *Sugar*, p. 64.

¹¹ Michael Symons: *One Continuous Picnic*, p. 108.

¹² A Queensland parliamentarian, not mentioned by name, cited in Peter Griggs: *Sugar demand and consumption in colonial Australia*, p. 84.

¹³ See subchapter 2.3 ›Stained With Human Blood‹.

sumption of sugar because it »was no longer white or brown, in her eyes, but red, blood red«, and its use converted her into »a practical Cannibal«. ¹⁴ Though a piece of mockery, it nevertheless demonstrated one of the abolitionists' rhetorical devices: an upside-down world view in which the consumer turned into an anthropophagic »savage« upon savouring this slave-product. ¹⁵

Another abolitionist article identified the connection of sugar, slave labour and beneficiaries in the anthropomorphized, »very white, of course« »American Liberty«. She was described as leaning on a receptacle used in sugar production. The observer interpreted this depiction with the words »the sugar-tub is blood again, turned into pleasantness and flavour«. ¹⁶ This translation of suffering into sweetness mirrored the rhetoric of abolitionists, like William Fox, who emphasized a metaphorical but also physical presence of blood in sugar consumed by the British and demanded the provision of a produce chemically »unpolluted with blood« as well as ideologically devoid of contamination from slavery. ¹⁷

This linkage of sugar and unfree labour and the efforts made to remove the production of sugar from a slavery context featured largely in the initial establishment of the Queensland sugar industry and in the questions of who was deemed suitable for the menial tasks of cultivating and harvesting the sugar cane and who should be engaged in the skilled tasks of milling and further processing the sugar.

In the end, by the time sugar cane was successfully cultivated in Australia, the purity-price relation had already been transferred to political realms: the more refined the sugar, the whiter the sugar – the whiter the sugar, the dearer the sugar. The epithet »white« after the British abolition of slavery came to mean not only chemically white but also ideologically »white«, i.e. cultivated without the use of slave labour. In Queensland this formula foreshadowed the lesson Australians were about to learn. »White« sugar was not only supposed to be produced by free labour but also in due consideration of nationalist ideology. In short: the »whiter« the producer, the »whiter« the sugar – but, once again, the »whiter« the sugar, the dearer the sugar.

¹⁴ »Black, White and Brown«, in: Idler and Breakfast-Table Companion (UK), 17.02.1838.

¹⁵ See, for example, Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Lectures 1795, p. 248: »A part of that Food among most of you is sweetened with the Blood of the Murdered« or William Cowper's satirical anti-slavery poem: »No nostrum, planters say, is half so good | To make fine sugar, as a negro's blood« – id.: Poems, Vol. III, p. 225.

¹⁶ »Othellos in New Orleans«, in: Punch, or the London Charivari (UK), Vol. 16 (1849), p. 138.

¹⁷ William Fox: An Address to the People of Great Britain, p. 11.

With all this in mind, the following deals with the (ascribed) ›colours‹ of the Queensland sugar workers. It was not only empirico-historical or economic but rather ideological circumstances that led to the employment of groups of workers from different locations throughout the history of sugar in Australia. The initial employment of European convicts in the cultivation of sugar cane remained very limited, due to the failure of cane growing in the early years of colonial Australia. After the end of convict transportation, when cane sugar was produced in ever-growing amounts in Queensland, sugar planters looked for ›cheap and reliable‹ labourers. These were characteristics they were sure would not be found in ›white‹ workers based on the assumptions of both their unfitness for tropical climate and unwillingness to do menial tasks.

White noise was the background against which occupation and colonization, free settlement and, eventually, the federation of Australia took place and which gave shape to the politics against ›coloured‹ people inside and outside of the Australian border. In the same vein as Australia's ›white man‹ was an ›identity constituted in anxiety and apprehension‹¹⁸ (i.e. in contradistinction to the Aborigines, Chinese, Japanese, Pacific Islanders and other non-European or ›non-white‹ people), the waves of ›white noise‹ amplified over time from the First Fleet to Federation – until its equalizing potential masked all social distinctions and generated a seemingly homogeneous society of ›rightful‹ ›white‹ Australians in contrast to the ›coloured‹ immigrants and neighbours. This consolidation was achieved not only by tolerating violence against ›others‹ and evoking a joint defence against potential threats from outside but also by admission to exclusive spheres of consumption and culture.

›*None suitable for plantations*‹ was the verdict on the Aboriginal people in Queensland. This is dissented to by the investigation into attempts preceding the introduction of foreign labourers to engage the local population as sugar workers and into the fateful spreading of British presence on the continent. Over time, the sugar industry caused harm to the Aborigines of Australia in several aspects. They were forced by violence to give way to the expansion of agriculture and pastoralism and were killed in large numbers in the context of punitive expeditions supposed to retaliate against local ›blacks‹ for supposedly unprovoked attacks on sugar plantations and stations. The advancement of the colonial frontier comprised, amongst other things, the fencing in of settler ›property‹. British interference with the surrounding flora and fauna further deranged the Aborigines'

¹⁸ Marilyn Lake: *White Man's Country*, p. 351.

way of life. Cut off from hunting grounds, watering holes and other necessities of life, they were forced to adapt to the British intrusion. One way of dealing with the given situation was finding a job either with the settlers or in town. The employers in the sugar industry and elsewhere not only paid with tea, sugar, bread and tobacco instead of wages but also largely left undocumented their contribution to ›white‹ settlement.

Slavery in Queensland was the allegation made by those in contraposition to the introduction of Pacific Islanders to the cane fields. After abandoning plans to encourage immigration and employment of Indians for agricultural industries in Queensland, workers for the sugar industry were recruited on time-limited labour contracts in the South Sea islands. Deemed suitable for both work and life in the tropical north, the so-called ›kanakas‹ were both physically brought to the country and theoretically constructed by Queensland plantation owners and their supporters in order to fill the void left by the perceived ›white‹ unfitness for work in the cane fields. Soon, suspicions of coercion and kidnapping as well as pressure from the growing labour movement and humanitarian associations caused the passing of several acts regulating the recruitment and employment of Pacific Islanders for and in the sugar industry of Queensland. In the context of increasing ambitions to establish Australia as a ›white‹ nation, efforts were made to replace Pacific Islanders with ›white‹ workers. This, however, was only to find that the ideological connection of field labour and degradation, in association with the supposed climatic disadvantages of tropical Queensland, were detrimental to the employment of British-Australian cane workers. It was not until Federation brought about legal enforcement of repatriation that the transition from a ›black‹ to a ›white‹ sugar industry was realized.

The yellow curse was not a new phenomenon. Though coined in the eighteen nineties, it drew on forty-year-old allegations against Chinese diggers on the goldfields who were accused with ›flooding‹ the country. Before Federation – in parallel to the extensive employment of Pacific Islanders – Chinese, Japanese and other Asian immigrants worked as cane cutters or even leased land and established their own sugar plantations and farms. Especially during the times of transition from Pacific Islanders to Europeans, Asian immigrants were increasingly employed as temporary labourers. Throughout their presence in the sugar industry, i.e. during the last decade of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth century, they were met with rejection and discrimination in particular by the labour movement. In the view of the latter, the so-called ›yellow peril‹ posed not only a threat by numbers but also had a detrimental effect on the negotiat-

ing power of European workers' interests. Asian engagement in the sugar industry of Queensland eventually found an end when legislation was passed in order to, more or less clandestinely, counteract all employment of ›non-whites‹ in this industry.

3.1 ›White Noise‹: ›Whiteness‹ Down Under

The physical effect caused by broadband noise that contains all audible frequencies is called white noise. Like white light it is the combination of all information which in superposition results in an all-masking homogeneity.¹⁹ Its analogical use has been extended to explain social phenomena of ›whiteness‹ and the propagation of ›white supremacy‹. As an aesthetic and social phenomenon,²⁰ ›white noise‹ can be seen as the overlaying effect that veils all socially constructed antagonisms. Being a product of ideology, historiography and contemporary discourse, class, gender and other distinctions, like age and education, would then be outshined by the placing of the self and others in a ›white‹ society – for example, as beneficiaries of racist exploitation or as a ›white‹ people under a ›coloured‹ siege.

In the Australian case, ›whiteness‹ as a coherent term of common usage did not fully unfold until the late decades of the nineteenth century. Notwithstanding its late »empirical emergence«, »analytic whiteness« manifested itself much earlier in contradistinction to those considered ›black‹, ›yellow‹ or ›brown‹.²¹ This increasing ›white noise‹ accompanied the occupation and colonization of the continent and the congregation of the colonies under the ideology of a ›white‹ Australia. It emanated from the arrival of the First Fleet at Botany Bay, and its amplifying waves travelled in three larger eruptions through the history of Australia via Federation into the twentieth century.

Colonial ›whiteness‹ was less an actual visual than a social experience. It entailed being a member of a highly diverse group that entered a foreign country with the intent of occupation and permanent settlement. While the military personnel could largely define themselves as the controllers and administrators in their new home, the majority of the sentenced and trans-

¹⁹ Cf. Gordon B. Hughes, Myles L. Pensak: Clinical Otology, p. 36.

²⁰ See, for instance, Heike Piehler: Editorial; Andrew Jakubowicz: White Noise; Halida Tanvir Sved: Through White Noise; Gary Taylor: Buying Whiteness, pp. 341 ff.

²¹ Leigh Boucher: ›Whiteness‹ before ›White Australia‹, p. 19.

ported people did not by necessity have any commonalities with the former group. Sent to the other end of the world from a country that deemed them unworthy of further contribution to the state, their only means of betterment was working as an unfree labour force in an allegedly undiscovered and uncivilized continent. On the colonial frontier, however, they were able to experience inclusion into the convict society in contradistinction to the original inhabitants of the continent. Not least their – though officially prohibited not only unpunished but at times even welcomed – actions against the Aborigines enabled them to elevate themselves above these ›others‹ and to feel part of the group that monopolized the conversation and occupied the continent.

European ›whiteness‹ was born on the goldfields. Together with a growing number of free settlers and the end of convict transportation, the last unfree workers became free labourers. Immigration broadened when gold was found in southern Australia in the eighteen fifties. This attracted not only European miners. The numbers of Chinese coming to the goldfields to take their chance soared. Along with the heightened presence of Asian diggers, the displeasure of the European mineworkers grew and led to the first physical conflicts with and restrictive actions against Chinese immigrants. In the following, the European workers forged their class consciousness in contradistinction to the allegedly ›cheap‹ Chinese workers. Agitation against Asian immigration became one important binding agent of colonial Australia. In the light of ›non-white‹ immigration and the populating of the continent, the adaptability of ›whites‹ to lead a life and work in tropical climate continued to be questioned.

Australian ›whiteness‹ demarked the highest amplitude of ›white noise‹ at the moment when all those considered ›rightful‹ Australians pooled together under the shared ideology of ›white Australia‹. Differences in two of the big three social categories, ›class‹ and ›gender‹, were overcome by emphasizing the third, ›race‹, as the decisive distinction and initiation factor of the joint venture of defending the continent not least against feared hostile takeovers by the surrounding Asian nations. This was also the time when ›whiteness‹ seemed at its most fragile, with ›race‹ scientists predicting the end of ›white supremacy‹. ›White‹ was codified in the context of the ›white Australia policy‹ as the national type and was further consolidated as the counter-category to ›coloured‹. Legislation provided for the restriction of ›non-white‹ immigration – the Immigration Restriction Act which necessitated the passing of an educational test – and for the reduction of ›non-white‹ presence in Australia – the Pacific Island Labourers Act which caused the repatriation of almost all people from the

South Sea islands.²² Nonetheless, far from automatically being granted to all those who were immigrants with a European background, ›whiteness‹ as a possible ascription for non-British immigrants underwent constant re-evaluation and re-endorsement. Depending on the ruling government, labour and population policies and the general situation regarding foreign affairs, the membership was denied or granted to those in the twilight area of, in particular southern European, ›whiteness‹. Contending views of their standing, however, could be overcome when the perspective was directed towards the differentiation from the surrounding area: when Australia was seen as the European outpost in an Asian part of the world.

In the course of its shaping, Australian ›whiteness‹ gradually replaced Britishness.²³ This manifestation of ›whiteness‹ comprised three perspectives: ›becoming white‹ in dissociation from the ›black‹ original inhabitants, ›being white‹ in contrast to the ›yellow‹ and ›brown‹ competition, and ›staying white‹ in defiance of all ›coloured‹ presence within the society and the endangerment by the ›yellow peril‹ and the ›brown threat‹ from the outside.²⁴

Colonial ›Whiteness‹

At the time when the First Fleet arrived on the shores of New South Wales, ›white noise‹ was only a whisper. ›Whiteness‹ as a society-spanning concept was far from being fully developed. In the mother country, separation into classes was strict and kept the social strata wide apart. The practice of sending the ›undesirable‹, i.e. declared criminal, parts of the British population to destinations like Northern America, the British West Indies and the west coast of Africa was a well-tried enterprise by the time convict transportation to Australia started. It was not least advantaged by the notion that the upper classes looked upon the lower classes as not belonging to their society. The working class as a ›race wholly apart‹ was seen as so far removed from the upper class that, in the latter's eyes, the workers' and poors' ostracizing seemed almost based on a natural fact.²⁵

²² Cf. Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1901, officially: An Act to provide for the Regulation, Restriction, and Prohibition of the Introduction of Labourers from the Pacific Islands and for other purposes, No. 16 of 1901; Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, An Act to place certain restriction on Immigration and to provide for the removal from the Commonwealth of prohibited Immigrants, No. 17 of 1901.

²³ Cf. Marilyn Lake: *White Man's Country*, p. 350.

²⁴ For these categories, see Wulf D. Hund: *Die weiße Norm*, pp. 174 f.

²⁵ Friedrich Engels: *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, p. 135.

This was not to disappear too quickly as an etching by George Cruikshank from 1867 shows. The ideological exclusion from society of those considered unproductive or detrimental enabled him in his portrayal of the

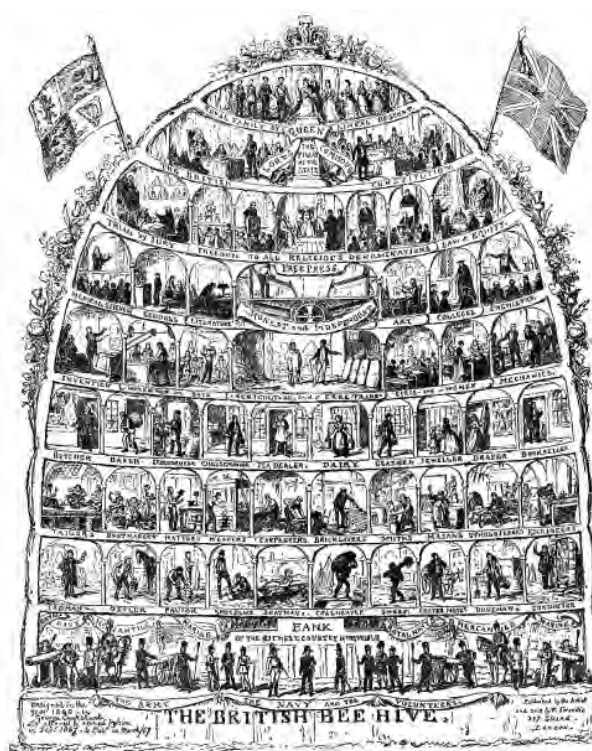


Fig. 8 – Cut-out from the hive:
A society without paupers and ›others‹

»perfect commonwealth England« – a beehive, itself a traditional symbol for industriousness and activity, which represents several occupations in a hierarchical order of the state »with everyone in his place and knowing his place« including women and girls – to completely banish from his closed structure those who are denied place and knowledge due to them being deemed ›racially‹ or socially inferior (Fig. 8).²⁶ Members of the low-

²⁶ ›Notes on Books and Booksellers‹, in: American Literary Gazette and Publishers' Circular (US), 15.05.1867 (›commonwealth‹); Janet Roebuck: The Making of Modern Eng-

er classes are here only seen if they practised any form of valuable profession. The declassed are either serving time in prison or have already been deported. Therefore, it comes in useful that the whole beehive rests on the combination of commerce and violence: the Bank of England, the Royal Navy, and the mercantile marine. In the rough stages of Cruikshank's ›beehive‹, the corresponding ships that brought the objects of desire into, and the undesirable out of the country, had been plainly visible in the lowermost part of the drawing.²⁷

Transportation of convicts to Australia started when, after the American Revolution, North America refused the continued shipping of sentenced criminals from Britain, while working houses as well as other correctional facilities were overcrowded with felons and delinquents. Rising poverty and unemployment were furthering the downward spiral of social morality and living conditions, in particular in London. After going through other locations, amongst them the Das Voltas bay in West Africa, the decision was made in favour of the yet largely uncharted antipodean landmass.

Upon arrival, dysentery and scurvy raged amongst convicts and military personnel alike. The local flora had yet to prove its capability to function as a remedy for these diseases, or as a means against the threat of starvation.²⁸ In the early days, »misery and horror« prevailed and »all [...] labour and attention were turned on one object – the procuring of food«.²⁹ The clothes were in rags, the stores were empty; not many material means of distinction were at hand until a surplus in provisions and materials was accumulated. Nonetheless, official distinction prevailed. Even though, except for alcoholic beverages, provisions were planned to be the same for both groups,³⁰ the distribution of foodstuff followed the order of priority: upon shortage the convicts' provisions were the first to cease and the officers were the first to be issued upon the arrival of new supplies.³¹ The officers held the power to direct those people whom they blamed for bringing them to their new, deficient home and expressed critique over the allegedly rash convicts' pardons compared with the compliance to the strict rules exacted from the military personnel.³² Time, however, brought

lish Society from 1850, p. 16 (›place‹), see there also a reprint of the etching.

²⁷ For the preliminary sketch dating from 1840, see <http://blogs.princeton.edu/graphicarts/british%20bee%20hive.jpg>.

²⁸ Cf. John Stockdale: *The Voyage of Governor Phillip to Botany Bay*, pp. 69 f.

²⁹ Watkin Tench: *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson in New South Wales*, pp. 37 (›misery‹), 41 (›food‹).

³⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 3.

³¹ Cf. ›General Orders‹, in: *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 22.05.1803 and ›Notice‹, in: *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 31.07.1803.

³² Cf. Robert Hughes: *The Fatal Shore*, p. 95.

distinction: as property owners after their relief from duty the officers fared better, being assigned as land grant more than four times the acres of emancipated convicts.³³

In contrast to the former transportation destinations in North America and the British West Indies, the Australian penal colonies were more than mere locations of correction.³⁴ First Fleet's Captain Watkin Tench maintained that it was the necessity to found a new colony on the other side of the world which compelled him and his peers to assign the convicts with »the most slavish and laborious employments«, »operations [... elsewhere] performed by the brute creation«. But he denied them compassion by emphasizing their self-responsibility and the justness of the system, thus legitimizing their denigration as a self-inflicted corollary of their criminal comportment.³⁵ Since they were designated to be the primary workforce in the new colony and an abundance of work was to be done – like exploring and appropriating the surroundings, erecting quarters, managing and maintaining supplies – the threat of punishment and violence could not have been the sole means of upholding the social order in a community where convicts outnumbered soldiers almost three to one.³⁶ Initially, convicts had the status of governmental servants; towards the end of the eighteenth century they were predominately assigned to private masters which could be free settlers, former military personnel but also ex-convicts. Once the convicts had served their sentence, they were entitled to own property and move freely. Similar permissions were granted to ticket-of-leave holders or pardoned convicts who could become overseers of convicts assigned to free settlers and former convicts.

The convicts themselves were hierarchically discerned according to their differing social conditions and milieus. Many of them came from the urban working classes; some had a high educational level. The majority were sentenced to seven years, some fourteen, some for life. They were classified into categories with regard to the kind of work they could be assigned to.³⁷ While the first-grade convicts (mostly reoffenders and absconders) were retained in the penal stations, the convicts of the second grade were governmental builders, erectors and farm labourers, and those

³³ Cf. »Extract from the Royal Additional Instructions dated Aug. 20, 1789«, in: Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 26.03.1803.

³⁴ Cf. Bruce Kercher: *Perish or Prosper*, p. 532.

³⁵ Cf. Watkin Tench: *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson in New South Wales*, p. 3 (there also »slavish« etc.).

³⁶ Cf. Bruce Kercher: *Perish or Prosper*, pp. 542 ff.

³⁷ For the categories and the following, see William Nichol: *Ideology and the Convict System in New South Wales*, in particular p. 6.

in the third grade were assigned tasks otherwise done by free people. After completing their hours of duty, convicts of the second and third grade were allowed to work for their own benefit. Some convicts were fast in moving up the social ladder. Soon after his arrival and the subsequent emancipation, one Oxford graduate was appointed secretary to the colony's deputy judge advocate; others became clerks, constables or businessmen.³⁸ Good behaviour was rewarded with tickets-of-leave or even monetary grants. Those breaking the laws of the colonies were punished with flogging, lashing and hanging; reoffenders and absconders were also taken to places of secondary punishment: the penal stations in Moreton Bay, Norfolk Island, Port Macquarie and Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania).

For the convicts, a ›whiteness‹ *avant-la-lettre* was experienced in the form of inclusion into a social group from which they were otherwise largely punished with exclusion. This found expression, *inter alia*, by admission to spheres of consumption, like the enjoyment of sugar, at a much earlier time than British workers in the mother country. While cane sugar became affordable in larger amounts for the working class in the latter half of the nineteenth century in England, rations of sugar were already assigned to convicts at the end of the eighteenth century. More importantly, the convicts – who were delineated as a group deviant to the societal norms of Britain and were firmly located in the hierarchy of the convict society, which allowed them hardly any freedom until they were granted emancipation – were able to experience themselves as members of the colonizing or invading party in the particular situation of a society under development on the colonial frontier.

The British urge for territorial expansion made them accomplices in the process of land-taking. This not only bestowed on them impunity for the gruesome atrocities they committed against the Aborigines. Subsequently, they were also permitted to partake in the rewards of their bloody deeds when they were granted land upon their emancipation. Under the conditions of colonial land taking, the convicts and the emancipated were comparatively early on granted that racist symbolic capital which was yet by no means a given for the lower classes of the mother country. By way of their active participation in the fight against and repression of the Aborigines, the convicts and ex-convicts were even able to claim credit for this partial inclusion in society.

³⁸ For Michael Massey Robinson, who before being sentenced for poetical extortion was a lawyer and then became Australia first poet, see Donovan Clarke: Robinson, Michael Massey.

Despite this, skin colour turned out to be a diffuse subject in the new colony. For one thing, the gender imbalance in the colony – about three male to one female convict – was initially thought to be mitigated by bringing women from the neighbouring Pacific Islands to the new settlement. »You are«, advised Lord Sydney, the Secretary of the State, the Fleet's Captain Arthur Phillip, »to instruct [...the] Commanders [of the First Fleet's supply ships] to take on board any of the women who may be disposed to accompany them to the said settlements«. A (crossed-out) annotation confined the provision of women to the soldiers and demanded that »every means to prevent their living in common with the Convicts« was to be exerted.³⁹ Whilst no such undertaking did take place, these deliberations and the readiness to introduce ›non-white‹ women as marriage partners could have been based partly on the imperative to populate the colony and partly on the understanding that the women and their offspring irrespective of their ›blackness‹ could be accommodated as members of the founding society. In the home country, such an enterprise would have been unthinkable and defied as miscegenation, and not even a century later in Australia this, too, would have been regarded as an acute threat to the ›racial purity‹ of the ›white‹ British-Australian society.

The absence of a tangible discrimination based on skin colour in the convicts' placing is further substantiated by the examples of convicts with African or West Indian ›roots‹ who were transported to Australia and were fully integrated not only into the convict society but also, upon emancipation, into the social life of the free settlement.⁴⁰ At least eleven convicts with African migratory backgrounds arrived with the First Fleet and many were to follow.⁴¹ Neither recognition for their achievements nor upward social mobility was denied to them. That the skin colour of the convicts was not necessarily giving a rise to such distinction can be demonstrated on the basis of several cases. For instance, the first bushranger, ›Black Caesar‹ – most likely a freed slave who was almost on his way to the Sierra Leone project but due to committing a last-minute crime in London was transported to New South Wales with the neighbouring First Fleet – had, previous to his absconding, been lauded as »the hardest working convict in the country«. It was no problem for the authorities to nominate him as

³⁹ Governor Arthur Phillip's Instructions, p. 19. According to the transcript's annotations, these instructions are based on a manuscript draft held by the Public Office – the original instructions, including the implementation of the corrections, have not yet been located. See also John Hirst: *Sense and Nonsense in Australian History*, p. 108.

⁴⁰ Cf. Andrew Markus: *Australian Race Relations*, pp. 55 f.; Cassandra Pybus: *Black Founders*.

⁴¹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 3; see also *id.*: *A Touch of the Tar*, p. 3.

the »official flagellator« whose job it was to flog fellow convicts. The first businessman in terms of aquatic passenger transportation at Port Jackson was a contemporary of his, William Blue who had been arrested for theft of raw sugar from a West Indian ship. He was later granted land for his ferry operation by Governor Lachlan Macquarie and came to city-wide fame as operator of the first ferry service in Sydney Harbour.⁴²

Certainly, with regard to their skin colour, ›black‹ convicts from the First Fleet served as a point of reference for the judgement of the indigenous population. African convicts compared with Aborigines were considered having »their complexion«, and in turn Aborigines were seen as »native negro[s]« and would not be able to become »two degrees less black than an African Negro« even after having a bath.⁴³ Irrespective of this, within the convict society colour racism was overridden by classism, which placed all convicts at the societal bottom. Externally, classism placing within the convict society was overridden by a racist upgrading of the sentenced or emancipated convicts in contradistinction to the original population. Lines of admission to the newly-founded society were drawn between the invaders identified as »our People« and the denomination »their People« for those who were henceforth forcibly expropriated.⁴⁴

Free or freed Africans arrived as settlers and were granted land to cultivate or were able to hold governmental offices; many others arrived in Australia as seamen.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, when, following the abolition of slavery, an increase of transportation from the West Indies to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land occurred, the heightened numbers of former African slaves was considered detrimental to the situation in these colonies. This invites to question whether convicts with an African background could have come to be »seen as dangerous because they threatened to blur the line between white and black, which was necessary in order to dispossess and destroy the Aboriginal population«.⁴⁶

⁴² Russel Ward: *The Australian Legend*, p. 37 (›flagellator‹); for the preceding: Cassandra Pybus: *Black Founders*, p. 94 (citing Judge Advocate David Collins on ›hardest working‹). For more information on ›Black Francis‹, the flagellator, see Ian Duffield: *Martin Beck and Afro-Blacks in colonial Australia*, p. 17. For William Blue, the ›Old Commodore‹, see Cassandra Pybus: *Black Founders*, pp. 5, 149, 154 ff., 165 f., 183; Ian Duffield: *Billy Blue. A Legend of Early Sydney*. See also his obituary: ›Billy Blue‹, in: *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 08.05.1834.

⁴³ William Bradley: *A Voyage to New South Wales*, p. 62 (›complexion‹); ›Tasmanian Aborigines‹, in: *Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser*, 08.04.1825 (›native negro‹); Janeen Webb, Andrew Enstice: *Aliens & Savages*, p. 30 (citing Watkin Tench: ›two degrees‹).

⁴⁴ William Bradley: *A Voyage to New South Wales*, pp. 59 ff. (›our‹), 81 (›their‹).

⁴⁵ Cf. Cassandra Pybus: *A Touch of the Tar*, pp. 16, 19.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

European ›Whiteness‹

›White noise‹ crescendoed when non-convict migrants to Australia began arriving in New South Wales and other parts of the continent. The second decade of the nineteenth century saw the sudden increase of free settlers. This was not only frowned upon by Governor Lachlan Macquarie,⁴⁷ but also caused a change in the social demography of the colony until the so-called ›exclusives‹ obtained the majority. The ›exclusives‹ were looking down on the convicts and the ›emancipists‹ (the ex-convicts) as an inferior class of people. Moreover, dissent with continued convict transportation grew in the latter part of the eighteenth forties. This was not only based on arguments against competition for the free workers by the forced labourers but also bore a discriminatory dimension. The convict class as a disruptive element to equality in the settler society was increasingly scorned as »a presumed source of moral contamination«.⁴⁸

The convict society on its transition to a settler society found its consolidation in the juxtaposition of ›black‹ and ›white‹ corroded by increasing internal contentions in the form of class struggles. If ›whiteness‹ was indeed »invoked to leverage the social status of emancipated convicts« after the end of transportation, the now free workers soon realized that their admission to the settler society was not convertible on a labour market that witnessed a heightened influx of Chinese immigrants.⁴⁹

With the expansion of the colonial frontier towards the north along the east coast, the issue of the ›whites'‹ fitness for tropical climates became a greater issue. At the time when sugar cane cultivation reached Cairns in the mid-eighteen seventies, the parts of Australia lying north of the Tropic of Capricorn were considered a »separate, racially dubious territory«.⁵⁰ Setting it in contrasting juxtaposition with the southern, more clement regions created incisive dichotomies: the tropical and the temperate zone; »wilderness« and »civilization«; »promiscuity« and »restraint«; and – as the combination of ›racial‹ and geographic dimensions – »coloured« and »white«. The peculiar climate would, this was contemporary mainstream scientific reasoning, cause mental and physical degeneration in ›whites«. The apprehension seemed obvious that the »Queensland settlers« who »have already found that the sun [...] darkens their skins and fevers their

⁴⁷ Cf. Stuart Macintyre: A Concise History of Australia, pp. 47 f.

⁴⁸ Marilyn Lake, Henry Reynolds: Drawing the Global Colour Line, p. 17 (›source‹).

⁴⁹ Angela Woollacott: Whiteness and ›the Imperial Turn‹, p. 17 (›leverage‹).

⁵⁰ Warwick Anderson: The Cultivation of Whiteness, p. 73 (see there also the subsequent quotes).

blood« would also find their character and mind ›darkened‹ by the un-European living conditions.⁵¹

Arguments about ›white‹ ability to work in the tropics survived as a constant part of the deliberations regarding suitable labourers for the sugar industry until far into the early decades of the twentieth century.⁵² These, however, were less based on empirical evidence than on the political motivation of those who wanted to secure their profits by employing an overworked and underpaid workforce.

It was only with the increase of settlement in tropical Queensland that knowledge about Europeans who lived and worked in these climes without any considerable damage spread and declared obsolete former concerns about ›white‹ vulnerability. While in 1901 a report on labour in the Queensland sugar industry justified the necessity of employment of Pacific Islanders based on their unique »fitness for the purpose and place«, eighteen years later European settlers, though still in need of initial »gradual acclimatization«, could experience tropical life as a »healthy pleasure«.⁵³ This validates presumptions that warnings of ›white‹ deterioration were mainly »rationalizations to substantiate the existence of a particular social structure«.⁵⁴

The perception of Australia as a refuge for predominantly British emigrants and settlers in the southern hemisphere led to a feeling of threat from the surrounding countries. The late nineteenth century saw the annexation of neighbouring islands by France and Germany, and a heightened anxiety about Russian military activities, which were thought to involve the invasion of Australia.⁵⁵ This perceived encirclement was enhanced by the notion of an insufficient populating of the continent. On the one hand, settlement in the northern parts progressed only slowly due to the allegedly unhealthy climate and the remoteness of civilization.

⁵¹ ›Coolie Labour‹, in: Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 27.05.1864.

⁵² That working in the cane fields was not universally seen as being beneath the dignity of the ›whites‹, can be demonstrated by looking at the sugar industry of New South Wales. It remained smaller and less productive than the Queensland industry, was protected by £3 a ton import duty, and based on mostly European labour. For this and further information on the New South Wales sugar industry, see Charles T. Wood: Sugar Country, pp. 34-51, in particular pp. 47 f.; and subchapter 4.3 ›Naturally A White Man's Industry‹.

⁵³ Walter Maxwell: Cane Sugar Industry of Australia, p. 7 (›fitness‹); Griffith Taylor: The Settlement of Tropical Australia, p. 108 (›acclimatization‹), 107 (›healthy pleasure‹).

⁵⁴ Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders, Kathryn Cronin: Race Relations in Colonial Queensland, p. 158.

⁵⁵ For the relationship of Britain and Russia, see John N. Westwood: Russia against Japan, pp. 16 f. and Luke Trainor: British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism, pp. 27 ff.

The declining birth rate of ›whites‹ after the eighteen seventies, on the other hand, was seen as a further hindrance to the survival of British, or at least ›white‹, Australia.⁵⁶ Added to this was the presence of non-European settlers which was also deemed detrimental to the maintenance of an ›ideal‹ Australia.

›Whiteness‹ as a term of self-designation for the settlers was still rare in the early days of the gold rushes in southern Australia. Only »as racial thinking developed over the second half of the nineteenth century settler-colonial literary, medical, political, and cultural discourses gradually constituted the category of the white Australian«. ⁵⁷ The drawing of boundaries followed first and foremost the attribute of nationality. Along these lines the European-Australians saw themselves opposed to the indigenous Australian, on the one hand, and to non-European immigrants mostly from China, on the other.

Based on empirical findings, which were later underpinned by the modification of Darwin's theory of natural selection in terms of its applicability to societies, the presence of Aborigines was considered an issue that would solve itself over the course of time. From early on »their race appeared to be hastening to entire extinction«, and the notion that it was not only the »nation's duty to Aborigines«, but all that was left to be done for them was to »in a loving and sympathetic spirit smooth the pillow of a dying race« prevailed until well into the first decades of the twentieth century.⁵⁸

The case of the Chinese turned out to be the exact opposite. Hoping to find their luck on the goldfields, Chinese miners arrived in southern Australia in what European diggers soon considered intolerably large numbers. Their numerical superiority on some of the goldfields, accompanied by their distinctively different culture and lifestyle gave rise to allegations of their undercutting of European workers. In contrast to this, governmental reaction was long in coming and subsequent restrictive legislation was mainly confined to the imposition of an immigration tax.⁵⁹ As the European workers found that their ›white‹ distinction – which had granted them privileges and impunity – had not the same effect of collective placing-over, areas of tension built up between the colonial powers, the Chinese workers and the European diggers who increasingly consolidated against the former.

⁵⁶ Cf. Lisa Featherstone: *The Value of the Victorian Infant*, p. 2.

⁵⁷ Leigh Boucher: ›Whiteness‹ before ›White Australia‹, pp. 2, 3 (›white Australian‹).

⁵⁸ ›The Native Police‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21.06.1850 (›entire extinction‹); ›Nation's Duty to the Aborigines‹, in: *Register*, 12.09.1913. See also ›Smoothing the Pillow of a Dying Race‹, in: *Register*, 07.02.1903.

⁵⁹ Cf. Andrew Markus: *Australian Race Relations*, pp. 61, 67.

Mateship in the ranks of ex-convicts and workers evolved from a survivalist necessity and from the gender imbalance in the bush. It added to the complicity in land seizure and was at the core of the, also rather gender-lopsided, ›digger ethos‹. As an important factor in the formation of a working class in contradistinction to ›coloured‹ labourers, it eventually became the »emotional backbone of the union movement«.⁶⁰

In a society where male was the norm, women were largely excluded from the individual writing of history.⁶¹ Like the bush, the »diggings are no place for women«, nor was one of the favourite pastimes »the races«, nor was the »pulpit« for »deaconesses«, nor was »the front«.⁶² Theoretically expelled from such cornerstones of Australian self-definition, the role of ›white‹ women was largely reduced to child rearing and household. Nonetheless, the European women's role in the building and later maintenance of a ›white Australia‹ became crucial.

Their potential educational and moral contribution to the European-Australian society were indeed valued. As workers in missions, they familiarized Aboriginal children with European cultures and habits.⁶³ As »God's Police«, they held the »moral guardian ship of society« and functioned as a role model for other women. The »Damned Whore« stereotype, in contrast, was converted from discrimination against all female convicts and immigrants via derogatory depiction of independent women to a threat for Australia's ›whiteness‹.⁶⁴ Their alleged weakness in terms of Asian men – in particular in the case of the stereotypical Chinese and his seducing opium pipe or the vigorous Japanese military man – stood against the ideal of ›white Australia‹. Thus the ›white‹ woman of Australia had not only to be defended against but also kept from Asian invaders and seducers by the ›white‹ Australian man.

›Whiteness‹ itself, however, remained a malleable term at the end of the nineteenth and the early decades of the twentieth century. While, generally spoken, in legal terms all Europeans were considered ›white‹, especially the labour movement discriminated between workers from southern Europe, northern Europe and from British descent.

⁶⁰ Elaine Thompson: *Fair Enough*, p. 133.

⁶¹ Cf. Kay Schaffer: *Women and the Bush*, p. 52; Anne Summers: *Damned Whores and God's Police*, pp. 60 f.; Elaine Thompson: *Fair Enough*, p. 171.

⁶² ›The Goldfields‹, in: *Portland Guardian and Normanby General Advertiser*, 26.12.1856 (›diggings‹); ›Mr. and Mrs. Caudle at Northam‹, in: *Western Australian Times*, 20.03.1877 (›races‹); ›A New Profession for Women‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 02.06.1888; ›At the front‹, in: *Argus*, 28.07.1894 (›front‹).

⁶³ Cf. Margaret D. Jacobs: *White Mother to a Dark Race*, pp. 285 f.

⁶⁴ Anne Summers: *Damned Whores and God's Police*, pp. 67 (›police‹, ›guardianship‹, ›damned‹) 316 ff. (convict), 359 (independent).

Australian ›Whiteness‹

Nearing Federation, ›white noise‹ became a thundering roar expanding to all spheres of society. While beforehand ›whiteness‹ in Australia had implied Britishness, in the last decades of the nineteenth century ›whiteness‹ was established as a national type.⁶⁵ Moreover, it was further consolidated as a counter-category to ›yellow‹ and ›brown‹ and ›black‹, which in turn could be subsumed under the umbrella term ›coloured‹.

The term ›Australian‹ itself had not been exclusively designated for British or other European immigrants until the latter half of the nineteenth century. Ethnographical resources evidence an application in the context of indigenous Australian peoples until the mid-eighteen eighties.⁶⁶ As a self-designation in everyday language, it found an earlier entry as the foundation of the Australian Natives' Association showed.⁶⁷ In the late eighteen eighties, the ›Bulletin‹ picked up on this designation and adopted the masthead slogan »Australia for the Australians«. The newspaper further clarified who exactly – in terms of class, gender and ›race‹ – they understood Australians to be: »By the term Australian we mean not those who have been merely born in Australia. All white men who come to these shores – with a clean record – and who leave behind them the memory of the class-distinctions and the religious differences of the old world; all men who place the happiness, the prosperity, the advancement of their adopted country before the interest of Imperialism, are Australian. [...] No nigger, no Chinaman, no lascar, no kanaka, no purveyor of cheap coloured labour, is an Australian«. ⁶⁸ Not only did they exclude Australian Aborigines as well as Australian-born Pacific Islanders, Asians and other nationalities from being Australian. They also barred from their definition of Australianness female immigrants and inhabitants as well as those who proved to be incompatible with the idea of ›white Australia‹ based on their solidarity with the mother country in these times when ›true‹ Australians felt forsaken by the Empire. It took twenty years for the ›Bulletin‹ to further sharpen their definition and change their slogan to »Australia for the White Man«, which then remained for more than half a century.⁶⁹

›Whiteness‹ was at the heart of the Australian identity. The time of the consolidation of its colonies and the following Federation saw a virtual par-

⁶⁵ Cf. Warwick Anderson: *The Cultivation of Whiteness*, p. 2.

⁶⁶ Cf. Marguerita Stephens: *A word of evidence*, p. 175.

⁶⁷ Cf. (Untitled), in: *Argus*, 27.04.1872.

⁶⁸ ›Australia for the Australian‹, in: *Bulletin*, 02.07.1887.

⁶⁹ Hsu-Ming Teo, Richard White: *Cultural History of Australia*, p. 108.

oxysm of ›whiteness‹. Firstly, it was celebrated as a great accomplishment. Australia was »new born« and radiated around the world as the »Brightest Jewel in the Empire«. The ›West Gippsland Gazette‹ (1901) accompanied this elaborately designed announcement with a pictorial affirmation (Fig. 9).⁷⁰ Drawing on the metaphor of the society as a boat, applauded by Brit-



Fig. 9 – An addition to the imperial collection:
Announcing the new Commonwealth

ain's John Bull, the federated colonies would henceforth pull together into one direction under a Federal government. Here it was depicted following the standardized portrayal of the nation along the common lines of a female Greek allegorical figure, which had as intrinsic characteristics ideals of Europeanness and pure aesthetics. This consolidation was, on the one hand, the conclusion to the intercolonial conflicts about the shaping

⁷⁰ ›The Australian Commonwealth‹, in: West Gippsland Gazette, 01.01.1901.

of the Commonwealth, with contrary opinions about taxes, duties, and in particular the work force of the Queensland sugar industry. On the other hand, the ›brightness‹ that was certainly also referring to the self-purification about to be laid down in the federal statutes undergirded the notion of Australia as nation built and populated by ›white‹ males of British descent. Its exclusionary character further reduced women to anthropomorphisms of governmental institutions and deprived anyone except middle-aged, ›white‹ males of being the driving force to society's progress.

Secondly, the vulnerability of ›whiteness‹ not only overshadowed the national unification but also functioned as a driving force for Federation. National movements propagating the necessity for exclusionist policies peaked at the end of the nineteenth century. Based on the continent's thin settlement and its geographical position, dangers from the exterior and interior of society were emphasized via manifold cultural agents. Theatrical plays, like ›White Australia: Or, the Empty North‹ by Randolph Bedford, told of foreign invasions; and the same held true for a literary genre that was functioning as a tocsin for a society apparently unresponsive to the necessities for defensive means brought about by Australia's special situation. Invasion novels developed the perceived threat of hostile occupation in particular by Asian intruders.

Nonetheless, it was »not merely a question of invasion from the exterior«. ⁷¹ Endangerment of the ›white Australian‹ ideal could come from external enemies as well as internal foes. The presumed greed for profit of capitalists and employers, especially in the northern part of the continent as well as British treaties and agreements with Asian countries, were seen as internal corruption of the way to and maintenance of a ›white‹ nation. Miscegenation was considered another threat to the ›health‹ of the Australian ›racial corpus‹. Invasion novels narrated horrid consequences of, inter alia, Russian, Chinese and Japanese invasion coinciding with the dire doings of enemies within the ›white‹ society and the indifference of ›race‹ traitors in the mother country Britain. ⁷² What was »at stake« in actuality was »the national manhood, the national character and the national future«. The maintenance of ›white Australia‹ was seen as a necessary action stimulated by the »instinct of self-preservation«. ⁷³

⁷¹ Alfred Deakin, Australian attorney-general, cited in Marilyn Lake: *White Man's Country*, p. 357.

⁷² For more on the ›white Australia‹ culture, see subchapter 5.1 ›Till He Landed On Our Shore‹, for information on the invasion novels 5.2 ›Life Or Death Of A White Continent‹.

⁷³ Alfred Deakin, Australian attorney-general, quoted in Marilyn Lake: *White Man's Country*, pp. 354 f.

Federation was then accompanied by the passing of legislation for the restriction and removal of parts of the population that were deemed detrimental to the ideology of ›white Australia‹. The Immigration Restriction Act was supposed to protect the country, especially from the allegedly heightened numbers of Asians desiring to enter Australia and to control the settlement of other non-Europeans; while the Pacific Island Labourers Act was meant to end the controversies surrounding the employment of Islanders in the Queensland sugar industry through their deportation. Other than in the United States of America, which »served as an important model for Australian nation-builders«, ⁷⁴ legislation in Australia thus followed the policies Britain had implemented in their treatment of freed, emancipated and other ›blacks‹ at the time the First Fleet left London: a stringent expulsion of an ›undesired element‹ in the society whose continued presence would supposedly have detrimental effects on the social status of ›whites‹ and on ›white Australian‹ ›racial purity‹.

This severe exclusionism was further based on the fear for ›whiteness‹, which emerged in the last decades of the nineteenth century and continued until well into the first half of the twentieth. The theoretical background was provided by an Australian historian and politician, Charles H. Pearson, and drawn upon by Lothrop Stoddard in his notorious work on the dangers to the ›whites‹.⁷⁵ Pearson, who was also quoted by Prime Minister Edmund Barton in his speech delivered at the debate on the Immigration Restriction Bill in 1901,⁷⁶ drew on his long stay in Australia as an inspiration for his dire prediction which foretold the end of ›white supremacy's‹ expansion based on the higher reproduction rates and superior climatic adaptability of the ›coloured‹ populations. In the same vein, Stoddard's findings underpinned the necessity for the Australian nation to guard itself against Asia's ›surplus‹ populations.

While ›yellowness‹ in Australia seemed threatening in the alleged capability of ›swamping‹ the continent by sheer numerical superiority (China) or occupying it by the advantages of a modern and skilful war technique (Japan), ›blackness‹ was a different issue altogether. The Pacific Islanders' skin colour not only distinguished them as a per se ›suitable race‹ for field work in tropical agriculture but also involuntarily accentuated the paradox of ›blackness‹ in Queensland. There were ›blacks‹, the Ab-

⁷⁴ Marilyn Lake: *White Man's Country*, p. 353.

⁷⁵ See Charles H. Pearson: *National Life and Character*; Lothrop Stoddard: *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy*.

⁷⁶ Cf. ›House of Representatives‹, in: *Register*, 08.08.1901; ›Federal Parliament‹, in: *Argus*, 08.08.1901.

origines, who were generally forced to vacate the land for the expansion of the sugar industry. There were also ›blacks‹, the Pacific Islanders, who were essential as contributors to the success of the sugar industry.⁷⁷ Inward



*Fig. 10 – Dissolution of colour:
A claim to nativeness and the continent*

and outward colonization coincided in the Europeans' ›burden‹ but also in their unity. The indigenous colonized and the imported colonized had in common the need to be both contained and controlled by ›white‹ colonizers. The ›whites‹ as a group were separated into their societal spheres but in distinction to those pooled as ›blacks‹, the ›whites‹ could unite and bridge the gaps especially of class difference, in this case between the

⁷⁷ For an example of ›blurring‹ of definitional boundaries between the two categories of ›black‹, see the interesting case of the ›Bunya Black‹, who raised debate about the ›degree of his blackness‹ – Tracey Banivanua-Mar: *Reading the Shadows of Whiteness*, (p. 155, ›degree‹). For the subtleties of differing constructions of ›natives‹ in settler societies, see Patrick Wolfe: *The Settler Complex*, in particular pp. 7 ff.

common worker and the plantation owner. After all, no matter whether they were employees or employers, rich or poor, men or women, old or young, they shared a distinguishable feature: their collective ›whiteness‹.

This ›whiteness‹ was so strongly solidified that neither empirical skin colour nor sartorial reversals of roles could darken its radiance, as was suggested by a cartoon in the ›Alexandra and Yea Standard, Gobur, Thornton and Acheron Express‹ of 1903 (Fig. 10).⁷⁸ The upper part of the cartoon shows a meeting between an Aborigine and congregational minister Llewelyn D. Bevan, who have swapped their apparel and items. While the Aborigine now wears a hat and carries a book or a newspaper and an umbrella under his arm, Bevan wears around his neck a so-called ›king plate‹ or breastplate – an ironical insignia usually given by the British to leaders of Aboriginal groups – and a boomerang which is just about to hit the ground.⁷⁹ The spherical insertion displays Prime Minister Edmund Barton, who feeds a white cockatoo and an Australian magpie (presumably the one eavesdropping on the previous conversation) ›conversing‹ with the latter. The lower part of the cartoon shows a black snake and a black swan attempting to defend the beach they stand on against a Chinese dragon and an Indian cobra.

Bevan was one of the contemporary critics of the ›white Australia policy‹. He considered the demand for an exclusively ›white‹ continent as »certainly the most unjust and inhuman cry ever uttered« and warned of the dangers of a homogeneous nation. He was also an advocate of the Pacific Islanders' employment in tropical Queensland as a means to develop the northern parts under European guidance and thus »preserving the glorious brotherhood of man«.⁸⁰ The role reversal here is more than a mere mockery of those defending ›non-white‹ Australian people. It draws on the annexation of the term ›native‹ by the European invaders,⁸¹ but is

⁷⁸ ›A White Australia‹, in: Alexandra and Yea Standard, Gobur, Thornton and Acheron Express, 18.12.1903. The caption reads: »A White Australia | 1. Dr. Bevan. – ›Fancy meeting you!‹ THE ABORIGINAL. – ›My word! not much difference between you white feller Australian and me black feller Australian when we change clothes.‹ | 2. COCKIE. – ›Yah! You're no white Australian.‹ MAGGIE. – »Pooh! I'm a little bit of both.‹ THE JUDGE. – ›Well, fight it out between you. I no longer draw the colour line.‹ | 3. THE BLACK SWAN AND THE BLACK SNAKE (to the Chinese dragon and the Indian cobra). – ›Out of this; we are the only black things permitted in Australia.«.

⁷⁹ For more information and examples of such ›insignia‹, see National Museum of Australia: ›Creation of Aboriginal kings‹, http://www.nma.gov.au/online_features/aboriginal_breastplates/creation_aboriginal_kings.

⁸⁰ ›Lecture by Dr. Bevan‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 11.06.1902 (›cry‹); ›Dr. Bevan and the North‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 12.06.1902; ›Federal Convention of Churches‹, in: Kalgoorlie Western Argus, 01.10.1901 (›brotherhood‹).

⁸¹ In 1851, it had to be explained to people »not conversant with colonial phraseology«, that ›native‹ in the case of the ›Native Police‹ did not mean »persons born in the colony

also an expression of the confidence that, unlike the depicted Aborigine, the ›white Australian‹ could rest assured of his distinctiveness based on his accumulated racist symbolic capital.

The black-and-white bird endemic to Australia had very early fallen victim to the colonial procedure of naming and came to be known as an Australian magpie. Now it not only visually brings together ›blackness‹ and ›whiteness‹ as a strong symbol for the ›native‹ Australian from European descent. In the contest between the white cockatoo, also endemic to Australia, and the chequered Australian magpie, ›Judge‹ Edmund Barton, in the light of the many colours of nativeness, eludes a definitive answer to the question of ›white Australianness‹ by eradicating the ›colour line‹ and thus attempting to dissolve issues of colour in the melting pot of ›white Australia‹. This followed the desire to become ›one people‹, but by no means did it mean an entitlement to equality for everyone. This is made sure by the last drawing. Indigenous to Australia, the black swan (also a symbol for Western Australia)⁸² and the black snake defend their territory against intruders. Not only are Chinese and Indian immigrants – depicted as menacing chimeras – barred from entering the country; as ›the only black things permitted in Australia‹ the exclusionist snake and swan also attest the Aborigines' and the Pacific Islanders' non-entitlement to residence in the southernmost European outpost.

However, in the public discourse it was not only non-Europeans who came under the suspicion of not being ›white‹ or ›white‹ enough. Even immigrants from European nations could be on the borderline to being ›coloured‹. The southern Europeans immigrating to Australia in increasing numbers after the eighteen nineties were, in particular in the labourite circles, considered as at least being partial descendants from Africans. Italy, for instance, was divided into a ›black‹ south and a ›white‹ north. Consequently, immigrants from the north were preferred as they were not only geographically but also allegedly ›racially‹ closer to the northern Europeans. For those nationalists who prioritized the populating of the country, settlers from southern Europe constituted a possible interstage in

of European persons« (›The Native Police‹, in: South Australian Register, 16.07.1850). In the following year, the Anti-Transportation Conference published a declaration, delimiting ›the native Australasians‹ from those transported to the colonies (›Results of the Anti-Transportation Conference‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 12.02.1851). The Victorian Natives' Association first appeared in public in May 1871 and continued their business as Australian Natives' Association (›Public Notices‹, in: Argus, 18.05.1871). See also ›On the Bomareng Propeller‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 11.01.1851, which talks about the weapons of ›the Australian man‹ but also exemplifies the fluent passage in the definition of the ›Australian native‹ (here one of the ›Australian aborigines‹).

⁸² Cf. ›New Australian Settlement‹, in: Colonial Times, 20.03.1829.

the development of the otherwise ›empty‹ northern parts of the continent. In the nineteen twenties and thirties, the British Preference Movement and its successor, the British Preference League, levelled their repulsion in particular against the alleged competition by Italian workers.⁸³

Nonetheless, Britishness on its own was also no definitive benchmark to access the, in the Australian eyes, ›right‹ kind of ›whiteness‹. Reminders by the British imperial authorities, that all British subjects of the Empire should be treated and acknowledged equally, were seemingly discomfiting. Plans for the immigration of Indian workers were broadly vetoed and treaties between Britain and Japan frowned upon as a betrayal of Australian anxiety about the latter's closeness and military power and caused demands to relinquish imperial connections. Maltese immigrants, though being British subjects from Europe, were also met with disapprobation by the labour movement and were racistly discriminated against as a ›coloured race‹.

On the other hand, ›whiteness‹ as a norm unfolded its purportedly integrative character when, in the context of policies of Aboriginal assimilation, the removal of Aboriginal children was legislated. As early as 1890 the Aborigines Protection Board fostered the transferring of »children of mixed descent« into ›white‹ families based on allegations of negligence by their original family association.⁸⁴ Following the granting of governmental guardianship in the Aborigines Protection Act of 1909,⁸⁵ removal of children could be initiated without the parents' consent. The children were then placed in foster families or homes to be educated and raised the ›white‹ way. Evidence suggests that members of the ›Stolen Generations‹ were also employed in the cane fields.⁸⁶

The assimilationist ideology behind this was the presumed ability to ›breed out‹ the Aboriginal character traits and the necessity to keep so-called ›half-caste‹ children away from the possibility of a relapse into ›primitivism‹ based on their physical closeness to their original family association.⁸⁷ Drawing on US-American ›racial‹ nomenclature, the scaling of ›intermixed‹ subjects included ›quadroons‹ and ›octoroons‹. This outward ›whitening‹ was considered to be concomitant with an inward enlighten-

⁸³ Cf. William A. Douglass: *From Italy to Ingham*, pp. 46 ff., 141 f., 228; Charles A. Price: *Southern Europeans in Australia*, p. 49; Jens Lyng: *Non-Britishers in Australia*, p. 97. For the British Preference Movement, see also subchapter 6.3 ›Think the Matter out‹.

⁸⁴ Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission: *Bringing Them Home*, p. 34.

⁸⁵ Cf. Aborigines Protection Act of 1909.

⁸⁶ Cf. Peter Read: *Stolen Generation 2007*, pp. 17 f.

⁸⁷ For the concept of ›breeding out the colour‹, see Robert Manne: *Aboriginal Child Removal and the Question of Genocide*, pp. 228 ff.; Russell McGregor: *Breed out the Colour*.

ment. Thus, it was in particular »octoroon children, white in appearance and outlook«, »attractive and apparently pure white kiddies«, who needed to be saved from »inevitably sink[ing] back into a condition far beneath their deserts« when remaining in their biological family or even, as in this case, in a »half-caste home« together with ›actual‹ natives.⁸⁸ Such attempts to disperse the native population by incorporating it into the ›white‹ ›racial corpus‹ continued, as did the ›white Australia policy‹, until the nineteen seventies and were the consequence of the failure of the ›doomed race‹ theory which predicted a disappearance of the Aborigines based on social Darwinism.⁸⁹

The unfolding and maintenance of Australian ›whiteness‹ and its defence against people deemed ›coloured‹ was then the background, the ›white noise‹, that accompanied the developments in the social history of the Queensland sugar industry from its emergence until far into the twentieth century. Its Australian story begins at the very commencement of British colonization in New South Wales.

3.2 ›None Suitable for Plantations‹: Aborigines and the Proliferation of Sugar

The First Fleet brought to Australian shores not only new settlers, sugar cane and other articles for the establishment of a new colony. Also, along with the British, colonialism invaded the southern continent. In multiple ways, British appropriation of land and the establishment of agriculture and pastoralism in New South Wales and Queensland affected the local Aborigines and jeopardized their very existence. Nonetheless, though widely understated, the local indigenous people were intimately connected with the Queensland sugar industry and contributed to its constitution and development.

Driven by the will to occupy the continental landmass and to expand both their industries and areas of settlement, the pioneers advanced violently into the country. The first settlers found the continent's soil to be neither uninhabited nor uncultivated. The Aborigines who were (falsely) said to be few in number were of course not willing to give up their land or

⁸⁸ ›Octoroons brought up as blacks‹, in: Advertiser (SA), 21.06.1934.

⁸⁹ Cf. Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission: Bringing Them Home, pp. 23, 69. In actual fact, the system of child removal extends into the present days, with Aboriginal children being taken from their families due to alleged health concerns – ›Australia's ›stop the boats‹ policy is cynical and lawless‹, in: Guardian (UK), 29.07.2013.

submit themselves to British government without resistance.⁹⁰ The struggle for property on the colonial frontier was »more bloody, and more prolonged« in the northern colony than it was in the rest of Australia.⁹¹ But the ›white‹ invaders' strategies of land-taking – exterminating violence, seizure of natural resources and, arguably, lethal viruses – were no match for the native societies.

Initial contacts with Aborigines were accompanied by presents of clothing, blankets and food. In this manner, they first encountered British bread and tea but also sugar. As the newly founded settlement cut deeper and deeper into their territories, settlements of Aborigines were forced to make way for cities and industries. Large tracts of land in Queensland were taken up by cattle farms, followed by plantations for the sugar industry. Dislodged from their traditional grounds, the dispersed groups of Aborigines settled down on the fringes of European settlements and, more often than occasionally, found employment as workers for cattle farmers or sugar planters, as herdsmen or to clear the soil. Not only were local groups of Aborigines seen as pools of cheap and docile labourers, but employment of Aborigines was in theory also seen as a means of civilizing.⁹²

A systematic investigation into the role Aborigines played in the establishment of the sugar industry is still a desideratum of research. The main body of work in reference to Aborigines has been done under the perspective of extermination. Individual studies have looked at the historically undervalued but continual contribution of Aboriginal labour to the ›white‹ progress and settlement of the Australian continent.⁹³ Despite their absence in the ›white‹ records, they now gradually enter historiography and their contribution to the British domination of the continent is being investigated. Nonetheless, their action had impacts on the opening up of the large tracts of land and the initial establishment of agriculture and primary industries which then began to dominate the settlement of the northern parts of Australia and should not be neglected for the history of sugar cane cultivation in Queensland.

⁹⁰ The generalizing expression ›Aborigines‹ is rather deceptive. Before British presence, the population on the continent consisted of about four hundred to five hundred small-scale societies, differing in culture, traditions and language. In this text, wherever individual groups or nations can be distinguished, they are mentioned by name. For what appears to have been rather universal experiences, especially in the context of ›white‹ invasion and stereotyping, they will be theoretically constituted as a single group in contradistinction to the people with a British or European migratory background.

⁹¹ Robert Castle, Jim Hagen: Regulation of Aboriginal Labour in Queensland, p. 66.

⁹² Cf. Henry Reynolds: With the White People, pp. 88 ff.

⁹³ For notable examples, see Ann McGrath: Born in the Cattle; Henry Reynolds: With the White People; Dawn May: Aboriginal Labour and the Cattle Industry.

But how was it at all possible for the British farmers to cultivate sugar cane on Australian soil? In order to comprehend the process of land appropriation from and forced displacement of Aborigines, which enabled the sugar plantations and farms as well as other industries to be established and evolved in Queensland, the investigation has to start at the beginning of ›white Australia‹.

The occupation of the Australian continent was legitimized by the European legal fiction later called ›terra nullius‹ – no one's land – declaring the country to be unoccupied (which is not the same as being devoid of inhabitants). This derivative stood in the tradition of preceding deliberations following John Locke's theorem of appropriation by labour and Emer de Vattel's assumption that the earth was given to the humans under the condition that they would put it to productive use.⁹⁴ After the British ›discovery‹ of the continent, and in conjunction with the conviction that agriculture was non-existent, the native population was legally dispossessed and their land passed into the possession of the Empire. The soil beneath the indigenous Australians' feet had swiftly been turned British. Subsequent to the declaration by Captain James Cook, who claimed for King George III the Australian east coast on Possession Island on 23 August 1770, the first Governor Arthur Phillip took formal possession in the King's name of the whole (yet unexplored) continent of Australia on 26 January 1788.⁹⁵

Several legal rulings consolidated this ›entitlement‹ over the years. When the Governor of New South Wales declared void one of the rare cases of contracting with Aborigines, he referred to the territory as being Crown's land and thus inalienable by the native population.⁹⁶ As late as the early nineteen seventies, Australian justice asserted this reading by declaring that it was rather a case of the Aboriginal groups being linked to the land than a possession of the land by the respective groups. It was only

⁹⁴ Cf. Andrew Fitzmaurice: *The Genealogy of Terra Nullius*; Wulf D. Hund: *Rassismus* (2007), p. 42.

⁹⁵ How important legal regulation was and for whom the regulation was made, became obvious when Jean François de Galaup, Comte de La Pérouse, and his fleet entered Botany Bay only shortly after Captain Arthur Phillip and the First Fleet had arrived. Until the formal possession taking by Phillip, it was common understanding in European colonialism, that the French, as well as any other nation, had the right to take up settlement – cf. Edward Jenks: *The History of the Australasian Colonies*, p. 30.

⁹⁶ John Batman had negotiated a ›treaty‹ with the local population near Port Phillip in 1835; shortly after, it was declared void by the Governor of New South Wales. The Crown's land comprised all the territory from Cape York to Wilsons Promontory (the southernmost part of Australia's mainland) and from the east coast (including Norfolk Island and the adjacent islands) westward to the 129th meridian east (today roughly the border between West Australia and the Northern Territory / South Australia). See Governor Bourke's Proclamation; Philip L. Brown: *John Batman*.

with the Mabo decision of 1992 that first steps were taken to acknowledge natives titles and undermine the construction of ›terra nullius‹.⁹⁷

Initially, the taking possession of the Australian landmass was intended to take place free of unnecessary physical violence. The governmental instructions given to Captain Arthur Phillip urged him to »endeavour by every possible means to open an Intercourse with the [...] Natives and to conciliate their affections, enjoining all Our Subjects to live in amity and kindness with them«. In consideration of utilization of the new continent and its inhabitants, he was further encouraged to report »in what manner Our Intercourse with the people may be turned to the advantage of the colony«. Punitive measures were supposed to be taken »if any of Our Subjects shall wantonly destroy them, or give them any unnecessary Interruption in the exercise of their several occupations«.⁹⁸ The latter instruction contained a not too concealed proviso: it was not any destruction or interruption that was to be punished, but intention and (colonial) necessity were factors that needed to be considered.⁹⁹ This further qualification helped justify the subsequent treatment of the native people.

Even before the first settlers in New South Wales came into contact with the indigenous population, the perception of the Aborigines had already been positioned between two extremes. At the end of the seventeenth century, William Dampier gave an account describing them as »differ[ing] but little from brutes« and being the »miserablest People in the World« because of their alleged lack of civilizational insignia, like houses, clothes and livestock holding. A century later, James Cook disagreed with this notion and stated that in their presumed state of not knowing and not having they were »far more happier than we Europeans«. Though he could now draw on a concept of life in an untouched state of nature that was seen as healthier and more harmonious and followed Jean-Jacques Rousseau's notion of the ›noble savage‹, this did not constitute a general promotion in the ›racial hierarchy‹.

This oscillation between two extremes continued to accompany ›white‹ settlement until far into the nineteenth century and allowed for the upvaluation as outstanding personalities of a few individuals – amongst them Arabanoo, Bennelong, Pemulwuy – and the devaluation of the Aborigines

⁹⁷ Cf. Richard Broome: *Aboriginal Australians*, p. 235.

⁹⁸ Transcription of Governor Phillip's Instructions, pp. 15 (›endeavour‹), 16 (›intercourse‹), 15 f. (›destroy‹). The elimination of the word ›savages‹ in the original could be indicating a reflection about the official perception of a ›right‹ to seize land without the consideration of indigenous peoples (as was the case in the Americas) that necessitated the legal fiction later called ›terra nullius‹.

⁹⁹ Cf. Keith Willey: *When the Sky Fell Down*, p. 39.

as a collective. The demotion from Cook's ›noble savages‹ to a position described by Tench as »very low, even in the scale of savages« followed quickly after the first encounters. With the support from the emerging ›race‹ sciences, the perception of the Aborigines altered. Increasingly the Aborigines were considered as not living in the Rousseauian ›Golden Age‹ but as rebellious and uncultivated people, who were at times under the suspicion of being cannibals and doomed to give way to the allegedly superior ›white‹ invaders.¹⁰⁰

On the colonial frontier, it soon became clear to the British occupiers that a non-violent approach was a difficult undertaking. The inhabitants of the surrounding areas did show neither a willingness to share their resources without receiving equivalent goods nor interest in volunteering for scientific research in terms of their language, culture or capacity to be ›civilized‹. In the early days of settlement, Governor Phillip put the blame for a majority of the violent encounters on provocation by the ›white‹ convicts and settlers who went into the bush.¹⁰¹ This assignment of guilt to the English turned out to be a two-sided sword. While it might have granted the Aborigines the benefit of the doubt and declared the incidents to be means of defence against the actions of the ›whites‹, it reduced attacks by Aborigines to mere reactions. This denied them the capability to take deliberate action against the intruders and played into the hands of those declaring all Aborigines to be cowardly and passive.

This, however, was a generalization refuted in individual encounters. After a near-fight with an elder Aborigine, Governor Phillip remarked how »personal bravery appears to be a quality in which the natives of New South Wales are by no means deficient«.¹⁰² Far from being passive observers, the Aborigines soon not only showed resentment to the ›white invasion‹ but also offered active resistance in burning the farmers' fields, taking away livestock or the fish catch of the day.

Furthermore, British land seizure was not beyond dispute. One contemporary critic of the occupation and dispossession of Aboriginal land was the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Sydney. Since »to trespass on the hunting grounds of another tribe is deemed a cause of war«, he followed that the indigenous population must have felt that they were treated un-

¹⁰⁰ William Dampier: *A New Voyage Round the World*, p. 464 (›brutes‹, ›miserablest‹). James Cook cited in Glyndwr Williams: *Far more happier than we Europeans*, p. 499; Watkin Tench: *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson in New South Wales*, p. 187 (›scale‹). Cf. Richard Broome: *Aboriginal Australians*, pp. 29 f. (noble savages).

¹⁰¹ Cf. Keith Willey: *When the Sky Fell Down*, pp. 61 ff.

¹⁰² Arthur Phillip: *The Voyage of Governor Phillip to Botany Bay*, p. 100.

justly when the Europeans took ›possession of their land, without giving them what they deemed an equivalent‹ and drove away the ›means of subsistence‹.¹⁰³ The taking of the land was accompanied by the cutting off of the Aborigines from food resources. The opening up of the land destroyed hunting grounds, the famine in the early days of settlement diminished the local wildlife stock, fencing prevented migration and obstructed access to water holes. When Europeans took land and wildlife, Aborigines took implements and fish. As such, they might have taken the British settlement as a new ›source of sustenance‹ and become dependants of the settlement, not only because of a growing desire for European stimulants, like tea, sugar and tobacco but also as a consequence of the Europeans' reducing their food supply.¹⁰⁴

The ›white invasion‹ had another accomplice besides starvation. The land taking was also supported on the microbiological scale, first of all by the smallpox virus. In April 1789, about half the native population in the Port Jackson region ›died a natural death‹.¹⁰⁵ The origin of the first recorded smallpox epidemic, which did not die out until 1845, remains unknown. It seems unlikely, however, that smallpox had existed in such dimensions before on the continent since the surgeons of the First Fleet and the former visitors to the country had not noticed any pock marks on Aborigines. Moreover, the velocity in which the disease abruptly spread and diminished the numbers seems to suggest that it had been recently introduced into the country.¹⁰⁶ First Fleet's Captain Watkin Tench expressed the likelihood that Europeans brought the disease to the Aboriginal societies when he asked whether ›the French ships under Monsieur de Peyrouse introduce[d] it? [...] Had it travelled across the continent from its western shore, where Dampier and other European voyagers had formerly landed? – Was it introduced by Mr. Cook? – Did we give birth to it here?‹.

One should certainly not recklessly presume outright ›biological warfare‹. However, the practice of variolation, i.e. the deliberate bringing into contact of people with the virus in dried or scab form, in order to cause immunity against the disease, was known by the surgeons on the First Fleet

¹⁰³ John Bede Polding, cited in Keith Willey: *When the Sky Fell Down*, p. 101.

¹⁰⁴ Keith Willey: *When the Sky Fell Down*, p. 120. See also Richard Broome: *Aboriginal Australians*, pp. 56 ff.

¹⁰⁵ Watkin Tench: *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson in New South Wales*, p. 18.

¹⁰⁶ For the absence of pockmarks on Aborigines, see the *Historical Records of Australia*, Series I, Vol. 1, pp. 744 f. Another theory provides for the possibility that it was introduced by the Macassan fishermen during their visits to the northern parts of the continent – see, for example, Judy Campbell: *Invisible Invaders* – but remains rather shaky. Cf. Michael J. Bennett: *Smallpox and Cowpox under the Southern Cross*, pp. 44 ff.

who brought »variola matter« in vials to the colony.¹⁰⁷ Given the time delay of fifteen months after the initial contact, the possibility that this matter could have caused accidental or deliberate spread of smallpox in a situation where the colonists felt threatened by starvation and surrounded by irate Aborigines cannot be easily denied. Though the thought that the smallpox epidemic emanated from the surgeons' inventory did cross Tench's mind as well, he discarded it with the words that »to infer that it [the epidemic] was produced from this cause [the surgeons' variola matter] were a supposition so wild as to be unworthy of consideration«.¹⁰⁸

While the Aborigines were powerless against European diseases, British intrusion and starvation of the local Aborigines did meet with opposition. Once the British had strained the hospitality and made no move to abandon the shores of Sydney Cove, the local population became increasingly annoyed with the trespassers. This happened at latest in May 1788, when Aboriginal men from the nations surrounding the British settlement began – maybe as an act of deterrence – to spear convicts who were sent into the bush to gather herbs and plants.¹⁰⁹ It was not that the British had not been warned. When their ships first approached Botany Bay four months prior, Aborigines on shore were »shouting and making many uncouth signs and gestures«, another group put an end to conversation by repeating »several times the word *whurra*, which signifies, begone«.¹¹⁰

These feelings of rejection intensified during the subsequent years. One of the first documented individuals offering strenuous resistance to »white« land occupation was Pemulwuy.¹¹¹ Born more than a decade before Cook had set foot on any Australian beach, he lived as a member of the

¹⁰⁷ Watkin Tench: *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson in New South Wales*, p. 18 (fn.) (»birth«, »variola«). See also the description of inoculation practice using »pock matter« in India in the early seventeenth century by Edward Ives: *A Voyage from England to India*, p. 54.

¹⁰⁸ Watkin Tench: *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson in New South Wales*, p. 18 (fn.) (»wild«). For current deliberations on this topic, see: Michael J. Bennett: *Smallpox and Cowpox under the Southern Cross*, p. 48; Noel G. Butlin: *Macassans and Aboriginal Smallpox*, pp. 332 ff.; Craig Mear: *The origin of the smallpox outbreak in Sydney in 1789*. Furthermore, the first Australian smallpox epidemic occurred long after attempts had been made, in western Pennsylvania, to infect native Americans by the use of blankets and handkerchief that were brought in contact with the smallpox virus. This substantiates that knowledge of how the disease can be (covertly) spread, was existing, and the effects were well-known. Cf. Ben Kiernan: *Blood and Soil*, p. 245. For further information on the smallpox epidemic of 1789, see also Henry Reynolds: *An Indelible Stain*, pp. 35 ff.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. »Governor Phillip to Lord Sydney«, in: *Historical Records of Australia*, Series I, Vol. 1, p. 48 f.

¹¹⁰ Watkin Tench: *A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay*, p. 53 (»signs«), 56 (»whurra«).

¹¹¹ This seems to be the most common British spelling of his name; others comprise Pimel-wi, Pe-mul-wy, Pemulwhy, Permulooy, Pemulwoy, Bimblewove, Bumbleway. His

Darug nation near Botany Bay and witnessed the expropriation of the indigenous population by the British. He, »newly shaved« (and thus clearly having socialized before with the settlers), entered British writing of history as an individual after throwing a spear at John McEntire, the colony's gamekeeper, and mortally injuring him. Subsequent punitive expeditions ordered by Governor Phillip were in vain.¹¹² In the years after, the »riotous and troublesome savage« and his followers continued to raid settlers, kill sheep and burn wheat fields.¹¹³

In May 1801, Governor King issued an order that the »large body of Natives resident about Parramatta, George's River, and Prospect Hill« be »driven back [...] by firing at them«. The soldiers sent to Parramatta were told to shoot as many Aborigines »as they could meet«. This was a pattern of ›white justice‹ that extended into the early twentieth century and over the whole of the continent. In November of the same year, rewards including pardon and home passage for convicts and rations of spirits were offered to those who would bring him in »dead or alive«.¹¹⁴

After years of strenuous fighting against the ›white‹ invaders, Pemulwuy was shot dead on the first day of June 1802. His head was taken to Governor King who sent it to Joseph Banks as an acknowledgment for his great scientific services to the initial exploration of the east coast. »A terrible pest to the colony, he was a brave and independent character« – this made his head not only one of the colonial »desiderata« but also an exceptional war trophy. The »Native's Head in Spirits« arrived in London in November 1802. After the »head of one of your subjects« had »caused some comical consequences« at customs, it – being »very acceptable to our anthropological collectors« – was made an exhibition piece in a public museum.¹¹⁵ His head became the earliest case of Australian human remains known by name and stolen for the sake of ›race‹ science. To this day it remains unburied.¹¹⁶

actual name, Bembilwyam, remains largely unmentioned. For his biography, see also James L. Kohen: Pemulwuy; Keith V. Smith: Pemulwuy.

¹¹² Watkin Tench: A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson in New South Wales, pp. 90 (›shaved‹), 91 ff.

¹¹³ David Collins, Philip G. King, George Bass, Maria Collins: An account of the English colony in New South Wales, p. 405 (›riotous‹).

¹¹⁴ New South Wales General Standing Orders, pp. 39 (›large body‹) 40 (›driven‹); David Collins, Philip G. King, George Bass, Maria Collins: An account of the English colony in New South Wales, p. 288 (›meet‹); New South Wales General Standing Orders, p. 68 (›dead or alive‹). See also Keith V. Smith: Pemulwuy.

¹¹⁵ King to Banks, letter, cited after James L. Kohen: Pemulwuy (›pest‹, ›desiderata‹); Samuel Enderby, trading merchant, to Joseph Banks, letter dated 24.11.1802 (›head‹); Joseph Banks to Governor King, letter dated April 1803 (›subjects‹, ›comical‹, ›collections‹).

¹¹⁶ Cf. ›Famous dispute over ownership of ancient artefacts‹, in: Telegraph (UK), 09.05.2011.

While in the earlier days of settlement confrontations with Aborigines were small-scale, the expansion of colonial settlement in the nineteenth century was accompanied by violence. Squatters eager to secure largest possible tracts of land pushed the colonial frontier further and further. With the British intrusion into the northern territories, Aboriginal resistance increased – it came »closer than hitherto to true guerrilla warfare« – and so did the retaliation campaigns and punitive expeditions which more than bordered on »genocidal massacres«.¹¹⁷ The officially documented number of Aborigines that died in rural Queensland before the twentieth century is disputed. Figures vary between five and fifty thousand – meaning that, at the lowest estimate, there were roughly thirteen dead Aborigines for one dead European.¹¹⁸

The expansion of agronomy claimed increasing tracts of land, and the ruthlessness of land-taking by both squatters and settlers stirred up the antagonism of the local population. Less than two years before Queensland was separated from New South Wales as a colony of its own, and only a few years before the commercial cultivation of sugar cane captured the country, one of the most extensive killings of Aboriginal people took place in central Queensland.¹¹⁹ Conflicts began when the initial settlement in this region was still sparse and parcels of land were large and isolated.

The local Yeeman showed their disapprobation of British landgrab and tried to deter the settlers with violent attacks. The confrontation peaked when their attempted theft of sheep and the murder of a shepherd was »duly avenged« by the Native Police – meaning dozens of Aborigines were slaughtered in retaliation.¹²⁰ This of course did anything but settle the conflict, and in the years following the »Hornet Bank massacre« the Yeeman continued to emphasize their disapproval by murdering six more shepherds.

One of the occasions on which the initiative agency of the Aborigines was emphasized was said assault on the residents of the Hornet Bank station. On 27 October 1857 Yeeman people attacked the station, took the stocked provisions and some livestock, and killed eleven Europeans living on the premises. News of the incident spread far and wide, using the most

¹¹⁷ Charles D. Rowley: *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society*, p. 170 (»guerrilla warfare«). For genocidal massacres and genocidal moments in Australia, see Ben Kiernan: *Blood and Soil*, pp. 13 f.; Colin Tatz: *Genocide in Australia*; Andrew Markus: *Genocide in Australia*.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Ros Kidd: *Missing in Action*, p. 132.

¹¹⁹ For the following on the Hornet Bank massacre and the Jiman or Yeeman, see Henry Reynolds: *An Indelible Stain*, pp. 121 f., 124 f. and Bruce Elder: *Blood on the Wattle*, pp. 159 ff.

¹²⁰ Bruce Elder: *Blood on the Wattle*, p. 161 (»duly avenged«).

gruesome vocabulary to condemn what was deemed an action springing from the Aborigines' ›blood-thirsty disposition‹ and fostering fear about future attacks. The ›particulars of one of the most diabolical outrages on the part of the aborigines‹ were given with a special emphasis on the fact that five of the ›cruelly and foully massacred‹ during these ›appalling atrocities‹ were females. Though there had been knowledge that ›the blacks have always betrayed a feeling of hatred to the dwellers at Hornet Bank‹, the attack was considered unprovoked and rather a case of ›plunder‹ since ›[n]othing had transpired to excite feelings of revenge in the breasts of the savages‹. Rather telling for the relation between the frontier and the metropolis in colonialism, a local paper warned that ›such scenes of barbarity‹ should not prompt the advocacy of ›vengeance and extermination‹, whereas in the colony's capital the possibility that the murderers would not be punished made ›one's blood boil‹.¹²¹

The subsequent actions of what the local settlers and authorities deemed retaliation, made William Fraser – the oldest son, who had not been present at the incident – ›a symbol and a focus for all the misguided frontier animosity‹ and eventually turned out to be the ›largest mass murderer in Australian history‹.¹²² The retaliatory actions extended over more than six weeks and, with the help of the Native Police and some settler gangs, reached a death toll of at least one hundred and fifty but might have actually reached three hundred.¹²³ The enraged European population on the colonial frontier closed ranks against what they considered the Aboriginal ›singularity‹. Thus, the hit squad avenging this ›never-to-be-forgotten massacre‹ put every single one of the local Aborigines under general suspicion and randomly carried out their arbitrarily passed ›sentence‹ without any regard to the absence of substantial evidence.¹²⁴ Randomly shooting

¹²¹ ›Moreton Bay‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 23.11.1857 (›blood-thirsty‹); ›Horrible Massacre by the Blacks on the Dawson‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 14.11.1857 (›particulars‹, ›cruelly‹, ›atrocities‹); ›Horrible Massacre by the Blacks on the Dawson‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 14.11.1857 (›hatred‹); ›Massacre by the Blacks and Separation Doings‹, in: Moreton Bay Courier, 14.11.1857 (›plunder‹, ›revenge‹, ›extermination‹); ›Moreton Bay‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 16.11.1857 (›blood‹). The affidavit made by the sole survivor, a boy of the Fraser family who escaped to inform his brother ›Billy‹ about the incident, was reproduced on multiple occasions. For first-hand reports, see ›The Massacre at the Hornet Bank Station‹, in: Empire, 12.12.1857.

¹²² Bruce Elder: Blood on the Wattle, p. 159.

¹²³ Cf. Henry Reynolds: Indelible Stain, p. 124; Bruce Elder: Blood on the Wattle, p. 170. The Native Police, established in Queensland in 1859, consisted of groups of Aboriginal recruits under the supervision of ›white‹ policemen, whose task it was to remove Aboriginal camps from areas of settlement and prosecute (criminalized) Aborigines. They also worked as forces of retribution. Cf. Ross Fitzgerald, Lyndon Megaritty, David Symons: Made in Queensland, p. 32; Clive Moore: Restraining Their Savage Propensities, pp. 92 f.

¹²⁴ ›The Native Police‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 08.01.1858.

down Aboriginals who were situated in the close or remote surroundings, the retaliation action had wiped out almost the whole Yeeman nation after the first quarter of 1858.¹²⁵

The insecurity on the fringes of ›white‹ settlement was evident. When forced to »choose either an exterminating warfare against them, or to abandon [the] outstations«, the settlers' fear of Aboriginal combat coupled with disdain for Aboriginal life lead to massacres which were nothing short of an attempt to at least wipe out the population of a whole area.¹²⁶ This part of the Australian history not only shows the dimension and excessiveness of retaliating actions on the part of the British in Australia. Even worse, the on-going expansion of the colonial frontier twenty years before Federation continued to confront the settlers with attacks by Aboriginals. The consequence drawn therefrom was that if not a »more rational and humane method« could be found to encourage Aborigines to give up their land, »settlement must be delayed until the work of extermination is complete«. ¹²⁷ This statement, while offering a critique to the dispossession and treatment of Aborigines, nonetheless emphasized the eventual inevitability of European settlement.

Looking at the British converse with Aborigines, the contradistinction between armed contact on the colonial frontier and official policy could hardly be more obvious. In theory, initial contact with Aborigines should have happened on an equal footing. Until the late nineteenth century, ideas of the Aborigines' perfectibility and the possibility of amalgamation dominated.¹²⁸ A poster dating from 1830 depicting the governmental proclamation of equality and justice in Tasmania at the time of the ›Black War‹ visually demonstrated to the local population how this was supposed to take place (Fig. 11).¹²⁹

The desired condition at the top would allow for respect and peacefulness pegged to willingness to submission and assimilation. Until then, the British would wear the breeches and on the quiet also remove European women from early Australian historical narrative. A cursory look at the ex-

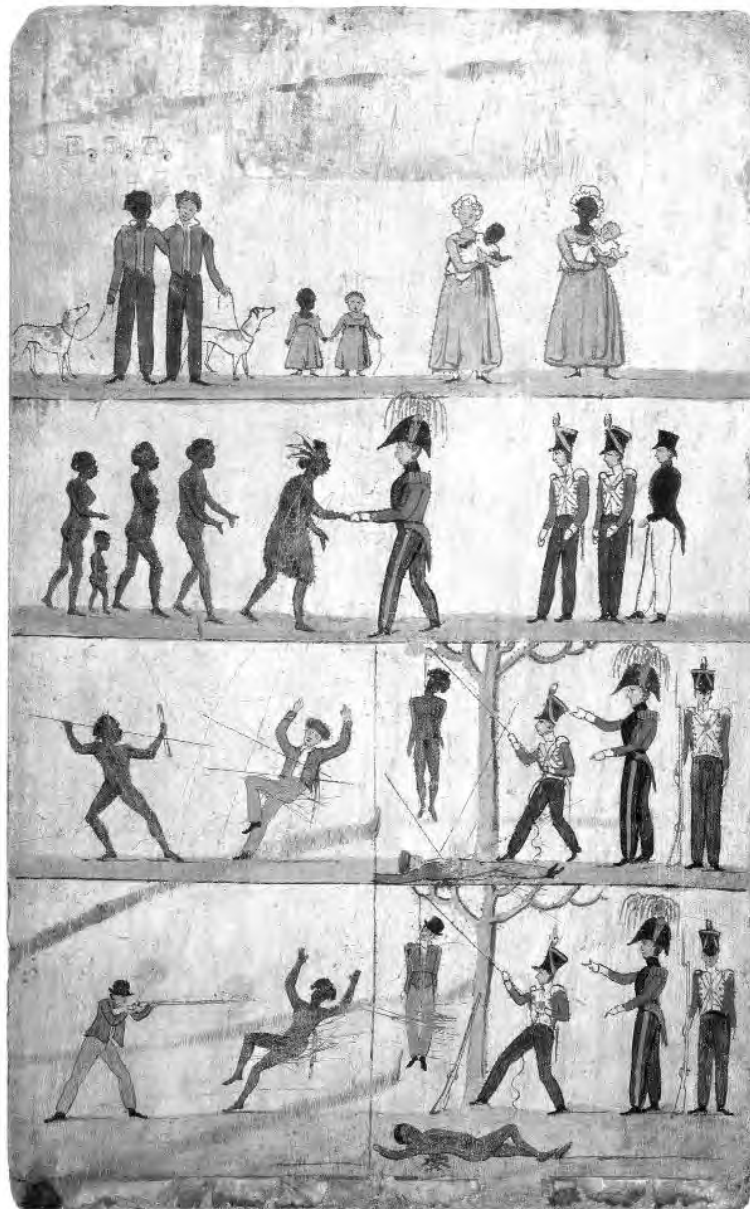
¹²⁵ The random victims included a woman on Rockhampton's main street, an Aboriginal errand boy and an old blind Aboriginal man – cf. Ben Kiernan: *Blood and Soil*, pp. 305 f.

¹²⁶ ›New Murders by the Blacks‹, in: *Moreton Bay Courier*, 08.05.1858 (›exterminating‹).

¹²⁷ ›The Way we Civilise‹, in: *Queenslander*, 01.05.1880. The author of this article, which was reprinted in many Australian newspapers, claimed to lay »bare a painful sore in [the] system of colonisation« by stating the details of the process of land-taking by dispossessing and ›dispersing‹ the local natives, declaring it a »fitful war of extermination waged upon the blacks«.

¹²⁸ Cf. Henry Reynolds: *With the White People*, pp. 85 ff.

¹²⁹ ›Governor Arthur's Proclamation to the Aboriginal People 1830 – versions of this are reprinted in: Richard Broome: *Aboriginal Australians*, p. 32, James Boyce: *What business have you here*, p. 78.



*Fig. 11 – Black causer, white legislation:
Colonial proclamation of equality and justice*

ecution of punishment feigns egalitarianism. But, even though the British as well as the Aboriginal offender atone for their offence in a similar manner, it is the reaction to the ›white invasion‹ by the Aborigine that becomes the original deed. The poster also leaves no doubt about the fact that both British and Aboriginal offenders will be prosecuted and sentenced only according to British law. The ›white justice‹ was to be enforced by British judges and British executioners, and, in most cases, the prospective execution of sentence or even the sentencing in the case of ›white‹ offenders remained an empty promise.¹³⁰

Though the original instructions for Phillip and his successors intended for amicable contact, compliance and the penalizing of crimes against Aborigines, murder of Aborigines was rarely punished. Before William Fraser, ›Black Caesar‹ – Australia's first bushranger – not only escaped unpunished from his alleged killing of Pemulwuy but, on the contrary, was temporarily honoured for it.¹³¹

Questioned by a fellow ›white‹ man about his views of British justice in Australia, a Queensland Aborigine in the eighteen sixties stated that ›if a blackfellow kill a white man they catch him and kill him by putting a rope round his neck; and if a white man kill another white fellow, they do just the same. That is your law‹. He afterwards advocated the intra-communal penalization of ›black‹ by ›black‹ murder; and it is noticeable here that the case of a ›white‹ man killing a ›black‹ man remained unmentioned. Possibly the punishment of a ›black‹ human's murder seemed beyond imagination. Likewise he complained about the imbalance of British justice which condoned the taking of land and the ›punitive‹ expeditions that turned into massacres but penalized the Aborigines' hunger-motivated taking of sheep or cattle and the acts of retaliation against dispossessing and abduction of women.¹³²

Individual encounters with the original inhabitants, on the other hand, could and would take a different course. From the first contact with the native population, gifts played an important role. The first British settlers attempted to win the Aborigines' favour by presenting them with clothing,

¹³⁰ This last circumstance was not least due to the purported non-admissibility of Aboriginal witnesses at court – cf. Graham Jenkin: *Conquest of the Ngarrindjeri*, p. 62. Posters of this kind are also mentioned or reprinted, inter alia, in Bruce Elder: *Blood on the Wattle*, p. 39; James Jupp: *The Australian People*, p. 10; Clive Turnbull: *Black War*, p. 52 f.; Antje Kühnast: ›In the interest of science and of the colony‹, p. 231 – see also her interpretation of the poster, pp. 229 ff.

¹³¹ Cf. Cassandra Pybus: *A Touch of the Tar*, p. 6; Ian Duffield: *The Life and Death of ›Black‹ John Goff*, p. 36.

¹³² Cf. Constance Campbell Petrie: *Tom Petrie's reminiscences of early Queensland*, pp. 182 ff., 184 (›your law‹).

blankets, hatchets and other articles they thought shareable. But the groups of Aborigines did not have much interest in the articles which they deemed unnecessary nor were they too keen about agriculture or language courses which not only were supposed to teach Aborigines but also determine their capacity to be taught. By the same token, the early settlers completely misjudged the situation by considering Aborigines unable to carry on commerce. However, that they were not the mere source for spears, weapons and other cultural assets to be sent to Europe for study or curiosity was demonstrated on many occasions. In 1791, local Aborigines worked as commercial fishermen with official (British) encouragement, catching the fish in the Parramatta River and trading them for bread or salt meat.¹³³ Tench, too, reported of the Aborigines' attempts to barter »spears, fish-gigs, and lines« for hatchets and other articles.¹³⁴ In the same vein, many individual accounts tell of the helpfulness and trustworthiness of Aboriginal workers and station hands, cattle drivers, sawyers and the like.

Even before the Europeans endowed them with sugar (or tea, bread, tobacco) to incite social interaction, Aborigines were no strangers to sweetness. They had various sources like the cases of lerp insects, honey, a kind of sarsaparilla called ›sweet tea‹, wild currant, resin of cider gum, and the murnong root. The European concept of ›sugar‹ was incorporated into local languages when Aborigines referred to a ›nest of honey‹ as »chewgah-bag« (sugar-bag).¹³⁵ Aborigines initially were not part of the group that received sugar on a regular, governmentally-defined basis.¹³⁶ On the fringes of European settlement, however, ›station management‹ blankets and ration articles like flour, tea, beef and sugar were a conventional means of circumventing monetary payment.¹³⁷

Additionally, sugar became part of the distributed rations for Aboriginal societies.¹³⁸ Reliable figures are sparse. In 1837, Victorian records registered a consumption of about fifty pounds per annum in return for

¹³³ Cf. Keith Willey: *When the Sky Fell Down*, p. 134.

¹³⁴ Watkin Tench: *A complete account of the settlement at New South Wales*, p. 65.

¹³⁵ Edward E. Morris: *Austral English*, p. 444 (›chewgah-bag‹, a reference from 1881) and Edward Palmer: *Early Days in North Queensland*, pp. 222 f.; for the preceding, see Philip A. Clarke: *Aboriginal Plant Collectors*, pp. 52 et passim.

¹³⁶ Cf. Peter Griggs: *Sugar demand and consumption in colonial Australia*, p. 80.

¹³⁷ Cf. Robert Castle, Jim Hagan: *Regulation of Aboriginal Labour in Queensland*, p. 67.

¹³⁸ Cf. Ann Curthoys, Clive Moore: *Working for the White People*, p. 9; Peter Griggs: *Sugar demand and consumption in colonial Australia*, p. 136. For the rationing as a mode of government and management, see Tim Rowse ›White Flour, White Power‹, in particular pp. 13 ff. The questionability of protection of Aborigines and governmental distributions of rations found expression in a stage play written by an Indigenous rights campaigner, Jack Davis. ›No Sugar‹ deals with the politics of ›handling‹ Aborigines under the auspices of A. O. Neville, Chief Protector of Aborigines in Western Australia, in the nineteen thirties. See Jack Davis: *No Sugar*.

work, which was about the same amount civil and military officials without families, or colonial public servants, consumed annually.¹³⁹ Alongside with Anglo-Australian consumption, the amount of sugar consumed by the Indigenous Australians rose in the course of the nineteenth century. In June 1866, married Aborigines received, besides tea, flour, soap and tobacco, rations of sixteen pounds of sugar monthly.¹⁴⁰

With settlement only slowly commencing in the newly ›discovered‹ tracks of land, the labour of Aborigines in the northern part of Australia was »an essential condition of success«. The concept of ›letting in‹, i.e. the employment of local Aborigines by British employers, was seen as an alternative to the complete displacement very early on and soon they made up about half of the total workforce in the pastoral industry.¹⁴¹ They contributed substantially to the European settlement with domestic and other services, so that at the end of the nineteenth century Europeans could engage fully into their leisure time activities because they had ›black labour for all jobs‹.¹⁴² As guides, Aborigines featured largely in the expedition into the interior of the country. They were knowledgeable in diplomatic dealings with other Aboriginal societies, well-versed in securing food and water in the outback, and unrivalled in finding their way across country. With these skills, they saved the ›white‹ explorers many a time from starvation, dying of thirst, getting lost or murdered.¹⁴³

Though the number of indigenous Australians was only a quarter of that estimated at the time of the first ›white‹ settlement in Queensland, by the time of Federation Queensland had the largest recorded Aboriginal population of any Australian state.¹⁴⁴ For all that, the usual dramatis personæ in the traditional history of sugar cultivation were ›white‹ British planters and ›black‹ Pacific Island labourers.¹⁴⁵ The Pacific Island labourers are nowadays (finally) entitled the »unsung heroes of the early years of

¹³⁹ Cf. Peter Griggs: Sugar demand and consumption in colonial Australia, p. 81.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. ›The Aborigines‹, in: Argus, 14.06.1866.

¹⁴¹ Clive Moore: Restraining Their Savage Propensities, p. 100 (›success‹); for the concept of ›letting in‹, see *ibid.*, pp. 95 ff.

¹⁴² Henry Reynolds: With the White People, p. 142 (›black labour‹, contemporary quote from 1895).

¹⁴³ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 5 ff.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Katherine Ellinghaus: Absorbing the ›Aboriginal Problem‹, p. 201. About half the original Aboriginal population was killed – either by gun fire or disease – after the first contacts with Europeans in the Pioneer Valley, see Clive Moore: Restraining Their Savage Propensities, p. 106.

¹⁴⁵ The secondary literature partly stresses the ›unemployability‹ aspects by bringing in the allegedly impossible endeavour to try and transform the hunters and gatherers into agricultural labourers (cf. Jock H. Galloway: The Sugar Cane Industry, p. 230), or by reducing the Aborigines' contribution to the gathering of firewood in exchange for opium, tobacco, and alcohol (cf. Kay Saunders: Workers in Bondage, p. 65).

sugar«. ¹⁴⁶ The Aborigines, on the other hand, remain largely unaccredited or were even only recorded as the destroyers of the cane fields. ¹⁴⁷

One reason for the understatement of Aboriginal employment in the contemporary documentation might have been the common belief that Aborigines were on the brink of extinction and were therefore not in the direct focus of attention as workers in the labour-intensive industry. ¹⁴⁸ When asked about the condition of the ›blackfellows‹, Thomas McIlwraith, the then former Prime Minister of Queensland, replied: ›Dying out, sir; dying out. The offscouring of the human race. Cannibals for the most part, but miserable wretches for all that, who are rapidly becoming extinct. [...] You take a blackfellow, feed him, educate him, civilise him as much as you can; put trousers upon him, and make him what you please. [...] Their savagery is ineradicable«. ¹⁴⁹ Under these premises of unteachability and endangerment, Aborigines would have barely qualified as a reliable and extensive workforce.

Looking at the contribution to ›white‹ progress in Queensland, we need to consider the way in which industries were able to be established in these parts of the continent. The northward expansion of pastoralism and agriculture had brought about the removal of local groups of Aborigines from cultivatable land – a ground that had large tracks of fertile soil and rich green pastures, probably because of Aboriginal fire-stick farming as a means of systematic land management. ¹⁵⁰ The diaries of one of the most renowned sugar planters of the Mackay district offer examples for the way how, before they worked the field, the settlers took possession of this soil. John Ewen Davidson gave a vivid description of planters' clashes with Aborigines, the Native Mountain Police's pre-emptive strikes and the dispersal of the local indigenous population, all of which are redolent of the incidents in the Hornet Bank massacre. ¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ John Kerr: *Southern Sugar Saga*, p. 7 (›unsung‹). When Aborigines are featured in the histories of sugar in Australia, if they appear at all, they predominately appear as the preventers of agricultural progress by killing cattle and men. See, for example, Kenneth W. Manning: *In Their Own Hands*, pp. 4, 8, 253; Charles T. Wood: *Sugar Country*, p. 71.

¹⁴⁷ Attacks on sugar plantations, as well as on maize farms and homesteads, became frequent in the late 1860s and 1870s, see Charles D. Rowley: *Destruction of the Aboriginal Society*, p. 176; Kenneth W. Manning: *In Their Own Hands*, p. 8.

¹⁴⁸ For the ›doomed race theory‹, see for example Russell McGregor: *Imagined Destinies*; Kay Anderson: *Race and the Crisis of Humanism*, pp. 142-145; Henry Reynolds: *An Indelible Stain*, pp. 140-150. For contemporary accounts, see inter alia Carl Lumholtz: *Among Cannibals*, in particular p. 349.

¹⁴⁹ ›An Interview with the Ex-Prime Minister of Queensland‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 24.09.1884.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Henry Reynolds: *With the White People*, p. 8.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Roslyn Poignant: *Professional Savages*, pp. 40 ff. For extracts from the diaries, see also Charles T. Wood: *The Queensland Sugar Industry as Depicted in the Whish and*

Though allegedly the »sugar industry had no need for aboriginal labour – except during the initial operation of clearing of the land« – Aborigines were actually employed in sugar mills for more than merely menial tasks like, for instance, attending the cane carriers.¹⁵² In the early stages of the Mackay sugar industry after 1868, the Yuibera people were successfully working in the cane fields and infrequently continued to do so in the earlier half of the twentieth century until machine-aided harvest became the norm. In the early eighteen seventies an ›Aboriginal Reserve‹ was established in this region which, matter-of-factly said, provided »a safe refuge for hundreds and [...] an organised supply of labour for use on the sugar plantations and farms«. ¹⁵³ They were said to be »as good and as reliable as [...] any other coloured labourers – not excepting the South Sea Islanders«, they were »working diligently, and giving their employers little trouble«. ¹⁵⁴

In parallel with the introduction of Pacific Islanders to the sugar districts, other places in Queensland, too, saw the employment of »several hundred Aboriginal people« who »lived and worked on a series of sugar properties on the central Queensland coast« in the late eighteen sixties. They cultivated, harvested and processed sugar cane; in return they were, inter alia, guaranteed residency on their lands, protection from the Native Police and the provision of food and other goods.¹⁵⁵ When in 1873 sixty Aborigines came to the sugar mill at Dulverton, twelve found employment while four Europeans who threatened the employer with strike in the case of the Indigenous' employment were dismissed from their jobs.¹⁵⁶ After being forced to the fringes of the European settlements, Aborigines worked in the early pastoralist settlements of Boonah and, in the eighteen sixties, laboured in the cotton fields until they were forcibly removed to a mission in late 1896.¹⁵⁷ The locals of the Mossman district, the Kuku-Yalanji people, showed strenuous resistance against the land occupation in the late eighteen seventies. Near-starvation and punitive expeditions were the con-

Davidson Diaries, pp. 573 f., 579; see also Derek J. Mulvaney: Aboriginal Labour Force.

¹⁵² Robert L. Jack: *Northmost Australia*, p. 370 (›no need‹). See also Kenneth W. Manning: *In Their Own Hands*, p. 49. Jobs in the mills were jobs from which Pacific Islanders were later on banned, and which, as skilled tasks, were only assigned to European workers.

¹⁵³ Clive Moore: *Restraining Their Savage Propensities*, p. 104.

¹⁵⁴ Report from the Commissioners appointed to Enquire into the Employment and Protection of the Aborigines in the District of Mackay (1847), cited in Charles D. Rowley: *The Destruction of Aboriginal Society*, p. 172 (›reliable‹, ›diligently‹); for the Yuibera, see Wayne Ah-Wong: *Living between cultures*, pp. 24 ff.

¹⁵⁵ James Jupp: *The Australian People*, p. 12.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Kenneth W. Manning: *In Their Own Hands*, p. 49.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. John Kerr: *Southern Sugar Saga*, p. 5; Murray Johnson, Kay Saunders: *Working the Land*, p. 6.

sequences of the erection of cane fields and European settlement. It seems, however, that in this case employment on the cane farms occurred only after the introduction of the Aboriginal Protection and the Restriction of Sale of Opium Act in 1897, which allowed for the wage labour of Aborigines.¹⁵⁸

At the time of Federation, in an attempt to replace the soon-to-be-abolished Pacific Island labour force, further efforts were made to resort to cheap local labourers. In contradiction to the former engagement of Aborigines in the industry, it was again stated that »[t]here were very few blacks to be found and none suitable for plantations«.¹⁵⁹

Biology entered the economic sphere when a distinction based on blood was included in the Sugar Bounty Act of 1905, which decided on the payment of a bounty for ›white‹ labour but counted Aboriginal workers as not affecting the payment of the bounty.¹⁶⁰ By virtue of the law, ›full-blood‹ and occasionally ›half-caste‹ Aboriginal labourers were excluded from the purview of the following bounty acts, thus they were excluded from the non-eligible ›coloured‹ labour.¹⁶¹ After the new legislation for the payment of rebate and later bounty for ›white‹-grown sugar were passed, debarment from this remuneration for the employment of Aborigines was promptly discussed and later repealed.¹⁶²

The actual implementation of this particular clause remains ambiguous, because, in other contexts, the cultivation and processing of sugar cane by Aborigines was still reported to disqualify the planters from receiving the ›white sugar‹ bonus based on the notion that the »expression ›white labour‹ meant the »exclusion of all forms of coloured labour, whether aborigines of Australia or not«. The deliberation then assumed a eugenicist perspective when the need was expressed to »have an exact definition as to the number of generations throughout which the restrictive effects of a taint of aboriginal blood is supposed to extend«.¹⁶³

In contradistinction to the Pacific Islanders, however, the Aborigines' incorporation into the ›white‹ society went so far that a request by two

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Rosemary Hill, Peter Griggs, Bamanga Bubu Ngadimunko: Rainforests, Agriculture and Aboriginal Fire-Regimes in Wet Tropical Queensland, Australia, pp. 146 ff. See also Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act of 1897.

¹⁵⁹ Report to the Police Magistrate at Cooktown, cited in Noelene Cole: Battle Camp to Boralga, p. 180.

¹⁶⁰ »The employment of any aboriginal native of Australia in the growing of sugar-cane or beet shall not prejudice any claim to bounty under this Act« – Sugar Bounty Act of 1905, p. 80.

¹⁶¹ Cf. John McCorquodale: The Legal Classification of Race in Australia, p. 10.

¹⁶² Cf. ›The Senate‹, in: North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times, 15.09.1905.

¹⁶³ ›News & Notes‹, in: Northern Territory Times and Gazette, 20.10.1905. For the prohibition of Aborigines in the sugar industry, see also ›Latest Telegrams‹, in: Northern Territory Times and Gazette, 22.01.1909; ›White Australia‹, in: ibid., 08.01.1904.

»full-blooded aboriginals« and therefore »coloured growers« were granted the sugar bounty upon finding that their sugar plantation was only »worked by aboriginals and half-castes« but »no kanakas«. ¹⁶⁴ The same patterns of differentiation were at work when the ›Worker‹ complained about the »very evil and demoralising effect« which Pacific Islanders had on the Aborigines working side by side with them and sharing accommodations. ¹⁶⁵ Their distinction to ›coloured‹ workers from overseas was furthermore emphasized when the Protector of Aborigines in Queensland permitted the relocation of Aborigines from the Tully to the sugar plantations of the Johnstone River. He was then confronted by the press media with his inertness in the case of such »fine a specimen of his race as could be found in Queensland« becoming »a prey to the swarms of disgusting aliens that infest those places«. ¹⁶⁶

During the labour shortage caused by the Queensland-wide ›Sugar Strike‹, in May 1911 planters of the Maryborough district hired Aborigines as wage labourers for »scrub felling, boundary riding, &c.« and recruited »cane field labour from this source« as an »experiment«. ¹⁶⁷ Elsewhere, it was reported that with the newly regulated bounty for ›white‹-grown sugar the Aborigines were now equal to those paid to Europeans. Having »no objection to the aboriginal working in the field« showed that their potential as a ›racial‹ threat was estimated moderately – either they were already seen as ›black Caucasians‹, or the danger was mitigated by their alleged speedy demise. ¹⁶⁸

The notion of Aborigines as ›black Caucasians‹ had its roots in the last decade of the nineteenth century and was the subject of much controversial discussion. ¹⁶⁹ It was based on the theory that the ›racial characters‹ of the Aborigines were deducible from a more ›primitive‹, i.e. chronologically removed, stage of western European ›racial‹ development – thus they »came to represent the past of advanced Europeans«. ¹⁷⁰ These ›race‹-biological findings did not in the least lessen the contemporary racism but merely changed its perspectives. The place of the slow extinction was taken by the ›breeding out of colour‹ which was furthered by removal of

¹⁶⁴ ››White-Grown‹ Sugar‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 29.11.1907.

¹⁶⁵ ›Blackfellows and Kanakas‹, in: Worker, 18.10.1902.

¹⁶⁶ ›Dr. Roth, Protector of the Blacks‹, in: Worker, 09.09.1905.

¹⁶⁷ ›Employment of Aborigines‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 31.05.1911, also ›Employment of Aborigines‹, in: Queenslander, 03.06.1911. For the ›Sugar Strike‹ of 1911, see subchapter 5.4 ›Sweetening Product With Bitter Servitude‹.

¹⁶⁸ ›Babinda Branch‹, in: Worker, 08.04.1911.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Russell McGregor: An Aboriginal Caucasian, p. 11.

¹⁷⁰ Warwick Anderson: The Cultivation of Whiteness, p. 199 (›past‹), see also p. 200 for the Aborigines as representing a »form of archaic Caucasian«.

Aboriginal children from their families. Both cases had in common that all the Aborigines would disappear from Australia in the foreseeable future. Their employment in the production of ›white‹ sugar did already anticipate this condition. This, however, did not preclude that individual Aborigines were able to profit from their employment under certain circumstances.

When – at the end of the First World War and with the introduction of the sugar workers' award, Aborigines were to be paid at a full-wage rate – the planters, who now had a sufficient supply of Europeans, refrained from employing Aborigines, and it was seemingly not until more than two decades later that Aborigines alleviating the war-induced labour shortage »received award wages for the first time«.¹⁷¹ A resolution moved that Aborigines »in any part of the industry will be paid award wages« and stated that »a number of good unionists« were amongst the Aborigines who, in the sugar industry, also »were holding their own with the best on the industry« but who were »employed cheaply«.¹⁷² At the same time, sugar cane was also grown by Aborigines – as it had been traditionally in Oceania – though not for commercial use but purely for indulgence.¹⁷³

Overall, the documented number of Aborigines in the sugar industry remained small compared to labourers from Asia or the South Sea islands. This may be accounted for by the planters' perception of an ›unemployability‹ of Aborigines based on alleged unfitness and unwillingness. But it is more probable that the Aborigines' ability to periodically withdraw from the more or less forced labour made them incalculable workers. Once the sugar cane was cut, time to crush the cane and extract the juice was limited. This made necessary a steady and large labour force. Perhaps, therefore, it was the irregularity with which Aborigines sought or tolerated employment that deterred cane farmers from expanding the recruiting of Aborigines for their fields. Furthermore, the possibility for Aborigines to disappear into the bush, and their intimate knowledge of the surrounding country, must have seemed detrimental to the farmers' enforcement of »discipline, punctuality, acceptance of authority and a sedentary lifestyle«, means by which Aborigines were supposed to be ›civilized‹ and assimilated to European standards.¹⁷⁴

From early on, planters and farmers were looking for a way to procure workers from overseas resources that were extensive and economic

¹⁷¹ Dawn May: *Aboriginal Labour and the Cattle Industry*, pp. 84, 148 (›award‹).

¹⁷² ›Fifty-Sixth A.W.U. Annual Convention‹, in: *Worker*, 10.03.1942.

¹⁷³ Cf. ›Gulf Blacks Grown Sugar Cane‹, in: *Worker*, 05.07.1938.

¹⁷⁴ Speculation-driven, equally, or even more probable, is a simple absence of documentation, based on the circumstance that the employment of Aborigines was perceived as a compromise solution which needed no bookkeeping.

but would not come under the suspicion to involve the now officially disdained slavery. In the end, the need for an expansion of Aboriginal engagement in the sugar industry was obviated by the extensive recruitment of Pacific Islanders who, in the eyes of the farmers, were almost as cheap and had the advantage of being strangers to the country and therefore seemed less prone to abandoning the fields.

3.3 ›Slavery in Queensland‹: Pacific Islanders in the Sugar Cane Fields

The joy of sugar consumption went hand in hand with the extortion of labourers in the cane fields. Successful cultivation of cane necessitated securing a steady supply of cane sugar for the colony. Employment of ›white‹ workers would have been preferred by those aiming at a ›racially‹ homogeneous society. Discourses on the ›whites'‹ chances of survival and employability in the tropics as well as remembrance of the classical cane sugar production on slave plantations interfered with these plans.

Traditionally, work in the cane fields had been done by an unfree, discriminated-against labour force.¹⁷⁵ Following this logic, the initial plans intended British convicts to cultivate the sugar cane. This foundered on the fact that when the cane was eventually successfully grown, convict transportation to New South Wales had ended about a quarter of a century prior. Due to the British abolition of the slave trade by the Slave Trade Act in 1807 and the permanent end to slavery in the British Empire by the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, slave labour, too, was no longer an option. A new extensive and economic resource of labour had to be found. This search for such a labour force was to a high degree affected by the racist and social appendages that sugar cane brought with it to Australia.

»The white labourer not only dies too fast, but he also charges too high«, stated the ›Brisbane Courier‹. Consequently, several aspects became inherent in the subsequent search for ›suitable‹ labour, which eventually led to the recruitment of Pacific Islanders.¹⁷⁶ Not only had the labourers to be ›cheap‹ in order to compete with the sugar on the world market and ›reliable‹ in terms of obedience – thus creating the planters' favourite standing expression ›cheap and reliable labour‹ for underpaid and unresisting workers – but also in terms of adaptability to a climate al-

¹⁷⁵ For the evolution of the sugar labour force, see subchapter 2.1 ›Without Slaves, No sugar‹.

¹⁷⁶ ›Queensland‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 21.03.1865 (›white labourer‹).

legedly detrimental to the health of ›white‹ workers was necessary. Added to this was the custom of plantation cultivation with the aid of ›non-white‹ labour in British colonies.

Early in the history of Queensland, the ›Courier‹ collected scientific and empirical evidence that Europeans were in actual fact capable of performing »field labour of any kind in Queensland, without danger to their health« and then referred to the possibility to grow, amongst other crops, sugar cane in these climes.¹⁷⁷ The ›Argus‹, in turn, assured that »European labour could never be made available for the profitable cultivation« of sugar cane, because there is »no instance in the world of any article of this sort [...] being successfully cultivated by the labour of Europeans« and »it would be a waste of industry to engage European labour in their cultivation«.¹⁷⁸

The question whether ›whites‹ could do field work in the tropics was not only examined scientifically but also drew on empirical evidence from other cane sugar producing countries. During British hearings on the occasion of the ›consideration‹ of the slave trade, owners of Caribbean sugar plantations did »not conceive it possible to cultivate sugar plantations by whites«, mainly because »no European could bear constant exposure to heat, still less when labouring« and »at the present prices, [a sugar estate] could not afford proper food and accommodation for the necessary number of Europeans«.¹⁷⁹ And even those who reasoned that sugar »could be raised much cheaper by freemen than by slaves« drew on examples from »sugars in Battavia, in China, and in other parts of the East« when making their case, thus suggesting that when it comes to sugar cultivation, climate and adaptability to it was essential.¹⁸⁰ It seemed thus inevitable that labourers working outside in Queensland's tropical heat and moisture had to be suited for the tropical conditions and, following the contemporary logic, necessarily had to be ›coloured‹.¹⁸¹

But the question whether ›whites‹ would be willing to do field work in the tropics remained. European workers – if not in times of depression – generally refrained from working in the tropical sugar fields. Neither the living conditions nor the level of wages and circumstances of the jobs were enticing enough to make up for the arduous work of planting, cultivating and processing sugar cane. They were thus not only deterred by the

¹⁷⁷ ›Letter from Dr. Lang‹, in: Courier (QLD), 18.06.1861.

¹⁷⁸ (Untitled), in: Argus, 05.08.1862.

¹⁷⁹ House of Commons: Abridgement of the minutes of the evidence taken before a committee of the whole house, pp. 92 (›heat‹), 134 (›prices‹).

¹⁸⁰ The Parliamentary Register, p. 163 (›freemen‹, ›Battavia‹).

¹⁸¹ Cf. ibid.; Ann Curthoys: Conflict and Consensus, p. 49.

myth of their possible degeneration in the tropical climate but even more by the, historical and still persistent, association of labour in the cane fields with ›black‹ slave labour.¹⁸²

Queensland's Governor George F. Bowen proposed to introduce so-called ›coolies‹ from British India or China and with this initiated the first major public discussion about who should be employed in the sugar and cotton fields.¹⁸³ The proponents of the introduction plans again drew on ›racial‹-climatic reasoning and emphasized the physical incapability of the ›whites‹ to work in the tropics. Even worse, they argued, Europeans would »make niggers of themselves growing cotton in such a climate as this«. Instead of letting »millions of acres« lie idle, the work in these allegedly hostile surroundings could be done by ›non-white‹ workers, since due to the location »no objections« could be made »on the ground of interference with the working classes«.¹⁸⁴

The opponents argued, that the introduction of »a more degraded humanity than we have at present, consisting of coolies, thugs, or cannibals, or even free niggers« would suit the planters' tastes but would »degrade the community, retard our national progress, and tend to overthrow our civil and religious liberty«. »The body politic, to be healthy, must be sound not only in the head but also in the hands and feet«, argued the correspondent against the introduction of Indians and appealed to the ›race‹-conscious readers to keep in mind the »future of the sons and daughters of Queensland«.¹⁸⁵

This latter correspondent was well-versed in the world-view of racist discrimination. On the one hand, it registered class differences as virtually natural diversity: plantation owners and sugar workers were related to each other as the head is to the hands and feet. On the other hand, this comparison drew on the uniting metaphor of the body politic: even the most diverse members belong together when they are all part of a body. At the same time, this letter writer used the chance contained in such an organic comparison. The reference to soundness (and disease) of the body politic evoked the menace to the very same by foreign ›pathogens‹ and requested

¹⁸² Cf. Warwick Anderson: *The Cultivation of Whiteness*, pp. 73-94.

¹⁸³ Cf. Alan Corkhill: *Queensland and Germany*, p. 31.

¹⁸⁴ This was published in a feverish debate between to correspondents, writing letters to the editor of the *Moreton Bay Courier*, from late February until mid-April 1860, under the heading ›Sugar and Cotton‹; here: ›Sugar and Cotton‹, in: *Moreton Bay Courier*, 23.02.1860 (›niggers‹ etc.).

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. (›areas‹); ›Sugar and Cotton‹, in: *Moreton Bay Courier*, 01.03.1860 (›humanity‹); ›Sugar and Cotton‹, in: *Moreton Bay Courier*, 15.03.1860 (›community‹); ›Sugar and Cotton‹, in: *Moreton Bay Courier*, 31.03.1860 (›body politic‹); ›Sugar and Cotton‹, in: *Moreton Bay Courier*, 17.04.1860 (›future‹).

the joint fending off of the latter.¹⁸⁶ At that, commonalities can be well thought in a transcolonial context of Britishness when the introduction of Asian workers was opposed based on its inconsistency with the abolition of slavery and the need for provision of employment in Great Britain.¹⁸⁷

Queensland had already passed a law in favour of the Indian immigration in 1862 – but these plans eventually failed. The introduction of workers from India for the sugar industry mainly foundered on the political situation. In contrast to the Pacific Islands, where workers could be recruited without any interference of a government acknowledged by Anglo-Australian rule, India was under British rule. In consequence, binding regulations for Indian migration were drawn up. With Queensland not willing to meet these requirements the scheme was discontinued.

The principal achievement effort in the development of the Queensland sugar industry was made by the workers who were brought to the cane fields from the islands of the South Seas. First accused of being a renaissance of slavery, the introduction of labourers to the sugar industry constituted the main source of workforce for the tropical industry.

The stereotyping of *Pacific Islanders in Queensland* oscillated between allegations of cannibalism in the home islands and adaptability to the work in the cane fields. Their potential violence was the one side of the Islanders' social construction; the other side was their depiction as strong and reliable workers who nonetheless were reduced to their presumed boyish and educable character. Perpetual tendencies to Europeanize the sugar industry in conjunction with the labour movement's opposition against ›coloured‹ labour brought about the restriction of Pacific Islanders' employment to certain types of work outside the presumed competition with European workers. This created a legally codified ›colour line‹ within the sugar industry which reinforced the perception of field labour as task exclusively for non-Europeans.

After the *recommencement of the ›labour trade‹*, suspicions of ›black-birding‹ were revived by the labour movement and the ›black‹ industry became increasingly at odds with the ideal of ›white Australia‹. But it was not until the pressure by the other Australian colonies forced Queensland to eventually solve the question of ›black labour‹ and the Commonwealth provided a legislative basis, that the sugar industry was turned into a ›white‹ industry.

¹⁸⁶ For the metaphor of the society as a »political organism« occurring from Antiquity to modern times, see Wulf D. Hund: *Rassismus* (1999), pp. 117 f.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. ›Sugar Growing‹, in: *Moreton Bay Courier*, 02.06.1849.

Pacific Islanders in Queensland

After unfruitful employment of Aboriginal workers and failed plans to introduce ›coolies‹ from Asia, satisfaction of the high demand for low-paid, tractable labourers – duly considering the ›racial‹-climatic argument of tropical deterioration – was eventually found in the neighbouring islands of the New Hebrides (today Vanuatu) and the Solomon Islands.¹⁸⁸ The concerns of those who had before vetoed Chinese and Indian immigration based on antislavery arguments rekindled as soon as the first Islanders reached Queensland. »We perfectly remember that Mr. Benjamin Boyd deluged the colony of New South Wales with Pacific Islanders, to the horror and disgust of the colonists« warned the ›Brisbane Courier‹ in August 1863 and reminded its readers of an incident that took place almost two decades before the ›sugar labour question‹ became urgent.¹⁸⁹ This incident foreshadowed future discussions and was crucial for the debate surrounding the introduction of Pacific Island labourers in the eighteen sixties as well as the perception of them in Queensland and the other colonies.

In early May of 1847, sixty-five men from islands of the New Hebrides were landed and employed as shepherds in New South Wales with another one hundred and twenty-seven following in September and October 1847.¹⁹⁰ Their introduction started a debate about the Islanders' alleged habits of anthropophagy but also about a possible renewal of convict transportation. At this, a ›forcible appeal‹ was made to the ›self-interest and the patriotism of the working classes‹ not to oppose against the resurgence of convictism, because the last resort would be the importation of ›hordes of cannibals‹.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ There exists a considerable body of secondary literature dealing with South Sea Islanders and the Queensland sugar industry. Entrance into this study found, amongst others, Tracey Banivanua-Mar: *Violence and Colonial Dialogue*; Michael Berry: *Refined White*; Peter Corris: *Passage, Port and Plantation*; Edward W. Docker: *The Blackbirders*; Patricia Mercer: *White Australia Defied*; Clive Moore: *Kanaka*.

¹⁸⁹ ›The Slave Trade in Queensland‹, in: *Courier*, 22.08.1863.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. ›Arrived & Sailed‹, in: *Melbourne Argus*, 30.04.1847; ›Introduction of Labour‹, in: *Moreton Bay Courier*, 08.05. 1847; ›Domestic Intelligence‹, in: *Moreton Bay Courier*, 09.10.1847; ›Arrivals‹, in: *Maitland Mercury*, and *Hunter River General Advertiser*, 23.10.1847. Both Myra Willard: *History of the White Australia Policy to 1920*, p. 13, and Jens Lyng: *Non-Britishers in Australia*, pp. 189 f., misdate the year of the Pacific Islanders first arrival to 1842. Edward W. Docker: *The Blackbirders*, pp. 8 f., correctly identifies 1847 as the year of the first attempt to import labour from the New Hebrides.

¹⁹¹ ›The Recent Experimentation in Immigration‹, in: *Maitland Mercury*, and *Hunter River General Advertiser*, 28.04.1847. A different interpretation of Boyd's intentions was suggested, in the light of anti-convictism, two years later by the ›Argus‹. Boyd, whose ›patriotism could not be questioned‹, imported the South Sea Island labourers believing that the British Government would realize that the need for immigrants was reaching such a desperate state that ›even those with the greatest stake in the colony and most deeply

Overall, the search for a labour resource in the South Seas was considered an »absurd attempt« to become independent from migration from the mother country. Foreshadowing later discussions of British preference, it was stated that »the colonists should never think of importing foreigners, much less savages and heathens, if their demand for labour could be adequately supplied from their own country-men«. The »bare idea« of employing these »strange races« seemed »repugnant to all their national predilections«. It would rather be tolerated to see »Australia replenished and subdued by the unmixed, undeteriorated progeny of their own Anglo-Saxon fathers«. Already at this point of time, the presence of the Pacific Islanders in the colony sparked assumptions of coercion and fraud in the recruiting process. The possibility of kidnapping and the »inferior grade of humanity« of the new arrivals raised fears of an emergence of slavery in the colony.¹⁹²

From the beginning on, the working class opposed the newly indentured labourers. Their revulsion was expressed by provoking and poking fun at the Islanders, claiming that »the only purpose for which they had been brought to New South Wales was to fatten them and then hold a feast«. They attempted to intoxicate the islanders with alcohol »with the intention of causing a disturbance«. ¹⁹³ Eventually, public agitation and fear for the colony's reputation brought about the prompt repatriation of this pioneering group of Islanders.

When the first Pacific Islanders for the cotton fields (which were soon converted into sugar cane fields) arrived, this experience was already part of the societal archives of knowledge. Adding to this, the subsequent social construction of the ›kanaka‹ coming to Queensland furthered connections with slave labour and the alleged fitness for menial labour in the tropical north which then became almost a unique characteristic among all contemplated sugar workers.¹⁹⁴

interested in its welfare« could not help but »call in the assistance of savages« (›Anti-Convict Meeting‹, in: Argus, 25.09.1849). Ironically, the question, if Boyd's traceless disappearance was the work of »cannibals« continued to puzzle the newspaper editors of the following century – see amongst others »The Mystery Of A Vanished Adventurer«, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 19.12.1953; »Ben Boyd – Did he become a cannibal's breakfast?«, in: Argus, 26.05.1956.

¹⁹² ›Immigration from the South Sea Islands‹, in: Moreton Bay Courier, 15.05.1847 (›absurd‹, ›colonists‹, ›bare‹, ›repugnant‹, ›replenished‹). This is taken from a reprint of the Sydney Morning Herald by the Moreton Bay Courier with which the Courier »entirely concur[red]«; ›Legislative Council‹, in: Maitland Mercury, and Hunter River General Advertiser, 06.10.1847 (›inferior grade‹); see also ›The Recent Experiment in Immigration‹, in: Maitland Mercury, and Hunter River General Advertiser, 28.04.1847.

¹⁹³ ›Immigration from Polynesia‹, in: Melbourne Argus, 04.05.1847.

¹⁹⁴ Though the term ›Kanaka‹ is said to be derived from the Hawaiian word for ›man‹ or ›people‹ – see for example Tracey Banivanua-Mar: Violence and Colonial Dialogue,

In the context of the European notion of ›Melanesianism‹, the Pacific Islander functioned as a dialectic counter-image to the civilized Europeans supposedly inherently unfit for the tropical climes of Australia.¹⁹⁵ The Islanders were considered lazy and would not work until forced to – thus legitimating the use of violence against them. At the same time, however, they were allegedly docile and boyish enough to need, receive and obey orders – thus necessitating their education and training by British instructors. Their allegedly low standards of life obviated the need for reasonable terms of service and living conditions; they were said to be agreeable to poor working conditions in the fields and did not demand comfortable housing. This, of course, was advantageous for employers' profits but was also, allegedly, the only way to make sugar production and consequently consumption more affordable – thus benefitting the consumers of sugar and sugar-containing products. Moreover, it was not the whole truth as the subsequent claims and negotiations by Pacific Islanders reengaging after their contracts expired showed.

The actual social situation in the South Sea islands largely remained unfathomed, and suspicions that slavery in the island communities was common practice were used by the proponents of the ›labour trade‹ to depict the removal of the Islanders from their homes as a good deed.¹⁹⁶ This notion of Europeans as saviours and educators was also transferred to the treatment of the labourers from the islands, as a dichotomy of illegitimate savage and legitimate civilized violence.¹⁹⁷ While the latter kind of violence was seen as a reaction to as well as an anticipation of the behaviour of the Pacific Islanders, the former, taken out of its social and political context, was declared a signifier of the madness and irrationality, characteristic for the Islanders. Their representation as ›black‹, savage, tribal, violent,

p. 187n11 – the fourth edition of the Macquarie Dictionary (2006), at the latest, warns about its discriminating potential, and states that a ›Kanaka‹ is »1. hist. a Pacific Islander, especially one brought forcibly to Australia during the 19th century as a labourer. 2. (derog.) a Pacific Islander«. In the same vein, see also Kenneth W. Manning: *In Their Own Hands*, p. 176; or Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders, Kathryn Cronin: *Race Relations in Colonial Queensland*, p. 163, who compare the term to the label ›nigger‹ of the American South. In order to distinguish the historical South Sea Islanders seen from a modern perspective from the historical Australian South Sea Islanders, who were not officially recognized as a ›distinct cultural group‹ by the Commonwealth Government until 1994 and by the Queensland government in 2000, they will here be termed ›Pacific Islanders‹. See also Queensland Government: *Australian South Sea Islander Recognition*; Australian Human Rights Commission: *A history of the South Sea Islanders in Australia*.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. Tracey Banivanua-Mar: *Violence and Colonial Dialogue*, pp. 17, 41 f. For the coining of the term ›Melanesia‹ in 1832 by Jules Dumont d'Urville, see Benn Finney, Marlene Among: *Voyage of Rediscovery*, pp. 10 ff.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. William E. Giles: *A Cruise in a Queensland Labour Vessel to the South Seas*, p. 17; see also Laurence Brown: *A Most Irregular Traffic*, p. 203.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Tracey Banivanua-Mar: *Violence and Colonial Dialogue*, p. 37.

and physical was an intrinsic part of the »colonial project of constructing and containing a colonisable, oppressable, and exploitable object«. ¹⁹⁸ Additionally, the splitting-up of the Islanders' image as both a ›savage‹ and a ›boy‹ substantiated the treatment of these intracolonial colonized subjects.

The ›savage‹ legitimized the use of colonial violence when dealing with the Pacific Islanders' resistance. The ascription of ›natural instincts‹ inherent in the ›savage‹ also allowed for the depoliticizing and decontextualizing of the Islanders' agency. Counter movements, ›unionizing‹, strikes and negotiation attempts by these workers could be deemphasized as rather instinctive, animal-like reactions. This ›instinctual violence‹ was counteracted by the colonizers' ›rational‹ violence. The contrast between civilization in Queensland and savagery on the islands also served as a rationale for those endorsing the Islanders' migration as a means of civilizing them as well as for those opposing the forced return of the Pacific Islanders in particular after Federation. ¹⁹⁹ ›Savageness‹ was used to explain outbursts against overseers and ›intertribal‹ warfare which then were met with ›civilizing‹ violence. The latter, in turn, became a common means of the maintenance of order in the Euro-Australian society into which a group of people who supposedly were »lazy, dirty, shiftless, and of extremely limited mental capacity« was introduced. ²⁰⁰

The infantilized ›boy‹, on the other side, necessitated tuition, education, and patronizing, i.e. an at least partial assimilation to ›white‹ civilization. The workers, many of them underage, were inexperienced in the eyes of the planters thus justifying their classification as unskilled labourers and thus allowing for low wages. Drawing on their supposed psychological infancy and unsoundness of mind, educational and spiritual guidance –

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 3.

¹⁹⁹ For these kinds of violence, see *ibid.*, pp. 2 ff. Cannibalism was thought to be a major problem in the context of returning Pacific Islanders to their islands, since it was certain that accidentally landing them at the wrong location would cause ›inter-tribal‹ war and killings. This served as an (ostensible) humanitarian reason for the exemption from repatriation, used by both planters and missionaries. See, for example, John G. Paton: Kanaka Labour Traffic between Queensland and the New Hebrides, pp. 8 ff.; ›Repatriated Kanakas. Murderers and Cannibalism‹, in: *West Australian*, 15.07.1907. Many missionaries doubted the persistence of the civilizing efforts, and also asked whether ›Mr. Deakin [did] intend to provide an island for the sinners as well as for the saints, or will he have them sent to some cannibal island where they can be knocked on the head and utilised for the cooking pot?‹ (›Deportation of Kanakas‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 08.01.1906). Others, a recruiter in this case, maintained that the ›fact of recruiting and returning the boys does more to them than is imagined, for the returns go back with a semi-education, and can do more good among their ignorant companions in a week than the missionaries could in six months‹, by this even the habit of cannibalizing the intra-island enemy would soon disappear – see ›Polynesian Recruiting‹, in: *Morning Post*, 29.09.1898.

²⁰⁰ ›How Cannibals Live‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12.06.1930.

provided by the mission schools which imparted both a basic education and knowledge of religion – was declared indispensable as was a certain harshness in their ›civilizing‹ process.²⁰¹

As cannibals, Pacific Islanders in situ allegedly held no moral responsibility and valued human life so low that they would not refrain from killing men simply for food or revenge. The old trope of anthropophagy dates back to the mythical creatures in the narrations of Antiquity and was from the outset incorporated in European colonialism. Soon after the ›discovery‹ of America, the ›savage‹ stereotype came to comprise both the ›noble‹ and the ›ignoble savage‹. This implied, in principle, the cultivability of the colonized but also the threat to society through their yet uncivilized and unassimilated way of living.²⁰² »Compared to the cannibals, the dismemberers and other lesser breeds«, asserts Aimé Césaire, »Europe and the West are the incarnation of respect for human dignity«.²⁰³ The western way of living set the benchmark against which the ›others‹ were rated.

The ›otherness‹ of those working in the cane fields in connection with the associated skin colour for tropical labour became obvious in public debates and newspaper articles. In the ›Worker‹, critique that in the context of ›white‹ unemployment the employment of Pacific Islanders meant that » [i]n Queensland the white man may starve, but the nigger must be fed« the term ›nigger‹ contained allusions to the traditional labourers in sugar cultivation.²⁰⁴ On the one hand, the suspicion of slavery, which in the understanding of the ›Worker‹ was a kind of unfair completion due to underselling of ›white‹ wages, was evoked. On the other hand, the ›racial‹ nomenclature subsumed both the Africans and the Pacific Islanders under the category of ›coloured‹ – if not ›black‹ – ›races‹, as opposed to the ›white race‹, which as »weak races will disappear all the same before the irresistible march of the white civilisation«.²⁰⁵

The ›blackness‹ of the Pacific Islanders stood in the tradition of racistly connoted physical features, like the slaves' ›colour‹: »against the backdrop of slavery, skin colour was made the social sign that supposedly indicated inferiority and that could be asserted independent of their social status against all those who could be somehow stigmatized as negroes«.²⁰⁶ This stigmatization could thus be extended to almost all those who had under-

²⁰¹ Cf. Patricia Mercer: *White Australia Defied*, pp. 66 ff.

²⁰² Cf. Wulf D. Hund: *Rassismus* (2007), pp. 62 f.

²⁰³ Aimé Césaire: *Discourse on Colonialism*, p. 70.

²⁰⁴ (Untitled), in: *Worker*, 28.10.1902.

²⁰⁵ Clement van de Velde: *Kanaka Labour and The Commonwealth*, p. 5.

²⁰⁶ Wulf D. Hund: *Rassismus* (2007), p. 30 (›negroes‹). See also the explanations on the ›Nigger Vortex‹ at the end of subchapter 3.3 ›Slavery In Queensland‹.

paid, menial jobs; and over the course of time the term ›nigger‹ proved to brand not only Chinese, Japanese and other ›non-white‹ workers. Even Italian and several southern Europeans could be subsumed under it. Lastly, their ›blackness‹ also denoted their status as ›generic Kanakas‹, who were »black in order to be cheap, natives in order to be black and available but from somewhere else in order to be temporary«.²⁰⁷

All in all, from 1863 to 1904 circa 62 500 Pacific Islanders were landed in the colony of Queensland.²⁰⁸ The Pacific Islanders arriving in August 1863 were initially designated for labour on the cotton plantation of Robert Towns – who soon turned to the cultivation of cane since there was »scarcely a cotton plantation of any extent that is not being transformed into a sugar estate«.²⁰⁹ It was only a short, unspectacular entry in the ›Courier's‹ shipping list that announced the arrival of the first recruiting ship in Brisbane in 1863 and heralded both the birth of commercial cane sugar production and starting point of five decades of Pacific Islanders' employment in Australia's cane fields.²¹⁰

The following day, further circumstances of what over the next weeks became the matter of a furious debate were reported.²¹¹ The methods of the Islanders' enrolment were questioned and concerns were expressed whether the Pacific Islanders were kidnapped – as was the case of the co-occurring labour recruitment for Peru.²¹² It only took a few days after the Islanders had landed, until the ›Courier‹ proclaimed that the »Slave Trade in Queensland« had commenced clandestinely. The paper remind-

²⁰⁷ Tracey Banivanua-Mar: *Violence and Colonial Dialogue*, p. 76.

²⁰⁸ This number is given by Michael Berry: *Refined White*, p. 8. The discrimination between actual workers and labour contracts (including re-recruitments) seems to be a bit blurred. Jürgen Matthäus: *Nationsbildung in Australien*, p. 277, states 62 000 Melanesians whereas Clive Moore: *The South Sea Islanders of Mackay*, p. 167, mentions 62 000 labour contracts which were issued to circa 50 000 Islanders; Andrew Markus: *Australian Race Relations*, p. 87, concurs.

²⁰⁹ ›Reflections‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 17.05.1865. Cf. Doug Hunt: *Hunting the Blackbird*, p. 45; Kay Saunders: *Workers in Bondage*, p. 15; House of Commons: *Further correspondence relating to the importation of South Sea islanders into Queensland*, pp. 541-544, 604. See also Kay Saunders: *Workers in Bondage*, p. 49.

²¹⁰ Cf. ›Shipping‹, in: *Courier*, 17.08.1863: »August 15. – Don Juan, schooner, Captain ---, from Sydney«.

²¹¹ Cf. (Untitled), in: *Courier*, 18.08.1863; see also Laurence Brown: *A Most Irregular Traffic*, p. 186.

²¹² Cf. ›Parliament‹, in: *Courier*, 19.08.1863. In the Peruvian ›labour trade‹, people from Polynesia were (seemingly forcefully) taken to Peru on vessels from Britain to relieve the labour shortage caused by the peaking of demand for Peruvian guano in the early eighteen sixties – cf. Henry E. Maude: *Slavers in Paradise*; Grant McCall: *European Impact on Easter Island*. For connections to Queensland, see in particular ›The Empire‹, in: *Empire*, 04.07.1863, for contemporary reports, see ›The Peruvian Slave Trade‹, in: *South Australian Register*, 30.07.1863; ›The Peruvian Slave Trade‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21.10.1863.

ed its readers of the »horror and disgust« experienced on the occasion of the first short-lived recruitment of Pacific Islanders scarcely two decades before.²¹³ Such suspicions of »blackbirding« continued to accompany the recruitment of Pacific Islanders even after its temporarily abolition in the early eighteen nineties.²¹⁴ In this »horrible traffic«, as it was referred to by a British newspaper, semi-legal to outright illegal methods were used to lure or force the Islanders on board: this comprised subtle misinformation about the destination or the duration of the labour period, outright skulduggery like dressing up as missionaries and enticing the islanders to board the ship, and did even not refrain from acts of violence as kidnapping, destroying canoes and taking captive Islanders on the beaches.²¹⁵

During the initial phase, the »labour trade« – an accepted term which nevertheless continues to convey a commodification of the Pacific Islanders – was a non-regulated, private enterprise of planters in search of as cheap as possible but also reliable, workers for their plantations. The first Pacific Islanders explicitly recruited for the sugar plantation were brought into the country at the instance of Louis Hope who introduced 33 Islanders in 1865 for his Ormiston plantation.²¹⁶ With this, the commercial cultivation and production of cane sugar in Queensland was launched. Over time, with the expansion of the now profit-yielding sugar cane fields, new parts of the country were opened up for settlement, freed of rank growth and scrub, and prepared for the cultivation of sugar cane. Consequently, more parts of the country were taken away from their rightful owners and appropriated for agriculture and primary industries. The mode of plantation production with its extensive deployment of fieldworkers led to an increasing need for unskilled labour. Also, due to the fast deterioration of the cut cane, the sugar mills had to be manned twenty-four hours a day during the harvest seasons to ensure an instant process of crushing.

In the following years, escalating newspaper reports of atrocities committed during the recruiting process on the islands, along with public disapproval necessitated official intervention. The first legislation which

²¹³ »The Slave Trade in Queensland«, in: *Courier*, 22.08.1863; »Slave Trade in Queensland« (letter to the editor by W. H. Palmer, later an employer of Melanesian labourers), in: *ibid.*, 24.08.1863.

²¹⁴ »The Carl Outrages«, in: *Argus*, 20.12.1872.

²¹⁵ Cf. »A Horrible Traffic«, in: *Western Mail*, 22.06.1885; for reference to the employment of Pacific Islanders as slavery, see also »The Queen of the Colonies«, in: *Pall Mall Gazette* (UK), 29.03.1876; »A Tour Round the World«, in: *Glasgow Herald* (UK), 12.12.1883; »Slavery in the South Pacific«, in: *Glasgow Herald* (UK), 09.07.1885; »News of the Day«, in: *Birmingham Daily Post* (UK), 23.05.1892.

²¹⁶ Cf. Helen Irvine: *Sweet and Sour*, p. 4. Also Tony Barker, Ian Byford: *Harvests and Heartaches*, p. 74.

turned the private enterprise into a governmentally regulated undertaking and attempted to counteract uncontrolled removal of Islanders from their homes was passed in 1868. The (misnamed) Polynesian Labourers' Act regulated the circumstances of recruitment on the western Pacific Islands as well as the conditions of the labourers' engagement in Queensland.²¹⁷ Bureaucratic measures were supposed to amend the former socially and ›racially‹ sanctioned treatment of the workers.

Furthermore, the act stipulated the term of labour to be »three years or thirty-nine moons« with a payment of £6 per annum. The responsibility for the Pacific Islanders was transferred to the recruiter, and accommodation, meals and medical care were declared not to be deductible from the wages but gratuitous parts of the employment agreement.²¹⁸ Arguably, legislation on this matter occurred less out of sheer humanitarian concern for the Islanders but rather as a move forced by the public outrage about the allegations of deceit and brutal treatment during the recruiting process.

Even though the Colonial Attorney-General asserted that in the legal sense »it was not possible to kidnap a person of a savage race if he was brought within the protection of the law«, thus substantiating the image of Europeans as saviours and civilizers, legislative attempts to regulate the recruiting followed in the form of the ›Kidnapping Act‹ of 1872.²¹⁹ The act made it mandatory to obtain a license for recruitment, the captain of the vessel had to pay a bond of £500 against kidnapping, and proof was demanded of the Islanders' comprehension and assent to the labour contracts.²²⁰ Nonetheless, protests against the planters' allegedly »permitting virtual slavery to exist in connection with the coloured labour traffic« and against the atrocities in the recruiting process became more sincere and more emphatic.²²¹

During the next decades, the dynamics and means of labour acquisition underwent forced changes. This decrease in coercive recruiting was

²¹⁷ The official name of the ›Polynesian Labourers Act‹ was An Act to Regulate and Control the Introduction and Treatment of Polynesian Labourers; it became effective on 10.06.1868 – Queensland Government Gazette, Vol. IX, No. 67, 1868, p. 704. See also Edward W. Docker: *The Blackbirders*, p. 53.

²¹⁸ Cf. *Polynesian Labourers Act*.

²¹⁹ John Bramston in 1871 cited in Kay Saunders: *Workers in Bondage*, p. 21. For the ›Pacific Islanders Protection Act‹, see also Tracey Banivanua-Mar: *Consolidating Violence and Colonial Rule*, p. 308; Lawrence Phillips: *British Slavery after Abolition*, pp. 23 f.; Papers Memorandum on a Bill to amend the Pacific Islanders' Protection Act.

²²⁰ Today the general academic assumption is that only in the initial phase of obtaining labourers from the islands, the recruiters »went blackbird catching« with violence and deceit prevailing – ›The Carl Murders‹, in: *Argus*, 06.12.1872.

²²¹ ›Slavery in Queensland‹ (reprint of a cable message from London), in: *Brisbane Courier*, 07.07.1883; see also ›Slavery in Queensland‹, in: *ibid.*, 01.02.1884 and ›Slavery in Queensland‹, in: *ibid.*, 02.02.1884.

attributable to the Islanders' increasing negotiation skills and the reports from experienced returnees rather than to an intensified surveillance of the Queensland Immigration Office or the enforcement of anti-kidnapping legislation. It is also unlikely that in the last decades of the nineteenth century a recruitment based on ›blackbirding‹ could have been maintained simply due to the fact that returning labourers would have informed their peers in the home islands and warned new recruits about labour or living conditions, forced work or the like; and it would then no longer have been possible for the ›labour traders‹ to land on the islands unmolested nor clear the harbour alive.

This, however, did not mean that the old ways of enforcing recruitment were once and for all abandoned. Kidnapping as a last resort remained to always be clandestinely at hand. Recruiting vessels in the eighteen eighties were still outfitted with leg irons, handcuffs, rifles and other weapons. In the case of New Guinea, already towards the end of the ›labour trade‹, the workers were straightforwardly coerced into recruitment for labour on the Queensland plantations.²²²

In the early eighteen eighties, the question whether a sugar industry could and should be worked solely by ›white‹ workers or rather employ Pacific Islanders or other non-European labourers for the unskilled tasks became the yardstick for the voters of a new Queensland government, a major concern for the labour movement and a thorn in the flesh of the emerging national identity. The operating Conservative government of Thomas McIlwraith, Premier of Queensland until November 1883, favoured a largely ›white‹-populated Queensland governed by ›whites‹ which nonetheless relied on a ›black‹ labour force to do menial jobs in the sugar industry. »Queensland is a white man's colony and we mean to keep it for the white man«, McIlwraith argued, but despite this desire, the »sugar industry will always employ a certain proportion of kanakas or coolies, who are required to work among the canes, but with that exception white labour will prevail everywhere«.

His reasoning then once again comprised the tropical unfitness of the ›white‹ workers as well as a climate-theoretical assertion about the Pacific Islanders. They were not only fit for the work in the cane fields, but their coming to Queensland would even constitute an improvement in the quality of life for them. He continued that »[w]hite men cannot work in the

²²² Cf. Tracey Banivanua-Mar: *Violence and Colonial Dialogue*, p. 33. For the turn of Queensland's attention to New Guinea, see Jürgen Matthäus: *Nationsbildung in Australien*, p. 120 and subchapter 4.4 ›Federation Or Separation‹. For the ›recruitment‹ conditions, see Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders, Kathryn Cronin (eds.): *Race Relations in Colonial Queensland*, pp. 161, 168.

canes because the dense steaming heat compels them to work naked, and the work in the shade of the canes produces an irritation of the skin from which natives are entirely free. They enjoy the steaming heat, and nowhere do you find kanakas more happy than on the Queensland plantations«. ²²³

This mindset and renewed plans to introduce Indian labourers was the cause for the Conservatives' loss of the majority of workers' votes in the election of 1883. The perceived linkage of immigration to heightened unemployment and lowered wages was an increasing concern for the labour movement. ²²⁴ Under the pretext of humanitarian concern, the piling up of reports about abuses in the recruiting became part of the line of argument. Samuel Griffith, McIlwraith's successor as the Premier of Queensland, built on this hostility against the »bête noire of the Abolitionists«. ²²⁵ He indicated that he generally spurned any kind of non-European labour and won the election mainly by maintaining that his party »has been consistently opposed to the system of working plantations by ›black‹ labour of any kind – whether coolie, Chinese, Malay, or kanaka«. One important plank of his party's platform was declared to be »Queensland for the white man and no black labour«. ²²⁶ The notion that all non-Europeans could be subsumed under this characteristic allowed Griffith to take at least two differing ›races‹ – ›yellow‹ and ›brown‹ – and juxtapose them as ›black‹ in opposition to ›white‹. ²²⁷ When Griffith took office in November 1883, his government repealed the ›Coolie Act‹, already passed, but never implemented during McIlwraith's time in office, and announced the end of the Pacific Islanders' employment. ²²⁸

While it was in line with the »attractive rallying cry« for a »White Queensland«, the government's decision on the timely abolition of the Pacific Island recruitment generated discomfort in the ranks of the planters. ²²⁹ The industry was firmly up and running with ›black labour‹ in 1885, when the Queensland sugar production peaked at more than eighty thousand

²²³ All previous citations come from ›An Interview with the Ex-Prime Minister of Queensland‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 24.09.1884.

²²⁴ Cf. Raymond Markey: *The Making of the Labour Party in New South Wales 1880-1900*, p. 184.

²²⁵ ›The Kanaka in Queensland‹, in: *Graphic* (UK), 29.10.1881.

²²⁶ ›A Horrible Traffic‹, in: *Western Mail* (UK), 22.06.1885; see also ›The Labour Traffic in the Southern Pacific‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 03.08.1885.

²²⁷ In contrast to this juxtaposition, ›race‹ scientists, like Johann Blumenbach, who saw ›the Ethiopian‹ and ›the Mongolian‹ as two extremes on the scale of his five principal human varieties with people from the Pacific constituting a third, considered ›white‹ not an exception opposed to ›others‹ but the sign for equilibrium and norm. See Sabine Ritter: *Natural Equality and Racial Systematic*, pp. 108 f.

²²⁸ Cf. Lyndon Megaritty: *White Queensland*, p. 3.

²²⁹ ›Australasian Labour Movement‹, in: *Worker*, 15.12.1900 (›cry‹, ›White Queensland‹).



Fig. 12 – A tearful good-bye:
The intermittence of Pacific Island recruitment

tons produced in over two hundred and eighty mills.²³⁰ Though after 31 December 1885 any recruitment of Pacific Islanders was barred, the planters hoped for an effective abolition not until 1890. They were assured that »long before that period [...] the labour question and position of the sugar industry will have settled themselves«. ²³¹ Eventually, a further five-year period was granted to the planters during which the prospect of replacing the Pacific Islanders by »white« Europeans increasingly grew dimmer.²³²

The »Figaro« of 1889 referred to a presumed demise of the sugar industry following the end of »labour trade« (Fig. 12).²³³ The answer to the »uneasy« question of »black labour« was to, eventually, approve of the planters' »loss« and repatriate the Islanders. Here, carrying a sugar cane stalk in her hand, the feminized sugar industry bewails the departing of an Islander dressed and equipped with items of »white« civilization. The depiction of the Pacific Islander is an uncommon one, and any contemporary reader of

²³⁰ Cf. Tony Barker, Ian Byford: *Harvests and Heartache*, p. 73.

²³¹ »Bundaberg Sugar Season«, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 20.10.1885.

²³² Cf. »The Queensland Sugar Industry«, in: *Argus*, 03.11.1885.

²³³ »A Polly-uneasy-un Question«, cover of the *Queensland Figaro and Punch*, 15.06.1889. The caption reads: »POLLY SACCHARINOMETER: »Boo hoo! Gidby Tommy Tanna, I'll never see your like again. Bother that Morehead«.

the cartoon could instantly identify that the male Islander was not depicted in the usual way. His portrayal suggests inappropriate truculence – a ›savage‹ who has unlearned his allocated role and location in society – and the possibility of miscegenation. However, feminized by the earring and ›racialized‹ by his skin, he was supposed to be in any case an unseemly relationship for the humanized and gendered sugar industry.

In other respects, his civilizing is denounced as superficial and futile. For the umbrella, which at the time of his departure he carries as a ›badge of modern civilisation‹ – so denoted by Robert Louis Stevenson with reference to Robinson Crusoe only shortly before – is devalued to a mere sign of vanitas by the mirror attached to it.²³⁴ At the dock, the Premier of Queensland, Boyd Morehead, was considered the ›rightful‹ male counterpart to the female industry and is attentively watching the scene. Morehead was a firm believer in the Europeans' ability to work in the cane fields and was firmly against the continuation of the Pacific Islanders' introduction, which would purportedly turn Queensland into ›a black man's country‹.²³⁵

At the same time, when the end of the ›labour trade‹ was decided, Australian annual sugar consumption per capita surpassed that of every other society, and the output of the booming Queensland sugar industry was higher than ever.²³⁶ This wave of success, however, was about to end very soon, and the situation changed for the worse. The influx of Pacific Islanders dropped sharply after 1890, when the stoppage came into effect, and in 1892 both the recruits landed and the recruiting voyages undertaken were only a fifth of those in 1893. An actual full cessation, however, did not take place.²³⁷ Thus, even the theoretical end of the ›labour trade‹ was of a temporary nature. This was mainly caused by two factors that almost led to the collapse of the sugar industry in the mid-eighteen eighties and early eighteen nineties.

²³⁴ Besides, items of vanity, like mirrors, were seemingly not actual contents of the trade boxes the Islanders took home, instead tools and domestic articles were preferred – cf. Adrian Graves: *Truck and Gifts*.

²³⁵ ›'Ints from the 'Ouse‹, in: *Queensland Figaro and Punch*, 15.06.1889. See also ›Rockhampton‹, in: *Morning Bulletin*, 24.04.1888; ›The Funeral of Black Labor‹, in: *Queensland Figaro and Punch*, 15.06.1889.

²³⁶ Cf. Peter Griggs: *Sugar demand and consumption in colonial Australia*, pp. 77 f; Henry Reynolds: *North of Capricorn*, p. 37.

²³⁷ Cf. Clive Moore: *Kanaka*, p. 25 for the figures. A contemporary report, composed in Britain by a former missionary in the New Hebrides, stated that ›except for a few months in 1891, the Traffic has never been stopped‹, and though the introduction was supposed to be ›totally abolished [...] at the end of 1890 [...] labour vessels with licences to recruit were allowed to leave Queensland up to the close of 1890, and kept returning with their loads of recruits until far into 1891‹ – John G. Paton: *Kanaka Labour Traffic between Queensland and the New Hebrides*, pp. 2 f.

Firstly, due to the technological improvements in sugar production, the world sugar price was in constant decline since the eighteen forties. Additionally, the global sugar supply was flooded by beet sugar coming from France and Germany and raided the market.²³⁸ Queensland had to pay duties to be able to sell its sugar on the New South Wales and Victoria markets.²³⁹ »We export principally to Victoria«, stated Griffith during the Colonial Conference in April 1887, »because New South Wales charges a larger duty than Victoria. [...] The price of sugar in Victoria is regulated by the price which they can get it at from Mauritius in competition with Queensland«.²⁴⁰ Since Queensland sugar was sold at equal conditions with sugar from abroad, sales and export to the other colonies had faltered with the introduction of European beet sugar to the colonial ›Australian‹ markets.

Secondly, the employment of Pacific Islanders – initially declared ›cheap labourers‹ – became more expensive due to the governmental regulations and thus markedly hindered sugar planters from offering sugar at a lower price than imported sugar.²⁴¹ The planters' preference for Pacific Islanders whose initial labour contract had ended, the so-called ›time-expired‹ labourers, increased since they brought with them experience in sugar cultivation.²⁴² They were free to choose their employer, and though denied the capability to political action, their ability to negotiate higher wages based on their work experience – frowned upon as an outrageous desire for ›wages fit for the white men‹ – as well as their unofficial unionizing long before ›white‹ sugar workers caused the comprehensive rise of labour costs.²⁴³ In addition, the recruitment costs increased when the ›passage money‹, which the employers had to pay for the voyage of each Islander, rose and made ›first-contract‹ labourers more expensive. Addi-

²³⁸ The proportion of beet sugar rose from seven (1840) to fifty per cent (1880) of the total sugar production – see Adrian Graves: *Cane and Labour*, p. 41. For the conflict between cane and beet sugar in Australia and its nexus in the context of the ›battle‹ of colonial cane sugar versus French beet sugar, see subchapter 4.3 ›Naturally A White Men's Industry‹.

²³⁹ Cf. Kenneth W. Manning: *In Their Own Hands*, p. 17.

²⁴⁰ Colonial Conference: *Sugar Bounties in Relation to Our Countries*, p. 641. See also ›The Sugar Bounties Question‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28.07.1887.

²⁴¹ The planters' profits ›had fallen with the drop in the price of sugar from £27 a ton in 1872 to £8 10s a ton in 1893‹ – Robin Gollan: *Radical and Working Class Politics*, p. 162.

²⁴² Cf. Henry Reynolds: *North of Capricorn*, p. 43.

²⁴³ Stephen Castles, Mark J. Miller: *The Age of Migration*, p. 58 (›wages‹). Cf. also Adrian Graves: *Cane and Labour*, pp. 27-40; id.: *Colonialism and Indentured Labour Migration in the Western Pacific*, pp. 256 ff.; Henry Reynolds: *North of Capricorn*, pp. 44, 169.

tionally, charges for the maintenance of the Islanders' hospitals had to be paid by the planters.

This meant that at the time when sugar became gradually more expensive in production, i.e. in the eighteen eighties, it had to compete with inexpensive imported sugar swamping the Australian market. As a consequence, the Queensland sugar industry plunged into a depression that lasted from the mid-eighteen eighties to the early nineties. In an attempt to counteract this effect, the largely bankrupt plantations – which were increasingly seen as an impediment to the expansion of the industry – were split up into small farms, in addition to a governmental plan to establish central milling.²⁴⁴ This ›reconstruction‹ of the sugar industry established family-run farms and fostered European settlement which was explicitly desired in the context of ›white Queensland‹ and for the fulfilment of the ›white Australia‹ idea.²⁴⁵

The sugar industry's reconstruction, however, was unable to change the labour situation itself. »The total extinction of the island population seems only a matter of time«, cautioned the ›Pall Mall Gazette‹ and demanded: »[w]e want ›coolies‹«. To this the Queensland government, willing to choose ›racial purity‹ over the capitalists' profit, replied: »Queensland is for the white man only, and if you cannot get on without black labour, then perish the industry«. ²⁴⁶ But the ›white man‹ stayed away from the cane fields. Seeing that wages and work conditions remained unattractive, the preferred Anglo-Australian and northern European workers continued to refrain from work in the sugar industry, thus causing a dramatic shortage of workers.²⁴⁷

Recommencement of the ›labour trade‹

As a consequence of the near-collapse, the Liberal Griffith government, now in coalition with McIlwraith, quickly repealed the intermittent abolition of the ›labour trade‹. Recruiting was reinstated for ten more years on

²⁴⁴ Cf. Adrian Graves: Colonialism and Indentured Labour Migration in the Western Pacific, p. 250; see also id., Peter Richardson: Plantations in the Political Economy of Colonial Sugar Production, p. 227; Peter Griggs: Sugar Plantations in Queensland, pp. 611 f.

²⁴⁵ Cf. Adrian Graves: Truck and Gifts, pp. 106 f. For ›white Queensland‹ in the context of Federation, see subchapter 4.4 ›Federation Or Separation‹.

²⁴⁶ ›Sugar Planting in North Queensland: by a Planter‹, in: Pall Mall Gazette (UK), 27.03.1885, p. 5.

²⁴⁷ For Italians and other southern Europeans in the sugar industry and the discrimination against them, see subchapter 4.1 ›Dagoes – What Is White?‹.

the basis of the Pacific Island Labourers Extension Act (55 Vic. No. 38) passed in April 1892.²⁴⁸ The local newspapers lauded the Premier for realizing that ruining the sugar plantations for »lack of labour« would cause whole regions to be abandoned and be »reduced again to the conditions of the jungle«, thus suggesting a regression of civilization and a relapse into the primitive state before British contact.²⁴⁹ Hopes for the survival and prosperity of the industry were held high, claiming that the reintroduction of the trade would »benefit this year's sugar industry to the extent of £400,000«.²⁵⁰ The sugar planters, who had augured a complete collapse of the sugar industry, if they could not get cheap labour from somewhere, cheered.²⁵¹ Not so the labour movement.

First published in March 1890, the ›Worker‹ was the self-proclaimed »Journal of the Associated Workers of Queensland«.²⁵² Its first editor, William Lane, was a front figure of the Australian labour movement, who also founded the ›Boomerang‹, another journal of the labour movement.²⁵³ A good two years later, in April 1892, it printed the first of several cover cartoons directly referring to the employment and settlement of Pacific Islanders in Queensland. In the context of the Pacific Island Labourers Extension Act (55 Vic. No. 38) parliamentary debates induced the ›Worker‹ to put the workers' feelings of betrayal and resentment in pictures.²⁵⁴

Cartoons had been featured in the ›Worker‹ from very early on. Soon after the first issues, the editors of the ›Worker‹ had publicly debated the »value of illustrating«: the cartoons were »somewhat expensive«, but the Board of Trustees endeavoured to »very speedily [be] able to illustrate

²⁴⁸ Cf. Warwick Anderson: *The Cultivation of Whiteness*, p. 88. A circumstance that was even covered in Great Britain's newspapers: ›Miscellaneous Items‹, in: *Leeds Mercury* (UK), 15.02.1892; ›News of the Day‹, in: *Birmingham Daily Post* (UK), 16.02.1892; ›Kanaka Labour in Queensland‹, in: *Aberdeen Weekly Journal* (UK), 17.05.1892.

²⁴⁹ (Untitled), in: *Argus*, 09.05.1892.

²⁵⁰ ›Queensland's Industries‹, in: *Pall Mall Gazette* (UK), 22.10.1892.

²⁵¹ Cf. (Untitled), in: *Brisbane Courier*, 10.08.1893.

²⁵² ›Welcoming the Worker‹, in: *Worker*, 23.04.1892, also the subtitle on the Worker's covers. When March 1890 saw the emergence of this printed mouthpiece for the (›white‹) workers' interests, the editorial of the first issue appealed to the »[r]ich men, grass kings, or gold kings, or cane kings, or paper kings« to be considerate with their workers. As an example for how »kindness begets kindness«, the newspaper retold the experience of a former slave-owning sugar planter in San Domingo, who was »good to his slaves«. Though the ›Worker‹ was pressing for a sugar industry run by and with ›white‹ men, and an advocate of »White Queensland« (for example the next issue ›The Editorial Mill‹, in: *Worker*, 01.04.1890), it thus reinforced the connection of work in the cane fields with (›nigger‹) slave labour. ›The Editorial Mill‹, in: *Worker*, 01.03.1890.

²⁵³ Cf. Patricia Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, Ann McGrath, Marian Quartly: *Creating a Nation*, p. 152; see also Wulf D. Hund: *Negative Societalisation*, p. 58.

²⁵⁴ Cf. ›Legislative Council‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 15.04.1892; *Government Intelligence & Tourist Bureau Queensland: Queensland Sugar Industry*, p. 23.



*Fig. 13 a – Images of the class enemy:
The re-instatement of the ›labour trade‹*

or at least to illustrate with cartoons during the elections«. ²⁵⁵ When, due to the depression in 1893, its editors decided to return to the fortnightly issue without the beloved cover cartoon, the consternation following this decision facilitated the »big bush unions« at their annual convention of the same year to declare that they would defray the cost for the reintroduction of the weekly issue including the cartoon. ²⁵⁶ Still seventy years later, the artists were celebrated for their contribution to the national cause: »The early ›Worker‹ cartoonists, poets and writers did not understand the meaning of the word ›fear‹. They knew they were creating something of great value in the cause of the working white man, particularly, and for Australia«. ²⁵⁷

›The Queensland Deeming‹ in the ›Worker‹ of April 1892 (Fig. 13 a) expresses the feelings of betrayal exposed by the labour movement. ²⁵⁸ Samuel Griffith is threatening to hit a ›white‹ woman watching over the infantile »White Queensland« with his hammer of »broken pledges«, while the »general election« barks in vein at his feet. During the former election – in his election address of 1888 reprinted in the speech bubble – Griffith had pledged to settle the »coloured labour question« and doubted the (McIlwraith) government's »genuineness« in this matter. ²⁵⁹ When the coalition with McIlwraith came into effect, these pledges were counteracted by the reinstatement of the Islanders' introduction. Consequently, the delicate attempts to establish Queensland as a country for ›whites‹ were allegedly rendered absurd by the decision to again admit ›coloured‹ workers. The land-grant railways, as well, came under fierce critique as being »opposed to the best interest of the people«, inter alia, because the employment of »Indian Coolies, Chinamen, or any other colored labour« was not precluded to the detriment of »persons of European descent«. ²⁶⁰

In the same vein, the labour movement in 1892 pictured their powers of self-assertion as being distinctively violated by the continued competition by ›black labour‹. A week after the ›Deeming‹, the ›Worker‹ depicted ›Griffith's Revenge: What Black Labour Means‹ (Fig. 13 b) ²⁶¹ in which the Pacific Islander, holding a rake labelled »cheap and reliable«, and the European are tied together by arm and foot leaving the ›white‹ worker's ability to nothing but threatening gestures. In front of the house of government,

²⁵⁵ ›A Weekly ›Worker‹, in: Worker, 28.11.1891.

²⁵⁶ Cf. Australian Workers' Union: The Worker's First Seventy Years, pp. 20 f.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 40.

²⁵⁸ ›The Queensland Deeming‹, cover of the Worker, 02.04.1892.

²⁵⁹ ›The Premier's Address‹, in: Morning Bulletin, 13.03.1888.

²⁶⁰ Charles Powers: The Land-Grant Bill of 1892, pp. 4 (›interest‹), 6 (›Indian Coolies‹ etc.).

²⁶¹ ›Griffith's Revenge‹, cover of the Worker, 09.04.1892.



Fig. 13 b – Images of the class enemy:
Labour fettered and shackled

flying a flag which reads »government by fraud«, Griffith, wearing a pirate hat and attire and waving the Jolly Roger which depicts McIlwraith's head, is about to punish the European with the whip of »betrayed confidence«. In the understanding of the ›Worker‹, the improvement of »White Labour« was actually undermined by it being tied to »Black Labour« following the renewal of the governmental »slavers'« enterprises.²⁶² With the con-

²⁶² ›Lawless Lawmaking‹, in: Worker, 09.04.1892 (›white labour‹, ›black labour‹); ›Against the Slavers‹, in: ibid. (›slavers‹).

tinued presence of Pacific Islanders putatively willing to work for lesser wages and in worse conditions than the ›whites‹, possibilities of negotiation for the labour movement were negatively affected. The empowerment of European workers was therefore only possible with the ›liberation‹ from non-European competition, which worsened negotiation possibilities.

The following week in April 1892, the ›Worker‹ made an allusion to the biblical Mark of Cain. ›The Brand of (Sugar) Cane‹ (Fig. 13 c) denounces Griffith as a traitor to the ambitions for a ›white‹ sugar industry.²⁶³ The two elements from the previous cartoon referring to the alleged act of treason are here again reverted to: the pelt he is wearing is belted by the suspicion of ›gov.t by fraud‹, and on his flight from the crime scene, Griffith is dropping a cane stalk labelled ›broken pledges‹. He has toppled ›White Queensland‹, which has then plunged from the pedestal imprinted with ›No Slavery‹. This again emphasizes the allegations of an unwanted reintroduction of forced recruitment and labour into the sugar industry by the Extension Act.

In the context of the readings of the ›Black Labour Bill‹ in the committees, the ›Worker‹ reported the ›immoral contempt of all principle and all honour‹ in the ›lawless lawmaking‹ which endangered the efforts of a ›White Queensland‹. The decision had to wait – parliament was adjourned



Fig. 13 c – Images of the class enemy:
The treacherous government

²⁶³ ›The Brand of (Sugar) Cane‹, cover of the Worker, 16.04.1892. The caption reads: ›Parliament has adjourned‹.

»till the beginning of June«.²⁶⁴ Griffith is not only branded by the accusers as the ›murderer‹ of the ›white Queensland‹ ideal, but the pheon on his forehead also associates him with imperial endeavours of colonization and occupation.²⁶⁵

The recommenced introduction of Pacific Islanders again provoked debates on the circumstances of recruitment in the islands. When reports of the atrocities committed in the process of recruitment became public at the end of the ›labour trade‹, the consideration of the reinstatement of the same and the investigation of a Royal Commission into this question caused the establishment of legislation which was supposed to regulate the circumstances of contracting and transporting the workers from the Pacific Islands to Queensland.²⁶⁶

Conflicts over the ›black labour‹ questions were not confined to politicians, capitalists and the labour movement but further involved opposing members of the print media. Against the backdrop of suspicions of slavery, the ›Worker‹ levelled criticism at the favourable coverage by the ›Argus‹ of the ›labour trade‹ reinstatement in a series of articles in December 1892.²⁶⁷ The ›Argus‹ had sent a »representative secretly to the scene of the recruiting, so that every phase of the work might be watched and impartially and fully reported upon«.²⁶⁸ The ›Worker‹ then accused the author of the articles of »gloss[ing] over the nefarious practices involved in capturing kanakas« and of not giving a »truthful sketch of the kanaka hunts« as well as the subsequent transportation on board the »licensed slave vessels«.²⁶⁹ The ›Worker‹ article implied that the recruiting as well as the reporting was done not only with the knowledge of but also with the connivance by Griffith, whom they deemed the »traitor to White Queensland«, who had beforehand prohibited all newspaper reporting on the matters of recruitment.

Once again, the depiction of the recruiting scene and the ship impose the suspicion of slavery on the reader. In December 1892, the ›Worker‹

²⁶⁴ ›Lawless Lawmaking‹, in: Worker, 16.04.1892.

²⁶⁵ The pheon or broad arrow was the mark of government property; it could be found on convicts' dresses and articles. Cf. Margaret Maynard: *Fashioned from Penury*, p. 21. For an example of a convict uniform with such pheons on it, see <http://nationaltreasures.nla.gov.au/%3E/Treasures/item/nla.int-ex13-s11>, for the branding of convicts as punishment, see <http://www.discovermorningtonpeninsula.com.au/fascinatingfacts/collins-torture.php>.

²⁶⁶ Cf. (Untitled), in: Launceston Examiner, 31.05.1892.

²⁶⁷ Cf. ›The Kanaka Labour Traffic. Our Representative on a Recruiting Schooner‹, in: Argus, 05.12.-22.12.1892 (Part I-XIII).

²⁶⁸ ›The Kanaka Labour Traffic‹, in: Argus, 03.12.1892.

²⁶⁹ ›A Clumsy Dodge‹, in: Worker, 17.12.1892.



Fig. 13 d – More images of the class enemy:
Newspaper rivalry between ›Argus‹ and ›Worker‹

published ›A Special on the Job‹ (Fig. 13 d),²⁷⁰ a visualization of said dispute, and framed its depiction with quotes from the ›Argus‹. The reporter – on the ›Helena Slaver Bundaberg‹ recognizable as a recruiting ship by its hoisted blackball – watches the scene of forced Islander recruitment through a bottle of ›Planter Tonic‹ acting as a telescope, which in addition is held the wrong way round and therefore miniaturizes the scene instead of magnifying it. The self-chosen ›glass to look through‹ does convey but a distorted reality and refutes any objectivity: the observer prefers to recognize voluntariness, but the reader of the cartoon bears witness to

²⁷⁰ ›A Special on the Job‹, cover of the Worker, 17.12.1892. The caption reads: ››ARGUS‹ Special: ›Ah! Ah!! This is the glass to look through! How peaceful and civilising to be sure. They come with delight – to save the country. Bai Jove, though! They must hurry them up or they'll break away and be lost to the refinements of civilisation and a country that yawns for cheap labour‹‹.

the violence of the recruiting process. Like the blackball and the inserted newspaper clippings, the bottle of champagne is also a reference to the governmental regulations of the recruiting process which are reduced to absurdity by the alcohol's mere presence.²⁷¹ The observer's endeavour to act as an impartial spectator is denigrated by the items surrounding him. The seat of his trousers declares him to be »[o]n an open secret mission«, poking fun at the fact that the ›Argus‹ pretended this to be a clandestine operation (unbeknownst to planters and government) in order to emphasize the authenticity and independence of the reporting. The neckpiece tags him as being there as a representative of the »Argus by permission Q. Government«, and its adornment with the pheon further stigmatizes him and his equipment as property of the government.

Contrasting scenes of recruitment were published in the early eighteen nineties and showed the utilization of the different stylistic devices by the supporters and objectors of the employment of labourers from the islands in the Pacific. Seemingly in order to avert the recommencement of the ›labour trade‹ giving rise to a renewal of speculation about possible ›black-birding‹, the ›Queenslander‹ in 1892 ran a four-part series of contextualized sketches of the recruiting procedure and the return the Pacific Island labourers (Fig. 14 a), in which it drew on romanticized elements of the recruitment and underlined the Islanders' willingness with regard to the journeys.²⁷² The corresponding articles emphasized the voluntariness of the recruiting by depicting »would-be recruits [...] signalling to a schooner to send a boat«. ²⁷³ The return of the islanders was an »occasion of great rejoicing« upon which the returned would find »a large number of friends« and retain British money to engage into trade with passing Germans and French. »Unpleasant« receptions were confined to unexplored places, but the »irresistible attractions of the white man's ›trade« soon »reassured« the islanders.²⁷⁴ The Pacific Islanders allegedly tricked the ›whites‹ during

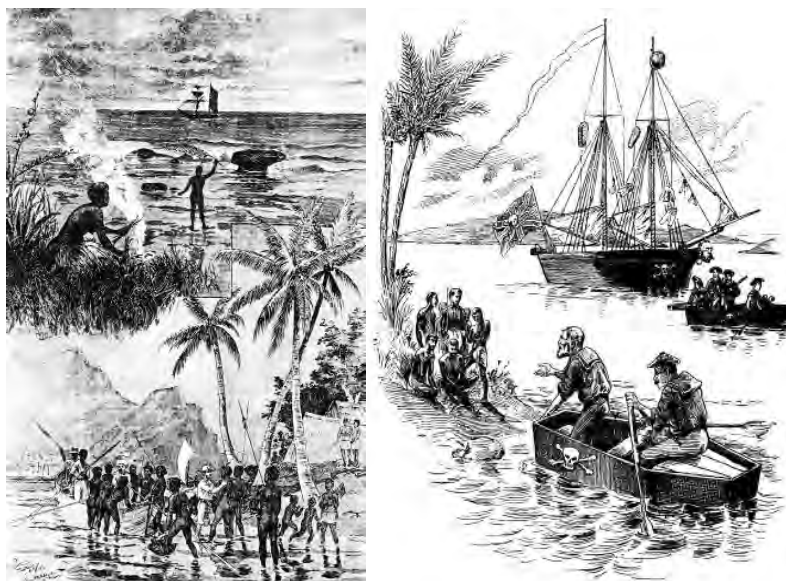
²⁷¹ The blackball and the wine bottle are references to the governmental regulation of the recruitment process: »Every labour vessel is to be licensed, painted slate colour, with a black streak along both sides, and carry a black ball at mast head. No firearms or intoxicating drink to be allowed on board, except a limited quantity of the latter for use of crew, or as medicines; nor are any to be either unladen or taken on board after leaving Queensland port of departure, under heavy penalties; no intoxicants must be given to any islander (unless as medicine), no carried in recruiting boats« – (Untitled), in: *Launceston Examiner*, 31.05.1892.

²⁷² Cf. ›Recruiting in the South Seas‹, in: *Queenslander*, 18.06.1892 (there also this picture, which is reprinted (though with a wrong date) in Clive Moore: *Kanaka*, p. 44), 25.06.1892, 02.07.1892, 09.07.1892.

²⁷³ ›Recruiting in the South Seas‹, in: *Queenslander*, 18.06.1892 (›recruits‹).

²⁷⁴ ›Recruiting in the South Seas‹, in: *Queenslander*, 25.06.1892 (›rejoicing‹, ›friends‹, ›irresistible‹).

the recruiting procedure by receiving the presents for their recruitment and then taking »headers« and swimming back to beach.²⁷⁵



*Fig. 14 a & b – Tales of recruitment:
Visual representations of recruitment*

The »Worker« of 1893, in contrast, illustrated the coercion by force of arms and underlined the unlikeliness of returning based on high mortality rates (Fig. 14 b).²⁷⁶ The blackball tied to the mast of the barge again indicates that this is a labour vessel on a journey to recruit workers. As the figurehead, Griffith is identified as thought leader and enabler of the (resumed) blackbirding campaigns. But not only the small coffin-shaped »Queensland Coffin Ships« bears the »skull and bones« – even the Union Jack is enriched with this symbol of death and deceit, the masts adorned with more coffins. While the two recruiters seem to attempt to engage in peaceful conversation with the Islanders, indifferently sitting on the beach, another boat with armed Australians is giving them rear cover in light of the expected resistance.

²⁷⁵ »Recruiting in the South Seas«, in: *Queenslander*, 02.07.1892 (»headers«).

²⁷⁶ »Queensland Coffin Ships«, cover of the *Worker*, 02.12.1893.

In fact, the death rate of Pacific Islanders in Queensland was three to four times higher than that of Europeans. Suspected reasons for this were »[p]oor food, inadequate housing, and medical neglect«, on the one hand, and »bacillary dysentery, pneumonia and tuberculosis«, on the other. A likelihood of mortality inversely proportional to the duration of residence – i.e. the heightened death rate during the first year (the period of ›seasoning‹) – suggested that it were these unfamiliar European diseases in particular, rather than the treatment of the Pacific Islanders, caused so many deaths.

Contemporary opinion, while admitting a higher mortality, called for statistical data on death rates in the South Sea islands for comparison. In an attempt to put mortality into perspective, one reverend drew on the ›doomed race‹ theory and asked whether it is »not true that the dark races throughout Australia and Polynesia are gradually dying out, whether in their own native settlements, or elsewhere?« In the same vein, the ›Bulletin‹ gave credit to the »special attraction« of the Islander to »die without attracting so much attention as a white man would«. ²⁷⁷

While the labour movement argued on the basis of alleged ›slavery‹ and kidnapping of the Pacific Islanders, nationalist interests in ›white Australia‹ pressed for measures of a restrictionist immigration policy and for the preservation of Australia as the »isolated outpost of western civilisation« reserved for the ›white‹ Europeans. ²⁷⁸ The presence in the social structure of a class of ›black‹ and ›coloured‹ labourers, who were perceived not only substratifying but also undercutting ›white‹ workers, was seen as contradicting the supposed shared equality of ›white‹ Australians, who belonged to a society where equality was emphasized as part of the emerging national identity. Australianness was then the motor uniting ›eligible‹ Australians from different classes, genders and backgrounds at the time of the Australian Federation in 1901. The unlimited settlement of non-Europeans in the colonies was deemed detrimental to this.

Once the Pacific Islanders had fulfilled their three-year contracts, they were able to rent parcels of land for themselves and take up actual residence. In the eyes of the European-Australians, the ›time-expired‹ and the settled-down Islanders soon began to represent a dangerous »hybridity

²⁷⁷ Warwick Anderson: *The Cultivation of Whiteness*, p. 84 (›poor food‹); Clive Moore: *The South Sea Islanders of Mackay* (›dysentery‹); Alex C. Smith: *Kanaka Labour Question*, p. 22 (›dark races‹); *Bulletin*, 09.02.1901 (›special attraction‹) cited in Evans Raymond, Kay Saunders, Kathryn Cronin: *Race Relations in Colonial Queensland*, p. 147. See also Clive Moore: *Kanaka*, pp. 244 ff. and id.: *The Counterculture of Survival*.

²⁷⁸ Andrew Markus: *Of Continuities and Discontinuities*, p. 178 (›outpost‹).

[...] between contained black labourers and free whites«. ²⁷⁹ This hybridity, however, was not only an issue of ›race‹ transcending class in Queensland but soon expanded to a continent-wide threat against ›racial purity‹ and fitness.

In the year of Federation, the ›Bulletin‹ – mouthpiece of the nationalist movement – took a stand for the purification of the national body by drawing on the rhetoric of disease, contamination, and health politics. In their eyes, recruitment for the sugar plantations produced a »constant piebald stream«. Their communities were »disease spots« that required a treatment to prevent the Islanders from »infecting the body of white Australia«. ²⁸⁰ Notions of contamination and impurity are also found in the use of the term »plague spots«, by which the settlement locations of Pacific Islanders and other ›non-white‹ people were referred to, and in the »leprous curse«, which ›black labour‹ was held to be; it corroded the community of the ›white‹ workers by undercutting them and taking away their jobs. ²⁸¹

Contemporary eugenicists declared the ›white‹ Australian population imperilled by »coloured germ plasm and coloured germs« necessitating immediate counteracting to prevent not only the outbreak of diseases but also the possibility of ›racial intermixture«. ²⁸² While contamination but also miscegenation, was already worrisome, fears of biological and cultural swamping – in particular by Asian immigrants from the eighteen fifties onwards – led to the exclusionist approach of the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 that constrained the influx of Asian immigrants. In the case of the Pacific Islanders, the solution was found in the eventual termination of the more or less forced migration and physical exclusion through removal from Australia legislated in the Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1901. ²⁸³

Even in the first years of the twentieth century, when the employment of ›white‹ workers was encouraged by the payment of rebates, the continued presence of ›black‹ labour in the sugar fields also prevented a conversion to ›white‹ labour. ²⁸⁴ The ›white‹ European labourers refused to work alongside Pacific Islanders, even though they might be paid slightly

²⁷⁹ Tracey Banivanua-Mar: *Violence and Colonial Dialogue*, p. 88. For the so far widely overlooked role of Pacific Island and other non-European small cane farmers in the opening up of land in the colony of Queensland, see Peter D. Griggs: *Alien Agriculturalists*, pp. 136 f., 150-155.

²⁸⁰ *Bulletin*, 28.09.1901 (›piebald‹, ›disease‹, ›body‹), cited in Henry Reynolds: *North of Capricorn*, p. 154.

²⁸¹ Manning Clark: *A Short History of Australia*, p. 198.

²⁸² Warwick Anderson: *The Cultivation of Whiteness*, p. 99.

²⁸³ Cf. Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1901.

²⁸⁴ For the excise and rebate system fostering ›white‹-produced sugar, see subchapter 5.3 ›White Wages for White Australian Workers‹.

higher wages. The association of ›black‹ skin and cane field work could seemingly never be eliminated while there was still evidence for it. Pacific Islanders who were hired as ›time-expired‹ workers were in direct competition with potential ›white‹ sugar workers. As long as there was a large resource of foreign sugar workers in Queensland, it was deemed impossible by the labour movement to enforce wages claims and improvement of work conditions for ›whites‹.

Both strains of discourse, the perceived competition for ›white‹ workers as well as the notion of the Australian continent as a British or at least ›white‹ point of presence, were mirrored in legislation. This, from the early introduction onwards, first confined Pacific Island labourers to certain jobs in order to minimize possible competition with ›whites‹, and then enforced the gradual reduction of their employment up to the complete repatriation of almost all Pacific Islanders in 1907/08.

The sugar planters were alleged of »only want[ing] the reliable kanaka to grow sugar«.²⁸⁵ This was a double entendre. Firstly, comprising the – originally intended – accusation against the sugar farmers who continued to prefer employing Pacific Islanders instead of Europeans, and, with this, also made significant contributions, not only to the perceived betrayal of the labour movement in the case of the recommencement of the ›labour trade‹, but by doing so they also posed an obstacle to ›white Australia‹. And secondly – in the light of the following history of regulating the competition with the ›white‹ workers – a description of the Pacific Islanders' eventual confinement to certain tasks within the sugar industry of eastern Queensland in accordance with the ›white Australia‹ ideal.

The notorious Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1901 was only the final step following almost four decades of legislation of the Islanders' introduction and employment. Not long after the institutionalization of the introduction of the first Pacific Island labourers legislation was passed to obviate the alleged competition to the ›white‹ workers for jobs in the Queensland's agricultural industries by confining the Islanders to »operations in tropical and semi-tropical agriculture«.²⁸⁶ In the following, the Pacific Island labourers' employment was further restricted to manual labour in the cane fields, excluding occupations like »engineers, engine-drivers, engine-fitters, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, farriers, sugar-boilers, carpenters, sawyers, splitters, fencers, bullock-drivers, or mechanics«.²⁸⁷ Therefore

²⁸⁵ Cf. ›Aliens and the Plague‹, in: *Worker*, 05.05.1900.

²⁸⁶ *Polynesian Labourers' Act* of 1868, p. 1.

²⁸⁷ *Pacific Island Labourers Act 1880 Amendment Act 1884*, p. 1. See also: Adrian Graves: *Cane and Labour*, p. 204.

›typical‹ contemporary pictorial representations of the sugar industry after 1885 (Fig. 15) employing only Pacific Islanders in the mills were little more than reminiscence of past times.²⁸⁸

In the decade before Federation, the area of work in the sugar industry was further restricted to unskilled labour that was already deemed beneath ›whites‹. The Islanders were specifically excluded »from the cultivation of maize, ploughing or mill labour except the handling of cane or megass«.²⁸⁹ As a result, the bifurcation of labour in the sugar industry – the manual, unskilled field work and the skilled work in the mills – was not only

firmly established along this colour line.²⁹⁰ But it was also further legally codified when the establishment of central mills with governmental funding was fostered. This happened under the initial provision that only ›white‹ labourers would be used and settlement of ›white‹ sugar farmers would be fostered by the subdivision of large plantations and selling land to the farmers which they could cultivate with their own family.²⁹¹

›White‹ settlement seemed feasible for some. The ›Worker‹ cited death rates of Pacific Islanders and Chinese to prove that European labourers in



Fig. 15 – Scenes of the past:
Pacific Islanders in the sugar mill

²⁸⁸ ›Sugar Industry Near Mackay‹ (1886), in Andrew Garran (ed.): Picturesque Atlas of Australasia, p. 393.

²⁸⁹ Adrian Graves: Cane and Labour, p. 204 (›cultivation‹). Megass is the residue of crushing in the mill, i.e. the fibres of the sugar cane after the juice is removed.

²⁹⁰ See also Edward W. Docker: Blackbirders, p. 245, 244.

²⁹¹ Cf. H. N. Lund: The Origin and Development of Co-operative Sugar Mills in Queensland, pp. 1107 ff.

the tropics had a lower death rate than the ›coloured‹ workers and declared the Islanders' presence in Queensland a »fruitful source of disease dissemination by reason of phthisical kanaka-made sugar and molasses«. In reference to the British anti-slave trade and anti-slavery campaign of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the ›Worker‹ maintained, that the »canefields of the North [...] are manured with the flesh and bones of coloured aliens«. ²⁹² A statement they had six years before put into picture by the ›Worker‹ (Fig. 16): monitored by the typically ›white‹ supervisor the Pacific Islanders lay to rest one of their fellow workers. ²⁹³ But far from being allowed to rest in peace, the usefulness of the Islander continues after his death as a fertilizer for the sugar cane growing in the background. The ›Worker‹ declared »played-out« not only the Pacific Islanders as labourers, due to their initial contracts involving unsatisfying working and sanitary conditions but also the system of labour recruitment, which, on the one hand, met with increasing opposition by the public and the government of the other Australian colonies, and, on the other hand, had over time diverged from one employing the desired ›cheap and reliable labour‹ to an industry involving the engagement of relatively autonomous Pacific Islanders who could negotiate their wages and choose their employers.

In the context of the Federation in 1901, the legal basis for ›white Australia‹ was about to be created and offered those who plead in favour of ›racial purity‹ the necessary tools to enforce the solving of the ›black labour question‹. The threat posed by Pacific Islanders against the ›white Australian‹ ideal was not least owed to the complicated ideological construction of them. While, on the one hand, they were accused of being unable to assimilate, in terms of culture, language and civilization, at the same time efforts were made to provide a basic education for them. On



Fig. 16 – Transcendental usefulness:
A reminder of the plantation system

²⁹² ›Coloured Aliens Death Rates‹, in: Worker, 09.03.1901. The allusion to the spreading of disease, in this case tuberculosis (historically also named ›consumption‹ or ›phthisis‹), through sugar handled by Pacific Islanders, was another contribution to their alleged impurity and to their depiction as carriers of numerous lethal diseases.

²⁹³ ›Things in General‹, cover of the Worker, 16.02.1895. The caption reads: »The Played-out Kanaka ›Worth /2d per lb. more dead than alive‹ as manure«.



Fig. 17 a & b – Fashionable Islanders:
When assimilation becomes dangerous

the other hand, they were said to assimilate too much to European habits and manners, especially with respect to alcohol, gambling, and women but also in comportment and appearance, which was then mocked as mimicry in contemporary caricatures (Fig. 17 a).²⁹⁴

The ›prosperous Kanaka‹ published by the ›Worker‹ in 1901 is more than a mere depiction of a westernized Pacific Islander. This revived a line of discussion which had arisen at the time when the ›labour trade‹ was intermitted in the mid-eighteen eighties. The ›Slaves of Fashion‹ of the ›Queensland Figaro‹ of 1885 (Fig. 17 b) not only hints at the fact that Pacific Islanders were in a position to accumulate money after the fulfilment of their contracts;²⁹⁵ it also depicts the feared competition by Pacific Islanders for the ›whites‹ in terms of economic and social skills. The desired societal situation is turned upside down. The impoverished ›white‹ worker, cleaning one of their symbols of wealth, eavesdrops on them deriding ›white‹ notions of the Pacific Islanders as »victims of slavery and oppression«. ›Class‹ threatens to overrule ›race‹ in a way detrimental to the ›whites‹. Reiterating their social status, one of the Pacific Islanders

²⁹⁴ ›The Prosperous Kanaka‹, Worker, 31.08.1901.

²⁹⁵ ›Slave of Fashion‹, Queensland Figaro, 14.02.1885, reprinted in: Michael Berry: Refined White, p. 33. The caption reads: »TOMMY TANNA: ›How's this, they calls us de wictims of slavery and ompression?‹ | SAMMY SAMOA: ›You is a ignorant gentleman, Tommy. We is de slave of fashion, and dey is frightened of the impression we makes on de ladies; de white man got no chance wid us, so they want to stop us from comin' to dis country‹«.

confirms ›white‹ suspicions of miscegenation and possible plans to conquer the country by the seduction of the ›white‹ »ladies«.

This topic resurfaced in the »prosperous Kanaka«. In a typical case, he »is married to a white woman« and with her built »a home that many a white labourer would envy« – thus questioning the »capacity of useful citizenship« as an »exclusive property of the white«. In this the ›prosperous Kanaka‹ also represented the »moral« and the »legal puzzle« the »disposal of these men« posed.²⁹⁶ The ›phenomenon‹ that entered the Australian consciousness shortly before their repatriation was especially that of successful Pacific Islanders. They obtruded the question whether those who had been residents in the countries for two decades and now owned property, cultivating their own cane and sometimes even employing workers, were to be returned without compensation for their loss.

Despite the concern, as a newspaper in early 1901 reported, that »it appears that the objection of the interested Queensland sugar-growers has caused a modification of [Prime Minister Edmund Barton's initial policy], and kanaka labor is not to be abolished for an indefinite ›period of years‹«, Federation brought about a major change in the labour management of sugar workers.²⁹⁷ Once the Pacific Island Labourers Act was passed at the end of 1901, it became clear for the sugar growers that the days of ›black labour‹ were counted.²⁹⁸ Accompanying this decision, the ›Bulletin‹ cast a last, macabre glance on the soon-to-be abolished situation in the cane fields by an account which again bore resemblance to the eighteenth-century British abolitionists' rhetoric by turning the producer into the violently produced product: »The sugar-growing Kanaka dies like a fly on a window pane; his blood is on every cane field, and his bones are in every pound of sugar, and his bleached skull grins from every grocer's window«.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁶ For the quote and the following, see ›Jottings by the way‹, in: *Queenslander*, 26.07.1902.

²⁹⁷ ›The Sugar Industry‹, in: *Daily Telegraph*, 08.02.1901 (›modification‹).

²⁹⁸ Cf. ›Australian Affairs‹, in: *Economist* (UK), 02.11.1901. Determined in the act was a prohibition of introduction of Pacific Islanders into Australia after 31 March 1904. This led to a (short-lived) dramatic increase of recruitments in the South Sea islands. Actually, the figure of employment of Pacific Islanders in the sugar industry was highest during the two years after Federation, because the growers wanted to avail themselves of all the advantages of Island labour for the time remaining. »[A]pproximately 45 per cent [of the total number of Melanesians in Queensland] had been recruited in the previous three years« before 1901 – cf. Doug Hunt: *Exclusivism and Unionism*, pp. 83, 87. After 31 December 1906, the repatriation of the Islanders to their home islands commenced, in order to further accelerate the demographic change of the sugar industry. Cf. Courtenay Ilbert: *Review of Legislation*, p. 177. See also Arthur F. Bell: *The Story of the Sugar Industry in Queensland*, pp. 10 f.; Laksiri Jayasuriya, David Walker, Jan Gothard (eds.): *The Legacies of White Australia*, pp. 176 f.; B. A. Ross: *Pacific Island Labourers Act*, pp. 3-10; Gwenda Tavan: *The Long, Slow Death of White Australia*, p. 8.

²⁹⁹ ›The Kanaka Phase‹, in: *Bulletin*, 27.07.1901.

As a consequence of this legislation, various Pacific Islander organizations petitioned for the issue of exemptions for those Islanders who had taken up long-time residence in Queensland, so that they could become British citizens and cultivate land undesirable to the Europeans planters.³⁰⁰ The campaigns that pleaded for the permission to settle in Australia peaked in the demand of the Pacific Islanders' spokesman that »if the ›boys‹ have to leave Queensland then the white men will have to leave the islands«.³⁰¹ These campaigns – in conjunction with statements by sympathizing Europeans, evidenced on the islanders' perception of deportation collected by



*Fig. 18 – Black masks, white planters:
Pacific Islander deputations against repatriation*

the Royal Commission in 1906, and the admonition by the British Government to conduct the deportation with due care and respect – eventually led to the expansion of criteria under which Pacific Islanders were exempted from deportation.³⁰²

³⁰⁰ Cf. Henry Reynolds: *North of Capricorn*, p. 58. See also Patricia Mercer: *White Australia Defied*, pp. 79 ff.; Department of External Affairs: *Re. Pacific Island Labourers Act*.

³⁰¹ Henry Diamur Tongoa in April 1906, cited in Patricia Mercer: *White Australia Defied*, p. 82. See also Peter Corris: *Passage, Port and Plantation*, p. 129.

³⁰² Cf. Patricia Mercer: *White Australia Defied*, pp. 87 f. Exempted from deportation were those who had taken up residency in Australia before 1886, who could not work due to

The suspicion that the petitions and/or the Islanders' associations were the workmanship of European interest groups³⁰³ was taken up by a cartoonist in the ›Bulletin‹ of 1906 who depicted Queensland politicians disguised as ›blacks‹ hiding behind the Pacific Islanders' vanguard delivering the petition (Fig. 18) at the door of the Prime Minister.³⁰⁴ The traditional intersectional overlapping of ›race‹ and class is turned upside down in this drawing. Most notably in the English mother country there was a widespread attitude of the upper classes to consider at least parts of the commonality as ›racially‹ inferior and ›savages‹ at the same time.³⁰⁵ The allegation of degeneration, supported by the theory of social Darwinism,³⁰⁶ is made politically by the cartoonist, and its cutaneous inking becomes the accusation of ›racial‹ opportunism and the therewith connected national incompatibility. Capitalists and their sugar produced with a maximized margin were both deemed detrimental to an Australia as the country of and relying on exclusively ›white‹ men. The introduction of a class of workers enabling high profits from cane sugar would lead to a ›substratification‹ of the Queensland social structure which, in turn, was seen as contradictory to the shared equality that was part of the emerging national identity. By giving in to their ›earth hunger‹ and ›covetousness the planters [had] deprived themselves of a stanch bulwark of support‹ by the labour movement which eventually tipped the scales in favour of Australianess as a ›white‹ identity.³⁰⁷

›Black‹ had become more than a skin colour during the issue of ›race‹ in the cane fields. Like the planters who prized their maximization of profits above the ›white‹ identity of the nation could be suspected of social ›blackness‹, all those seeming capable of endangering the ideal of ›whiteness‹ were declared ›blacks‹. With this, the social construction of ›blackness‹ became unmistakable. It was not a question of perception but an element of a binary scheme which organized inclusion through exclusion. To be ›white‹, and to be thus able to partake in the benefits of ›whiteness‹, did not constitute a freak of nature but a social privilege resting on discrimination.

age or infirmity, who had been married to other islanders or to a non-Melanesian woman, or who were owners of registered freeholds. Cf. *ibid.*

³⁰³ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 79 f.

³⁰⁴ ›Pacific Islander Deputation‹, in: *Bulletin*, 27.09.1906, reprinted in Patricia Mercer: *White Australia Defied*, p. 119.

³⁰⁵ Cf. Wulf D. Hund: *Rassismus* (2007), pp. 76 f.

³⁰⁶ Cf. Daniel J. Kevles: *In the Name of Eugenics*, p. 71.

³⁰⁷ ›Queensland Sugar Culture – No. III‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 30.05.1890.

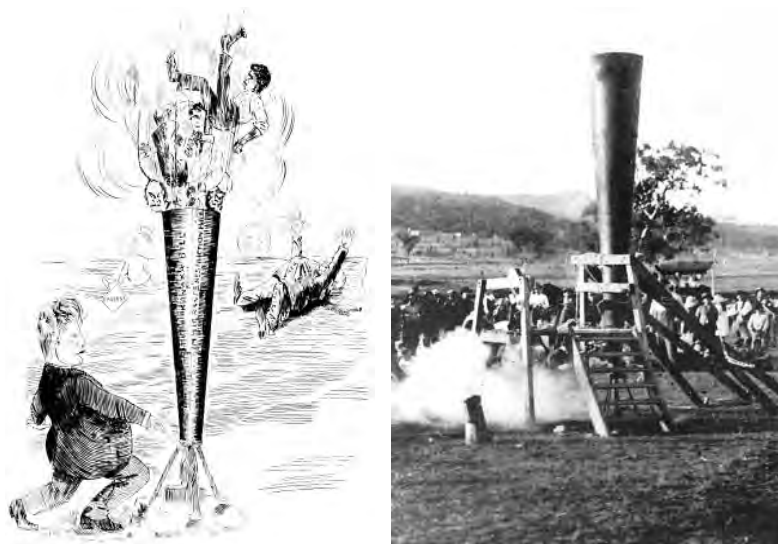


Fig. 19 a & b – Cloud seeding:
Expulsion of the undesired others

The ›Worker‹ (1901) emphatically illustrated this when in the year of Federation the first Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia, Edmund Barton, was shown igniting a ›canon‹ of ideological purification (Fig. 19 a).³⁰⁸ Built from the »Kanaka Bill & Immigrants Restriction Bill«, he makes vanish into thin air all those who did not fit into the ideal of ›white Australia‹. The representative of the planters, labelled ›slave owner‹, is thrown onto his back by the high-pressure wave of exclusion and can do nothing but stretch his arms heavenwards. Incidentally, the cartoon leaves no doubt that it is about more than the struggle for equitable working conditions. Instead of appealing for solidarity with the contract workers, the cartoonist celebrated their expulsion from society. With the racist legitimization of such procedure he had no problems – on the contrary, he maliciously named the presented apparatus »Nigger Vortex«.

The N-word used in this context came from the southern US-American slave states and had been exported to the Pacific region some time ago where it was not least employed by the blackbirders to describe the Pacific Islanders.³⁰⁹ In Australia, it entered into the use of language in everyday life and was, for instance, remodelled by illustrator and cartoonist George

³⁰⁸ ›The Nigger Vortex‹, cover of the Worker, 19.10.1901.

³⁰⁹ Cf. Gerald Horne: The White Pacific, p. 134.

Augustus Taylor for the titling of a postcard drawing as »Kanaka Nigger«.³¹⁰ The ›Worker‹ did not restrict itself to this combination but also expanded the term to all those who, in contemporary Australian discourse, were discriminated against as members of the so-called coloured races. Hence, in the ›Nigger Vortex‹ are found, besides Pacific Islanders, also Chinese and Indians. Racist exclusionist thinking does not sanction contamination – opposed to pure ›whiteness‹ everyone else is considered equally stigmatized. For his racist machine, the artist drew on an apparatus popular at that time, the vortex gun, which the government meteorologist wanted to use to produce rain in drought-stricken Queensland.³¹¹ Even the relation to ›good‹ weather finds entrance in the caricature – only that the technology here is not used to seed the desired clouds but for the removal of undesired others; a process which the sun on the horizon approvingly acknowledges with a chuckle (Fig. 19 b).³¹²

Of the ten thousand Pacific Islanders that were in Australia at that time, only a third remained – about half of those staying had evaded deportation by absconding, meaning that not even a sixth of the workers from the Pacific Islands were allowed to stay on the basis of exemptions.³¹³ The ›Sydney Morning Herald‹ retrospectively denoted the exclusion of the Pacific Islanders by the Pacific Island Labourers Act in 1901 as an important part in the formation of Australia, since »White Australia was practically affirmed by the repatriation of the kanakas«.³¹⁴ The repatriation of the Pacific Islanders, however, was only the one pillar of the ›white Australia policy‹.

3.4 ›The Yellow Curse‹:

Asian Involvement in the Queensland Sugar Industry

The other pillar was the Immigration Restriction Act, which constituted the solution to a problem that had been addressed for several decades: Asian immigration. The subsequent section investigates into the involvement of

³¹⁰ Joan Kerr: George Augustus Taylor.

³¹¹ Cf. ›The Stiger Vortex Gun Experiment‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 05.08.1901; ›Mr. Wragge's Visit‹, in: Morning Bulletin, 18.10.1901. See also ›Steiger Vortex rain-making gun, c1900‹ at <http://www.qhatlas.com.au/resource/steiger-vortex-rain-making-gun-c1900>.

³¹² The realistic depiction of the gun suggests that the artist must have had first-hand knowledge about the apparatus and its operations. For example at this presentation: ›Crowd of people watching a small explosion of a Vortex Gun, Mount Morgan, 1902‹ (John Oxley Library).

³¹³ Cf. Clive Moore: The South Sea Islanders; Michael Berry: Refined White, p. 77; Henry Reynolds: North of Capricorn, p. 180; Sibylle Gundert-Hock: Mission und Wanderarbeit in Vanuatu, p. 52 f.

³¹⁴ ›White Australia‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 17.12.1917.

mainly Chinese and Japanese labourers in the Queensland sugar industry. Simultaneously, considerations need to be taken into account locating discrimination against Asian workers in a broader history of adverse reactions towards the presence and employment of Asian people which took place outside the sugar industry since the eighteen fifties. After all, when the first Chinese workers entered the Queensland sugar industry in the mid-eighteen seventies, the colonies of Australia had already passed several acts against Chinese immigration into the country. In line with these processes, a perception of Asian workers had already been pre-formed.

Especially the Chinese, as the largest group of indentured labourers, were seen as a direct threat to the achievements of the labour movement. They were held to be responsible for levelling down working and living standards due to their supposedly low values and morality. Indentured labour was seen as creating an unfree underclass which was inferior to the British workers but preferred by the employers since it was available and more cost-effective.³¹⁵

The limitation of movement and employment had a past history in Australia. The first restrictions of Chinese immigration were passed after large-scale influx of Chinese to the goldfields in the mid-eighteen fifties caused resistance by European miners. The ›Eureka Stockade‹ in 1854 stood at the beginning of the working-class' consolidation based on their shared ›whiteness‹. Such uprising of European diggers, later repeated at Buckland River in 1857 and Lambing Flat in 1861, resulted in the passing of restrictions both on the rights of the Chinese who already lived and worked in the country and on the immigration of new Chinese labourers to Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales.³¹⁶ These, however, were repealed after the findings of gold abated and the influx of Chinese decreased in the late eighteen sixties. Market gardening and cabinetry then became their main stay, especially in southern Australia.

Continuing labour shortages on the sugar plantations led to the employment of Japanese, Chinese and other labourers – Malays, Singhalese, Bengalese and Javanese – subsumed under the term ›Asiatics‹.³¹⁷ As the

³¹⁵ Cf. ›Meeting at Ipswich‹, in: Moreton Bay Courier, 14.01.1850. In contrast to this stood the statement of the squatters at a meeting in Ipswich: in an attempt to distinguish themselves from the supposedly ›racially‹ disloyal employers, they declared they ›would not take the Chinese, unless impelled by necessity‹, and continued that they would prefer ›English, Irish, and Scotch, whether free or convicts‹ because they ›depended upon the labourers, and the labourers upon the squatters; one could not exist without the other‹.

³¹⁶ Cf. Andrew Markus: Australian Race Relations, pp. 64 ff.; Alexander T. Yarwood: Attitudes to Non-European Immigration, pp. 20 ff.

³¹⁷ Furthermore, they were commonly referred to as members of the iridescent but always ›yellow‹ or ›black‹ ›Oriental races‹. The Chinese and Japanese, conspicuous due to their

»pioneers of tropical North Queensland«,³¹⁸ they not only cleared and de-scrubbed the grounds and undertook the initial cultivation of the soil taken into possession by the Europeans but also established one of the first sugar mills in Queensland, constructed drainage and irrigation systems, expanded the tram services, served as (interim) replacement of the Pacific Islanders and as strike-breakers during the ›Sugar Strike‹ of 1911.

Already early on in the establishment of the commercial sugar industry of Queensland, admission of Chinese for tropical industries had been considered, but opposing voices argued that it would »not accord with the professed object« which was »endeavouring to promote the production of cotton and sugar here« as a result of »the abolition of slave labour, and the sustenance of the starving thousands of the United Kingdom«. ³¹⁹ An envisaged introduction of Chinese labourers was also fiercely vetoed by the labour movement, which foresaw the weakening of the influence of the European working classes by the creation of a second group of labourers.

When the few ›white‹ labourers drained off to the goldfields in 1873 and diseases like influenza and measles reduced the count of Pacific Islanders, Chinese settlers entered the sugar district on the Pioneer River.³²⁰ For reasons of heightened immigration, due to the discoveries of gold, the possibilities for Chinese to engage in mining was severely restricted, in the following years.³²¹ As the Chinese were no »natural-born or naturalized subject[s] of Her Majesty«, they were prevented from holding land by the Land Acts of 1876. The European selectors, however, leased their land to them for initial cleaning and de-scrubbing of the ground and cultivation of the soil.³²²

In 1879, the Hop Wah plantation and the Pioneer Mill were established near Cairns by a syndicate of one hundred Chinese under the guidance of a Chinese-born naturalized British.³²³ The syndicate was in »such high

numerical superiority, were then declared the ›yellow peril‹. See, for example, ›The Yellow Peril‹, in: *Morning Bulletin*, 23.09.1905 (›yellow‹ Japanese and Chinese); ›The Cry of the Children‹, in: *North Australian*, 10.09.1886 and ›A White Australia‹, in: *West Australian*, 15.02.1928 (›yellow‹ Javanese); ›The Miner's Right‹, in: *Sunday Times*, 29.01.1905 (›yellow‹ Malays). For the emergence of ›yellow‹ as a skin colour, see Michael Keevak: *Becoming Yellow*.

³¹⁸ Henry Reynolds: *North of Capricorn*, p. 62 (›pioneers‹).

³¹⁹ ›Sugar Growing‹, in: *Moreton Bay Courier*, 02.06.1849.

³²⁰ Cf. Kenneth W. Manning: *In Their Own Hands*, p. 21.

³²¹ Cf. Alexander T. Yarwood: *Attitudes to Non-European Immigration*, p. 20.

³²² *Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876*, p. 167 (›natural-born‹). See also Henry Reynolds: *North of Capricorn*, p. 62; Kenneth W. Manning: *In Their Own Hands*, p. 79.

³²³ For ›Andrew Lee On‹, see Charles T. Wood: *Sugar Country*, p. 20; for ›Andrew Leon‹, see G. C. Bolton and Kathryn Cronin: *Leon*, who also state that ›Hop Wah‹ translates to ›good luck‹. For the Hop Wah plantation, see Henry Reynolds: *North of Capricorn*,

repute« that they »got finance without security«. ³²⁴ In August 1882, they became the »foremost of the pioneers« in sugar crushing with a fair chance to »make their sugar equal to any in Northern Queensland«. ³²⁵ Seeing the success of this sugar plantation, Queensland planters were led to believe that in the light of labour shortage, the employment of Chinese would be »better than nothing«. ³²⁶ Four years after, half of the land and the machinery had to be sold, due to the losses during the world sugar price crisis. It was then used for fruit-growing until it was mortgaged.

Another plantation that had a high ratio of Chinese labourers was the Hambleton plantation. It crushed its first sugar in August 1883 after the Chinese workers had cleared the land and carried out the initial cultivation. ³²⁷ After the Pyramid mill, it was the third of three plantations in the Cairns district that had a sugar mill built before 1890 and employed, inter alia, Japanese gangs, »50 South Sea Islanders and several gangs« of Chinese field workers. ³²⁸

In constructing irrigation and drainage systems and helping to expand the tramway systems, Chinese workers provided for important parts of the colonial infrastructure without which settlement and industry in Queensland could not have subsisted. ³²⁹ Moreover, in the sugar industry Chinese, Japanese, Javanese and Malays were employed as semi-skilled labourers rather than as workers in the cane fields. ³³⁰ This placed them higher in the employment hierarchy compared to the Pacific Islanders. Nonetheless, they met with rejection and were objects of constant distrust and discrimination. This comprised occasional hate campaigns against individuals – as

p. 65; J. W. Collison: *The Origin and Growth of the Sugar Industry in the Cairns District*, pp. 261 ff.; »The Sugar Industry«, in: *Argus*, 08.03.1884.

³²⁴ Charles T. Wood: *Sugar Country*, p. 54.

³²⁵ »Northern Queensland Sugar«, in: *Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser*, 26.08.1882 (»pioneers«), (Untitled), in: *Queenslander*, 16.09.1882 (»equal«). See also Charles T. Wood: *Sugar Country*, p. 20.

³²⁶ »Overland Chinese Influx«, in: *Queenslander*, 02.08.1884.

³²⁷ For the Hambleton plantation, see J. W. Collison: *The Origin and Growth of the Sugar Industry in the Cairns District*, pp. 262 f.; »Commercial Intelligence«, in: *Argus*, 16.08.1883.

³²⁸ »A Large Queensland Sugar Farm«, in: *Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser*, 11.08.1883. See also Charles T. Wood: *Sugar Country*, p. 54.

³²⁹ Cf. Kay Saunders: *Workers in Bondage*, p. 67.

³³⁰ Cf. Kay Saunders: *Masters and Servants*, p. 98. This allocation of unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled tasks according to skin colour fell in line with »racial hierarchies« dating back to theories as early as Immanuel Kant. He understood Asians – while nonetheless second to the »whites« – as having the capability to adopt the »culture of art but not of science« and as always remaining »pupils«; further, he maintained that the other »coloured« people would remain in a state of perpetual inability and in need of instruction, situated below the Asians. Immanuel Kant: *Entwürfe zu dem Colleg über Anthropologie*, p. 877. See also Wulf D. Hund: *Inclusion and Exclusion*, p. 16.

was the case when a Pacific Islander died of dysentery and the local media wrongly suspected a Chinese cook to have murdered him – but soon acquired larger dimensions.³³¹

At the same time when the Hop Wah plantation was initially established, the first strike in Queensland directed against Chinese labour took place. It affected the general mood not only in the realms of the labour movement but also in the general public. The Seamen's Strike, lasting from November 1878 until January 1879, was a reaction to the replacement of Anglo-Australian ship crews with Chinese crews by the Australasian Steam Navigation Company.³³² When for the »first time the flag for White Australia and solid unionism went aloft«, the labour movement saw verified its predictions about ›swamping‹ and competition by Chinese immigrants.³³³ The strike met with approval not only from trade unions but also found support in the broad public and amongst Brisbane businessmen and traders. Mass meetings, attended by »nearly every class of the community«, and public petitions bore witness of the broad disapproval of the actions by the Australasian Steam Navigation Company.³³⁴ As a decisive step, the Queensland government withdrew from their mail subsidy contract with the Australasian Steam Navigation Company and stipulated that henceforth subsidies were only granted on the condition that neither Pacific Islanders nor Chinese were employed on the steamers.³³⁵ The local printed media commented on the strike as being founded on a »social principle which is shared by all classes«, since it was »not a question of class against class, but a question of race against race«. It was preferable to »have a community capable of the highest civilisation« even without the advantages of low labour costs.³³⁶ The partial victory against the Australia-

³³¹ For the coverage by the Brisbane Courier on the Chinese cook, see Kenneth W. Manning: *In Their Own Hands*, p. 21. A local newspaper reported the incident in the same way, see ›Queensland‹, in: *Rockhampton Bulletin*, 08.02.1877. The efforts to solve the case were unusual for the murder of a Pacific Islanders. As a consequence of these accusations, an exhumation was ordered by the police magistrate: the post-mortem showed that the Islander died from natural causes – ›Mackay‹, in: *Queenslander*, 17.02.1877.

³³² For the following, see Ann Curthoys: *Conflict and Consensus*, pp. 48 ff.; Noel B. Nairn: *Some Aspects of the Social Role of the Labour Movement in New South Wales*, p. 11; Alexander T. Yarwood, Michael J. Knowling: *Race Relations in Australia*, p. 183; Charles A. Price: *The Great White Walls Are Built*, p. 163; Andrew Markus: *Fear & Hatred*, pp. 82 f.; Stefanie Affeldt: *A Paroxysm of Whiteness*, pp. 107 ff.

³³³ ›Two Branches Proposal‹ (letter to the editor in the name of the Australian Workers' Union), in: *Worker*, 08.07.1915.

³³⁴ (Untitled), in: *Age*, 16.12.1878, cited in Norbert Ebbels: *The Australian Labour Movement*, p. 104 (›every class‹).

³³⁵ Cf. Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders, Kathryn Cronin: *Race Relations*, pp. 312 f. (mail subsidy contract).

³³⁶ (Untitled), in: *Townsville Herald*, 30.11.1878 (›principle‹); (Untitled), in: *Brisbane Courier*, 20.11.1878 (›community‹).

sian Steam Navigation Company – merely half of the dismissed European seamen were rehired – and the broad support in the colony were probably the first manifestations of utilizable racist symbolic capital, i.e. class-spanning participation in ›whiteness‹, on behalf of the working class.³³⁷ In retrospective, the results of this dispute for the ›racial‹ rights of ›white‹ workers, which had »assumed almost a national character«, became proof for the »genesis« of the »White Australia policy« in the minds of the working classes and its taking »definite shape among Australian trade unions«.³³⁸

In late August 1886, another widespread anti-Chinese campaign was joined by the ›Bulletin‹. In a special issue the alleged danger of Chinese to the European-Australians and in particular to the ›white‹ women was stressed. A few days later, the ›Chinese question‹ was discussed in parliament, and anti-Chinese leagues were founded throughout the country, for instance in Townsville in mid-September.³³⁹ With the experience of a prolonged drought and heightened European unemployment in the agricultural districts, moves to discourage Chinese employment and immigration and encourage European recruitment were revisited.

A look at the other colonies seemed to validate a generally anti-Chinese mood. In the light of rising engagement of Chinese workers in furniture making, the Cabinetmakers Union concerned itself with anti-Chinese actions and – with the support of the Brisbane Trade and Labour Council, eleven other unions and the East Moreton Farmers' Association – formed an anti-Chinese league in late December 1886. Furthermore, Chinese products were stigmatized by branding them. Legislation was actively promoted, so that after the following years no Australian colony was without restriction of Chinese immigration. Consequently, Chinese and Japanese population on the Australian continent was already on the decrease in the decade before Federation, and with that before the eventual debarment from immigration.³⁴⁰

³³⁷ For the settlement of the Seamen's Strike, see Andrew Markus: *Fear & Hatred*, p. 87; ›The Seamen's Strike‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 11.01.1879.

³³⁸ ›The Editorial Mill‹, in: *Worker*, 26.11.1892 (›national character‹); ›A Peep at the Past‹, in: *Worker*, 12.12.1928 (›genesis‹, ›policy‹, ›shape‹).

³³⁹ Cf. Andrew Markus: *Fear & Hatred*, pp. 126 f.

³⁴⁰ Cf. Andrew Markus: *Australian Race Relations*, p. 112. After repealing former legislation in this matter, the colonies agreed on corresponding regulations: Tasmania passed their Chinese Immigration Restriction Act in 1887, Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia in the following year, Western Australia and Victoria in 1889 and 1890 respectively. They allowed for »one Chinese for every 5000 tons of the ship's registered tonnage« and in New South Wales and Tasmania an additional poll tax of £10 – cf. Homes and Territories Department: *Chinese Immigration into Australia, Pre-Federation Restrictions*.



Fig. 20 – Attack with sugar cane:
Queensland's problem with Chinese immigration

The ›Chinese question‹ had a large impact also in the cane fields of Queensland. Following the opening of a new hospital, dispute ensued about the »admittance of Asiatic labourers into the white men's quarter« and was solved by building a separate ward for the »decidedly unpopular« workers from Asia, following the example of the »as usual erected« separate quarters for Pacific Islanders.³⁴¹ This, in turn, enforced the placement of the Asian workers as ›race‹-ideologically outside of the group of skilled labourers. While they could be accepted as more skilful than Pacific Islanders within the context of mill work, they were not accepted as equals in terms of medical treatment.

In the context of the intermitted immigration of Pacific Islanders in the eighteen nineties, the ›Boomerang‹ (1889) foresaw a new threatening scenario (Fig. 20).³⁴² With a decrease in employment of Pacific Islanders, influx of Asian workers in Queensland would increase. The ›white‹ worker is lying unarmed on the patio while a female anthropomorphized Queens-

³⁴¹ ›Ingham‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 02.02.1886.

³⁴² ›Queensland fighting‹, in: Boomerang, 06.04.1889, reprinted in Raymond Evans: Keeping Australia White, p. 174.

land uses a riding crop to fend off Chinese attackers wielding sugar canes. Behind her a child clumsily handles a gun labelled »restriction«. Since the laws regulating immigration restriction to ›young‹ Australia were still in its infancy and were far from taking the desired effects on Asian immigration, Queensland was compelled to try and defend itself from the superior numbers of incoming Asian sugar workers. The sugar planters did exactly the opposite of what was indicated. In the light of abolition of Pacific Islanders' employment, they turned instead to the recruitment of Chinese, Japanese, Singhalese, Indian and other ›alien‹ labourers already present in the colony.

The ›conflict potential‹ of Asians, and in particular Chinese, was two-fold. Allegations against them were based on the construction of the stereotypical Chinese as having a low level of living standard and as being numerically far superior. In this, they were a ›racial‹ threat, allegedly capable of »levelling down the civilised European to the status of the half starving Asiatic«. The Chinese immigrants also posed a challenge to interclass tension. In the eyes of Thomas McIlwraith, the former Prime Minister of Queensland, introducing Chinese competition to Australia would mean forcing the European worker to »work for as low wages as this Chinaman, who has no wants, who lives upon garbage, and shelters in a hole«. ³⁴³ Like the putative underprizing of European workers, the threat of Chinese people ›swamping‹ the Australian continent was a durable, but unaccounted for, conception that also found entrance into the cultural sphere of ›white Australia‹ in the narrations on the ›yellow peril‹. ³⁴⁴

Repudiated as competitors, the Chinese were nonetheless able to work as »market gardeners, cooks, tradesmen and sometimes storekeepers«. ³⁴⁵ As merchants, they could be considered »honorary Europeans« who, despite the official separation of Europeans and non-Europeans in hospitals and trains, were commonly accepted into the community. Far from suiting the stereotype of the ›low-standard‹, ›money-siphoning‹ ›alien‹, the Chinese merchants supported local institution and engaged in communal

³⁴³ ›An Interview with the Ex-Prime Minister‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 24.09.1884 (›Asiatic‹, ›Chinaman‹).

³⁴⁴ For this, see subchapter 5.2 ›Life or Death of a White Continent‹. The origins of this term seem to go back to Kaiser Wilhelm, who »coined the term [...] upon reading« Charles H. Pearson's ›National Life and Character‹ – Raymond Evans: *Pigmentia*, p. 115. Evans refers for this information to David Walker: *Anxious Nation*, p. 3 (›Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm« was »the first statesman to have used it in public«), who refers to Richard Austin Thompson: *The Yellow Peril 1890-1924*, p. 4, who states that »[a]n English author [possibly Thomas H. Reid] declared in 1904, that the Kaiser started the yellow peril discussion in 1900«. Other sources claim that Wilhelm II has not used the term until »a point in time when it was already on everyone's lips« – Heinz Gollwitzer: *Die Gelbe Gefahr*, p. 42.

³⁴⁵ Andrew Markus: *Fear & Hatred*, p. 71.

activities.³⁴⁶ Chinese New Year celebrations with fireworks took place in Cairns with the Chinese Opera attended by »large numbers«. ³⁴⁷ The deputation of the Anti-Chinese League explicitly stated that they opposed the immigration of »pauper semi-slaves« from China and the competition against the »respectable white men« by »poor ignorant Chinese« but did not object to »wealthy Chinese merchants [...] residing in the coastal towns for the purpose of disposing of their tea, rice, and silks, [...] whilst they take in return our wool, sugar, and other Australian products«. ³⁴⁸

What on the surface seems to be contradictory was in fact the interaction of ›race‹ and ›class‹. While the Chinese as a collective were racistly discriminated against, individual upward social mobility enabled them to gain a certain respect through monetary means or personal interaction. ³⁴⁹ Albeit, in the case of successful and productive sugar cane farmers, for instance, the latent racist overtones could be fallen back on to advise the public against perceivedly ›unfair‹ competition and expansion of enterprise detrimental to ›white‹ cane cutters, farmers and business people. Furthermore, this exemplifies the general spectrum that racism had reached at the turn of the century. It spanned from the discrimination against so-called ›primitives‹, which ranked Aborigines at the bottom and which accused Pacific Islanders with cannibalism, to antisemitism, which was directed against Jews as an allegedly different ›race‹ with dastard intelligence and plans for the attainment of world domination. The western image of the Chinese oscillated between these two poles. It combined references to an old culture with perceptions of ›degenerated‹ masses which greatly outnumbered Euro-Australian presence in the southern hemisphere.

Superiority in numbers and the introduction of diseases were the main points addressed by those opposing Chinese immigration. The ›Figaro‹ (1883), contesting Queensland Premier Samuel Griffith's standing on the introduction of foreign workers, painted a picture collage of a dystopian Queensland (Fig. 21). ³⁵⁰ These show the prevailing Australian fears and seamlessly connect to the nightmares dreamed up by the invasion novels: Chinese gradually assume the social roles of Europeans, replace them at work or become their superiors. European workers become serfs to the Chinese ladies or are equipped with stereotypical Chinese work tools. Mis-

³⁴⁶ Cf. Henry Reynolds: North of Capricorn, pp. 69 (›honorary‹), 70 ff.

³⁴⁷ (Untitled), in: Queenslander, 20.02.1897.

³⁴⁸ ›Anti-Chinese Meeting‹, in: Queenslander, 30.07.1887.

³⁴⁹ Cf. Alexander T. Yarwood: Asian migration to Australia, p. 117.

³⁵⁰ ›Queensland in 1900‹, in: Queensland Figaro, 14.07.1883, p. 464. The caption reads: »The Hon. Samuel Griffith declares that he prefers Chinese to any other colored labor because it is ›more easily controlled‹«.



Fig. 21 – Dystopic Chinese everywhere:
The expulsion of the Europeans from Australia

cegenation, which is at the heart of every narration of Chinese invasion, is already in the past of history. While ›white‹ women have apparently largely disappeared upon the unfolding of the scenario, Chinese women take over their social roles. The cartoon takes one step further the allegations

of the Chinese infectiousness: the formerly alleged carriers of illnesses pass them to the Europeans who are decimated by »leprosy« and the like. Lethal diseases and European unemployment carry matters to extremes and the »last white man in Australia« is being expelled from the country and sent back to England.

At the latest, this part of the overall issue indicates that the reality of racism is here as a whole turned on its head and passed off as a form of outward self-defence. The ship episode (top left) processes material from the discussion surrounding the ›kanaka slaves‹, and the depiction of the sedan chair paints over the fantasies of ›white‹ domestic work assisted by members of the (re)educated Aboriginal ›half-castes‹. The central figure of the European burden bearer is the unvarnished confession that the relations in the reverse case (which actually was the rule) were in good order. The job-seeking Europeans (centre right) are the revenants of all those whose employment opportunities were repeatedly constraint based on racist considerations, whilst their demonstrating colleagues (centre left) at least seem to have a freedom of association, which was denied to most of the ›non-white‹ workers. Underneath this, a hospital for lepers (bottom left) delineates exactly those suspicions which non-European ›others‹ were met with in Australia and which are, with their cautioning against the contamination of the own purity, a general argument of racism. Thus, the final forcible removal from Australia (bottom right) only effectuates in a reverse scenario what the ›non-white‹ population has been repeatedly threatened with in countless cartoons using the very same imagery.

Besides Chinese workers, Japanese had been arriving in the sugar industry of Queensland since 1889, where they worked as overseers on farms but also held leases of own farms.³⁵¹ Japan's closeness to the Australian continent caused suspicion, which not least found expression in numerous invasion novels describing the hostile take-over by well-organized and well-armed Japanese forces.³⁵² Accordingly, the ›Bulletin‹ stated, that the »Chinese bogey died about two months ago, and before it was decently interred the Japanese bogey arose in its stead«.³⁵³ When in 1894 Britain and Japan signed the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Commerce and Navigation, the Australian colonies felt pressurized. At the International Conference of March 1896, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia

³⁵¹ Cf. Kenneth W. Manning: *In Their Own Hands*, pp. 150, 188.

³⁵² For invasion novels in the light of the ›yellow peril‹, see subchapter 5.2 ›Life Or Death Of A White Continent‹.

³⁵³ Bulletin 1895, cited in Luke Trainor: *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism*, p. 161.

and Tasmania decided against taking advantage of the possibility to allow Japanese immigration into their colonies.³⁵⁴ Queensland, however, decided differently.³⁵⁵

The North Queensland planters saw the Asian labourers as a necessary, auxiliary work force. Within a year, under the pressure of the foreseeable end of the Pacific Islanders' introduction, they took advantage of the colony's becoming a party to the Anglo-Japanese treaty and opened up for the Japanese the immigration of labourers – inter alia, for the sugar cane fields. The treaty also granted Queensland the right to restrict immigration of Japanese artisans and labourers.³⁵⁶ Other than the Pacific Islanders, Japanese workers were not confined to field labour but rather worked as personal and domestic servants to ›whites‹ or as skilled operators in the sugar mills.³⁵⁷ This was, of course, objected to by the labour movement and the unions. »No Chinese or Japanese, or South Sea Islanders, or other coloured races be allowed to join the union«, the Queensland Labourers' Union laid down in their rules.³⁵⁸

›Gender‹ and ›class‹ were written large in the question of maintaining ›racial purity‹. The ›Worker‹ urged, that the solution to the »colour problem« in »Leper-land« or »Mongrel-land« was »young Labour men« saving the »misguided girls« who fell for Chinese men and, in turn, »tackle the yellow squirmers with Maxim guns«. ³⁵⁹ With this, they alluded to the dangers for Queensland by the Chinese immigrants being literal and figurative disease carriers as well as through the likelihood of miscegenation caused by the immigrants. They also emphasized the ›white‹ men's task to save the ›white‹ women and to effectuate the immediate extermination of the ›alien‹ intruder.

It was in the context of the Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1901 and the subsequent repatriation of the Pacific Islanders in the first years of the twentieth century that the employment of Asians in the cane fields rose. The subsuming of Asian and Pacific Island workers under the category »cheap and reliable« had been practiced since decades, as the depiction in the ›Worker‹ from 1893 demonstrated (Fig. 22).³⁶⁰ Following this log-

³⁵⁴ Cf. Andrew Markus: *Fear & Hatred*, p. 184; Homes and Territories Department: *The Agreement between the Japanese and the Queensland Government*, Appendix H.

³⁵⁵ Cf. Alexander T. Yarwood, Michael J. Knowling: *Race Relations in Australia*, pp. 232 f.

³⁵⁶ Cf. Archibald H. Charteris: *Australian Immigration Policy*, pp. 523 f.

³⁵⁷ Cf. Kay Saunders: *Workers in Bondage*, p. 67.

³⁵⁸ Cited in *Australian Workers' Union: The Worker's First Seventy Years*, p. 51. See also Kay Saunders: *Masters and Servants*, pp. 96 f.

³⁵⁹ ›Leper-land‹, in: *Worker*, 24.03.1900.

³⁶⁰ ›Cheap and reliable‹, clipping of ›Some Government Exhibits at the Big Show‹, in: *Worker*, 19.08.1893.

ic, it seemed obvious that the Islanders had to be substituted by Chinese, Indians and Japanese. In consequence, the proponents of ›white Australia‹ complained, that the federal legislation only meant »taking away the black man simply to replace them by the yellow man«. ³⁶¹ In the same vein, many newspapers warned against the »yellow curse«. ³⁶² If the engagement of Chinese in the sugar industry continued and the labour conditions that deterred Australians from working in the sugar industry were not improved, the industry would be overtaken by Chinese. During the employment of Pacific Islanders »it was simply blacks in the fields and whites everywhere else«; a Chinese sugar industry, in turn, »would mean yellow ploughmen and yellow men in the field« and, moreover, would lead to heightened number of Chinese farm owners. ³⁶³



Fig. 22 – Not a badge of honour:
The stereotyping of non-European labourers

Employment of Asians in the sugar industry became severely restricted with the legislation of the year 1911. The Sugar Works Act required the passing of a dictation test – in any language decided upon by the Secretary

³⁶¹ Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1904-05, cited in Doug Hunt: *Exclusivism and Unionism*, p. 88.

³⁶² ›A White Australia‹, in: *Daily Telegraph*, 20.02.1901.

³⁶³ ›Northern Sugar Growers‹, in: *Queenslander* 14.07.1906.

for Agriculture – for all non-British workers and applicants in the sugar industry.³⁶⁴ This effectively reduced employment of ›non-white‹ workers to six per cent.³⁶⁵ The complete exclusion of Asian and other non-European labourers, however, eventuated in 1913 when the Sugar Works Act was amended by the Sugar Cultivation Act and henceforth was supposed to prohibit any future employment of ›coloured‹, i.e. non-European, labour.³⁶⁶

This was propelled by the labour movement and the Labor Party³⁶⁷ and was further supported by a system of excise and rebate. It also fell in line with those fearing a hostile takeover on the occasion of a ›yellow invasion‹. Several Australian newspapers printed a copy of an article published in the London ›Daily Mail‹ maintaining that ›Australia [...] seems to become the scene of the next phase of that interminable conflict between Europe and Asia, between the white races on the one hand and the brown and yellow races on the other‹ and reminding its readers that this ›is the oldest and most persistent factor in human history‹.³⁶⁸

While Chinese immigration had already been frowned upon for half a century, Japanese workers were cherished for their engagement in the northern pearling industry. This, however, was possible not least because European employment remained low and thus immediate economic conflicts remained few. It was only when immigration increased after the eighteen nineties and political conflicts with Europe and Australia intensified, that the western perception of Japan worsened.

The image of Japan in Australia was shaped by the same respect for an old culture as in the case of China; but in contrast to the latter the perception of Japan was furthermore affected by the modern imperial role it played. Both the defeat of China in the Sino-Japanese War in 1895 and the

³⁶⁴ Cf. Sugar Works Act of 1911.

³⁶⁵ Cf. Jürgen Matthäus: Nationsbildung in Australien von den Anfängen weißer Besiedlung bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg, pp. 277 f.

³⁶⁶ ›These workers included Hindus, Malays, Chinese, Japanese, Pacific Islanders, and all sorts. The term ›coloured aliens‹ meant Pacific Islanders and Asiatics‹ – ›Sugar Industry‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 05.06.1919. See also Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913.

³⁶⁷ This is the modern spelling of the Australian Labor Party which dropped the ›u‹ in 1912 – cf. Jonathan King: Great Moments in Australian History, p. 228 and Bradley Bowden: No Improvement without Standardisation, p. 10 – for reasons of consistency, I have chosen this spelling..

³⁶⁸ ›Yellow Men's Brains‹, in: Register, 30.06.1913 (›yellow invasion‹, ›conflict‹, ›factor‹); at about the same time also in: Advertiser, Sydney Morning Herald, West Australian, Examiner, Northern Territory Times and Gazette and others. This notion of defencelessness against a hostile Asian ›takeover‹ accompanied Australian population politics since the eighteen nineties and had special importance for the sugar industry, since it was considered the means to populate the northern, tropical parts of the continent. For the invasion by ›yellow peril‹ as a contemporary literature genre, see also subchapter 5.2 ›Life Or Death Of A White Continent‹.

success over Russia ten years later at Tsushima were seen as indications of Japan's military power and imperial ambitions.³⁶⁹ This »deadly blow at the dominance of the West« and the »White Race« further unsettled the already labile ›white supremacy‹.³⁷⁰ This challenge later peaked at the Paris Peace conference, where Japan suggested an amendment to solve issues of ›racial‹ inequality and discrimination which, in turn, was heavily opposed by the Australian, British and American delegations.³⁷¹ Consequently, from the end of the nineteenth century onwards it was not so much an invasion by sheer force of numbers or economic competition that was feared in Australia but a tactical conquest by military means.

The Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913 demanded that each person employed in the sugar industry held a certificate of having passed a dictation test. After the act was passed it became unlawful for those not holding the certificate to »engage in or carry on the cultivation of sugar-cane upon any land within Queensland«.³⁷² Like its role model, the dictation test stipulated in the Immigration Restriction Act, this test was designed to exclude any non-European person from working in the sugar industry.³⁷³ Without explicitly mentioning any nationalities and leaving the choice of the language to the Secretary for Agriculture, it was at his discretion to decide who could be denied a certificate and thus not be employed in the sugar industry.

A secret correspondence between the Governor of Queensland William MacGregor, the Premier of Queensland Digby Denham and the Secretary of State Lewis Harcourt reveals the usage of this Act as a means to target in particular ›undesired‹ workers from Asian and Pacific Island origins. Plans for the abolition of the excise and bounty on Australian sugar in 1912 necessitated the »Queensland Government [...] to introduce legislation prohibiting Asiatic aliens from engaging or working in the industry« and thus to prevent the dismissal of allegedly expensive ›white‹ workers to be replaced by ›cheap‹ foreign labourers. Denham assured MacGregor that »both Commonwealth and State Governments« were determined to

³⁶⁹ Cf. Alexander T. Yarwood: *Asian Migration to Australia*, pp. 6 f., 88.

³⁷⁰ ›Some New Year Reflections‹, in: *Worker*, 30.12.1905 (›blow‹).

³⁷¹ Cf. Norman A. Graebner, Edward M. Bennet: *The Versailles Treaty and Its Legacy*, pp. 55 ff.

³⁷² Cf. Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913. See also *Queensland Government Gazette*, 16.10.1913; Kay Saunders: *Workers in Bondage*, p. 182.

³⁷³ For an examination of the roots of the Immigration Restriction Act's dictation test in the preceding Natal Restriction Act from 1897, see Raymond Markey: *Populist Politics*, p. 78; Herbert I. London: *Non-White Immigration and the ›White Australia‹ Policy*, pp. 11 ff.; Everard Digby: *Immigration Restriction in Australia*, pp. 149 ff.; Marilyn Lake: *The White Man under Siege*, p. 56.

turn the Queensland sugar industry into an »exclusively white men industry«. First steps were taken by »giving bounty on white persons only«. As the Premier stated, the object of the dictation test »was to absolutely exclude coloured labour from employment in the sugar in field and mill«. ³⁷⁴ By doing so, he reiterated the construction of ›coloured‹ as a summative counter-concept to ›white‹ which, though also consisting of peoples considered ›brown‹ or ›yellow‹, could be in short pooled as ›blacks‹.

Without a mention of colour or nationality, »any person or classes of persons can be exempted from the operation of the Act«. Nonetheless, it was predominantly »Kanakas, Japanese, [and] British Indians«, who were targeted by this legislation. The abolition of the excise duties was held out in prospect, since it would »be undesirable to give tariff protection to sugar other than that grown and manufactured by white men«, and efforts were emphasized to make »sugar-growing and manufacture in Queensland [a] white labour industry«. ³⁷⁵

Exemptions from the 1913 act were issued to the majority of those who had been formerly involved in the sugar industry – either based on long residence in Australia or on marriage with a resident of Australia – and thus ceasing of all non-European employment was gradual. As a consequence, it was not until the sugar industry award in 1919 that exclusively ›white‹ workers were allowed to cultivate, harvest or process sugar cane. ³⁷⁶ For the next years, fear of a ›clandestine‹ settlement of Japanese immigrants continued to dominate political decisions. In the context of a presumed »serious leakage« of illegal Japanese immigrants to Queensland at the end of 1918, desires to undermine their possibility of making a living by stringent exclusion from work in the cane fields met with opposition. Nonetheless, as they were the »decreasing remnants« of the number of workers who legally came to work in the Queensland sugar industry, the end of ›non-white‹ employment was foreseeable. ³⁷⁷

³⁷⁴ Department of External Affairs: Sugar Cultivation Act 1913, Exclusion of non-European labour from sugar industry, 01.12.1912 (›Asiatic aliens‹), 23.07.1913 (›Commonwealth‹, ›white men‹), 12.07.1913 (›exclude‹).

³⁷⁵ Department of External Affairs: Sugar Cultivation Act 1913, Exclusion of non-European labour from sugar industry, 12.07.1913 (›exempted‹), 22.07.1913, (›British-Indians‹), 17.06.1913 (›protection‹, ›white labour‹).

³⁷⁶ Cf. Markus Andrews: Australian Race Relations, p. 143.

³⁷⁷ Home and Territories Department: Question re Employment of Japanese in Sugar Cane Industry Cane Cutters, 20.06.1919 (›serious leakage‹), 05.06.1919 (›remnants‹). Likewise, in the preceding year the Indians Overseas Association vainly appealed for the repealed or modification of said act, because it was instituted »not in order to prevent the underselling of expensive white labour by cheap labour but purely as an expression of racial prejudice since there was here no differentiation of economic standard, either as regards pay or conditions of labour« and threatened the Commonwealth's relations with

Officially exempted from the Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913 based on their nationality were only the »native-born residents of Australia of European descent«, »residents of Australia of European descent«, »residents of Australia who are descended from any resident of the Continent of North America other than from any aboriginal native thereof or Negro or aboriginal of African or Asiatic race«, »subjects of the Kingdom of Italy who are not of European race«, »subjects of the Empire of Russia who are not of European race« and »citizens of the Republic of Colombia«.³⁷⁸ The designation of some czarist and Italian subjects as »not of European race« insinuated that certain European immigrants were either not even admitted to complete ›whiteness‹ or their being considered ›white‹ underlay changing conditions and foreign affairs.

the government of India – Letter to the Under Secretary of State by the Indians Overseas Association, 09.01.1920.

³⁷⁸ Queensland Government Gazette, 16.10.1913, p. 2.

4. Bleaching Sugar for ›White Australia‹ ›Whiteness‹ and the Sugar Industry

In the mid-eighteen eighties, at latest, concrete plans for the sugar work force began to crystalize, favouring a demographic ›whitening‹ of the Queensland industry. It was, however, not until Federation that the law-enforced repatriation of the Pacific Islanders offered the decisive stepping stone for this undertaking by forcing sugar planters to look for other pools of labourers. After having taken a look at the opposition to and the final removal of ›coloured‹ workers in the sugar industry, the focus of the study now shifts to the areas where ideas of ›whiteness‹ could no longer conceal its malleability. If ›white noise‹ was the superimposing effect that smoothed over the socially constructed antagonisms of gender and class within a society on its transition to ›racial‹ homogeneity, the discords sparking within this process were interferences of discourse. These interferences document that Europeanness and ›whiteness‹ are not at all events congruent, and their delimitation comprises more than the exclusion of groups constructed as ›racial others‹. At this point, ›race‹ as a means of discrimination does not seem insufficient but has to be further specified. The interferences are then the manifestations of permanent shifts within the definitions of ›whiteness‹ and its delimitations.

Dagoes – what is white? This question ran like a thread through the events of the decades following the eighteen nineties. What constitutes ›whiteness‹, who is ›white‹ and who decides? While legislation generally considered Europeans ›white‹, the narrowed-down group demanded by the labour movement and the unions comprised as ›white‹ workers only northern European or, at the extreme, only those of British origin. Since the general ›whiteness‹ of Europeans is already identified as a social construction, the even more restrictive definition of ›whiteness‹ set by the labour movement needs even more attention and situational awareness. In this con-

text, it touches upon the location of southern Europeans within the Australian societal context and within an area of tension between European-ness, ›whiteness‹ and acknowledgement. Italians, as the largest group of the discriminated-against southern Europeans besides Greeks and Spanish, were not only suspected of economic competition but were also, definitionwise, cut in two by the distinction between ›preferred‹ northern and ›scorned‹ southern Italians. Following Italy's own discrimination between the north and the south, this bisection allowed for the acceptance of some of the migrants as suitable for the populating of the northern parts of Australia, while other migrants could be ›identified‹ as being ›undesirable‹ for immigration. The labour movement opposed the arrival of all southern European labourers as undermining the negotiating power of the Australian working class and put forward most racist defence strategies. In the case of Maltese immigration, these strategies were so effective that, at times, virtually all immigration was prevented.

On the other hand, Maltese immigrants became entangled in the power struggles between the Colonial Office in the mother country, representing British imperial interests, and the Australian government, finding itself pressured by the labour movement at the time of election. They were seen as ›racially‹ southern European while being – definitely in their eyes and in the mind of the Empire, at least partially by pro-Maltese sugar farmers – British subjects. Politically and culturally they became increasingly British. However, those opposing the immigration of foreign labourers labelled them ›not-white-enough‹ and clustered them with Italians and other southern Europeans. In the intra-Australian context, both Italians and Maltese were discriminated against in this manner. The situation was different when the focus shifted to an outward view and Australia was increasingly perceived in need of defence against an alleged Chinese swamping or Japanese take-over, which, in turn, necessitated the increase of population in the northern parts of the continent. With the intractable myth of ›white‹ unfitness in the tropics, Italians and other southern Europeans were, in terms of population policy, regarded as the climatically best-fitting people to settle and cultivate the north and thus defend ›white Australia‹ against ›yellow‹ or ›brown‹ encroachment.

Not a ›white‹ men's work seemed the toil in the Queensland cane fields. The labour movement worked hard to disprove such allegations of unfitness. Originating from convict roots and having experienced societal inclusion based on ›whiteness‹ in contradistinction to the Aborigines, the Australian working class consciousness formed on the goldfields where the diggers rose up against competition by allegedly low-standard Asian

immigrants. At the end of the nineteenth century, the labour movement opposed a sugar industry based on ›black labour‹ and pressed of the replacement of the current labourers with ›white‹ workers. At the same time, legislation interfered in the social relations by codifying the ›racial‹ line in the cane fields. Europeans were henceforth able to benefit from an increased chance of upward social movement, since only they were employed in skilled and supervisory tasks. Opposition against the immigration of Pacific Island workers solidified with the alleged betrayal of the ›white‹ working class by Premier Samuel Griffith. Federation, substantially supported and promoted by the emerging Labor party, provided the opportunity to close the Australian gates to ›undesired‹ immigrants, expel the Pacific Islanders and decimate what was, in the eyes of the labour movement, economic competition as well as ›racial‹ endangerment.

Naturally a ›white‹ man's industry was the self-definition of the Victorian beet sugar industry, which started a nationwide debate about what legitimately constituted ›white‹ sugar in Australia. In the attempt to grow beet sugar in southern Australia, ›race‹, ›class‹ and ›gender‹ were called on to justify ideological and financial support of an industry on the verge of early demise. In this process, they reflected a historic ›war‹ between cane and beet in Europe that was not only fought using similar arguments but also significantly affected the sugar industry of Queensland. In the late eighteen eighties, this latter industry came under pressure by the heightened amount of beet sugar on the world market, which then led to a decrease in the retail prices for sugar. While the sugar planters in northern Queensland insisted on needing and employing non-European labourers, the other colonies saw their economic markets endangered and demanded the end of the Pacific Islanders' immigration and employment. Nationalist opponents of ›black‹ sugar referred to the New South Wales sugar industry which – with much less profit and to a much smaller extent – had allegedly always produced ›white‹ sugar. This was, on the one hand, seen as proof for the possibility to have a ›white‹ sugar industry; on the other hand, the New South Wales industry was threatened by the Queensland industry, which would supposedly ›swamp‹ the Australian market with its cheaper ›black‹ sugar once the intercolonial borders were opened.

Federation or separation was Queensland's choice in terms of its land policies at the end of the nineteenth century. When other European powers closed in on Australia, Queensland's Premier Thomas McIlwraith made a daring decision and annexed south-eastern New Guinea for the British Empire. At that time, recruiters had already discovered the islands as a new resource of labourers for the sugar industry. The atrocities in the con-

text of these recruiting tours provided the opponents of Pacific Islanders' employment with new arguments and affected the decision to end the ›labour trade‹.

At the same time, northern Queensland grew weary of the disadvantages they saw in the colony second largest in area. The Queensland separation movement was born from a desire to improve the political and financial situation of the north and found broad support in the ranks of the sugar industry. The northernmost sugar planters held against this a dire prediction of the sugar industry's demise in case the engagement of ›cheap and reliable‹ labourers was abolished. They would rather not become a member in the Australian Federation than jeopardize their prospering plantations and farms. This was successfully counteracted by the labour movement, which, politicized as the Labor party, found even broader support by taking up a class-spanning desire to ostracize ›coloured‹ workers and immigrants. In the end, the Labor-supported ›white Australia policy‹ brought about the statutory basis for a first ideological and subsequently demographic transformation of the sugar industry.

4.1 ›Dagoes – What is White?‹: The Shades of Whiteness

»What is White?« asked a reader of the ›Cairns Post‹ – he who was »under the impression that all Europeans were white«. And, for another thing, what is »the colour of a ›Dago‹«? The malleability of ›whiteness‹ in changing social and political perspectives becomes obvious when considering that even within Europe ›whiteness‹ was not a vested right for members of every nation but something that was to be conceded and appropriated.¹ The editor's answer to the enquiry whether the southern Europeans would then be categorized as »black, brown or brindle« referred the questioner to the »oracles of the Brotherhood of Man party who are authorities on the Maltese and similar questions« and showed that a reply to the delineation of ›whiteness‹ was a rather fickle issue. ›Dago‹ was a derogative term for southern Europeans.² Moreover, that this term exceeded a mere description of colour or physiognomy and could be used as a social attrib-

¹ ›What is White?«, in: Cairns Post, 27.04.1917.

² Though the term is said to be derived from the Spanish name ›Diego‹, it was predominantly applied against Italians. Cf. Macquarie Dictionary, lemma ›dago‹; Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, lemma ›dago‹.

ute, demonstrated the branding of British-Australians sympathizing with southern Europeans as »white dagoes«.³

During the early twentieth century, the sugar industry was the destination for migrants of several southern European countries, predominantly Greece, Spain, and Portugal. All of them met with opposition from nationalists, willing to defend the ideology of ›white Australia‹, and the labour movement, fighting for the British-Australian workers. Two countries in particular stick out under the perspective of ›whiteness‹ in the history of the Queensland sugar industry. The first group to be addressed, *the Italians*, were the numerically largest group of southern European immigrants. Their ›race‹-ideological distinction into two groups in order to justify the public acceptance of immigrants from the northern part and the denigration of those from the south constitutes an interesting case study in the malleability of ›whiteness‹. The second group, *the Maltese*, is a special case in the debate whether being British-born per se conditioned an acceptance as being ›white‹. In the case of the southern Europeans, ›race‹ proved to be more important than class; all were workers, but not all were allowed to unite. The immigrants from both nations were not only conjoined in the ways they were discriminated against – as ›dagoes‹ with a low living standard replacing British workers by immorally undercutting their wages – but also by their ideologically iridescent ›skin colour‹.

The Italians

Though unarguably originating from the continent of Europe, Italians faced severe discrimination by both the labour movement and the public in Australia. The following deals with the stereotyping of, and discrimination against, Italian workers in the sugar industry of Queensland during three waves of immigration and discrimination.

The first segment addresses the increasing employment of Italian and other southern European workers to counteract the labour shortage in the sugar industry in the eighteen nineties. Though unemployment was soaring due to the Australia-wide depression, British-Australians considered their own employment in the sugar industry a temporary affair, if anything. The labour movement suspected that imported labour furthered a bad situation and put British-Australian workers into an even worse position. Due to the latter's volatile interest in working as cane cutters, the racistly

³ Charles A. Price: *Southern Europeans in Australia*, pp. 214 f.

motivated campaigns against Italian workers and the demand to recruit ›white‹ workers was at this stage a merely ideological one. Italians were mainly discriminated against based on their assumed ›otherness‹ to northern Europeans.

The second segment relates to the time after Federation and the direct confrontation of southern and northern European workers. After the Pacific Islanders were deported, the labour movement urged the employment of British-Australian workers. Strikes in the sugar industry were supposed to improve working conditions and wages for the sugar workers. Consequently, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company imported and employed southern Europeans, mostly Italians, as strike breakers. This put them in an actual situation of competition with the increasingly unionized British and northern European cane cutters, to which the latter reacted with ostracization of the southern Europeans.

The third segment looks at the situation after the First World War. The likening of Italians to ›coloureds‹ continued. On the one hand, this distanced them from those deemed ›proper‹ ›white‹ Australians; on the other, it emphasized their fitness for hard labour in the tropical climate. In the light of the continued involvement of the purportedly ›non-white‹ Italians in the industry, Australian consumers expressed their dissatisfaction with the allegedly high price they had to pay for sugar and with the continued maintenance of governmental support to the Queensland sugar industry, which did not foster employment of northern Europeans or British-Australians. One strategy taken by the Italian workers to gain acknowledgment as ›whites‹ was the application of the same stereotyping they met with against other groups of southern European immigrants.

In the attempt of transforming its sugar industry into one based on European labour and in the face of problems with recruitment of northern Europeans, the Queensland government encouraged the replacement of Pacific Islanders with southern European workers, especially Italians. This specific group of immigrants was no stranger to emigration to Australia. Individual migration had occurred beforehand, and even the First Fleet carried on board a few men with Italian roots. Large-scale migration to Australia began with the gold findings in the eighteen fifties.⁴ The Italian gold prospectors were contemporary witnesses of the first class struggles of the British-Australian diggers. The most renowned report of the revolts on the goldfields in 1854 was even written by an Italian author.⁵ Over time,

⁴ Cf. Gianfranco Cresciani: *The Italians in Australia*, pp. 28, 33.

⁵ See Raffaello Carboni: *The Eureka Stockade*. See also Gianfranco Cresciani: *The Italians in Australia*, pp. 33, 38.

Italians came to be the first non-British, southern Europeans who immigrated in significant numbers to Australia.⁶

After a failed attempt to reach a migration agreement between Italy and Queensland in the mid-eighteen sixties, the first group of over three hundred Italian labourers for the sugar industry of Queensland was recruited in Piedmont and Lombardy and arrived on an ›assisted passage‹ in Townsville in 1891.⁷ In the light of opposition against Asian and Pacific Island workers, these Italians were supposed to counteract labour shortages in the sugar industry.

Nonetheless, the labour movement did not take too kindly to the information about the imminent arrival of imported labourers in the colony. With high unemployment rates, it seemed consistent to them to engage only British-Australian workers. The ›Worker‹ cast doubt upon Premier Samuel Griffith's loyalty to Australian ›wage-earners‹ and bewailed: ›First the coolie, then the kanaka, now the Italian! Isn't it time our own flesh and blood had a chance?‹⁸ ›Flesh and blood‹ transcended being a mere figure of speech; it reflected the elements of the Australian workers' struggle for ›fair‹ wages that began on the goldfields in the eighteen fifties, continued on the ships towards the end of the nineteenth century, and was far from over when the ›white‹ sugar workers struck in the early twentieth century.⁹ Flesh and blood were the symbolical equivalents of class and ›race‹. The earned income was supposed to enable the worker to live an adequate life and populate the continent, but it was also to be obtained by those who were considered deserving, meaning predominantly the British-Australians but certainly not foreign workers.¹⁰

For the sugar growers, however, the employment of workers other than northern Europeans was allegedly a necessary evil caused by the factual unwillingness of British-Australians to work in the cane fields. The planters' statements evinced ›othering‹ of Italians based on their perceived

⁶ Cf. Loretta V. Baldassar: *Italians in Australia*, p. 851.

⁷ Cf. (Untitled), in: *Brisbane Courier*, 26.04.1865; Gianfranco Cresciani: *The Italians in Australia*, p. 47; Helen Andreoni: *Olive or White*, p. 81. Assisted passages were a governmentally regulated way of fostering immigration to Australia. Upon successful application – open to most European migrants but preferably rural workers – the government partially financed the journey to Australia from the home country, and this was occasionally coupled with the allocation of a parcel of land or its lease – cf. Timothy A. Coghlan: *A Statistical Account of the Seven Colonies of Australasia (1901-1902)*, pp. 534 f.; Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: *Official Year Book (1908)*, p. 160; William A. Douglass: *From Italy to Ingham*, pp. 25, 41.

⁸ ›The Editorial Mill‹, in: *Worker*, 13.12.1890.

⁹ For the ›Sugar Strike‹ of 1911, see subchapter 5.4 ›Sweetening Product with Bitter Servitude‹.

¹⁰ Cf. Stefanie Affeldt: *A Paroxysm of Whiteness*, p. 115.

›non-whiteness‹: »I have no particular hankering after Italians«, stated the planter and parliamentarian Hume Black, »if we could only induce some European farmers – men of our own colour – to accept these terms«.¹¹ The denigrating assumption made in the course of the eighteen nineties' agitation against Italians became part of the foundation of anti-southern European labour during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Allegedly, the Italians constituted an unfair competition based on the denunciation that they were able to »live on the smell of an oil rag«,¹² which purportedly enabled them to lower the wage levels and living conditions of whites; they were unable to accustom themselves to British-Australian culture and would never assimilate; and, as stereotypical Italian ›Mafiosi‹, they would face every fight with a readily produced knife.¹³

The most prominent stereotypical depiction of the Italian was a bearded, pipe-smoking man, wearing tattered clothes and a pointed hat, who carries a ›hurdy-gurdy‹ (barrel organ) and a monkey. In the depiction by the ›Bulletin‹ (1890), the monkey not only wears a similar hat but also has the same inquisitive posture (Fig. 23 a) as the Italian organ-grinder, who is looking at a job offer explicitly stating »local man preferred«. He is caught mocking the salary offer as being below his demands or that of any talented foreign worker and by doing so is ridiculed based on his hubris of judging ›furrin talent‹ higher than ›white‹ through both visualization and verbalization.¹⁴ The situation is turned upside-down when he enters the sugar cane fields a year later in another ›Bulletin‹ cartoon (1891). Now it is the unemployed British-Australian (Fig. 23 b) who is being burned by the sun of »cheap labour« and carries the ›racialized‹ ›insignia‹ of the Italian – organ and monkey – while the actual Italian worker holds in his hand a cane knife as the symbol of his employment. This is an expression of the labour movement's apprehension that the ›white‹ cane cutter will not only lose his job to the Italian worker but would additionally take on the latter's social role as a wandering beggar with an alleged closeness to his simian ancestors, symbolized by the organ grinder's monkey.¹⁵ In the

¹¹ Cited in Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders, Kathryn Cronin: *Race Relations in Colonial Queensland*, p. 6.

¹² William A. Douglass: *From Italy to Ingham*, p. 110.

¹³ Cf. Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders, Kathryn Cronin: *Race Relations in Colonial Queensland*, p. 5. The *Bulletin* in 1893 outlined the ›typical‹ Italian immigrant »with his stiletto and his dirt and his vast and wonderful ignorance« – cited in Gianfranco Cresciani: *The Italians in Australia*, p. 57.

¹⁴ ›Hurdy Gurdy‹, in: *Bulletin* 12.07.1890, reprinted in Desmond O'Connor: *No Need to be Afraid*, p. 54. The caption reads: »Italian Count in disguise: ›Shure an' ye'll never git fourst class furrin talent fur that price – at laist not wid a monkey!‹«.

¹⁵ ›The Situation in Queensland‹, cover of the *Bulletin*, 22.08.1891. The original caption reads as follows: »The Situation in Queensland – Owing to the hot weather up north, the



Fig. 23 a & b – Reversal of roles:
The British-Australian becomes the beggar

left-hand cartoon, the Italian's simianization is further underlined by the monkey mimicking pose and habitus of its owner. Moreover, the change of monkey ownership in the right-hand cartoon does not signify its separation from the Italian: rather than being associated with his new British owner, it seems to still be linked with the Italian to whom he looks back rather longingly.

Like the insulting labels »Dago Menace«, »Olive Peril«, »Greasy Wog«, »Olive Trash« and the »Chinese of Europe«, this stereotype was rather aimed at southern Italians instead of northern.¹⁶ While immigration from southern Italy was not explicitly precluded, there was also no provision for institutionalized immigration schemes for other than northern Italian cities.¹⁷ This migration policy corresponded with Italy's own ideological division into a »northern« and a »southern race«. A division in which the Italians rather identified in the sense of »regional and familial

cheap Italian will, if Sam. Griffith can arrange it, henceforth work the cane-knife while the expensive Australian man carries round the monkey«. The absence of the caption in Kay Saunders (Workers in Bondage, p. 178), and the depiction of the ›white‹ man with the – stereotypically Italian – organ grinder's ape on his back, led Helen Andreoni (Olive or White, p. 81) to neglect the perspective of ›doing race‹, and thus to misinterpret the cartoon as a depiction of an Italian (on the left) and a Pacific Islander (on the right), linked under the ›sun of cheap labour‹. In doing so, she also sees skin colours that are not in the cartoon, which, at least, clearly depicts the hand of the full-bearded Italian as light-skinned.

¹⁶ Helen Andreoni: Olive or White, pp. 81, 86 (›Chinese‹).

¹⁷ Cf. William A. Douglass: From Italy to Ingham, pp. 90 f.

bonds, not national sinews«; and the antipathy between the north and the south was blamed on the »Southern problem«.¹⁸

Though Italian immigration did continue in the last decade of the nineteenth century, public discrimination against Italians was a transient occurrence in the early eighteen nineties.¹⁹ This was owed to the fact that the number of Italians in the cane fields remained relatively small and the moments of actual competition remained few, since labour demand was high, but interest of British-Australians in jobs in the sugar industry remained low. Even more so this was a consequence of Premier Samuel Griffith's taking action. In 1892, he reversed the Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1885 (49 Vic. No. 17) in order to resume the labour migration of Pacific Islanders to Queensland. In the subsequent time, this made him – besides the system of introduction of Pacific Islanders – the main target of the labour movement's agitation.²⁰

Under the Immigration Restriction Act, passed as one of the earliest legislative manifestations of Federation, Italian immigrants were supposed to not be affected by the dictation test stipulated in said act, based on their nationality. As the Prime Minister specified, it was generally not intended that immigrants from Europe were »subjected to the [educational] test unless there is some specific reason for their exclusion«. Nonetheless, in the case of ›undesirability‹ »independent of colour«, the dictation test could be applied to »people of European race whether Italians or other nationalities« as a means for targeted hindrance of immigration.²¹ This showed that, while the main purpose of the test was excluding ›coloured‹ immigrants, in particular from Asian countries, ›whiteness‹ was nevertheless not the sole benchmark of ›desirable‹ immigration and could be devaluated by other factors, such as ›class‹, political engagement or medical conditions. In fact, it was understood that »no person can enter the Commonwealth unless the authorities choose«.²²

¹⁸ Francesco Barbagallo: *Mezzogiorno e questione meridionale*, p. 31 (›razza settentrionale‹, ›razza meridionale‹); Catherine Dewhurst: *Collaborating on Whiteness*, p. 34 (›sinews‹, ›problem‹). For the intra-Italian discrimination, see also William A. Douglass: *From Italy to Ingham*, p. 92. In anglophone countries theories like this were made available by contemporary authors, like, for instance, William Z. Ripley: *The Races of Europe*; id.: *Geography as a Sociological Study*, in particular pp. 643 f.; for more information on Ripley's theories, see Heather Winslow: *Mapping Moral Geographies*. For a more current consideration of this issue, see Vito Teti: *La razza maledetta*.

¹⁹ Cf. William A. Douglass: *From Italy to Ingham*, p. 69.

²⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 55. See also subchapter 3.3 ›Slavery in Queensland‹.

²¹ Prime Minister Edmund Barton, cited in a memorandum by the Department of External Affairs (06.01.1902), p. 22 in: Home and Territories Department: *Queensland Sugar Cultivation Act 1913. Discrimination against Japanese*.

²² ›Mr. Bamford's Meeting‹, in: *Morning Post*, 28.11.1902.

It seemed, however, that with a strengthened and politicized labour movement, the protest by the labour movement against the introduction of Italians under contract to work in the sugar industry was successful. The Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs noted that the »Australian government [...] wants to avoid the coming of migrants to the Commonwealth with the certainty of finding a job with a work contract«; they should rather arrive »only with the hope of finding employment«. Further, newspaper reports noted that »an Italian« upon coming to Australia under contract »is ignominiously fired out«; if he arrives on his own he is examined in a language unfamiliar to him, »Gaelic«, »Welsh or Kamilaroi« and is »warn[ed] off the Australian shore«.²³

Despite this, in the light of the sugar industry's ›white‹ labour shortage, the monopolistic Colonial Sugar Refining Company was allowed to look for European workers interested in coming to Queensland. Their recruitment of Italian workers was, however, less an introduction of ›white‹ but rather of ›cheap‹ workers; this made the Colonial Sugar Refining Company enter the focus of the labour movement's antipathy.²⁴ While before their activity was a largely ideological agitation against the general employment of southern European workers, now the Italians actually stood in the way of labour interests. Albeit, this hindrance was less to be blamed on the Italians than on the labour movement which substantiated their class interests with racist arguments by excluding other workers instead of drawing on a shared status.

The Colonial Sugar Refining Company employee entrusted with the recruitment of cane workers in Europe was explicitly directed to travel to southern Europe, with a special focus on Italy. It was deemed more likely that the contractual conditions would agree with the Italians than with the northern Europeans.²⁵ Furthermore, Italians were considered »used to hot climates and agricultural work«, and it was proposed that therefore they could »contribute to the evolution of the higher type of tropical white man«. Considerations of population policies considered »Spanish, Italians, and Maltese«, those »Europeans who are most fitted«, to accelerate the migration to and settlement in the northern parts.²⁶

²³ Minister cited in Gianfranco Cresciani: *The Italians in Australia*, pp. 55 (›Australian government‹, ›hope‹); North Queensland Register, 16.05.1904, cited in William Douglass: *From Italy to Ingham*, p. 75 (›Italian‹, ›fired‹, ›Gaelic‹, ›shore‹). See also ›World of Labour‹, in: *Worker*, 13.08.1904.

²⁴ For the following, see William A. Douglass: *From Italy to Ingham*, pp. 81 f.

²⁵ The approval of the labour scheme was subsequently denied by the Italian government.

²⁶ ›Report of the Royal Commission‹ (1911), cited in William A. Douglass: *From Italy to Ingham*, p. 87 (›hot climate‹); Warwick Anderson: *The Cultivation of Whiteness*, p. 160 (›higher type‹); ›Spanish‹ etc.).

Already six years before, the ›Worker‹ had warned about the almost completed replacement in the sugar industry of »the white worker« by »the coloured alien« and classed Italians with the latter by continuing: »Japs act as cooks at the mills and lengthsman on the tramways, kanakas do the ploughing, and low grade Italians do the mill work«.²⁷ Based on their quantitatively increasing presence in Queensland and their purchase of sugar cane farms, Italians were accused of ›swamping‹, an allegation otherwise used against Asian immigration.²⁸ In contrast to the Pacific Islanders, who were considered »harmless«, the »fiery Italian is as explosive as his native mountains and would overflow lava-like our regions and institutions«.²⁹

In the official understanding, Italians – no matter whether from the south or the north – were ›whites‹. Inquiries about the rebates paid for ›white‹-grown sugar cane were decided in favour of the illegibility of farmers employing Italian labourers. There was no statutory distinction between labourers from any part of Europe in terms of ›white‹ sugar workers.³⁰ Sydney's ›Italo-Australiano‹ newspaper was of course aware of the ascribed ›non-whiteness‹. It approved of the Italian government's rejection of the labour migration, planned by Australia in 1907, based on the reasoning that Italian workers should be treated »like true whites«.³¹

The Italians entering the sugar industry were eligible to join unions though they were not encouraged to do so.³² The ›Worker‹ opposed the admittance of southern Europeans to union membership but admitted that their policing would be more difficult if union policy changed.³³ Inclusion into union action would undoubtedly have been profitable during the time of class struggle since it would have strengthened the negotiation power and closed the ranks of the workers. Moreover, considering that »[u]nionism came to the Australian bushman as a religion«, having in it »that feeling of mateship [...] which always characterized the action of one white man to another«,³⁴ the lack of unionist inclusion also meant the lack of ideological inclusion in the ›comradeship‹ of the Australian workers.

²⁷ ›World of Labour‹, in: Worker, 24.08.1901.

²⁸ Cf. William A. Douglass: From Italy to Ingham, p. 94.

²⁹ Boomerang, 10.01.1891, cited in Raymond Evans: ›Keep White The Strain‹, p. 5.

³⁰ Cf. Department of Trade and Customs: Black Labour and the Sugar Industry; Department of External Affairs: Rebate of Excise on White Grown Sugar Cane.

³¹ The Italo-Australiano, 02.03.1907, cited in William A. Douglass: From Italy to Ingham, p. 82.

³² Cf. Jock H. Galloway: The Sugar Cane Industry, p. 232.

³³ Cf. William A. Douglass: From Italy to Ingham, p. 130.

³⁴ William G. Spence, president and secretary of the Australian Workers' Union and the Australian Shearers' Union, cited in Clement Semmler: Some Notes on the Literature of

The contrary happened when the labour movement's discrimination peaked after Italian sugar workers were brought to Queensland in order to act as strike-breakers during the ›Sugar Strike‹ of 1911. Though they were willing to join the unionists and support the strike, they were refused entrance to the strike camps. Moreover, the attempted exclusion from the unions was at the expense of the European workers' ability to present a united front against the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and the sugar planters. Consequently, Italian workers, who were additionally aided in their immigration by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, found no support by strike funds and became susceptible to job offers as strike-breakers.³⁵

The anti-Italian and anti-southern European agitation by the labour movement did not end after the Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913 limited the employment of sugar workers to virtually only European labourers. While the statutory definition still considered all people of European origin ›white‹, the British-Australian unionists and workers drew the boundaries more narrow: only those coming from northern Europe were considered truly ›white‹ workers, if not only those of British ancestry. At this time, work in the cane fields had shed its connection with skin colour. In the subsequent period, with what the workers considered appropriate wages and working conditions, the numbers of gangs consisting of British-Australian cane cutters were able to increase.

The Australian soldiers returning after the First World War further increased the aggravation of competition for work places and thus fostered an intensifying anti-Italian sentiment.³⁶ Though the wartime had led to a decrease of southern European immigration, the presence of non-British-Australian workers generally attracted negative attention. In particular in the ›white Australia‹ ideology the sturdy, war-tried soldiers were deemed far more qualified to work in the cane fields than the »dirty, dangerous, dark-skinned, uncultured, and untrustworthy« Italians. The returnees, feeling they had a right to resume their jobs or be saved from unemployment after their service for the country, found themselves replaced by multitudes of what was described as a »strange, dark gentleman from the Mediterranean shores«.³⁷

the Shearers' Strikes of 1891 and 1894, p. 74.

³⁵ Cf. Kay Saunders: *Masters and Servants*, p. 104; Jock H. Galloway: *The Sugar Cane Industry*, p. 232.

³⁶ Cf. Anthony Paganoni: *The Pastoral Care of Italians in Australia*, p. 47.

³⁷ Loretta V. Baldassar: *Italians in Australia*, p. 850 (›dirty‹ etc.); William A. Douglass: *From Italy to Ingham*, p. 109 (›strange‹).

The nineteen twenties saw a change in immigration patterns to Australia, due to the quotas and restrictions which the United States of America placed on southern European, and in particular Italian, immigration. Consequently, migration was directed to Australia. The focus was still on the question whether ›whiteness‹ comprised Europeans in general, northern Europeans or only descendants of British immigrants. While, on the international level, the Queensland sugar industry with its European producers was deemed ›white‹, on the national level, voices of dissent could be heard. It was not only the labour movement that showed displeasure with the employment of southern Europeans. With the continued dissatisfaction about the, what at least for the consumers felt like, too high sugar prices, the ›whiteness‹ of Italian cane workers was again challenged.

A well-renowned sugar planter in his letter to the Prime Minister, reporting on the situation of the sugar industry, described the people from Spain and Italy as having a »large admixture of Moorish blood«.³⁸ The theory of degeneration allowed for the recognition of cultural accomplishments by »these people [who] were good men 2,000 years ago, and showed the way the world should go«; but when »the Moor invaded the southern portion of Europe«, he »tainted the different races with his blood« and made them the »swarthy people« now labelled ›dagoes‹.³⁹

In the light of the emerging British Preference Movement, fuelled by the Australian Workers' Union, demands to restrict the majority of labour contracts to British people were supposed to ascertain that the subsidised wages reached those deemed ›appropriate‹. The Italians in North Queensland »exhibit neither inclination nor ambition to become readily assimilated with the inhabitants of Australia«, argued the president of the Innisfail branch of the British Preference League, and their »Italian customs have become harmful to Australia's economic, cultural, and industrial welfare«.⁴⁰

The Federal Housewives' Association stated that »an Italian industry« in Queensland was certainly not worth supporting and chose to have the long-lasting embargo on »black-grown sugar« from overseas lifted, in order to have a sugar price »that would enable workers to live decently«. Being of the same mind as the labour movement, the Association complained about the practices of recruitment where Italians »are getting the prefer-

³⁸ Edward Denman to William Hughes (02.06.1920), in: Home and Territories Department: Edward Denman, n.p.

³⁹ North Queensland Register, 12.05.1919, cited in William A. Douglass: From Italy to Ingham, p. 103.

⁴⁰ ›The Sugar Embargo«, in: Canberra Times, 04.08.1930 (›assimilated‹).

ence of the employment, to the exclusion of [...] our own Australian men«. With reference to the »cry coming from Queensland for a White Australia«, they implied that both the support of, as well as Italian employment in, the sugar industry would be contradictory to the national persecution of ›whiteness‹.⁴¹

The employees and operators of the sugar mills weighed in on this discriminatory strategies coming from the ›white‹ workers. On several occasions they defamed and refused to process »›black‹ sugar produced by Italian farmers«. ⁴² In this ›blackness‹ of sugar, the ascription of colour was racistly determined.⁴³ On the one hand, disagreement with the ›whiteness‹ of Italian workers spread to their product. On the other hand, the betrayal perceived by the labour movement during strikes and agitation against employers found expression in this product manufactured by ›blackleggers‹.

However, despite the Italians being at least partly denied their racist symbolic capital, they were nonetheless able to have their share of the wages of whiteness by working in the governmentally supported sugar industry. Moreover, in the light of feared invasion and the pressing ›yellow peril‹, Australian population policy was in favour of Italian immigration. The possibility of settling northern Europeans in the tropical parts of Australia continued to be a matter of dispute, and in the eyes of the proponents of southern European settlement Italians seemed to be able to supply this need.⁴⁴

They were not only eligible for union membership but could also legally acquire land for sugar cultivation and act as employers. This, in turn, seemed a threat to the British-Australian sugar planters, who were afraid of an Italian takeover of the industry. The Italians' successful approach of pooling together savings and sharing the land purchase with fellow-countrymen, while encouraging family and friends to migrate and participate, was considered insidious because equivalent to buying up the whole industry, piece of land by piece of land.⁴⁵

⁴¹ ›Housewives Oppose the Sugar Embargo‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 22.09.1927 (›Italian industry‹, ›black-grown sugar‹, ›decently‹); ›Cost of Sugar‹, in: Argus, 12.04.1923 (›preference‹, ›cry‹); see also Judith Smart: The Politics of Consumption, p. 24.

⁴² Vanda Moraes-Gorecki: Black Italians, p. 315.

⁴³ See also Stefanie Affeldt: A Paroxysm of Whiteness, p. 125.

⁴⁴ Cf. Anton Breinl, William J. Young, Ellsworth Huntington: Correspondence, pp. 474 ff.; Harold Cox: The Peopling of the British Empire, pp. 128 f.; Anthony Paganoni: The Pastoral Care of Italians In Australia, pp. 78 f.

⁴⁵ For Italian ›pooling‹ and chain migration, see William A. Douglass: From Italy to Ing-ham, pp. 110 f.; John S. MacDonald: Italian Emigration to Australia, the Empire and the Commonwealth, p. 134.

The Royal Commission headed by Thomas A. Ferry was established by the Gillies (Labor) government of Queensland to examine the »social and economic effects of increase in the number of aliens in North Queensland«.⁴⁶ Their findings, published in the ›Ferry report‹ of 1925, were, unsurprisingly, very favourable to the labour movement. The first choice was British workers before northern Italians. Most of the southern European immigrants in the sugar districts were considered undesirable due to their allegedly low living standard and their preference of town life before agriculture. Immigration of people without knowledge of the English language was supposed to be kept at a minimum. Ferry's report suggested an extended selection between immigrants. The migrants' »racial stock« should be selected to the end that they »assist rather than hinder the building up of superior social and economic conditions«. Correspondingly, »stricter medical examinations« were supposed to exclude the ›unfit‹. Records should be kept of the immigrants, unemployed translocated to other districts, and, in the case of conviction, they should be deported to their countries of origin. Here the concept of ›race‹, as was perfectly customary in the mother country Great Britain, is connected to eugenic categories. Racism is not only directed against allegedly ›non-whites‹ or ›not-actually-whites‹ but also against those thought to be ›inferior‹ who, even if they do look phenotypically ›white‹, are branded as biologically (›fitness‹) and socio-biologically (›criminals‹) undesirable.

Racist discrimination is in this case not based on their ›race‹ but refers to their cultural ›unsuitability‹. Their cultural differences, which were said to disagree with the British-Australian mainstream culture and hinder their assimilation, were to be eradicated by means of ›re-education‹. In order to encourage immigrants to shed the »customs, speech, and traditions of foreign lands«, the establishment of »foreign clubs« should be averted, and the »undigested mass of alien thought, alien sympathy and alien purpose«, which foreign immigration had created in the United States, should be remembered.⁴⁷

Overall, the report appeared to be a »vindication of Italians«. Upon closer examination, the report drew on the alleged two types of Italians and favoured only the northern Italians as »most acceptable in terms of commercial viability, standard of living, adherence to union rules and re-

⁴⁶ Warwick Anderson: *The Cultivation of Whiteness*, p. 159.

⁴⁷ ›Alien Influx. Mr. Ferry's Report‹, in: *Morning Bulletin*, 03.06.1925 (›racial stock‹, ›assist‹, ›medical‹, ›customs‹, ›clubs‹); ›Royal Commissioner's Report on Alien Influx‹, in: *Cairns Post*, 03.06.1925 (›undigested‹). See also Warwick Anderson: *The Cultivation of Whiteness*, pp. 159 f.

spect for social conventions«. ⁴⁸ They were »a very desirable class of immigrant« and »thrifty, industrious, law abiding, and honest«, while, »[u]nfortunately, the majority of new arrivals [...] appeared to be from the South« and »less likely to be assimilated into the population« of Queensland. ⁴⁹

In the same vein, the ›Worker‹ drew on this divide into a European north and an African south of Italy by extending it to the whole of southern Europe. On the Mediterranean littoral, they identified »a racial imprint« allegedly left by the Turks in the east and the Moors in the west. Italians, in addition, stemmed from an »enormous slave population« of the Roman Empire. Therefore certain parts of European immigration would »seriously undermine [...] the] White Australia policy«. ⁵⁰ The ›Bulletin‹ had already admonished of the »serious drawback« that was constituted not only by the »considerable admixture of African blood« in the south but also by the now »degenerated« »German element« in northern Italians. ⁵¹ The labelling of Italians as »black fellows« was not a mere description of descent and clearly not simply one of outer appearance but an attribution of social status associated with »low status labour [...] and an] inferior social type«. ⁵²

One means to attempt being ›acknowledged‹ as genuine sugar workers and being awarded racist symbolic capital, was the degradation of other (non-British, non-European or ›non-white‹) nationalities or groups. The Italian counter-movement to the discrimination and stereotyping emphasized the distinction between Italians and non-European immigrants, when they criticized the ›white Australia policy‹ as a »barbaric law«. They did so not for the reason that they disapproved of the discrimination against ›undesired‹ migrants, but because they feared the negative influence on the standing of Italians in general if they were equated with ›the others‹. ⁵³ Already in 1907, an Italian newspaper in Sydney noted that »Spaniards« who »live on the proverbial ›smell of an oil rag‹« as well as the »better class of Spaniards have a deep-rooted objection to manual labour«. ⁵⁴ Applying

⁴⁸ Thomas A. Ferry: Report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into and report on the social and economic effects of increase in the number of aliens in Queensland, cited in Warwick Anderson: *The Cultivation of Whiteness*, p. 159 (›social‹); Gianfranco Cresciani: *The Italians in Australia*, p. 67 (›vindication‹, ›most acceptable‹). See also Jens Lyng: *Non-Britishers in Australia*, p. 102; Barry York: *Empire and Race*, p. 122.

⁴⁹ ›Royal Commissioner's Report on Alien Influx‹, in: *Cairns Post*, 03.06.1925.

⁵⁰ *The Australian Worker*, 21.01.1925 (›imprint‹, ›slave‹, ›undermine‹), cited in Andrew Markus: *Australian Race Relations*, p. 146.

⁵¹ *The Bulletin* 1907, cited in Catherine Dewhirst: *Collaborating on whiteness*, p. 42.

⁵² Vanda Moraes-Gorecki: ›Black Italians‹ in the Sugar Fields of North Queensland, p. 307.

⁵³ Cf. Catherine Dewhirst: *Collaborating on whiteness*, p. 40.

⁵⁴ *The Italo-Australiano*, 26.10.1907, cited in William Douglass: *From Italy to Ingham*, p. 82.

this stereotyping, otherwise used against the Italians, to the Spanish cane workers was supposed to emphasize the higher value of Italian contribution to the sugar industry. In another case, the Australian labour movement utilized alleged Italian denigration of Maltese to justify the British-Australian workers own discrimination against the latter by reminding the readers that »large numbers of Italians in the North, who maintain the Australian standard and conform to Australian industrial conditions, are just as resentful as the native-born Australian to these cheap new arrivals, and just as bitter in their denunciation«.⁵⁵

The Maltese

Whilst the case of ›otherness‹ of southern Europeans like Italians, Greeks and others was additionally supported by them not being British, the position of the Maltese was far less unambiguous. The case of Maltese immigration into Australia from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century demonstrated that even British-Europeanness not automatically constituted ›whiteness‹ or granted racist symbolic capital.⁵⁶

The Australian discourse on Maltese immigration – together with the therein contained debate about the ›whiteness‹ of migrants from the Maltese archipelago – can be roughly divided into three sections. Firstly, the eighteen eighties when imagined Russian invasion was threatening Australia, and the (intermediate) end of the Pacific Islanders' employment was nearing. This period was dominated by a positive reception of the possibility of Maltese immigration as both a replacement of Pacific Islanders to secure the survival of the sugar industry and a means of populating the north with European settlers. Secondly, this is followed by a short episode, at the time of the First World War, when all Maltese immigration was stopped altogether. The anti-conscription movement, together with the labour movement, opposed the introduction of Maltese workers or settlers into the country and considered it a means to replace Australian workers momentarily at war with allegedly cheaper foreign workers. And thirdly, the time after the war when the threat of invasion and the need to populate the northern parts resurfaced and, not least in the light of the shared

⁵⁵ ›More about the Influx‹, In: Worker, 09.04.1925.

⁵⁶ Less common but nonetheless possible was the explicit official deprivation of the British status. The first time Maltese were recorded as »Maltese (British)« in official Australian statistics was not until 1927 – Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: Official Yearbook No. 20 (1927), p. 899. In spite of that, Lyng eight year later still counted Maltese as »non-Britishers« – see Jens Lyng: Non-Britishers in Australia, pp. 144 f., 246.

war experiences, Maltese in Australia pushed for their being recognized as equal British subjects.

In each of these sections, the debates surrounding the Maltese were subject to changes in argument and redefinition of the position of immigrants from Malta. While Maltese in popular discourse were constantly subjected to everyday racism and confrontation by the labour movement, their official treatment was alternating. Under an imperial perspective, Maltese were ›white‹ enough to defend the British bastion of Australia against threats of invasion. Their characteristic as not only European but also British was enough to make for a ›betterment‹ in comparison to the (southern) Italians despite their geographical location. Their reputation as industrious workers and their adaptability to a warmer climate made them suitable settlers for the northern parts of the continent. Under an Australian national perspective, by contrast, Maltese were not only ›not white‹ enough but were rather considered a ›dark race‹ with their capability of assimilation being contested in defence of ›white‹ workers. As a consequence of the Australian government generally following the argumentation of the labour movement, the question of Maltese immigration in the years of the First World War put under pressure the government, which had to balance national and imperial interests.⁵⁷

At the time when, in the Australian perception, Malta was considered part of the Empire and the question of Maltese immigration had not been raised, newspaper reports were generally in favour of them. »Ever [...] faithful and obedient to their Sovereign«, the Maltese were said to be »temperate, frugal, and industrious, most grateful for every boon accorded them«. ⁵⁸ Individual immigration of Maltese into Australia had occurred earlier on, but these seem to have been rather isolated cases.⁵⁹ Reports from other British colonies, however, told tales of success. In British Guiana, the Maltese were »working [...] cheer fully and regularly«; in terms of Malta as a resource of labour, »thousands of able bodied labourers and mechanics can be obtained«, and since »they are British subjects, and ac-

⁵⁷ The »average Australian of whatever class, does in effect limit the term ›White‹, to British stock, allows American and Canadian, tolerates Scandinavian or Dane or French but is doubtful about Central Europe and satisfied that Southern European are coloured«, Manchester Guardian (UK), 14.08.1925, cited in Government Emigration Office: Report on Emigration for the Fiscal Year 1924-25, p. 6.

⁵⁸ ›Imperial Parliament‹, in: Sydney Gazette and New South Wales, 05.12. 1828.

⁵⁹ The census of January 1851 lists one Maltese »Alien« in South Australia – ›Domestic Intelligence‹, in: Argus, 01.04.1851. In 1911, for the first time, 41 Maltese were admitted landing (without having to take the dictation test), cf. Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: Official Yearbook No. 5 (1912), p. 1190. See also Barry York: Maltese, pp. 580 ff.

customed to a similar climate, there can be little doubt of such emigrants being most useful to this colony«.⁶⁰

Already in the early eighteen sixties, Queensland's Governor George Bowen had suggested the introduction of Maltese labour for the cotton fields. Not only were they at least as skilled and industrious as ›coolies‹, but, moreover, they were British subjects from Europe and thus preferable to Indian or Chinese labourers.⁶¹ After all, Malta had been under British rule following the French Capitulation in September 1800 and became a British possession by the Treaty of Paris fourteen years later.⁶²

But despite their northern European affiliation, the geographical position of the Maltese archipelago caused distrust in Australia and was the reason for discrimination against the Maltese. This was made most clear when the Immigration Restriction Act of 1882 extended possibilities for European migrants in the case of departure from London. This constituted a great disadvantage for the Maltese as they were, despite being part of the British Empire, excluded from the preference for British migrants.⁶³

In 1882, first attempts were made when Francesco DeCesare, a Maltese newspaper editor, travelled Australia to look for emigration possibilities for Maltese workers. His timing was right, since, in the light of the possible abolition of the migration from the Pacific Islands, the planters had an urgent need for »labourers accustomed to hard work and hot sun«.⁶⁴ They showed great interest in engaging Maltese workers as substitutes. DeCesare succeeded in enthusing the Premier of Queensland with the idea of a migration scheme. Thomas McIlwraith was about to prepare a bill for the foundation of a Maltese colony in Queensland and supported government-assisted immigration. The press was in favour of the arrival of »these interesting islanders« and approvingly stated that »[a]ny immigration will go down, provided it be not of the Asiatic type«. Even though their arrival was hoped for, the distinction from ›white‹ workers was nonetheless recognizable, as they were considered an »industrious and intelligent class of people who are not likely to demand exorbitant wages«.⁶⁵ Maltese workers were attracted by the guaranteed work period of five years. Additionally, since, in this context, they were regarded as British subjects, they

⁶⁰ ›British Guiana«, in: *Australasian Chronicle*, 05.11.1839.

⁶¹ Cf. Barry York: *Empire and Race*, p. 10. Though Maltese were not eligible for Queensland's assisted passage scheme, the planters' interest in them led to the provision of passages for four Maltese in July 1881, cf. *ibid.*

⁶² Cf. Carmel Cassar: *A Concise History of Malta*, pp. 145 (British rule), 150 (treaty).

⁶³ Cf. Barry York: *Empire and Race*, p. 17.

⁶⁴ Barry York: *Sugar Labour*, p. 49.

⁶⁵ ›Our Queensland Letter«, in: *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 11.11.1882 (›Asiatic‹); ›Immigration from Malta«, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 13.09.1882 (›industrious‹).

were entitled to selection of land for sugar or cotton cultivation under the terms of the Crown Land Act. Eventually, due to DeCesare's inability to negotiate officially and concretely with the Queensland government, no arrangements for government-assisted migration were made. A few of the Queensland sugar planters, however, were willing to compensate potential labourers for their travel expenses.⁶⁶

Though the Maltese were able to »disperse[] in the general labour market« when recruited for work in the Queensland sugar cane fields, they were seemingly perceived as ›coloured‹ enough to withstand the detrimental heat effects of the tropics.⁶⁷ In this, their initial presence in the sugar industry occurred within the area of tension between ›white‹ and ›coloured labour‹ – a context in which class was transcended by ›race‹.

Fears of Maltese as »a primitive, dark race« emerged amongst the Mackay public upon actual contact in the early eighteen eighties. When sixty Maltese arrived in Townsville, at that time a »racially-prejudiced and ethnically-diverse city«, they were described as a »strong well formed race – the men dark, handsome and lithe, the women with dark eyes, fine hair and easy carriage«. ⁶⁸ This so-called ›Nuddea experiment‹ proved to be detrimental to their perceived employability as sugar workers, not least because the labourers aware of their Britishness refused being employed at low wages. Shortly beforehand, the overall expenses of Maltese employment had been estimated to be »so high as to preclude any profits arising out of their substitution for kanakas«, and, with the Maltese »doing less work than an average European«, it would render obsolete lengthy employment and migration discussions.⁶⁹ This prophecy was somewhat fulfilled when, being unsatisfied with the labour conditions, the majority decided, because they were »not thought more of than the Kanakas«, to leave the plantations and relocate to the south.⁷⁰ In the following, negative reports started to accumulate. A group of Maltese enjoying the »convivialities of town life« attracted so much »considerable attention« with their unruly behaviour and »playful disposition« that they were arrested.⁷¹ The »different kinds of foreign labour« all proved to be »extremely unsatisfy-

⁶⁶ Cf. Barry York: *Empire and Race*, pp. 18, 62. The main districts with interest in Maltese sugar workers were Bundaberg, Maryborough and Mackay, see *ibid.*, p. 46.

⁶⁷ Alexander T. Yarwood: *Attitudes to Non-European Immigration*, p. 62.

⁶⁸ Barry York: *Empire and Race*, p.17 (›primitive‹), Kenneth W. Manning: *In their own hands*, p. 262 (›strong‹). See also ›Queensland News‹, in: *Queenslander*, 24.11.1883.

⁶⁹ ›The Labour Question‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 18.04.1883. See also Charles A. Price: *Southern Europeans in Australia*, p. 98.

⁷⁰ Barry York: *Sugar Labour*, pp. 52 (›experiment‹), 55 (contemporary quote of Maltese priest Fr Cassar, ›Kanakas‹). For the whole story, see *ibid.*, pp. 50 ff.

⁷¹ ›The Late Great Frauds in the City‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 06.12.1883.

ing«, the planters »have tried Maltese« and others which all »have been failures«. ⁷²

Allegations that Maltese were of a ›coloured race‹ were refuted in statements by Maltese or pro-Maltese sources, but they nonetheless relied on notions that workers from the Maltese archipelago were better adapted to the tropical climate and were a particular choice to populate and cultivate the ›empty North‹ of Australia. Similarly, a report commissioned by the British Government focused on the advantageous ›race‹-biological compound in combination with British ›educability‹. It stated, »that the immigration of Maltese would be welcome to the Australian Government in solving the problem of developing the northern territories of Australia with white labour«. This was in particular because the Maltese »are accustomed to great heat during several months in the year« and could »with proper supervision [...] adapt themselves to the new circumstances and prove themselves excellent colonists«. Given the stereotyping of southern Europeans, the favouring of settlement in northern Australia was reinforced by invoking the migrants' ›Britishness‹ which perceptibly manifested itself in the Maltese complexion, since their »type is South European, but the people are fairer in colour [...] and have a better appearance than South Italians or Sicilians«. ⁷³

The Australian government seconded, that Maltese agriculturalists and workers appeared »specially suitable for the Northern Territory where labour of any kind is hard to procure« and, upon bringing »their wives and families [...] special areas of land«, could be made available for their permanent settlement. ⁷⁴ Seemingly, the government understood that »Maltese emigration [...] involved a question of Empire, not just inter-Colonial relations«. ⁷⁵ Furthermore, the national interest in populating the northern parts of the continent also outweighed reservations expressed by the public and

⁷² (Untitled), in: Brisbane Courier, 08.03.1886.

⁷³ Report of the Royal Commission on the Finances, Economic Position, and Judicial Procedure of Malta (1912), pp. 29 (›problem‹, ›heat‹, ›supervision‹), 5 (›type‹). »[S]ugar«, assured the same report (p. 24), »is not consumed by the lower classes in Malta« in the amounts as it is in other countries and »its use is practically confined to sweetening tea and coffee and to the manufacture of confectionery and preserves«. Combining the knowledge about sugar as a (former) means of social positioning (see subchapter 2.2 ›An Opiate of the People‹) and about the early and excessive consumption of sugar by the whole British-Australian society, one could muse about what this observation signified for the Australian determination of the Maltese ›state of progress‹ and their cultural development.

⁷⁴ Letter by Prime Minister to Governor-General, 09.10.1913, in: Department of External Affairs: Admission of Maltese for Placement in Employment, n.p.

⁷⁵ Barry York: Sugar Labour, p. 48.

the labour movement. This positive reception of the Maltese by the Australian government ended when the global political situation worsened.

Around the time of the First World War, Italian and other southern European arrivals continued to be subject of increasing disapproval, but in the case of Maltese migration the effect of opposition proved to be more far-reaching than in any other situation.⁷⁶ In the mid-nineteen tens, the arrival of migrants from the Maltese archipelago began to be met with strong opposition, above all, from the labour movement. Subsequent enquiries by Australian steamship companies and shipping agents into the possibility of bringing Maltese settlers to the Australian colonies remained either unanswered or were warded off by the reply, that during the war »this Government consider it undesirable to encourage the immigration into New South Wales of Maltese«. ⁷⁷ Assisted passages from Malta to Australia – though often sought for by Maltese and their immigration agents and also entered into with many other (European) countries – were unthinkable for the Australian government until the mid-twentieth century.⁷⁸

Against the immigration of Maltese workers to Australia, the British Immigration League of New South Wales argued, that introducing the »cheapest semi-white labour known« on a regular basis would inevitably lead to a reduction of the »present standard«. The Labour Council of New South Wales, which was affiliated to the Sugar Workers' Union, called on the Minister of External Affairs to »have notices published at Malta, to the effect that Maltese labourers are not required in Australia«. ⁷⁹ The Maltese were seen as »in many respects worse than Chinamen in their habits and mode of living«; and in the same vein, the Winton Women Workers' Union decided »not to work with Chinese, Maltese, or Japanese cooks« – putting Maltese in conjunction with Asians.⁸⁰ At the same time, advocates of emigration in Malta emphasized, that the emigrants were, »loyal British

⁷⁶ Cf. also Kenneth W. Manning: *In their own hands*, pp. 264 ff.; Barry York: *Empire and Race*, p. 63.

⁷⁷ Premier of New South Wales to Prime Minister, 19.07.1912, in: Department of External Affairs: Circular to the Premiers of the States, n.p. For offers by shipping agents to introduce Maltese men, see the communications with the Malta-based F.S. Fenech or De Mattos & Sullivan in: Department of External Affairs: Circular to the Premiers of the States, n.p.

⁷⁸ Cf. Memorandum for Prime Minister (28.06.1922), in: Prime Minister's Department: Immigration Restrictions Policy. Admission of Maltese (Part I), n.p. In 1948 the governments of Australia and Malta agreed on a scheme under which »selected settlers« could be assisted in their travel - Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: *Official Yearbook No. 38* (1951), p. 578.

⁷⁹ Letter from Kavanagh to Thomas (06.08.1912), in: Department of External Affairs: Protests against the introduction of Maltese Labourers, n.p.

⁸⁰ Secretary of Trades and Labour Council E. Cavanagh (1912), cited in Barry York: *Empire and Race*, p. 49 (»worse«); »Miscellaneous«, in: *Worker*, 06.04.1912 (»cooks«).

subjects, white, sober, and sound skilled artisans and agriculturists, etc.», who should »obtain the same privileges in the matter of assisted passages as British subjects from the rest of the Empire«.⁸¹



Fig. 24 – Treacherous ›whiteness‹:
Capitalists and ›coloured labour‹ sabotaging ›white Australia‹

The decisive moment in terms of statutory regulation happened in 1916, the year of the first conscription referendum. The Australian Government was suddenly confronted with a possible arrival of Maltese immigrants, which they decided would seem like a confirmation of warnings by conscription opponents. Stating that the »public feeling« was »excited by wild rumours about conscription being prelude to wholesale importation colored and cheap labor«, the government – panicking over their

⁸¹ Minute Paper (29.07.1912), in: Department of External Affairs: Protests against the introduction of Maltese Labourers, n.p (›cheapest‹, ›standard‹, ›loyal‹, ›privileges‹).

pledge not to import any labourers – now officially labelled the Maltese as ›non-white‹ and thus evidenced under political pressure the malleability of ›whiteness‹ in the Maltese case.

When a ship with over two hundred Maltese men was nearing the West Australian coast, the Department of External Affairs considered it »absolutely imperative« that the men were not to be landed before the date of the referendum. The arrival of »imported labor of any sort« would »kill the referendum which would be a great national disaster«. ⁸² ›History Repeated – A Famous Ancient Ruse‹, the cover cartoon of the ›Worker‹ (1916), expressed the labour movement's allegation that while »William Maltese Hughes« and other Australians wave the conscripted men goodbye, ›coloured labour‹ would be admitted to the country (Fig. 24). ⁸³ The Trojan horse is a piebald horse – with black spots but predominantly white on the outside – holding in its belly the very ›coloured‹ workers – depicted as ›coolies‹, ›kanakas‹, Chinese – against whom the protest was directed. The horse could be read as an allegory of the Maltese, whom those favouring their immigration attempted to pass off as ›white‹ and as coming from a British dominion thus seeming honourable on the outside. But on the inside, they were thought to actually be as ›non-white‹ as the outwardly respectable horse which hides within the dangerous cargo of ›coloured labour‹. The Maltese Trojan horse could also be seen as the spearhead of further immigration of ›non-whites‹, who were to be employed instead of ›white‹ workers. In any case, the initiator of this endeavour was the capitalist – he has just dropped the pull rope of the Maltese Trojan horse – who was allegedly avid for maximizing his profit through the employment of ›cheap labour‹ and, in disregard of the ›white‹ workers' interests and the nation's desire for a ›racially‹ homogeneous society, is trying to dismantle ›white Australia‹.

Moreover, it seemed certain that a ›malady‹ once admitted into the country was not to disappear for quite some time. This is hinted at by the inclusion of the prickly pear, also called *Opuntia vulgaris*, into the cartoon right above the ›white Australia‹ sign. Contemporary readers could under-

⁸² Department of Homes and Territories: Messageries Maritimes SS Co, n.p. (›public feeling‹, ›rumours‹, ›imperative‹, ›imported‹, ›disaster‹). For the ›Gange incident‹ and the proceeding ›Arabia episode‹, see Barry York: *The Maltese, White Australia, and Conscripted Labor*. When their landing in Melbourne could no longer be postponed, the ›dictation test‹ was applied, and, since the Maltese failed the test in the Dutch language, they became »prohibited immigrants«. Ibid., pp. 7 f.

⁸³ The caption reads: »Rumours have been current in Fremantle that the importation of 1,000 Maltese has been arranged. Ninety-seven arrived by the Arabic last week, and another 100 are due by the Morea to-morrow. The affair is mysterious«. Prime Minister William Morris Hughes received his byname after these incidents – ›Men and Matters‹, in: *Worker*, 30.11.1916.

stand it as both an augury of the coming invasion by ›coloured labour‹ and a symbol for an immigrant which the country could not easily rid itself of. Prickly pear was a widespread, invasive weed, which was introduced to Australia in the eighteenth century, presumably with the First Fleet, and which spread to the dimensions of a phytovian invasion in Queensland after the eighteen thirties.⁸⁴ At the time of the cartoon, deliberations about means to eradicate the »prickly pear pest« were a common topic in the national newspapers, and after previous attempts to weed out the undesired growth by biological countermeasures, like cochineal insects, chemical experiments were commenced to find a successful agent for the »extermination of prickly pear«.⁸⁵

In the course of the next years, virtually all Maltese immigration – with the exemption of wives and children of Maltese already in Australia – was prevented by the request to the government of Malta not to issue passports for emigration to Australia. During the next decades, the question of Maltese immigration continued to be a balancing act for the Australian Government.⁸⁶ On the one side was the labour movement, which strongly opposed any Maltese immigration despite the fact that Maltese – like Italians and other (southern) Europeans – could become union members.⁸⁷ On the other side were several camps that voted for the immigration of Maltese to Australia: northern sugar planters and other farmers, shipping companies, Maltese desiring emigration and the Colonial Office representing the interest of the British Empire. For the latter, Malta was not only an important military base but with the opening of the Suez Canal also became an highly valued strategic point on the trade routes to Asia and Australia.

In the debates about the employability of Maltese labourers, the proponents and opponents of Maltese immigration relied on (supposed) former experience with Maltese people as workers and on presumed delineations of character underlining either their loyalty to the Empire or their unasimilarity to British culture. The notion that Maltese could not be considered ›white‹ British subjects was propagated in the public sphere in the printed media and statements of the labour movement. Maltese immigration was seen in contradiction of ›white Australia‹. The »importation of

⁸⁴ Cf. ›Prickly Pear‹, in: Warwick Examiner and Times, 08.03.1916; Graeme R. Quick: Remarkable Australian Farm Machines, pp. 139 ff.

⁸⁵ ›The Prickly Pear Pest‹, in: Queenslander, 25.11.1916 (›pest‹); ›Queensland Experiments‹, in: Argus, 18.04.1916 (›extermination‹).

⁸⁶ Cf. the memorandum for Prime Minister William M. Hughes on the Maltese case from 1916 to 1922, in: Prime Minister's Department: Immigration Restrictions Policy, n.p., 28.06.1922.

⁸⁷ Cf. ›A Protest‹, in: Worker, 04.05.1912.

these coloured ›Britishers‹ should be prevented, stated the ›Worker‹ and warned about the »black menace« as a part of the »deep-laid scheme [...] to bleed out Australia of its white manhood by conscription« and, by using a »system of Colored Immigration«, to subsequently »infuse the colored and cheap into the land«. ⁸⁸ Puzzled by their ›racial‹ origin, the ›Worker‹ earlier described them as »a mixture of Italians, Arabs, Phoenicians, Greeks, and whatnots, [...] who] speak Arabic and a bastard Italian« and were about to become »slaves« in the cane fields instead of the »kanakas«. ⁸⁹ These statements, arguing in a similar vein to those against the Italians, make obvious that the discrimination against the Maltese is constituted of elements containing both biological (›mixture‹) and social racisms (›slaves‹). The ›Worker‹ replaces the usual virtue of ›solidarity‹ with the supposed commitment to ›whiteness‹, not only for the ›white‹ workers. In doing so, ›class conflict‹ was conceptually brought together with the ›community of race‹ and thus facilitated, that for the ›white‹ worker the ›white‹ exploiter seemed by all means to be closer than their ›non-white‹ colleague, who was sharing the experience of exploitation.

Official statements of the government regarding the ›colour‹ of the Maltese are scarce, but (confidential) internal memoranda testify the iridescence of Maltese immigrants. They had already been brought into connection with the »importation of colored and cheap labor« during the ›Gange‹ incident in 1916. ⁹⁰ The Secretary of the Department of Home and Territories claimed, that they were »similar in type and complexion to Italians and other Southern Europeans«. ⁹¹ Another statement addressed the colour issue more subtly by maintaining, that »Maltese are not a particularly attractive type of immigrant« but »can hardly be classed as undesirable, as they are no more coloured than Southern Europeans generally« and, additionally, »are inoffensive, industrious and law-abiding«. ⁹² The variability of Maltese perception can best be seen in a correspondence between the Chair of the British Overseas Settlement Committee and the Australian Prime Minister. Lord Amery, who was a proponent of Maltese migration to Australia, confided in private to William Hughes that he considered Maltese, like all southern European, »Dagoes«. Nonetheless, presumably due to »a century of British rule«, they had surpassed the others in »physique,

⁸⁸ ›The Black Menace‹, in: Worker, 05.10.1916.

⁸⁹ ›The Maltese Cross‹, in: Worker, 28.09.1916.

⁹⁰ Department of Homes and Territories: Messageries Maritimes SS Co., n.p. (03.10.1916).

⁹¹ Atlee A. Hunt in 1917, cited in Barry York: Empire and Race, p. 114.

⁹² ›Maltese Immigration‹, memorandum by A. S. Peters (Home & Territories Department), 08.06.1923, in: Prime Minister's Department: Immigration Restrictions Policy, n.p. (›attractive‹, ›coloured‹, ›inoffensive‹).

cleanliness, standard of living, etc.«⁹³ – in this case, Britishness apparently added a kind of upvaluing ›racial‹ prestige to their southern-Europeanness.

After the First World War, immigration policies changed. Former enemies were again allowed to enter the continent; migrational schemes and assisted passages were arranged with European countries, like Spain and Italy. Migrants from these countries were admitted immigration without restriction. Not so the Maltese. The Australian Government retained their restraints on immigration from Malta. In April 1920, in an addition to family-related migration (wives and dependent children) and returnees, a quota of two hundred sixty Maltese per annum was allowed to enter.⁹⁴

The decision by the Australian government to restrict Maltese immigration to a quota caused not only turmoil in Malta but was also considered an affront against the British Empire. It was supposed to be in the Australian interest to solve the ›interesting Imperial strategical problem, to the great benefit of Malta, Australia, and the Empire at large‹ by translocating people from the ›overcrowded‹ Maltese archipelago to the ›underpopulated‹ Australian continent.⁹⁵ Therefore, the Colonial Office informed the Prime Minister about their perception of the Maltese. The Colonial Office considered the ›admission of reasonable numbers of these [Maltese] people [...] of advantage to the Commonwealth, especially for the development of the more tropical parts where they could engage in the cultivation of cotton and sugar‹. They were ›British subjects and [...], as the result of a century of British rule, are better behaved and altogether more ›white‹ than Southern Italians‹.⁹⁶ This statement unequivocally demonstrated the connection of culture and skin colour and revealed the social construction of an outer signifier of inner values. The social revaluation under British guidance of people more southerly than the Italians found expression in the perceived colour of the Maltese skin.

The Australian government's preservation of the restriction to Maltese immigration for about twelve years definitely cannot have been based on the actual numbers of Maltese immigrants. Admittance of Maltese migrants appeared for the first time in the statistics in 1912; and until 1922 the number of all Maltese immigrants in almost all years was by far lower

⁹³ Amery to Hughes, December 1921, cited in: Barry York: *Empire and Race*, p. 118.

⁹⁴ Cf. Henry Casolani: *Awake Malta*, p. 52. See also Memorandum for Prime Minister (28.06.1922), in: Prime Minister's Department: *Immigration Restrictions Policy*, n.p. The quota was calculated from the average arrivals from 1912, 1913 and 1914. Cf. this chapter, footnote 97.

⁹⁵ Maltese senator Achilles Samut in 1927, cited in: Barry York: *Empire and Race*, p. 5.

⁹⁶ Letter from W.G.A. Ormsby Gore (Colonial Office) to Prime Minister S.M. Bruce (Australia), 22.10.1923, in: Prime Minister's Department: *Immigration Restrictions Policy*, n.p. (›admission‹, ›British subjects‹).

[illegible]

Fig. 25 – Multilingual rejection:
Australian announcement in Malta

than the quota for non-exempted admission, i.e. the admission of other than family-related or returning migrants.⁹⁷ To a greater degree the maintenance of the immigration restriction in the case of the Maltese could have been a »power play« in the process of cutting the cord with the mother country – a »question of Australia's independence« and the determination of »its own place in the empire scheme-of-things«.⁹⁸

The repeal of the quota in 1924 happened not least due to the pressure of the British government, stressing the »bad political effect« the immigration restriction had in Malta and the latter's vital importance as a »naval station«.⁹⁹ Nonetheless, a limitation to »no more than twenty Maltese [...] to disembark at any particular port in Australia from the same vessel or during the same month« remained.¹⁰⁰ Information about the new Australian immigration law was distributed multi-lingually: English, Italian and Malti, all the languages spoken on the Maltese islands (Fig. 25).¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ The numbers of all Maltese admitted to Australia before the repeal of the quota were in 1911: 41, 1912: 122, 1913: 193, 1914: 464, 1915: 57, 1916: 173, 1917: 212, 1918: 14, 1919: 47, 1920: 88, 1921: 132, 1922: 373, 1923: 323. Cf. Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: *Official Yearbook* No. 12 (1919), p. 1169; id.: *Official Yearbook* No. 17 (1924), p. 916.

⁹⁸ Barry York: *Empire and Race*, p. 117.

⁹⁹ Cablegram from Prime Minister Bruce to Victoria Premier Page (26.10.1923), in: Prime Minister's Department: Immigration Restrictions Policy, n.p.

100 Letter from Superintendent of Emigration, Malta, to Government Emigration Office in Valetta, (11.02.1924), in: Prime Minister's Department: Immigration Restrictions Policy, n.p. (>disembark<).

¹⁰¹ Notice issued for Maltese emigrants in 1924, in: Home and Territories Department: Introduction of Maltese. n.p. (10.01.1924).

Upon the publication of the allegedly unrestricted immigration of Maltese, the anti-Maltese camps protested that Prime Minister Bruce was about to »make a Maltese cross of White Australia«.¹⁰²

Defending Maltese immigration interests, the Maltese Emigration Superintendent directly addressed the »cry from Australia [...] for people« to populate the continent and attempted to counteract the ›racializing‹ of his fellow countrymen and countrywomen by assuring the Australians, that the Maltese »are absolutely white« and had »not a drop of colored blood in their veins«.¹⁰³ Those Maltese who had arrived in Queensland over the years had already settled down. Despite the debate about their ›colour‹, their status as Europeans formally enabled the Maltese cane farmers to join the United Cane Growers' Association.¹⁰⁴ As an evidence of their aspiring after upward social mobility, beginning »at the bottom rung of various industrial and rural ladders«, over the time they succeeded in qualifying for more skilled jobs. They were in fact so successful to secure land for sugar cultivation that the Habana district, northwest of Mackay, was publicly known as »New Malta«.¹⁰⁵

Discrimination against southern Europeans was not confined to those working in the cane fields but also included employers. The antagonistic ›non-whiteness‹ commonly transcended class barriers in the sugar industry and expressed itself as national racism – this was evidenced by the findings of a Royal Commission investigating »the social and economic effects of the alien influx in North Queensland«. While »Greek employers were most offensive and insulting to our womenfolk« and made »improper suggestions to girls who were their employees«, the »Maltese were as objectionable as members of any nationality from the industrial point of view«. This ambiguous statement is clarified by the addition that the »Greeks and Sicilians were also objectionable«. Upon inspecting the farms of southern Europeans, it was found that »they were not as good agriculturalists as a majority of other farmers in the district«. Witness statements were then drawn upon to substantiate allegations against Maltese farmers who allegedly encouraged their employees to anti-union behaviour and illegal overtime work while, in addition, withholding their payments.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² ›He likes them‹, in: Daily Guardian, 03.05.1924.

¹⁰³ Henry Casolani, cited in a newspaper article from May 1922, attached to a secret telegram sent to Prime Minister Hughes. See Prime Minister's Department: Immigration Restrictions Policy, n.p.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Government Emigration Office: Report on Emigration and Unemployment, p. 18.

¹⁰⁵ Barry York: Empire and Race, p. 147 (›bottom rung‹); ›Swamping the Sugar Industry‹, in: Worker, 27.08.1925 (›New Malta‹). See also ›In the Central District‹, in: Worker, 21.09.1932; Barry York: Empire and Race, p. 123.

¹⁰⁶ ›Aliens in the Sugar Industry‹, in: Worker, 04.06.1925 (›influx‹, ›Greek‹, etc.).

Like the Italians and Greeks, they were not only accused of living »on the smell of an oiled rag« – thus emphasizing their allegedly far inferior standards – but were also perceived as »unfair competition« to British growers who could neither stand the pace with the southern Europeans' price offers nor miss out on their offers to purchase and thus were prone to »selling out«. Despite prosecution and fining, the employers, in particular the Maltese of the Habana district, continued their »breach[ing] of industrial laws« and fell further out of favour with the unions.¹⁰⁷

A look at a different industry in a different state reveals this discriminatory treatment was by no means universal. The New South Wales Vegetable Growers' Association, for instance, strove for winning over Maltese vegetable growers to join their association and, seemingly language was no exclusionary attribute, provided special translation of their leaflets for those interested.¹⁰⁸ The supposed Maltese feature of ›being on small commons‹ was cast in a different light when a Minister with the Home Affairs Department lauded »foreigners« for their »thrifty habits«. In particular in the cane fields of Queensland, »a good deal of money« had been »amassed«, and among the people endowed with economic reason were conspicuously many Maltese cane farmers.¹⁰⁹

Though acknowledging their physical and financial investment into the early sugar district of Mackay, the report of the Royal Commission presided by Thomas A. Ferry concluded, that the Maltese were »uneducated and their standard of living [...] inferior to that of the Britisher or Italian«. ¹¹⁰ Subsumed together with other southern Europeans under the label ›aliens‹, the Maltese were considered undemanding in terms of the housing situation but occasionally matchlessly overambitious in relation to their working hours – thus threatening to compromise the negotiation power of the sugar workers.¹¹¹

Arguing against the introduction of Maltese workers, the labour movement – insisting that Maltese allegedly without knowledge of the English language were brought into the country to undersell the local workforce – drew on such investigations in order to undergird their exposition of Maltese as lower in living and general standards. They claimed that the

¹⁰⁷ ›The Sugar Industry‹, in: Northern Miner, 07.06.1919 (›oiled rag‹, ›unfair competition‹, ›selling out‹).

¹⁰⁸ ›Vegetable Growers‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 01.06.1934.

¹⁰⁹ ›Lessons to Australia‹, in: Examiner, 24.04.1929 – but it was also published at the same time in other newspapers.

¹¹⁰ For the 1925 report of the Royal Commission to Inquire into the Social and Economic Effect of the Increase in Numbers of Aliens in North Queensland, see Barry York: Empire and Race, pp. 122 ff., 123 (›uneducated‹).

¹¹¹ Cf. Barry York: Empire and Race, p. 123.

southern European's higher standard of living, evidenced by their »table wines and [...] plentiful supply of lager beer«, was a deceit contrived by the »wily champions« who favoured the introduction of cheap labour.¹¹² The ›Melbourne Punch‹, in writing against immigrants from southern Italy, validated allegations of the Maltese non-belonging to the ›white race‹ by maintaining that »any foreigner who is small and dark is classed as a Southern Italian, and so the Greeks, Maltese and Albanians weigh down the balance in the public mind«.¹¹³

In the light of the ›British Preference Movement‹, the question of Maltese ›white Britishness‹ resurfaced. Their employment as ›scabs‹ during the 1927 strike brought them into further discredit in the unions' perception. The ›Bulletin‹ anticipatorily underpinned the retaliation for such allegedly ›back-stabbing‹ Maltese attitude by combining ›racial‹ and social ›shortcomings‹ and describing them as »a little Asiatic, a good deal African, undersized, the wrong colour of head, the wrong kind of hair, and (in the main) no fighters except with a carving-knife and from behind«.¹¹⁴

Consequently, the British Preference Agreements between local employers and union branches did not comprise workers from Malta.¹¹⁵ In the context of British preference in cane cutting, the ›Worker‹ went so far as considering the »low grade Maltese and Sicilians« worse than the (northern) Italians, since the formers' »general physiognomy betrayed their recent descent, not indeed from the organ-grinder man himself but rather from the grotesque Simian that shuffled on top of the organ« and thus moved them not only further away from ›Europeanness‹ but even from humanity itself.¹¹⁶

The Australian Workers' Union clarified that in the agreement, which determined fifty seven per cent of the workers employed in the sugar fields to be British labourers, Maltese were excluded. The latter did, of course, not agree with their being classed as foreigners. Ninety eight Maltese cane cutters, all members of the Australian Workers' Union, took the matter to the Board of Trade and Arbitration. This decided, not in favour to the Maltese at all, that the agreement was a private arrangement between the sugar farmers and the Australian Workers' Union – and as such out of the court's jurisdiction – to which the farmers were not bound by law. Aggravating the bitterness of the decision, the representative of both the Mill Suppli-

¹¹² ›More about the influx‹, in: Worker, 09.04.1925.

¹¹³ ›Italians in North Queensland‹, in: Melbourne Punch, Oct 1925, filed in Home and Territories Department: ›Corriere D'America‹ (USA) and ›Corriere de la Sera‹ (Italy), n.p.

¹¹⁴ The Bulletin, 25.12.1924, cited in Barry York: Empire and Race, p. 110.

¹¹⁵ Cf. Barry York: Empire and Race, pp. 114, 179 f.

¹¹⁶ ›South Johnstone Dispute‹, in: Worker, 23.05.1928.

ers' Committee and the Australian Workers' Union agreed that the farmers were nonetheless »in honour bound to honour it«.¹¹⁷

The Maltese, in the context of British preference, were constantly discriminated against by being considered too ›dark‹ to be eligible for the same treatment as fellow British-Australians. But in the context of defending the British bastion that was Australia, they were perceived to be »excellent antidotes to the yellow peril« in the prediction of alleged invasion by Asian countries.¹¹⁸ They were considered allies in the fight against hostile invasion, because they were European (or even British) and had experiences in acting as allies when the Australians were in Europe – especially during the First World War. Due to their geographically southern origin, they seemed used to labour in a hot climate and thus more able to populate the northern parts of the continent. The Maltese tried to avail themselves of this toehold to betterment by maintaining, that »[s]o thinly a populated Continent as ›White Australia‹ with the hordes of Asia over by, needs all the white blood it can get«, not only to »develop its resources« but also to »ensure the continuation of its present civilisation«.¹¹⁹

In an attempt to substantiate their ›racial‹ prestige – which comprised a mixture of racism (›white blood‹) and nationalism (›British subjects‹) – they also emphasized their superiority to non-British immigrants by stressing their British culture and their nation being »bred up to a British standard of living«. Thus, they claimed, the »conditions under which Italians, Spanish, Greek, and Slav immigrants work« in the sugar industry were hardly tolerable for them.¹²⁰ Furthermore, it was not a lower living standard or a deliberate undercutting of British wages but the Maltese being »cheated out of their dues« on the basis of their language skills that led to them working at less than award rates.¹²¹ They called to mind the collective experience of Gallipoli – a battle during the First World War that became an important event in the Australian community of shared memory – and the mutual acceptance as ›brothers‹ of the wounded Australian (and New Zealand) soldiers hospitalized in Malta.¹²²

¹¹⁷ ›Cane Cutting‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 23.05.1929 and ›Maltese Right‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 28.05.1929 (›honour‹). See also ›Foreign Labor and the Sugar Industry‹, in: Worker, 05.03.1925; ›Not Foreigners‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 10.01.1931.

¹¹⁸ Barry York: Empire and Race, p. 47.

¹¹⁹ Letter by Henry F. Bugeja (30.07.1924), in: Home and Territories Department: Letter re Maltese Immigration, n.p.

¹²⁰ The Daily Malta Chronicle, 19.01.1927, cited in Barry York: Empire and Race, p. 185.

¹²¹ Maltese Australian Workers' Union member cited in ›The Alien Problem‹, in: Worker, 28.05.1925.

¹²² Cf. Letter by Henry Casolani, Superintendent of Emigration in Malta (04.01.1929), in: Prime Minister's Department: Immigration Restriction Policy, n.p.; Home and Territories Department: Letters re Maltese Immigration.

In February 1928, the restriction on Maltese emigration was lifted, and half a year later a monthly stop at Malta on the waterway link between United Kingdom and Australia seemed to finally acknowledge the legitimacy of Maltese immigration.¹²³ Notwithstanding the removal of such obstacles, it was not until 1945 that Maltese were recognized as ›white‹ British subjects and their immigration was encouraged by the Australian government.¹²⁴

Consideration of these three periods of governmental treatment of the Maltese demonstrates an extreme case of both the malleability of ›whiteness‹, including its social construction, and the possibility of attribution and deprivation of ›racial‹ prestige. As southern Europeans the Maltese were deemed fit for hard work in the tropics and their working power inexpensive. The labour movement, in defence of British-Australian workers, zeroed in on the complexion of the Maltese. The Australian government, depending on the political situation, either followed these arguments or vindicated Maltese immigration on the basis of their ›brightening‹ status as British subjects.

These internal interferences which challenged and put to discussion the modes of transitions between ›whiteness‹ and ›non-whiteness‹ forfeit their dissonant effects on the occasion of the drowning ›white noise‹. Despite the partial denial of ›whiteness‹, under the perspective of a threatening Asian invasion and also in light of British imperial interest, Maltese British-related ›whiteness‹ as well as Italian Europeanness were considered adequate enough to contribute to the defence of Australia. Eventually, they were considered part of the ›bulwark‹ against the ›yellow peril‹ when they fostered the populating of the tropical ›empty North‹, which for a long time had been considered hostile to life and work for ›the white man‹.

4.2 ›Not a White Man's Work‹:

Labour's Campaign for ›White‹ Sugar

While southern Europeans were considered ›white‹ in the eyes of legislation, the advocates of the labour movement demanded the preferential employment of unemployed British-Australians. The perceived ›white‹ unfitness for life and labour in the tropics, and the ideological connection of cane sugar produced by ›coloured‹ workers, deterred ›white‹ workers

¹²³ Cf. Barry York: *Empire and Race*, p. 111.

¹²⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 195 f.

engagement with field labour. Additionally, benefits from the employment of ›coloured‹ labourers accrued for skilled European workers already employed. Taking into consideration the forming of a ›white‹ consciousness in the working classes sheds light on the history of the labour movement and their struggles against, what they deemed, unfair competition by ›non-white‹ workers. Labour's fight for a ›white‹ sugar industry was first merely ideological, then, eventually, effectuated by statutory means. In the end, the labour movement's drive to expel ›coloured‹ sugar labourers from both the labour market and the country were addressed in one of the two acts that were the mainstay of the ›white Australia policy‹, the Pacific Island Labourers Act; and the maintenance of ›white Australia‹ became the top priority of the Australian Labor Party.

When the First Fleet arrived on the shores of Australia, it brought with it the people who were supposed to work in the cultivation and processing of sugar cane: the convicts. Expurgated from the society in Britain, they were sentenced to work off their crimes far away from their former centre of life. They were the very group of the convict society that was deemed lowest in status, an experience the convicts could physically make every day in the form of hard labour.

Their depraved social position was not even differentiated based on the fact that in the beginning of the Australian colonial system ›black‹ convicts were amongst them.¹²⁵ Yet outwardly, the convict society constituted itself in distinction to the native population. In the context of violent encounters with Aborigines, the convicts were able to experience social inclusion on the occasion of genocidal massacres on the colonial frontier from which they, though being heavily involved, departed with impunity.¹²⁶ One of the incidences in which impunity of non-native offenders was questioned for the first time was the ›Myall Creek‹ massacre in 1838 when, after the first verdict of not guilty was returned, the accused were sentenced to death. The coverage of the trial against the murderous stockmen nonetheless revealed the prevailing opinion about the status of Aborigines and, at the same time, gave evidence about the clear-cut juxtaposition of convict society and native societies. One newspaper listed the »Europeans killed by aboriginal natives« and called upon the government to »protect the white population«, another presumed the court to have had a »previously formed determination never to bring a white man to the gallows for the murder of an Aboriginal black« and quoted a juror who saw the Aborigines »as a set

¹²⁵ See subchapter 2.4 ›An Article of Real Necessity‹.

¹²⁶ Cf. Ben Kiernan: *Blood and Soil*, pp. 254 ff. See also subchapter 3.1 ›White Noise‹.

of monkeys« – »the earlier they are exterminated [...] the better«. ¹²⁷ A »solidarity of racial feelings« found expression in an »alliance of all classes« for the purpose of taking (allegedly rightful) possession of the whole continent. ¹²⁸ The »Black Association«, formed by the landed classes interested in the expansion of the colonial frontier, provided not only ideological but also financial support for their henchmen. ¹²⁹ In consequence of the events surrounding the trial, the attorney-general excoriated the fact that »gentlemen of rank associated themselves together«, »stretch[ed] a protecting hand over the convicts in their acts of aggression« and, by declaring »that it was a meretorious circumstance«, encouraged them to »destroy the blacks«. ¹³⁰ Therefore, the racist symbolic capital granted in the context of these conflicts manifested itself in the distinction to the indigenous people, and its accumulation meant a social inclusion into the ›white‹ society, in which the convicts otherwise were, if anything, mere fringe dwellers.

After the end of convict transportation, ex-convicts and other labourers had to discover that their accumulated racist symbolic capital was not actually convertible into wages. When the colonial Australian labour market was entered by Chinese immigrants, the ›white‹ workers saw themselves as victims of the employers' preference for ›cheap labour‹. In their agitation against these ›alien‹ labourers, class consciousness gradually developed and drew on the unifying virtue of ›whiteness‹ in dissociation from the Chinese workers. It was on the goldfields of Victoria that the conflicts between Europeans and Asians culminated with the Eureka Stockade. This was not only »the first instance of an Australian rebellion against colonial authority« but also »initiate[d] the first organised racist campaign against the Chinese«. ¹³¹ During the subsequent decades, ›white‹ class consciousness was rehearsed and consolidated in situations when the Australian labour movement clashed with allegedly ›cheap labour‹ and ›unfair‹ competition – as in the case of large strikes, for instance the ›Seamen's Strike‹ in 1878, the ›Maritime Strike‹ in 1890, and the ›Shearers' Strike‹ in 1891. ¹³²

¹²⁷ (Untitled), in: Sydney Herald, 10.12.1838 (›killed‹, ›protect‹); ›The Jury System‹, in: Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 11.12.1838 (›determination‹, ›monkeys‹, ›exterminated‹).

¹²⁸ Alexander T. Yarwood, Michael J. Knowling: Race Relations in Australia, pp. 108 ff. (›solidarity‹, ›alliance‹); see also Jürgen Matthäus: Nationsbildung in Australien, pp. 33 f. and Wulf D. Hund: Die weiße Norm, pp. 191 f.; Bruce Elder: Blood on the Wattle, pp. 83 ff.; Stefanie Affeldt: A Paroxysm of Whiteness, pp. 103 ff.

¹²⁹ Richard Walsh: Australia Observed, p. 431; Alexander T. Yarwood, Michael J. Knowling: Race Relations, p. 107 (›Black Association‹).

¹³⁰ ›Law‹, in: Australian, 17.11.1838 (misspelling in original).

¹³¹ Lars Jensen: Unsettling Australia, p. 141.

¹³² For the ›Seamen's Strike‹, see Andrew Markus: Fear & Hatred, pp. 86 f.; Raymond Markey: The Making of The Labor Party, p. 288; see also subchapter 3.4 ›The Yellow

The labour movement's ›racially‹ exclusive self-definition as a ›white‹ movement was fully developed when, at the end of the nineteenth century, the failed attempt to make the ›black‹ sugar industry ›white‹ was summarized with the words that »[i]n all tropical countries of the civilized earth [...] the nigger, or the coolie does the work in the cane fields«; even »in America, the land of the free, who grows the cotton and the cane? Not the white man, for it would kill him«.¹³³ In the same vein, the proponents of beet sugar would later argue, that it was not possible that »white labour could take the place of black in growing sugar cane [...] because during certain seasons of the year the heat was so oppressive that white men could not stand it«.¹³⁴

The cane fields of southern Queensland and northern New South Wales could have proved obsolete the necessity of the connection between sugar cane and ›coloured‹ labourers. But the maintenance of what the employers considered ›cheap and reliable labour‹ was in their interest. From the start of the commercial sugar production, it was »believed that white labour would not answer, in the sugar cane plantations on the hot and unhealthy coast lands«.¹³⁵ In the same vein, publications voicing the belief of agricultural employers stated that it was »generally acknowledged by those who are competent to express an opinion« that, based on their inability or unwillingness to work in north Queensland, »white labour will never serve the planter within the tropics«.¹³⁶ »White labour« was thought to be »too dear, too irregular and not sufficiently adapted to the work required of it between the 20th and the 29th degrees of southern latitude«; so clearly »[w]orking under a tropical sun is not a white man's work«.¹³⁷

Walter Maxwell, director of the Queensland sugar experiment stations and commissioned by the Commonwealth government to investigate into the conditions of the industry, emphasized in his report on the cane sugar industry, that it was »not a matter of abstract value, but of fitness for the purpose and the place«. He condoned the ›white‹ tropical unfitness by likening the European and the Pacific Islander to two different members of the genus *Equus*. When he likened the ›white‹ workers to horses and the

Curse«. For the ›Maritime Strike‹, see Brian Fitzpatrick: *A Short History of the Labour Movement*, pp. 70 ff. For the ›Shearers' Strike‹, see *ibid.*, pp. 74 ff.; Clement Semmler: *Some Notes on the Literature of the Shearers' Strikes of 1891 and 1894*.

¹³³ Aleck[sander] J. Ivimey: *All About Queensland* (1893), cited in Barry York: *Empire and Race*, p. 10.

¹³⁴ ›To Start the Beet Sugar Industry«, in: *Morwell Advertiser*, 16.06.1905 (›heat‹).

¹³⁵ ›The General Election«, in: *Darling Downs Gazette and General Advertiser*, 19.09.1868.

¹³⁶ ›Agricultural«, in: *Queenslander*, 08.09.1883.

¹³⁷ (Untitled), in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16.11.1871 (›dear‹); ›Queensland Sugar Estates and Tropical Labour«, in: *Pall Mall Gazette* (UK), 21.05.1892 (›tropical sun‹).

›coloured‹ workers to mules, he claimed that: »the one had greater powers of organisation and competence, but in certain climatic conditions, the other was more economical and had more stamina«. ¹³⁸ Maxwell further reported the unreliability and instability of ›white‹ labour in the tropical parts of Queensland. He, however, did not depict it as general weakness of the ›whites‹ but blamed it on climatic conditions. Other than the Asians and especially the Pacific Islander, the Europeans were unfit for agricultural work in such latitudes. ¹³⁹ This also allowed for the crediting to the Pacific Islander of a superior work quality in a confined space (tropical agriculture) without questioning overall inferiority to Europeans. Using biology with social relativization, he reasoned that though »vastly superior to and economically more valuable in general than the mule«, the »denseness, the endurance, and the longsuffering of the ass« makes the latter better fit to the purpose of working in a warmer climate. ¹⁴⁰ Nonetheless, underneath the superficially merely labour-economic deliberation, discriminatory intentions shimmered through. The comparison evokes the pictures of the ›white‹ man as a noble steed versus the ›coloured‹ man as a mere beast of burden – which, furthermore, as a mule lacked ›purity of breeding‹ and was thus a harbinger, if not an incarnation, of miscegenation.

There were, however, those who had adverse opinions. The proponents of Australia as a ›white‹ bastion in the South Pacific, those wanting to strengthen its position as an »isolated outpost of western civilisation« as well as the labour movement propagated demands for the employment of European workers and issued calls for settlement in the northern regions. ¹⁴¹ An article in the newspaper of the mid-eighteen sixties incited British settlers from the southern settlements at Sydney to »go north« and come »over the border« to engage in Queensland's agriculture. More than only strengthening the influence of this new Australian colony over the others by populating it and developing its trade, the employment of European labourers in the sugar industry would send an important message in favour of the end of slave labour. The production of sugar with »free European labor in a free country«, it was argued, would »do more towards setting the vexed questions of slavery, and of so-called cheap colored labor, than all the bloodshed, and horror, and misery, of the present unnatural American war«. ¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Doug Hunt: *Exclusivism and Unionism*, p. 85.

¹³⁹ Cf. Walter Maxwell: *Cane Sugar Industry of Australia*, p. 7.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Andrew Markus: *Of Continuities and Discontinuities*, p. 178 (›outpost‹).

¹⁴² ›Reflections – To Our Sydney Friends‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 17.05.1865.

John Dunmore Lang, clergyman, political activist and proponent of European labour in the production of cotton and sugar in Queensland, blatantly neglected the presence of and contribution by Pacific Islanders – which he was very well aware of given his commendation of sugar planter George Raff's treatment of the Islanders he employed – and maintained, that the »supply of these tropical products [sugar and cotton] by white labour in our colonies constituted [...] an era in the history of civilization«. ¹⁴³ Successful cultivation of »cotton, sugar and other tropical products that are elsewhere raised almost exclusively by coloured and slave labour« would give evidence of the »perfect suitableness of the soil and climate for the growth by means of European and British labourers«. By doing so, it was supposed to »create a counterpoise [...] to negro slavery«. ¹⁴⁴

Edward W. Knox – founder and manager of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, and Angus Gibson, sugar planter, sugar representative for Queensland and founder of the Sugar Producers and Manufacturers Union – claimed, that it was not »impossible to cultivate sugar with European labour« no matter in what climate as long as the workers were »well paid«, thus giving the issue a class instead of a ›race‹ perspective. ¹⁴⁵

A reader of the ›Worker‹, the major mouthpiece for the labour movement in Queensland, went one step further and remarked that the »old parrot-cry« of Europeans not being suitable for work in the tropics was outdated since at the new settlement at Watawa, east of Bundaberg, »not only the men but their wives, sisters, and daughters« worked in the cane fields. ¹⁴⁶ Another correspondent considered it a matter of suitable accommodation and wages evidenced »every day in the year« in Queensland sugar districts, »where white men may be seen at such work as scrub-cleaning, timber-getting, weeding-cane, planting-can, cutting and loading, ploughing, etc.«. Since these men were »working their own farms«, »under prospects greatly in advance of those which lie in before the kanaka«, the strategy should be an improvement of living conditions and settlement in the north. ¹⁴⁷

When, due to the restrictions on Asian immigration, the sugar planters were forced to look for new places of recruitment, attempts to interest

¹⁴³ For Lang on Raff, see his letter to the editor ›Cotton and Sugar‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 03.10.1868.

¹⁴⁴ John Dunmore Lang: Queensland, p. vii. For the cultivation of sugar cane by free Europeans, see also pp. 25, 137, 283 f.

¹⁴⁵ ›Out of Their Own Mouths‹, in: Worker, 09.03.1901. For Knox, see Martha Rutledge: Knox, Edward William; for Gibson, see Herbert J. Gibbney: Gibson, Angus.

¹⁴⁶ ›Mail Bag‹, in: Worker, 15.02.1896.

¹⁴⁷ ›Sugar and White Labour‹, in: Worker, 17.07.1897.

European emigrants reached new heights. British newspapers advertised the opportunity for labourers to »turn our millions of acres of wilderness into fruitful fields«¹⁴⁸ and emphasized the »excellent openings for farmers with a little capital«.¹⁴⁹ In 1899, the Queensland government even commissioned a film team to produce one-minute clips of sugar and wheat harvest in order to draw interest in Britain for Queensland agricultural life.¹⁵⁰ Overall, efforts to recruit German or Scandinavian workers in larger numbers were in vain, and interested British recruits were deferred by British newspapers telling tales of »men who have worked at the sugar plantations [...], full of dust, not a breath of air, with sun burning over their heads, and had to sleep in a miserable hut at night [...] covered with insects, and all for 15s a week and their ›tucker‹ (which was salt, beef, damper, tea and sugar)«, adding how these »disappointed people [...] all wished themselves home again«.¹⁵¹

In contrary to this, European workers who had jobs in the sugar industry were well off. With the amendment of the Pacific Island Labours Act in 1884,¹⁵² the government directly interceded in the social relations of the Queensland industry and established a statutory stipulation of the ›colour line‹ in the sugar industry. Henceforth, only ›white‹ workers were admitted to skilled tasks, supervisory jobs and work in the sugar mills.¹⁵³ A fast breaching of class boundaries was thus accomplished in the case of the ›white‹ workers becoming overseers and managers, later acquiring land of their own. This ›lift effect‹ did not go unnoticed by contemporaries, who saw »it being well proved to-day that, far from interfering with the legitimate occupation of the whites, the assistance of black labour on work that the whites refuse to perform, serves on the contrary to give employment to thousands of Europeans«.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁸ ›Emigration to Queensland‹, in: Daily News (UK), 25.12.1872.

¹⁴⁹ ›Information for Emigrants‹, in: Glasgow Herald (UK), 01.04.1896; the same article ›Information for Emigrants‹, in: Aberdeen Weekly Journal (UK), 02.04.1896.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Ross Fitzgerald, Lyndon Megaritty, David Symons: Made in Queensland, p. 65.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Loretta V. Baldassar: Italians in Australia, p. 852; ›The Unemployed and Australia‹, in: Liverpool Mercury, 07.04.1885.

¹⁵² Cf. Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1880 Amendment Act of 1884.

¹⁵³ Cf. Adrian Graves: Cane and Labour, p. 204.

¹⁵⁴ ›The Beet-Sugar Industry. Part III‹, in: Tuapeka Times (NZ), 30.05.1896 (›well proved‹). Ulrich Beck coined the term ›Fahrstuhleffekt‹ for a collective (social) increase which benefits a larger group of people, without changing the relative inequalities within the group. See id.: Risikogesellschaft, p. 122. See also ›Some Factors relating to the Cane-Sugar Industry of Australia‹, in: Queenslander, 31.08.1901 that described the general segregation in the cane field – »several kinds of employment [which are] being reserved for the selection of the white labourer – but also emphasized that positions in ›field work [...] that is performed by use of implements, and which commands a higher rate of compensation‹ were also available for European labourers.

In international comparison, the wages of the European cane cutters in Queensland came off well against those in Hawaii and Louisiana, and within the sugar industry they were able to convert their racist symbolic capital into higher wages, actual wages of ›whiteness‹. ›White‹ workers in the cane fields earned about two times the Pacific Islanders' wage but only half the average wage of mill hands.¹⁵⁵

The fostering of ›white‹ employment was further substantiated by legislation that was supposed to encourage the abolition of employment of Pacific Islanders in the mid-eighteen eighties. When the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and other holders of large plantations had to subdivide their properties in the context of depression in the Queensland sugar industry, government-funded central mills were erected.¹⁵⁶ Assistance was granted to enable small farmers to cultivate sugar cane without owning a manufacturing plant or a mill, but furthermore the proviso for this support was that only ›white-grown‹ cane was allowed to be crushed there.¹⁵⁷ The vast majority of sugar cultivation, however, was still done under the employment of Pacific Islanders. On grounds of the imminent demographic change, not only in Queensland but also in the composition of the sugar workforce based on the Pacific Island Labourers Act 1901, the notion that the sugar industry firmly relied on the employment of Pacific Islanders found expression in several contemporary cartoons.

The ›Bulletin‹ (1901) conveyed the perception that the sugar industry was firmly resting on the shoulders of ›black labour‹. This finds expression under perspectives of ›class‹ and ›race‹ (Fig. 26).¹⁵⁸ The sugar industry



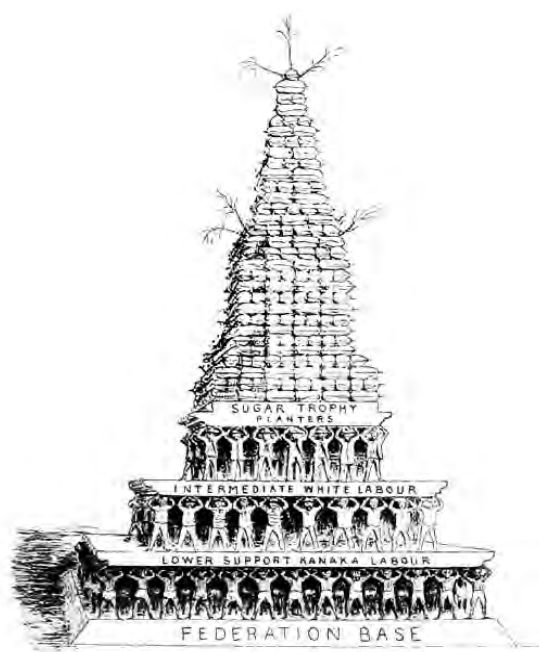
Fig. 26 – ›Black‹ worker, ›white‹ capitalist:
Role allocation in the sugar industry

¹⁵⁵ For the wages in 1901, see Walter Maxwell: Cane Sugar Industry of Australia, pp. 7, 10.

¹⁵⁶ For the central milling system, see Adrian Graves: Cane and Labour, pp. 23 ff.

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Government Intelligence & Tourist Bureau: Queensland Sugar Industry, p. 130; Frederick C. P. Curlewis: The Australian Cane Sugar Industry, p. 7; Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders, Kathryn Cronin: Race Relations in Colonial Queensland, p. 156.

¹⁵⁸ ›Fat in Peril‹, in: Bulletin, 07.09.1901, reprinted in Nick Dyrenfurth, Marian Quartly: Fat Man v. ›The People‹, p. 53.



is depicted along the lines of the ›Fat Man‹, representing capitalist interests usually at the expense of the workers. In this case the wealth springs from the exploitation of ›cheap labour‹, exemplified by his belly which is labelled »nigger-nourished prosperity« and reminds of the circumstance that ›blackness‹ was a ›racial‹ but also a social description as it could be ascribed to anyone working menial jobs.¹⁵⁹ The ›black‹ labourer is barefooted, famished and on the verge of exhaustion. His depiction partly follows stereotypical drawings of African Americans with exaggerated lips, and thus emphasizes the alleged links of the Islanders' employment in the sugar industry with African-American slavery.

An anonymous drawing of the same year depicts a functional and a collapsed pyramid, both representing the sugar industry (Fig. 27).¹⁶⁰ In

¹⁵⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 53.

¹⁶⁰ ›The Sugar Industry with normal division of labour / without its natural support‹, drawing received by the Prime Minister on 07.03.1901, archived in Department of External Affairs: Sugar Industry and the Question of Coloured Labour. There also the following labels.



*Fig. 27 – Collapsing sugar pyramid:
The breaking-away of foreign labour*

the functional pyramid »Lower Support Kanaka Labour« was seen as the »natural support« of the sugar industry. Standing firmly on the »Federation Base«, it sustained the numerically inferior »Intermediate White Labour« which, being carried by »Kanaka Labour«, is not only uplifted but placed in a higher strata of the pyramids hierarchy and is thus located above the mere »lower support labour«. The towering sugar bags at the top of the pyramid are held up by the »Sugar Trophy Planters«, their prosperity is symbolized by burgeoning sugar cane.

The collapsed pyramid on the right is standing »on Federation Base or not«, symbolizing its unsteady governmental backing. The sugar workers from the Pacific Islands standing at attention on the left-hand side have now made way for »European Labour Only«. The ›European labour‹ is barely able to discharge its duty: workers are sitting on the floor, chatting or waving others good-bye, while the rest struggles to carry the »Sugar Trophy Planter«. These, like the field workers, have decreased in number and are struggling to keep control of the sugar bags they carry overhead.

These bags no longer constitute a well-arranged, soaring accumulation but reflect chaotic conditions in the industry. The Queensland sugar bags are crushed by the burdens of »Bounty« payments, »Fed[eral]« regulations and »Foreign« sugar without any signs of prosperity. This latter is a dysfunctional sugar industry without its »normal division of labour« and »without its natural support«. The cartoon not only cautioned against the abolition of the Pacific Islanders' employment but also against the consequential dissolution of the strict hierarchy in the sugar industry organized along the unambiguous ›colour line‹, which divided menial and skilled tasks. After the disappearance of the ›racial‹ divide, even the class structure would crumble under the absence of overseers and closed ranks of workers.

In the early times of the Pacific Islanders' employment, opposition was less working-class based but was largely motivated by missionary or commercial intentions. It was rather the perceived threat by Asians and ›coolies‹ and the ›capitalist class‹ which employed them and fostered their immigration that worried the workers. Consequently, it was not until the eighteen nineties that Pacific Islanders were understood as a being intolerably detrimental to the ›white‹ working class.¹⁶¹

One example for the initial oscillation between class and ›race‹ struggle and for the sporadic fraternization of workers against employers was an incident in Bundaberg in 1882. Five hundred Singhalese and twelve Bengalese workers were »engaged by desperate sugar planters« during an episode of labour shortage. The Singhalese were designated for labour in the cane fields and the Bengalese as overseers; but both groups refused to march to their destination. In the quarrel with the employers, ›white‹ members of the Anti-Coolie League cast their lot with the non-Europeans and accompanied them to a nearby hotel.

A public meeting was subsequently announced during which a Bengalese man climbed the platform to address »an overflow white crowd [who] listened sympathetically and responsively to the detailed experiences of a hapless ›coloured‹ worker«, who reported how he and his fellow workers had been »decoyed, kidnapped and maltreated by the recruiters«. The arrival of the police and the arrest of a Singhalese spokesman caused a violent reaction from a crowd of ›white‹ and non-European workers. Eventually, the symbolical burning of an effigy of one of the planters was accompanied by a firing of the sugar cane by Pacific Islanders on a neighbouring plantation. This incident showed, that at (scarce) times ›racial‹

¹⁶¹ Cf. Joe Harris: *The Struggle against Pacific Island Labour*, pp. 40 f.

barriers were indeed transgressed in favour for a short collective working class campaign against capital.¹⁶²

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, those workers whom employers considered ›cheap and reliable‹ became »cheap and nasty« in the eyes of the labour movement.¹⁶³ The presence of Pacific Islanders in Queensland towns and cane fields was increasingly frowned upon. The depression phase of the eighteen nineties brought ›white‹ workers in direct contact as equal labourers with the Pacific Islanders upon their commencement of work as cane cutters.¹⁶⁴

The ideological connection between the work in the cane fields and low-skilled, ›non-white‹ ›cheap labour‹ was thought to prove detrimental to the ›white‹ workers' standing. When Europeans worked alongside non-Europeans in the cane fields, it supposedly became clear that »between the white employer and the black employed no intermediate class can exist«, since employment conditions would be based on the »black man's wage« and required learning to be »subservient and humble«; all conditions that were unreasonable for the Europeans. This would virtually make the ›white‹ worker »a nigger in everything except colour«.¹⁶⁵ These statements exemplify the possibility of interference and overlapping of cultural, social and ›racial‹ arguments, which then resulted in ›black men‹ becoming an entirely social ascription. Consequently, it seemed obvious to contemporaries that voluntary employment of European workers was impossible as long as labourers from the Pacific Islands were still present in the cane fields.

This increase in hostility towards the Pacific Islanders coincided with the foundation of the Labor Party in Queensland in the last decade of the nineteenth century, which henceforth campaigned for a ›white‹ Australia and benefitted from the »cross-class consensus on the desirability of a racially discriminatory immigration policy«.¹⁶⁶ Therefore, the reinstatement of the Pacific Islanders' introduction to Queensland in the early eighteen nineties was a heavy setback in the labour movement's campaign for European employment in the sugar industry, rendering a ›whitening‹ of the industry impossible, for the time being at any rate.

¹⁶² For this incident, see Raymond Evans: *Keeping Australia Clean White*, pp. 182 ff., 183 (›overflow‹), 184 (›decoyed‹).

¹⁶³ ›The Alien Question‹, in: *Worker*, 22.10.1898. See also Joe Harris: *The Struggle against Pacific Island Labour*, p. 41.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Verity Burgmann: *Capital and Labour*, p. 30; Adrian Graves: *Colonialism and Indentured Labour in the Western Pacific*, p. 257.

¹⁶⁵ ›Coloured contact with whites‹, in: *Worker*, 17.10.1896.

¹⁶⁶ Andrew Markus: *Australian Race Relations*, p. 114. See also id.: *Fear & Hatred*, pp. 200 ff., 221 f.

In 1892, the ›Worker‹ published a cartoon titled ›The Bushman's Future‹ showing the perceived Queensland labour situation (Fig. 28 a).¹⁶⁷ It depicts a (social) landscape where all jobs are already occupied by either the Pacific Islanders (cane cutting) or the Chinese (mining) and not even as a shearer or station hand need the ›white‹ swagman apply. With all the jobs taken by ›coloured‹ labour, the ›white‹ bushman has to face his inevitable yet undeserved fate: unemployment. Here the employees have renounce the ›white‹ alliance united by ›race‹, which customarily overrode class distinction, in favour of economic capital.

In ›A Grim and Dastardly Reception‹ (Fig. 28 b), the ›Worker‹ (1892) takes this situation a step further and greets the immigrant family freshly off the ship with an enactment of what lies ahead in their future.¹⁶⁸ With the sticker on his bag, the British immigrant (the S.S.



Fig. 28 a – No country for ›white‹ men:
Australia's detrimental employment policies

¹⁶⁷ ›The Bushman's Future‹, cover of the Worker, 14.05.1892.

¹⁶⁸ ›A Grim and Dastardly Reception‹, cover of the Worker, 03.12.1892. The caption reads: »MOREHEAD (to immigrants): Come along, you boobies. You thought this was the Working Men's Paradise and you were going to have rosy times, did you? Well, you're here all right! You've knocked up a big cheque in passage money for the B.I. Company; and now you'll be taken in hand by our grim friend, STARVATION. [One hundred and forty-four immigrants for Queensland arrived per R.M.S. India at Thursday Island, November 26. – Daily Paper]«. The ›Working Men's Paradise‹ refers to the recently published book by William Lane: The Workingman's Paradise.

India plied between Australia and London)¹⁶⁹ is already marked as being ›not wanted‹. Boyd D. Morehead, the Premier of Queensland, welcomes

the passengers, showing them a sign, which is supposed to tell the worker that, in the very moment his arrival, he was already undercut by the ›cheap‹ ›raw kanakas‹ and by the ›Japs, Malays & Coolies‹, who are also ›in demand‹. The spectre of ›Starvation‹ is lingering over the scene, and Samuel Griffith's sign reveals, that the ›white workers‹ were only brought to Australia ›to lower wages‹ and tip the scales on the labour market in favour of the employers. In this regard, the ›white‹ workers are not introduced to support a ›racially‹ homogeneous society, but by their arrival contribute to the oversupply of workers and thus,



Fig. 28 b – No country for ›white‹ men:
An uncordial welcome

facilitating an intensified class struggle, to the process of wage-reduction for ›white labour‹.

Little victories were celebrated: ›Bundaberg goes white‹, rejoiced the ›Worker‹ at Labor's victory in one electoral district which was ›received [...] with exaltation by the White Queensland man, and with bitter surprise by the Black Labour traitors‹.¹⁷⁰ Samuel Griffith maintained a different view about the reinstatement of the immigration of Pacific Islanders. For

¹⁶⁹ Cf. ›Shipping‹, in: Advertiser, 02.08.1894.

¹⁷⁰ ›Bundaberg goes white‹, in: Worker, 18.06.1892.



Fig. 29 – Kanakilgriff slave gang:
›White‹ workers leaving the country

him it was the »insensate action of the so-called Labour party« which refused to »allow white labour to do the work« in the cane fields.¹⁷¹

In the following year, the ›Bulletin‹ published a cartoon depicting the likely departure of the ›white‹ workers of Queensland in consequence of re-installation of Pacific Island labour migration (Fig. 29).¹⁷² Samuel Griffith is here depicted holding a whip and Thomas McIlwraith is acting as the flagbearer. Workers of all kinds are pinioned and shackled like slaves and walking together into their unfree future. The depiction makes it quite clear that the continued presence of ›non-white‹ labourers would result in a devaluation of European workers to the lowest standards. Con-

¹⁷¹ ›Our Kith and Kin‹, in: Pall Mall Gazette (UK), 06.05.1892.

¹⁷² ›The Argentina Emigration Scheme‹, in: Bulletin, 1892, reprinted i.a. in Patricia Rolfe: The Journalistic Javelin, p. 143. The caption reads: »The Argentina Emigration Scheme (1892). Chorus from the boats: So long, boys. We're all right«, and alludes to the plans of William Lane and his fellows to establish a ›New Australia‹ in South America, firstly intended in Argentina. For this, see ›Labor Colonies‹, in: Barrier Miner, 12.01.1893; Lloyd Ross: William Lane and the Australian Labor Movement, pp. 164-210. For ›Kanakilgriff‹ as a disdainful label for the Queensland government, see also ›Notes and Comments‹, in: Western Champion and General Advertiser for the Central-Western Districts, 07.06.1892; ›Local and General News‹, in: Warwick Examiner, 18.06.1892.



Fig. 30 – History repeats itself:
Pacific Islanders enter the labour market

sequently, the situation for British-Australian workers, whose opportunity to revolt against their situation and their employers was hindered by the fellow workers from the Pacific Islands, had allegedly so far deteriorated that there was nothing left for the reputable ›white‹ worker other than to leave for a less anti-labour country. The re-installation of the Island labour migration meant the further compelling into submission of labour and the disempowerment of unions and labour movement.

The ›Landing of ›Forefathers‹ in Queensland‹ alluded to the labourers' own roots: the transportation of convict labour to the colony (Fig. 30).¹⁷³ The sign implanted on the beach invites »Nigger Labour« even »with a ›past‹« to join the workforce. This notion of the sugar workers as ›niggers‹ is further underlined by their depiction reminding of stereotypical images of African Americans with exaggerated lips and effeminated by their adornment with earrings, anklets and bracelets. Further, the depiction

¹⁷³ ›Landing of the ›Forefathers‹ in Queensland‹, in: Bulletin, 1895, drawn by ›Hop‹; reprinted i.a. in Jonathan King: Stop Laughing This is Serious, p. 54. The caption reads: »The South Sea Islanders now deport their criminals to Queensland where they are ›absorbed‹ by the Labor market«.

of the Pacific Islanders swimming ashore veiled the means by which the labourers were brought into the country. But even more, it criticized the decision by the Government of Griffith to recommence the labour trade and undercut the ›white‹ labour market once again.

In the same vein, ›Thrice Happy Dreams‹ depicts Premier of Queensland Hugh Nelson and his alleged dream of a suitable Queensland scene (Fig. 31).¹⁷⁴ Nelson is standing on a rum keg, a sugar-product, in front of a cane field. Playing the first and only fiddle, he is surrounded by rejoicing Pacific Islanders who play other instruments or bring on foodstuff. They are celebrating their victory over European workers by chanting the »Kanakan Lament: ›White men go, but we go on for ever, but we flow on for ever‹«. At the bottom of the dream scene, the ›Worker‹ has to bear witness; he is gagged by a cane stalk and pinioned to the ground by sugar knives. Hugh Nelson – though he was opposing both the separation of Queensland and the publicly associated notion to form a northern state with Pacific Island workers in the cane fields – was also an opponent of the federation, which for the labour movement in Queensland seemed the only way to progress into a pro-(›white‹)-labour future. Federation and the notion of ›white Australia‹ seemed the counter-movement to the continued employment of ›non-white‹ workers in the sugar industry. Therefore, Nelson, who was also the primary part of the »Queensland Kanaka Government«, epitomized the diametrically opposite way of proceeding.¹⁷⁵

Griffith's volte-face in the decision to abolish the Pacific Island labour trade was furthermore interpreted as a sign of a growing distinction by the capitalist from the working class. While class division in Australia initially remained relatively amorphous, after the fall of the sugar prices on the world market in the eighteen eighties and the resulting inability and desire of the employers to grant any more concessions, caused the labour movement to become increasingly popular and the abyss between working and ruling class to broaden.

»There is no brotherhood between capital and labour, any more than there is a common interest between the vampire and the sleeping Indian«, claimed the ›Bulletin‹ as early as 1888.¹⁷⁶ It thus implied the divisiveness of a community which should be united by ›race‹ and ›whiteness‹, instead of being divided by class. Furthermore, by making the capitalists the vampires and the labourers the defenceless victims, they also hinted at the ex-

¹⁷⁴ ›Thrice Happy Dreams‹, in: Worker, 26.12.1896.

¹⁷⁵ ›Socialist League News‹, in: Worker, 26.12.1896.

¹⁷⁶ The Bulletin, 11.08.1888, reprinted in Robert N. Ebbels: The Australian Labour Movement, p. 162.



Fig. 31 – Labor's nightmare:
Continued employment of Pacific Islanders

exploitative relationship which consequently ensued. Meanwhile, the ›brotherhood‹ between the ›white‹ workers themselves was on the upgrade. The employers were aware of this, and a new disadvantageous factor for the employment of European workers emerged: the possibility of class struggle and workers' joint action in the cane fields. In the following, the focus turned from ›race‹ to ›class‹, and now the »most serious question about white labour on sugar plantations is not climate or wages, but whether or not white labour would try to virtually get control of the plantations by refusing to harvest the crop except upon their own terms«.¹⁷⁷

Already in April 1891, the first Federal Conference of the Australian Labor Party was held at Ballarat and the former Queensland association became an all-Australia organization.¹⁷⁸ In the eyes of the labour movement, the continuation of the Pacific Islanders' immigration was a betrayal of them by Griffith and part of the capitalists' plan to turn Queensland into

¹⁷⁷ ›White Labour in Queensland Canefields‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 04.01.1894.

¹⁷⁸ This party was »the only Australian party with continuous organization outdating the creation of the Commonwealth in 1901«, Louise Overacker: The Australian Labor Party, p. 678; cf. Brian Fitzpatrick: A Short History of the Australian Labor Movement, p. 100.

a »plantation state«. ¹⁷⁹ This desire by the »black labour party« would cause a landslide change in the class structure, because »the whole middle class – small traders, artisans, white servants – will be crushed out or reduced to the conditions of mean whites, and Queensland, glorious Queensland [...] will become a paradise of the Devil, inhabited by two classes, the McIlwraith capitalist and the savage with a weak condition«. ¹⁸⁰

The ›Worker‹ appreciated the labour movement's attempt to fight »for a place in the sun for the toilers of Queensland« and the »right to live and work for all«. ¹⁸¹ With the majority of the sugar workers not being European, and the labour movement's condemnation of ›foreign‹ workers as undermining the ›white‹ working classes' negotiation bases, unionization of sugar workers did not take place until the deportation of the Pacific Islanders. The first emergence of sugar workers' unions was located in Mackay and Cairns in 1905 and the Amalgamated Workers' Association was founded a year later. ¹⁸² Union membership continued to be impossible for non-European workers. In 1894, the Australian Workers' Union's membership rules declared »all bona fide wage-earners, male or female« to be eligible, with the exception of »Chinese, Japanese, Kanakas, Afghans, and other colored aliens«. ¹⁸³ The exclusion of these supposedly »inferior racial groups« was based on a denial of the »requisite standard of humanity«, and the cultivation of an ›Australian feeling‹ became the first federal objective. ¹⁸⁴



Fig. 32 a – *Cleansing Australia:
A political platform*

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. See also Doug Hunt: *Exclusivism and Unionism*, p. 80.

¹⁸⁰ ›Queensland‹, in: *Argus*, 20.07.1886; ›The Premier's Manifesto‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 16.02.1892 (›black labour party‹); *The Bulletin*, 26.03.1892, reprinted in Robert N. Ebbels: *The Australian Labour Movement*, pp. 163 f. (›two classes‹).

¹⁸¹ *Australian Workers' Union: The Worker's First Seventy Years*, p. 10.

¹⁸² Cf. Doug Hunt: *Exclusivism and Unionism*, p. 89; Joe Harris: *The Struggle against Pacific Island Labour*, p. 47.

¹⁸³ Verity Burgmann: *Racism, Socialism, and the Labour Movement*, p. 41. See also Doug Hunt: *Exclusivism and Unionism*, p. 80; Jürgen Matthäus: *Nationsbildung in Australien*, p. 204; Henry Reynolds: *North of Capricorn*, p. 44.

¹⁸⁴ Doug Hunt: *Exclusivism and Unionism*, p. 80.

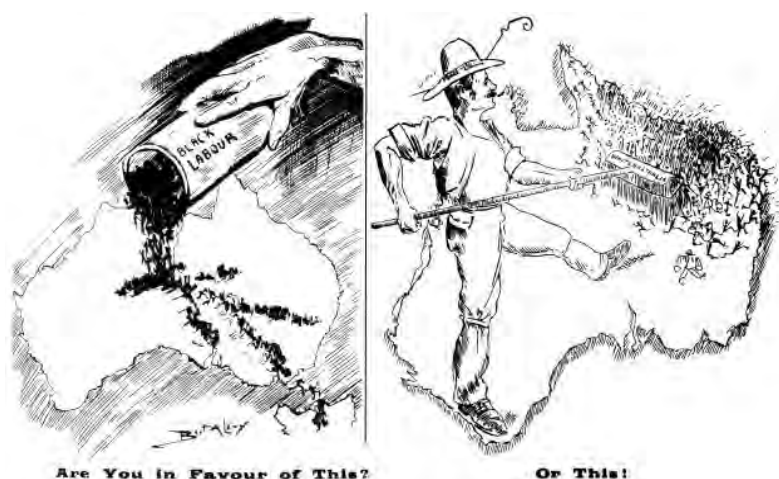


Fig. 32 b – Cleansing Australia:
Repatriation of Pacific Islanders

After the ›Bulletin‹ had already made clear in 1887 that they considered Australians to be confined to »[a]ll white men« who had shedded class-distinctional notions, adapted ideas of progression and spoken out against all kinds of ›coloured‹ settlers and workers,¹⁸⁵ its political counterpart chimed in with these exclusionist ideology. Labor's platform in 1899 provided for the abolition of ›coloured labour‹ as well as the exclusion and prevention of ›non-white‹ immigration. In the context of the labour movement's struggle for a ›white‹ Queensland sugar industry, it is small wonder that Labor's plank for the »total exclusion of coloured and other undesirable races« – which as the ›white Australia‹ ideal became the top priority of the Federated Parliamentary Labor Party after 1901 – was a proposal coming from Queensland.¹⁸⁶ Labor considered it necessary to purify or cleanse the continent of ›coloured‹ or ›black‹ labour with either brush of ›white Australia‹. On the left-hand side (Fig. 32 a), the ›Worker‹ (1900) depicts the ›white‹ worker – his hat is labelled »Labour« – as standing on the »Federal Platform« and being about to whitewash the whole continent of Australia with »White Labour«.¹⁸⁷ That the ›whiteness‹ of Australia has to emanate from Queensland (i.e. the ›whitening‹ of the sugar industry) is

¹⁸⁵ ›Australia for the Australians‹, in: Bulletin, 02.07.1887. See also subchapter 3.1 ›White Noise‹.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Ross McMullin: The Light on the Hill, pp. 43 ff., 44 (›exclusion‹).

¹⁸⁷ ›A White Australia‹, cover of the Worker, 27.01.1900.

underscored by the already shining north-eastern part of the depicted continent. On the right-hand side (Fig. 32 b), the ›Worker‹ (1901) lets ›Black Labour‹ pour into the country from the east (the Pacific Islands) which is threatening to distribute all over the continent, at the bottom already reaching Tasmania.¹⁸⁸ The solution is once again the ›white‹ labourer who, firmly standing on the Australian ground, is sweeping out the rather undefined ›black filth‹ with his broom of ›White Australia‹. This time, too, Queensland occupies a particular role in the cartoon as it is depicted as the last colony filled with ›non-white‹ people who are banished from the Australian continent via the north-eastern coast.

The ›purity‹ of Australia was not only called for on an economic basis but also overtly racistly motivated. John C. Watson, Labor leader and later Prime Minister of Australia, expressed his aversion for miscegenation when he warned of the ›possibility and probability of racial contamination‹.¹⁸⁹ Another Labor politician confirmed, that the ›chief objection is entirely racial‹.¹⁹⁰ The ›Worker‹ seconded the conflation of alleged cultural aspects with racist discrimination by asserting that a principle of ›white Australia‹ was needed solely because ›[c]oloured skins happen to coincide with low wages and still lower morality‹.¹⁹¹

The Laborites were not alone with this approach; the Conservatives tried a more subtle but similar policy: ›We simply cannot in practice exclude all coloured men from the country. What we must do is make Australia as unpleasant a place of residence for them as we can‹.¹⁹² In the context of Australian Federation, these proposals were soon turned into statutory reality. With the deportation of the Pacific Islanders induced by the Pacific Island Labourers Act 1901, the sugar growers were forced to abandon old models of employment and were supposed to turn to the recruitment of European workers. For the latter, however, the conditions of life and work in the cane fields were still far from satisfactory and the numbers of European cane cutters remained low. Due to these circumstances, the transformation from a ›black‹ to the desired ›white‹ sugar industry had only been ideologically completed.

The labour movement's conviction that sugar cane in the tropical regions could, and should, be cultivated and processed with the help of ›white‹ workers took a long time of persuasion and effort. It was even-

¹⁸⁸ ›Are you in favour of this? Or this!‹, in: Worker, 30.03.1901.

¹⁸⁹ Watson cited in Verity Burgmann: Racism, Socialism, and the Labour Movement, p. 41.

¹⁹⁰ George Pearce cited in Ross McMullin: The Light on the Hill, p. 47.

¹⁹¹ ›Political Pellets‹, in: Worker, 26.03.1904.

¹⁹² (Untitled), in: The North Queensland Herald, 27.02.1899.

tually achieved mainly with the aid of legislation – the Pacific Island Labourers Act 1901 – which effectively forced the employers to abandon the employment of Pacific Islanders. This implementation of the job clearance in the industry in favour of the employment of ›whites‹ was a first manifestation of the workers' successful investment of racist symbolic capital in the case of sugar. By upgrading ›race‹ over class and agitating against their ›coloured‹ competition, they ascertained their ›racial‹ prestige and maintained it against the alleged capitalist ›race‹ traitors. The ›white‹ workers would now not only be the producers of the demand for ›white‹ sugar but would physically produce the doubly ›white‹ sugar they had been fighting and campaigning for. Still, it took the monetary incitement of bounties paid for the cultivation of sugar cane solely with ›white‹ workers, and the self-assertion of a unionized workforce in the first year of the twentieth century, to accomplish a complete transformation to a sugar industry that employed virtually none but European workers.¹⁹³ Meanwhile, other sugar-producing industries in Australia attempted to institutionalize themselves as ›the white man's industry‹ but in terms of actual sugar output they remained far less successful.

4.3 ›Naturally a White Man's Industry‹: Beet Sugar versus Cane Sugar

At the time of Federation there was much dispute about how Australia would be able to secure a satisfying supply of sugar at an affordable price while at the same time considering the main objective of having a ›white Australia‹.

The emerging Victorian *beet sugar* industry attempted to establish itself as the only ›real‹ ›white‹ industry based on the tradition of growing sugar beet in Europe. Initially a matter of improving agricultural output and financial profit, the argument for beetroot cultivation soon fell in line with the overall desire to foster the settlement of ›suitable‹ demographic groups. As a consequence of the pending abolition of the Pacific Islanders' employment in the sugar industry, beet sugar was at times supposed to be a substitute that conformed to the ›white Australia‹ ideology. Like its European relative a century before, the Australian sugar beet triggered off a struggle between the two main kinds of sugar. But unlike the former, it

¹⁹³ See the information on the labour movement in the sugar industry after Federation and the story of the ›Sugar Strike‹ of 1911, in the subchapters 5.3 ›White Wages for White Australian Workers‹ and 5.4 ›Sweetening Product with Bitter Servitude‹.

proved to be inefficient and eventually lost the contest against its competitor from Queensland.

The *cane sugar* industry of New South Wales, on the other hand, was an immediate counterpoise to the Queensland sugar industry, and due to its (predominantly) European sugar farmers and workers also raised a claim to be the real, already existing ›white‹ cane sugar industry. While proponents of ›black labour‹ defended the need for ›coloured‹ workers with the argument of ›white‹ unfitness for work in the tropics but also with the ideological connection of sugar with ›non-white‹ labour, the northern sugar districts of New South Wales with its predominantly European labourers proved this connection faulty. The way to Federation was paved with debates about the abolition of intercolonial tariffs, the effects on the New South Wales sugar industry, and their repercussions for ›white Australia‹.

Beet Sugar

Intentions to grow beet sugar in Victoria were initially largely economic. With the implementation of ›white Australia‹, however, the notion of growing sugar with only ›white‹ labourers intensified. Reports from Europe – especially France and Germany – painted a picture of the beet sugar industry as a family-oriented enterprise that was less labour intense than cane cultivation. Offering an alternative to the Queensland cane sugar grown with ›coloured‹ workers from abroad, was not only supposed to reinforce the local industry and retain financial resources within Victoria.¹⁹⁴ Also, the establishment of a sugar industry relying on British-Australian workers was supposed to provide the consumer with a product that followed the idea of affordable ›white‹, locally-produced sugar instead of importing ›black-grown‹ sugar from overseas or foreign sugar from Germany. Allegedly, only cultivation of beet sugar, »that great white man's industry«, would enable Australia to do so.¹⁹⁵

Perhaps in reflection of their own unsuccessful attempts to grow beet sugar, attention in the eighteen forties was turned to a seemingly receding beet sugar industry in Europe. The »bubble of home-grown beet-sugar has burst in France«, informed the ›Sydney Morning Herald‹, and further claimed »that the best wisdom is [...] to trust to the canes of the tropics than to the beet-root of [France's] northern departments«.¹⁹⁶ This statement

¹⁹⁴ Cf. ›Tuesday, April 28, 1914‹, in: Ballarat Courier, 28.04.1914.

¹⁹⁵ Clement van de Velde: Kanaka Labour and the Commonwealth Sugar Supply, p. 12.

¹⁹⁶ ›French Sugar Duties‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 08.01.1844.

described the height of the decades-long competition between cane sugar and beet sugar which involved questions of colonial as well as intercolonial policies and was not won by the beet sugar until the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁹⁷ As in Australia, the beginning of the history of beet sugar was intertwined with the debate about the most economic and efficient way of sugar production. This, however, was far from being free of ideology and lobbyism. Not least because beet sugar, with its location of cultivation and processing in Europe, seemed to provide the solution to the problem of the presumed European incompatibility to tropical climates and to that of the disgraced employment of forced or unfree labour as well.

Though it was already discovered in Germany before the mid-eighteenth century and extraction was successfully accomplished on a larger scale in the mid-seventeen eighties, the industrial production of sugar from beetroot did not commence until the first decade of the nineteenth century.¹⁹⁸ Furthermore, it took an international conflict between colonial powers to start off the large-scale beet sugar production. The ›continental blockade‹, as decreed by Napoleon in November 1806 in an act of retaliation to the British naval blockade and their victory at Trafalgar, interrupted the trade of British goods on French markets and therefore also cut off the supply of overseas cane sugar for roughly five years.¹⁹⁹

The British cartoon ›The Giant Commerce overwhelming the Pigmy Blockade‹ (Fig. 33) from 1807 depicts a ›trade giant‹ throwing goods from Britain and its colonies – amongst them a cone sugar – at Napoleon who – empty-handed – pleads to stop the attack in favour of a removal of the blockade.²⁰⁰ In this context, the ›giant‹ having a foothold in »Great Britain« is completely commodified, as he is entirely composed of British trade goods (inter alia, »wool«, »leather«, »fleece flosiery«, »pig iron«, »London porter«, »printed calico«, »porcelain«, »Wedgwood ware«, »Birmingham steel«, »Woodstock gloves«, »block tin«, »British spirits«, »sugar«). Napoleon, on the other hand, is at least verbally ›racialized‹ as a »pigmy«. While ›pygmies‹ were not an invention of the modern era but

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Tobias Küster: 500 Jahre kolonialer Rohrzucker, p. 503.

¹⁹⁸ Cf. Jakob Baxa, Guntwin Bruhns: Zucker im Leben der Völker, pp. 96 ff.; Edmund O. von Lippmann: Die Geschichte des Zuckers, pp. 699 ff.

¹⁹⁹ The imperial Australian version of the story, due to the absence of a British ›inventor‹ of beet sugar, located the initial stimulus for the (eventual) success story of beet sugar within the Empire's responsibility. They declared that »France is a great sugar-making country, because our fleet, by cutting off the West Indies supplies, forced Napoleon to build beet-sugar factories« – ›British Beet Sugar‹, in: Cairns Post, 17.01.1922.

²⁰⁰ ›The Giant Commerce overwhelming the Pygmy Blockade‹ (1807), reprinted in Louis Napoleon Bonaparte: Untersuchung der Zuckerfrage, p. 149 and Jakob Baxa, Guntwin Bruhns: Zucker im Leben der Völker, p. 127.

tinental markets, cut sugar prices and ruined many French beet sugar factories.²⁰⁴

Beet growers argued against the competition through cane with an array of reasons. Beet sugar had proved to be a versatile plant that could also be used to feed the cattle and fertilize the soil.²⁰⁵ Its high demand of labour ensured employment in the rural areas of their own country and turned every profit into national profit. But most of all – emphasizing moral deliberations – beet sugar was grown slave-free and could thus secure the sugar supplies in the case of slave emancipation. The »German substitute for the Indian sugar« was designated by the inventor of the extraction procedure, Franz C. Achard, as an alternative to the slave-grown sugar of the Caribbean islands. The German poem ›The Sugar Beet‹, published two years after the brochure, addressed its view of the »sorrowful cane« and linked colonial violence and intercolonial policies: »Die Runkelrübe | O wundervolle Runkelrübe! | Dir welkt das blut'ge Zuckerrohr, | Bald steigt beim Knall der Peitschenhiebe | Des Negers Schrei nicht mehr empor. || Der Franke wird des Kampfes müde, | Der Brite fürchtet Deine Macht, | Und eh' Europa es gedacht | Wird's einer Rübe wegen Frieden«. ²⁰⁶ Beet sugar was to triumph over cane sugar on moral grounds and unite the nations of sugar consumers. In the first verse, the »bloody cane withers away before« the »wonderful beet« and relieves the slave of the painful whiplashes. The last of the two verses pictures how »the Franconian becomes weary of the war, the Britisher fears your power« and very soon Europe will make »peace over a beet«. ²⁰⁷

But – au contraire – in the late eighteen thirties, the decades-long »sugar war« between cane sugar and beet sugar culminated.²⁰⁸ A »strong colonial cane sugar lobby« prepared measures to endanger the beet sugar's industry. It was the governmental attitude to beet sugar that was supposed to decide upon the beet's fate. Political cartoons bear witness to the unfolding sugar contest. ›Bataille de Cannes‹ (1839), a wordplay with the French expression for sugar cane (canne à sucre) on the Battle of Cannae,

²⁰⁴ Cf. Hubert Olbrich: *Zuckermuseum*, pp. 108 f.; Jakob Baxa, Guntwin Bruhns: *Zucker im Leben der Völker*, pp. 134, 138, 142.

²⁰⁵ Cf. Sanjida O'Connell: *Sugar*, pp. 109 f.; Tobias Küster: *500 Jahre kolonialer Rohrzucker*, p. 507.

²⁰⁶ Jakob Baxa, Guntwin Bruhns: *Zucker im Leben der Völker*, pp. 332 f.

²⁰⁷ The full title of the German brochure of 1799 further emphasized beet sugar as a humanitarian invention contra to slave-grown West Indian cane sugar: Johann D. F. Rumpf: *Der neuste deutsche Stellvertreter des indischen Zuckers oder der Zucker aus Runkelrüben, die wichtigste und wohlthätigste Entdeckung des 18. Jahrhunderts* – cf. Jakob Baxa, Guntwin Bruhns: *Zucker im Leben der Völker*, pp. 101 (›substitute‹), 107 (›sorrowful‹), 332 f. (poem ›Die Runkelrübe‹).

²⁰⁸ Tobias Küster: *500 Jahre kolonialer Rohrzucker*, p. 510.

depicts the beet sugar industry as almost fighting a losing battle (Fig. 34 a).²⁰⁹ The infuriated sugar cane throws cones of sugar at a medal-decorated beetroot. The beet is about to topple over backwards and succumb to the superior numbers of canes and projectiles.²¹⁰

The second cartoon, ›Enterrement du Sucre Indigène‹ (1839), paints an even darker picture (Fig. 34 b).²¹¹

A funeral cortège comprised of beetroots follows the coffin in which the domestic sugar industry is carried to its grave. The coffin, carried by sugar manufacturers, has a cone sugar with a wreath on top and is further adorned with a skull and crossed bones. Wayside stands a sugar beet grower, mourning for the downfall of the industry as well as his future. The procession is led by an anthropomorphized sugar cane using a walking (sugar) cane and wearing the hat of Napoleon Bonaparte.

Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, who later became Napoleon III, authored a treatise on the ›sugar question‹ arguing that the maintenance of the French beet sugar industry was to become a ›national question‹.²¹² He condemned the defamation by the British of beet sugar as a bitter sugar in



Fig. 34 a – A fight to the death:
Beet versus cane

²⁰⁹ ›Bataille de Cannes‹ by Honoré Daumier, in: Charivari, 1839, reproduced in Louis Napoleon Bonaparte: Untersuchung der Zuckerfrage, p. 24 and Jakob Baxa, Guntwin Bruhns: Zucker im Leben der Völker, p. 160.

²¹⁰ The caption reads: ›Ceci vous représente un grand combat qu'on peut croire commandé par le Général Croque Betterave! qui n'entrera pas au Musée historique de Versailles, et qui doit servir de pendant à la Bataille de Cannes‹ (Here represented is a great fight, which, as one can believe, is commanded by the General Beetcracker! which will not make its way into the historical museum of Versailles and which will serve as an equivalent to the Battle of Cannae) – Jakob Baxa, Guntwin Bruhns: Zucker im Leben der Völker, p. 160 (emphasis in original).

²¹¹ ›Enterrement du Sucre Indigène‹ by G. Grandville, 1839, reprinted in Louis Napoleon Bonaparte: Untersuchung der Zuckerfrage, p. 32 and Jakob Baxa, Guntwin Bruhns: Zucker im Leben der Völker, p. 164.

²¹² Napoleon L. Bonaparte: ›Analyse de la Question des Sucres‹ (1842), translated in Louis Napoleon Bonaparte: Untersuchung der Zuckerfrage, pp. 185 ff., 215 (›national question‹); ibid., p. 25 (›lobby‹).

order to secure the uniqueness of colonial sugar.²¹³ In his eyes the protection through tax exemption and collection of charges for foreign sugar was laudable, whereas after the eighteen thirties the ruin of both the domestic



*Fig. 34 b – Fight to the death:
The domestic industry is carried to its grave*

beet sugar industry and the colonies seemed decided upon; only the cane sugar coming from the West Indies was supposed to find favour with the French sugar market.²¹⁴ The heavy taxation of refined sugar coming from the colonies was a behaviour that was »rather appropriate for a barbaric century than for our enlightened era«.²¹⁵ In the same vein, the »suppression of the domestic sugar industry« was a »barbaric idea«.²¹⁶ Blaming on the beetroot a disruption of the sugar market was detrimental to both the domestic industry as well as the colonies, since it was used to disguise the actual grievances.²¹⁷ A consideration of the corporate good would involve questions of the domestic industry as well as the interests of the colonies and the consumers.²¹⁸ Thus, for Bonaparte, beetroot cultivation was the remedy to the relapse into ›barbarism‹ since it represented progress. He pointed out the reduction of abandoned agricultural ground by the beet

²¹³ Cf. Louis Napoleon Bonaparte: *Untersuchung der Zuckerfrage*, p. 195.

²¹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 199, 204, 263.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 207 (›barbaric century‹), 270.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 249 (›suppression‹, ›barbaric idea‹).

²¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 209 f.

²¹⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 215.

growers, the improvement of the soil by beet culture and the subsequent rise of the purchase price.²¹⁹

Moreover, Bonaparte stretched the fact that increasing sugar demand and thus an increase in beet sugar production, which moreover combined agriculture and industry, would lead to a decisive extension of employment in France.²²⁰ As the expansion of the industry was an »indispensable element of the wealth of a nation«, but – here he evoked a familiar corporeal metaphor uniting all members of society in a political body – »the arms which [the industry] takes into its service have to be protected«. The head, i.e. the »refined minds« and the government, were called upon to solve this problem.²²¹ Bonaparte saw its solution in the production of beet sugar, which for him was the »source of wealth for agriculture and industry«.²²² Sugar, now »a product of French soil«, ought to have the »inalienable« »right to benefit from the protection and advantages that are conceded to all continental products in contradistinction to colonial products«.²²³

A year after this treatise, the complete suppression of the French sugar industry could be averted despite the still strong colonial sugar lobby. The beet sugar's unique selling point, however, was weakened when an equal taxation of sugar from beet and cane was decided. Again, the end of the beet sugar industry seemed near – a feeling that was expressed in 1843 in another cartoon (Fig. 35).²²⁴ The beetroot already lay on the board and tub which functioned as an executioner's block. In the background, two cone sugars are towering, possibly signifying the French sugar market. While the tobacco plant is calmly watching the scene and smoking a pipe – an opponent of French beet sugar reported that beetroots had almost completely displaced tobacco in northern France – the carrot as a representative of the agricultural industry is trying to prevent further damage.²²⁵ Actually, the abolition of protection did cause the closure of a range of beet sugar factories but also fostered the efficiency enhancement by the remaining. Eventually, by the latter half of the nineteenth century, the number of acres under beetroot cultivation increased together with sugar consumption, and by 1875 France had the highest beet sugar production in Europe.²²⁶

²¹⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 220.

²²⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 224, 228.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 229 (›fertile‹, ›arms‹, ›minds‹), 272.

²²² *Ibid.*, p. 246 (›source‹).

²²³ *Ibid.*, p. 249 (›product‹, ›inalienable‹, ›right‹).

²²⁴ ›Combat de deux raffinés‹, by Jean J. Grandville, 1843, reprinted in: Louis Napoleon Bonaparte: Untersuchung der Zuckerfrage, p. 31.

²²⁵ Cf. Hubert Olbrich: Zuckermuseum, p. 31. For tobacco in northern France, see Louis Napoleon Bonaparte: Untersuchung der Zuckerfrage, p. 223.

²²⁶ Cf. Jakob Baxa, Guntwin Bruhns: Zucker im Leben der Völker, pp. 161, 268 f.



*Fig. 35 – Beheading of the beetroot:
Slavery or local industry*

At the same time in southern Australia, the first steps to success for a beet sugar industry had already been taken. In the eighteen seventies, the Victorian Beetroot Sugar Company was registered and began cultivation at Geelong.²²⁷ Production did not last long – despite a year of successful sugar processing, the company got into financial trouble and was forced to monetize its machinery, premises and other property.²²⁸

The key figure of sugar beet cultivation in Australia was Clement van de Velde, a civil engineer who had been manager of beet sugar factories in Belgium and the Netherlands and frequently published his knowledge and opinion, not only as monographs but also in Australian and New Zealand newspapers.²²⁹ Initially, he suggested the cultivation of sugar beet in the southern colonies of Australia first and foremost as a means of improving agriculture. Due to its ability to fatten the cattle and improve the quality of the soil, »beetroot has become the true foundation of good farming«

²²⁷ Cf. Keith T. H. Farrer: *To Feed a Nation*, p. 64.

²²⁸ Cf. ›The Victorian Beetroot Sugar Company Works, Staughton-Vale‹, in: *Argus*, 20.11.1873; (Untitled), in: *South Australian Register*, 04.02.1874.

²²⁹ Cf. ›Notes for Farmers‹, in: *Star*, 21.03.1895.

and sugar a mere but valuable ›bye-product‹ of a ›great industry‹, he reasoned.²³⁰

More than this, there was thought to be a politico-aesthetical advantage over the cane sugar industry. The ›erection of modern sugar-works‹ for the production of beet sugar would be a demonstration of the assumption that the ›cane industry will always be many years behind in progress with that of the beet‹. Its modernity was expressed in the factories, which were described as ›beautiful, orderly, and clean appearance‹ in distinction to the ›colonial sugar mills [that] look like old patched-up establishments after a very short number of years‹.²³¹

The first successful attempts to establish a beet sugar industry in Australia coincided with the labour movement's (short-lived) victory in terms of the cane sugar industry. Shortly after the labour migration from the Pacific Islands to Queensland was temporarily abolished, cultivation of beet sugar began at Maffra, Victoria. In March 1896, an act was passed by the Victorian Government granting loans to enable the establishment of a beet sugar industry.²³² It was not until the first decade of the twentieth century, when the Victoria government granted extensive support, that the Maffra beet sugar production was able to move away from its precarious existence and hope for a successful future. Before mid-century, however, it became clear that sugar production in Victoria was negligible in the light of Queensland cane sugar. Sugar production at Maffra was eventually fully abandoned in 1946.²³³

Despite its fugacity, the establishment of the Maffra beet sugar industry, and the attendant discourse on beet sugar production as the sole ›real‹ ›white man's industry‹ in the light of ›white Australia‹, is worth further investigation. The ideology behind the beet proponents' reasoning is nicely demonstrated in van de Velde's comments on the beet sugar industry as being a future ›love industry‹.²³⁴ ›Could any industry be more favourable to the solution of that great Australian problem: the settlement of the people on the land‹, he asked and therewith referred to the population policies of ›white Australia‹ which necessitated the populating of a whole continent

²³⁰ ›The Sugar-Beet Industry‹, in: Coburg Leader, 07.03.1896.

²³¹ From Clement van de Velde's articles: ›The Beet-Sugar Industry. Part I‹, in: Tuapeka Times (NZ), 16.05.1896 (›good farming‹, ›bye-product‹, ›great industry‹); ›The Beet-Sugar Industry. Part II‹, in: Tuapeka Times (NZ), 23.05.1896 (›progress‹); ›The Beet-Sugar Industry. Part III‹, in: Tuapeka Times (NZ), 30.05.1896 (›erection‹); ›The Beet-Sugar Industry. Part IV‹, in: Tuapeka Times (NZ), 06.06.1896 (›patched-up‹, ›beautiful‹).

²³² Cf. Timothy A. Coghlan: A Statistical Account of the Seven Colonies of Australasia (1901-02), p. 614.

²³³ Cf. Keith T. H. Farrer: To Feed a Nation, p. 64.

²³⁴ ›The Beet-Sugar Industry‹, in: Argus, 07.05.1900 (›love industry‹).

with settlers who were deemed ›desirable‹, that is ›white‹, meaning of (British) European descent.²³⁵ Besides the ›racial‹ component, beet sugar was supposed to bridge gender gaps. Due to the possibility to cultivate sugar beet on individual farms, the enterprises were destined to be family-run, i.e. involving men as well as wives and children. Since beetroot cultivation was part of intense agriculture that enabled the expansion of areas under cultivation, growing beet sugar was a task that provided work all the year round. Labour costs might seem high at first glance: there was »only one thing [...] necessary to secure [the beet growers'] services and that was »pay them what they are worth«. But this was compensated, *inter alia*, by transferring the entrepreneurial risk onto the grower and his family: the »women and children employed are more convenient than cheap«, and a »compulsory insurance of the labourers against accidents, old age, infirmities &c.« was non-existent.²³⁶

In the light of proclamation by law of ›white Australia‹ in 1901, and thus also of the supposedly sure demise of the Queensland sugar industry, the proponents of the beet sugar industry focused on two main arguments: profitability based on the efficiency-raising climate and the ideology of a ›white man's sugar industry‹. For the latter, Alfred N. Pearson, a chemist in the Department of Agriculture, invoked the sugars' historical origins and argued that »sugar cane is naturally grown by coloured races; but the beet industry is, and has been from the outset, a white man's business«. Based on his description of the European »beet sugar question« as now being a struggle »between the white man and the coloured man«, the fight for the establishment of the beet sugar industry would then become a fight for ›white Australia‹.²³⁷

Van de Velde expressed a similar thought by asserting a »great competition« in the production of sugar »between white and coloured men«. It was not only him who found no contradiction in having the »coloured races« abroad provide Australia with »their spices, tea, coffee, rice, indigo, tobacco and other products«. Then again, articles which could be grown by Australians – in particular sugar – should not be put into competition with those »made by wretchedly paid servile coloured labour«.²³⁸ This was, in

²³⁵ ›The Beet-Sugar Industry. Part II‹, in: *Tuapeka Times* (NZ), 23.05.1896 (›great Australian problem‹).

²³⁶ *Ibid.* (›convenient‹, ›insurance‹); ›The Beet-Sugar Industry. Part IV‹, in: *Tuapeka Times* (NZ), 06.06.1896 (›thing‹, ›worth‹).

²³⁷ Alfred N. Pearson: *The Beet Sugar Industry of Victoria*, pp. 5 (›naturally‹, ›question‹), 6 (›white man‹).

²³⁸ Clement van de Velde: *The White Sugar Industry and the Customs Tariff of the Commonwealth*, 5 (›competition‹, ›spices‹), 6 (›servile‹). In his report dealing with the political aspect of the sugar industries under Federation, too, he asserted that »beet versus

fact, an elementary picture of the incorporation of racism into the (›white‹) everyday life. In this context, ›consuming whiteness‹ was by no means confined to the consumption and utilization of ›white‹ objects. An important part played the consumer-producer role allocation advantaged through colonialism. Where the actors of consumption and production were clearly distinguishable from each other the (›white‹) consumer was able to reproduce cultural patterns of racist self-conception; here the employment of ›black‹ labourers and the ability participate in the enjoyment of colonial goods was parsed as the practical experience of ›white supremacy‹.

In the case of ›white sugar‹, the fields of consumption and production markedly intersected, but it was the successful ›whitening‹ of the sugar industry that offered the very same political option which otherwise drew on the colonial exploitation of ›coloured labour‹. Based on their act of purchase and their consumer attitude, the sugar consumers were able to understand themselves as the foundation of a whole industry – which in this case not only provided a mere foodstuff, but in addition to this the cultivation, production and expansion represented the appropriation, colonization and defence of the vulnerable Australian north. In this context, the consolidation of products based on either kind of operation – say, ›black‹ tea and ›white‹ sugar – was consistent with benefitting from ›white supremacy‹ by both its utilization and its subsidization.

Nonetheless, the definition of ›white‹ sugar began to pose a problem when other industries started to claim this attribute in order to profit from its political acknowledgement. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the printed media became the stage of the struggle between cane and beet. Based on political focus, attachment to the local industry and location of the respective newspaper, the newspaper coverage defended either the one or the other sugar production as the most decisive industry for ›white Australia‹, but all combined connotations of cane or beet cultivation with particular social, classist or ›racial‹ characteristics.

The Victorian newspapers were in favour of the beet sugar industry. The ›Maffra Spectator‹, for instance, supported the beet sugar industry and fell in line with van de Velde's argument that if the Australians wanted to »keep the continent a home for their kinsmen«, »no amount of protection will save [the Queensland cane sugar industry] if they do away with black labor«. ²³⁹ The ›Morwell Advertiser‹ quoted Frederick Lee, the Agricultural Superintendent of the Maffra Beet Factory, in his belief that the while

cane sugar mainly means white versus colored labor« – ›The Beet Sugar Industry‹, in: Advertiser, 14.06.1900.

²³⁹ ›Another Phase of the Beet Sugar Industry‹, in: Maffra Spectator, 07.05.1900.

»white men« are capable of »growing of beet sugar«, the »cultivation of sugar cane [...] must always be to a great extent a colored man's work«.²⁴⁰ The ›Portland Guardian‹ stated that »Victoria's contribution [...] towards the white labor sugar could be saved in future by the growth of beet for sugar at Maffra« while at the same time providing employment.²⁴¹ The ›Mercury‹ from Tasmania, where an interest in growing beet sugar existed, too, maintained that »so far as Australia is concerned, perhaps the best way to make sure of a white Australia would be to offer a good, swingeing bonus for beet sugar, rather than to tax the people in order that white men may be induced to work for a few months in the year in a tropical climate«.²⁴² The Australia-wide ›Bulletin‹ supported governmental development funds in order to supply the continent's demand without importing ›non-white‹ sugar: »If the Australian supply of white-man-grown sugar is insufficient then let the Federal Government offer such inducements as shall ensure the establishment of the beet-sugar industry on a sufficiently large scale«.²⁴³

The Brisbane-based ›Worker‹ opposed governmental subsidies for the Maffra Beet Sugar Company for reasons of class as well as nation, stating, that »this ›made-in Germany company‹ [...] is making ›sugar‹ out of its employés by paying low wages«. In the same vein, other critiques combined social and gender perspectives in warning about exploitation of farmers' families, since beet sugar »can only be made successful by turning the women, the girls, the boys, and the little children into [...] agricultural labourers«.²⁴⁴ The ›Brisbane Courier‹ asserted that cane sugar would not be threatened by beet sugar production. Instead, the Queensland sugar producers should turn their attention to the export of surplus cane sugar, since, adding emphasis on the ›Brisbane Courier's‹ unity with the local production, »we know that we shall have to sell in oversea markets«.²⁴⁵ The ›Queenslander‹ predicted the »downfall of the [beet] industry« upon the withdrawal of governmental subsidies and quoted van de Velde in saying, »we shall continue to eat Kanaka-grown sugar«.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁰ ›Beet Culture‹, in: Morwell Advertiser, 29.06.1906.

²⁴¹ ›Latest News‹, in: Portland Guardian, 16.06.1909.

²⁴² ›Beet Sugar‹, in: Mercury (TAS), 22.10.1910, p. 4.

²⁴³ ›A Policy for the Commonwealth: The federated Chinaman‹, in: Bulletin, 1900 – cited in James Walter, Margaret MacLeod: The Citizens' Bargain, p. 63.

²⁴⁴ ›World of Labour‹, in: Worker, 18.06.1898 (›employés‹, misspelling in original); ›Our Melbourne Letter‹, in: Mercury, 18.10.1899 (›agricultural‹). On the »imported curse of low wages« in the context of Maffra beet sugar, see also ›N.S.W. Parliament in Session‹, in: Worker, 05.11.1898.

²⁴⁵ ›Cane and Beet Sugar‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 01.04.1896.

²⁴⁶ ›Beet Sugar in Victoria‹, in: Queenslander, 15.09.1900.

Sugar-production from beetroot continued to be in a precarious state. Despite the praising of the industry as a means of supplying Australia with truly ›white‹ sugar, governmental subsidies ceased due to continual losses, and the Maffra Beet Sugar Factory had to close down for a few years.²⁴⁷ Upon the commencement of the rebate system for ›white‹-grown and ›white‹-produced sugar cane in Queensland, considerations were given to revive the Maffra sugar works.²⁴⁸ The tax on sugar financing the rebate system was paid by all Australians, therefore it was deemed fit that Victorian sugar growers, »who had no thought of employing colored labor«, since in the »temperate climate of Gippsland kanakas are not required«, should be granted the same treatment as their northern colleagues.²⁴⁹

Eventually, in the context of the extension of the ›white sugar‹ bounty for cane sugar, beet sugar proponents again called for equal treatment. The Federal Parliament discussed favourably a proposition to pay a rebate for both ›white‹ cane and beet sugar. The reasoning, again, followed exclusionist argumentation: while »protection against the foreigner« was »well and good«, discriminative practice between two Australian industries would be »utterly impossible«.²⁵⁰ The ›Advertiser‹ weighed in on this discussion by maintaining that imposing an excise on Victorian beet sugar would »discourage and probably extinguish« the industry. Monopolizing the one and penalising the other seemed unfavourable, since the production of cane sugar had to be transformed from a ›black‹ to ›white‹ industry with a »heavy annual subsidy from the people of the Commonwealth«, while beet sugar production was »naturally a white man's industry«.²⁵¹

Besides its own financial problems, the main obstacle to the expansion of the beet sugar industry was the competition by the Queensland cane sugar. This was already firmly established at the time of Federation, and its output by far surpassed the beet sugar.²⁵² Van de Velde anticipated a dwindling of its sugar industry upon the finalization of the Pacific Islanders' employment and was also certain that cane sugar supplies from Queensland and New South Wales would not suffice to satisfy the increasing sugar demand in Australia – two reasons that necessitated the establishment of a beet sugar industry.²⁵³ Nonetheless, he thought advisa-

²⁴⁷ Cf. ›Maffra Beet Sugar Factory‹, in: Maffra Spectator, p. 3.

²⁴⁸ For the excise and rebate system, see subch. 5.3 ›White Wages for White Australian Workers‹.

²⁴⁹ ›Maffra Sugar Works‹, in: Maffra Spectator, 08.05.1905.

²⁵⁰ ›Beet Sugar and Bounty‹, in: Maffra Spectator, 15.02.1912.

²⁵¹ Extinguishing the Beet Sugar Industry, in: Advertiser (VIC), 06.12.1912.

²⁵² Cf. ›Sugar Inquiry‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 15.10.1912.

²⁵³ Cf. ›The Beet-Sugar Industry. Part III‹, in: Tuapeka Times (NZ), 30.05.1896. The industry »must either perish in the tropical districts«, he reasoned, »or be carried on with the

ble to tax the employment of »coloured labour« not only in order to foster a fast transition to the engagement of ›white‹ workers but moreover to financially support both the establishment of a beet sugar industry and the maintenance of the »white labour industry« of the sugar districts in northern New South Wales.²⁵⁴ The latter was considered under threat by the abolition of intercolonial tariffs, and the consolidation of the colonial markets to an Australian goods market brought about by the Federation of the Australian colonies.

Cane Sugar

The first attempts of growing sugar in the New South Wales colony date back to the early British settlement days. These attempts were in vain and trial plantings continually moved northwards, until they eventually encountered a seemingly more suitable climate around Port Macquarie in the eighteen twenties.²⁵⁵ For reasons of climatic conditions and settlement patterns, the commercial cane sugar production in New South Wales, in turn, was generally confined to small farming at the very northern part and had a lower output than Queensland.²⁵⁶ In 1912, for instance, New South Wales had about a tenth of acreage under cane compared to Queensland; and two decades later, Queensland produced about ninety-five per cent of the Australian cane sugar, New South Wales the rest.²⁵⁷ Despite the soil having been tested suitable, it seems that commercial beet sugar production was never seriously attempted there in the early twentieth century.²⁵⁸

When the settlement of small farmers on the northern rivers of New South Wales – the Clarence, the Richmond and the Tweed – increased,

assistance of coloured labour« – ›The Black Labour Question‹, in: *Argus*, 18.03.1901. See also ›The Beet Sugar Industry‹, in: *Argus*, 07.05.1900; ›Black Labor‹, in: *Advertiser (VIC)*, 07.05.1900.

²⁵⁴ Clement van de Velde: *Kanaka Labour and the Commonwealth Supply*, p. 13.

²⁵⁵ Thomas Alison Scott is most often mentioned as the »pioneer sugar grower«, who successfully grew the first sugar cane in that district – Vivienne Parsons: Scott, Thomas Alison. See also ›The Sugar Industry‹, in: *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 13.01.1934. For a more critical assessment of his contribution, see Charles T. Wood: *Sugar Country*, pp. 35 f.

²⁵⁶ For modes of sugar cane cultivation in New South Wales, see Barry W. Higman: *Sugar Plantations and Yeoman Farming in New South Wales*; Peter D. Griggs: *Global Industry, Local Innovation*, pp. 47 ff.

²⁵⁷ Cf. *Intelligence & Tourist Bureau Queensland: Queensland Sugar Industry*, p. 5 (1912); William A. Douglass: *From Italy to Ingham*, p. 7 (1930s).

²⁵⁸ Cf. Timothy A. Coghlan: *A Statistical Account of the Seven Colonies of Australasia (1901-02)*, p. 615. For plans to commence the cultivation of *beta vulgaris* in New South Wales, see also ›The Cultivator‹, in: *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 28.09.1872; ›Sugar Beetroot Cultivation in New South Wales‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17.03.1894; ›Cane and Beet Sugar‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 01.04.1896.

persistent cultivation of sugar cane was established commercially in the mid-eighteen sixties. In the subsequent two decades, it was increasingly constrained to the northern part, while the southern half resorted to the cultivation of other crops or made a transition to the dairying industry. The few plantations that did exist were subdivided like their Queensland counterparts during the depression after the mid-eighteen eighties when the decline of the industry commenced.²⁵⁹

The New South Wales sugar industry stood in contrast to the general understanding that, since sugar cane was a tropical plantation plant, Europeans could not and would not be willing to be employed in the sugar cane fields.²⁶⁰ ›White men‹ were ›ready enough to enter the canefields at the Clarence‹ but not at Cairns, since the ›difference of temperature‹ made not only ›a considerable commercial difference‹ but also one in the organization and composition of the work force.²⁶¹ At the time when slavery was no longer a means of procuring cane cutters for the sugar production, the scarcity of suitable labourers in Australia was thought to necessitate either policies of coercion or introduction of workers. While in Queensland ›non-white‹ labourers from abroad were employed to do the initial clearing of the plots and start off the industry, settlement and agriculture in the New South Wales sugar-districts-to-be were considered to be evolved enough to provide for both potential farmers and suitable land. Other than in Queensland, yeoman farming and small mills dominated the northern New South Wales cane sugar industry from the beginning.²⁶² The few central mills were set up by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, which contracted small farmers to supply sugar cane.²⁶³

The idea of owning a sugar cane farm in New South Wales initially met with enthusiasm. ›Nearly everyone was bitten with the sugar mania‹, a merchant recorded, but ›all burned their fingers‹.²⁶⁴ Small farmers attempting to grow sugar cane paid dearly to learn that the crops would

²⁵⁹ Cf. ›A National Debt‹, in: *Argus*, 21.09.1922; ›The Sugar Industry‹, in: *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, 13.01.1934.

²⁶⁰ The question, why sugar cane could and would be grown by Europeans in New South Wales but not in Queensland, surfaced occasionally over decades. See for example ›Queensland‹, in: *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 30.12.1876; ›Speech on Public Affairs‹, in: *Capricornian*, 02.04.1892; ›White Labour in the Canefield‹, in: *Queenslander*, 22.02.1902.

²⁶¹ ›The Coloured Labour Question‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 31.05.1895 (›difference‹).

²⁶² For the following on the New South Wales sugar industry, see Barry W. Higman: *Sugar Plantations and Yeoman Farming in New South Wales*, in particular pp. 700 f.; for small mills in New South Wales, see Peter D. Griggs: *Global Industry, Local Innovation*, pp. 92 f.

²⁶³ Cf. Anon.: *The Industrial Progress of New South Wales*, p. 432.

²⁶⁴ Nehemiah Bartley: *Australian Pioneers and Reminiscences* (1896), cited in Charles T. Wood: *Sugar Country*, p. 38.

wither away during the winter frosts and that, due to their little experience, they were provided with diseased cane setts. It was not until the Colonial Sugar Refining Company entered sugar production on the Northern Rivers in the late eighteen sixties and provided the district with sufficient capital, adequate production facilities and organized channels of distribution, that the small farmers' undertakings had a substantial base to evolve on.²⁶⁵

The New South Wales sugar industry, too, was no stranger to labour shortages and other workforce-related problems.²⁶⁶ It was considered processing »sugar produced from cane by white labour exclusively« – but in actuality this was nothing but wishful ›white Australian‹ thinking.²⁶⁷ When attempts to recruit Danish and Maltese workers remained unfruitful, employers turned to non-European labourers. While New South Wales did not employ newly recruited Pacific Islanders coming from Queensland or directly from the South Sea islands, upon finding that ›white‹ workers refused to do menial tasks, like trashing the cane, Chinese, Indians and ›time-expired‹ Pacific Islanders found employment in these jobs.²⁶⁸ Since the Pacific Islanders employed in the fields or mills were ›time-expirees‹ from Queensland, they could freely negotiate their wages and earn as much as ›whites‹.

This, of course, had no effect on the racist argumentation of the workers' unions who continued to exclude from admission ›non-white‹ workers, thus perpetuating the condition of ›race‹ for membership.²⁶⁹ In this case, their cause went far beyond the matter of class struggle but touched upon the ideological issue of Australia as a ›racially‹ pure nation. Their opposition was not confined to the competition by the ›non-white‹ workers but also comprised their mere presence that allegedly posed ›racial‹ threats of miscegenation and transmittal of diseases as well as a general demotion of the Australian society. The Australian Workers' Union welcomed all »male or female« workers with the exception of »colored aliens«.²⁷⁰ Like the unions, its mouthpiece was of the opinion that »permitting any shade whatever of coloured alien labour to remain« was detrimental to the

²⁶⁵ Cf. Charles T. Wood: *Sugar Country*, pp. 34, 39 ff.

²⁶⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 41.

²⁶⁷ ›New South Wales‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 01.10.1879.

²⁶⁸ Cf. Jock H. Galloway: *The Sugar Cane Industry*, p. 229; Charles T. Wood: *Sugar Country*, p. 47; ›Some Factors relating to the Cane-Sugar Industry of Australia‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 12.08.1901.

²⁶⁹ Cf. Jürgen Matthäus: *Nationsbildung in Australien*, pp. 96 f., 290; Gwenda Tavan: *The Long, Slow Death of White Australia*, p. 18; Ann Curthoys, Andrew Markus: *Introduction*, p. xv.

²⁷⁰ Announcement by the Australian Workers' Union in 1894, cited after Verity Burgmann: *Racism, Socialism, and the Labour Movement*, p. 41.

»whole of Australia«. This was a class-based issue, as the foreign workers were said to undermine the ›white‹ workers' demands concerning wage and working conditions, as well as a social concern, since the ›coloured‹ would »drag down« the ›whites‹ to »almost bestial levels«, as well as a ›racial‹ matter, because the ›white‹ women and children would be »polluted by the presence« of the ›coloured‹ foreigners. The ›Worker‹ further lauded the Labor Party's attempts to exclude the ›coloured‹ people from the society and expanded this feeling of a ›racial‹ collective by prompting the Australian people to take the ›preservation‹ »of Australia for the whites« out of the government's and into their own hands and asking its readers to consider the question, whether »all white people [should] unite to save their race and civilisation from going down before the black, brown, and yellow invaders«.²⁷¹

Based on the contemporary statement of a sugar mill manager that »a white man does but little more than a kanaka unless under eye«, one could infer that it was not »racial differentiation« that shaped the management hierarchy in the cane field, and, moreover, that the division of work and the wage settlements were not dependent on ›race‹ but rather on class.²⁷² Other responses to Indian and Chinese sugar workers, however, drew on the usual patterns of racist discriminations when members of the Australian Socialist League warned about miscegenation and contamination fostered by the »Colored Labor Curse« in general and »hordes of smellful Hindoos« in particular, and told the Chinese workers to stay in their home country.²⁷³ A politician and sugar planter from northern Queensland complained that Pacific Islanders employed in New South Wales were »a hundred times worse off than anywhere in Queensland«, and without governmental supervision they would be treated »little better than slaves«, thus not only exposing the dark side of the ›white‹ sugar industry of New South Wales but also defending the railed-against labour scheme under which the Islanders arrived in the north.²⁷⁴

During the preliminary stages of Federation, any memory about ›non-white‹ employees in the New South Wales industry were cast aside, when the attention turned to the ›sugar labour question‹ in Queensland and the intended abolition of intercolonial tariffs and duties on imports. Without the protection against cane sugar imported from Queensland and beet sugar from overseas, asserted Edward Knox, the Colonial Sugar Refin-

²⁷¹ ›Australians, Hold Your Own«, in: *Worker*, 15.05.1897 (›permitting«, etc.).

²⁷² Barry W. Higman: *Sugar Plantations and Yeoman Farming in New South Wales*, p. 704.

²⁷³ Verity Burgmann: *Racism, Socialism, and the Labour Movement*, p. 46.

²⁷⁴ ›Address by Hon. A. S. Cowley«, in: *Morning Post*, 02.07.1901.

ing Company spokesman, it would be »impossible for the farmer to grow the cane [...] unless he employs coloured labour to cultivate« it. Since »[w]hite men can do all the work in connection with the cane in this colony«, in case of the prevention of ›white‹ employment caused by fiscal policies, he would prefer the »destruction of the industry rather than take any part in the introduction of coloured labourers«. ²⁷⁵

Despite the (albeit sparse) employment of Pacific Islanders and other non-Europeans in their industry, the sugar growers and producers of the New South Wales sugar industry entered the federation debates in favour of abolishing the Pacific Islanders' employment. This was, on the one hand, a substantiation of claims which declared their local industry to traditionally be a ›white man's industry‹, since it was established by ›white‹ farmers within the first fifty years of British settlement in Australia. On the other hand, the issue was a largely socio-economic one. While the Queensland planters were said to work with large profit margins, due to their employment of ›non-white‹ labour, the planters on their small farms in New South Wales worked within a much closer margin by employing mostly ›white‹ workers. It was thought that only by letting »Queensland and New South Wales start fair with white labour from the very beginning« that the »absolute destruction of the New South Wales sugar industry under a system of Intercolonial Free-trade« could be averted. ²⁷⁶

Deliberations in the local newspaper to introduce an »excise duty for black sugar« were certainly received favourably in the sugar districts south of the Queensland-New South Wales border. ²⁷⁷ The advocates of the New South Wales sugar industry protested against a prolonged Pacific Island engagement in the cane fields of Queensland. With the continuation of ›non-white‹ employment in the Queensland sugar industry, they argued, the commencement of intra-Australian free trade would place them at a disadvantage. The New South Wales sugar growers lauded the fact that a »considerable sugar industry« was established even under the less favourable climate of northern New South Wales. But, as they claimed, without an absolute interdiction of the »dark-skinned workers« in Queensland,

²⁷⁵ Edward Knox's report of 1896, cited in Charles T. Wood: *Sugar Country*, p. 47. See also ›The Sugar Industry of New South Wales‹, in: *South Australian Register*, 15.05.1895.

²⁷⁶ ›Mr. Norton and the Kanakas‹, in: *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 02.03.1901.

²⁷⁷ ›The black labor and sugar problem‹, in: *Richmond River Times and Northern Districts Advertiser*, 30.05.1901. See also ›No Bonus for Black-grown Sugar‹, in: *Richmond River Times and Northern Districts Advertiser*, 13.06.1895, which also encouraged withholding »the white man's bonus from the black man's favour«, in order to coerce the Queensland industry to abandon all but ›white‹ workers, in favour of a »United Australia«.

their industry would succumb to the competition by sugar that could be produced and sold at a lower price.²⁷⁸

Clement van de Velde reminded of the imminent dangers to the New South Wales cane industry. He (falsely) emphasized, that it was »carried on entirely by white labour« and therefore deemed it defenceless against the competition by the »cheap and docile, not to say servile, labour of the north«.²⁷⁹ Nevertheless, after Federation, this sugar industry was, against his and others' expectations, negatively affected by the deportation of the Pacific Islanders. Due to the new job openings, and with hopes for higher wages sugar workers migrated northwards, leaving the sugar districts south of the border with grave shortages of labour.²⁸⁰

The fact that employment of ›coloured‹ labourers in New South Wales was neither absent nor abandoned at the time of Federation and afterwards sparked criticism not only in the Queensland sugar districts. A report on the sugar industry in Australia criticized in 1910 that despite the efforts to discourage the employment of »alien labour«, New South Wales had not lessened the percentage that was employed before the Federation. The Bundaberg ›Mail‹ considered it a »satire on the ›White Australia Policy« that Indian workers for the Queensland districts were now drawn from the southern states, i.e. New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.²⁸¹ With the regulations against Pacific Islanders and other non-European labourers that applied to all Australian sugar districts after 1913, the employment in the New South Wales industry, too, was eventually confined to European sugar workers, and both cane sugar industries survived.²⁸²

In the case of both the Victorian beet sugar production and the New South Wales cane sugar industry, the possibility of finding another way to supply Australia with sugar grown by ›white‹ labourers accorded with the desire to establish a self-sustaining nation, which could defy (economic) attacks by overseas countries but at the same time would be able to retain the ideal of a ›racially‹ homogeneous society. Successfully establishing and providing financial means for the Victorian beet sugar industry would result in the merchandising and consuming of a product that was inferior in quality and lower in its sugar content to that from Queensland.²⁸³ But

²⁷⁸ ›Sugar and Kanakas‹, in: Daily Telegraph, 12.02.1901.

²⁷⁹ Clement van de Velde: Kanaka Labour and the Commonwealth Sugar Supply, pp. 3 (›white‹), 4 (›cheap‹).

²⁸⁰ Cf. ›Labour Members Protest‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 26.02.1907.

²⁸¹ Maxwell's report from 1901, cited in Alan Birch: The Implementation of the White Australia Policy in the Queensland Sugar Industry, p. 209 (›alien labour‹); Bundaberg Mail, 02.9.1901, cited in John Kerr: Southern Sugar Saga, p. 69.

²⁸² For the 1913 Sugar Cultivation Act, see subchapter 3.4 ›The Yellow Curse‹.

²⁸³ Cf. ›Notes on Saturday Night's Lecture‹, in: Maffra Spectator, 25.03.1895.

since sugar in tropical climates was considered impossible to be produced solely by ›white‹ workers, consuming beet sugar, in the eyes of its defenders, would also mean supporting the only possibility to establish an actual ›white‹ sugar industry. The cane sugar industry of New South Wales, on the other hand, was from the start maintained by a majority of ›white‹ workers, but its output left a lot to be desired and would not suffice to satisfy the demands.

While the southern Australian colonies before Federation searched for a means to completely ›whiten‹ the Australian sugar production, the sugar growers and other advocates of non-European agricultural workers in north Queensland entertained the idea of maintaining their traditional production hierarchy in which ›whites‹ were acting as overseers and skilled labourers in an industry employing ›black‹ workers for menial, repetitive tasks. At the end of the nineteenth century, this led to contemplations in the northernmost part of the continent to separate from the rest of the continent and therewith reject joining the Commonwealth of Australia.

4.4 ›Federation or Separation‹: Queensland's Land Policies before Federation

The Queensland separation movements were expressions of political and economic considerations in the light of a ›racially‹ homogeneous society. They peaked at the end of the nineteenth century and were embedded in an almost continent-wide aspiration for ›white Australia‹ towards the end of the nineteenth century.

When, in the light of Federation, the Queensland sugar industry and its labour force became an intercolonial concern, two processes, brought about mainly in connection with labour, were of particular interest in terms of ›sugar‹. Firstly, the *annexation* of New Guinea facilitated by the establishment of colonies by France and Germany at close range, but, moreover, motivated by the prospect of being able to use the population as a pool of sugar workers. Secondly, the *separation* plans in order to establish a bipartite – or even tripartite – Queensland. These were supported by the sugar planters who were hoping to settle the question of ›black labour‹ in their favour.

These two episodes shed light on deliberations to defend a perceived British-Australian continent against outward threats, not only by Asian nations but momentarily more pressingly by European powers which were supposed to be counteracted by inwardly strengthening ›white Australia‹.

It also provided evidence of an increasingly nationalistic approach which raised a claim to Australian rights of dominance of the South Pacific in contrast to other European nations.

At the same time, the joining of Federation was intensely debated in Queensland. Being a part of the Australian Commonwealth undoubtedly meant the end of ›coloured‹ labour in the sugar industry – this was supported by the labour movement and opposed especially by capitalist interest in the sugar industry. Eventually, with the help of labour voters, the referendum in Queensland in 1899 was narrowly decided in favour of Federation.

Annexation

As »one of the most promising fields of colonisation«, deliberations to expand colonial Australian territory to the north and to New Guinea had been around at least since the mid-eighteen seventies.²⁸⁴ The annexation of New Guinea by Queensland in April 1883 was pre-dated by a decade of debates about its possible value for the Empire. Deciding that it was mainly Australia that would commercially and strategically benefit from taking possession, and in remembrance of the atrocities which had occurred on other South Sea islands, no further steps had been taken to advance annexation of New Guinea. The Colonial Office further emphasized that neither would encouragement for settlement be given nor could any legal acquisition of land be undertaken.²⁸⁵

A perceived closing in on Australia by European powers occurred at the end of the nineteenth century. A French penal colony had already been founded in New Caledonia, now plans about the establishment of ›New France‹ in New Guinea were developed. French colonization of the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) was fostered and numbers of settlers there increased until they surpassed that of the British at the turn of the century. Germany's approaches, however, went even further.

Generally, as labourers, Germans were sought after in the sugar districts of Queensland. As chemists, they were recruited for skilled chemical work at mills and refineries.²⁸⁶ German settlers had been present in Queensland even before separation from New South Wales, and for some

²⁸⁴ John Conley: Australia in New Guinea prior to annexation, p. 426.

²⁸⁵ Cf. Marjorie G. Jacobs: The Colonial Office and New Guinea, p. 106; John Conley: Australia in New Guinea prior to annexation, p. 427.

²⁸⁶ Cf. George Bindon, David P. Miller: Sweetness and light, p. 181.

time constituted the »largest non-British minority group« in the north.²⁸⁷ After plans to engage Australian residents as sugar workers failed again, by the mid-eighteen eighties the government of Queensland focussed on fostering the immigration of Germans and Scandinavians to replace the Pacific Islanders.²⁸⁸ There were voices reminding of the deadliness of tropical work for Europeans and also warning of a »Germanisation of Queensland«; but overall they were considered »industrious, honest and desirable colonists«, and many of them were confident of their scope as agricultural labourers.²⁸⁹ However, with the foundation of the German Empire, diplomatic relations between Germany and Australia dwindled and emigration from Germany was severely curtailed.²⁹⁰

Then again, despite the generally positive feeling about Germans when it concerned employment and involvement in the sugar industry, their imminent (uncontrollable) presence as members of a foreign nation, following the German annexation of New Guinea, perturbed Queensland political and strategic minds. These occurrences played an important part in the re-consideration of Australia's attitudes to commerce and defence and imperial politics. The expansion into the Pacific began in the early eighteen seventies and combined a threat to the Australian markets for raw material and labour as well as to the naval power. German positioning was the result of »effective co-operation between German merchants and consuls, who ›together push the commerce of their country and extend the territory of the German Empire‹ and was therefore strongly dreaded.²⁹¹ The admonition that the »success of Germany has revealed the existence of a possible danger nearer home« was parried off by the German media

²⁸⁷ Alan Corkhill: *Queensland and Germany*, p. xiii.

²⁸⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 73 f. The Prussian government, in turn, was unwilling to let their citizen be employed as indents in Queensland's sugar industry. Not only did Prussian legislation disallow the signing of labour agreements in several cases, but the negative reports on Queensland in German newspapers, about tropical climate and slavery, were detrimental to recruitment of workers as well. See also William A. Douglass: *From Italy to Ingham*, p. 29.

²⁸⁹ »For Europeans work in the canefields is almost deadly. Typhus, malaria, liver complaint, dysentery will decimate the people who allow themselves to be entrapped. [...] they will be treated as slaves [...] they will be considered as nothing better than brute beasts« - ›German Labourers for Queensland‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 06.03.1885; ›German Design on Queensland‹, in: *Morning Bulletin*, 24.02.1887 (›Germanisation of Queensland‹); ›Parliamentary Jottings‹, in: *Queenslander*, 13.9.1884 (›honest‹). The most notable opponent to German employment was Boyd D. Morehead, representative in the Queensland Legislative Assembly, who compared them to »Coolies« (›German Electors‹, in: *Morning Bulletin*, 01.05.1888), and called them »rejects«, »serfs« and »inferior to the Chinese« (cited in Alan Corkhill: *Queensland and Germany*, p. 113). See also ›Our Parliamentary Letter‹, in: *Capricornian*, 25.9.1880; ›The Voters of Warwick and Cunningham‹, in: *Warwick Argus*, 05.05.1888.

²⁹⁰ Cf. Arnold Beuke: *Werbung und Warnung*, pp. 164 ff.

²⁹¹ Peter Overlack: *Bless the Queen and Curse the Colonial Office*, p. 134.

as »the ›ridiculous fear‹ of military action from a foreign power« which »now appears to have been transferred to Germany«.²⁹²

Concrete Australian discomposure followed a German newspaper article which described New Guinea and the need to turn it into the »foundation of a future German colonial kingdom« in close vicinity of Australian shores.²⁹³ Imperial supporters of an Australian annexation scheme emphasized the necessity to explore the »wholly unexplored« island, its contribution to the »scientific enlightenment«, its strategic geographical position for the trade between Australia and India and, a topical subject emerging in the last decade of the nineteenth century, the danger emanating from surrounding countries; altogether, it seemed preferable to have Britain annex New Guinea than »some foreign power which would be a menace to the security of Australia«.²⁹⁴ In the same vein, the Governor of New South Wales argued that expanding to New Guinea would »conduce specially to the peace and safety« and that »the establishment of a Foreign Power in the neighbourhood of Australia would be injurious« to both Britain and Australia.²⁹⁵

The fear for Australia's defence and the indignation about the inaction in London were the first manifestations of what was soon to become the issue of the ›empty North‹ and afterwards found expression in numerous examples of the invasion novel genre.²⁹⁶ Consequently, since »European interest in this portion of the Pacific is on the increase« – in particular in Germany which »if [...] it] does not take up a colonisation policy to-day [...] may do so to-morrow« – expansion to New Guinea was fostered in the Australian colonies without consent from the Colonial Office.²⁹⁷

On behalf of Thomas McIlwraith, Premier of Queensland, and to the approval of the rest of Australia, formal possession of south-eastern New Guinea in the Queen's name was taken in early April 1883.²⁹⁸ McIlwraith himself asserted that an annexation of New Guinea was neither an expres-

²⁹² (Untitled), in: Sydney Morning Herald, 13.06.1871 (›danger‹); Deutsche Kolonialzeitung cited in Peter Overlack: Bless the Queen and Curse the Colonial Office, p. 137 (›ridiculous‹, ›transferred‹).

²⁹³ ›German Annexation of New Guinea‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 07.02.1883.

²⁹⁴ John Conley: Australia in New Guinea prior to annexation, pp. 426 (›unexplored‹, ›enlightenment‹), 428 (›menace‹).

²⁹⁵ Hercules Robinson cited in *ibid.*, p. 429.

²⁹⁶ For the Australian attitude towards perceived indifference of the Colonial Office, in terms of the alleged commercial and political German endangerment of the Australian colonies, see Peter Overlack: Bless the Queen and Curse the Colonial Office. Furthermore, see subchapter 5.2 ›Life or Death of a White Continent‹ for the invasion novels of ›white Australia‹.

²⁹⁷ (Untitled), in: Sydney Morning Herald, 10.02.1883.

²⁹⁸ Cf. John Conley: Australia in New Guinea prior to annexation, pp. 430 ff.



Fig. 36 – Danger from the north:
›The New Guinea Protectorate‹

sion of requirement for expansion, nor a means to secure a new source of labour for the sugar plantations – the Queenslanders, he claimed, did not »want to bring over Papuans to work as coolies in the sugar plantations, for they would be useless« – but rather as counteracting the potential possession-taking of the island by »the French or any foreign Power«.²⁹⁹

Australian fears of annexation by a foreign power seemed vindicated, when the proclamation of protectorate over the south coast of New Guinea in November 1884 was followed by the proclamation of a German protectorate for the northern part only days later.³⁰⁰ In the name of the Berlin-based German New Guinea Company, a representative claimed possession of the northern part of the main island and the Bismarck Archipelago which then were annexed as German protectorate.³⁰¹ The depiction of the region under German rule, in particular with the present exaggeration in size, seems to put further emphasis on the menacing power nearby (Fig. 36).³⁰² It was not until the late eighteen nineties and with the realiza-

²⁹⁹ ›Sir Thomas McIlwraith in London‹, in: Warwick Argus, 15.04.1884. Speaking against this, was the contemporary condition of employment in the sugar industry. Sugar prices continued to rise in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, recruitment in the Pacific Islands increased in price and circuitousness, and the belief that work and life in the tropics was detrimental to health and morality of ›white‹ people persisted – hence labour deemed ›cheap and reliable‹ was sought after. It suggests itself to consider Queensland's »primary motivation the desire to monopolize this huge labor supply« in New Guinea, and to push on with the opening of tropical Queensland – Clive Moore: New Guinea, p. 145.

³⁰⁰ Cf. John Conley: Australia in New Guinea prior to annexation, p. 432.

³⁰¹ Cf. Horst Gründer: Geschichte der deutschen Kolonien, p. 92.

³⁰² ›The New Guinea Protectorate‹, in: South Australian Register, 05.01.1885.

tion that »the whole question of our future in the Pacific is at stake« that the Colonial Office eventually assured support on the German-Australian border.³⁰³

In accordance with the theoretical construct of ›white‹ unfitness for tropical climates, a reluctance to relocate to New Guinea widely persisted, and settler colonization seemed out of the question for the time being. This found expression in the bilateral description of New Guinea as both a »tropical paradise« and a »pernicious tropics«. While compared to a paradisiacal image as »gems of the ocean«, a »dream of beauty« with »scenes of loveliness«, climate, fauna and inhabitants were a constant threat to European visitors, since the »heat was a ceaseless torture«, »wild beast and reptiles« lurked in the underwoods and the »natives are always ready to murder« intruders.³⁰⁴

Colonial and ›racial‹ deliberations about the landscapes and their inhabitants led to the notion of New Guinea as »a tropical Eden awaiting exploitation« – not only because mineral deposits were suspected to be found on the island but also due to a possible new resource of labourers which were seen as fitting the ›cheap and reliable‹ category not least based on their skin colour.³⁰⁵ This latter intention, to put the new annexed part of the world to use as a pool for additional labourers, was not officially communicated outside of Australia or in the Empire, because of the critical discussion surrounding the Pacific Islanders' introduction with suspicions of kidnapping and brutality. In the light of the shortages in the Queensland industry, securing »a supply of labour for her sugar plantation« was – besides preventing the taking possession of another European power – in fact another factor fostering the will to annexation of the latter British New Guinea.³⁰⁶ In this, the expansion of Queensland was as two-tiered as the admired/despised German Pacific politics: territorial expansion under an economic premise.

Even before the annexation took place, recruitment of New Guinean workers had already begun and soon hit the headlines with regard to the circumstances accompanying the enlistment and employment of these la-

³⁰³ Colonial Office, cited in Peter Overlack: Bless the Queen and Curse the Colonial Office, p. 147. Cf. *ibid.*

³⁰⁴ Richard Eves: *Unsettling Settler Colonialism*, pp. 304 (quotes from Minnie Billing in 1894-95, ›gems‹, ›loveliness‹, ›dream‹), 305 (›paradise‹, ›tropics‹, ›heat‹, ›beasts‹, ›natives‹).

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 314 (mineral), 317 (›Eden‹). See also Edward W. Docker: *The Blackbirders*, p. 188.

³⁰⁶ (Untitled), in: Maitland Mercury, and Hunter River General Advertiser, 24.04.1883 (›supply‹). See also John Conley: *Australia in New Guinea prior to annexation*, p. 432; Edward W. Docker: *The Blackbirders*, p. 175.

bourers. Pioneering the not quite legal recruiting episode was the ›Hopeful‹, a ship that sailed for the company of James Burns and Robert Philp (the latter later became Premier of Queensland).³⁰⁷ In February 1883, the recruiter departed the harbour of Townsville and cruised in the waters between southern New Ireland and northern New Britain. When rumours that New Guinea »would be an excellent place to recruit« leaked, sugar planters in Queensland, full of hope of finding new pools of dependent labour, started fitting out their vessels.³⁰⁸ But upon discovering that they were met with prejudice and resistance on the coast of New Britain, their discontent diverted the recruiters to other islands in the region.

One recruiter reported his success at the west coast of New Ireland where beforehand European advance had been seldom. He described a wondrous process of recruitment, which he made sound like nothing short of a welcomed salvation. The male inhabitants of the island speedily entered his vessel as soon as he arrived. They were »eager to get away« and boarded the ship without »waiting for ›pay‹, nor yet for any agreement with regard to the term of service in Queensland [...]. All they wanted was to get away«.³⁰⁹ The witness report from the mate, however, recounted the events differently. After »144 natives were recruited in five days« in New Ireland, the absence of wind prevented the ship's return to Mackay and forced them to drop the anchor. This opportunity was seized by »fourteen boys [who] jumped overboard and deserted«. Furthermore, when the recruitment party landed the interpreter on a neighbouring island, the inhabitants attempted to take vengeance for the death of the other interpreter which, according to the report of the surviving interpreter, »was due to the white people«. The captain and the government agent returned to the ›Fanny‹ alive but severely injured.³¹⁰

Recruitment in the New Guinea region started out as a private business and with this paralleled the early days of the recruitment on the Pacific Islands.³¹¹ Furthermore, it was, at least in the eyes of the planters, a short but initially an apparently lucrative undertaking. The crew of the ›Fanny‹

³⁰⁷ For voyage and legal case of the ›Hopeful‹, see Peter Corris: ›Blackbirding‹ in New Guinea Waters, pp. 91 ff.; Edward W. Docker: *The Blackbirders*, pp. 174 ff. The process against the crew of the ›Hopeful‹ became the ›model case‹ for the New Guinea recruitment investigations, and was initiated in November 1884, with its witness statements revealing a ›recruitment‹ process so dreadful that, eventually, all accused were pronounced guilty.

³⁰⁸ Edward W. Docker: *The Blackbirders*, p. 177.

³⁰⁹ William Wawn, cited in Edward W. Docker: *The Blackbirders*, pp. 178 f.

³¹⁰ ›Attempted Massacre‹, in: *Morning Bulletin*, 12.07.1883 (›natives‹, ›boys‹, ›white‹).

³¹¹ The »scheme [...] to secure cheap labour« was »of course without Government sanction« and should be regarded as »a slaving and illegal one«. (Untitled), in: *Queenslander*, 12.05.1883.

were not the only recruiters who managed to get islanders enlisted in such a short time without ›great effort‹. Within a month, five recruiting vessels returned with five hundred twenty-eight labourers in all. Overall, during one and a half years on thirty-three voyages almost five thousand eight hundred islanders were brought from the New Guinean region to work as indentured labourers in the Queensland sugar industry. Compared to the arduous search and lengthy journey in the ›traditional‹ Pacific Islands, the romanticized islands of New Guinea seemed to be »a paradise of beauty and a land of boundless resource« for the recruiters. The »demand for labour created by the sugar boom« was the main incitement for the recruiters and planters to partake.³¹²

Meanwhile, the heightened awareness about the seemingly forceful recruitment of workers from New Guinea and the increasing suspicion of kidnapping caused a storm of public indignation. Bearing in mind the recently disclosed misconduct of recruiters in the Pacific Island region east of Australia, the means of enlistment in New Guinea were seen as a resurrection of slavery. This »traffic in human flesh« was considered a »blot upon [...] civilisation«.³¹³ Other newspapers reprinted German comments on the situation which stated outrage against the New Guineans being »repeatedly sold actually as slaves for [...] the sugar plantations«.³¹⁴ The happenings in New Guinea were considered a »disgrace to Queensland«, »legalised slavery« »with all its concomitant evils of kidnapping, duplicity and murder«; the gruesome facts of which, by becoming »more and more clear week by week«, obviated the need to »give expression to the views of the sugar growers«.³¹⁵

The Royal Commission, appointed by Griffith in early 1885 to investigate into the enlistment process of the recruiters in New Guinea, established that virtually none of the almost five hundred workers from the New Guinea region had been duly recruited.³¹⁶ Reported methods of inducing the men to board the ship went from erroneous translations to deceit about the length and location of their employment to physical kidnapping.³¹⁷

As workers, the recruits from New Guinea were thought to be sturdier and »a step or two ahead of the Melanesians in their progress towards civi-

³¹² ›A Visit to New Ireland and New Britain‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 20.02.1885 (›paradise‹); Peter Corris: ›Blackbirding‹ in New Guinea Waters 1883-84, pp. 86, 87 (›sugar boom‹); cf. Edward W. Docker: The Blackbirders, p. 178.

³¹³ (Untitled), in: Launceston Examiner, 21.05.1883.

³¹⁴ ›German Labourers for Queensland‹, in: South Australian Register, 14.02.1885.

³¹⁵ (Untitled), in: Warwick Argus, 01.12.1883.

³¹⁶ Cf. Edward W. Docker: The Blackbirders, p. 224.

³¹⁷ Cf. Peter Corris: ›Blackbirding‹ in New Guinea Waters, pp. 97 f.

lization«. ³¹⁸ But in fact, mortality amongst the workers was incredibly high with sixteen to twenty-five per cent of the newly arrived New Guineans perishing due to the living conditions. ³¹⁹ Alarmed by this circumstance, recruitment in New Ireland and New Britain was prohibited in May 1884 by the Premier of Queensland. In the subsequent years, recruiters turned to neighbouring islands with an equally devastating outcome. ³²⁰

The eventual decision by the Queensland government to return the workers to their islands, and subsequently compensate the employers for their loss, was at that time very welcomed by the northern planters who found the New Guinean workers did not live up to their expectations but instead, so they alleged, were »thieving, deserting« and »exceedingly difficult to manage«. ³²¹ The end of ›black labour‹ in the sugar industry of course affected the employment of New Guineans as well. In 1905, restriction of immigration was expanded to immigrants from British New Guinea, then Papua, and thus also constrained their employment in Queensland's sugar industry. ³²²

During the period of recruitment in the New Guinea region, political cartoons were published in the workers' papers commenting on renewed debates on atrocities and circumstances of recruitment of foreign workers. The labour movement accused the sugar planters of violently forcing workers to come to Queensland to anticipate union actions and negotiations. ³²³

One of the first cartoons, ›Annexation‹, depicts an Australian crossing the Torres Strait, ready to catch hold of a New Guinean man who retreats with fear (Fig. 37). ³²⁴ While the latter is without weapon and dressed in the stereotypical loin cloth of the ›uncivilized‹, the ›white‹ man who due to his insignia could be a sugar gang overseer, not only carries a bush knife in his belt but is also set to swing a whip imprinted with »Slavery« – foretelling the designated use of the islander – at the receding, much smaller

³¹⁸ Edward W. Docker: *The Blackbirders*, p. 169.

³¹⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 216; Peter Corris: ›Blackbirding‹ in *New Guinea Waters*, p. 96. The official explanation for the mortality rate was the volatile temperature which differed from the one in New Guinea, cf. *ibid.*, p. 101.

³²⁰ Cf. Peter Corris: ›Blackbirding‹ in *New Guinea Waters*, p. 95.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 96. See also ›The Premier of Queensland in the northern district‹, in: *South Australian Register*, 18.06.1885.

³²² Cf. Patricia O'Brien: *Remaking Australia's Colonial Culture*, pp. 103 f.

³²³ Still a decade later, the Australian Workers' Union petitioned against »New Guinea natives to be worked as slaves on the Queensland sugar plantations« – ›The World of Labour‹, in: *Worker*, 16.06.1894.

³²⁴ ›Annexation – Carrying the Blessings of Civilization into New Guinea‹, in: *Bulletin*, 9.06.1883, reprinted amongst others in Marguerite Mahood: *Loaded Line*, p. 170; Patricia Rolfe: *The Journalistic Javelin*, p. 32.



Fig. 37 – Civilizing with the whip:
Queensland's annexation of New Guinea

man. The cartoon makes it plainly clear by which means planters and recruiters thought the »blessings of civilisation« were to be brought into the new recruiting grounds. Rather than education by missionaries situated in the islands, a violent approach with ensuing economic advantages was preferred.

The mouthpiece of the labour movement, on the other hand, exercised religion-tinted empathy in its comments on the dealing with deliberations of renewed recruitment. In the desire to foster immigration from New Guinea, the »cloven hoof of the sugar planters show[ed] through«, demanding to assist the »poor devils over from New Guinea so that their flesh and blood may be ground through the mills of the sugar planter into golden dividends for the lordly ›plate‹«. ³²⁵

³²⁵ ›The World of Labour‹, in: Worker, 16.02.1895.

These accusations mirrored public debates and judicial hearings that led to the exposure of patterns of deceit and violence in the recruitment process in New Guinea. The outcome of which, in turn, influenced the introduction of Pacific Islanders. The evidence brought forward proved that in a society in which colonial violence was a cultural residue of the »Australian frontier culture«, kidnapping – declared by the sugar planters and ›labour traders‹ to have been a bygone part of the early phase of migration from the Pacific Islands – was still a possibility in the modes of labourers' ›enlistment‹.³²⁶ It also necessitated stricter regulations of the recruitment modalities and provided those opposing the introduction of Islanders for the cane fields with sound arguments. Amongst them was Samuel Griffith, who declared he »had never heard of a voyage of such murderous atrocity as that of the Hopeful«.³²⁷

When Griffith took office as the Premier of Queensland in November 1883, it was the turn of this proclaimed »champion of ›White Australia‹« to solve the sugar labour question. Ever an opponent of ›coloured‹ workers in Queensland, he nonetheless had to find out that attempts to stop the immigration of Pacific Islanders were condemned to failure. During the short intermission of the ›labour trade‹, labour shortages ensued due to the unwillingness of ›white‹ workers to engage in the sugar industry and the lack of other employment policies. Also, the ›black sugar‹ issue became a matter of concern for all colonies of Australia and generated more and more tension between the northern and the southern districts of Queensland.

The employment of Pacific Islanders was increasingly frowned upon by the labour movement and those demanding stricter regimentation for ›white Australia‹. The end of their introduction was drawing closer. But without governmental subsidies, Queensland sugar was not thought of as being able to prevail over imported sugar on the markets of the other Australian colonies where intercolonial duties had to be paid. As a consequence, rumours were afloat that after an outlawing of immigration from New Guinea and Pacific Islands only a secession of North Queensland from the rest of the colonies would allow for a rehabilitation of the ›labour trade‹ and thus for the salvation of the sugar industry.³²⁸

Subsequent to the end of the recruiters' involvement in New Guinea, the case of the ›Hopeful‹ and the other incidents of recruitment in said region provided strong counter-arguments when spokespersons of the Separation Leagues maintained a necessity to continue the employment

³²⁶ Patricia O'Brien: *Remaking Australia's Colonial Culture*, p. 100 (›frontier culture‹).

³²⁷ Edward W. Docker: *The Blackbirders*, p. 219.

³²⁸ Cf. *ibid.*

of ›coloured‹ labourers in the sugar industry and put forward the potential imperative to partition the northern colony.³²⁹

Separation

In the late eighteen nineties the employment of continued non-European labour in the cane fields, particularly from the Pacific Islands, became a continent-wide concern as plans for Federation were put in concrete terms. The Queenslanders now had to face the question of whether they wanted »Federation or Separation«.³³⁰ Given the labour situation and the dissatisfaction about political representation throughout the colony, the opinions in Queensland differed widely about joining the Federation. While the government and the sugar planters feared the collapse of the sugar industry upon the end of Pacific Islanders' immigration, the labour movement saw ›white Australia‹, in particular, as a possibility to secure the ›white‹ workers' rights and conditions. At the same time, deliberations to separate north (and at times central) Queensland from the south grew stronger. Complaints were made about the vastness and hence ungovernability of the northern colony, unsatisfactory management and underdevelopment of the resources, and financial imbalance between the rural parts and, in particular, Brisbane.

After a failed attempt to establish a North Queensland Separation Movement in Rockhampton in 1868, fifteen years later the movement formed in Townsville and rapidly gained more ground.³³¹ By the autumn of 1884, a Separation League had been established in most cities of northern Queensland. With Griffith succeeded by McIlwraith in 1888, separation seemed to become less pressing until the termination date for labour trade approached.³³² The desire to separate the colony resurged few years later, due to an intensifying conflict between capital and labour. Griffith return as a Premier in a coalition with McIlwraith and proposed to separate Queensland into three – southern, central, and northern Queensland. After the Federation, these would become provinces or states of Australia. This would contain the ›black‹ labour to a small part of Australia while the rest of the country could rely on ›white‹ workers.

³²⁹ Cf. ›Queensland Separation Movement‹, in: *Queenslander*, 28.11.1885.

³³⁰ ›Federation or Separation‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 22.03.1899.

³³¹ Cf. ›Queensland Separation Movement‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 19.11.1885.

³³² Cf. Luke Trainor: *British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism*, p. 91; Kay Saunders: *Workers in Bondage*, p. 55.

Deliberations about twofold or threefold separation continued to be a constant undercurrent in the last years of the nineteenth century.³³³ In the end, however, Federation overtrumped Separation in the eyes of the working class, and the separationists were defeated when especially labour-affiliated voters in Queensland decided in favour of a federated Australia. The question of whether northern separationism and the employment of ›coloured‹ labour were necessarily associated with each other was and is disputed. Many of those, however, who considered the fate of the sugar industry connected to the continuation of ›non-white‹ employment saw salvation in separation. Furthermore, the separation debates of the eighties were always closely connected to disputes about the future of the sugar industry.

While parts of the northern supporters pressed for the separation, due to the »desire to perpetuate a plantation system using coloured labour«, and separationism found support in the circles of sugar planters,³³⁴ at the time of its emergence, the desire for separation was not motivated by the perceived need to retain an allegedly ›cheap‹ labour force.³³⁵ The subsequent imperative conflation of separation with ›black labour‹ and the perception that the whole movement was in favour of a continuation of ›non-white‹ employees in the sugar industry was chiefly owed to a political stroke, a »deliberate system of misrepresentation«, against the separationists by Samuel Griffith and other opponents of separation.³³⁶ They accused the movement of consisting solely of, and emanating from, »a class of sugar planters who wish[ed] to turn the North of Queensland into a slave State« and who were furthermore responsible for the atrocities in the context of the labour traffic.³³⁷

The chairman of the London-based North Queensland Labour League, Harold Finch-Hatton, devoted a whole book chapter to the sugar districts of Queensland. Though he was convinced that crimes were conducted in the context of the Pacific Islanders' recruitment and pleaded for governmental superintendence, he maintained that the »result of any attempt on the part of the Brisbane Government to stop Black labour would inevitably

³³³ The desire for separation was especially strong in the central and northern part of Queensland. In November 1897, the ›separationists‹ achieved a victorious vote in the Queensland Legislative Assembly, clearly stating that an interest for three separate colonies still existed. See *Brisbane Courier*, 08.11.1897, 30.11.1897, 08.12.1897.

³³⁴ Alan Birch: *The Implementation of the White Australia Policy*, p. 199 (›plantation‹). See also Katherine McConnel: *Our wayward and backward sister colony*, p. 287.

³³⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 131 f.

³³⁶ Harold Finch-Hatton, cited in ›Queensland Separation Movement‹, in: *Queenslander*, 28.11.1885 (›misrepresentation‹).

³³⁷ ›Queensland Separation Movement‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 19.11.1885.

be to make the north of Queensland, where the sugar is grown, insist upon separation from the south«. Finch-Hatton stated, that Samuel Griffith and his government in their attempts to restrict the employment of ›coloured‹ labourers were »either [...] enemies to the progress of Queensland or [...] strangers to common sense«. This was based on his appraisal of sugar-growing as »the only agricultural industry of any importance« in Queensland, the socially connoted belief that »white men cannot and will not do the work done by niggers in the field« and the racist and simplifying conviction that the Pacific Islanders, per se a »cheerful, hard-working, and rather intelligent race«, were »well treated on the plantations, and perfectly contended and happy«. ³³⁸

It was in particular the New South Wales sugar industry that pressed for the abolishment of ›coloured‹ employment. Before Federation, the New South Wales sugar industry was protected by a tariff on the imported sugar from Queensland. ³³⁹ The former, mostly ›white‹-produced sugar was considered not being able to compete with the seemingly low-cost production from Queensland – the north had the better climatic conditions and access to ›cheap labour‹. In the case of the tariffs being lifted in the course of Federation, the planters in New South Wales foresaw the demise of their industry.

The certainty that measures were to be taken to counteract the Queensland sugar planters' current workforce policies grew stronger. Suggestions included the levying of »an excise duty on black-grown sugar« grown in Queensland, New South Wales or »any other part of Australia«. This was not supposed to end the employment of those »undesirable people« – the time-expired Pacific Islanders – who had crossed the border after the end of their contract in Queensland but rather served as a means against the »many thousands« who were in fact »State-assisted and State-regulated Kanakas«. ³⁴⁰

To legitimate the tariff these sugar planters had to racistly argue against the introduction of Pacific Islanders or other workers. Queensland, it was alleged by those warning about free trade, »with its superior climatic conditions and black labour, can flood the New South Wales market as soon as the border duties are removed« and therewith threatened the southern sugar industry with »absolute destruction«. The only way to avert this damage

³³⁸ Harold Finch-Hatton: *Advance Australia*, pp. 143 f. (superintendence), 145 (crimes, ›race‹), 144 (›result‹), 139 (›importance‹), 142 (›field‹), 146 (›happy‹).

³³⁹ Cf. Adrian Graves: *Cane and Labour*, p. 43 and subchapter 4.3 ›Naturally a White Man's Industry‹.

³⁴⁰ ›Coloured Labour«, in: *Papers on Coloured Labour*, 25.03.1901.

would be to abolish ›black labour‹, but when »[n]o mention was made by Mr. Barton of how long the pro-kanaka period should be«, and he did not comment on the future of the New South Wales industry, the electors of the latter wearied of his »pro-kanakaism« to encourage people of New South Wales to »shoulder their share of the burden«.³⁴¹

Nonetheless, the persuasion that Federation would mean the abolition of the employment of Pacific Islanders had already been circulated amongst the sugar growers, and their fear that the sugar industry in northern Queensland would not be able to persist (profitably) with solely ›white‹ labour intensified. The labour movement, however, did not only desire chemically white sugar but also supported the intercolonial demands for cane sugar grown and processed by ›white‹ labour. Though not the founding reason for a partition of Queensland, the conflicting positions of employers of sugar workers and oppositionists of ›coloured‹ labour and the question, whether it was more beneficial for the northern colony to end or to continue the introduction of Pacific Islanders got in line with the deliberations about a possible separation of north from south Queensland.

The members of the separation movements in central and north Queensland did not understand themselves as mere movements focused on capitalist interests but as uniting the classes – though explicitly not including ›coloured‹ cane cutters. This evidenced the ›racial‹ boundary which demarcated the ›outsideness‹ of Pacific Islanders and other non-Europeans in the sugar industry. The separation movement had called together »representatives of various classes, of every class«, since in the »question of separation planters, squatters, miners, agriculturalists, and merchants, have all lifted up their voice with one accord in favour of it«.³⁴² In recounting the situation before the separation from New South Wales in 1859, the pro-separationists reminded of the prosperous economic change that Queensland had undergone and drew parallels to developmental possibilities of the contemporary north Queensland. Subsequent to the renunciation of direct ties to the first colony, the agricultural and mining industry had benefitted from the possibility to export their goods directly to England and other countries, and the sugar industry, besides other blossoming industries, had by now assumed »vast proportions«.³⁴³

³⁴¹ ›Sugar in New South Wales‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 19.02.1901 (›flood‹); ›Mr. Norton and the Kanaka‹, in: Clarence and Richmond Examiner, 02.03.1901 (›destruction‹); ›A Puzzling ›White Australia‹ Policy‹, in: Daily Telegraph, 14.02.1901 (›mention‹, ›pro-kanakaism‹, ›burden‹).

³⁴² ›Queensland Separation Movement‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 19.11.1885 (›representatives‹, ›question‹).

³⁴³ ›Queensland Separation Movement‹, in: Queenslander, 28.11.1885 (›vast‹).

One observer of the separation debates, who was in favour of the separationists, drew on the well-renowned analogy between the »physical body and the social body« for the political organization in colonial Queensland.³⁴⁴ He understood the heart to be the capital (Brisbane), and went through various kinds of impacts the geographical location of this seat of government had. He argued, that the remoteness of the seat of government from most regions of the colony was detrimental to communication and financial flows.³⁴⁵ With the metropolis of the colony establishing »a monopoly of interest against the parts further away«, areas close to the former would »flourish at the expense of the other half«. The heart and the extremities – a toe and a leg – from which the heart is dislocated, would grow stronger. The rest of the colony – arms, brain and the other leg – would be destroyed, leaving its people »crippled, blind, deaf, dumb and idiotic« and, more than that, leaving them open to be »exterminated by some race of men whose hearts were normally situated«, i.e. who had a more effective organization of the body politic.³⁴⁶ In view of the heightened fear of hostile takeover by Asian invaders coming to the northern shores, this meant that defence against invasion would not be accomplished by a federated ›white Australia‹ but would, in this opinion, require a political reorganization and decentralization of Queensland – if necessary by dividing it.³⁴⁷

The reasoning was based on financial issues as well as on an underrepresentation of northern political interests. Not only did the northern inhabitants pay more in taxes than southern Queenslanders and were therefore financially disadvantaged, the »natural opposition« between the north and the south also made for greatly differing demands on the government in terms of soil and labour management. In this thinking, ›coloured labour‹ was essential for the northern climate.³⁴⁸ Allegations were voiced by anti-separationists stating, that in the case of separation, north Queensland would become a »slave colony« and that this was predominantly forced and striven for by the sugar planters. Against this argument, it was em-

³⁴⁴ Alfred G. Stephens: *Why North Queensland wants a separation*, p. 7.

³⁴⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 21.

³⁴⁶ With Brisbane being »situated in the extreme south-eastern corner«, the long distances within Queensland were problematic for political representation and sense of belonging. Its capital was »placed seven hundred miles from the centre, and one thousand four hundred from the Northern boundary«; it was »nearer to Sydney than to Bowen, and as near to Melbourne as to Cooktown«. *Ibid.*, pp. 9 (›monopoly‹, ›flourish‹, ›extreme‹), 14 (›placed‹), 29 f. (ideological distance); Ernest Scott: *Australia*, p. 310 (›nearer‹).

³⁴⁷ Cf. Alfred G. Stephens: *Why North Queensland wants a separation*, p. 13. For a more in-depth analysis of the fear of invasion and invasion novels, see subchapter 5.2 ›Life or Death of a White Continent‹.

³⁴⁸ Cf. Alfred G. Stephens: *Why North Queensland wants a separation*, pp. 19 (taxes), 27 (management).

phasized that the numerically inferior sugar planters would be unable to »impose coloured labour upon the new colony«, if it was not supported by the other classes – thereby maintaining the class-spanning interest of separation.³⁴⁹

The first taking office of Samuel Griffith in the mid-eighteen eighties brought about the revival of the separation movement in both north Queensland and Great Britain. Griffith opposed both Pacific Island and Indian employment in the sugar industry and therefore stood against the interests of the northern planters. Three years later, on the basis of an imperial statute – passed after Queensland's separation from New South Wales in 1859 that vested authority for changes of colonial boundaries to Great Britain – a motion in favour of separation was made in the Brisbane assembly but was rejected.³⁵⁰

The Constitution Bill drafted by Samuel Griffith in 1891 – after a change of mind in terms of separation – designed a trisection into the provinces Southern, Central and North Queensland. While ›white labour‹ would be prevalent in the southern states, North Queensland could maintain the employment of ›non-white‹ workers. Griffith seconded the separation of north Queensland from the rest of the Australian continent since »it was impossible to carry on the sugar industry [...] with white labour«. This was not a consequence of ›white‹ incapability to work and live in the tropics but rather due to the refusal by the »so-called Labour party« of ›white labour«, as Griffith emphasized.³⁵¹ The bill was supported by the representatives of north and central Queensland while southern representatives preferred the alternative of a »bi-provincial« scheme. No final decision was taken. In the opinion of this separationist, however, a mere divisional separation would not solve the problems of the financial disequilibrium and conflicts of interest caused by the location of the capital Brisbane. Only a de facto separation would grant »Northern autonomy«.³⁵²

The possibility of growing sugar without the help of ›coloured‹ workers seemed small in the tropical parts of Queensland. But with the approaching Federation, the likelihood of a continued employment of Pacific Islanders worsened. In defence of the New South Wales sugar industry, the ›Daily Telegraph‹ argued that »[n]othing is more certain than that under Federation the general introduction of alien inferior races will not be per-

³⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 43. See also ›Queensland Separation Movement‹, in: *Queenslander*, 28.11.1885.

³⁵⁰ Cf. Ernest Scott: *Australia*, pp. 310 f.

³⁵¹ ›Our Kith and Kin‹, in: *Pall Mall Gazette* (UK), 06.05.1892. Cf. Raymond Evans: *A History of Queensland*, pp. 141 f.

³⁵² Cf. Alfred G. Stephens: *Why North Queensland wants a separation*, pp. 33 ff. (33: ›bi-provincial‹, 35: ›Northern autonomy‹), 40 f., 45.



Fig. 38 a & b – *Race for Federation: Queensland hindered by ›black labour‹*

mitted« without any regard to interests in »dark-skinned workers«. The Queensland planters' employment of »a class of cheap labor« denied to those of New South Wales would cause the latter to »go under«. No other state in the newly federate Australia would have any difficulties with the »colored labor question« – »[s]o strong is the aversion to the introduction of colored labor throughout the other States that when joining the Federation, Queensland must have clearly recognised that kanaka labor will be ultimately denied to her sugar-growers«.³⁵³

The debates surrounding Federation and a possible partition of Queensland were accompanied by comments and critiques from the side of labour in numerous cartoons in the ›Worker‹ and the ›Bulletin‹. The continuation of the Pacific Islanders' employment was depicted as the obstacle to Queensland joining the Federation and thus as a renunciation of ›white‹ labour and, in addition to it, ›white Australia‹.

The ›Worker‹ (1892) drew on the metaphor of the society as a boat, and saw ›Queensland Last‹, as being on the losing end of the federation ›competition‹ (Fig. 38 a).³⁵⁴ The other colonies have long overtaken the Queensland boat. This, as the drawing is implying, is caused by two reasons: uncontrolled ›coloureds‹ and abandoned ›whites‹. The government

³⁵³ ›Sugar and Kanakas‹, in: Daily Telegraph, 12.02.1901.

³⁵⁴ ›Queensland Last. The Intercolonial Race‹, cover of the Worker, 04.06.1892.

agent, closely resembling Premier Samuel Griffith and acting as coxswain, carries a whip announcing his »Government by Fraud«. He, however, has already lost control of his crew. The rowing motion of ›Kanakas‹, the ›Chinese‹ and the ›Coolie‹ is unsynchronized, and the rowboat's progress is slowed down. The fourth oarsman, a bearded European wearing a sash labelled »white labour«, is pinioned to his oar by »conspiracy laws«. The lower half of his oar has already broken off and now floats away proclaiming that »The White Must Go«. ›White labour‹ complies with this demand and deserts the losing ship, the fate of which can no longer be changed. In the same vein, the accompanying cover article referred to the unions' and their followers' struggle against both the defence of »black labour« and the »freedom of contract« fostered by anti-unionists.³⁵⁵

In ›The Wreckers‹ (Worker, 1896), the beacon on the horizon announces »Federation«, but the »United White Australia« ship is wrecked at the rock of »Black Labour« (Fig. 38 b).³⁵⁶ The people on the coast, identified by the caption as those accountable for the sea damage, were considered detrimental to the ›Worker‹'s cause of ending the introduction of labourers from the Pacific Islands. Premier Hugh M. Nelson and Federation-opponent Andrew H. Barlow were the main investigators in the ›Queensland National Bank crisis‹ of the mid-eighteen nineties, in which the bank was accused of booming shares in Queensland and other deceptive practices. They expedited its acquittal in what was declared to be »a tin-pot inquiry [...] held by two friends of the bank« and to which Andrew J. Thynne was complicit by moving for reimbursement of the government.³⁵⁷ The removal from politics of the former two – together with colonial secretary Horace Tozer and northern-separation-opponent Thomas J. Byrnes – would, in the eyes of the ›Worker‹, be the only way to effect »any radical change«, i.e. the implementation of ›white Australia‹.³⁵⁸ They are fuelling the fire with »Lies«, »Bluff« and »Bluster« thereby wiling the ship away from its due course and towards its demise. Watching the scene from behind is an anthropomorphized newspaper. The ›Courier‹, traditionally under suspicion of obstructing the abolition of Pacific Islanders' employment, is accused of »pleading its capitalistic course«, namely blaming the conditions of the workers on the mis-education of the »working classes

³⁵⁵ ›Unionists to the core‹, in: Worker, 04.06.1892.

³⁵⁶ ›The Wreckers‹, cover of the Worker, 24.10.1896.

³⁵⁷ ›The Q. N. Bank‹, in: Worker, 22.08.1896 (›tin-pot‹); ›The Q. N. Bank‹, in: Worker, 05.09.1896 (Thynne).

³⁵⁸ ›The Editorial Mill‹, in: Worker, 01.02.1896. For further information, see E. Clarke: Barlow, Andrew Henry; Brian F. Stevenson: Thynne, Andrew Joseph; J.C.H. Gill: Tozer, Sir Horace; Rosemary Howard Gill: Byrnes, Thomas Joseph.

who make the great bulk of the consumers».³⁵⁹ With this, the ›Courier‹ not only blamed the workers for their own misery – by demanding inexpensive goods, for example sugar, the workers allegedly undermined their labour political demands as well as their employment possibilities – it also hinted at the qualities of consumption as a political implement, a venture that later would develop into ›commodity racism‹, when the focus of the consumers shifted to the consumption of ›white‹-friendly, nation-advancing Australian-made goods.



Fig. 39 a – He's the reason:
›Black labour‹ as a hindrance to the Federation

In a couple of cartoons, the reason that, in the eyes of the ›Worker‹, stood against the partaking of Queensland in the Commonwealth of Australia was explicitly personified. In ›The Real Reason why Queensland was not allowed to take part in the Federal Convention‹, the ›Worker‹ (1897) depicts the anthropomorphized and feminized colonies of Australia, which also bear distinctly European features, holding hands and forming a circle (Fig. 39 a).³⁶⁰ They beckon Queensland to join, but ›she‹ is held back by a man identified as ›kanaka‹. The cartoon not only depicts the alleged hinderance to Queensland's joining the Federation because of the ›black‹ labour policies but also provides for a broader perspective through its gendering of the protagonist. With Queensland being a ›white‹ girl and the perpetrator being a ›black‹ and somewhat brutish looking man, allusions are made to both miscegenation and the endangerment of, as evinced

³⁵⁹ ›Stray Notes‹, in: Worker, 24.10.1896.

³⁶⁰ ›The real reason why Queensland was not allowed to take part in the Federal Convention‹, cover of the Worker, 24.07.1897.



Fig. 39 b – *He's the reason:
›Black labour‹ and ›white Australia‹*

by their girlish depiction, innocent or pure ›white‹ women.

Two years later, in ›The Nigger on the Fence‹ (Worker, 1899), the alleged perpetrator himself is called to account (Fig. 39 b).³⁶¹ Wearing stereotypical attire, a Pacific Islander is sitting on a fence. This time he is not depicted as being threatening per se but looks rather boyish and mischievous. With a sneaky smile he proclaims: »I'se the boy that's kept Queensland, up to the present, out of the Federation«. In his hand he holds the crime instrument: a sugar cane stalk. »The blackfellow

on the fence«, claimed the ›Worker‹, »has ever stood in the path of progress and as a menace to our race« because »[K]anaka labour [...] has blocked Federation, which is to be the salvation of the people of Queensland«.³⁶²

Eventually, it was in particular the votes coming from the labour electorates that changed the course of the anti-Federationist attitude of Queensland. This was not least due to the votes of the workers who saw the uniting of the Australian colonies as a possibility to increase their joint negotiating power in terms of industrial struggle. They answered the call: »White workers of Queensland [...] show them [the sugar planters voting

³⁶¹ ›The Nigger on the Fence‹, cover of the Worker, 18.03.1899. The speech balloon reads: »I'se the boy that's kept Queensland up to the present out of the Federation«. The cartoon was published a second time (but without the speech balloon) when the debates about the abolition of the Pacific Islander's introduction and employment intensified; now the caption read: »Federation must rid Australia of the Coloured Alien« – see ›The Curse of Queensland‹, in: Worker, 12.01.1901.

³⁶² ›Wanted: A White Queensland‹, in: Worker, 04.03.1899.



*Fig. 40 a – Cure to the itch:
Holding on to the old days*

against federation and the subsequent abolition of ›black‹ labour] that you are determined to have a white Australia for yourselves and your children«. ³⁶³ The workers seem to have followed this racistly charged patriotic call: by a narrow margin, Queensland decided in favour of joining the Commonwealth. ³⁶⁴

The consequences connected to this were also put into cartoons. Even before the final decision, the ›Bulletin‹ in ›More or less ›In the Air‹ (1898) removes the Pacific Islander from the fence and accounts for the hope, provided by this referendum in favour of Federation, that the voters of northern Queensland would renounce its provincialist deliberations by giving in to the Federation and its ›purifying‹ function, meaning the abolition of

³⁶³ ›Federation and Black Labor‹, in: Warwick Argus, 02.09.1899.

³⁶⁴ The majority for Federation was 6.220 votes: 35.185 for yes, 28.965 for no. The metropolitan districts disfavoured Federation; the southern votes were evenly distributed, while the large majority of northern voters advocated Federation. See ›Federation‹, in: Queensland, 23.09.1899 (votes); ›Federation. The Queensland Vote‹, in: Australian Town and Country Journal, 09.09.1899 (districts). At that time, 482.400 people were living in Queensland, cf. Timothy A. Coghlan: A Statistical Account of the Seven Colonies of Australasia (1899-1900), p. 249.



Fig. 40 b – Cure to the itch:
The deportation of the Pacific Islanders

employment of Pacific Islanders (Fig. 40 a).³⁶⁵ Intercolonial trade and the prospect of expanding the market had then become the keyword which convinced the northernmost Queenslanders to vote in favour of Federation.

And finally, it was up to Prime Minister Edmund Barton and his government to fulfil the last stage of ›whitening‹ the Queensland sugar industry: the eventual removal of Pacific Islanders. In ›Barton and the Brush‹ (1901) the ›Bulletin‹ conveys the perception of ›black labour‹, and moreover the Pacific Islanders' presence, as a contamination (Fig. 40 b).³⁶⁶ In the background »Queensland Kanaka Interest« expresses violent tendencies in demanding »Blacks or Blood« and threatening the Commonwealth Parliament with armed-to-the-teeth Pacific Islanders.³⁶⁷ The foreground,

³⁶⁵ ›More or less ›In the Air‹, in: Bulletin, 29.01.1898, reprinted, inter alia, in: Katharine Sturak, Zoe Naughten: Getting it together, p. 16; Ross Fitzgerald: Seven Days to Remember, p. x.

³⁶⁶ ›Blacks or Blood‹, in: Bulletin, 19.10.1901.

³⁶⁷ »We are all bothers in blood« – with these words Henry Parkes, Premier of New South Wales, evoked the unity of ›rightful‹ Australians (›Summary of the News for Europe‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 20.04.1891). Hence, ›Blacks or Blood‹ also refers to the choice

however, suggests a more promising future in the eyes of the proponents of ›white‹ labour. »Black Queensland«, which Barton, depicted as motherly »Commonwealth«, addresses with »You dirty boy!«, is shown infested with flea-like black figures. Barton hands Queensland a brush labelled »A White Australia« so it can clean itself from the infestation – of course symbolizing the Pacific Island Labourers Act ›given‹ to Queensland, as a means to bring to an end the story of Pacific Islanders and the cane sugar industry.

Following the referendum that voted in favour of a federated Australia, separationism was effectually muted by the ›New State clause‹, which necessitated the consent of the parliament of the colony from which a territory desired to be separated.³⁶⁸ Eventually, the Pacific Island Labourers Act 1901, which provided for the removal of the Islanders from Queensland, sealed not only the fate of the Pacific Islanders and ended debates about the employment of ›black labour‹ in the cane fields – be it from the Pacific Islands or New Guinea – but it proved to be the most significant stepping stone on the way to a ›white‹ sugar industry in ›white Australia‹.

between a low price of sugar and a ›racially‹ purified Australia, i.e. economic versus ›racial‹ profit for Australians.

³⁶⁸ Cf. Katherine McConnell: Our wayward and backward sister colony, p. 356.

5. Advance Australia Fair

›White Australia‹ Culture

The explanation of the ›white Australia policy‹ as a result of sheer economic considerations is definitely too short-sighted.¹ It edits out historical, social and cultural contextures, leaves underexposed the spheres into which ›whiteness‹ spread at the end of the nineteenth century, and reduces a ›racist‹ strategy of national unification to a purely political endeavour. This becomes obvious if one looks at the emergence, implementation and maintenance of ›whiteness‹ throughout the eighteenth to twentieth century. Their discourse on innately ›racial‹ features and characteristics, in particular the alleged contagiousness and seductiveness which both entailed the imminent degeneration of the ›white race‹, connected labour-based deliberations with biological as well as societal components.

The numerous political cartoons initiated by the labour movement assembled in this study, as well, argue against such a one-sided view and give further evidence of the entanglement of class with the other social categories. Gender, nation and race are never actually out of the picture when it comes to representing the position of the male, ›white‹ worker in Australia. This, however, situates the labour movement's struggle in a societal context in which it transcends class boundaries and presents itself as a cause that pertains to the whole ›white‹ community of Australia. William Lane, co-founder of the Australian Labour Federation, the ›Boomerang‹ and the ›Worker‹ and author of a widely read invasion novel, called for a closing of ranks: »We stand together, we whites, shopkeepers and merchants, artisans, labourers and farmers; if one falls the others follow«.² The same message is found in the caricaturing drawings which were prominently featured on the cover of several papers of the labour

¹ For a theory of the ›white Australia policy‹ as following economic motivations, see, for example, Keith Windschuttle: *The White Australia Policy*.

² ›The Chinese Question‹, in: *Boomerang*, 26.05.1888.

movement and visualized ›whiteness‹ as a melange of social, political and racist elements. These depictions are far from being unparalleled graphical anomalies but stand in the tradition of a decades-long abundance of political cartoons. They illustrated the cultural, biological and military threat to the society allegedly posed by those deemed ›aliens‹.

At this, culture played an essential role. One element that accompanied the British-Australian history from the start was the desire to retain the continent for the ›white (preferably British) race‹. This, however, comprised the formation of cultural identity, firstly, in terms of ›space‹ and secondly, in terms of ›body‹ – more than a mere populating of the thinly settled northern climes, ›white Australia‹ put into question the ›racial‹ qualification of the population that was supposed to do so.² The ›space‹ was opened up during British invasion of the continent based on the legal fiction of ›terra nullius‹ – the notion that though there were original peoples roaming the land, the land did not legally belong to anyone and was therefore up for the taking by ›white‹ settlers. This connection between ownership and occupation, however, became a problem at the end of the nineteenth century, when the increasingly ›white‹ Australians had to realize that the increase of their population was by far not enough to occupy the whole continent. In particular the tropical parts in the north had been largely spared from settlement. This was due to the discourse on northern Europeans, in particular British, and their resistibility against heat, moisture and diseases. Research was done to ›reproduce the ›white body‹, cleansed of the ›germs of tropical laziness‹ (hookworm but also leprosy), and preserve its purity from diseases and disease-carriers«. Amongst the latter were counted not only the Aboriginal Australians but also the ›Pacific ›Arabians‹, Chinese, and Southern Italians«. ³ The antidote to both problems then becomes the emergence of a ›body culture‹, akin to ›bio-power‹, ⁴ which, on the one hand, was supposed to forestall miscegenation and risk of contagion by individual hygiene and the exclusion of ›dangerous‹ people, and, on the other hand, a governmental regulation of the ›racial‹ body which arranged for a controlled increase of settlement in the north by ›suitable‹, i.e. European people.

In the case of sugar, these considerations were linked to culture in the most proper sense: agriculture. The concern about the seemingly ›under-

² For body and space see, inter alia, Nancy Duncan: *BodySpace*; Ruth Barcan, Ian Buchanan: *Imagining Australian Space*; Robert T. Tally: *Geocritical Explorations*. For the ›white‹ body and its allocation of space, see, in particular, Richard Dyer: *White*, pp. 32 ff.

³ Gaia Giuliani: *Whose Whiteness*, p. 134.

⁴ Michel Foucault: *The Will to Knowledge*, p. 140.

populated« north of the continent was found to be mitigated by the attraction and settlement of farmers, and cane sugar was the crop found to grow in the tropics to the most fruitful extent. Eugenic notions of the ›pure white race« that was supposed to occupy the southern outpost of Europe, in turn, made it indispensable to settle the ›empty North« with people deemed suitable to both stand up for and ›racially« promote the idea of ›white Australia«. ›White« sugar as a catalyst for northern settlement therefore necessitated its cultivation in Australia. With this it rendered impossible the import of overseas sugar made from beet or cane and averted the possibly ensuing obviation of the Queensland sugar industry and the jeopardizing of Australia's status as a ›white« nation.

›White Australia« culture propagated outward seclusion as well as inward consolidation. In a similar manner as racism was popularized on the countless exhibitions and world's fairs, ›white Australia« culture made political and economic decisions approachable for the broad masses and facilitated the individual identification with Australianess. In the light of warnings about an alleged external endangerment by ›racial others« and a purported eugenic endangerment from within, ›white« culture was therefore not only necessary as a differentiation from the purportedly detrimental neighbouring cultures but was also shaped to be the common nominator of those willing to defend and support the nation. The special conditions in Australia – its geographical remoteness but ideological closeness to Britain, whilst at the same time feeling surrounded by purportedly encroaching Asian countries – facilitated the emergence but also the need for a shared culture which was shaped to the core by racism and became the ideological heart of ›white Australia«.

Political decisions of exclusion and expatriation were also being enveloped into a much broader storytelling of ›white Australia« culture. The use of racism as a community-binding event could only have such an impact in connection with its public and informal substantiation. ›White Australia« as a self-definition for an idealized society was constantly fed with narrative assurances of ›white« superiority and legitimacy of British land-occupation based on the ability to cultivate and develop the country. ›Whiteness« was so overtly present in songs, poems, travel stories, on stage, in movies, in advertisements and commerce, that »far from being unmarked and invisible, ›whiteness« in settler societies has been explicitly named and visible, as evident in the White Australia Policy« and everywhere else.⁵ The »novel and the newspaper« are now understood as providing the

⁵ Ann Curthoys: *White, British, and European*, pp. 5 ff.

»technical means for »re-presenting« the *kind* of imagined community that is the nation«,⁶ and in Australia around the time of Federation, print media was the dissemination channel for daily politics and dystopian fantasies that reached not only a broad audience but via its transmission of pictorial vocabulary in the form of cartoons also contributed to the establishment of a shared archive of visual language. The overall accomplishment of »white Australia« culture was the complete penetration of everyday behaviour in all spheres of society; this resulted in a »white-heartedly« practiced racist morality.

Till he landed on our shore, to the »white« mind, there was not much of significance on the Australian landmass. When singing the contender for the latter national anthem, the continent was vocalized into »white« possession and the original inhabitants out of its history. The carefully chosen and prized original lyrics of »Advance Australia Fair« told a story of denial and construction which substantiated the superiority of its »white« intruders. This song, however, represents only one medium through which »white Australia« was publicly narrated, instituted and also commodified. Its penetration of all spheres of society was an essential reason for the success of the subsequent stages of the »white sugar« campaign. Had the British-Australians not been so intimately involved in an ever-present »whiteness« discourse, both the appeal of the labour movement to grant »fair« wages to the »white« workers in the sugar industry and the sugar industry's promotional campaigns for the consumers' support in the nineteen twenties and thirties might have been doomed to failure.⁷ But, added to the political perspective in the form of the »white Australia policy«, the representation of »whiteness« in poems, songs, theatrical pieces, narratives and movies fostered the fixation of »white Australia« as the ultimate objective. From the (later) national anthem to a film concerned with the historical stages on the path to the Commonwealth of Australia, the British-Australian narration of how the continent was occupied and put to »good« use by a seemingly predestined group of people substantiated the alleged rightfulness and prosperousness of this British possession and evoked a belonging to a distinct collective based on »race«. With such an abundance of ideologically saturated nourishment, the consumers' disposition to pay a higher price for sugar produced with »white« labour and in support of »white Australia« was soothed. Shortly before Federation, it was made clear that support of

⁶ Benedict Anderson: *Imagined Communities*, p. 25 (»novel«, »imagined«, emphasis not added).

⁷ For the »whiteness« of Australian consumption and the associated appeals to the consumers, see chapter 6 »Consuming »White Australia«.

the Queensland sugar industry was a vital necessity to the ›survival‹ of ›white Australia‹.

Life or death of a ›white‹ continent was the war cry at the end of the nineteenth century, when literature brought together foreign affairs and politics of the day, anxieties based on the unusual geographical position of a European offset and intra-societal tensions based on ›race‹, class and gender in a just then emerging genre: the invasion novels. They revealed the societal weak spots by identifying foes and ›race‹ traitors within the society that facilitated ›coloured‹ labour and settlement in northern and eastern Australia, the members of the ›white Australian‹ society who were likely to fall victim to the ›coloured‹ intruders' seductions, and problematic procedures in the relation with Britain and the defence of the continent. The tenor of the stories, which in the majority of cases told of hostile takeovers by a stampede of Chinese or clandestine seizure of power by the Japanese military, was the need to overcome internal struggles in order to join forces in defence of ›white Australia's‹ survival.

White wages for white workers was the demand of the European cane cutters. The Queensland sugar industry proved to be the crucial factor to the ›white‹ settlement of the continent's northern parts. That an Asian invasion could not be prevented with workers from China, Japan and the South Sea Islands seemed logical to the critics of ›coloured‹ employment. With the help of the federal government, the transition from a ›black‹ to a ›white‹ sugar industry had been initiated by legislation of the deportation of Pacific Islanders was legislated and jobs freed of their former occupiers. Still, the European workers, supported by the labour movement, greatly hesitated to sign up due to the unsatisfying working and living conditions. These demands were not least based on the development of the excise and rebate system, which was supposed to function as a further catalyst for the increase of European workers by rewarding the sugar farmers for the employment of ›white‹ workers. It was a highly disputed system; in particular the sugar growers complained that the whole burden of ›white labour‹ would be carried by them, and the other industries which criticized the exposed and overly protected position of the whole sugar industry to the detriment of the rest of Australia.

The *sweetening product with bitter servitude* was eventually the reason for an industry-spanning strike. The ›white‹ workers pressed for a treatment that reflected their ›racial‹ value: ›white‹ employment in the sugar mills and cane fields should be ›fairly‹ rewarded, they claimed. A state-wide strike by the cane and mill workers in Queensland with broad public and political support substantiated their demands. But not only was this

a class struggle against employers allegedly continuing to treat their employees like slaves. It was also a process of distinction within the group of those legally declared to be ›white‹ workers. The labour movement's agitation against the Italians and other southern Europeans, who were brought into the sugar regions as substitute workers and strike-breakers, demonstrated once again the fuzziness and malleability of the spheres of ›whiteness‹.

5.1 ›Till He Landed on Our Shore‹: Refining ›White Australia‹

›Whiteness‹ in Australia found expression in diverse media and forms. Scientific texts, fictional narrations, songified verses and theatrical pieces charged with ›white‹ symbolism all shaped and secured the way ›white Australia‹ was received and passed on in public discourse. This held true also for intersectional issues, like the ›white‹ woman in whom gender and ›race‹ supposedly clashed or the ›white‹ capitalist who willingly transgressed ›racial‹ conventions to succeed in class struggle.

Shortly before the colonies on the Australian landmass formed the Commonwealth of Australia, Edward E. Morris, professor of modern languages and literature in Melbourne, published his ›Dictionary of Australasian Words, Phrases and Usages‹.⁸ Based on the method used by the Oxford English Dictionary which procured quotations from contemporary literature, Morris produced a vast collection of »words and uses of words peculiar to Australasia«.⁹ With this he gave scientific acknowledgment to the circumstance that English in colonial Australia had become a subset of the language in its own right. Not only the fact that it also documents words from the »Aboriginal Australian« and »Maori language« gives credit to the effect of locality on the colonial language; also, as Morris noted that »[m]uch of Australasian nomenclature is due to ›the man in the bush‹«.¹⁰ The dictionary also listed amongst the indexed words the names of fauna and flora. By doing this, it codified the naming and mapping of the Australian landscape – and the classification of the animals and plants in it – by the British intruders, which had taken place during the more than a hundred years of colonial settlement.

⁸ See Edward E. Morris: *Austral English*.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. ix.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. xiii f. (›Aboriginal Australian‹, ›Maori‹), xii (›nomenclature‹).

The dictionaryal fixation of the latter was more than mere stocktaking; it was rather a conservational strategy. Less than a decade of ›white Australia‹ had passed when the ›Australian spotted gum‹ was supplanted by a competitor intruding from New Guinea in the northern climes. What at first glance seems to be a mere biological observation, reveals its national affinity upon closer consideration: the »native races of the botanical world« were endangered by an »invader« from overseas. »For ages past a tropical vegetation, differing altogether from our own true flora, has been invading Australia from the north«, the ›Sydney Morning Herald‹ warned its readers and continues, »[t]his is more than survival of the fittest, and in the floral world a white Australia is no longer possible«.¹¹

In the space of one paragraph, more than floral ownership is ascertained. The local native flora is incorporated into ›white Australia‹; and that not only since recent years but for times immemorial. This timelessness was a discussional skein common in the discourse of Australian ›whiteness‹. In the same vein, the Australian Natives' Association claimed nativeness for ›whites‹ born in Australia, and the original anthem claimed an obscured ever-presence of (›white‹) Australians on the continent.¹² Moreover, the invading tropical, and therefore necessarily non-›white‹, New Guinean plant mirrored contemporary fictional narrations as well as scientific reports on the ›racial‹ dangers of human invasion. Besides the concerns about the French and German colonial settlements close to Queensland, it was the hostile take-over by Asian forces that was expected to take place via the tropical north as well.¹³

Almost at the same time, the ›whiteness‹ of Australia and the legitimacy of its British occupation were established in song form and enabled generations of Australians to henceforward repeatedly sing the landmass into their possession.¹⁴ Written by the Scottish composer Peter Dodds McCormick, ›Advance, Australia Fair‹ was performed for the first time at the Scottish Concert of the Highland Society of New South Wales, during the celebration of St. Andrew's Day on the last day of November 1878, as a »patriotic song«.¹⁵ But its most spectacular staging was probably the choir of ten thousand school children conducted by the composer

¹¹ ›The Cangai Mine‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 19.01.1904.

¹² Cf. (Untitled), in: Argus, 27.04.1872. The first quotation for the ›spotted-tree‹ in Morris dates from 1889, see Edward E. Morris: *Austral English*, pp. 430 f.

¹³ See the invasion novels in the next subchapter ›Life or Death of a White Continent‹.

¹⁴ For an investigation into the implication of the national anthem, see Christopher Kelen: *Hymns for and from White Australia*; for a reflection on Australian ›fairness‹ in this context, see also Wulf D. Hund: *Negative Societalisation*, pp. 74 ff.

¹⁵ ›Amusement‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 27.11.1878.

himself and heard by fifty thousand listeners at the inauguration ceremony of the Commonwealth of Australia on 1 January 1901, which heralded the official beginning of ›white Australia‹.¹⁶

Already long before Federation, the lyrics to the song were widely circulated in the daily press. The reprint by the ›Clarence Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser‹ provided a hint at one of the contemporary interpretations of the song since in its title as well as in the chorus the punctuation deviated from the original lyrics: ›Advance Australia Fair‹ became ›Advance, Australia Fair‹.¹⁷

Looking at some lines of the lyrics offers an insight into how ›whiteness‹ was sung into the heads of those attending the celebrations and those savouring the performance of the national anthem, albeit in a modified version, until today. The lyrics start off with a strongly gendered perspective: ›Australia's sons, let us rejoice, | For we are young and free‹. It is the male part of the population that participates in the celebrations of the newly established Commonwealth's accomplishments. Having left behind their convict roots, they are now about to shed the last suspicions of forced labour on their territory by legislating against the workers from the Pacific Islands. The contribution by the female population is erased from history. Explorers, scholars, and active inhabitants – all those who wrote, located, drew, or versified Australia into the maps, texts, and histories of the world – are instantaneously masculinized. Underhandedly, the protagonists as well as the history are thus ›whitened‹. The reported ›recentness‹ of (›young‹) Australia blanks out the pre-existing inhabitants of the continent, the indigenous population, who are also not included in the group entitled to the mineral and natural resources of the country. One reason for this being a correlation that not least purportedly legitimized the British occupation of the Australian landmass: ›wealth‹ only comes with ›toil‹. As the Aborigines were considered nomads without agriculture and without willingness to work, both their claim to ownership and their participation in the allocation of profits was thus denied to them.¹⁸

This occupation of the landmass became a timeless necessity, fulfilled ›[w]hen gallant Cook from Albion sailed, [...] Till he landed on our shore‹.

¹⁶ Cf. ›The Music‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 02.01.1901; ›Advance Australia Fair‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 20.02.1954.

¹⁷ For these lyrics of ›Advance Australia Fair‹, see ›Advance, Australia Fair‹, in: Clarence and Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser, 13.09.1879. Compared with the official lyrics of the same year, the reprint also omits some words and adds others (for example, ›hist'rys page‹, ›ev'ry stage‹, ›In joyful strains then let us sing‹) – see McCormick's lyrics, <http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview/?pi=nla.mus-an24220024-s1-v>.

¹⁸ See subchapter 3.2 ›None Suitable for Plantations‹.

This time the denial is even more far-reaching than only that of history and ownership – it also allows for the ›dispossession‹ of those inhabitants who have allegedly never ›possessed‹ the country.¹⁹ The invocation of Britain's oldest name, ›Albion‹,²⁰ predates the occupation of the eastern shores of then ›New Holland‹ by Captain James Cook in 1770; British seizure of the Australian landmass becomes a primordial destiny. By claiming the shores to be ›ours‹, while at the same time emphasizing the British roots, the ›aboriginality‹ of the ›white‹ Australians is further solidified. With the presence of ›white‹ indigenous people, the original indigenous people can even more easily be written out of history, and with their disappearance the myth of terra nullius, Australia without pre-possessors, is being validated.²¹ Furthermore, Australia's ›uninhabitedness‹ is prolonged from Cook's possession taking to the recent past when such perceptions had been reiterated in judicial decisions.²² It was not until the ›Mabo decision‹ of 1992 that the construction of ›terra nullius‹ was raised to question and first steps to rectify historical misrepresentations were taken.²³

The appropriation, however, is not confined to landmass, »our glorious Southern star« becomes symbol and benchmark for the rising Australia. At the same time, it hints at the ideological narrating-into-possession of the southern continent long before it was correctly geographically recorded in the maps. Australia entered the European mind as part of ›Terra Australis‹ a long time before anyone from the western part of the northern hemisphere set foot on its soil.²⁴ The (initially fictive) southern landmass was not only thought to be a counterweight in geographical terms. The antipodes were also commonly considered to counterbalance the inhabitants of the northern hemisphere. From the location of monsters via a promising Eden with paradisiacal inhabitants via the pristine habitat of noble savages to the living environment of ethnologically evaluated ›inferior races‹, the southern continent passed through several conditions of representation.

In the course of European ›discovery‹ of the world, the most prominent identifier of Australia was catalogued very early on. Even though, astron-

¹⁹ Recent attempts to replace ›Advance Australia Fair‹ with a song that emphasized the inclusion of indigenous Australians were in vain – ›I am Australian‹, in: Herald Sun, 11.02.2011. For the lyrics, see <http://www.independentaustalia.net/2011/australian-identity/make-i-am-australian-our-national-anthem/>.

²⁰ David Hackett Fischer: *Albion's Seed*, p. 6.

²¹ Cf. Kate Foord: *Frontier Theory*, pp. 146 f.

²² For Cook's possession taking and its aftermath, see Katrina Schlunke: *Historicising Whiteness*.

²³ Cf. Richard Broome: *Aboriginal Australians*, p. 235.

²⁴ For the following information and a collection of interesting maps that should have been published in a more appropriate layout, see William Eisler: *The Furthest Shore*, pp. 13 (counterweight), 10, 31 (monsters), 33 ff. (paradise).

omers in Australia knew the stellar constellation of the Southern Cross long before Europeans searched the Australian skies – artists had drawn early representations on rock platforms,²⁵ and the ›Emu in the Sky‹ with his head in the very stellar constellation is likely to have been discovered »thousands of years« ago²⁶ – the Southern Cross continues to be remembered as a result of having been mapped and named by a European in the sixteenth century. After »writers of classical antiquity and Arabic cosmographers« told about its existence and, besides others, Amerigo Vespucci took notice of this stellar constellation, it was the Italian explorer Andrea Corsalis who was the first to »recognised and described its shape [...] as a cross, thus both publishing and effectively naming it«. Quite prophetically, though nonetheless coincidentally, with regard to its later ideological usage as a signifier of ›white Australia‹, he remarked that the »marveyulous crosse in the myddest of five notable starres« was »so fayre and bewtiful, that none other hevenly signe may be compared to it as may appeare by this figure«.²⁷

As more than a mere point of reference in nautical astronomy, the Southern Cross accompanied the history of ›white Australia‹ from early on. It was not least evoked in the context of the Australian Natives' Association's celebration of Cook's landing, when the »Commonwealth« was described as »the fairest gem in the crown of the British Empire, having for its emblem the finest constellation in the heavens«.²⁸ It also appeared on the Eureka flag and was used in the miners' oath in 1854 during the Eureka Stockade: »We swear by the Southern Cross to stand truly by each other, and fight to defend our rights and liberties«.²⁹ Furthermore, it was a feature of the National Colonial and the Australian Federation flag, and it is now part of the Australian national flag, of which Andrew B. (›Banjo‹) Paterson rhymed: »The English flag may flutter and wave, | Where the World-wide oceans toss, | But the flag the Australian dies to save, | Is the flag of the Southern Cross«.³⁰ Saving not only the flag but defending the

²⁵ Cf. Clive L. N. Ruggles: *Ancient Astronomy*, p. 114. Of course the stellar constellation has also been discovered, watched and named by numerous other communities, in other places of the globe; for example, the Maoris – cf. Elsdon Best: *The Astronomical Knowledge of the Maori*, pp. 28, 31.

²⁶ Clive L. N. Ruggles: *Ancient Astronomy*, p. 148. See also Patrick Moore, Robin Rees: *Patrick Moore's Data Book of Astronomy*, p. 353.

²⁷ Anne McCormick, Derek McDonnell: *The Corsali Manuscript*, pp. 8 (›naming‹), 10 (›crosse‹, ›bewtiful‹).

²⁸ ›Captain Cook's Landing‹, in: *Barrier Miner*, 29.04.1909.

²⁹ Raffaello Carboni: *The Eureka Stockade*, p. 60.

³⁰ ›A Flag for Australia‹, at http://www.bwm.org.au/site/Banjo_Patterson.asp. For more information on Paterson, see also Clement Semmler: *The Banjo of the Bush*.

whole ›white‹ nation became an important part of the ›white‹ man's task in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

The original lyrics of ›Advance Australia Fair‹ close with a declaration of war against possible invaders. This was a topic very alarming to the ›white‹ Australian at the time of Federation. Other nations were suspected of wanting to occupy the continent, or parts thereof, for themselves. Caught in the area of tension between presumed expansion by European nations (like France and Germany, who both took into possession islands in the South Pacific at the turn to the twentieth century) and the alleged need for Asian nations to channel their supposed surplus population to the southern landmass, Australian minds saw a need to protect their continent against illegal and unwanted immigration, as well as their society against detrimental influences from overseas. This necessity for defence against external foes and simultaneous consolidation of an equalized homogeneous society found expression in the trope of the ›empty North‹ and was a permanent feature of the discourse on ›white Australia‹.

As a whole, the ›fairness‹ of advancing Australia in today's national anthem is a disputed wording. Historically, the word ›fair‹ itself can embrace three meanings: ›just, beautiful, white‹.³¹ Not only in the Australian context were these three interlocked in discourses of legislation, aesthetics, normativity and supremacy. In this early version of the (later) national anthem, it is not only the advancement of Australia that is supposed to be ›fair‹. The country defended in the last stanza is explicitly ›fair Australia's land‹, and it is not to be defended by anyone but by British-Australians – the ›sons‹ of ›Britannia‹. Furthermore, the lyrics state quite unequivocally who is considered capable of advancing Australia: ›From English soil and Fatherland | Scotia and Erin fair | Let all combine with heart and hand | To advance Australia fair‹. Consequently, the call for advancement is not only directed at those coming from the ›white land‹ but also from its neighbouring island.³² This is taking the narrowing down relatively far. Despite the influence of other non-European and European contribution to the settlement of the continent and the advancement of Australia as a society, not only its roots but even its crucial protagonists are British.

³¹ Christopher Kelen: *Hymns for and from White Australia*, p. 218; see *ibid.*, pp. 213 ff. for more information on this perspective.

³² Over the years Albion was seen as being etymologically rooted in the Latin word ›albus‹ for ›white‹ and as such to stand for the ›white land‹; a connection that still was maintained in both Webster's Unabridged Dictionaries of 1828 and 1913. The Australians, too, were no strangers to the application of this context. Narrating the discovery of New Zealand, the ›Argus‹ found parallels to the ancient naming of the British Isles for ›A-o-te-wa [...] – the long white land – another Albion – [was] the Britain of the South in name and nature‹ – ›The Land of the Golden Fleece‹, in: *Argus*, 24.10.1885.

How then should Australian ›fairness‹ be read? A decade after ›Advance Australia Fair‹ had been performed for the first time in public, the ›Australian Town and Country Journal‹ suggested as a national anthem the poem ›The Song of Australia‹.³³ Written by Caroline J. Carleton in 1859 and with music composed by Carl Linger,³⁴ it was another invocation of Australia as a British and distinctly ›light-skinned‹ continent. The last line of the poem and song read: »Fairest of Britain's daughters fair, Australia!«. It could be found paraphrased in reports about the Federation, and celebrations thereof, for example as »the brightest gem in England's crown – Australia fair and free« and as Britain's »fairest daughter«.³⁵ Published several times, inter alia in 1915 and 1926, both editions of the sheet music were adorned with the Australian coat of arms including its motto ›Advance Australia‹.³⁶ For a second time again, it was suggested as a national anthem in the late nineteen seventies when it was again in competition with ›Advance Australia Fair‹, the then current anthem ›God Save the Queen‹ and additionally ›Waltzing Mathilda‹.

This is not to say that all that is ›fair‹ is foul. However, connections between ›whiteness‹ and the ›fairness‹ of Australian advancement were indeed recorded. Around the time of Federation, those in doubt what the term ›fair‹ contained were enlightened not least by the reading of invasion novels.³⁷ In the late eighteen eighties, the »rays of the sun« fell on the »graceful figure, and upon the fair face and shapely head with its wealth of dark brown hair« of the protagonist's sister who, of course with preserved purity, becomes a victim of foreign invasion.³⁸ In the same year, the preservation of her virginity even when facing her demise made an Australian woman doubly ›white‹ – the Chinese assailant left her dying with her clothes in rags and »torn away from the fair white arm«; meanwhile, a second female protagonist, who is married to a Chinese man, is noticeably marked, »her face looking gray and ghastly«.³⁹ A couple of years later, the »pallid whiteness« of a female protagonist's face is closely followed by a

³³ ›The Song of Australia‹, in: Australian Town and Country Journal, 17.12.1887.

³⁴ Carleton won the 1859 Gawler Prize for »the best Words for a Patriotic Song« – ›The Gawler Prize Song‹, in: South Australian Register, 21.10.1859. For the poem, see ›The Gawler Prize Poem‹, in: South Australian Register, 21.10.1859.

³⁵ ›Original Poetry‹, in: Northern Star, 29.09.1900 (›daughters‹); ›The Banquet‹, in: Singleton Argus, 26.03.1901 (›brightest‹, ›fairest‹).

³⁶ For the 1915 version, written for »Foundation Day« on 26 January: <http://nla.gov.au/nla.mus-an5528000>, for the 1926 version: <http://nla.gov.au/nla.mus-an9821950>.

³⁷ For nexus and background of these and other invasion novels, see the next subchapter ›Life and Death of a White Continent‹.

³⁸ Edward Maitland: Battle of Mordialloc, p. 33.

³⁹ William Lane: White or Yellow, 07.04.1888 (Chap. VIII, ›fair white‹), 28.04.1888 (Chap. XI, ›fair face‹).

description of »[w]omen fair as« her.⁴⁰ Shortly after the Commonwealth of Australia came into being, a takeover by Japanese forces involved the incarceration of parts of the »White men and women«: »The fairest and most beautiful women and the fairest and most handsome men will be mated [... and] provided for in the Fair Lily Colonies«.⁴¹

Readers could also orientate themselves by poems such as the one in celebration of the semi-centennial anniversary of Queensland: written at a time when the »[w]ide canefields [which] glisten in the light« are already ›whitened‹ by the recent repatriation of the Pacific Islanders, and legislation is impelling a further ›purification‹, Queensland as the »Daughter of the Sun« is lauded as »[o]f all thy kin the fairest one«, its capital Brisbane as »one fair city« and its female inhabitants as »thy daughters, fair of face«. Nonetheless, danger is afoot: »dark aslant the Northern Gate« and the visible »Shadow of the Sword« herald the possible arrival of Asian invaders.⁴²

The main topics of ›Advance Australia Fair‹ were also approached in poetic form. In 1908, Henry Lawson's poem ›Song of Australia‹ was published. The country is anthropomorphized and gendered, the verses written from the perspective of a »girl called Australia«. Once again, its historically incorrect occupation happened without resistance by, or even presence of, indigenous Australians since »no fields of conquest grew red at my birth«. Possession is further claimed by asserting that the »White world shall know its young outpost with pride«, and the whole region is defended from other's appropriation, as »[i]n spite of Asia, and safe from her yet | Through wide Australasia my standards I'll set | [...] | To suffer in silence, and strike at a sign, | Till all the fair islands of these seas are mine«.⁴³ For Henry Lawson, writer of short stories and poems as well as contributor for both ›Worker‹ and ›Boomerang‹, the protagonist of ›white Australia‹ was the bushman domiciled in the Australian outback. His ›racial‹ assignment was unequivocal: »You'd only need to say of one – ›He was my mate!‹ that was enough | To hint a bushman was not white, nor to his Union straight and true, | Would mean a long and bloody fight in Ninety-one and Nine-

⁴⁰ Kenneth Mackay: *The Yellow Wave*, p. 245.

⁴¹ Thomas R. Roydhouse: *Coloured Conquest*, 06.09.1904 (Chap. XIV).

⁴² ›Queen of the North‹, in *Government of Queensland: Our First Half-Century*, pp. 1-4; see also ›Jubilee Ode‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 07.08.1909. In the pictorial representation of Japanese intruders, the sword was a common property and symbolized their military power – see, for example, the cartoon ›Sleeping at his homework‹ (Fig. 47 c) in the next subchapter.

⁴³ Henry Lawson: ›The Song of Australia‹ (1887), in id.: *The Skyline Riders*, p. 137. For information on Lawson, see Manning Clark: *In Search of Henry Lawson*; Christopher Lee: *City Bushman*.

ty-two«. ⁴⁴ Mateship, unionism and ›whiteness‹ were closely linked in the perception of the bushman as the backbone of Australia.

By the nineteen twenties, there was little doubt about this particular interpretative approach of an advancing of ›white Australia‹. In the model case of climatic synergy between nationalism and consumerism, the ›Great White Train‹ (which toured New South Wales for similar reasons and at the same time when the Queensland sugar industry placed advertising notifications in Australian newspapers), it went almost without saying that it was sent off from its starting point and greeted on its stations by ›Advance Australia Fair‹ and ›Awake, Australia‹. ⁴⁵ Even before that, the ›Cairns Post‹ presenting a politician's plans to foster the populating of Australia's inland and his proposal to »people this Continent of White Australia with millions of men from the Cradle Land of the White Race. It means the scientific co-operation of land, labor, and capital, and the results will be peace progress and prosperity and the advancement of Australia Fair«. ⁴⁶

At the end of the nineteen twenties, the popularizing of Australian ›whiteness‹ claimed a new medium. The silent film ›The Birth of White Australia‹, written and directed by Philip K. Walsh, provides cinematic »evidence of Australian racism« by visiting ideological cornerstones on the path to ›white Australia‹ from the time of the possession taking by Captain James Cook in 1770 via commemorations of Anzac Day, to official footage of the opening of the Parliament House in Canberra at the time of its shooting. ⁴⁷ The film was, not least because of its name, often being compared to David W. Griffith's ›The Birth of a Nation‹. ⁴⁸ It takes an unsurprisingly anti-Chinese perspective in its focus on the mid-nineteenth century gold field riots which were shot with European actors wearing ›yellowface‹.

The Chinese narrative element in the story once again provided the viewer with dire predictions about Asian lustfulness with regard to ›white‹ women and their need to be saved from the pursuers by ›white‹ men. The depiction of Aboriginal Australians mirrored the line of argumentation found in ›Advance Australia Fair‹ and in Lawson's ›Song of Australia‹:

⁴⁴ Henry Lawson: ›Bourke‹ (c1906) in id.: *When I Was King*, p. 102.

⁴⁵ See for example ›Great White Train‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 09.09.1926 – but, more importantly, see subchapter 6.4 ›Thousand Feet of Whiteness‹.

⁴⁶ ›A Million Farms‹, in: *Cairns Post*, 01.02.1922.

⁴⁷ For more extensive information on the film, see Tom O'Reagan: *Australian National Cinema*, pp. 346 ff., 346 (›evidence‹).

⁴⁸ Cf. Michael Organ: *Strike 1912*, p. 44; Bruce Dennett: *How Dixie Waltzed with Matilda*, p. 501 f.; see also the curators' notes at the National Film and Sound Archive, <http://www.aso.gov.au/titles/features/birth-of-white-australia/notes>.

the continent was always meant to be the ›white‹ men's country, and the occupation was a peaceful one; consequently the resistance by the indigenous population was registered to not only be futile but even non-existent. As a result of this, the story of the Aborigines, narrating their incapacity and subservience but played by actual indigenous people,⁴⁹ was already done with after scarcely a third of the movie.⁵⁰

Contemporary reports underlined its romantic-patriotic message and advertised its telling of an »epic story of the pioneers, explorers, and statesmen who moulded the history of the nation«; its ideas were considered »typically Australian«, yet marketable to other countries. It also made special notice of the appearance of the »first white woman born in the south-west«. How far the enshrinement of ›whiteness‹ and its possessive connection to Australia embodied in her went, was shown three years later when she was proclaimed »Australia's oldest native woman«.⁵¹ Nevertheless, possibly due to its low quality or its unconvincing storytelling, its audience remained small and apparently no wider distribution took place.⁵²

The theatrical representation of foreigners, in this case Chinese, by ›white‹ Australian actors was rooted in another medium: the minstrel shows staged in theatres all over the country in which ›white‹ actors dressed up as and impersonated ›black‹ people. In late 1931, reports about the Queensland sugar industry were once again filling the newspapers with allegations that unnecessarily high sugar prices were demanded from the consumers, as well as the industry's rebuttal by emphasizing their contribution to the maintenance of ›white Australia‹.⁵³ At the same time, Eddie Leonard, renowned vaudevillian and »minstrel king«, made an on-screen appearance in Australian theatres in the film ›Melody Lane‹ which, amongst other songs, introduced his song »(There's) Sugar Cane 'Round My Door«.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ For example, the aboriginal group near Yass – ›Yass‹, in: Canberra Times, 02.12.1926.

⁵⁰ Cf. Bruce Dennett: How Dixie Waltzed with Matilda, p. 502. For pertinent scenes of the film, refer to <http://aso.gov.au/titles/features/birth-of-white-australia/>.

⁵¹ ›An Australian Film‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 23.05.1927 (›epic story‹, ›first white woman‹); ›The Birth of White Australia‹, in: Daily News, 27.05.1927 (›typically‹); ›Australia's Oldest Native‹, in: Advocate, 21.06.1930 (›oldest‹).

⁵² Cf. Tom O'Reagan: Australian National Cinema, p. 347. However, over the years the movie never faded from the collective memory – see, for example, ›Scalps Taken At Lambing Flat‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 26.04.1947. Furthermore, several Australian libraries hold copies open to the public of a remastered version of the movie, with added score from 2000.

⁵³ For sugar and ›white Australia‹, see, for example, ›Sugar‹, in: Frankston & Somerville Standard, 24.10.1931; ›The Sugar Monopoly‹, in: Cairns Post, 26.12.1931. For more information on the sugar industry's campaigns, see subchapter 6.3 ›Think the Matter out‹.

⁵⁴ ›Eddie Leonard at the Don‹, in: Northern Standard, 20.11.1931 (›minstrel king‹, ›cane‹); for a short synopsis, see Edwin M. Bradley: The First Hollywood Musicals, pp. 48 f.

The so-called ›blackface minstrel‹ genre originated in the United States, where they were a popular form of entertainment from the eighteen thirties onwards.⁵⁵ They brought forth racistly stereotyped figures like ›Jim Crow‹, ›Uncle Tom‹, ›Sambo‹, ›Zip Coon‹, ›Dandy Jim‹ and others. Subsequently, blackface minstrelsy, making the ›black‹ a »grotesque figure of fun«, was widespread in Britain in the latter half of the nineteenth century.⁵⁶ A main feature of the representation of the ›black‹ characters was their reinforcement of ›white‹ superiority by emphasizing the submissiveness and simple-mindedness of the non-›whites‹ – the same characteristic traits ›white‹ Australians professed to find in Aborigines. Originally, minstrel shows did not function by simply bringing into racist ridicule those who were acted out;⁵⁷ they also fostered the trivialization and belittlement of those mimicked during the performances.

Single minstrel-show-like acts were first staged in Australia in the late eighteen thirties. Though the reaction to one of the first performances of the stereotyped caricature of the well-known minstrel character ›Jim Crow‹ was a negative one – the ›Sydney Herald‹ theatre critic considered it a »mass of vulgar buffoonery and impiety«, which should not »annoy[]« the »ears of decent people«⁵⁸ – its readers had already been made familiar with this subject: the Australian newspapers had, already for years, been closely following the entertainment career of Thomas D. Rice, the well-renowned American minstrel performer.⁵⁹ In addition, the expression ›Jim Crow‹ had been priorly established as a rhetorical device for political satire, and the corresponding poetry taught the readers to »jump Jim Crow« and gave them discriminatory pleasure long before the theatrical performance.⁶⁰ With the minstrel genre, terms like ›nigger‹ and ›coon‹ entered the Australian word pool and were subsequently accommodated to the local situation as collectives for ›non-white‹ people in general.⁶¹

Two decades later the »minstrel show was a fixed feature« of the »popular stage« in Australia,⁶² and British and US-American companies tour-

⁵⁵ For more information, see Jan Nederveen Pieterse: *White on Black*, pp. 132 ff.; Eric Lott: *Blackface and Blackness*.

⁵⁶ Michael Pickering: *Blackfacing Britain*, p. 239. For more on British blackface, see also id.: *Blackface Minstrelsy in Britain*.

⁵⁷ Cf. Eric Lott: *Blackface and Blackness*, p. 3.

⁵⁸ ›Domestic Intelligence‹, in: *Sydney Herald*, 12.09.1838.

⁵⁹ See, for example, ›Miscellanies‹, in: *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 05.10.1833; (untitled), in: *Hobart Town Courier*, 27.01.1837.

⁶⁰ ›Jim Crow's Trip to Downing-Street‹, in: *Sydney Herald*, 31.08.1837 (›jump‹). Cf. ›The Revenue‹, in: *Sydney Herald*, 29.06.1837; ›News of the Day‹, in: *Sydney Monitor*, 27.09.1837.

⁶¹ Cf. Richard Waterhouse: *The Minstrel Show and Australian Culture*, p. 149.

⁶² Richard Waterhouse: *From Minstrel Show to Vaudeville*, p. 26.

ing the country became a common sight. Like sideshow entertainment, minstrel shows proved to be a crowd puller especially in towns close to the southern goldfields.⁶³ Furthermore, the staging of these well-attended minstrel performances concurred with the times of heightened tension between European and Chinese diggers in the mid to late eighteen fifties. Their appeal was nowhere near lost when, in 1902, a minstrel troupe entertained the audience at the Childers sugar-mill where an employees' picnic had been organized.⁶⁴ In contrast to other shows, minstrelsy in Australia also featured racistly stereotyped caricatures of Chinese as ›John Chinaman‹, specific musical discrimination, or at least alteration of the stage adaptation of common performances.⁶⁵ It is further suggested that »the prism through which Australians viewed Aboriginals was one which was cut by the minstrels«.⁶⁶

Increasingly detached from references to slavery and plantation life, the minstrels' particular responsiveness to the Australian situation, and the potential for political caricature inherent in them, may have accounted for the audience's emphatic reception of this theatrical genre.⁶⁷ In addition to British and American shows touring the country, local amateur groups emerged, and this led to minstrel competitions awarding amateur performers with gold medals and charity events raising awareness and money.⁶⁸ Soon street artists adopted the practice of ›blacking up‹.⁶⁹ Another reason for the minstrelsy's success was its class-spanning appeal, which allowed the working class to share an evening with the upper classes united in compliant laughter at the staged racist stereotypes.⁷⁰

This, however, had a limit to it as well. Amongst the audience members were found the ›larrikins‹, a group of violent and street-smart young males, who were »among minstrelsy's most devoted clientele« but also »its most uproarious«. With their aggressive manners, their habitus and vocabulary

⁶³ Cf. Richard Broome: *Windows on Other Worlds*, p. 5; Richard Waterhouse: *Minstrel Show and Vaudeville House*, pp. 366, 372; id.: *From Minstrel Show to Vaudeville*, p. 36; ›Advertising‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 01.04.1856; ›Advertising‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9.12.1857.

⁶⁴ Cf. ›A Sugar-Mill Picnic‹, in: *Queenslander*, 19.07.1902.

⁶⁵ Cf. Richard Waterhouse: *Minstrel Shows and Vaudeville House*, p. 380; id.: *From Minstrel Show to Vaudeville*, pp. 38 f.

⁶⁶ Richard Waterhouse: *The Minstrel Show and Australian Culture*, pp. 149, 157.

⁶⁷ Cf. Melissa Bellanta: *Leary Kin*, p. 682; Richard Waterhouse: *Minstrel Show and Vaudeville House*, pp. 367, 378 ff.

⁶⁸ Cf. Richard Waterhouse: *The Minstrel Show and Australian Culture*, pp. 147 f. For appeals for contestants in amateur minstrel competitions, see (untitled), in: *Argus*, 30.04.1884; ›Amusements‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 04.03.1889.

⁶⁹ Cf. Melissa Bellanta: *Leary Kin*, p. 681.

⁷⁰ Cf. Richard Waterhouse: *Minstrel Show and Vaudeville House*, pp. 371, 376, 378. See also id.: *The Minstrel Show and Australian Culture*, p. 151.

derived from the minstrel shows, they formed a societally disdained group and continued to be counted amongst the ›worst‹ at the time of Federation – »a half lunatic, a drunkard or a larrikin«. ⁷¹ The potential for their own identification with the negatively stereotyped figures of the shows and the permeability of the ›white‹ society cannot be easily denied, when, »[l]ike the coons of late nineteenth-century minstrelsy, larrikins were cast as violent and sexually rapacious, ranking beneath the rest of white Australians on the evolutionary scale«. ⁷² The minstrels' appeal might also have been the possibility to entertain the idea of social revolt as a »carnavalesque inversion«. ⁷³ Or it was motivated along the »pattern of blackface-on-Black violence« in the United States, which usurped the »preindustrial permissiveness« of African Americans while at the same time emphasized the distinction of the ›white‹ mob in blackface from the latter. ⁷⁴ In any case, the recipients of the larrikins' physical discharge were commonly those already discriminated against by the mainstream society. Not only were they infamous for their attacks on Chinese in southern Australia, the larrikins in the sugar districts were also – at least in two major incidents, the riots of Pacific Islanders and fights between them and groups of ›whites‹ in 1900 and 1903 in Bundaberg – accused of having provoked the Pacific Islanders' violent resistance: the »larrikins [...] have always been the aggressors in every case«, remarked the police magistrate of said city. ⁷⁵

The minstrels substantiated ›white supremacy‹ by ridiculing or belittling the caricaturized and thus, in time of ›white‹ crisis at the turn to the twentieth century, had a soothing component. From minstrel evolved vaudeville. Its Australian variant continued the idealization of ›whiteness‹ but also, not unlike the invasion novels of its time, warned of the dangers from within the society. The ›new woman‹ with her newly-gained self-confidence and their claims to equality came under theatrical fire. ⁷⁶ They were represented as »nags and spoilsports« in terms of their treatment of ›white‹ men and were made protagonists in scenes of promiscuous and miscegenation behaviour. ⁷⁷

For the proponents of ›white Australia‹, the ›new woman‹ as a politically aware and active protagonist was an element of uncertainty. Like the

⁷¹ Melissa Bellanta: Leary Kin, p. 677 (›clientele‹, ›uproarious‹), 683; ›Woman's Franchise‹, in: Colac Herald, 12.03.1901 (›lunatic‹).

⁷² Melissa Bellanta: The Larrikin's Hop, p. 135.

⁷³ Melissa Bellanta: Leary Kin, p. 680.

⁷⁴ David Roediger: The Wages of Whiteness, p. 107 (›permissiveness‹).

⁷⁵ ›The Kanaka Bill‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 28.10.1901.

⁷⁶ Cf. Richard Waterhouse: Minstrel Show and Vaudeville House, p. 383.

⁷⁷ Richard Waterhouse: From Minstrel Show to Vaudeville, pp. 129 ff., 131 (›nags‹).

capitalists, who were under constant suspicion of corroding the ›white‹ country from the inside by rating profit over purity and employing ›coloured‹ labourers, the more emancipated women of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century with their striving for employment and equal income, their endeavour to become politically involved and thus their renunciation of traditional roles, allegedly constitute the decline in values of family and home.⁷⁸ In the eyes of the ›white Australian‹ agents, the continued extension of the women's sexual freedom – implicating their instinct to fall for Asian men from whom they could only be saved by the ›white‹ man's reason – seemed as a further threat to the maintenance of ›white Australia‹.

Logically, the women's involvement in politics was regarded somewhat sceptically. It took only one conference to shake the male ›white‹ Australian faith for years to come. During the »first Commonwealth conference of the Women's Anti-Socialistic Organisation«, the spokesperson of the Women's Liberal League Sydney, Molyneux Parkes, suggested that despite its desirability »from a race point of view« the maintenance of ›white Australia‹ was detrimental in terms of »industrial aspect[s]«. She suggested a »colour line«, separating the tropical parts with ›non-white‹ employment from the southern regions in which only ›white‹ workers were tolerated. Her motion that the »importation of coloured labour is necessary for the development of tropical territory« appealed to the attending crowd.⁷⁹ Still, years later, this incident continued to be in the mind of the labour movement's mouthpiece: on the occasion of another conference of the Women's Anti-Socialistic Organisation a corresponding cartoon embellished the cover of the ›Worker‹ (Fig. 41 a) in 1909.⁸⁰

The caption makes direct reference to the motion carried in the conference and to another female speaker (Miss Ogg) who called for a renewal of the immigration policy in favour of a more internationally acceptable system.⁸¹ The cartoon depicts the People's Progressive League (P.P.L.), whose representatives also attended the contemporary conference, as an elderly woman put on a dragon-crested pedestal, lionized and catered for

⁷⁸ Cf. ›The New Woman‹, in: Worker, 04.05.1895; ›The New Woman‹, in: Worker, 22.06.1916.

⁷⁹ ›Women in Conference‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 25.10.1907.

⁸⁰ ›The Kind of Australia they'd like‹, cover of the Worker, 24.07.1909. The caption reads: »The Anti-Labour Leagues of Ladies are to meet in Brisbane on August 2. At last year's meeting in Melbourne, Miss Hogg indignantly asked: ›What Title-deeds has the White Australian got to Australia?‹ and the following resolution was rapturously carried by the ladies present: ›That while the conference approves of the principle of White Australia from the racial point of view, it considers that the importation of coloured labour is necessary for the development of the tropical territory«.

⁸¹ Cf. ›Women in Conference‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 25.10.1907.

by ›coloured‹ men. A Chinese is shading her with a parasol, and an Indian is serving her drinks. Prostrating before her feet are an Indian cane cutter, an unidentifiable ›black‹, a Chinese and another cane cutter from the Pacific Islands. The drawing alludes to the notion that the ›coloured‹ men are (anew) introduced as workers due to the woman's political decision.



Fig. 41 a & b – Sin and indulgence:
Threats of invasion approved by the ›fairer‹ sex

She, who seemingly savours being wantonly eyed by men seeking after miscegenatious activities and enjoys their ambiguous catering to her every needs, impersonates the upper class women, susceptible to the exploitation of ›coloured‹ labour. Not only is she a precursor of the Federated Housewives' Association which, two decades later, questioned the subsidies to the Queensland sugar industries and demanded the introduction of more budget-friendly ›black‹-grown sugar from overseas.⁸² She also acts as the antagonist to the proponents of ›whiteness‹ who, in the majority, are male and associated with the labour movement. Apart from that, she also sums up the upper-class pleasures of colonial life advertised throughout the Empire: Indians serving tea, Africans handing chocolate, Native Americans providing tobacco, and Latinos picking coffee.

⁸² See subchapter 5.3 ›White Wages for White Australian Workers‹.

The year after, in 1910, the ›Worker‹ published another reference to the remarks from 1907 (Fig. 41 b).⁸³ This time the People's Progressive League's awareness of ›white Australia‹ has completely faded and given way to sweet(ened) dreams of a tropical Australia farmed and cultivated by ›black labour‹. Shortly before the upheavals of the 1911 ›Sugar Strike‹ – in which the workers fought for the improvement of labour conditions and wages for ›white‹ workers – the president of the League, Digby F. Denham, furthered their falling out of favour with the labour movement by the refusal to recognize the amalgamation of two of the largest Queensland trade unions, representing sugar workers, based on their closeness to the Labor Party.⁸⁴ Like the previous cartoon, the depicted woman is not the anthropomorphized young and blond Australia but seems to mirror in her facial features and hair colour the adverse effects of miscegenation. Combining the ›Worker's‹ disapproval of a sugar industry employing ›non-white‹ workers and the stereotypical ›swamping‹ otherwise attributed to immigration from Asian countries, the invasion of ›black labour‹ spreads via Queensland to all parts of Australia.

In general, political cartoons played a decisive role in spreading perceptions of ›whiteness‹ in Australia. As »graphic instrument of explanation or propaganda« such cartoons »proliferated like flowers in fertile soil, and helped to clarify and crystallize the issues« at the time of Federation.⁸⁵ The caricatures and cartoons boil down to its very essence the spirit of the times and the issues which public discourse deals with and mirror the humour and concerns of their days but require knowledge of current affairs, cultural memes and talk on the street. Not least by means of the graphical commentaries reprinted here, newspapers and magazines along the lines of the ›Worker‹, the ›Queensland Figaro‹, the ›Bulletin‹, the ›Boomerang‹, the ›Melbourne/Sydney Punch‹ gave voice to ›white Australia‹. They did so not only in text form but also by the cartoons published on and between their covers. These comprised depictions of external enemies, like Pacific Islanders, Chinese, and Japanese, as well as capitalists, women and imperialists who posed as internal threats to the ›white man's country‹, Australia.

At the forefront with its caricaturizing covers was the ›Worker‹, which habitually drew attention to the situation of the ›white‹, predominantly

⁸³ ›The Anti's Dream‹, in: Worker, 05.02.1910. The caption reads: »Give us (said a member at the Ladies' Anti-Socialist Conference in 1907) a sympathetic Liberal Government in power, and we will get coloured labour again«.

⁸⁴ Cf. John Armstrong: The Sugar Strike, p. 105 and subchapter 5.4 ›Sweetening Product with Bitter Servitude‹.

⁸⁵ Marguerite Mahood: The Loaded Line, p. 281.



Fig. 42 – No work for the ›white‹ man:
Poverty instead of ›white‹ wages

male worker. This held true in particular for the time of Federation, when in 1907 the ›Worker‹ bemoaned that ›The White Man's Burden‹ had transformed from the education of to the compliance to the ›non-white‹ people (Fig. 42).⁸⁶

The cartoon shows a group of jobless ›white‹ Australian males, labelled »The Unemployed«, waiting in front of the »Charities Depart-

⁸⁶ ›The White Man's Burden‹, cover of the Worker, 24.12.1907. The caption reads: »The White Man's Burden. White Worker (to ›Uncle‹ Bull): ›You have ruined South Africa, and now you would ruin me, too!«.

ment«. Instead of a Christmas gratification they are offered but refusing »Xmas Degradation« by the national personification of Britain, John Bull. This scene is surrounded by snippets depicting ›non-white‹ workers exercising their occupations in Australia: »Chinese Gardeners«, »Black Seamen«, »Kanaka Labour« and »Indian Hawkers«. The cartoon references Rudyard Kipling's poem ›The White Man's Burden‹, published shortly before Federation, by turning it on its head. Imperialism is no longer a noble enterprise which enlightens and promotes the ›dark‹ corners of the world – it is no longer the ›white race‹ which rules over the other peoples of the world. The commonality of ›race‹ has decomposed into the dissimilarity of ›class‹. Hence it is ›John Bull‹ – a representative of the British ruling classes, unmasked as a capitalist ›race‹ traitor – who turns against the ›white‹ heart of Australia (the working class) by privileging the employment of workers from abroad for maximization of profits, despite the detrimental effects to the Australian society. The ›burden‹ for the veritable ›white‹ has by implication become their survival in the face of imperial pretensions.

As such, ›whiteness‹ was at the heart of their national identity but, like ›whites‹ in other places in the world, ›white‹ Australians came to realize that it was not invincible. Far from being invisible and a norm, ›whiteness‹ in Australia was explicitly mentioned not only in politics but also in advertising, literature and other entertainment. Despite its omnipresence, it was critically endangered. It became clear at the turn to the twentieth century that ›whiteness‹ had to be protected and cultivated.

Possibly contrived under the apprehension of Japan as a new military power after its victory over Russia four years before was a dramatization that reached the Australian stage in 1909. The play by Randolph Bedford – journalist with the ›Bulletin‹, ›Lone Hand‹ and others, nationalist Queensland politician and proponent of ›white Australia‹⁸⁷ – with the working title ›The White Man's Land‹ was performed in Melbourne at the end of February and featured two Australians in their fending off of Japanese and Chinese invaders.⁸⁸ The play drew on certain motives which were also applied in the invasion novels: while the Chinese are threatening by virtue of their outnumbering, the leading cunning, tactical Japanese were individual dangers; and all were assisted by one Australian man, turned into a morally corroded ›race‹ traitor during his stay in ›Japanophil Britain‹, while some of his fellow-countrymen idly let the invasion happen, and the only

⁸⁷ See Rodney G. Boland: Bedford, George Randolph.

⁸⁸ Cf. ›Mr. Randolph Bedford's New Play‹, in: Coburg Leader, 06.03.1909. This was a copyright performance necessary to establish the stage rights to the play.

ingenuity of others, supported by two Aborigines, are able to rescue the Australian nation from the takeover.⁸⁹

The indigenous' participation could be construed as a hint of their inherent capability of progression conceded to them by ›white‹ ›race‹ scientists. In 1893, Alfred R. Wallace ranked the Aborigines as the »lowest and most primitive« Caucasians, and with this paved the way for the later attempts to ›breed out the colour‹. Thus, the more benevolent reception of Aborigines in the invasion genre after Federation as »white and black combining to defeat the ›Yellow Peril‹« reflected their contemporary assessment as »more nearly allied to [›white‹ Australians] than the comparatively civilised Malays, Mongols, or Negroes«.⁹⁰ It also demonstrated that in face of the danger from the outside (by Chinese, Japanese and other northern neighbours), not only the areas of tension based on the suspicion of non-›whiteness‹ (against Italians, Maltese and others from southern Europe) inside the society were put aside, but even the indigenous ›blacks‹ would be called on to defend the ›white‹ man's country.

The contemporary reception of Bedford's ›white Australia‹ play was generally favourable, its staging was lauded in Tasmania based on the notion that »[f]or the first time on a stage the ›empty North‹ becomes the convincing ground of a national problem«.⁹¹ The »long-expected production« then was regularly given in Melbourne under the title »White Australia, or The Empty North« and advertised as the »greatest dramatic event for years« and »the play that will stir Australia«.⁹² It was unrivalled not only in its being the »heaviest production yet attempted« but also in its ›authenticity‹: »The average stage aboriginal is considered by back blocks critics to be as untrue to type as the average stage Irishman, Scotchman, or Jew. Terrebit, the blacktracker of Randolph Bedford's play, ›White Australia or the Empty North‹, at the King's Theatre, Melbourne, is, however, to be the real thing. He is a humorous, hard-headed, sentimental, cold-blooded man, with strong ideas on the subservience of woman«.⁹³ Thus, the Aborigines as well as the ›white‹ women in the play, who are »paragons of virtue«

⁸⁹ For more on this and the possible alienation of ›whiteness‹ in the play, see Helen Gilbert, Jacqueline Lo: *Performance and Cosmopolitics*, pp. 34 ff. and Helen Gilbert: *Millennial Blues*.

⁹⁰ Warwick Anderson: *The Cultivation of Whiteness*, p. 200 (›lowest‹); Martin Crotty: *Constructing Whiteness in the Australian Adventure*, p. 139 (›white and black‹); *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia* (1910), p. 159 (›allied‹).

⁹¹ ›Music and Drama‹, in: *Examiner*, 20.05.1909. Similar also ›Dramatic Notes‹, in: *Advertiser*, 22.05.1909.

⁹² ›Music and Drama‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 12.06.1909, ›Amusement‹, in: *Argus*, 22.06.1909 (›greatest‹, ›stir‹).

⁹³ ›Dramatic Notes‹, in: *Register*, 05.06.1909; ›Dramatic Notes‹, in: *Advertiser*, 12.06.1909.

and in any case prized the nation's preservation over their own, remain stereotyped versions, behaving according to the ›white‹ male authors' and the then commonly accepted ideas.

In the contemporary version of his main song, senses of defence and exclusion were firmly established in the second of three verses: »Australia keep we ever pure from alien stain. | Never insult to endure. All fears disdain. | Thy gold and wine and oil, | Beloved land of light, | And all thy pleasant toil, | Are only for the white«. Three decades later, Bedford in his second verse reiterates the old tale of a pristine land before British occupation in the lyrics of his play: »Our land for many a thousand years, | Inviolat; | Until we grew, through storms and fears, | To make one State. | One Continent for all, | One people truly free, | One State that shall not fall, | From liberty«. ⁹⁴

A few years later, a disturbing silent film entered Australian cinemas »[g]raphically depicting the invasion of Australia by an Asiatic Horde, and showing how Australia responded to the call to war«. It, too, addressed the contemporarily important question of national defence by attempting to arouse patriotic feelings. ›Australia Calls‹ was written by John Barr and Charles A. Jeffries and directed by Raymond Longford in 1913. Not unlike Bedford's play, the movie was meant to be »a stirring patriotic appeal to Australia«. ⁹⁵ It drew on the anxiety about the ›yellow peril‹ and showed an aerial attack on several Australian cities by an unnamed Asian nation. ⁹⁶ It told the tale of a society occupied with sport interest, oblivious to the landing of Asian troops on their shore until it is too late and Sydney is already burning. ⁹⁷

However, neither Longford's movie nor Bedford's stage play were forerunners in fictional accounts of invasive intentions of foreign countries but could draw inspiration from more than three decades of literary preoccupation with the endangerment of ›whiteness‹ by internal and external foes. ›Whiteness‹ in the Australian literature of the last quarter of the nineteenth century evolved into a status that needed to be enshrined and retained. Besides authors being bothered by the impacts of colonial conditions on ›white‹ Australians and speculating about degenerating explor-

⁹⁴ This song called ›Australia my beloved land‹ was part of Bedford's play. For the 1909 version, see <http://nla.gov.au/nla.mus-vn3965485>; for the 1941 version, see <http://nla.gov.au/nla.mus-vn1628086>.

⁹⁵ ›Amusement‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 28.07.1913.

⁹⁶ Cf. John Connor: Australian-Japanese Relations, p. 59. Some reporters identified them as Japanese – see for example ›Australia Calls‹, in: Bairnsdale Advertiser and Tambo and Omeo Chronicle, 30.01.1914, or ›Amusement‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 22.07.1913.

⁹⁷ Cf. ›Amusements‹, in: Mercury, 25.02.1914; ›Olympia Pictures‹, in: Mildura Cultivator, 08.04.1914.

ers and ›whites‹ ›going native‹, scenarios of threatening hostile takeovers from external enemies were conceived and described situations fostered by political and socio-geographical circumstances as well as intra-Australian tensions.

5.2 ›Life or Death of a White Continent‹: The Literary Invasion of the ›Empty North‹

Australia held a special location in the world. Culturally mainly British in orientation, its geographical location was in close proximity to Asia. The fear of invasion by large groups from China or Japan spread throughout the Australian population and was fostered by cultural implementations.

The ›empty North‹ and its public discourse fostered anxiety about the closeness of allegedly overpopulated Asian countries and Australia's seemingly being on the verge of an invasion by the ›swamping hordes‹ coming from these countries. Nonetheless, scientific and political discourse gave these fears credibility. The invasion novels thrived splendidly on this fertile soil of national angst and scenarios of hostile takeovers. They diagnosed interior dislocations and emphasized the need for exterior cohesion of the ›white Australian‹ society. Their message was: ›white‹ unity is necessary for efficient defence. The practical geopolitical solution to the ›empty North‹ was seen in the expansion of sugar cane cultivation, while for others sugar cane was the root of all evil since it provided for the initial discords in the demography of northern settlement and acted as a possible stepping stone for foreign invasions via employment in the tropical north.

At the end of 1901 – the Immigration Restriction Act had not yet been passed – a newspaper in newly federated Australia was troubled by recent deliberations on the vulnerability of ›white supremacy‹. An article in the ›Queensland Figaro and Punch‹ thought most pressing the closeness to civilizations considered more powerful and civilized. The ›coloured people‹, which not only already constituted »[t]hree-quarters of the population of the entire globe« but also increased »in a very much faster ratio than the whites«, would need space to extend their territory to accommodate surplus population. Leaving aside the parts of the American continent and Africa, the article reminded that »all the habitable spaces of this planet [...] are practically occupied«. To the »peril of Australia«, the »natural outlet« for »Java, Japan, China, and India« was located in the uninhabited vastnesses of its northern shores.

The author of the article reminded his readers of the »natural law« that »tropical and semi-tropical countries« were already peopled by »dark-skinned races« since to carry on profitably an industry like the sugar industry, »coloured labour« was a necessity. But no need for fear: the Pacific Island Labourers Act 1901 would regulate the immigration from the nearby South Sea islands. Besides, »[t]he kanakas, of whom there is but a limited number, are a diminishing factor«. They »are not an organised nation, and are quite helpless when confronted with any civilised power«.⁹⁸

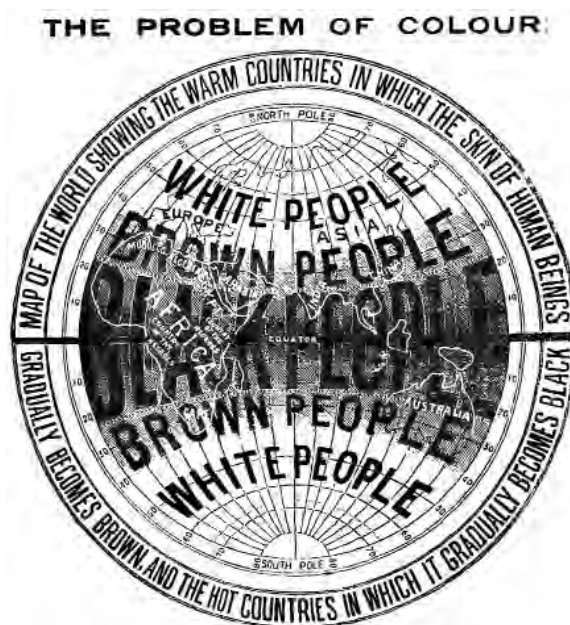


Fig. 43 – The ›coloured tide‹:
›White supremacy‹ under pressure

The emptiness they left behind after repatriation was the problem. A racial-climatic component was part of the argument of the ›Queensland Figaro and Punch‹ (1901), and this was depicted in its accompanying illustration (Fig. 43).⁹⁹ The global skin colour scale, having its darkest zone

⁹⁸ ›The Problem of Colour‹, in: Queensland Figaro and Punch, 21.11.1901 (›coloured people‹ and the following quotations).

⁹⁹ Ibid. The lettering reads: »Map of the world showing the warm countries in which the skin of human beings | gradually becomes brown, and the hot countries in which it gradually becomes black«.

at the equator and lightening up in its course towards the poles, located the »white people« not only in the colder but also in the more remote corners of the globe. While northern Europe was to remain firmly in the hands of »whites«, outlook on the southern hemisphere was less promising. With all the landmasses from Africa to Australia (America is strategically omitted) ascribed to »brown« and »black people«, the »whites« may be on top of the world but are nonetheless in a tight corner. Not only would expansion be out of the question but, according to the text circling around the globe, the skin colour of those residing near the equator would sooner or later adjust itself to the location. Australia becomes half brown, half black.

With the »birth-rate in Australia [...] declining« and an equally regressing »appropriate« »immigration«, »[w]hat must be the inevitable result in another generation or two?«. Due to the political interconnectedness with Great Britain, policies of exclusion were encouraging a kind of immigration that was considered detrimental to »white Australia« since »neither the Japanese as possible allies, or the Indians as British subjects, can be deliberately kept out of Australia, while we remain an integral part of the British Empire«.

The article drew on the contemporary debate which revolved around three main questions: will a surplus population in any of the numerically superior Asian countries – namely China or Japan – cause a hostile takeover or clandestine invasion of the unsettled or sparsely populated northern parts of the Australian continent; how, if at all, could Australia defend itself against the close-by nations; and should a separation from the British parent country be considered? Together with the perception of Australia as an outpost of (British) Europe and the firm belief that only »white« settlement is right settlement, the notion of the Australian continent as an endangered space of »whiteness« intensified. By this time, the »empty North« had already been firmly established as a trope for the perceived vastness, emptiness and the consequential vulnerability of the northern landscape as a part of »white Australia«.

The invasion anxiety of the late nineteenth century combined two preceding British-Australian concerns. The first was a presumed »swamping« by Chinese or Japanese »hordes« and had its roots in the days of the gold rushes of the eighteen fifties, when heightened Asian immigration and presence on the goldfields attracted negative attention. The second was the constant endeavour to defend and maintain the boundaries of Australia against other states. These were initially other European countries – France and Germany – whose presence in the South Pacific raised question to British land claims and resource economics. While in the last

decade of the century the apprehension of the accrual of a legal claim for uncultivated or unpopulated areas in the north of Australia waned, the fear of illegal land taking by Russian, Russo-Chinese or Chinese and later Japanese forces grew.¹⁰⁰

The belief that Australia was in imminent danger was ›scientifically‹ underpinned, in particular by two authors in the early eighteen nineties and the nineteen twenties. Charles H. Pearson, developed his theory during his two-decade-long residence in Australia, where he came to understand the necessity that democracy imposed on the homogeneous ›racial‹ composition of society.¹⁰¹ In this widely read book with several reprints,¹⁰² he distinguished two kinds of what he considered inferior categories of humans: the »evanescent races« and those who were »too numerous and sturdy to be extirpated«.¹⁰³ The former seemed unthreatening since Australian Aborigines, Pacific Islanders and other indigenous peoples (predominately in settler societies) would succumb to the ›natural‹ law of ›survival of the fittest‹ and give way to the ›white race‹

The latter, however, are characterized by their (presumed) rate of reproduction. In the case of peoples like African Americans, Chinese and Japanese, the »white man's burden« had turned into a bane when, as a consequence of the »peace and order« brought by the ›whites‹, their independence, and with this their gaining of power, was encouraged.¹⁰⁴ By the virtue of their adaptability to the tropical climate, Africans and Asians were considered to be able to populate landscapes close to the equator, which at that time seemed out of bounds for the tropically unfit ›whites‹. Pearson foretold the hindrance of the expansion of European colonies and drew a picture of a »globe girdled with a continuous zone of the black and yellow races, no longer too weak for aggression or under tutelage but independent, or practically so, in government, monopolising the trade of their own regions, and circumscribing the industry of the European«.¹⁰⁵

Queensland, under constant debate with regard to the Europeans' ability to settle and work in its tropical climate, was not only the place where Europeans already had empirical proof of non-European presence and adaptability. Its geographical closeness to countries presumed to soon be-

¹⁰⁰ For the Australian perception of danger from without in literature and public discourse, see Anthony Burke: *Fear of Security*; Robert Dixon: *Writing the Colonial Adventure*, pp. 118 ff.; David Walker: *Anxious Nation*; id., Agnieszka Sobocinska: *Australia's Asia*; Janeen Webb, Andrew Enstice: *Aliens & Savages*, pp. 130 ff.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Marilyn Lake, Henry Reynolds: *Drawing the Global Colour Line*, pp. 86, 91.

¹⁰² Cf. *ibid.*, p. 87.

¹⁰³ Charles H. Pearson, *National: Life and Character*, p. 33 (›numerous‹), 34 (›evanescent‹).

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14 (›peace‹, ›burden‹).

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

come unable to accommodate the tremendous population growth caused the foretelling of its future as a ›natural outlet‹ for the Asian ›surplus‹ population to appear possible. This made Queensland the crucial factor in ›white Australia‹ and emphasized the sugar industry's important task: it was thought to »offer[] the only practicable solution of the problem of national defence« since »[n]o other industry possessed the same capacity to settle white cultivators on the soil of Australia's vast tropical areas«.¹⁰⁶

Barely three decades later (fittingly during the heyday of crisis in the sugar industry, when it saw itself forced to justify for its reception of subsidies to the Australian public with a reasoning based on the ›empty North‹), Lothrop Stoddard drew on Pearson's »epoch-making book« in his deliberations on the »awakening« of China. This country had for a long time been an old culture deficient in development. With the dawning of the twentieth century, however, »Young China« presented the Western cultures with a not technically but numerically superior adversary who furthermore threatened to enter an alliance with its neighbouring state.¹⁰⁷ In his reflection of the latter, Stoddard was also influenced by the Japanese success in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904/05. At several points in his work, Stoddard utilized direct quotes from Japanese scholars and soldiers expressing interest in the »vast tracks of unoccupied territory awaiting settlement« in Australia (and other former settler colonies) and expressions of annexation of »so fine a country lying waste«.¹⁰⁸ Thus, the »natural outlet« would lay, besides in the United States and Latin America, in »Australasia« which, due to their exclusive method of ›white‹ settlement, would have to be taken by force.¹⁰⁹ Until then, social Darwinism – in the case of the Native Americans and the indigenous Australians following the rules of »Survival of the Fittest«, »the few colored aborigines vanished like smoke before the white advance« – and an alleged submissiveness – in Asia and Africa, under »the white man's burden«, »colored millions bowed with only sporadic resistance to mere handfuls of whites« – led the ›whites‹ to believe in their perpetual ›invincibility«.¹¹⁰

For Stoddard, Australia presented a particular case due to its location. He considered it »thoroughly white by settlement«, but its geographical remoteness from the »main body of the white world« and its »contiguous[ness] to colored race-areas« called for special defence. Though his ar-

¹⁰⁶ The Sugar Industry Organisations: The Australian Cane Sugar Industry, p. 7.

¹⁰⁷ Lothrop Stoddard: *The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy*, pp. 29 (›epoch-making‹), 26 (›awakening‹, ›Young China‹), see also pp. 238 ff.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., pp. 10 (›vast tracks‹), 21 (›waste‹).

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 48.

¹¹⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 149 ff., 150 (›survival‹), 151 (›burden‹).

gumentation followed allegations of undercutting and replacing European labourers, it exceeded questions of economy and was based on matters of the ›white race‹ and its survival. Regardless of the original population, by peopling the continent, it had become part of the ›white‹ »race-heritage«, and as such its ›value‹ as »true bulwarks of the race« had to be secured for future generations.¹¹¹

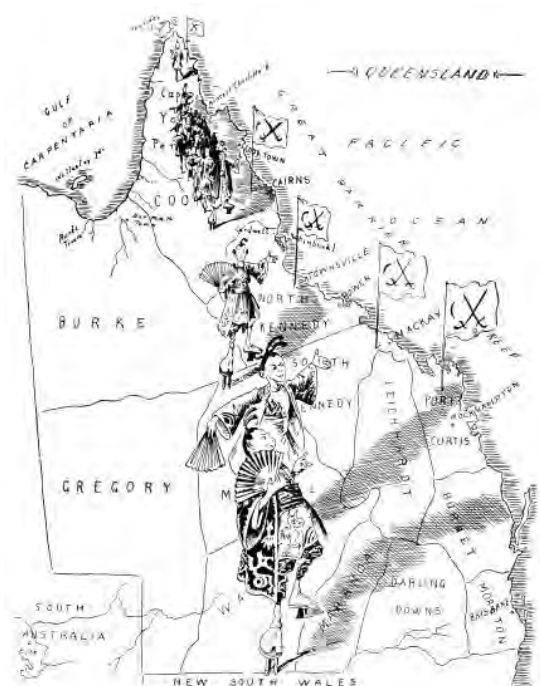


Fig. 44 – A leakage in the north:
Japanese invasion via Queensland

One concrete example of these ›bulwarks‹ proved to be the northern coast of Australia. The unchecked immigration of Japanese into Queensland is commented on in two cartoons by the ›Worker‹. In 1896, ›The March of the Jap‹ obscures the means by which they will arrive but identifies the port towns of the northern shores as the stepping stone for the numerous migrants then travelling south to the other states (Fig. 44).¹¹²

¹¹¹ Ibid., pp. 225 f.

¹¹² ›The March of the Jap‹, cover of the Worker, 16.05.1896.

In ›The Japanese Invasion‹ (1898) the ›Worker‹ depicts the alleged extent of expected Japanese immigration (Fig. 45 a).¹¹³ It makes direct reference to the Queensland-Japanese treaty, which granted Japan the supervision of passport allocation in order to restrict migration to Queensland.



Fig. 45 a – A leakage in the north:
Bureaucratic problems

This stood in contrast to the other Australian colonies which uniformly declined to enter into a contract with Japan and decided to pass legislation to restrict Japanese immigration.¹¹⁴ In this latter cartoon, the ›Japanese Government‹ is handing out countless passports to Japanese people. They uncontrollably sneak through the legs of Premier Thomas Byrnes who, in vain, demands to »[p]lease limit those passports for the present« and receives a derogatory and ridiculing reply. This reflected rumours circulating in Queensland

that »scores of Japanese are landed in Australia at places well out of the ken of Europeans, and gradually work their way to the large towns«.¹¹⁵

In the same vein, ›Up for vagrancy‹ in the ›Worker‹ (1899) depicts »what may soon happen in Queensland« (Fig. 45 b).¹¹⁶ The cartoon shows the inside of a Queensland court. The jury box is staffed with two Pacific

¹¹³ ›The Japanese Invasion‹, cover of the Worker, 20.08.1898. The speech bubble reads: »Please limit those passports for the present« and the caption: »JAPANESE GOVERNMENT: ›Limit them for the present? Ha! Ha! Ha! What about your treaty?‹«.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Anne Twomey: Federal Parliament's Changing Role in Treaty Making and External Affairs, p. 40; Luke Trainor: British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism, p. 161.

¹¹⁵ ›The Japanese Invasion‹, letter to the editor, in: Brisbane Courier, 20.08.1898.

¹¹⁶ ›Up for Vagrancy‹, in: Worker, 04.03.1899. The caption reads: »Or, what may soon happen in Queensland«.

Islanders, an Indian and a Chinese man. The other persons all bear stereotypical Asian facial features. Some of them are possibly Chinese since the same issue of the ›Worker‹ not only raised awareness to the increase of population in Japan but also strongly opposed the employment of Chinese workers.¹¹⁷ At least the judge and the agitated prosecutor, however, are Japanese males. In keeping with the stereotypical numerical superiority of the Asians, the only European in the room is the accused person – a well-groomed ›white‹ worker who, in place of the labour movement, fights for the implementation and better conditions of European employment. The ›white‹ worker forced into unemployment by the ›coloured‹ competition now finds his vagrant situation used against him.¹¹⁸



Fig. 45 b – *Invaders' justice:*
Japanese and Pacific Islanders in the courtroom

The ones absent from straight pictorial representation are those who paved the way for this situation: the »capitalists and their hirelings« who had been allowed »absolute-ly free hand in making the laws«. But even as the »open enemy«, the »un-compromising foe« to the labour movement, the fate of the capitalists is no equalization with the ruling Asian invaders but rather symbolizes their disappearance.¹¹⁹ Also absent from this picture are any females: neither activity in invasion nor the problem of unemployment nor class struggle were anything but men's business.

¹¹⁷ Cf. ›Smoke-Ho‹, in: *Worker*, 04.03.1899.

¹¹⁸ See also ›The Bushman's Future‹ (Fig. 28 a).

¹¹⁹ ›Editorial Mill‹, in: *Worker*, 25.07.1896 for the quotations.

Even though the legal fixation of ›white supremacy‹ had been achieved with the ›white Australia policy‹, »White Australia could hardly be judged a success so long as the tropical north remained largely unsettled«. ¹²⁰ At the same time, the Royal Commission of 1912 stated that the »sugar industry was vital to a White Australia« and would »contribute to the problems of the settlement and defence of the northern parts« therefore its »effective justification [...] must be sought in the very existence of Australia as a nation«. ¹²¹

The tropical climate hindered the northern development; yet a century ago, the Australian continent had been taken into British possession in accordance with the understanding that undeveloped terrain is unoccupied land. Would the same not apply in case that an Asian country would consider itself fitter to open up the unexploited parts and put it to better use? In the near future, Australia was to become the »scene of the [...] interminable conflict between Europe and Asia, between the white races on the one hand and the brown and yellow races, on the other«, predicted the ›Worker‹ and added that the struggle between these was the »oldest and most persistent factor in human history«. The Northern Territory was then the main concern as the country would »not a century hence have population enough to stem the flood of a yellow invasion« whose movement »must eventually follow seems automatic and irresistible«. ¹²²

While scientists continued to be in dispute about the adaptability of the ›white‹ men and women to life in the tropical part of Australia, ¹²³ the maintenance of ›white Australia‹ in the area of tension between external threat and internal disunity necessitated the implementation of a eugenically perceived ›body culture‹ which had to campaign at several fronts simultaneously: ›race‹ danger from the surrounding Asian countries, ›seducible‹ European women who betray their nation by falling for the ›racially‹ wrong men and ›indolent‹ European men who refrained from supporting their nation by working in the cane sugar industry.

¹²⁰ David Walker: *A Sunburnt Country*, p. 121.

¹²¹ The Australian Sugar Producers' Association: *White Australia's Great Sugar Industry ONLY Can Keep Tropical Australia WHITE*, pp. 6 (›vital‹), 7 (›defence‹); The Sugar Industry Organisations: *The Australian Cane Sugar Industry*, p. 8 (›existence‹).

¹²² ›Yellow Men's Brains‹, in: *Worker*, 21.05.1914.

¹²³ See, for instance, the correspondence between the Australian medical scientist Anton Breinl with biochemist William J. Young, on the one side, and American professor of geography Ellsworth Huntington, on the other, about »The Adaptability of the White Man in the Tropics in Australia«. Breinl and Young were trying to prove, on the basis of empirical data, that the suspicion of »unhealthiness of Tropical Australia« was insupportable – Anton Breinl, William J. Young, Ellsworth Huntington: *Correspondence*, p. 474 (›adaptability‹, ›unhealthiness‹). Huntington, on the other hand, referred to the »extremely high« mortality amongst the settlers, due to the »climatic conditions« – *ibid.*, p. 476.

This happened against the backdrop of a global attack on the ›white‹ body at the end of the nineteenth century. At the same time, the ›female body‹ was seen as the preserver and the compromiser of Australia's wholeness. While the ›true woman‹ acted out her social role as a stay-at-home mother and devoted as much as supportive wife,¹²⁴ the ›new woman‹ aspired after self-determination and personal fulfilment. Their fight for gender equality – in particular the right to vote and the right to work – was seen as much an assault on manliness as an interference factor in the societal order. Women who turned their back on family life were diametrically opposed to the policy of populating the continent, hence monetary awards for mothers were meant to counteract decreasing birth rates.¹²⁵ The women were otherwise seen as the weak spot of ›racial purity‹ in the light of the presence of ›non-whites‹ in the country. Be it voluntarily or forcibly, they would purportedly succumb to the sexual prowess of the ›racially‹ other and become the multiplier of miscegenation. In this way, the figurations of the ›Australian female body‹ shared essential characteristics with the western debate about emancipation, motherhood and public health, in which it was insinuated that in particular women from the upper classes were evading their obligation to bestow valuable offspring upon the nation due to their individual egotistic motives. Women as a whole were constructed as the ›other sex‹ and, consequently, as weak, nervous, endangered and seducible beings.¹²⁶

The ›male body‹, on the other hand, was not only endangered by it but, along the same lines as its female counterpart, imperilled as an underclass body by the eugenic calamities of industrialization which as such threatened to corrupt the entire ›racial‹ corpus. At the same time, external disaster loomed for the ›male body‹. Inter alia as ›racial menace‹, it was directed against ›white‹ manliness which, from athletic rivalry to military conflicts, was subject to ›coloured‹ competition.

Already in 1868, a team of Aboriginal cricketers had put up a good fight during a tour to the mother country of the most English of all sports. In the year 1908, Sydney became the scene of the first world heavyweight boxing championship, at which the previous ›white‹ champion fell by the wayside against the ›black‹ contender. Finally, in Europe in 1915, the same

¹²⁴ See, for instance, ›A mother's influence‹, in: Camperdown Chronicle, 24.01.1903 or ›What a woman can do‹, in: Bairnsdale Advertiser and Tambo and Omeo Chronicle, 12.07.1902. See also Anne Summers: *Damned Whores and God's Police*, p. 381.

¹²⁵ Cf. Richard White: *Inventing Australia*, p. 127.

¹²⁶ See Ann Heilmann, Margaret Beetham: *New Woman Hybridity's*; Joane Nagel: *Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality*, pp. 19 ff.; Angelique Richardson: *Love and Eugenics in the Late Nineteenth Century*; Anna L. Stoler: *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*, pp. 41 ff.

humiliation befell the Australian troops which previously – to the dismay of the whole ›white‹ world – the Russian fleet had to suffer when they were defeated by Japanese military formations near Tsushima in 1905: the so-called ›diggers‹ of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps failed at their attempted attack on Gallipoli because of the Turkish troops, who according to the contemporary view were classed with the ›yellow race‹.¹²⁷ The threat scenario connected with these events corresponded to the overall alarmist discourse about the ›rising tides of colour‹ for which one Australian author had become an important cue giver.¹²⁸

The perceived external endangerment by official or clandestine immigration to a country that was on the way towards framing its own identity under an exclusionist perspective was a promotive breeding ground for a dystopian literary genre, which went through several grim scenarios of the future development of Australia. Invasion novels combined the politics of the day and contemporary ›scientific‹ knowledge with rumours of the street and common stereotypical depictions of ›others‹, fabricating possible yet fictional scenarios of foreign invasion. They intertwined perceptions of internal areas of tension with respect to class, gender, ›race‹ and politics with warning descriptions of dangers coming from the surrounding countries. They were read against the backdrop of the everyday discourse and a notion of ›dwindling‹ ›white supremacy‹ at the end of the nineteenth century. Scientific underpinning was provided by the works of researchers, like Charles H. Pearson and Lothrop Stoddard, who evoked pictures of Asian countries finding an outlet for their surplus population in north Australia. Illustrating the necessity for immediate action and decisions as a matter of »Life or Death of a White Continent«, they were meant to serve as a tocsin for the white, mainly British, population.¹²⁹

Invasion novels, as a literary genre, have their roots in Britain in the late nineteenth century. The forerunner in the narration of hostile conquest was George T. Chesney's ›The Battle of Dorking‹, dating from 1871, which told the tale of a successful German attempt to takeover Britain and demonstrated its readers how vulnerable their unprepared and un-

¹²⁷ For the Aboriginal cricketers, see Ashley A. Mallett: *The Black Lords of Summer*; John Mulvaney, Rex Harcourt: *Cricket Walkabout*. For Jack Johnson, see Theresa Runstedtler: *Jack Johnson, Rebel Sojourner*; Randy Roberts: *Papa Jack*. For Gallipoli, see, amongst many, Jenny Macleod: *Reconsidering Gallipoli*; Marilyn Lake, Henry Reynolds: *What's Wrong with Anzac?*; David W. Cameron: *Shadows of Anzac*; Graham Seal: *Inventing Anzac*. 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*.

¹²⁸ Cf. Charles H. Pearson: *National Life and Character*.

¹²⁹ Charles H. Kirmess: *The Australian Crisis*, p. 92 (›life or death‹).

suspecting nation would be in the case of foreign intrusion.¹³⁰ In 1877, George Ranken's ›The Invasion‹ which dealt with an invasional attempt by Russian forces, the first Australian invasion novel, was published.¹³¹ It was followed, amongst others, by Kenneth Mackay's ›The Yellow Wave‹ (1885), ›White or Yellow? – A Story of the Race-War of A.D. 1908‹ (1888) by William Lane, ›The Battle of Mordialloc‹ (1888) by Edward Maitland, ›The Coloured Conquest‹ (1904) by Thomas R. Roydhouse, ›The Australian Crisis‹ (1909) by Charles H. Kirmess. Later novels of the same genre in the twentieth century and on-going include ›Celestia: A Fantasy A.D. 1975‹ (1933) by A. L. Pullar, ›Fools' Harvest‹ (1939) by Erle Cox, ›The Invasion‹ (1968) by John W. Hay. Far from being confined to the era of ›white Australia‹, this special genre of utopian literature spans as far as 1999 when John Marsden published the last part of his ›Tomorrow‹ series.¹³² While the latter turned to an undefined country in southeast Asia as the home for the intruders, his predecessors made their enemy image more concrete. Russians and Chinese formed an invasive alliance in the works of Mackay and Maitland (who published his book anonymously). Lane, Pullar and Hay concentrated on Chinese as possible new rulers. Kirmess and Roydhouse both told of Japanese invasions. Cox, however, imagined a country named Cambasia to try and obtain possession of the Australian continent.¹³³

Australians had been familiarized with such a topic even before Chesney's or Ranken's work had been launched. More than two decades before local invasion literature found entrance in Australian readership as books or series run in newspapers, the heightened Chinese immigration during the gold rushes caused a mini-outburst of invasion fiction. The seemingly first excursion into this genre was published in the ›Melbourne Punch‹. A fictitious newspaper account dated »June 2000« reported the »centenary anniversary of the establishment of a Mongolian dynasty in Victoria«.¹³⁴ The festive decoration and activities followed presumed Chinese traditions, including the firework, and showed off with the prosperities the Asian colonizers had amassed, while the report contrasted it with the detrimental treatment of the »European slaves«. When reporting

¹³⁰ See Everett F. Bleiler, Richard Bleiler: *Science-Fiction*, p. 134.

¹³¹ George Ranken, a former commissioner of crown's land, wrote this novel under the pseudonym ›W. H. Walker‹. Cf. David Denholm, H. J. Gibney: Ranken, George.

¹³² ›Tomorrow, When the War Began‹, the first book of the series, was made into a film and released in 2010. Here, the invading ›The Coalition Nations‹ stemmed from Asia.

¹³³ For a bibliography of invasion novels, see Lyman T. Sargent: *Australian Utopian Literature* and Russell Blackford: *Australian Science Fiction*.

¹³⁴ ›The Mongolians in Victoria‹, in: *Melbourne Punch*, Vol. 2, 19.06.1856 – there also the following quotes and the depiction of the initial.

»three Englishmen hav[e] been beaten to death, for casually upsetting a dish containing a trussed puppy-dog, garnished with grubs, on its way to the bake-house«, the article reaffirmed fears of rigid Chinese reign once they had subdued the Europeans as well as catering to the stereotypization of Chinese eating habits which, in turn, was being used to emphasize their cultural ›otherness‹. The dismal evaluation closed with the latest (fictive) census, listing – besides »Malays« and other »Slaves« – more than seventy-five million »Chinese«, more than six hundred thousand »Slaves

of British origin« and seventeen »Aborigines«. While this, once again, reflected the numerical superiority always present in dystopian invasion fictions, on the quiet it also incorporated the firm belief that by this time the original indigenous population had not escaped their ›predetermined‹ fate and was virtually extinct.

The faked account was further decorated with a depiction of a Chinese as an initial (Fig. 46 a). Forming the letter T, he bears some of the stereotypical Chinese features – a pig-tail, a fan and a form of facial hair that was later known as a Fu Manchu moustache and became the identifier of the ›Mongolian invader‹.¹³⁵ His corpulence is evidence of Asian affluence, while the temple-style buildings in the background are a further testament to the success of the foreign takeover.

For the readers of the ›Melbourne Punch‹, this story was the conclusive conglomeration of previous pictorial readings of Chinese life culture and success. In ›A Celestial Delicacy‹, the ›Melbourne Punch‹ (1856) introduces the presumed Chinese habit of consuming as a treat European domestic animals (Fig. 46 b).¹³⁶ In a delicatessen shop emptied of European customers by a massed Chinese presence, a stereotypically dressed client expresses his appetite for the cat owned by the appalled proprietress. Al-



Fig. 46 a – Chinese visions:
Dystopian foreboding

¹³⁵ For the depiction of Fu Manchu and its connection to the ›Yellow Peril‹, see Thomas J. Cogan: Western Images of Asia. The designation ›Mongolian‹ for Chinese followed the ›racial‹ classification of the world population, inter alia, into ›Negroid‹, ›Mongoloid‹, ›Australoid‹ and ›Caucasian‹ races.

¹³⁶ ›Celestial Delicacy‹, in Melbourne Punch, Vol. 1, 1856, p. 70.



Fig. 46 b & c – Chinese visions:
Imaginings of affluence and role reversal

ready a wide-spread rumour in Western travel reports, »cats, digs, rats, serpents« or »cats, puppies, and worms« as ingredients of the Chinese cuisine not only signified the ›terrifying‹ cultural dissimilarity of the Chinese but also their misjudging of the ›real‹ delicacy.¹³⁷

In ›Celestial Happiness‹ the ›Melbourne Punch‹ (1856) inverted the ›racial‹ hierarchy (Fig. 46 c).¹³⁸ As a consequence of the Chinese's success on the goldfields, his financial superiority allows him to transcend class and ›race‹ boundaries; the menial tasks fall to the British worker who had formerly deemed himself ›racially‹ superior and had to submit to the power of the Asian immigrant. While the British man is kneeling down and taking up the role of the subservient shoe blacker, the condescendingly smiling Chinese gentleman – upright, with a traditional hat and pig-tail – who has swapped his stereotypical Chinese shoes with high, military-style boots assumes the position of the customer under the watchful eyes of a group of porters and other Chinese.

Since this episode of early invasion anxiety fell into the time of heightened Chinese presence caused by the gold finds, its tangibility for British and other European settlers very probably made such a scenario a forbidding yet not unfeasible future. It also provided a point of reference to which later arguments against ›excessive‹ Asian immigration and scenarios of ›swamping‹ by Eastern ›hordes‹ could be based upon. This was of course no unique phenomenon; stories dealing with invasion anxiety also

¹³⁷ ›Varieties in Human Food‹, in Anon.: Imperial Magazine, p. 173 f. (›serpents‹); ›An Englishman Dining with a Chinese‹, in Anon.: Youth's Dayspring, p. 66 (›worms‹).

¹³⁸ ›Celestial Happiness‹, in: Melbourne Punch, Vol. 1, 1856, p. 44.

became popular in the last three decades of the nineteenth century in Europe and the United States.¹³⁹

Nonetheless, the Australian audience was especially susceptible to the literary genre of invasion novels, and not only because of the contemporary political and demographic development and its linkage to the broader debates about immigration and settlement of non-Europeans. Considering its remote geographical position in the southern hemisphere, Australia as the »isolated outpost of western civilisation« was seen as »the most vulnerable part of the British Empire«.¹⁴⁰ Surrounded by non-European countries whose population growth was allegedly causing lack of living space, the unsettled northern parts of the Australian continent with its »coloured labour« in the cane fields were deemed threatened to become the gathering place of Asian settlement policies.

Generally, in the Australian invasion novels four complexes involving discriminating argumentation can be discerned and compared to their inducements and implications in »real life«.¹⁴¹ All the novels not only identified the enemy outside of the national boundaries attempting to take possession of the continent but also marked foes in the own »racial« ranks who tolerated or even promoted the others' domination. The final implication then was that only by placing »race« over gender, class and nation, and only by overcoming the intra-Australian differences »white Australia« – often as a proxy for the whole »white race« – could be successfully defended against the »coloured tide«.

Firstly, the *gender* roles are firmly re-established: the Australian men are destined to defend both Australia and the Australian women. The Australian women, in turn, are a danger in themselves: they are deemed too receptive for the Asians' lure and therefore become the weak spots in terms of the »survival« of the »white race«. The women's representation in the novels was a reaction to changes in gender roles at the end of the nineteenth century. The »new woman« of the eighteen nineties was not only supporting female suffrage, better education and the right for women to pursue a profession. Contemporary anti-feminist prejudice maintained

¹³⁹ There is a broad secondary literature for the invasion novel genre. For Britain and Northern America, see for example Ignatius F. Clarke: *Voices Prophesying War*; Patrick Brantlinger: *Rule of Darkness*; Brian Stableford: *The Battle of Dorking and Its Aftermath*. For general information on Australian invasion anxiety in literature, see, amongst others, Robert Dixon: *Writing the Colonial Adventure*; Neville Meaney: *The Yellow Peril*; David Walker: *Anxious Nation*.

¹⁴⁰ Andrew Markus: *Of Continuities and Discontinuities*, p. 178 (»outpost«); Joseph Cook, Defence Minister, in his address to Parliament upon the Defence Bill 1909, cited in Henry P. Frei: *Japan's Southward Advance and Australia*, p. 87 (»vulnerable«).

¹⁴¹ For the following, see also Stefanie Affeldt: »White« Nation – »White« Angst.

that, worse than adopting beneficial male attitudes and habits, it was highly probable that she would ›follow in the footsteps of the bad and sinful man‹.¹⁴² In the light of the declining birth rate of ›white‹ Australians – Pearson had already warned of its consequences – this desire for female self-actualization was considered detrimental to the survival of the ›white‹ Australian society.¹⁴³ The counter-image to this was the ›True Woman‹, who was aware and acceptive of her role as mother and housewife, and fulfilled this as her duty to the ›white Australian‹ society. Furthermore, women ›who forget their sex and imitate the masculine gender‹ were not only excluded from being ›true‹ women but also bereaved of their womanliness when not being considered ›womanly women‹.¹⁴⁴

Secondly, the invasion novels turned upside down traditional patterns of *class* racism. It was not the lower classes who were deemed disloyal to the national welfare but the capitalists, businessmen – belonging to this also sugar planters who recruited non-Europeans workers – and politicians who employed, traded and concluded agreements with Chinese and Japanese, thus furthering cooperation and immigration. Though the war at hand was the imminent ›true racial struggle‹,¹⁴⁵ it was those enabling colonial circumstances who endangered ›white Australia's‹ ›well-being‹ by undermining the European workers' employment possibilities. The politicians compromised the society's situation by their inability to prevent both immigration and employment of ›coloured‹ workers and were identified by their better-words-than-deeds attitude.

In particular Queensland with its sharing in with the British-Japanese treaty was under the suspicion of ›race‹ treachery – an allegation that was aggravated by the heightened accumulation of foreign sugar workers in the north of the state. Subsequently, the Australian bush became the signifier of ›real Australia‹ in the eighteen nineties. And with it, the ›true Australian‹ was the bushman – an opportunistic, self-reliant nomad who subdued

¹⁴² ›The New Woman‹, in: Warwick Examiner and Times, 09.01.1897. In this case, the ›emancipated one‹ fell for the habit of red wine degustation. In a similar vein, other newspapers apparently mocked these women's movements by incorporating them into marketing schemes: The ›genuine new woman‹ not only enhances her comfort and happiness but also her husband's by taking brand-named medicine to cure her indigestion, in order to keep up with her household duties (›The Genuine New Woman‹, in: Singleton Argus, 28.09.1895). Elsewhere, as a joke's protagonist, she, who desires to be treated like her male opposite ›would another man‹, is promptly pumped for money (›Miss Newwoman‹, in: Warwick Argus, 24.09.1898).

¹⁴³ Cf. Charles H. Pearson: National Life and Character, pp. 342 f.; Marilyn Lake, Henry Reynolds: Drawing the Global Colour Line; p. 157.

¹⁴⁴ ›The True Woman‹, in: Traralgon Record, 24.02.1899; ›Womanly Women‹, in: Warwick Argus, 01.01.1897 (›forget‹).

¹⁴⁵ William Lane's editorial words in ›Boomerang‹ of 21.04.1888, cited after Kathryn Cronin: The Yellow Agony, p. 290.

the deficiencies of life in the dry and harsh landscape; the personification of health, wholesomeness, physical fitness, manliness, roughness and, of course, mateship.¹⁴⁶ The discourse of everyday life further agreed that the danger was not only to be sought in the »hostile invasion« but moreover within the society – »the Imperialist who would have no independent army and navy for Australian, and the Capitalist who would deluge Australia with cheap labour from Chinese hells and English slums«.¹⁴⁷

Thirdly, the perceived disparity in the relation with Great Britain led to *nationalist* deliberations towards separation from the mother country. Political decisions that were frowned upon, like the Anglo-Japanese treaty and the removal of the British fleet from Pacific waters, were interpreted as signs of Britain's siding with Asian countries and its indifference to the Australian geographical position. Fears of being neglected or forgotten by the mother country were not too far-fetched. The Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Commerce and Navigation in 1894 presumably confirmed the Australian apprehension of being let down in favour of trade politics.¹⁴⁸ When in 1902 reports about the Anglo-Japanese Alliance reached Australia, the national press expressed their discontent. In reprints of reports by English colleagues, Australian newspapers gave warning examples of the British attitude. A »London journalist« described the treaty as a »striking triumph for the yellow race« and stated that »it was considered that an alliance with a yellow race, even one so civilised as the Japanese, would alienate a large section of public opinion«.¹⁴⁹ In the light of Australian immigration policies, the »London Times« demanded to »consider legislatively the legitimate susceptibilities of Great Britain's vigorous and progressive ally in regard to the Japanese immigrant question«.¹⁵⁰ The »Bulletin«, as usual, went one step further and saw in this »Jap Alliance« a part of the politics of »Edward VII's stupendous nigger empire«. It was »no easy matter to remain white« and at the same time to »remain part of an Empire that grows blacker every day«.¹⁵¹

Lastly, the »non-white« actors in the assumed Chinese invasion, or in the Japanese takeover, become the common »*racial*« foe of the whole »white Australian« society and force the inhabitants to overcome internal

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Richard White: *Inventing Australia*, p. 102; Neville Meaney: *The Yellow Peril*, p. 258; Russel Ward: *The Australian Legend*, pp. 180 ff.

¹⁴⁷ »The Sweat and Swindle Invasion«, in: *Worker*, 02.05.1908.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Archibald H. Charteris: *Australian Immigration Policy*, p. 523.

¹⁴⁹ »England and Japan«, in: *Argus*, 15.02.1902.

¹⁵⁰ »Japanese in Australia«, in: *Mercury*, 11.03.1902.

¹⁵¹ The *Bulletin* of 22.02.1902, cited in Jürgen Matthäus: *Nationsbildung in Australien von den Anfängen weißer Besiedlung bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, p. 280.

tension to fend off the external enemy in a fight of ›white‹ against ›yellow‹. ›Real-life‹ associations of Chinese, dating as far back as the days of the goldrush, with vices like gambling and licentiousness, immoral behaviour like opium smoking and bribery, and as bearers of diseases like cholera, typhoid and small-pox were mirrored in the invasion novels.¹⁵² Likewise, the depiction in cartoons of Chinese using symbols of crowds or multitudes – like octopi, elephants or locusts – and similar representation in newspaper reports or letters – »the introduction of hordes of Mongolian pagans« who would soon »inundate [the Australians] in hundreds of thousands« and compromise the living and working conditions of the »labouring man of our own race«¹⁵³ – were reproduced as a recurrent strand in the invasion novels.

With the shift from Chinese to Japanese as the enemy image in fiction and non-fiction, the presumed patterns of invasion in the form of ›swamping‹ by the invaders were supplemented by the capability of clandestine takeovers based on a technical superiority in military tactics and modern machinery. In the latter scenario, the northern parts of Australia, which were deemed unpeopled, became the gateways to the gradual undermining of ›white domination‹. In fiction, the local indigenous population, who were indeed inhabiting these tracts of land, proved to not be an obstacle to the Japanese takeover but a clever way to exploit legal regulation following a different take on the miscegenation despised by ›whites‹: the Australians were forced to »watch[] helplessly the rapid progress of the despised Asiatics from a mere horde of invading nomads into a settled nation bound to the conquered soil by the most sacred ties – by little brown babies quite unconscious of their own significance, all young Australians-Austral-Mongoloids«.¹⁵⁴

Accordingly, the stepping stones for most of the invasions were suspected to be located either in the east or the north of Australia. The east because it offered quick access to the to-be-subdued population, and the north because it was almost defenceless due to its thin population. Queensland, with its working or even seasonal-only population allegedly comprised of mostly non-European (and therefore disloyal) defenders, was one of the common places of entrance. No contemporary European-Australian needed further explanation that, concerning the northern coast, the defence of the continent stood or fell with the political and demographic organisation of the Queensland sugar industry. Even during the first decades of the

¹⁵² Cf. Timothy Kendall: *Ways of Seeing China*, p. 23.

¹⁵³ ›Chinese Invasion‹, in: *Argus*, 25.06.1856.

¹⁵⁴ Charles H. Kirmess: *The Australian Crisis*, p. 216.

twentieth century, the »greatest need of the North was ampler population«, not only for industrial development but also in order to »meet that enemy who was ever waiting at the gates«. ¹⁵⁵ However, the financial interests and greed for profit of the employers, investors and plantation or farm owners seemed the stumbling block for the employment of European workers. With that, the presence of non-European posed an additional menace to the ›whites‹, for they were suspected to be susceptible to fraternization with Asian invaders. The defence of ›white Australia‹ was certainly not supposed to be in the hands of Aboriginal Australians, Pacific Islanders or New Guineans.

»We know that coloured and white labour cannot exist side by side«, asserted Pearson and continued, »we know that if national existence is sacrificed to the working of a few mines and sugar plantations, it is not the Englishman in Australia alone but the whole civilised world that will be the loser«. ¹⁵⁶ The consequential scenario was developed in the following year by Kenneth Mackay in ›The Yellow Wave‹, a book that »[e]very Member of Parliament should read [...] before voting on [...] the Alien Emigration Restriction Bill«. ¹⁵⁷ »Individual effort in all industrial pursuits had ceased, but sugar-planting and cattle-raising flourished«; not as a result of ›white‹ workers' efforts but because »the Kanaka labourer and the Kalmuck stockman did more for a penny than the white man would do for a pound«. Dire consequences were afoot: »Queensland poured out a golden harvest, and law and order reigned supreme; but the harvest was for foreign consumption«. ¹⁵⁸

Both authors, Mackay and Pearson, assumed the irreconcilability of European and non-European employment, and while the former prognosticated detrimental effects on what he deemed the civilized, ›white‹ parts of the globe, the latter located the winner of ›coloured labour‹ in the capitalist classes who, in this case, could be either ›white‹, ›yellow‹ or others. In Mackay's novel, it is one of the Russians, already settled in Australia, who before »had poured an army of Asiatic workmen« into the region and now applauded the introduction of Pacific Islanders as »an admirable

¹⁵⁵ Government Intelligence and Tourist Bureau: Queensland Sugar Industry, p. 172. For further information about the sugar industry and the defending of the ›empty North‹ in the early twentieth century, see subchapter 6.3 ›Think the Matter out‹.

¹⁵⁶ Charles H. Pearson: National Life and Character, p. 17.

¹⁵⁷ ›Political‹, in: Windsor and Richmond Gazette, 10.10.1896. After finishing his theoretical considerations, Kenneth Mackay put »his novel [...] ideas into practice« and formed a »military movement« – ›Personal and Political‹, in: Queanbeyan Age, p. 17.11.1897. Mackay was also a member of parliament, and »looked on as an authority on Eastern affairs«, in particular China – ›China and Australia‹, in: Advertiser, 29.12.1897.

¹⁵⁸ Kenneth Mackay: The Yellow Wave, p. 94.

system« making use of a »mob of savages«, who were »only slaves, and not fit for a better destiny« though they were »apt to become too sickly for sugar-growing, and a trifle expensive for manure«. His opinions drove away most listeners but found favour with those »interested only in the creation of wealth«. ¹⁵⁹ On this occasion, class was transfigured by ›race‹ to the extent that, on the one hand, the ›white‹ capitalists were depicted as ›race‹ traitors who cared more about earnings than about ›white Australia‹. On the other hand, the profiteers of an increase in ›coloured‹ population and employment in the north were located in the ranks of the employers and landowners whose ›race‹ in the aftermath of invasion had ceased to matter.

For those fighting in the war for ›white Australia‹, the picture of the enemy was obvious: »ze common chow« was a thing of the past. No longer could the Chinese be seen as inconspicuous market gardeners and furniture producers. »[A]fter a sleep of centuries« the members of the Chinese ›race‹ had »shaken off their death-like stupor«. Now they had the »faces of devils mad with lust and carnage [...] sworn to offer up womanly purity, prattling babyhood and helpless age on the altar of a blind, unreasonable revenge«. Chinese were dehumanized, they were »brave as lions, enduring as dogs, and rapacious as wolves [...] cunning as foxes and far-sighted as ravens«. While this did acknowledge their war efforts, at the same time it devaluated the same as animalistic instincts, the skills of »savage-looking devils« »swarming like ants« (again emphasizing their perceived numerical superiority). ¹⁶⁰

While Mackay's resistance fighter fought »for hearth and homes«, for family and nation, against the Chinese invaders and the traitors amongst their own ranks, the dangers of ›racial intermixture‹ were of concern in the case of the ›white‹ women. The defence of ›white Australia‹ even allowed for suicidal methods if matters were carried to extremes – the Australian woman was urged to arm herself not only with weapons but also to »have poison on her, so that protection from worse than death may be assured«. ¹⁶¹

Mackay's scenario was influenced by the reinstatement of the Pacific Islanders' employment under the Griffith government, and the subsequent upheaval by the labour movement, which did not end until the repatriation of them was decided. The ›Worker‹ decidedly denounced »that idol called sugar«, which not only caused the »kanaka trade« as »the curse of

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 94 (›army‹), 106 (›admirable system‹, ›mob‹, ›slaves‹, ›sickly‹, ›wealth‹).

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 231 (›common chow‹), 160 (›sleep‹, ›stupor‹), 167 (›faces‹), 160 (›lions‹), 207 (›devils‹), 239 (›ants‹).

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 206.

Queensland« to continue, but, even worse in their eyes, the preference of labour deemed ›cheap and reliable‹ by this »industry controlled exclusively by financial institutions« »allowed the Japs to pour into Queensland in shiploads«. So that now, as the latest governmental returns proved, »every seventh man in the North is an alien!«.¹⁶²

In this, the sugar industry, which was thought to be capable of fostering ›white‹ settlement in the north, became a problematic case because of the employers and capitalists who, instead of being loyal to their fellow countrymen, gave preference to their profit and employed non-European workers. Thus, in the eyes of those favouring a ›white‹ Queensland, they worsened not only the ratio between ›white‹ and ›coloured‹ but also endangered the safety of Australia by weakening its northern defences. The Queensland sugar industry, which »carried out its duty to promote the White Australia policy and realise the national ideal« by its transformation to a ›white‹ industry, was largely considered the catalyst for extended settlement of Europeans in the north, and as such the subsidies granted to the sugar industry following Federation were seen as immediate support of ›white Australia‹.¹⁶³

William Lane, under the nom-de-plume ›Sketcher‹, in his invasion novel named ›White or Yellow‹ described, how »[t]hey over-ran everything, these Chinese. They monopolized a score of important industries and had long ceased to be hewers of wood and drawers of water only. Admitted by Imperial treaty to all civil rights, they sat in Parliament, directed State departments, and one had even place upon the bench«. But not only did this increase the number of Chinese in the colony, Europeans would also refrain from settling there because »[a]lready the white migration was slackening as Australia became more and more distasteful to the Caucasian peoples«. ¹⁶⁴ Indeed, a »scare [was] raised concerning the threatening substitution of Chinese for kanakas« after the deportation of Pacific Islanders was finished. The argument that it »may not be an unmixed evil« that Chinese »unfairly compet[ing]« elsewhere could be concentrated in the sugar industry did little to counteract an imbalance in settlement.¹⁶⁵ In the same vein, Queensland was »not only threatened with what is little better than invasion [by the Chinese], but she must be prepared to see farmers settled in north of the Tropic of Capricorn steadily starved out«.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² ›Wanted: A White Queensland‹, in: Worker, 04.03.1899.

¹⁶³ The Sugar Industry Organisations: The Australian Cane Sugar Industry, p. 8 (›ideal‹).

¹⁶⁴ William Lane: White or Yellow, 18.02.1888 (›over-ran‹, ›slackening‹).

¹⁶⁵ ›The Yellow Peril‹, in: Barrier Miner, 09.09.1904.

¹⁶⁶ ›Chinese and the North‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 07.09.1904.

But not only were the Chinese allegedly displacing European sugar and other farmers, another stereotypical characteristic trait was associated with their involvement in the Queensland industry. The »very many sugar [...] plantations which are now owned and worked entirely by the Chinese« were under suspicion of being the places of transshipment for contraband opium forwarded to the south of Australia in »bags and mats of sugar from the north«.¹⁶⁷ Likewise, in terms of Japanese immigration the sugar plantations became the places where »they have already ousted the white man« and were allegedly potential locations to which »Japs will be sent along to form the nucleus of Japanese colonies«.¹⁶⁸ Japanese workers were thought to be »more objectionable than the Chinese« since they were »far and away more progressive«, »perform the meanest labour [...], till they learn, and when they possess sufficient knowledge of the work, they become employers instead of employees«.¹⁶⁹

In Lane's story, the »plutocracy and the landocracy [...] had always tolerated the invaders and were on terms of intimacy with their prominent and wealthy men«.¹⁷⁰ Due to this governmental involvement in the Chinese takeover, the fighters for the ›white cause‹ were forced to stand up not only against the invaders but also against the Australian governmental troops – »Law and Order« – defending them. It was only after a fierce combat that the soldiers remember that the ›true‹ distinction was colour-based and returned to the struggle of »white against yellow«.¹⁷¹

This change of mind was not least based on another strand of invasion fiction. The constant threat of miscegenation was overshadowing this novel as well. After one young woman already escaped possible rape by »yield[ing] up her life to save her honour« and became the »heroic Australian girl who [...] by her death had roused Australia and saved the white race«, the female protagonist can only be saved from »a fate worse than death« – she was meant to »rule a yellow race and rear a yellow brood« – by her Chinese husband being killed.¹⁷² Besides departing this life by suicide, the (always ›white‹) women's other hope for rescue came from outside the ruling classes. In an allusion to the Eureka uprising (one of the first outbursts against Chinese presence), those defending ›white Australia‹ convened beneath the Southern Cross flag and debated the cutting

¹⁶⁷ ›The Chinese Invasion‹, in: Barrier Miner, 29.03.1909.

¹⁶⁸ ›A Japanese Influx‹, in: Clarence and Richmond Examiner, 17.10.1893.

¹⁶⁹ ›The Japanese Invasion‹, letter to the editor, in: Brisbane Courier, 21.12.1893.

¹⁷⁰ William Lane: White or Yellow, 18.02.1888 (›landocracy‹).

¹⁷¹ William Lane: White or Yellow, 24.03.1888 (›Law‹, ›yellow‹).

¹⁷² William Lane: White or Yellow, 25.02.1888 (›honour‹), 28.04.1888 (›heroic‹), 21.04.1888 (›death‹), 24.03.1888 (›brood‹).

of ties with Britain, due to there being »no hope in England [...] because her aid will be given to the Chinese and against the whites«. ¹⁷³ Eventually, the Chinese are dispersed northwards »like great droves of cattle« and expelled from Australia. As a last point, Lane summarized what was most significant. It was not so much the defence against actual invaders as the overpowering of the intra-Australian antagonisms: »Australia was true to her destiny. In spite of the white Chinamen, she stayed white«. ¹⁷⁴

In ›The Coloured Conquest‹ by Thomas R. Roydhouse, who had published the first book on the New South Wales Labor Party and was involved in several social movements, ¹⁷⁵ the perceivedly sinister vision had become reality. ¹⁷⁶ After a successful war against Russia, ›coloured troops under Japanese rule took over Europe. Then they turned to Australia, where they met with little resistance from a population more interested in sports than politics and lacking a defending army. The invaders soon ruled the whole continent. The men, women and children were put to hard labour. A selection of the most beautiful women and men were brought to the ›Fair Lily Colonies‹ »to produce the most beautiful women the world has ever known« and to be subsequently assigned one of the ›conquerors«. ¹⁷⁷ Already before the takeover, the Australian women had demonstrated their fondness of visiting Japanese men. ¹⁷⁸ Here the ›breeding out‹ of colour was anticipated by the ›white‹ women's immorality and their susceptibility to the Japanese males.

The novel told the story of the ›last free White man‹ who was on friendly terms with the cousin of the new (Japanese) Admiral-Governor, who also gave information about the invasion to the ›white‹ Australian, knowing that no one will believe him. His fiancée attracted the interest of two Japanese men. While, in the face of a threatening letter from one of her ›suitors‹, the ›white‹ protagonist promised her: »Before he shall touch you [...] I'll shoot you«, he subsequently was unable to save her from being deported to one of the breeding colonies.

¹⁷³ William Lane: *White or Yellow*, 03.03.1888 (›hope‹).

¹⁷⁴ William Lane: *White or Yellow*, 05.05.1888 (›destiny‹).

¹⁷⁵ Cf. ›Death of a Veteran Journalist‹, in: *Advertiser*, 29.05.1943.

¹⁷⁶ Thomas R. Roydhouse, a Sydney journalist – who also established the so-called Dreadnought Fund, supposed to finance a battleship for the Royal Navy – used the pen name ›Rata‹ for the publication of his novels. Cf. ›Mr. T. R. Roydhouse Dead‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29.05.1943.

¹⁷⁷ ›The Coloured Conquest‹ (Thomas R. Roydhouse), in: *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 06.09.1904.

¹⁷⁸ The first (friendly) visit of Japanese military ships to Australia followed the true story of a Japanese squadron's parade in Sydney harbour in June 1903, during which it was remarked how »quite up to date« their »thoroughly efficient fighting machines« were – ›Japanese Squadron‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 05.06.1903.

The ensuing fading out of the ›white‹ Australian population was not only fostered by biological means. While biological genocide was practiced – the whites were prohibited from marrying and reproduction was »confined to the Coloured invaders« – extinction was also promoted on cultural grounds: education was denied to ›white‹ children, so that the history of the whites would disappear along with the last remembering the time before invasion.¹⁷⁹

The newspaper reviews of the novel exemplified how the stories of invasion novels were discussed and matched with the politics of the day. The announcement in the ›Sydney Morning Herald‹ declared the work might »serve a good turn«, if it convinced the readers that improvement of defence was highly necessary and »hostile invasion« was not avertable merely by legal regulation of immigration.¹⁸⁰ The ›Brisbane Courier‹ understood that the author had »in view the object of awakening the Australian people to the necessity of a serious consideration of defence«, and the ›Register‹ seconded the intentions of the book cautioning »the people that the defence of Australia cannot be safely neglected«.¹⁸¹ A differing perception of a possible takeover was shown by the ›West Australian‹ who considered Roydhouse's story the »latest manifestation« of the »eager ratted cry about the yellow peril«, which was »too wildly absurd to warrant serious attention being given to it«.¹⁸²

The need for Australia to awake to the danger of geographical Asian closeness and the continued negligence of defence and precautions against hostile invasions, conveyed not least by the invasion novels, were simultaneously the topic of several contemporary cartoons.

In ›Wake, Australia! Wake‹ the ›Boomerang‹ (1888) depicts a sleeping Australia lying on the bed (Fig. 47 a).¹⁸³ A Chinese labelled »Chinese Invasion« enters through an open window with a knife between his teeth. Australia has her head turned away from the intruder and is unaware of the unauthorized access. The open window labelled »South Australia« is a reference to the missing restriction of Chinese immigration in that state. Via South Australia Chinese could enter the continent and travel on to other states. Notably was the coastal town of Robe, which was the landing

¹⁷⁹ ›The Coloured Conquest‹ (Thomas R. Roydhouse), in: Clarence and Richmond Examiner, 30.08.1904 (›shoot‹), 06.09.1904 (›confined‹, education).

¹⁸⁰ ›The Coloured Conquest‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 05.08.1904 (›Yellow Race‹ etc.).

¹⁸¹ ›Publications Received‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 17.09.1904; ›A Shilling Shocker – and more‹, in: Register, 27.08.1904.

¹⁸² ›Australia and the Yellow Peril‹, in: West Australian, 20.09.1904.

¹⁸³ ›Wake, Australia! Wake‹, in: Boomerang, 11.02.1888, reprinted in Bill Hornadge: The Yellow Peril, p. 54.

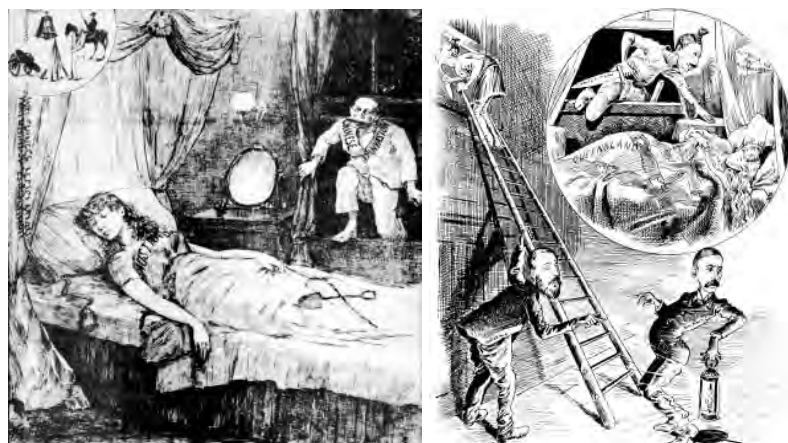


Fig. 47 a & b – »White society« sleeping tight:
Negligence in defence could endanger existence

place for thousands of Chinese who travelled by foot to work as miners on the goldfields of Victoria and New South Wales in the eighteen fifties. The high numbers of immigrants from China continued to be a trouble for the labour movement until far into the eighteen eighties.¹⁸⁴ Consequently, Australia's blanket in the cartoon is embroidered with the insignia of gold miners – shovel and pick.¹⁸⁵ The message of the cartoon is obvious: to Australia's right is situated a bell rope which, via the »Anti-Chinese Legislation«, in case of danger rings a warning bell and calls to arms foot soldiers, horse artillery and cannoneers – therefore political Australia has to free itself from its defensive dormancy and legislate an Anti-Chinese immigration restriction that comprises all of the colonies.

In 1897, the »Worker« illustrated in »The Coalition Government« the same fear (Fig. 47 b).¹⁸⁶ This time, however, the intruder does not exploit legal loopholes but is enabled by Australian relations. »Sirorace« and »Dalpimple« – derogative nicknames for Sir Horace Tozer and David H. Dalrymple, Queensland politicians in the ministry of Hugh Nelson –¹⁸⁷ are holding the ladder for the Japanese sneaking through the window, with his short-sword labelled »competition« held at the ready. Queensland – cov-

¹⁸⁴ For the Chinese landing at Robe, see Gerry Groot, Glen Stafford: South Australia and China, p. 96; Ann Curthoys: Men of All Nations, Except Chinamen, p. 106.

¹⁸⁵ For pictures, see <http://www.nma.gov.au/collections-search/display?irn=58687>; <http://acms.sl.nsw.gov.au/item/itemLarge.aspx?itemID=388511>.

¹⁸⁶ »The Coalition of Government«, cover of Worker, 31.07.1897.

¹⁸⁷ See J. C. H. Gill: Tozer, Sir Horace; Rosemary H. Gill: Dalrymple, David Hay.

ered with the Australian Federation flag (a blue St. George's cross with five stars on a white background with the Union Jack in the upper left corner) which was commonly used by the Australian Natives' Association and others promoting the federation of Australia¹⁸⁸ – is sound asleep and is unaware to the upcoming danger. In the face of the imminent danger, the plague above her bed (›Australia for the Australians‹) becomes a mere scribble.

This cartoon is a direct reference to the debate about the Queensland-Japanese treaty of the same year. In the context of this debate, both Tozer and Dalrymple had granted the reaching of an agreement with Japan over immigration and the taking into account of measures against ›the danger from the threatened influx‹.¹⁸⁹ Despite this, their negotiation with the Japanese government remained a thorn in the labour movement's side. The ›Worker‹ continued to critique ›the clever settlement of the [Japanese] question‹ by the two, in cooperation with Premier Nelson, which led to the Japanese ›flocking in large numbers‹ and undercutting ›white‹ workers, and accused them of legislating ›presumably in the interest of Japan and the Japanese‹.¹⁹⁰ In the cartoon, the two are directing their gaze to the right as if in shocking discovery of the approaching Japanese ›masses‹.

The always overshadowing possibility of miscegenation is once again part of the scene, as both cartoons contain a gendered perspective. The national personifications of Australia and Queensland are depicted as females about to be harassed by male Asian invaders in the same vein as the seduction of Australian females, sometimes with the help of opium, was a regular feature of the invasion narratives.

The ›Bulletin‹ (1911) in ›Sleeping at his homework‹ shows Australia as a school boy working on his ›Home Work | A White Australia‹ but having fallen asleep in the chair of ›false security‹ (Fig. 47 c).¹⁹¹ The (school) boy is a common representation of the Commonwealth of Australia, emphasizing its recent establishment and its position as learning from England, which is like here often depicted as ›John Bull‹. The candle on the ›Australia for the Australians‹ book is almost burned down. He is oblivious to

¹⁸⁸ The flag started as the ›New South Wales Ensign‹ in the 1830s – see Carol A. Foley: *The Australian Flag*, pp. 40 f.; ›The New South Wales Ensign‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26.05.1908 – and was later also called the ›Australian National Flag‹, see ›The Australian National Flag‹, in: *Queensland Figaro and Punch*, 02.06.1888.

¹⁸⁹ ›The Parliament‹, in: *Chronicle*, 03.07.1897; see also ›Restricting Japanese Immigration‹, in: *South Australian Register*, 01.07.1897 and ›Questions in Parliament‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 14.07.1897.

¹⁹⁰ ›Stray Notes‹, in: *Worker*, 02.10.1897 (›influx‹, ›flocking‹); ›Bystanders' Notebook‹, in: *Worker*, 17.07.1897.

¹⁹¹ ›Sleeping at his homework‹, in: *Bulletin*, 19.01.1911.

the Japanese military man approaching him from behind. The Japanese spills his »Eastern Overflow« onto the »World Atlas« in the form of a tinted Australia. The sword is a symbol for the military power of Japan – this was drawn after the Japanese victory over Russia in 1905. Once again, this is a depiction of Australia's allegedly unwarranted inaction in terms of defence and Eastern political relations with regard to the latest knowledge about Japan's military power and presumed plans of southwards extension.

»Australia for the Australian« continues to be a closed book, while »White Australia« remains an unfinished work and the world, like Australia, is being occupied by the population spillover of Japan.

How closely entangled actual politics of the day and fictitious dystopias were, exemplified the marketing campaign of the »Sydney Morning Herald«. They ran at least three different front page announcements for the novel, all referring to real-life events or resembling actual reports. In the »Public Notices« section, the first mixed the statement of Major-General Hutton about Japanese and Chinese interests – they cast »longing eyes upon the rich Northern Territory« – with the advice to refer to Roydhouse's novel for further information. Another invitation to the reading is incorporated in the »Lost & Found« columns: »LOST, the chance of a lifetime if you do not advocate Awake Australia. The Japanese at our doors. Immense Chinese force being trained in Central China. No more marriage – Women to work on fields and factories. Australia under the yoke«. Thirdly, in »Personal and Missing Friends« a »Jack« calls upon »Mary« to »Advocate Awake Australia« in order to fend off the imminent danger. Lastly, in »Professions, Trades, &c.«, the advertiser »wanted thousands of people to advocate Awake Australia«.¹⁹²



Fig. 47 c – »White society« sleeping tight:
A gruesome foe creeping up on innocence

¹⁹² »Public Notices«, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 13.08.1904; »They fancy the Northern Territory«, in: North Queensland Register, 15.08.1904 (»longing eyes«); »Lost & Found«,

These advertisements present the four main threads of invasion discourse in a nutshell. In the case of ›coloured‹ invasion, it is the ›white‹ women who are in jeopardy. They are forced to work, which means they are to leave their allocated role as housewife and mother. In addition, the repeal of ›white‹ marriages also terminates ›white‹ reproduction, thereby with the continuance of ›white Australia‹, and gave way to miscegenation. It is the working part of the population – not the politicians and certainly not the capitalists – who are called upon to help overcome the incapacity of the Australian nation to defend itself on its own terms. The enemy image is blatantly declared to be both the Chinese and Japanese (in this case quite interchangeable), who are preparing for a takeover in the near future.

While the theoretical knowledge to populate the ›empty North‹ with ›appropriate‹ settlers was urged on stage and in novels, the practical implementation left much to be desired in the eyes of worried ›white Australians‹. In his speech on the occasion of the Immigration Restriction bill, Barton quoted Pearson's warning to the ›white men‹ and his argument in favour of defending the higher, i.e. ›white‹, civilisation.¹⁹³ But even though legislation was encouraging a transition to a European-dominated sugar industry through the removal of Pacific Islanders labourers, both the sugar farmers and the European sugar workers-to-be clung to the notion of work in the cane field as unsuitable for ›whites‹. In order to foster the employment of European workers, further steps had to be taken.

5.3 ›White Wages for White Australian Workers‹: Labour's Campaign for ›Racial‹ Wages

With the Federation, legislation answered to the heightened awareness of ›white Australia‹. Surrounded by non-European cultures, stability and defence was supposed to come from within the continental population. In the eyes of the proponents of a ›white‹, predominately British, Australia this necessitated a homogeneous society. One step was to keep the immigration mostly confined to Europeans and reduce the influx of Chinese, Japanese and other ›undesirable‹ migrants under the Immigration Restriction Act. The other step was to heighten the population density in the northern parts of the country. The sugar industry of Queensland seemed ideal to

in: Sydney Morning Herald, 31.08.1904 (›lost‹); ›Personal and Missing Friends‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 31.08.1904 (›Mary‹); ›Professions, Trades, &c.‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 03.09.1904 (›wanted‹).

¹⁹³ Cf. Marilyn Lake, Henry Reynolds: Drawing the Global Colour Line, pp. 137 f.

provide employment for workers with a European migratory background and enable their families' settlement.

Notwithstanding the promised job prospects, labour shortages in the sugar industry continued in terms of ›white‹ workers. While the supporters of ›coloured labour‹ referred to the problems of tropical climate for European workers and with this argument explained the fugacity of ›white‹ employment in the sugar industry, the unions claimed that the reasons were rather of a financial nature. »There are unemployed men tramping for work along every road in Queensland at the present moment«, asserted the ›Worker‹ and argued that »at a decent living wage [they] would be found thoroughly liable«.¹⁹⁴ In the same vein, the Labor Party argued that the issue with labour in the sugar industry was »only a question of wages«. When »paid white workers' wages«, the workers would »in fact do any work«. The capability of paying »white Australian workers white wages«, in turn, was supposed to rely on the continuance of protection against the import of foreign products, and in particular the payment of »a fair rate of wages to white workers« would allow demanding the consumer to pay an appropriate price for their sugar.¹⁹⁵

Not the conditions as such but the »natural repugnance of the men to work under conditions to which they are not constitutionally adapted« was the reason for the »utter unreliability of white labourers in the tropics«, claimed a cane farmer.¹⁹⁶ This argumentation was closely tied to the understandings of colonial hierarchies in which labour was divided along a ›race‹ or ›colour line‹. With ›whites‹ considered as superior in reason and technology, the ›coloured‹ were their underlings, in charge predominately of physically demanding work. The traditional role allocation in the Queensland sugar industry followed these notions by employing as field workers Pacific Islanders, New Guineans, Indians and Asians, and as overseers British and other (northern) Europeans.

The legislative fixation of this ›colour line‹ in the 1884 Amendment Act to the Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1880 was complemented by the Land Act of the same year, which fostered the establishment of small farms.¹⁹⁷ These divisive labour policies based on skin colour were retained unchanged until the deportation of the Pacific Islanders; they were certainly not without an effect on the European workers' willingness to engage in

¹⁹⁴ ›The Coloured Labour Question‹, in: Worker, 26.01.1901 (›unemployed‹, ›decent‹).

¹⁹⁵ ›The Senate Election‹, in: Capricornian, 16.03.1901 (›wages‹, ›any work‹, ›white wages‹, ›fair rate‹).

¹⁹⁶ Cited in Kay Saunders: Masters and Servants, p. 99.

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1880 Amendment Act of 1884.

physical labour in the cane fields. Added to this, was the circumstance that unskilled labour was still being discussed as a task traditionally located in the spheres of ›coloured labour‹, and empirical evidence proved that it continued to be in most other sugar-producing countries. Accordingly, it was argued that the refusal to work in the sugar industry was based less on »climatical, but economic, moral and racial« grounds. European workers refrained from engaging in field labour because they resented »degrading themselves« to do »niggers' work« – a notion that was substantiated by the employers' treatment of the workers.¹⁹⁸

In this context, ›niggers' work‹ unfolds to reveal a mélange of racist and culturalistic perceptions which extend far beyond mere demands of improvement of working conditions. On the one hand, the employment of ›blacks‹ stands in a historical context of substratification: owing to the tradition of plantation work and slave labour, an image has formed of an unequivocally ›racially‹ stratified employment hierarchy in the production of cane sugar. Not only the work force but also the work itself is ›racialized‹, and certain jobs and tasks are classified as undue for ›white‹ labourers.

The successful agitation against ›coloured‹ workers in Queensland does indeed solve one problem: it creates employment possibilities for ›whites‹. But it also raises a new problem: these jobs are not ›white‹ jobs, because they are still associated to the notion of cane cultivation as ›coloured‹ work. The image of work itself must therefore be changed for it to be done by ›whites‹. This, on the other hand, is acted out as a fight for higher wages, but backstage the labour movement is concerned about more than the reified monetary expression of wages.

Already Karl Marx in ›Capital‹ has pointed out that the »determination of the value of labour power« includes a »historical and moral element«. This not only signifies that the means for the satisfaction of needs differs depending on location and epoch. Instead »the number and extent of [...] the] so-called necessary wants, as also the modes of satisfying them, are themselves the product of historical development, and depend therefore to a great extent on the [cultural stage] of a country, more particularly on the conditions under which, and consequently in the habits and degree of comfort in which, the class of free labourers has been formed«.¹⁹⁹

Since this ›degree of comfort‹ does contain more than calories, and is also not simply conceded, the determination of the historical-moral el-

¹⁹⁸ Bulletin, 26.01.1901, cited in Kay Saunders: Masters and Servants, p. 99 (›climatical« etc.).

¹⁹⁹ Karl Marx: Capital, p. 190 (›determination«, ›element«, ›historical product‹). Albeit, the original translation turns the ›Kulturstufe‹ (cultural stage) into a »degree of civilization«, and thus adds an unnecessarily problematic undercurrent to the statement.

ement is shaped by the conflicts of the parties involved, and their ›class struggle‹ is always also a ›culture struggle‹. When this pivots on ›whiteness‹, as it did in the Queensland sugar industry, the latter's entire history since the time of the continent's colonization is evoked for the discussion. ›Whiteness‹ has been an element of the ›degree of comfort‹ – initially even for the convicts, later on for the free workers. Insofar as sugar was involved, it was for a long time a product of ›racialized‹ plantation work, which had been unchallengedly distributed, purchased and consumed. The desire for doubly ›white‹ sugar, which came to full bloom at the end of the nineteenth century, was thus new and extraordinary and had to be enforced during interminable arguments and disputes.

The removal of the Pacific Islanders from the cane fields was thus a necessary step in favour of a heightened engagement of ›white‹ workers. For the emerging sugar trade unions, it was a step that fell too short. This was with regard to the slow transformation of the sugar industry, in which the northern employers in particular attempted to prolong their exploitation of ›coloured‹ workers as long as they possibly could. Neither did this create the job opportunities for the alleged masses of ›white‹ workers in desperate need of employment; nor did this present the labour movement with the hoped-for sphere of influence regarding the wages and conditions of employment in those districts which were already on the verge of transformation. In the long run, in their opinion, only a dissociation of the ›white‹ working class from the ›coloured‹ would bring closure. Nothing but the complete displacement of all those deemed ›cheap coloured labour‹ would put the labour movement into a negotiating position in which they were able to enforce the demands and interests of a ›white‹ workforce.

Legislation enabled the transformation to a European sugar industry not only in terms of the repatriation of the Pacific Islanders in order to create jobs for ›white‹ workers. The Sugar Bounty Act of 1905 increased the excise on sugar to £4 per ton and the bounty to £3 per ton and extended the payment of this remuneration to 1912. Additionally, as a reaction to cane growers' and mill owners' observation of an increasing presence of foreign farmers – it excluded ›aliens‹, like Chinese cane farmers, from the recipients of the bounty.²⁰⁰

The excise and rebate system was supposed to ensure a speedy transformation from a sugar industry mainly employing labourers from the Pacific Islands to one based on European workers. It is considered a very early, if not the first, »use of fiscal means to achieve a social ideal [as] a

²⁰⁰ Cf. Alan Birch: *The Implementation of the White Australia Policy in the Queensland Sugar Industry 1901-12*, p. 208. See also Sugar Bounty Act of 1905.

dominant feature of Australian economic history in the twentieth century«.²⁰¹ The system remained in force – extended and rewritten by several Sugar Bounty Acts – until the Sugar Excise Repeal Act and the Sugar Bounty Abolition Act became effective with the condition that »legislation prohibiting the employment of coloured labour in connection with the industry« was passed.²⁰² The Sugar Growers Act of the following year then implemented the payment to the growers of a compensatory amount equal to the bounty and ended the latter.²⁰³ By the time of the bounty's termination, the percentage of cane sugar manufactured by ›coloured‹ labour had declined from sixty-eight at the beginning of the twentieth century to six.²⁰⁴

Combined with a protection of sugar grown in Australia against both foreign cane and beet sugar by a prohibitive import tariff of £6 per ton, the Excise Tariff Act of 1902 provided for an excise of £3 per ton on all consumed Australian-produced sugar, and a rebate of only 4s. per ton »on all sugar-cane delivered for manufacture in the production of which ›white‹ labour only had been employed after 28th February 1902. Based on the assumption that ten tons of cane were needed for one ton of sugar the rebate effectively amounted to £2 per ton of sugar«.²⁰⁵ This meant that in fact the creation of a fund from which the implementation of the ›whites‹-only policy in the sugar industry was supposed to be financed was already commenced about five years before the deportation of Pacific Islanders began. But it also meant »that the home consumer paid an extra two-thirds of a penny per pound of sugar; or reckoning consumption at the rate of 100 lbs per head per year, a total payment of about £1.2 million per year«.²⁰⁶

Employment of ›white‹ labour was then rewarded by the payment of a rebate to the farmers. Due to the extra payment, the farmers' harvest

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 199.

²⁰² Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: Official Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia (1913), p. 396. See also Sugar Excise Repeal Act of 1912; Sugar Bounty Abolition Act of 1912.

²⁰³ Cf. Government Intelligence and Tourist Bureau: Queensland Sugar Industry, p. 52. See also Sugar Growers Act of 1913.

²⁰⁴ Cf. Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: Official Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia (1913), p. 396.

²⁰⁵ Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: Official Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia (1908), p. 325 (›sugar-cane‹); Government Intelligence and Tourist Bureau: Queensland Sugar Industry, p. 37. A scheme to apply a similar system of rebates on ›white‹-grown tobacco was initially rejected in the Commonwealth Parliament – ›Commonwealth Parliament‹, in: Bendigo Advertiser, 24.07.1902. The Bounties Act of 1907 included other articles, produced by ›white labour‹, for which a bounty was to be paid: cotton, flax, jute, hemp, oil materials, rice, rubber, coffee, tobacco, preserved fish and dried fruit – Robin Gollan: Radical and Working Class Politics, p. 167.

²⁰⁶ Alan Birch: The Implementation of the White Australia Policy in the Queensland Sugar Industry 1901-12, p. 205.

was now allegedly done »by white labour at less expense than [...] with coloured labour«. The workers themselves, however, did not automatically benefit from this regulation. To remedy the inequity, »better wages and hours for the white workers« had to be ensured.²⁰⁷ The industrial struggle between the workers of the sugar industry, who demanded improved conditions, the (small) farmers, who saw themselves as the losers in the ›white sugar‹ campaign, and the millers and refiners, who reputedly enforced their benefits in a near-monopolistic environment, became defining for the sugar industry in the first decades of the twentieth century.

Overall the system was considered successful since it eventually succeeded in transforming the sugar industry from one employing mostly workers from the Pacific Islands or from Asia and India to one that was almost exclusively entertained by ›white‹ labourers. Initially, however, the prospect of being paid a rebate for ›white‹-grown sugar appeared not enticing enough to prompt the northern Queensland planters to employ European workers. Though some newspapers advertised ›white‹ gangs for cane cutting and others adduced the high number of unemployed ›whites‹ roaming the countryside in search of jobs, as a general trend, the sugar farmers in the last years prior to the Pacific Islanders' repatriation attempted to get the most out of their last chance to recruit and employ ›non-white‹ workers.²⁰⁸

Critique to this system was common particularly in the southern Australian states. Though it was contested by the proponents of the system, arguing that it was in fact the growers who paid for their own rebate,²⁰⁹ the notion that the transformation to »white labour« happened »at the cost of the Australian consumer throughout the continent« worried several societal formations.²¹⁰ It was argued that the consumers were doubly made to pay for the protection of the sugar industry: on the one hand, for the sugar they consumed directly, on the other hand, they were indirectly charged by the jam and fruit-growing industry which passed on the heightened prices they had to pay for their sweetening agent. As a consequence, the latter industries got in line with those questioning the need for protection of the industry, as it allegedly fostered one industry not only at the expense of the Australian consumers but also privileged this industry to the detriment of the others.²¹¹

²⁰⁷ ›A Plea for White Sugar Workers‹, in: *Worker*, 28.01.1905.

²⁰⁸ Cf. Doug Hunt: *Exclusivism and Unionism*, p. 87; Kay Saunders: *Workers in Bondage*, p. 165.

²⁰⁹ Cf. ›Queensland Sugar‹, in: *Examiner*, 18.01.1906.

²¹⁰ Archibald H. Charteris: *Australian Immigration Policy*, p. 540.

²¹¹ Cf. ›Sugar versus Fruit‹, in: *Singleton Argus*, 23.03.1905.

In particular in the sugar districts, the system was considered flawed due to its shortcomings with regard to the farmer employing nothing but ›white‹ workers. It was argued that this system was in so far a penalization of farmers manufacturing ›white‹-grown sugar as the excise fell short of the bounty by £1 instead of compensating the »white grower« for his employment of »white labour«.²¹² The Australian Sugar Producers' Association argued along the same lines. Having been established after the repatriation of the Pacific Islanders commenced, the Association hinted at the financial discrepancy between the duty on all sugar and the remuneration for the employment of ›white labour‹. They argued that the goal of accelerating the transformation from ›black‹ to ›white‹ had been accomplished, and that now the bounty was no longer essential to revise the labour policies of the sugar industry.²¹³

The system was »a direct financial loss to every sugar grower« while it was »a very excellent bargain for the Federal Government«, they claimed and rejected false allegations that their opposition was »due to antagonism to the ›White Australia‹ policy«. Since public discourse and fictions of invasion had already targeted them as members of the ›enemy within‹, who would price profit over ›race‹, they were quick to add their support of an exclusionist policy. The sugar producers »loyally subscribe to this policy, and are doing all in their power to give effect to it«, therefore they would support a »fitting Excise [...] on all sugarcane grown by coloured labour«.²¹⁴

The antagonistic picture of the capitalist did not newly emerge in the context of past-Federation industrial conflict. Constructions of the ›Fat Man‹, or for short ›Fat‹, found its way into the pictorial archives of the Australian society in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The early juxtaposition in ›Labour and Capital‹ (1887) emphasized the distinctions through the similarity of the two figures: while the industrious labourer, on the left-hand side in tattered clothes, carries his possessions in his re-stitched bag and runs the risk of being expropriated at any time, the selfish untarnished capitalist has already devoured his and promenades them in his big belly (Fig. 48 a).²¹⁵ Not uncommonly, the capitalist's gluttonous figure

²¹² ›White-Grown Sugar‹, in: Clarence and Richmond Examiner, 22.09.1910.

²¹³ Cf. Diana Shogren: The Politics and Administration of the Queensland Sugar Industry to 1930, p. 112.

²¹⁴ Secretary of the Association G. H. Pritchard's letter to the editor, ›The Sugar Industry‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 13.08.1908 (›subscribe‹ etc., misspelling in original).

²¹⁵ ›Labour and Capital‹, in: Bulletin 1887 reprinted i.a. in Patricia Rolfe: Journalistic Javelin, p. 144 and Nick Dyrenfurth, Marian Quartly: Fat Man v. ›The People‹. Labour Intellectuals and the Making of Oppositional Identities, p. 52.

appears as the counter-image to the physically fit worker.²¹⁶ He is the »embodiment of social greed«, an Australian variation of the long tradition of American and British labourite caricature. With the densification of class struggle leading to the great strikes of the late nineteenth century, representations of the capitalist class began to visually express their moral and political corrosion. Subse-

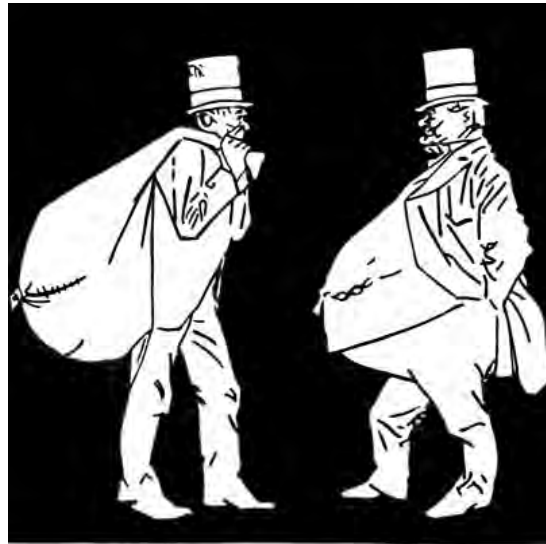


Fig. 48 a – *Trampling down workers' interests:
Labour's antagonist is the capitalist*

quently, the portrayal of the capitalist's or employer's potbelly as a symbol for wealth, self-interest and avarice became a common sight.

The capitalist's depiction generally appeared in two shapes oscillating between an adversary for the working class and a contrary to the whole »white Australia«. In the first case (Fig. 48 b),²¹⁷ the »Worker« (1908) depicts him as anthropomorphized »Capitalism«, he is the »Enemy Within Our Gates«, and holds a whip labelled »Wage System« and a scroll inscribed with »Rent, Interest, Profit«, his way down the east coast of Australia is plastered with the »white« workers' corpses whom he had ruthlessly run over. This depiction catered to anti-classist allegations assuming that the Australian landed class and the capitalists would stop at nothing to maximize their gains and profits. In the case of the employer, his clinging to past labour policies is symbolized by the whip he is wielding over his head as a sign for his exploiting of the physical conditions of the workers as well as his master-like behaviour. In the labour conflicts of the sugar industry, the absence of a change of the farmers' mind was one of the factors

²¹⁶ For this, the following and more pictorial reproductions of the »Fat Man«, see Nick Dyrenfurth, *Marian Quartly: Fat Man v. »The People«*, in particular p. 34 (»greed«).

²¹⁷ »The Enemy Within Our Gates«, cover of the *Worker*, 05.09.1908.



Fig. 48 b & c – Trampling down workers' interests:
The capitalist is the enemy within

that led to the ›Sugar Strike‹ of 1911. While the ›white‹ workers demanded a conversion of their racist symbolic capital as a vested right into actual monetary counter value, the employers supposedly continued to treat them in the fashion of the former plantation labourers.

»Capitalism smiles benignly upon coloured labour«, wrote the ›Worker‹, »and welcomes the vari-tinted alien« since they »serve[] the useful purpose of keeping down wages and increasing the supply of cheap humanity«. ²¹⁸ In the second cartoon by the ›Worker‹ (1910), ›Electors, Strengthen It!‹ (Fig. 48 c), ²¹⁹ the »Fat Man« is attempting to open the lock

²¹⁸ ›Capitalistic Anti-Aliens‹, in: Worker, 01.10.1904. Interestingly, in the case of »the Fat Person« agitating against unfavourable competition to them by Chinese, the ›Worker‹, albeit ironically, expressed their incomprehension of the capitalist's turning against »Italians and Greeks, who are not coloured at all, but white races«, *ibid.* In this uncommon case, ›class‹ seems to have outdone ›race‹ as a marker of solidarity.

²¹⁹ ›Electors, Strengthen It!‹, cover of the Worker, 08.01.1910. The caption reads: »ARCH-BISHOP DONALDSON: ›If we would not have coloured races in Australia we should have an empty Northern Territory as an alternative, and the attraction of an empty North would be tenfold greater than if we attempted to fill it. That white men could work in the North had been proved beyond question, but the difficulty was that white men demanded such high wages to work there that it hardly paid to employ them‹ – The West Australian (October 28, 1909) | EX-GOVERNOR-GENERAL NORTHCOTE, in England: ›I question whether we can hope, from generation to generation, that a healthy and virile white race can continue to live and breed in the Northern Territory‹ | MRS. MOLYNEAUX

provided by the »Federal Labour Party« with his »Fusion Govt.« mace. The only other provision against the masses of ›coloured‹ workers – Indians, Pacific Islanders, Chinese and Japanese – lying in wait, eager for their admittance to »Northern Australia« is a rather sketchy-looking door latch labelled »Alien Exclusion Law«. The depiction of the people lurking outside draws its symbolism from ›racist‹ stereotypes. At least two of the Chinese and Pacific Islanders appear to have vampire fangs, hinting at their intentions to leech on ›white labour‹ draining them of possible wages and jobs, and one already holds out his hand to grab whatever he can reach. The captions outline the general standpoints of the proponents of ›coloured labour‹ in the North: ›white‹ workers demanding (unjustifiably) high wages, ›white‹ unfitness for the tropical climate, the development of the northern parts of the continent necessitates the presence of ›non-white‹ workers and settlers fit for the task.

These arguments are the contextualisation for the statement of the depicted ›capitalist‹ that it would only take the overturning of the Labor Party's restrictive policies to enable the immigration of what he deemed ›suitable‹ labour for the tropical parts of the continent. In the same issue, the ›Worker‹ clarified once again that it is the Northern Territory that will become the »back-door Fat hopes to let in the brown or yellow flood of cheap labour« and that it was with the help of Governor-General Henry Stafford Northcote, who, incidentally and rather paradoxically, had just been the host to the visit of the United States' ›Great White Fleet«²²⁰ and whose job the ›Worker‹ credited with a merely symbolic function, that capitalists and employers were enabled to draw on overseas pools of labour. He, as well as other predominately non-Labor politicians, held the view that it was »doubtful that a healthy and virile white race can continue to live and breed« in the northern tropics. Effectively this meant that »the white race are unequal to the taste of developing this continent, and that our only chance of salvation lies in the Nigger!«. The closing remark – concerning the »importation of a Polynesian Governor-General, who would stand the

PARKES moved: »That while the Conference approves of the principle of a White Australia from the racial point of view, IT CONSIDERS THAT THE IMPORTATION OF COLOURED LABOUR IS NECESSARY for the development of the Northern Territory«. Mrs. Parkes said »there were thousands of the King's Indian subjects who would be suitable for the work in this Territory and might be allowed in with their families. ... They should put in a Ministry favourable to the kanaka, and the thing would be done« – Ladies' Anti-Socialist Conference, Melbourne, October 23, 1907. | FAT MAN: »If I could only break the lock I could easily let in all the cheap coloured labour I want«.

²²⁰ For the ›Great White Fleet‹, see Michael J. Crawford: *The World Cruise of the Great White Fleet*, in particular pp. 58 ff.; Justine Greenwood: *The 1908 Visit of the Great White Fleet*. For visual examples, see the exhibition brochure at <http://www.deakin.edu.au/alfreddeakin/assets/resources/spc/exhibitions/adffleet.pdf>.

climate better and do the work just as well for a shilling a day and rations« – unveiled the ›Worker's‹ unmasking of this ›racial‹ question of ›non-white‹ suitability for tropical climes as an issue substantially motivated by classist agitation against ›white‹ workers who demanded their share of the ›wages of whiteness‹.²²¹

These demands extended to more than the workers' financial interests but are rather the expression of a ›culture struggle‹ between the ›white‹ employees and employers: for the acknowledgement of their ›whiteness‹, which was expression of ›white‹ culture and therefore of general interest, the workers campaigned against the purportedly egotistical capitalists who not only had in mind their profit but in doing so were also a barrier for a shared ›white‹ cultural identity.

The ›Fusion government‹ was the result of political disagreements between the Labor Party and Alfred Deakin who was Prime Minister at that time. His joining forces with Joseph Cook, the anti-socialists and the liberal protectionists – forming the Commonwealth Liberal Party – as antagonists to Labor caused a stir in parliament. Rumours that the Liberal Party desired to »reintroduce black labour to the sugar industry« were declared unfounded since »the White Australia policy is now accepted and upheld without questioning«. Nonetheless, statements like the one made at the Anti-Socialist Ladies' conference of 1907 who agreed that »Tommy Tanna couldn't be done without« were circulated in various forms in labourite newspapers for several years.²²² A year later, the government was defeated in the April 1910 election and Labor Prime Minister Andrew Fisher re-took office.²²³ For the ›Worker's‹ readership the message was obvious: the ›Alien Exclusion Law‹ alone posed no actual protection against the ›coloured flood‹, therefore nothing but electoral votes supporting the Labor Party would constitute a hindrance to the alleged deluge of non-European workers in the case of a re-elected ›Fusion‹ government.

Even if the Liberal Party did not directly express an intention to allow or introduce non-European workers for the Queensland sugar industry, shortly before the elections, the party had nonetheless announced an investigation into the further utility of the sugar bounty – examining, amongst

²²¹ ›Bystander's Notebook‹, in: Worker, 08.01.1910.

²²² ›The Labour Party and the Sugar Industry‹, in: Queenslander, 26.02.1910 (›reintroduce‹, ›questioning‹); ›Tommy Tanna‹, in: Worker, 03.07.1913 (›Tommy‹). See also ›The Kind of Australia they'd like‹ (Fig. 41 a) and ›The Anti's Dream‹ (Fig. 41 b) in subchapter 5.1 ›Till He Landed on Our Shore‹.

²²³ Cf. R. Norris: Deakin, Alfred; Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: Official Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia (1912), p. xl.

other issues, its implementation, the possible consequences of its termination in terms of labour and its burden on the Australian consumer.²²⁴

Besides the possible shortcomings of the excise and rebate system in terms of who had to carry the burden of financing the ›white‹ industry and who actually received the money, the processes of reviewing the planters' applications and the granting of rebates to them set in motion complex bureaucratic proceedings of validation of ›whiteness‹. Minute inquiries into when the exact point in time of planting the sugar cane was, who was employed at that time, to what extent could the cane field be considered a ›white plantation‹, who planted the cane, who cut the cane and who transported the cane followed.²²⁵ Initially, the regulations demanded the destruction and replanting of any sugar cane planted with the help of Pacific Islanders in order to grant the rebate.²²⁶

At times, these investigations even ended in a judicial hearing in which was eventually affirmed that »if black labour was employed on any portion of the plantation«, there could be no entitlement to remuneration by rebate.²²⁷ Planters were further inquiring with the custom collectors on details, such as: will the rebate be granted on cane originally planted by ›white‹ and ›black‹ workers but after the last harvest only handled by ›whites‹; or stand over cane from the previous year planted and cultivated by both kinds of workers but in the future cultivated only by ›whites‹; or partially granted for cane planted by both kinds of workers but parts of it only produced by ›white‹ workers. The reply was ›yes‹ in the first two cases and a ›no‹ in the last based on the precept that it »must be exclusively white produced sugar«.²²⁸

Along with the excise and rebate system, protectionist legislation prevented the entering of Australian markets by greater amounts of sugar from abroad. When in early 1911 sugar from Java entered the Sydney market for a lower price than Queensland sugar, it was regarded »as an absolute menace to the Australian article«, and the importation was declared a »distinct breach of the Industries Preservation Act, designed to prevent unfair

²²⁴ Cf. ›The Sugar Question‹, North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times, 09.03.1910.

²²⁵ See, for example, Department of Trade and Customs: Infringement of Sugar Relations (re black labour); Department of Trade and Customs: Black Sugar and the Sugar Industry; ›White-Grown Sugar‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 04.01.1902. See also Alan Birch: The Implementation of the White Australia Policy in the Queensland Sugar Industry 1901-12, p. 205.

²²⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 207 ff.

²²⁷ ›Important Excise Case‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 03.04.1903, in which rebate was claimed under the false statement that only ›white‹ workers were involved in the cultivation and handling of the planter's sugar cane.

²²⁸ See the letter by W.E. Tremearne and reply in: Department of Trade and Customs: Black Sugar and the Sugar Industry, pp. 6 f. (25.10.1901), pp. 12 f. (›exclusively‹, Nov. 1901).

competition«. ²²⁹ It was an outrage that »white Australians are consuming Java sugar grown by coloured labour«, which placed it at a competitive disadvantage with »Queensland sugar grown by white men and carried down the coast on ships manned by white crews at Arbitration Court rates of wages«. ²³⁰ That it was rather a matter of ›whiteness‹, or at least Empire, which stood against the introduction of foreign sugar, than a mere regulation of the quantity of sugar on the market was demonstrated by at least one exception to this rule of protection. Amongst »certain other goods«, it was sugar from South Africa, which was »imported from and being the produce of any of the Colonies or Protectorates included within the South African Customs Union« and was as such considered sugar »produced solely by white labour«, that was allowed to enter the Commonwealth. ²³¹

Australian cane sugar continued to be largely protected against competition from overseas by an embargo on all sugar imports until the last decades of the twentieth century. ²³² Even more than a decade after its instatement, critic to the protective system had not levelled off. Deliberations to »abandon the policy of a White Australia« in the northern parts in favour of »facilitat[ing] the further expansion of the white population in the south« were based on the premise that attempting to »produce sugar with white labour is an economic failure«, detrimental to the Australian population and industries. ²³³

The members of the Henry George League – which followed the theories of ›single tax‹, a taxation based on land value alone – were critical about the negative economic repercussions of the protective system of restriction of international trade. ²³⁴ »Is Queensland a Parasitic State?« they asked in the subtitle of their pamphlet and with this entertained the notion that Queensland nurtured itself by illegitimately drawing off (financial) resources from the rest of Australia. In their eyes, »every embargo or duty« »interfere[ed] with the natural flow of the trade« and was »an injury to the people as a whole«. ²³⁵ Not only did the declaration of trade as a natural element of societies draw comparisons to living organisms. This biolog-

²²⁹ ›Sugar Industry‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 20.01.1911.

²³⁰ ›Sugar Industry Strike‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 03.07.1911.

²³¹ Cited in John Chesterman, Brian Galligan: Citizens without Rights, p. 86 (›solely‹); Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: Official Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia (1908), p. 496 (Customs Tariff (South African Preference) 1906: ›certain‹, ›imported‹).

²³² Cf. Peter Griggs: Global Industry, Local Innovation, pp. 815, 834.

²³³ Harold Cox: The Peopling of the British Empire, p. 128.

²³⁴ For more information on the single tax, see John C. Weaver: Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World, pp. 338 ff.

²³⁵ P. J. Branagan: The Sugar Embargo, p. 3.

ical imputation of the one state being a parasite also declared the latter an element alien to the Commonwealth – a suspicion which mirrored the debates in connection with the process of Federation in which Queensland or at least parts of it were on the verge of being excluded from the national consolidation.²³⁶

The term ›parasite‹ is evocative of the ›pest discourse‹ in the tradition of racist discrimination, in particular in the depiction of the racistly discriminated against Jew as an ›economic parasite‹. Not least the man coining the term ›eugenics‹, Francis Galton, had as early as 1884 diagnosed that »the Jews are specialized for a parasitical existence upon other nations«. ²³⁷ Unsurprisingly therefore, in nineteen-twenties Australia, ›parasites‹ had already established a close interconnection with the depiction of Jews as well as non-British immigrants. A jeweller complaining about cash orders stated that »these barnacles, parasites and Polish Jews« should have no right to enter the community.²³⁸

At that time, the term was not only reserved for an allegedly money-sucking industry or state but also denoted a general foreign presence in ›white‹ and British Australia. In a different context, for example, a newly arrived Scottish emigrant complained about the »Parasites in Perth«. He referred to his observation by stating that »most of the restaurants and tea-shops were run by foreign Jews, fish shops by Greeks, fruit and wine shops by Dagos, Greeks, and Chinamen; Bodega bar and hotels by Germans – in fact, most of the miscellaneous businesses were in the hands of foreigners«. He was negatively impressed by the »medley of nationalities – brown and bronze kiddies, black babies, Afghans, Jews, Syrians, Greeks«. In this case, the term was foremost associated with Jewishness, the article closes with the accusing question: »Why don't they change it [the name Perth] to New Jerusalem or Jericho?«. ²³⁹

In the case against foreign sugar, it seemed clear that »without the protection at present afforded Australian cane sugar cannot compete against the product of the cheap coloured labour of Java, Fiji, and Mauritius, or the beet sugar of Europe«. ²⁴⁰ In the southern states, sugar imports initially

²³⁶ For a further discussion of the nexus and repercussions of the critique to the governmental protection and support of the Queensland sugar industry in the nineteen twenties and thirties, see subchapter 6.3 ›Think the Matter out‹.

²³⁷ Cited in Jerry Hirsch: *Genetics and Competence*, p. 12.

²³⁸ ›Cash Order‹, in: *Mercury*, 08.09.1927.

²³⁹ ›Parasites in Perth‹, in: *Sunday Times*, 29.08.1920 (›parasites‹, ›foreigners‹, ›medley‹, ›change‹). For antisemitism in Australia, see, inter alia, John S. Levi, George F. J. Bergman: *Australian Genesis*; Hilary L. Rubinstein: *The Jews in Australia*; Suzanne Rutland: *Edge of Diaspora*.

²⁴⁰ *Government of Queensland: Our First Half-Century*, p. 94.

defied the protective tariffs with South Australia consuming almost nothing but imported sugar. Consequently, the major part of Queensland sugar was consumed on location and in New South Wales. This also meant that in the early stage of the system the major part of the excise was paid in those two states, and the disbursement was suspended until it was figured out »whether the burden of establishing a white Australia is to be borne« by two states alone.²⁴¹ This imbalance was supposed to be rectified by the Sugar Rebate Abolition Act of 1903 and the Sugar Bounty Act of the same year.²⁴² Though nothing was changed about the amount of remuneration paid, the regulations provided for a distribution of the bounty in relation to the districts' labour and demographic characteristics but also taking into consideration the higher sugar content in the northern canes.²⁴³

Demands for a possible abolition of the excise and bounty system were dismissed by the Acting Prime Minister, William Hughes, on account of protection against non-European labourers. »If the request [to terminate the funding system] were granted«, he reasoned, »the way would be clear for aliens in Australia to take part in the sugar industry on the same terms as the white people«. The debate about abolishment had pinnacle when the capitalists and growers of the sugar industry consented to agreeing with the striking workers about their requests concerning wages and working conditions in the case that excise was ended. But this would only temporarily benefit the workers. Mirroring the dystopian fantasies of invasion narratives in their warning that the ›coloured‹ would crowd out the ›whites‹ in their own country, Hughes maintained, that in the long term a new increasing non-European employment would »result in the wholesale displacement of white labour«.²⁴⁴

²⁴¹ ›The Sugar Rebate‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 03.04.1903. See also Alan Birch: The Implementation of the White Australia Policy in the Queensland Sugar Industry 1901-12, p. 205; Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: Official Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia (1910), p. 400. Model calculations for a distribution of the rebate based »on a population basis«, »on the basis of Consumption of all Australian Sugar« and »on the basis of Consumption of Australian ›White‹ Sugar« showed that the consumption of ›white‹ sugar, and even of any Australian-produced sugar in Victoria and South Australia, was extremely disproportionate to their population number – cf. Department of Trade and Customs: Rebate of Excise on White Grown Sugar Cane, pp. 59 (04.03.1903), 44 (South Australian sugar consumption, 09.05.1903).

²⁴² Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: Official Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia (1913), pp. 394 f. See also Peter Griggs: Global Industry, Local Innovation, p. 59; Robin Gollan: Radical and Working Class Politics, p. 166; Sugar Rebate Abolition Act of 1903; Sugar Bounty Act of 1903.

²⁴³ Cf. Alan Birch: The Implementation of the White Australia Policy in the Queensland Sugar Industry 1901-12, p. 205; Government Intelligence & Tourist Bureau: Queensland Sugar Industry, p. 37.

²⁴⁴ ›A Forlorn Hope‹, in: Register, 03.07.1911 (›request‹, ›aliens‹, ›displacement‹).

This took the same line as presumptions a few years before when the bonus for cane sugar cultivated with the exclusive use of ›white‹ labour was about to be terminated. Farmers as well as millers once again foresaw the demise of the sugar industry, due to the financial situation and extended labour shortages. They predicted the necessity to enter into employment agreements with less costly workers and accused the government of ›taking away the black man simply to replace him by the yellow man‹.²⁴⁵

The collection of excise was temporarily ended with the Sugar Excise Repeal Act and Sugar Bounty Abolition Act of 1912, which also terminated the payment of bounties to planters employing ›white‹ workers.²⁴⁶ Henceforth, the cultivation of cane with the help of ›black‹ labour was virtually prohibited, and the ›Kanakan grower [was] forced to relinquish that form of cultivation altogether‹.²⁴⁷ It seems, however, that not the whole amount reserved for the ›whitening‹ of the Queensland sugar industry and thus the stabilization of ›white Australia‹ flew to its original purpose.

In retrospective, it was calculated that while more than six and a half million pounds were collected as excise from 1901 to 1913, only just under four million pounds were disbursed as rebate or bounty. Thus leaving an excess of about two and a half million pounds that came to benefit the Commonwealth government.²⁴⁸ The advocates of the sugar industry took up these numbers and reasoned that instead of protection and preference Australia, or rather the Australian government, burdened the sugar industry, so ›vital to a white Australia‹, with financial liabilities. Drawing on a calculation which opposed the £4 excise with the £3 per ton rebate and stated that £1 per ton tax was to be paid even on ›white‹ sugar, this overall imbalance was recounted by the Sugar Producers' Association in order to show that the ›sugar industry was taxed‹ instead of being supported by the government, and that it was neither bounty fed nor [...] reasonably protected at the Customs‹ as the opponents of protectionism claimed.²⁴⁹

It is difficult to tell who eventually benefitted the most from this financing system comprising an excise taxed on all consumed sugar and a rebate or, as later, a bounty paid allegedly to those who were the ›keepers‹ of

²⁴⁵ Doug Hunt: *Exclusivism and Unionism*, p. 88.

²⁴⁶ Cf. Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics Official: *Yearbook of the Commonwealth of Australia* (1913), pp. 394 f. See Sugar Excise Repeal Act of 1912; Sugar Bounty Abolition Act of 1912.

²⁴⁷ Government Intelligence & Tourist Bureau: *Queensland Sugar Industry*, p. 40.

²⁴⁸ Cf. The Sugar Industry Organisations: *The Australian Cane Sugar Industry*, pp. 7 f.; Ronald Muir: *The Australian Sugar Industry*, p. 79.

²⁴⁹ The Australian Sugar Producers' Association: *White Australia's Great Sugar Industry ONLY Can Keep Tropical Australia White*, pp. 6 (›vital‹), 10a (›taxed‹), 12 (›bounty fed‹).

the ›white‹ sugar industry. The ›White Labour Conference‹ in Townsville fifteen years prior, on the other hand, came to the conclusion that the sugar bonus should be continued and that it ensured that »the money reached the right hands«, i.e. »the hands of the grower«.²⁵⁰ The consumers, though time and again incensed about perceivedly heightened sugar prices, were nonetheless more than overzealous to lend the ›whitened‹ industry financial support. Over the years, from Federation to the nineteen thirties, Australia was always amongst the top per capita consumers of sugar in the world, many times leading the list.²⁵¹ »Householders pay dearly for the protection extended to the Queensland sugar industry«, reported the ›Advertiser‹, »but they have borne the burden of expense cheerfully because of the many thousands of persons employed in growing and preparing the indispensable commodity for market«; it was time, though, that the sugar industry would completely rid itself of »coloured labour«, and by becoming self-financed enter into competition with other sugar – this would eventually result in a reduction of the sugar price.²⁵²

At the end of the first decade, one of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company representatives contentedly remarked that, in accordance with population politics, the »white labour policy has created an expansion of settlement«. The ›Worker‹ added in a subsequent paragraph that »[i]rrigation not Immigration is what Queensland needs at present«.²⁵³ Another contemporary observer considered the fiscal fostering of a ›white‹ sugar industry »remarkably successful« since »white labour and small farming hav[e] within a decade been substituted for colored labor and small plantations« and the manufacture of sugar from cane had been doubled. It was further suggested that this procedure, which had »affected so remarkably both the race of the worker employed and the wages paid«, should be introduced in other industries as well.²⁵⁴ This last remark was a confirmation of the sugar workers' gravest concerns.

The sugar industry at the beginning of the twentieth century was still characterized by its »rigid class system«, a remainder of the plantation days.²⁵⁵ In the eyes of the emerging trade unions in the sugar industry, the continued application of the Masters and Servants Act of 1861 (25 Vic.

²⁵⁰ Anon.: White Labour Conference held at Townsville (1905), p. 8.

²⁵¹ See, for example, ›Import Market‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 29.05.1901; ›Sugar Statistics‹, in: Clarence and Richmond Examiner, 26.08.1911; ›Sugar Industry‹, in: Townsville Daily Bulletin, 07.10.1927; ›Australia leads‹, in: Examiner, 22.07.1931.

²⁵² ›The Sugar Crisis‹, in: Register, 14.09.1912.

²⁵³ ›Sugar Notes‹, in: Worker, 09.12.1911 (›white labour policy‹, ›irrigation‹).

²⁵⁴ Victor S. Clark: The Labor Party and the Constitution in Australia, p. 485.

²⁵⁵ Kay Saunders: Masters and Servants, p. 97.

No. 11) perpetuated a similar oppression of the sugar workers as it had been during the time of Pacific Island employment.²⁵⁶ Workers were emphatic about the »protest against being treated like the Kanaka of slavery days«.²⁵⁷

Along with the increase of ›white‹ employment in the sugar industry went the more direct involvement of the labour movement. Once the repatriation of Pacific Islanders was certain, and ›white‹ workers' employment numbers in the sugar industry slowly increased, the organization of the workers into unions began.²⁵⁸ The establishment of the first unions in the sugar districts of Mackay and Cairns coincided with the prohibition of Pacific Islanders from entering Australia after December 1904.²⁵⁹ Several men of the founding staff were previous members of other unions. This being the case, in addition to their objections to raised wages for ›whites, it was small wonder that the sugar workers' trade unions were prone to follow the restrictionist patterns of the Australian Workers' Union, which did not grant membership to »Chinese, Japanese, Kanakas, or Afghans, or coloured aliens other than Maoris, American Negroes, and children of mixed parentage born in Australia« and the broader the tradition of Labor's policies which had pleaded for the »total exclusion of coloured and undesirable races«.²⁶⁰ For it was only by ridding the sugar industry from those declared ›cheap and reliable labour‹ that the workers' interest could be successfully negotiated.

Like other Australian unions, the principle of distinction was not restricted to class but also addressed membership of ›race‹.²⁶¹ Instead of uniting all the workers of Australia, »a distinctive feature of Australian labour« was the denial of support and unity, in particular to the more easily exploitable non-European workers.²⁶² Consequently, ›non-whites‹ were excluded or, as in the case of the sugar workers' unions, never admitted to membership. During the subsequent years of transformation in the sugar industry, the unionization of the sugar workers increased. The Sugar Workers' Union extended its area of influence southwards from Cairns and Mackay. Moreover, almost since the same time the sugar workers were

²⁵⁶ Cf. ›An Act to regulate the Law between Masters and Servants‹, in: *Courier*, 27.09.1861.

²⁵⁷ Cited in Pater Macinnis: *Bittersweet*, p. 159.

²⁵⁸ Cf. Kay Saunders: *Masters and Servants*, pp. 100 f.

²⁵⁹ Cf. Doug Hunt: *Exclusivism and Unionism*, p. 89; Kay Saunders: *Workers in Bondage*, p. 165; Gwenda Tavan: *The Long Slow Death of White Australia*, p. 8.

²⁶⁰ Labor Party's Federation plank and Australian Workers' Union's rules, cited *ibid.*, p. 18.

²⁶¹ Cf. Jürgen Matthäus: *Nationsbildung in Australien von den Anfängen weißer Besiedlung bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg*, pp. 96 f.

²⁶² Ann Curthoys, Andrew Markus: *Introduction to Who are Our Enemies*, p. xv.

firmly demanding improvements in wages and working conditions, threatening with strikes and temporarily joining forces with other unions.²⁶³ The main foe in this scenario of theirs was not so much the small farmers who could hardly ever calculate on being guaranteed a minimum price for the delivery to the mills of their harvested cane but the millers, refiners and owners of larger plantations as well as the Colonial Sugar Refining Company who still owned a near-monopoly on the Australian sugar market.²⁶⁴ Union leverage was further impaired by the continued presence of ›coloured‹ workers in the sugar industry, who, not least due to the unions' policy of exclusion, were not in the position of negotiating with possible employers, and therefore did not and could not demand conditions of work that followed the desired union standards.

This, self-evidently, held true for the workers from China and Japan, who could not become members of the unions. But a similar pattern of ostracism was applied as well against Italians who came to Queensland or were brought there by large planters and refiners in order to work, replace strikers in the cane fields and keep the sugar production going. The unions did not consider them fellow members of the working class but first and foremost ›cheap labour‹, willingly entering into competition with the unionized and justifiably striking British-Australian workers. As a consequence, they were altogether divested of their ›whiteness‹ – which had continually been questioned since the eighteen nineties – and were summarized with the Chinese, Japanese and other non-European workers as the antagonists to ›white‹ workers' interests.

It became especially obvious in the subsequent ›Sugar Strike‹ of 1911, when these workers deemed unsuitable were banned from union camps and thus also from support by the strike fund. As a consequence, the ›coloured‹ workers were impelled into the arms of the employers who, following their original plan, could hire them as strike-breakers and replacements. In contrast to this, newly arrived British labourers were able to join the unions right away and this enabled them to refuse being involved in ›blacklegger‹.²⁶⁵ This ›shortcoming‹ of the sugar workers' unions based on the appreciation of ›race‹ over class was accompanied by the (false) allegations against Chinese, Japanese and other workers which imputed that they had no intention of joining unions or strikes. This exclusion from labour activities founded on racistly constructed images of the antagonistic ›non-white‹ workers continued unremedied until legislation eventually

²⁶³ Cf. Kay Saunders: *Masters and Servants*, p. 101; id.: *Workers in Bondage*, p. 168.

²⁶⁴ Cf. Kay Saunders: *Masters and Servants*, pp. 102 f.

²⁶⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 105.

prevented virtually all non-European employment in the Queensland sugar industry and forced the farmers and planters not only to recruit European workers but also gave leverage to the labour movement's demands.



*Fig. 49: He is in for it now:
Sugar's challenge to the minimum wage*

The Shearers' and Sugar Workers' Accommodation Act of 1905 had established minimum standards of food and accommodation for all sugar workers, and reaffirmed the premise that only ›white‹ labourers were supposed to be employed in governmentally-controlled sugar mills.²⁶⁶ Also, a minimum wage that needed to be paid to the workers was fixated in the

²⁶⁶ Cf. Shearers' and Sugar Workers' Accommodation Act of 1905.

conditions for the sugar farmers' qualification for the bounty.²⁶⁷ Nonetheless, dissatisfaction continued among the workers, and complaints about accommodation, hygiene and food were voiced by union members. Opposed to them stood the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, which had been founded in 1907 and acted on behalf of the sugar planters, mill owners and other sugar refiners.²⁶⁸ Not only was it opposed to the prolongation of the sugar bounty, but, together with the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, the association stood against demands for improvement made by the sugar workers.

The cover of the ›Worker‹ (1908) shows a cane cutter at the edge of a cane field, caught mid-harvest by a pack of wolves that hinder him from re-entering the rows of cane (Fig. 49).²⁶⁹ He swings his cane knife in defence high above his head and clings on to his crock to keep it from the beasts threatening him with bared teeth. The trigger for this cartoon was the meeting of the Queensland senators Thomas D. Chataway, editor of the *Sugar Journal* and *Tropical Cultivator* and proponent of the Pacific Islanders' employment, R. J. Sayers, Anthony J.J. St. Ledger, politician and anti-socialist, and Queensland representatives Justin F.G. Foxton, also an anti-socialist and supporter of the northern agricultural development with the help of workers from the Pacific Islands, Edward W. Archer, pastoralist and representative of the Free Trade party, Hugh Sinclair, G.H. Pritchard, the secretary of the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, with Austin Chapman, the federal minister for trade and customs, on the topic of »casual labour in the canefields« during off-season.²⁷⁰ Following the new order by the minister with reference to the Sugar Bounty Act of 1905, the wages for field workers had virtually increased by a third. The representatives of the sugar producers' interests opposed this reform of wages and claimed that the »new rate of wages – namely 30s. a week and found – was more than the sugar industry can afford to pay for casual unskilled field labour«. ›Whiteness‹ had its price, and their allegation that these wages were »nearly double what was paid for similar labour in the other agricultural

²⁶⁷ Cf. Kay Saunders: *Workers in Bondage*, p. 168; Doug Hunt: *Exclusivism and Unionism*, p. 91.

²⁶⁸ Cf. Peter Griggs: *Global Industry, Local Innovation*, p. 60.

²⁶⁹ ›After his bread‹, cover of the *Worker*, 30.05.1908. The caption reads: »›After his Bread‹ – A deputation representing the Sugar Producers' Association, waited on the Minister for Customs in Melbourne last week to urge the withdrawal of the Federal regulation fixing the wage for casual labour at 5s. per day, with the object of reducing it to 3s. 9d.«.

²⁷⁰ ›Canefield Labour‹, in: *Cairns Morning Post*, 22.05.1908. For Thomas D. Chataway, see K. H. Kennedy: Chataway, Thomas Drinkwater; for Anthony J. J. St. Ledger, see Andrew Spaul: St Ledger, Anthony James Joseph; for Justin F.G. Foxton, see Duncan B. Waterson: Foxton, Justin Fox Greenlaw; for Edward W. Archer, see Lorna L. McDonald: Archer, Edward Walker.

industries in Australia« was considered highly disputable. Their appeal was not without effect: though he emphasized that »the order was fair«, he nonetheless admitted that »[i]t was no use fixing rates that men would not accept and that employers could not pay« and promised to make sure that inquiries were to be made on location by the comptroller-general of customs himself.²⁷¹ Understandably, these looming attacks on their prospective »white wages« fit for »Australian white workers«, advised in the enthusiasm of »white Australia's« Federation, troubled the sugar workers.²⁷²

The cartooned cane cutter attempts to defend his federally guaranteed minimum wage of 5s. a day with the cutting-edge unity of sugar trade unions. The way he is drawn follows the traditional pattern of the Australian worker's depiction. The hat is the sign of the genuine bushman, as is the beard that is »not only excusable but advisable« and »adds greatly to the manly appearance« like it had since the colonial days, and both are anchored as such in the Australian societal archives of knowledge and images.²⁷³ But he is also the embodiment of the »racialized« and gendered union member: a »white« male who in himself unites the exclusionist and male-dominated policies of the labour movement and their offshoots, the trade unions in the sugar industry.

The »white sugar bonus« was now paid to all planters, cultivating sugar cane with exclusively European labourers.²⁷⁴ Yet the workers continued to complain that though extra money was raised from all the sugar consumers in order to finance a sugar industry which provided employment exclusively for European workers, the living and working conditions in the cane fields had not significantly improved since the Pacific Islanders' era. This, they reasoned, would constitute a continuation of what in their eyes were outdated regulations of the Masters and Servants Act, which conceded to the workers hardly any rights. Furthermore, to work under circumstances unaltered since the day of the Pacific Islanders' employment seemed a denial of »wages of whiteness« to the »white« workers or at least a confinement to its mere symbolic value. Nonetheless, their claims referred

²⁷¹ »The Sugar Industry«, in: *Capricornian*, 23.05.1908; see also »3s. 9d. a Day«, in: *Worker*, 11.12.1909.

²⁷² »The Senate Election«, in: *Capricornian*, 16.03.1901.

²⁷³ Godfrey Charles Mundy: *Our Antipodes*, p. 283 (»advisable«); Samuel Mossman, Thomas Banister: *Australia Visited and Revisited*, p. 80 (»adds«). This depiction is a common thread in the representation of bushmen and their »outbackness«: »I've caught a real wild bushman; hat, beard, boots and all«, from Walter H. Cooper's play »Hazard; or, Pearce Dyceton's Crime« (1872) in Richard Fotheringham, Angela Turner: *Australian Plays for the Colonial Stage*, p. 337; »Bushman's hat, [...] trimmed beard, hair curling down over the edges of his open-necked shirt [...] He's in the outback [...] Boy from the bush«, Kay Schaffer: *Women and the Bush*, p. 184.

²⁷⁴ »Edited by Bobby Byrne«, in: *Queensland Figaro and Punch*, 12.11.1903.

to more than a financial improvement of their situation. They demanded acknowledgement for a ›way of life‹ which found monetary expression in wages but defied to be described only quantitatively. At this, ›whiteness‹ is not only the (negative) benchmark for an outward delimitation but also the ›cultural‹ element of identity formation that was at the heart of the shared Australianness. This aspiration for acknowledgement led to one of the most extensive strikes in the early twentieth century.

5.4 ›Sweetening Product with Bitter Servitude‹: The ›Sugar Strike‹ of 1911

The culmination of the ›white‹ workers' struggle in state-wide industrial action deserves special attention due to its practical and its ideological dimensions. As a fight for being both recognized as thoroughly ›white‹ workers and compensated as such, it was the most pronounced attempt to convert the sugar workers' racist symbolic capital – whose validity they had not least proven by attracting governmental support in the creation of the job opportunities – into ›wages of whiteness‹, which were meant to comprise financial as well as social components. Furthermore, the dissociation from, and ostracizing of, Italians and southern Europeans as collaborators of the capitalists against the labour movement once again put to the test the malleability of ›whiteness‹.

The ›Sugar Strike‹ of 1911 was the »first major, prolonged and acrimonious industrial dispute« in the Queensland sugar industry.²⁷⁵ Having started in June 1911, this »general strike« quickly spread to almost all other Queensland sugar districts.²⁷⁶ It was not settled until the end of August – concurrently, but more or less incidentally, statistics were published in the newspapers showing that Australia had the highest per capita sugar consumption in the world.²⁷⁷

The striking workers referred to the government's intention for an alteration of the workforce – the »desire [...] that it might be wholly a white man's industry« – and urged that it not only needed to be demographically ›white‹ but also prove worthy of ›white‹ workers.²⁷⁸ They claimed that ›whiteness‹, held so high in national esteem and legally codified as central

²⁷⁵ Kay Saunders: *Masters and Servants*, p. 96; see also Ross Fitzgerald, Harald Thornton: *Labor in Queensland*, p. 13.

²⁷⁶ John Armstrong: *The Sugar Strike*, p. 106.

²⁷⁷ Cf. ›Sugar Statistics‹, in: *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 26.08.1911.

²⁷⁸ ›Sugar Production‹, in: *Argus*, 18.12.1909, p. 21 (›desire‹). See also *Intelligence & Tourist Bureaus of Queensland: Queensland Sugar Industry*, p. 46.

to the national identity at the time of Federation, was now supposed to benefit certain parts of the workforce in the Queensland sugar industry.

The actual industrial action was preceded by two minor, less successful strikes in the previous years and more recent concrete complaints about the conditions in the sugar industry. Reports about investigation into this issue were published in all national newspapers, and in particular one lecture on ›The Sugar Slaves of Queensland‹ caused a stir. Alexander J. Fraser, the General Organiser of the Australian Labour Federation, presented his findings about the inadequate working conditions in an address in Melbourne. He held against the employers' long working hours and low wages, maintained that the »result of the deportation of the Kanaka had been to substitute white slaves for black in the cane fields«, and announced a possible strike by the »28,000 sugarworkers« of Queensland.²⁷⁹ He was subsequently attacked for these statements by »the sugar barons« who tried in vain to disprove his evidence of a »sweating wage«.²⁸⁰ On the basis of his allegations against the employers, Fraser was declared an ›enemy of the industry‹ because allegedly his »glaring misrepresentations« were declared to have a negative effect on the southern workers' wilfulness to engage in the sugar industry.²⁸¹

A correspondent from England drew upon this phrase, the ›sugar slaves of Queensland‹, and claimed that in the Queensland sugar industry »[w]hite labour has been reduced below the level of kanaka labour, and is cheaper because of the wretched conditions imposed«.²⁸² His weighing in on the debate, in return, provoked broad efforts to defend the reputation of employment in Australia on the national and international stage. Though he later argued the case for the striking sugar workers, before the ›Sugar Strike‹, the Acting Prime Minister mistrusted the depictions of miserable conditions in the sugar districts, considered them »flagrant exaggerations« but admitted »great room for improvement«. Nonetheless, he maintained that »compared with the East End of London, Australia is as heaven to hell«.²⁸³ The sugar mill's interior was certainly easy to be likened to purga-

²⁷⁹ ›The Queensland Sugar Workers‹, in: Morning Bulletin, 21.01.1911; ›The Queensland Sugar Workers‹, in: Capricornian, 28.01.1911 (›28,000‹) and numerous other newspapers.

²⁸⁰ ›The Sugar Slaves in Queensland‹, in: Worker, 25.03.1911. The article is Fraser's reply to the attempts to disprove his lecture, made by Alexander J. Draper – the former owner of the renowned but ill-fated Hop Wah plantation, sugar farmer, and chairman of both the Queensland Sugar Producers' Association and the Cairns Sugar Growers' Association. For Draper, see Catherine May: Draper, Alexander Frederick John; ›Sugar Labour Question‹, in: Cairns Post, 09.06.1911.

²⁸¹ ›The Sugar Industry and its Enemies‹, in: Cairns Post, 07.02.1911, which also reprinted a report of Fraser's lecture by the Melbourne ›Age‹, 16.01.1911.

²⁸² ›The ›Sugar Slaves‹, in: Examiner, 16.05.1911.

²⁸³ ›Sugar Slaves‹, in: Argus, 12.05.1911 (›exaggerations‹, ›heaven‹).

tory, and many a time it became »so hot [...] that if Lucifer were confined in one for a few minutes he would clamour for iced drinks and a fan«, contested a unionist and regular correspondent of the ›Worker‹.²⁸⁴ In direct reply to William Hughes, he imputed lack of knowledge about the »actual conditions of the sugar-worker« to the Acting Prime Minister and criticized that only through said article in an English paper »the cry of the sugar worker was listened to«.²⁸⁵

Apparently, he was not completely mistaken about this. In the previous year, after the Australian newspapers of late February had briefly, but redundantly, reported on the uprising of »some 20,000 native cutters« who were striking for improved wages in Guadeloupe, a strike in the Mossman sugar district only featured minimally in the news. The strike had them simply been defeated by replacing the striking unionists with workers from Tasmania and Victoria.²⁸⁶ As were the twelve men downing their tools in the Maryborough Sugar Factory who pushed for an advance in wages and were only curtly mentioned in the news.²⁸⁷ However, possibly because the connected arguments were largely advanced based on classist reasoning, less on a ›racial‹ basis, all these small uproars in the home sugar industry went almost unheard by the public. Other the ›Sugar Works' Strike‹ in Brooklyn, North America: the quantity of newspaper articles on their violent »strike riot« outdid the reports on the local workers' struggles by far; additionally, while the motives of the American workers remained unmentioned, it was considered important to state in virtually all articles that the »rioters« were »mostly Poles«, thus implicitly introducing a ›detering‹ foreign element into local labour policies.²⁸⁸

In its first meeting, the Cairns Sugar Growers' Association took up the recent heated debates fostered by the article from England about the working conditions. It was reported that the cane cutters in general were »quite satisfied with the contract terms, but the Unions forced them to refuse to sign« and it was decided to the »suggested hours and methods of wages now being forced upon the industry«.²⁸⁹ The workers' demand of »fair wages [...] under fair conditions« fell in line with the Australian Natives' Association's aspiration to secure »fair wages, fair values, and

²⁸⁴ Bob Ridley in ›The Sugar Industry‹, in: Worker, 06.05.1911.

²⁸⁵ ›The Sugar Industry‹, in: Worker, 03.06.1911 (›cry‹, ›conditions‹).

²⁸⁶ ›Sugar-Mill Workers Strike‹, in: Register, 15.06.1910. See also ›Mossman Sugar Labour‹, in: Cairns Post, 22.06.1910.

²⁸⁷ Cf. ›Strike at the Maryborough Sugar Factory‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 13.08.1910.

²⁸⁸ ›Brooklyn Sugar Strike‹, in: Daily News, 30.07.1910.

²⁸⁹ ›Sugar Labour Question‹, in: Cairns Post, 09.06.1911.

fair profits«. ²⁹⁰ In both statements resounded ›whiteness‹ as well as appropriateness. Furthermore, it was continually emphasized that ›whiteness‹ and the improvement labour conditions went hand in hand, by referring to the class-spanning desire to »preserve this continent as a home for the white race« as a catalyst for the transformation of the sugar industry. ²⁹¹ The Queensland government had paved the way in the eighteen nineties by erecting governmentally subsidized central mills and by legally fixing the subdivision of the large sugar plantation into sugar farms – thus fostering the settlement of ›white‹ farmers and possible workers in the sugar districts.

Consequently, the strikers were now asking for more than improved working conditions and increased wages. They also pressed for their acknowledgement as actual ›white‹ cane cutters and not as replacements for the former workers. No longer were they willing to do what has earlier been called »nigger work for a dog's pay« or be treated »like kanaka slaves«. ²⁹² In the same vein, the ›Worker‹ rhymed against the employers and capitalists: »It's just as clear as figgers, | Sure as one and one makes two, | Folks as make black slaves of niggers | Want to make white slaves of you«. ²⁹³ A decade later, it complained that the employers on the sugar farms had made »little or no alteration« to the barracks of the »old kanaka days« and protested that the »whites are herded together [...] with the smell of the kanaka in their nostrils all the time«. ²⁹⁴

Far from tying in with abolitionist perceptions, the authors in the ›Worker‹ did not put themselves into the tradition of the oppressed but drew scandalized attention to the circumstance that they, or the likes of them, were treated in the same way as the former. For them, their predecessors on the plantations were and remained ›niggers‹, ›racially‹ inferior others with whom one does not solidarize, not even in retrospect. The denomination of the Pacific Islanders only served the purpose of describing the whole monstrosity of the situation. Its outrageousness did not primarily consist in the fact that the structures of exploitation subsisted after the deportation of the ›kanakas‹ but that the ›white‹ workers had to bear the ›smell‹ left behind by them. There was hardly any more intense way to express the racist undercurrent shaping the agitation than by such olfac-

²⁹⁰ ›Strikers and Politicians‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 20.06.1911 (›conditions‹); ›The Referenda‹, in: Advertiser, 07.04.1911 (›values‹).

²⁹¹ ›A Craven-hearted Government‹, in: Worker, 24.06.1911.

²⁹² ›Griffith Labor Scheme‹, in: Queensland Figaro, 13.09.1884 (›dog's pay‹); Kay Saunders: Workers in Bondage, p. 182 (›slaves‹).

²⁹³ ›The Grafters' Wallet‹, in: Worker, 23.03.1901.

²⁹⁴ ›Sugar Industry‹, in: Worker, 20.05.1911.

tory idiosyncrasies.²⁹⁵ »[S]mell [...] as a disgrace« was here hypostatized to such an extent that the verve of repulsion implied, even years after the Pacific Islanders' removal, the scope of eugenic hatred for those whose expulsion they had successfully pursued because they were not only competitors but also purportedly poisoning the breathing air.²⁹⁶

The work agreements made »of the worker a bond slave for the crushing season«.²⁹⁷ One thorn in the workers' side was in particular the attempt by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company – who held the virtual sugar refinery monopoly in Australia – to apply the Masters and Servants Act of 1861 (25 Vic. No. 11) to the strikers absent from work.²⁹⁸ Most ›coloured‹ workers – except Pacific Islanders, who subsequently came under specific legislation – had been, and continued to be, employed under this act in the twentieth century.²⁹⁹ It severely constrained rights and actions of employees by punishing absconding, striking or other insubordination while employers were provided with an upper hand in labour regulations.³⁰⁰ It lawfully forced the worker to »perform, willingly and unhesitatingly, all duties requested« by the employer and, in the case of infringement or refusal, gave right to persecute the labourer.³⁰¹

The application of this act was certainly an affront against the striking Europeans since indentured workers from British India, China, former Ceylon, and other labourers – in particular those from Italy and other southern European countries who were all deemed ›not-white-enough‹ by the trade unions and labour movement – were also subsumed under this act. Thus, by its application »all servants regardless of sex, age or ethnic origin were given the same legal status«.³⁰² Using it against the strikers, therefore, basically meant a literal referral to their place as servants as well as constituted disregard of the alleged distinction between ›white‹ and ›coloured‹ workers – experienced not only by the fact that ›whites‹

²⁹⁵ For the relative importance of ›odor‹ as a measurement of ›racial‹ perfection, see also George L. Mosse: *Die Geschichte des Rassismus in Europa*, p. 133.

²⁹⁶ Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno: *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 151 (»smell«). See also, for the original expression »Geruch als Schmach«, Max Horkheimer: *Gesammelte Schriften*, p. 214.

²⁹⁷ ›The Sugar Industry‹, in: *Worker*, 03.06.1911.

²⁹⁸ Cf. ›Sugar Workers' Trouble‹, in: *Kargoorlie Western Argus*, 11.07.1911; Doug Hunt: *Evolution of the System*, p. 79; John Armstrong: *The Sugar Strike*, p. 108.

²⁹⁹ Cf. Kay Saunders: *The Black Scourge*, pp. 160 f.

³⁰⁰ Cf. Kay Saunders: *Masters and Servants*, p. 97.

³⁰¹ Kay Saunders: *Troublesome Servants*, p. 172 (also ›perform‹). See also Doug Hunt: *Evolution of the System*, p. 78.

³⁰² Kay Saunders: *The Black Scourge*, p. 169 (›all servants‹). Cf. also William A. Douglass: *From Italy to Ingham*, p. 57; I. N. Moles: *The Indian Coolie Labour Issue in Queensland*, p. 1368.

were paid and supplied with the same ration as ›coloureds‹.³⁰³ It thus effected a classified equalization based on the denial of acknowledgement of the ›white‹ workers' racist symbolic capital. This they had otherwise been able to accumulate in the exercise of their ›racist duty‹, i.e. not only in their willingness to contribute their working power in the production of ›white‹ sugar but also in its consumption as a means of supporting the cultivation and settling of the north in defence of ›white Australia‹ against purported Asian invaders.

Accordingly, the labour movement complained about this »oppressive evil« which not only criminalized union action but also favoured the exploitation of workers and fostered in particular »Asiatic competition«. By proceeding against this act, they fought, of course, not for the well-being of all the labourers in the sugar industry. Instead they campaigned exclusively for the »unfortunate employees«, meaning the ›white‹ workers recruited to replace the Pacific Islanders, who were not used to the »food and accommodation ›as usually provided« – i.e. the »stinking meat and maggoty porridge« – that had been the everyday provision for mill and field hands.³⁰⁴

In the context of the ›Sugar Strike‹, the court then decided that the act was not applicable for the working agreements of the labourers at the Colonial Sugar Refining Company.³⁰⁵ Furthermore the Masters and Servants Act of 1861 – the alleged pretext of the sugar capitalists to continue the treatment of their employees under a ›racialized‹ perspective: as servants equal to the Pacific Islanders – could no longer be used against strikers prosecuting them for absconding from their regular work. Demands for distinction were fulfilled, because it was still referred to in cases with non-European workers.³⁰⁶ In 1918 the Masters and Servants Act was eventually repealed altogether.³⁰⁷

In terms of accommodation and living situation, the »canegrowers of the North have been so accustomed to kanaka labor and conditions, that [...] it is not in many instances a bit better than a blackfellow's camp«. ³⁰⁸ They might have been deemed appropriate for the former employees but the »[p]oor accommodation«, »poor provisions for hygiene«, and »poor

³⁰³ Cf. Kay Saunders: Masters and Servants, p. 100.

³⁰⁴ ›The Masters and Servants Act‹, in: Worker, 07.11.1911 (›evil‹, ›Asiatic‹, ›unfortunate‹, ›food‹, ›stinking‹).

³⁰⁵ Cf. ›The Sugar Labour Trouble‹, in: Cairns Post, 05.07.1911.

³⁰⁶ Cf. Duncan Waterson, Maurice French: From the Frontier, p. 90; Kay Saunders: Masters and Servants, pp. 109 f.; John Armstrong: The Sugar Strike, p. 108.

³⁰⁷ See Queensland Government: Chronological table of repealed Queensland Acts, p. 1.

³⁰⁸ ›Correspondence‹, in: Northern Miner, 11.04.1911 (›canegrowers‹).



Fig. 50: Foul circumstances:
Fighting for better of living conditions

quality food« were now the crucial points of grievance tinged with the workers' demand to cash in their ›white supremacy‹.³⁰⁹ More than mere practical problems, the workers were worried about the ideological significance of this lack of acknowledgment and foresaw their moral and ›racial‹ degeneration: as argued by a correspondent who called himself ›Worker‹, »men living under such conditions eventually degenerate into what may be really termed (both as regards color and habits), black-white fellows«.³¹⁰ With no changes in the quality of food and accommodations since »the old kanaka days«, the impression that ›white‹ was meant merely as a replacement for ›black‹ solidified and furthered the workers' aggravation.³¹¹

The cartoon by the ›Worker‹ of 1911 depicted a scene from the cane barracks at dinner time (Fig. 50).³¹² A gang of ›white‹ cane workers is ral-

³⁰⁹ John Armstrong: The Sugar Strike, p. 114.

³¹⁰ ›Correspondence‹, in: Northern Miner, 11.04.1911.

³¹¹ ›The Sugar Industry‹, in: Worker, 20.05.1911 (›old kanaka days‹).

³¹² ›Strong‹, in: Worker, 22.07.1911. The caption reads: »›Strong‹. Reference was made in strong language to the poorness of the accommodation and the rottenness of the food supplier to workers in some of the sugar mills. Queensland Parliamentary news item. |

lied around the table, examining the food the cook had just served. While it has a quality appealing to many a fly, the workers, like the dog, refrain from eating it and take to swear words instead. The source of the food is the barrel of ›salt beef‹ in the corner, also circled by flies. A common ration food on stations and sailing ships, salt meat already had a rather negative connotation since this was the cheapest kind of meat and was traditionally associated with emigrant ships, starvation on expeditions and the hardships of bush life.³¹³

The other labelled object sitting on the table is even more significant: a tin filled with treacle. At a time when the consumption of refined sugar had long not been associated exclusively with the upper classes and Australian per capita sugar consumption led the global statistics, the sugar workers, instead of being able to sweeten their tea with refined sugar, were forced to use this by-product of sugar processing. This was, of course, an affront against the ›white‹ workers' pride. The man producing a product of mass consumption was no longer able to afford it for his own consumption. This also meant, due to the excise taken on refined and consumed sugar, that the sugar worker was kept from his industry and even more so from supporting the ›white Australia‹ by the employers' greed for profit.³¹⁴

Thus, not only the food which could not even be offered to a dog but even more so the depiction of the workers being forced to sweeten their beverage with a product otherwise only used as spread or baking ingredient instead of the fiercely contented for and cherished good, must have been a strongly worrying message to the supporters of the sugar workers, and its implications for ›white Australia‹ as an outrage.

In contrast to the Irish workers in North America, who secured their ›wages of whiteness‹ by acts of contradistinction to present African-Amer-

MILL EMPLOYEE: Strong language! Lord love me, if it had been as strong as this meat they'd have nick-named the Assembly the Sewage Chamber«.

³¹³ Cf. ›The Meat Ring‹, in: *Worker*, 25.10.1902; Michael Symons: *Our Continuous Picnic*, pp. 105, 302; ›Emigrant Ships in the Sixties‹, in: *Queenslander*, 11.11.1911; ›The Bush Christmas‹, in: *North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times*, 23.12.1911.

³¹⁴ In actual fact, a comparison of prices for consumption of several sugar products quoted »1A White Crystal« sugar with £21 10s. per ton and »Treacle« with £12 per ton (with »Yellow Ration«, »Tablets« and »Golden Syrup« ranking in between) – ›The Sugar Industry‹, in: *Sunday Times*, 08.01.1911. This, by the way, meant that sugar workers earning the weekly wages of 30s., which they pressed for during the ›Sugar Strike‹, had to work about fourteen weeks to afford a ton of sugar. Furthermore, with a world-leading per capita consumption of 107 lbs., a ton of sugar would have lasted circa twenty one years – Cf. ›Sugar Statistics‹, in: *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*, 26.08.1911. On the presumption that 2240 lbs. equals one ton and 107 lbs. equals one year of consumption. Compared to the averages weekly rates of 1910 in Brisbane, 30 shilling was located at the lower end of the scale – see Theophills P. Pugh: Pugh's (Queensland) Official Almanac for 1912, pp. 59 f.

ican workers,³¹⁵ the unionized sugar workers of Australia needed to distinguish themselves from a ›foe‹ that had already been forced to leave the country. The Pacific Islanders were gone, but their (non-voluntary) imprint on the labour conditions in the sugar industry remained and needed to be overturned by the European workers. Apparently, this situation occasionally led to bizarre suggestions: at a meeting of Labor and trade unions, one Labor politician suggested completely relocating sugar refining to New Guinea since »being part of the Commonwealth no protection against cheap sugar from there was possible« and this would be the ruin of many a sugar farm in Queensland.³¹⁶ This effectively meant that the Labor Party – urging the maintenance of ›white Australia‹ since their inception – was threatening the persons in charge of the ›white‹ industry and the ›white‹ sugar planters with the import of ›black‹ sugar, produced by those who were formerly rejected as »poor devils«, brought to Queensland as ›sugar slaves‹ and repatriated to their country of origin.³¹⁷ All of this to press for the granting of ›wages of whiteness‹ to ›white‹ sugar workers who had recently been virtually implemented into the industry by legal favouritism in an invocation of their racist symbolic capital, i.e. based on their value for Australia, not only as consumers and producers of ›white‹ sugar but also as protagonists in the preservation of the endangered because thinly populated northern Australian climes.

By the end of July, the strike had spread to nearly all cane sugar districts of Queensland. Strike camps in many cities provided the unionists with food and accommodation. However, the ›Sugar Strike‹ of 1911 was not confined to the circa four thousand striking sugar workers of Queensland but found broad support in other unions, notably maritime, miners' and railway, and by other workers as well. This broad base of support contributed to the victory of the Australian Workers' Association by putting public pressure on the opposite negotiating party. Public events were held around the strike camps, rallies demonstrated the residents' unity with the unionists.³¹⁸

A common feature of these events were talks on the ›white Australia policy‹, the Labor Party's contribution to it and unionists' marches in the streets of the sugar towns.³¹⁹ The general organizer of the Australian La-

³¹⁵ Cf. David Roediger: *Wages of Whiteness*, pp. 133 ff.

³¹⁶ ›A Labour Member's Threat‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 07.08.1911.

³¹⁷ ›The World of Labour‹, in: *Worker*, 16.02.1895 (›poor devils‹).

³¹⁸ Cf. John Armstrong: *The Sugar Strike*, p. 106; Ross Fitzgerald, Harold Thornton: *Labor in Queensland*, p. 13; Ross Fitzgerald: *From the Dreaming to 1915*, p. 331.

³¹⁹ See, for example, ›Malvern Labour Rally‹, in: *Argus*, 11.07.1911; ›Whispering of the Wires‹, in: *Worker*, 12.08.1911.

bour Federation was enthused by the »magnificent sight« of the »columns of strikers, six deep, 900 strong, swinging along Bourbon-street, without a whisper being heard«, »[s]teadily, sternly« and with »an expression of silent determination that convinced«. ³²⁰ What the workers' struggle for ›fair‹ wages and conditions was also about became obvious in a different coverage of this event. The ›Sugar Strike‹ and the fight for the ›white‹ workers' possibility to live on and with his job in the sugar industry were here also closely tied to the problem of the ›empty North‹ and the eugenic politics of settlement. A similar description of the »march[] through the streets of sugaropolis« by Fraser framed a death-notice-like announcement headed ›Race Murder‹. ³²¹ It dealt with a couple taking up work on a station that was forced by the station-owner to leave their child in the city. In the face of this discouragement of ›white‹ families to settle in rural Queensland, the ›Worker‹ not only deduced that »Queensland's waste places will never be filled up« but also rhymed (here a digest) that »[w]hen the native-born have all been wiped out, | And the old ›hands‹ take the track, | ›There's room‹, he'll say, in his lordly way. | ›For the Asian knave | And the Island slave, | For the Yellow and Brown and Black«. Emphasizing the greed for gain of the squatter (›he‹) who owns a station and prefers to employ ›cheap and coloured labour‹, the story expresses the fear of a displacement of the ›white‹ workers in north Queensland, and the ›race‹-traitorous replacement by foreign labourers which, as the invasion novels told, could only end in a complete loss of ›white Australia‹.

Financial support was also secured from other unions. The miners eagerly paid levies for the strike fund, as did the Federated Engine-Drivers and Firemen's Association. ³²² The ›Worker‹ listed the receipt of payments and donations from railway and tramway employees, seamen, waterside workers, ironworkers, plumbers, typographers, butchers, and numerous private persons from Queensland. ³²³ The wharf labourers followed their union's orders to refrain from handling cane sugar produced with the help of non-union, or ›scab‹, labour; simultaneously the railway employees hindered trains with workers from the south to arrive in the sugar districts. ³²⁴ In the same vein, the Amalgamated Workers' Association made

³²⁰ Arthur J. Fraser's letter to the editor, ›Names and Photos of Scabs‹, in: *Worker*, 22.07.1911.

³²¹ Arthur J. Fraser's letter to the editor, ›A Despatch‹ and ›Race Murder‹ (also the rhyme), both in: *Worker*, 15.07.1911.

³²² Cf. ›Northern District A.W.A.‹, in: *Worker*, 22.07.1911 (miners); ›Levy in Aid of Strikers‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12.08.1911.

³²³ Cf. ›Help for the Sugar Workers‹, in: *Worker*, 22.07.1911. See also Amalgamated Workers' Association: *Epitome of the Struggle*, pp. 4 ff.

³²⁴ Cf. ›Sugar Workers' Strike‹, in: *Barrier Miner*, 05.08.1911 (wharves); ›The Sugar Strike‹, in: *Geraldton Guardian*, 12.08.1911 (railway).

it obvious that the aspiration for higher wages and better conditions was closely connected to the ›whiteness‹ of the workers when they pleaded their southern colleagues: »If you desire to help the men who are battling for White-Australian conditions in the sugar industry, keep away from the sugar districts until the strike is settled«; they also argued that »white men would be untrue to their colour if they did not revolt against« these »conditions of labour«.³²⁵

As the support for the sugar unionists spread to local residents and other trade unions, it became evident that the conflicts in the sugar industry were »a large national question, in which the whole of Australia is an interested party«.³²⁶ The industrial action was further supported by private persons who refused to provide ›scab‹ workers from the southern states with lodging or service and organized social events for the moral support of the strikers.³²⁷ Therefore – though there was »no doubt that the people of the Commonwealth are heavily penalised« by the excise and rebate system – sugar was not only indispensable »as a household necessity« but also as an Australian product with which increasing parts of the society identified in contradistinction to domineering monopolies, unjust employers, and unfairly produced products and which – once again – was consumed in globally unmatched per-capita-amounts.³²⁸

The success of the ›Sugar Strike‹ was in no small part owed to this support from outside of the sugar unions. On the one hand, it was decisively fostered by the »refusal of maritime unions [...] to transport milled sugar« and the »Storemen, the Coal Lumpers, the Carters and Draymen, the Engineers, the Officers, and the many unions included in the Australian Labour Federation« who did their best to forestall ›scabbing‹ as well as the transportation of sugar.³²⁹ On the other hand, the Federal Parliament – the first parliament with a Labor Party majority – declared that it stood »by the white worker« in this strike, criticized the police magistrate's way of dealing with the strikers, and expressed its »strong condemnation of the C.S.R. Co.«.³³⁰ Furthermore, by now William M. Hughes, Acting Prime Minister and president of the Waterside Workers' Federation, had appar-

³²⁵ ›The Fight for an Eight Hour Day‹, in: Worker, 24.06.1911 (›keep away‹); ›A Treacherous Government‹, in: Worker, 08.07.1911 (›white men‹, ›conditions‹).

³²⁶ ›The Sugar Strike‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 01.08.1911 (›question‹).

³²⁷ Cf. Kay Saunders: Masters and Servants, p. 108; John Armstrong: The Sugar Strike, p. 106.

³²⁸ ›The Sugar Strike‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 01.08.1911 (›penalized‹, ›necessity‹).

³²⁹ Simon Blackwood, Doug Hunt: Strikes, p. 188; ›Unity Wins!‹, in: Worker, 19.08.1911 (›Storemen‹ etc.).

³³⁰ ›Queensland Sugar Strike‹, in: Argus, 11.07.1911, p. 7 (›workers‹); ›The Sugar Strike‹, in: Northern Miner, 10.07.1911 (›condemnation‹).

ently listened to the unions' cry for change and for support of the sugar workers. He not only backed the strike but also declared all sugar produced by non-union members to be ›black‹ sugar and encouraged the other unions to refrain from handling it. In addition, he signalled governmental readiness to cut the supports to the sugar industry in the form of duties if the strike continued and the demands of the Amalgamated Workers' Association were not met.³³¹ Here, ›black‹ and ›white‹ were manifest as universal cultural markers. In cases of doubt, the pseudo-biological criteria allowed for the complete detachment from ›race‹ and for the parsing of them as patterns of cultural identity and membership or as means of social demarcation.

Though the ›Worker‹ wondered »[w]hat on earth has gone wrong with the daily press« and their »meagre reports of the strike«,³³² sympathy for the striking sugar workers was shared by a couple of Australian papers. »[I]f the sugar company cannot support married men it is not an industry fit for the white men, or fit for the white man's country«, claimed the ›Argus‹.³³³ The ›West Australian‹ reported the strikers' desire to return to work and paraphrased the Minister for Trade and Customs, Francis G. Tudor, in demanding the people of Australia's right to know whether they should continue to support an industry which »could not pay a living wage«.³³⁴

The ›Worker‹ (1911) showed great optimism when it depicted its view on ›The ›Case‹ for the Sugar Worker‹ (Fig. 51).³³⁵ The »Sugar Monopolist« is depicted nailing shut a wooden box containing the »Sugar Worker«. The conditions in which the latter is supposed to be confined were attached to the box: »60 hours a week at 4 ½ [s.] per hour«. The case almost becomes a cage if not a casket into which the worker's existence is banned. But in his last gasp, the worker rears up against the employer's suppression and the ›monopolist‹, who thought the matter as good as decided in disfavour of the sugar workers, suffers a surprise when he is confronted with the rebellious tendencies of the latter. The striking sugar workers defied the employers' suggested conditions with wages of sixty hours of work and wages of 22 ½ shilling a week, which differed widely from the formers' ideas of an eight-hour day and a minimum wage of thirty shillings a week.³³⁶

³³¹ Cf. John Kerr: *Southern Sugar Saga*, p. 76; Charles T. Wood: *Sugar Country*, p. 23; John Armstrong: *The Sugar Strike*, p. 107; ›The Sugar Strike‹, in: *Mercury*, 03.07.1911; ›The Last Straw‹, in: *Advertiser*, 29.07.1911.

³³² ›The Sugar Industry‹, in: *Worker*, 08.07.1911.

³³³ ›Sugar Strike‹, in: *Argus*, 03.08.1911.

³³⁴ ›The Sugar Industry‹, in: *West Australian*, 03.07.1911.

³³⁵ ›The ›Case‹ for the Sugar-workers‹, cover of *Worker*, 08.07.1911.

³³⁶ Cf. ›The Sugar Industry‹, in: *Worker*, 08.07.1911; Amalgamated Workers' Association: *Epitome of the Struggle*, p. 2; Donald Watson: *The Australian Sugar Story*, pp. 94 f.

With a trade unions-spanning, nation-wide combined effort combined with the political influence of the Labor Party, the workers were eventually able to bring the employers and refiners to their knees and »secured major victories cemented by minor material triumphs«.³³⁷ In the end, the striker's



Fig. 51: *The final nail in the case of sugar: Sugar workers against sugar monopolists*

victory had positive monetary effects for the mill-workers but only symbolical value, at least for the time being, for the cane cutters who were promised improvement in the subsequent harvest season.

As a reaction to the cane cutters' refusal to work, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company had hired strike-breakers from outside Queensland. They fostered the immigration of Italian field hands on a larger scale and recruited »free workers« in the southern states via newspaper advertisements.³³⁸ This was a deliberate move by the employers since »Italians and possibly Spaniards would [...] be preferred as they would be more difficult for the labour unions to handle than labourers from Great Britain«.³³⁹ The action evolved from a

»mainly state concern to one of national importance« also by the unions' extroverting of labour solidarity.³⁴⁰ Decisive to »give the big gun C.S.R. the fight of its life«, they attempted to forestall recruitment of strike-breaking sugar workers in other Australian states by raising the awareness of the employers' class interest undermining intentions and likewise – though a punishable act – successfully briefed new arrivals in the sugar district.³⁴¹

³³⁷ Duncan Waterson, Maurice French: *From the Frontier*, p. 90. See also John Armstrong: *The Sugar Strike*, p. 100.

³³⁸ ›Assistance from Sydney Unions‹, in: *Mercury*, 29.07.1911 (›free workers‹). See, for example, ›Advertising‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13.07.1911; ›Advertising‹, in: *Argus*, 24.07.1911; Kay Saunders: *Masters and Servants*, p. 104.

³³⁹ Edward Knox, Colonial Sugar Refining Company's general manager, cited in William A. Douglass: *From Italy to Ingham*, p. 87.

³⁴⁰ John Armstrong: *The Sugar Strike*, p. 107 (›national importance‹).

³⁴¹ William McCormack, one of the launcher of the Amalgamated Workers' Association, cited in Kett H. Kennedy: *The Rise of the Amalgamated Workers' Association*, p. 197.

If »a certain kind of egalitarianism and racism go together« in the Australian case, this held true for the ostracizing of the predominately non-British strike-breakers.³⁴² The ›white‹ workers emphasized their alleged superiority by invoking their ›Australian whiteness‹ shared with the capitalists and by racistly discriminating against Japanese and Chinese sugar workers, who were not allowed to join the unions and were stereotyped as unfair, low-standard and ›cheap‹ competition. Some employers furthered the antagonism against non-European labourers by granting higher wages to their Japanese, Chinese and other workers they continued to employ or hired as strike-breakers.³⁴³

The case of the discrimination against southern Europeans, however, functioned differently. While they were also seen as competition and discursively many a time mentioned in the same breath with labourers from Asia,³⁴⁴ theoretically Italians and other Europeans were eligible for union membership. Nonetheless, based on the unionists' reasoning that southern Europeans were at an intermediate stage between ›black‹ and ›white‹, they were denied entrance to the strike camps and therefore also barred from both participation in the strikes and payment from strike funds. This, in turn, virtually led them no other option than accept their status as strike-breakers. Workers of the Mossman district complained that because of the farmers' unwillingness to pay wages »no man with any respect« would work under, they circumvented the precept to employ ›white‹ workers: on »some farms Japs are employed to cook for white workers, who work on land on which cane is grown and bounty paid for employing white labour«.³⁴⁵ On the side of the capitalists, not only the »best and most reliable workers« but also a »stumbling block with the Unions« turned out to be the (Northern) Italians and Spaniards.³⁴⁶

In this, »[r]acist ideology effectively limited [the strikers'] perception of class allegiance«. This, however, stood in contrast to the contemporary perception that »a quickening of class consciousness« amongst the strikers had taken place which had led them to the victory of the sugar employers.³⁴⁷ Therefore, rather than relying on class solidarity the unions and

For the legal restrictions on strike actions, see Kay Saunders: *Masters and Servants*, p. 107.

³⁴² Ann Curthoys: *White, British, and European*, p. 8.

³⁴³ Cf. Kay Saunders: *Masters and Servants*, p. 104; John Armstrong: *The Sugar Strike*, p. 104.

³⁴⁴ See subchapter 4.1 ›Dagoes – What is White?‹.

³⁴⁵ ›Sugar Workers‹, in: *Worker*, 28.01.1911.

³⁴⁶ Cane plantation managers, cited in Kay Saunders: *Masters and Servants*, pp. 104 f.

³⁴⁷ Kay Saunders: *Masters and Servants*, pp. 105, 110 f., 111 (›ideology‹). See also Jock H. Galloway: *The Sugar Cane Industry*, p. 232. ›Unity Wins!‹, in: *Worker*, 19.08.1911

workers on strike employed racist conviction to substantiate their ›wages of whiteness‹ and the ›racial‹ prestige they shared with the capitalists and the sugar consumers. By this, they consolidated class struggle with ›racial‹ exclusionism and an invocation of a ›white unity‹; and they did so successfully. Consequently, the Acting Prime Minister maintained that the »employment of white labour at white men's wages in the industry« was supposed to provide for the »Australian sugar« that the »people of Australia want« and »are certainly entitled to have«; he thus substantiated the value and interweaving of the sugar industry with ›white Australia‹.³⁴⁸

The Colonial Sugar Refining Company and the Australian Sugar Producers' Association had thwarted the emergence of unionism in the Queensland sugar industry. The disposition to consult with representatives of unions remained low, and during the ›Sugar Strike‹ the authority of the Amalgamated Workers' Association to represent the sugar workers was not recognized, and thus the opposing parties refused to engage in negotiations with them.³⁴⁹ For the Amalgamated Workers' Association – a trade union comprised of miners and sugar workers, which had only in December 1910 fused with the Australian Sugar Workers' Association and later joined the Australian Workers' Union – a victory in the strike was important not only for its reputation but also because increased membership meant an expansion of negotiation potential.³⁵⁰

The sugar growers themselves let the strikers know that they »recognized« the ›white‹ cane cutters' entitlement »to better conditions« but were unable to grant any improvements due to their own precarious situation.³⁵¹ There were »scores of small growers« finding themselves »between the devil of loss by leaving their cane to rot and the deep sea of ruin« in the case that they accept the strikers' demands and in consequence have the »mills refuse to crush their cane«.³⁵² They proposed to abolish the excise-and-bounty system in order to enable them to consent to the workers' demands but this was denied by Prime Minister Hughes.³⁵³ A continued strike »must ruin a good many« of the growers and planters, and they were »agreeable to concede A.W.A. [Amalgamated Workers' Association]

(›consciousness‹).

³⁴⁸ William M. Hughes cited in ›Sugar Strike‹, in: *Argus*, 03.08.1911.

³⁴⁹ Cf. John Armstrong: *The Sugar Strike*, pp. 103, 113; Diana Shogren: *The Politics and Administrations of the Queensland Sugar Industry to 1930*, pp. 143 f.

³⁵⁰ Cf. John Armstrong: *The Sugar Strike*, pp. 103; Donald Watson: *The Australian Sugar Story*, p. 94; Duncan Waterson, Maurice French: *From the Frontier*, pp. 271, 291.

³⁵¹ ›The Sugar Strike‹, in: *Advertiser*, 01.07.1911.

³⁵² ›Menials of Monopoly‹, in: *Worker*, 15.07.1911.

³⁵³ Cf. ›The Sugar Industry‹, in: *West Australian*, 03.07.1911.

terms, but their association will not allow them to move». ³⁵⁴ In the same vein, Hughes maintained that the struggle for recognition and improved conditions was »not merely a dispute between the cane growers and their employers« but the »average grower and the average worker« allegedly stood on the same side in the struggle against the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. ³⁵⁵ These small farmers were also the ones most pressurized by the striking workers since a lack of labourers during harvest season meant the loss of most of the cane; this would have constituted a financial disaster. Nonetheless, an association between the unionists and the farmers did not take place despite the ›Worker's‹ attempts. ³⁵⁶

On the contrary, as the letter of the wife of »a small sugar farmer« showed, small farmers had no high opinion of the striking workers. »I voted for a White Australia to give Britishers the preference every time, but what have we to-day but British slaves; slaves to other men's opinions«, she complained. She accused the unionists of blindly following their leaders and »sneak[ing] off to a strike camp, like the cowards they are«. The workers, she claimed, did not hold in low esteem being employed in the sugar industry and compromised the farmers who have worked »long hours [...] to make a start here«. With this, the striking unionist would also be opposed not only to the possibility of employing European workers but were also acting counter to the »British motto« by making themselves the »slaves« of those who tell them what to do and think. ³⁵⁷

The ›Worker‹ of 1911 addressed the topic of the comprehensive area of tension which discharged into the sugar workers' strike in its cartoon series on the ›Sugar Strike‹ published on its cover from the early days till the settlement of the strike. ³⁵⁸ ›Fanning the Flame‹ (Fig. 52 a) depicts an assembly of the unions' antagonists – »Sugar Monopolist«, »Bureau Boss«, »Sugar Grower«, Premier of Queensland Digby F. Denham – around a campfire hearth heating a sugar vat labelled »Sugar Dispute« which blows into the air residual »Scab Scum«. ³⁵⁹ The energy input to the dispute is steadily secured by the ›Boss‹, who is throwing another log onto the fire (›Brisbane Sydney Labour Bureau‹), and Denham, who also was an outspoken opponent to the Australian Workers' Union and businessman for dairy produce, is fanning the fire. The ›Monopolist‹, i.e. a representative

³⁵⁴ ›The Fight for an Eight-Hour Day‹, in: Worker, 29.07.1911.

³⁵⁵ ›Mr. Hughes on the Price of Sugar‹, in: Advertiser, 29.07.1911.

³⁵⁶ John Armstrong: The Sugar Strike, p. 110.

³⁵⁷ ›Opinions of a Sugar Farmer's Wife‹, in: Cairns Post, 15.07.1911.

³⁵⁸ Besides these cartoons, ›The ›Case‹ for the Sugar worker‹ (Fig. 51) and ›Strength United is Stronger‹ (Fig. 53) were also part of the cover series.

³⁵⁹ ›Fanning the Flames‹, in: Worker, 22.07.1911.



Fig. 52 a & b – Unsweet tetragon:
The Colonial Sugar Refinery, the grower, the worker and the consumer

of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, is depicted along the lines of the ›Fat Man‹. He is holding off from the situation the ›Grower‹, who wants to have his share. The ›Sugar Dispute‹ is boiling and the capitalists keep the fire burning by fuelling it with new workers. Their presence in the cartoon is reduced to their representation as inflammable material. The vaporized ›strike-breakers‹ rising from the dispute virtually take away the possibility of foresight. By introducing higher numbers of potential recruits into the sugar district via the labour bureaus in southern towns, and with the Premier's blessings, the planters and refiners not only attempted to keep the production going but also, by passage of time, to ›starve out‹ the strikers by proving that the capitalists would conquer the industrial action by their more extensive ›resources‹.³⁶⁰

Another ›Worker‹ cartoon of 1911, ›Australia's Boss‹ (Fig. 52 b),³⁶¹ concentrates on the power of the »Sugar Monopolist« over the »Consum-

³⁶⁰ Cf. ›Men and Matters‹, in: Worker, 09.12.1911; it reported that »the ›scab‹ and ›scum‹ of Sydney« were recruited by the Sydney Labour Bureau, and then passed on to Brisbane.

³⁶¹ ›Australia's Boss‹, cover of the Worker, 05.08.1911. The caption reads: »›The refiners hold the key of the position at both ends of the transaction.‹ – Melbourne Age. | ›It is a fact that the manager of the Farleigh Estate Sugar Co., in the presence of two gentlemen, told me that if a strike occurred and I did not assist in manning the mill, or send a substitute, my cane would be left in the field.‹ – T.F. Ross, sugargrower, in Mackay Mercury. | The C.S.R. Company has advertised an increase in the price of sugar of £1 per ton. – News Item«.

er« and the »Sugar Grower«. While the supersized ›monopolist‹, again depicted very similar to the ›Fat Man‹, clutches the former and fishes the money out of his pocket, he keeps the latter under his boot by extortion. In his pocket, the »Sugar Tariff« of »£6 per ton« not only secures him a protection of his gains against competition but is also a sign for his getting rich at the expense of others. The oversizing of the ›monopolist‹ in relation to the ›consumer‹ and the ›grower‹ make it very obvious that the latter are not in the position to overturn his sugary dictatorship. Additionally, the immobility and the locations of the ›consumer‹ and the ›grower‹ so far apart from each other render it impossible for them to cooperate in this endeavour.

The Colonial Sugar Refining Company was accused of taking in all the profits and wages instead of forwarding them to growers and workers. They were »fleecing their workers of a sum of money subscribed for them by the people of Australia«. As such, they were blamed not only for defrauding the ›white‹ workers of their adequate reward since »the white is entitled to be paid a sum commensurate with his standard of living« but also of deceiving the consumers who are »desirous of a white nation« and for this reason are willingly supporting the sugar industry via the excise they paid on the sugar they consumed.³⁶² The captions substantiate these allegations of one-sided enrichment and subjection of those cultivating and supplying the sugar cane. The growers stated that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and Australian Sugar Producers' Association made them work as mill hands and field workers and, as a consequence, formed »rebel organizations« acting against this kind of monopolistic diktat.³⁶³ The ›Worker‹ called upon the »average sugar-grower« to »join hands with the A.W.A. in its tough struggle against the common foe, and not [...] fight his oppressor's battle«. ³⁶⁴ But to no avail. Despite the growing discontent with both the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, and though the »majority of the growers« were »perfectly willing to concede to the demands of the men as reasonable and fair«, no coalition between the workers and the farmers could be effected.³⁶⁵

The Colonial Sugar Refining Company unhinged the social ›whiteness‹ of sugar from its cultivators and proposed that they could move production

³⁶² ›The Sugar Industry‹, in: Worker, 13.05.1911.

³⁶³ Cf. John Armstrong: The Sugar Strike, pp. 109, 110 (›rebel‹).

³⁶⁴ ›A Persian King‹, in: Worker, 22.07.1911.

³⁶⁵ ›Open Air Meeting‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 07.08.1911; cf. John Armstrong: The Sugar Strike, p. 113.

to their offshoot in Fiji and there, »with the aid of its coloured Brother«, could provide for »the good white sugar that the white Australian desires to eat«. ³⁶⁶ Prime Minister Hughes countered the employment politics of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company with the statement that they did have »a reputation for making good white sugar« but also had »a predilection for making it with good black labour«. ³⁶⁷

The unionists' action against undiscerning employers did not always go off peacefully. In the eyes of the unionists, the police was »hand in glove with the bosses« and were »inclined to exceed their duty«. ³⁶⁸ In order to prevent attacks on non-unionists and buildings, the policemen arrived on scene armed and ready to use violence against possible offenders. ³⁶⁹ At Childers, disturbances and harassment of free workers and farmers caused the repeated reinforcement of police protection, and it was reported that the unionists carried revolvers with which they forced the labourers to abandon their work. ³⁷⁰ Several strikers were arrested and accused of »using obscene language«, »creating a disturbance«, and home invasion including causing devastation, others were incarcerated for disturbances in context with the »playing mouth organs« and engaging in »a noisy concert«. ³⁷¹ Seeing that in some districts the replacement by strike-breakers reduced the negative effects of the strike on the sugar production, ³⁷² the strikers, in order to lend weight to their pressure on the sugar growers and to hinder the harvest of the sugar cane as much as possible, even resorted to acts of incendiarism. ³⁷³

When the ›Sugar Strike‹ ended in August 1911, the mill workers were granted an eight-hour day along with a minimum wage of thirty shillings per week. ³⁷⁴ The workers in the cane fields were consoled »with the promise of better conditions« for the subsequent season. ³⁷⁵ Nonetheless, the fruitful outcome of organized industrial action was a proof for the unions'

³⁶⁶ Edward Knox, Director of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, paraphrased in ›Sugar Strike‹, in: *Argus*, 03.08.1911.

³⁶⁷ William Hughes in ›Sugar Tariff‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 03.08.1911.

³⁶⁸ ›The Fight for an Eight Hour Day‹, in: *Worker*, 29.07.1911.

³⁶⁹ Cf. John Armstrong: *The Sugar Strike*, p. 109.

³⁷⁰ Cf. ›The Sugar Strike‹, in: *Northern Miner*, 02.08.1911 (home invasion).

³⁷¹ ›The Sugar Strike‹, in: *Advertiser*, 05.08.1911; ›The Sugar Strike‹, in: *Northern Miner*, 02.08.1911 (home invasion); ›Sugar Strike‹, in: *Register*, 03.08.1911 (concert).

³⁷² ›Sugar Notes‹, in: *Cairns Post*, 08.08.1911.

³⁷³ Cf. Diana Shogren: *The Politics and Administration of the Queensland Sugar Industry to 1930*, pp. 145 f.

³⁷⁴ Cf. Kay Saunders: *Masters and Servants*, p. 110; Diana Shogren: *The Politics and Administration of the Queensland Sugar Industry to 1930*, pp. 148 ff.; ›The Sugar Strike‹, in: *Mercury*, 15.08.1911; ›The Sugar Strike‹, in: *Argus*, 16.08.1911, p. 14.

³⁷⁵ Simon Blackwood, Bradley Bowden: *Strikes*, p. 188. See also John Armstrong: *The Sugar Strike*, p. 102; *Amalgamated Workers' Association: Epitome of the Struggle*, p. 2.



Fig. 53 – United forces:
The sugar workers' victory

influence and brought publicity.³⁷⁶ The ›Worker‹ showed its optimism about the workers' ability to resistance against employers and capitalists. It celebrated the success of the ›Sugar Strike‹ by lauding the united action of the contributing unions (Fig. 53).³⁷⁷ In the centre, the »Sugar Worker«

³⁷⁶ Cf. Kett H. Kennedy: *The Rise of the Amalgamated Workers' Association*, p. 198.

³⁷⁷ ›Strength United is Stronger‹, cover of the *Workers*, 19.08.1911.

poses pridefully. He is surrounded by the ensigns of various unions from all states – most of them having signed the terms of settlement at the end of August.³⁷⁸ An anthropomorphized »Solidarity« bathes in the glory of the victory over the capitalists. She is standing on a pedestal, towering over the union member whom she claps on the shoulder, raising heavenwards the »New Conditions« of the sugar industry enforced in the ›Sugar Strike‹. In this context, the ›Worker‹ further affirmed the advantages of orchestrated industrial action. As vindicators of the »fair fame of the country«, the unions did not want the »free air of Australia to be poisoned by the breath of a degrading servitude«, a »bitter servitude« that was associated with the »sweetening product«. Their success in the ›Sugar Strike‹ was seen as both the »guarantee of many glorious victories for justice yet to come« and the proof that the »spirit of mateship« politically organized as a »wonderful thing [...] the Unity of Labour« meant the workers' »salvation«.³⁷⁹

Two years later, legislation effectively reduced the employment of non-European workers in the sugar industry. Eventually, the Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913 made it unlawful to »engage in or carry on the cultivation of sugar cane« without having passed a dictation test.³⁸⁰ The Act that was to »absolutely exclude coloured labour from employment« in cane fields and mills predominantly targeted »Kanakas, Japanese [and] British Indians« while it was not intended to »apply the Education test to white races [...] unless there is some specific reason for their exclusion«.³⁸¹

The goal of making »Queensland sugar [an] exclusively white men industry« was accomplished in the first two decades of the twentieth century by assertions of the superiority of ›whiteness‹ and several pieces of legislation that substantiated these.³⁸² Financed through the rescheduling by the excise-rebate-system, the rewards for employment of ›white‹ workers were continued to be paid for by a community of not-too-unwilling sugar consumers. The cane growers, though superficially suspected to benefit from the system, voted early on for the termination of both the excise and the bounty since, as they claimed, the money only went into the coffers and pockets of the government.

³⁷⁸ ›The Sugar Strike‹, in: Morning Bulletin, 16.08.1911.

³⁷⁹ ›Unity Wins!‹, in: Worker, 19.08.1911.

³⁸⁰ Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913, p. 6040.

³⁸¹ Department of External Affairs: Sugar Cultivation Act 1913 (Qld.), p. 19 (›exclude‹); Harcourt, 22.07.1913, in: *ibid.*, p. 22 (›Kanakas‹); Homes and Territories Department: Queensland Sugar Cultivation Act 1913, Discrimination Against Japanese, p. 134 (›Education‹).

³⁸² MacGregor, 23.07.1913, in: Department of External Affairs: Sugar Cultivation Act 1913 (Qld.), p. 23 (›industry‹).

However, even though the Queensland sugar industry was now established as a ›white man's industry‹, and in the following years the industry's importance in the defence and population of the continent grew, its national value was constantly being balanced against its cost of operation, protection and governmental support. In particular, consumers and sugar-processing enterprises grew increasingly weary of having to pay for Australian sugar if it could simply be imported at a lower price from abroad. This necessitated further ideological work to affirm the additional content of nationalism embodied in the sweet Queensland product.

6. Consuming ›White Australia‹

Protecting the Nation

›Consumerism‹ is commonly dated to the mid-nineteenth century and, symbolically, to the opening of the Great Exhibition at London's Crystal Palace. In fact, this was not only the starting point of a development but also the end point of a projection – the conception which Adam Smith had devised about the ›Wealth of Nations‹ almost a hundred years prior. His theory was (partly) predictive and contained (partially) set pieces for the basis of the development which it held out in prospect. The division of labour on the different levels was the prerequisite for the circumstance which then caused Marx to conceive of the metaphor of the civil society as an »immense accumulation of commodities«.¹ In Smith's deliberations this socio-economic projection rested on the moral-philosophical discernment of the alienation of human relations and the knowledge of the uneven distribution of the wealth generated in such way. This prompted him to assign to the ›savages‹ – who were intensely debated in the philosophy of the Enlightenment – a not unimportant place in his socio-theoretical deliberations.

In ›The Theory of Moral Sentiments‹, Adam Smith sees the desire for admiration as the principle of human efforts. These would therefore have to strive for »wisdom and virtue«; the humans, however, rather orientated themselves by descent and wealth. From this resulted a »disposition to admire [...] the rich and the powerful« which was indeed a »corruption of our moral sentiments« but was nevertheless »necessary both to establish and to maintain the distinction of ranks and the order of society«.² On

¹ Karl Marx: Capital, p. 41. The double entendre of the »ungeheure Warensammlung« can also be translated as a ›monstrous accumulation of commodities‹ – Karl Marx: Zur Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie, p. 15.

² Adam Smith: The Theory of Moral Sentiments, pp. 61 (›disposition‹, ›corruption‹, ›distinction‹), 62 (›wisdom and virtue‹).

the one hand, Smith assumed that the poor had to pull out all the stops to become wealthy. On the other hand, he was aware of the uneven distribution of wealth and was sure that »with regard to the produce of the labour of a great society there is never any such thing as a fair and equal division«.³ Wulf D. Hund has pointed out that Smith attempted to remedy the legitimacy deficiency with a turn to the outside. The poor – who admired the wealthy but despite their efforts could not increase their wealth – were suggested to compare their social position not with the wealthy of their own society but with that of a chief of ›savages‹. They would find that »[their] luxury is much superior to that of many an Indian prince, the absolute master of the lives and liberties of a thousand naked savages«.⁴

This perspective had been maintained by the organizers of the world's fairs. In presenting the wealth of the civil society to the poor and even arranging special days with reduced admission for them, the organizers indubitably relied on the suggestive power of such exhibitions. At the same time, they did not forego the racist comparison advised by Smith, which they additionally facilitated by showcasing miscellaneous specimen of ›savages‹ right beside their ›immense accumulation of commodities‹. Already the organizers of the Great Exhibition in London banked on this concept. When the Crystal Palace was dismantled after its premier in 1851 and was newly and permanently reopened in Sydenham in 1854 as a location that was meant to be accessible even for the commonality, it was added an ›anthropological‹ department that exhibited plaster casts of ›savages‹ from various continents: ›Australia‹, for example, displayed besides animals like the emu, kangaroo, platypus and Tasmanian wolf also ›Cape York Men‹ from the utmost north-eastern top of the continent. From then on, the exhibition of ›savages‹, which soon after was also featuring ›living examples‹ in ›native villages‹, became a permanent feature of world's fairs.⁵

The thus effected charging of the presentation of commodities at great exhibitions, expressly organized for this purpose, was staged as a well-nigh »commodity culture« in the context of the newly developing advertisement, and after that quickly expanded into a system of »commodity racism«.⁶ Ordinarily, the latter was tantamount to deploy ›others‹ who

³ Adam Smith: Early Draft of Part of The Wealth of Nations, p. 563.

⁴ Ibid., p. 562. Cf. Wulf D. Hund: Negative Societalisation, p. 68 f.

⁵ Cf. Sadiya Qureshi: Peoples on Parade, pp. 193-208 (Sydenham); Robert W. Rydell: All the World's a Fair; Pascal Blanchard, Gilles Boëtsch, Nanette Jacomijn Snoep: Human Zoos (native villages). For the overall context, see Wulf D. Hund: Advertising White Supremacy.

⁶ Thomas Richards: The Commodity Culture of Victorian England, pp. 1 ff. (›commodity culture‹); Anne McClintock: Imperial Leather, pp. 33 f. and passim (›commodity racism‹).

were ›racially‹ constructed and infantilized, exoticized or made subservient as advertising characters. Frequently, they were harvesting colonial material or offered its processed products. In the case of sugar, this held true only when it was the raw material or essential component of products like rum or chocolate. Around 1900, sugar itself had become a mass product so widespread and cheap that it was only very seldom advertised. Great parts of it were put in privately made desserts or were used to sweeten beverages, as was not least the case for tea in countries under British influence or tradition.

In Australia, sugar and tea had arrived on board of the First Fleet. After the scheme to have it cultivated and produced by convicts on plantations had become unrealizable, their histories took divergent courses. Though experiments in the cultivation of tea continued, it remained without presentable results while sugar eventually developed into a successful local product. Even so, the Australians around nineteen hundred not only were amongst the top per capita consumers of sugar, but they were also classed with the most intensive tea drinkers worldwide. Despite both products being accompanied by two seemingly different discourses, one that pleaded in favour of ›white‹ sugar and one that praised ›black‹ tea (and other colonial products), those who savoured its taste had no difficulty putting their ›white‹ sugar into ›black‹ tea.

The willingness of Australian consumers to *support a home consumption price for sugar* was the result of a decades-long accumulation of ideological, racist and nationalist enrichment of ›white‹ sugar shortly before and after Federation. Its roots lay not least in the desire to make the sugar industry of Queensland ›compatible‹ to the spirit of ›white Australia‹, emerging at the end of the nineteenth century. Against this backdrop, racism was not the means but the motivation to convert the sugar industry to a ›white man's‹ industry, and it continued to affect the willingness of Australian consumers to lend financial and moral support to ›their‹ industry. At the same time, the increase of printed and illustrated advertising disseminated tangible manifestations of a phenomenon now called ›commodity racism‹. In the case of ›white‹ sugar, however, commodity racism seemed largely turned from its head onto its feet. Instead of marketing fantasies about the overseas and ›white superiority‹ in an exploitative relation, which the consumer more or less unconsciously had in mind, advertisements for Australian-made products emphasized the advantages of local production in terms of a prospering, guarded nation and incorporated this into everyday experiences. In particular the campaigns of the nineteen twenties and thirties were filled with ideology, evoking the consum-

ers' duty to their nation. Consumption of ›white‹ sugar was considered a pledge to ›white Australia‹ and the ideals it stood for. Even though, *prima facie*, it appears to be a kind of ›reversed commodity racism‹, it actually fitted neatly into the inner logic of commodity racism when presenting sugar as a product which – after having emancipated from the necessity of exploiting ›coloured labour‹ – enables 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‹ and the consumers' duty to do their share in their nation's protection.⁷ These ›advertising‹ newspaper articles about sugar expressly underlined that its consumption was not only helping a technologically sophisticated and efficient industry operated by Europeans; but it was also said to secure the survival of ›white Australia‹. Advertisements for other products, like tea and coffee, occasionally veiled their origins behind depictions of ›white‹ consumers but on other occasions displayed the production locations in the otherwise frowned upon so-called ›black labour‹ countries. While in the case of sugar ›whiteness‹ was secured by exclusive consumption of a ›white‹ product, the latter drew on the exploitation of ›non-white‹ labourers in foreign countries.

An exhibition is the best mode of advertising, was the opinion of the commissioners of the Australian courts. The Great Exhibition in London paved the way for numerous intercolonial and international exhibitions in Australia, France, England and other countries. It was also the role model for advertising not only of commodities but also of countries. In the display of Australian colonial products and indigenous artefacts, the dialectic of civilization as ›progress‹ and ›regress‹ was reflected. Sugar – initially as a processed import, then grown on the soil from which the indigenous inhabitants were displaced and whose localization in history and ascription of being a ›dying race‹ was part and parcel of the exhibitions – over time became a commercial product evidencing technological evolution. Subsequently, being the only ›white‹ cane sugar industry in the world, the exhibits of the industry gained new meanings as inciting European immigration, on the one, supporting ›white Australia‹, on the other hand. Debates about Australian admission policies evidenced the urgent

⁷ See, for example, ›Sugar‹, in: Sunday Mail, 02.04.1933, which was published by the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, and informed about the individual nutritional advantages of sugar consumption but also pointed out the sugar industry's contributions to employment, defence and other ›social and national problems of the Commonwealth‹. For more information on the larger campaigns, see subchapter 6.3 ›Think the Matter out‹.

desire to include workers and people from the lower strata of society into the audiences of exhibitions. The community of consumers was not only supposed to be substantiated by actual consumption but also through the knowledge thereof.

Think the matter out, demanded the Queensland sugar industry in newspaper campaigns during the nineteen twenties and thirties. Without a ›white‹ sugar industry, ›white Australia‹ was considered unable to stand any chance against the ›coloured waves‹ supposedly about to invade the continent. The consumers, on the other hand, criticized the high price they were required to pay for a product that was, in their eyes, needlessly protected against foreign competition. Overseas sugar, imported at the world price, would relieve the burden on the consumers and reduce the prices of those Australian products which contained Queensland sugar. Critics also challenged the employment of ›not-white-enough‹ employees in the cane fields, and consequently queried the appropriateness of subsidize. In order to justify the continued embargo on foreign sugar and protection of the industry, newspaper campaigns were supposed to assuage the public mood, and further to assign the ›white Australia policy‹ and the threat of invasion as a reason for the indispensability of the sugar industry. The sugar industry was a vital element in the maintenance of ›white Australia‹ because it presented a ›bulwark‹ against clandestine unlawful immigration and, further, acted as a catalyst for ›white‹ settlement in the northern climes.

Thousand feet of whiteness crossed the state of New South Wales in the form of the ›Great White Exhibition Touring Train‹, or short ›Great White Train‹, in the mid-nineteen twenties. As an exhibition on wheels, the train campaign was a circular trip through New South Wales promoting ›white‹ nation building through racist consumerism and a class-bridging and gender-spanning conformity in ›white supremacy‹. By sharing in with other consumers in the preference of Australian-made products, individuals were able to give proof of their nationalism and patriotism. Loyalty to Australian goods was equated with loyalty to the Commonwealth of Australia and the support of its ›whiteness‹.

6.1 ›Support a Home Consumption Price for Sugar‹: The ›White‹ Consumer's Burden

The »shift from scientific racism« to »commodity racism« in the latter nineteenth century was an expression and catalyst of a societal tendency with integrative effects for those at the edge of society who were previ-

ously ostracized based on class, gender or lack of cultural techniques. Advertising and exhibition evolved into »consumer spectacles«, highlighted »racial difference« and provided new gateways to an otherwise exclusionist society.⁸ In doing so, commodity racism successfully marketed »evolutionary racism and imperial power [...] on a hitherto unimaginable scale« and also made it approachable for a broad audience.⁹ It drew on the ›non-whites‹ not as potential consumers but continued and rephrased the traditional, pre-abolition view of them as producers of raw material from which high-value products, affordable for the whole society, were manufactured.

The opening event for a new era of advertising brought together all spheres of society as well as all parts of the world in a vortex, blending consumerism, classism, and racism, and, further, contrasting progressiveness and backwardness, scientific advancement and cultural primitiveness and the development of the one with the receding of the others. The Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace in London not only ringed in the second half of the nineteenth century but also projected a »consumer society that had not yet come into being in the rest of England, where a large number of people still lived in poverty«.¹⁰ Contrasting technological knowledge, manufacture prowess and progress of European civilization with the alleged backwardness and nescience of indigenous people in the colonies, the exhibition was not only an extravaganza of production and consumption but equally pleased the visitors, in particular of the lower classes, with the possibility to identify and reinvent themselves in contrast to the depictions, descriptions and plaster casts of members of the supposedly ›racially‹ inferior peoples. Its contrasting of high technology and low culture established a common denominator for a society otherwise fragmented into widely differing social spheres. Participation in shared consumption meant attribution of social acceptance. While a large portion of the exhibited products had their origins in raw material obtained in the

⁸ Anne McClintock: *Imperial Leather*, pp. 33 (›shift‹, ›commodity‹, ›spectacles‹), 209 (›difference‹).

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34 (›evolutionary‹). McClintock takes as an example the turn-of-the-century selling of soap. Its triumphant marketing strategies comprised selling ideologies of ›race‹, gender and nation, while reaffirming newly developing dimensions of flawless (›white‹) complexion and social, as well as ›racial‹, purity. In doing so, soap as a »technology of social purification« became means and remedy of »imperial racism and class denigration«. Cleansers and detergents generally enabled the display of a successful civilizational progress and the passing into higher societal spheres, and eventually could even imply the possibility of »racial upliftment through the historical contact with commodity culture« in the colonies. This, however, was to be handled with care, since ›racialized‹ bodies were depicted not as »historic agents but as frames for the commodity, valued for exhibition alone«. *Ibid.*, pp. 212 (›technology‹, ›imperial‹), 220 (›upliftment‹), 223 (›exhibition‹).

¹⁰ Thomas Richards: *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England*, p. 120.

colonies, the anthropological locating of the initial producers and cultivators referred to their supposed ›primitiveness‹.

After the end of the slave trade and the abolition of slavery, »whites continued to read blacks economically« as producers of raw material for affordable products.¹¹ By contrast, in terms of Australian nationalist consumption – i.e. in particular the preference of Australian products fostered by the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League in the nineteen twenties and the preceding campaign to consume Queensland sugar for the support of ›white Australia‹ – they were read ›racially‹ as the bringer of danger to nation, ›race‹ and ›whiteness‹.

Commodity racism, however, did not come out of nowhere. It was built upon a tradition of exploitation. The connection of increasing sugar consumption and objectives to end both slavery and slave trade in latter-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century Britain led to two campaigns elucidating with graphical narrations the practical implementation of »eating the Other« to »assert[] power and privilege«. ¹² Admittedly, these anthropophagic episodes did not occur with intention but were owed to the circumstances of exploitation. Nonetheless, the visualization of repercussions led to intermittent reactions in the British sugar consumer society.¹³

Before commodity racism found tangible expression in advertising using stereotypical characters, British consumers had already been able to enjoy its practical manifestations on the occasion of the spreading of tropical products. Tea, coffee, cocoa entered the British society as luxuries, and sometimes medicinal articles, and made their way through the spheres of society until they reached the working classes and the less well-off. In the case of cane sugar this trickling from the top to the bottom not only brought forth new ways of consumption and satisfaction but also generated a common denominator in a society otherwise intensely socially stratified.¹⁴ Cane sugar became a mass product only with the expansion of the plantation cultivation of sugar. British workers exploited in the factories regenerated their energy with tea sweetened by the cane sugar cultivated on the plantations of the West Indies. Sugar as a sticky binding agent for a community of consumers did not only assuage pangs of hunger but also had the capability to soothe monetary deprivations and propertylessness.

Colonial products divided the world into locations of cultivation and of consumption. The respective native people were understood as cultivators

¹¹ Ibid., p. 126 (›economically‹).

¹² belle hooks: *Black Looks*, p. 36.

¹³ See subchapter 2.3 ›Stained with Human Blood‹.

¹⁴ See subchapter 2.2 ›An Opiate for the People‹.

of the raw material rather than as consumers. The circumstance that tea, coffee, cocoa, tobacco and sugar passed their initial stage, or all of their production, in their countries of origin further substantiated the consolidation of ›white‹ consumers of these products as a group of beneficiaries, which spanned social differences like class and gender.¹⁵ Advertising consolidated this understanding of the colonies as the suppliers of imperial wealth and prosperity; for instance, by its depictions of gleeful Indian tea pickers and cheerful Arabian men presenting tins of coffee powder.

At first glance, nationalist sugar consumption in Australia differed from ›traditional‹ commodity racism, as it was not based on the exploitation but on the exclusion of ›alien‹ labourers. However, that the deportation of Pacific Islanders and the ›whitening‹ of the sugar industry went to greater depths than mere economic motivation and that even the introduction of desired goods from their islands was possible, was evidenced by the circumstance that at the time of their settled fate, »a fair amount of business [was] transacted with the South Sea Islands [...], [t]he imports consist of island produce, the chief of these being copra«.¹⁶ At the same time as other products, like tea and coffee, were imported from the otherwise shunned ›black labour‹ countries, the purchase of Australian-made goods was facilitated in terms of its benefitting the ›white Australian‹ nation through financial and moral support. For the ›white‹ Australian consumer, the burden was not so much the civilizing of the ›others‹ but the exclusion of ›black‹, ›brown‹ and ›yellow labour‹ by the consumption of products and purchase of the very manufactured goods which were deemed favourable to nation and ›race‹ and endorsed the ›white Australian‹ ideal.

The campaigns initiated by the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League, particularly the ›Great White Train‹ of 1925/26, drew on unifying means of an equal community of consumers by appealing to the nationalist feelings and duties of the Australian people, and by evoking purported threats against population and continent. Advertising for Australian products was thus not merely a promotion for local manufacture or for the purchase of goods; its propagandist value was likewise an acknowledgement of the ›white Australia‹ ideal and its maintenance, while furthermore constantly emphasizing external dangers that could be averted by appropriate consumption.¹⁷

¹⁵ Cf. Troy Bickham: *Eating the Empire*, pp. 80 f.

¹⁶ Timothy A. Coghlan: *A Statistical Account of Australia and New Zealand* (1903-04), pp. 262 f.

¹⁷ For the interconnections of advertising and the state, see also Thomas Richards: *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England*, pp. 155 ff.

The short history of the cultivation of tea, coffee and cocoa beans on the Australian continent, or rather the failure thereof, does not mean that there were no attempts to invoke the spirit of ›white Australia‹ in favour of ›white‹ production of these goods. After all, the newspapers were filled with firms advertising their products with reference to ›white Australia‹ or ›white‹ labour. At the time of Federation, when the abolition of the Pacific Islanders' employment was already imminent, a poem promoted minty treats, while at the same time emphasizing the employment of ›white‹ workers for the production of its main ingredient, and likened the capacity of ›white Australia‹ to rid itself of its ›disease‹ to a similar ability of their own product: »A ›White Australia‹ let it be, | Perdition to those knaves | Who use Black Labour on the plea | That all black men are slaves. | But slavery has had its day, | Such horrors we adjure | As coughs and colds that will not stay | With Wood's Great Peppermint Cube«. ¹⁸

In the same vein, Sunlight Soap could, of course, not let a »white Australia« go without »white linen«, therewith emphasizing notions of ›racial purity‹ equalized with hygienic cleanliness and spotlessness. ¹⁹ A furniture manufacturer advertised his products as being made from materials »by skilled white labour only«; similarly, another one stated with even more emphasis that his furniture was »constructed by skilled White labour ONLY«. ²⁰ »The White Australia Furnishing Firm« published advertisements for their bedsteads. ²¹ A restaurant owner recommended their »White Australia Dining Rooms [...] Where the White Australia Policy is adhered to and the Alien Restriction Act is respected« and where also other Australian products were sold. ²² ›White‹ complexion was furthermore underhandedly promoted in a report about the high usage of face powder in Australia concluding with »[k]eeping Australia white, as it were«. ²³ Here the renouncing of historical circumstance veils the vital fact that Australia has not from time immemorial been ›white‹ but had to be constructed and actively made so.

The Minister of Customs, Thomas W. White, declared that the Australians who were willing to advocate the nation's self-reliance were »prepared

¹⁸ ›Advertising‹, in: Argus, 19.07.1901 (emphasis omitted).

¹⁹ ›Advertising‹ by Sunlight Soap, in: Mercury, 22.06.1904, also Daily News, 21.07.1904.

²⁰ ›Advertising‹ for Walton Bros., in: Brisbane Courier, 15.04.1914; ›Advertising‹ for Goodson Brothers, in: Morning Bulletin, 26.09.1918. The latter advertisement was placed almost directly underneath an advertisement for ›King Tea‹, made by the Oriental Tea Company promoting their »leaves all plucked in the early Morning Sunshine of the East« – ›Advertising‹, in: Morning Bulletin, 16.04.1929.

²¹ ›Advertising‹ by C. & H. Locke, in: Daily News, 04.09.1918.

²² ›Advertising‹ by Pearse, in: Northern Territory Times and Gazette, 13.04.1920.

²³ ›White Australia‹, in: Bunbury Herald and Blackwood Express, 05.10.1928.

to support a home consumption price for sugar«. ²⁴ With this he identified the most pronounced example of an Australian manifestation of commodity racism, which to this extent was very likely rare, if not the only of its kind: the ›white‹ sugar campaign in the spirit of the ›white Australia policy‹. At this, it was more than a mere financial endorsement of Australian primary industries. The accumulation of ideological and symbolic value in the ›white‹ sugar industry as a means to facilitate and maintain ›white Australia‹ was further supported by a propagandist cause, which was geared towards patriotic and nationalist feelings by the Australian consumers, and culminated in an equalization of ›white sugar‹ with ›white Australia‹. White's statement was made at a time when this conflation of consumption and nation had already been established by at least three major nation-wide newspaper campaigns, which closely tied the sugar industry of Queensland to the survival of Australia as a ›white‹ nation.

Sugar was the role model of subsequent campaigns promoting Australian-made purchases, which, too, came to be seen as the preferable way to support the nation by keeping the profits ›inside‹ the country. Retaining the profits would help fostering the industries concerned and, in turn, lead to increased demands for workers and encourage immigration, therewith populating the country and by this occupying the empty spaces before Chinese or Japanese could just ›take‹ them based on the legal construction with which the British settlers themselves legitimized their initial occupation of the continent.

»Sugar In Your Tea. Have you ever thought how it is made?« asked the ›Mirror‹ its readers and, albeit unintentionally, unfolded one of the discordances in the ›white Australia‹ ideal. This »great Australian industry [...] has amazed the scientific world by demonstrating how white men can work and live in the tropics« and found »employment for tens of thousands«. ²⁵ But no matter how advantageous a ›white‹ sugar industry was for Australia and how important it was to keep the value accumulated by cane sugar within the nation, this decisiveness was not analogically applicable to other tropical products. While Australian sugar was subjected to extensive protection against beet and cane sugar from abroad, and its condition as a ›white‹ industry was further financed by governmental subsidies and more or less loyal consumers, the import of other (mostly tropical) commodities caused less of a headache. This is not least evidenced by the occasional juxtaposition of articles and advertisements on the same newspaper page. On the one side, first the consumption of ›white‹ sugar and

²⁴ ›Queensland Sugar‹, in: West Australian, 14.09.1935.

²⁵ ›Sugar In Your Tea‹, in: Mirror, 07.05.1938.

later the purchase of ›Australian Made‹ are praised as a necessary act of patriotism and a pledge to the nation. On the other side, sugar's historical companions – tea, coffee and cocoa – were consumed with the same gusto and benefit as in the mother country while largely lacking the intention to cultivate it by employing ›white‹ workers already on the Australian continent. Admittedly, this was probably mainly due to the failure of successful commercial cultivation of these products throughout the ›white‹ history of Australian agriculture, then again cane sugar's part in and nexus with social and global history should not be too easily dismissed.

From the start, tea accompanied the endeavour to occupy Australia for the ›whites‹. In the seventeen eighties, tea had already become a common habit in all spheres of society. As a necessity of daily life, it was also on board the First Fleet for both consumption and trial plantations.²⁶ After the First Fleet had landed the British settlers and their supplies and equipment, three of the ships set sail to China to load on board tea supplies for England.²⁷ The British cultural baggage soon began to show, and the first settlers' ambitions to discover comparable items in the Australian landscape and bind them nominally to their European counterparts did not stop with birds like the ›magpie‹. The convicts, sent to the bush to gather edible things, stumbled across a ›vegetable creeper‹ which yielded ›a sweet astringent taste‹ ›on infusion of water‹ and was subsequently called ›sweet-tea‹. Arabanoo was one of the first Aborigines taken to the new British settlement to be studied and ›educated‹.²⁸ His progress in the British ›civilizing‹ missions was benchmarked, inter alia, by his drinking ›with avidity‹ the tea handed to him in contrast to his avoidance ›with disgust and abhorrence‹ of ›strong liquors‹, which were frowned upon as beverages of the common military men and lower classes.²⁹ Tea, as a part of Britishness, was also a marker of culture and civility, and, in parallel to other tropical products but less pronounced than sugar, divided the world into countries of cultivation and countries of consumption.

Tea was at the heart of the Australian identity. Initially, and during times of shortages, hardly being a part of the rations, three decades after the First Fleet's arrival tea, like sugar, had become a firmly established part of the provisions distributed among the convicts.³⁰ Subsequently, it

²⁶ For more information of tea during the early settlement at Sydney Cove, see Jacqueline Newling: *A Universal Comfort*, here p. 19, 22, 38.

²⁷ Cf. Michael Symons: *One Continuous Picnic*, p. 19.

²⁸ Eleanor Dark: *Arabanoo (1759-1789)*.

²⁹ Watkin Tench: *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson*, p. 17 (›sweet-tea‹), 14 (›avidity‹, ›disgust‹, ›liquors‹).

³⁰ Cf. Jacqueline Newling: *A Universal Comfort*, here p. 37.

acted as a steady companion for bushmen, swagmen and sundowners, it was the all-time »colonial kitchen beverage«.³¹ In the eighteen thirties, Australia was amongst the top per capita tea drinkers, and was still leading per capita consumption, before New Zealand and Great Britain, half a century later.³² This was also when Richard E. N. Twopeny, at that time journalist and correspondent for the London exhibition, declared it to be »the national beverage«, which was also drunk at every meal by the »Metropolitan middle-class.«³³ Worrisome to the sceptics of ›white‹ fitness for the tropics, even the Queenslanders drunk »black tea like the Australians of the south«, and in all Australia tea continued to be »the principal drink« for all classes in the nineteen thirties.³⁴

Since tea was not cultivated in Australia, it had to be imported from Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Java, the ›Netherlands East Indies‹, India, and also of course from China.³⁵ Though so-called ›facing‹ of tea – that is sending spent tea to China, where it was coloured, mixed with herbs and re-exported – was a common and accepted practice, issues with illegal tea adulteration were heightened in the eighteen eighties. Purity of tea was a marker of quality and, as in the case of sugar, was measured according to the colour of the product. Teas from China were declared »the rankest rubbish that can be imported« by some. Indian tea was preferred as it was »found to be pure in every respect«. Others made the point for Indian tea by underlining its »adulation and colouring« as deeds done in China, clearing of blame the Australian importers and retailers.³⁶

It was only with the Tea Act of 1881 by the Victorian government, which provided for closer examination of tea from China and India, that concrete actions could be undertaken. Nonetheless, problems with ›impure‹ tea continued for the next years. It was largely explained as a »matter of business« which favoured tea from China as long as no other »equally

³¹ Cf. Michael Symons: *One Continuous Picnic*, pp. 30, 44 (›colonial‹), 52.

³² Cf. *ibid.*, p. 19. The assumption that the Australians were »the world's heaviest tea drinkers« seems daring, and might be attributable to a lack of data for that period from, for instance, China. For data from Australia and New Zealand and the ranking, see C. Fox: *Statistics of Tea Consumption*, p. 715.

³³ Cited in Michael Symons: *One Continuous Picnic*, p. 73. For Twopeny's connection to the London exhibition, see footnote 108 of subchapter 6.2 ›An Exhibition is the Best Mode of Advertising‹.

³⁴ ›Sydney‹: *The White Australia Policy*, p. 107; Michael Symons: *One Continuous Picnic*, p. 166 (›principal‹).

³⁵ See Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: *Official Yearbook of Australia* (1925), pp. 224 ff.; Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: *Official Yearbook of Australia* (1930), pp. 122; Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: *Official Yearbook of Australia* (1935), pp. 239, 260 ff.

³⁶ ›Tea in Victoria‹ (letter to the editor), in: *Argus*, 03.01.1880 (›rubbish‹, ›pure‹); ›Tea and Coffee in Victoria‹, in: *Argus*, 13.01.1880 (›adulteration‹).

profitable trade« could »be carried on with a purer and superior article«. ³⁷ In 1883, a newspaper campaign against adulterated tea from China identified the market expansion of one of the leading tea importers as the reason for the »state of war« on the tea market and defamation by other importers. ³⁸

Coffee, on the other hand, was »not a universal beverage in Australasia, the consumption being only one-twelfth that of tea«. ³⁹ But like tobacco, it was suggested to be one of the tropical plants to be cultivated in the Northern Territory. ⁴⁰ Coffee and cocoa beans were brought on board the First Fleet at the Cape of Good Hope. ⁴¹ Cocoa seems to have remained an import article, while attempts were made to cultivate coffee which altogether remained unsatisfactory. In 1899, only 495 acres in Queensland, the only colony in which cultivation had »been at all extensively tried«, were under coffee, compared with 110,657 acres under sugar cane. In 1901-02, coffee cultivation peaked with only 547 acres and a steep downward tendency thereafter. This could not even be stopped by the payment of bounties for its cultivation and resulted in a meagre seven acres under cultivation in 1928, nineteen acres in 1938-39 and, eventually, nothing but two acres of coffee plants in 1947-48. ⁴² To meet the needs of coffee drinkers and cocoa users, these products were imported from India, the East Indies, Papua New Guinea, Ceylon, Netherlands, and the Pacific Islands. ⁴³ In the nineteen thirties, consumption patterns changed and coffee was rather purchased in the form of essence than as beans and enriched with sugar and chicory. ⁴⁴

Nonetheless, legislation did at times explicitly address the spirit of ›white Australia‹ with regard to tropical products. The 1907 Bounties Act

³⁷ ›The China v. Indian Tea Controversy‹, in: *Argus*, 25.03.1882.

³⁸ ›Tea and Toe-Nails‹, in: *Warragul Guardian and Buln Buln and Narracan Shire Advocate*, 05.04.1883. see also Michael Symons: *One Continuous Picnic*, p. 118; Keith T. H. Farrer: *A Settlement Amply Supplied*, pp. 227, 232.

³⁹ *A Statistical Account of the Seven Colonies of Australasia (1899-1900)*, p. 413.

⁴⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 457.

⁴¹ Cf. Michael Symons: *One Continuous Picnic*, p. 15.

⁴² Cf. *A Statistical Account of the Seven Colonies of Australasia (1899-1900)*, p. 543 (coffee), 534 (sugar); Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: *Official Yearbook of Australia (1914)*, p. 350 (›extensively‹, peak and decrease); Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: *Official Yearbook of Australia (1930)*, p. 519 (1928); Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: *Official Yearbook of Australia (1940)*, p. 410 (1938-39); Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: *Official Yearbook of Australia (1951)*, p. 1013 (1947-48).

⁴³ See Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: *Official Yearbook of Australia (1925)*, pp. 225 f., 478; Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: *Official Yearbook of Australia (1930)*, pp. 109, 123; Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: *Official Yearbook of Australia (1935)*, pp. 239, 260 ff.

⁴⁴ Cf. Michael Symons: *One Continuous Picnic*, p. 166.

provided for the payment of bounties for ›white‹-produced coffee and tobacco, as well as cotton, flax, rice, rubber, preserved fish and some kinds of dried fruits.⁴⁵ But despite this support by legislation, subsidies never reached the extent of the protection of ›white‹ sugar.

After Federation, the seeming discrepancy of consuming ›white‹ sugar in ›black‹ tea was utilized by those advocating ›black labour‹ in Queensland or opposing taxes on sugar in order to finance the transition of the industry. Writing against the unjustified »Black Labour Bogey« evoked by the repatriation of Pacific Islanders, an Adelaide politician ascertained that most of the importations from »black-labour countries« consisted of »tea, rice, and coffee« which his »protectionist friends consume[d] [...] without any scruple«.⁴⁶ Labor's principles and their declaration against »coloured labour« were compromised by their assistance in abolishing »the duty on tea which is about the only article that comes into the Commonwealth entirely produced and prepared either by yellow or black labour«.⁴⁷ Shortly before the renewal of the Sugar Agreement, the embargo on foreign sugar was criticized by pointing out that Australians »drink black-labour tea every day, therefore it will do [...] no harm to sweeten that tea with black-labour sugar« in particular with regard to the savings for the consumers not needing to finance a ›white‹ sugar industry.⁴⁸

While the opponents of the sugar agreement drew on an apparent contradiction in the import of ›black labour‹ products and the insistence on consumption of only ›white‹ sugar, 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 labour‹ and thus conformed to the ›racially‹ divided patterns of consumption that had emerged in Europe and provided for a geographical as well as ›racial‹ demarcation of colonial workers and metropolitan consumers, 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. Had coffee or cocoa or tea been successfully cultivated in these parts, one of them might have been

⁴⁵ Robin Gollan: *Radical and Working Class Politics*, p. 167.

⁴⁶ George F. Pearce in ›Gossip and Notes‹, in: *Register*, 17.05.1902.

⁴⁷ ›Free Tea‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11.04.1902.

⁴⁸ ›The Sugar Question‹, in: *Register*, 17.06.1922.

advocated as the ›motor‹ of settlement. But since sugar cane was the crop that could be grown most prosperously at a high commercial value, and also stood at the pinnacle of a long history of its socio-political and ideological charging, it was ›white sugar‹ and the corresponding industry that, at this point, was seen as the ›guardian‹ of ›white Australia‹ and the means to maintain the allegedly superior ›whiteness‹.

Historically, in the spirit of ›white Australia‹, the promotion of tea and coffee grown with ›white labour‹ also had its proponents. It was already established that the tropical parts of Australia were supposedly ›adapted for many crops besides sugar; coffee, tea, cotton and many other products grow luxuriantly‹ but the crucial point turned out to be ›labour suited to the requirements‹.⁴⁹ However, it was not only the hard labour inherent in tropical cultivation that was demanding but also the labourers who would only work when paid ›white‹ wages. ›Australian coffee-growers‹ would not be able to ›pay the Australian rate of wages and compete with the East Indian planters‹ when employing ›white labour‹ if the industry remained unprotected by an appropriate duty.⁵⁰ Other than in the case of sugar, a higher retail price through higher wages was a death warrant for ›white‹ coffee.

With the decrease of employment of ›coloured‹ workers in the sugar industry at the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century, the prospects and hopes to be able to cultivate tea bushes in Queensland or the Northern Territory rekindled. While by now the perspective of ›race‹ – ›coloured‹ workers are better fitted to work in tropical climate than ›whites‹ – lost ground, the question of class grew stronger: once again, the cost of ›white labour‹ seemed prohibitive to such endeavours. A fictional calculation of Ceylon tea versus ›white‹-grown and ›white‹-picked Queensland tea showed that the latter could not be put onto the market at a wholesale price lower than four times the price of tea from Ceylon. Additionally, the omission of mixture with tea leaves from other countries – Ceylon tea was commonly mixed with Indian tea – seasonal variations in the quality could not be compensated and the consumer would even receive a lower quality for a higher price.⁵¹ ›Tropical products can be grown in Queensland, and by white labour‹, the State Government's instructor was quoted, ›but the point is whether the community is prepared to pay the price entailed in the production at high rated, or [...] continue to import its tea and coffee, cocoa, and so forth from countries where it is cheaply grown by black

⁴⁹ ›A National Industry (I.)‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 02.03.1901.

⁵⁰ ›Federal Tariff Commission‹, in: West Australian, 11.03.1905.

⁵¹ See ›Tea Growing‹, in: Northern Miner, 28.02.1912; also in: Northern Star, 23.02.1912.

labour«. ⁵² Seemingly, the community of those savouring tea and coffee decided, by a majority, to continue the traditional exploitation of ›cheap labour‹ in foreign countries for the sake of their own budgetary planning.

In the spirit of the ›Australian-Made‹ campaigns of the nineteen twenties, the cultivation of tea bushes within the national boundaries was reconsidered. Still, the irreconcilableness of ›coloured labour‹ and ›white Australia‹ were the main hindrance to an extensive tea industry in the northern climes. »People may cry out about black labour: but they are the sort who would cry out even more loudly if tea were produced by white labour only, and they had to pay enormous prices for it«, reasoned an »ex-Ceylon planter«. ⁵³ The prohibitive price, which was no problem in the case of sugar due to its protection and governmental support, proved to be an exclusion criterion for ›white‹-grown tea. Perhaps, it was due to the circumstance that sugar represented more than increase of employment, or financial benefits for the Australian nation, and that Queensland cane sugar with its nationalist propaganda had reached a position of ideological value, which could not easily be revoked based on bald facts. Or, as the ›Cairns Post‹ reasoned: »Tea, coffee, rice, sago and a lot of other things are produced by black labour and we don't object to using these things because of that fact. The case for sugar is the case for protection and the case for protection is the fact that it gives employment to our own people«. ⁵⁴ Then again, the notion that tea could be commercially grown in Australia never disappeared from public discourse in the subsequent years. ⁵⁵

In the wake of Federation, an outstanding promotion of ›white‹ tea for ›white Australia‹ was made public by a tea importer. Albeit, this tea, too, was not a socially ›white‹ one when considering its cultivation in a ›black labour‹ country. In spite of that, Murray and Co. advertised the overwhelming holistic ›whiteness‹ their teas provided (Fig. 54). ⁵⁶ In their advertisement, they not only connected the outward complexion to the inward intake, they also added to the marker of civilization – the tea ceremony – something even further civilized: non tea-staining tea. It was made clear by this advertisement, though, that the suspicion of impurity directed against imported teas two decade prior was here translated into an all-encompassing need for purity that was measured by the tea's whiteness and, furthermore, mirrored the contemporary processes in the nation's ›racial

⁵² ›Tropical Culture‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 29.09.1914.

⁵³ ›Tea Growing‹ (letter to the editor), in: West Australian, 10.02.1922.

⁵⁴ ›The Town and Country Union‹, in: Cairns Post, 14.09.1929.

⁵⁵ See, for instance, ›Tea Could be grown in Australia‹, in: Argus, 28.07.1936; ›Tea Industry for the North?‹, in: Morning Bulletin, 15.10.1948.

⁵⁶ ›A White Australia‹, in: Daily News, 15.08.1905.

purity‹. It seems that due to their inability to provide ›white-grown‹ tea, the advertising enterprise wanted to provide a product which came as close as possible to the needs of a civilized, ›white‹ nation.

Most striking are the numerous coincidences of articles arguing for the maintenance of ›white Australia‹, with advertisements promoting the purchase and consumption of tropical products grown outside of Australia, which are apparently ideologically located detrimental to the ›white Australia‹ ideal.⁵⁷

In the ›Daily News‹ of July 1903, an article on »The Cost of a ›White Australia« explained the transition of the sugar industry from employing Pacific Islanders to Europeans as to be paid for by the tax levied on sugar and thus demonstrated the individual's high expenditures as a necessity to having a ›white Australia‹. On the same newspaper page, the readers were presented an advertisement for ›Devenish's Upland Tea‹, which was cultivated and picked in Ceylon, a ›black-labour‹ country. Even more obvious the arrangement in the ›Clarence and Richmond Examiner‹ of November 1904: ›Goldenia Tea‹ is identified as being »pure Ceylon« and depicted to be consumed by a ›white‹ woman; visually and contextually combining the tea and the woman are the adjectives »dainty«, »delicious« and »delicate«. This advertisement is placed directly above the warning-cry concerning ›white Australia‹ and emphasizing the critical lack of ›white‹ workers: if a transition to sugar as an entirely ›white‹-produced good could not be accomplished, predominantly Chinese labourers would work as cane cutters and, »in the natural order of things, become a menacing factor in the maintenance of a White Australia«.⁵⁸

Thus, the informed and wholehearted moral support of ›white‹ sugar meant by no means that its addition to ›black‹ tea was out of the question. In June 1911, the ›Cairns Post‹ published an article on the formation of the Cairns Sugar Growers' Association in which, inter alia, the decision to not



Fig. 54 – ›White‹ from the inside and outside
Advertising ›white Australia‹

⁵⁷ For more in-depth information about the newspaper campaigns by the Queensland Sugar Defence Committee, and the Sugar Growers of Australia regarding sugar and ›white Australia‹, see subchapter 6.3 ›Think the Matter out‹.

⁵⁸ ›The Cost of a ›White Australia‹, in: Daily News, 14.07.1903; ›Sugar-Growing and White Labour‹, in: Clarence and Richmond Examiner, 22.11.1904.

give in to the demands of the unionized workers to improve the working conditions was reported. Such refusals by the employers to negotiate working hours, wages and other conditions led to the state-wide ›Sugar Strike‹ of 1911.⁵⁹ Right next to said article was placed an advertisement for tea. »Ask for King Tea. The New Ceylon« (Fig. 55).⁶⁰ The advertisement depicts the initial circumstances of production – a woman in the tea fields. The tea, billed by the means of the pictures, was doubly ›black‹ by Australian standards. As a natural product, tea from Sri Lanka was put on the market largely fermented, that is as black tea.

As a social product, it relied on plantation labour by labour migrants. At first, it was seasonal labourers from the Indian Tamil Nadu who came to the coffee plantations of Ceylon. When, after the extinction of the coffee plants by a rust infestation, the plantation economy was shifted to tea, its cultivation, harvest and processing required intensive labour all-year-round. The formerly predominately male migrant workers were then, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, replaced by the families of permanent migrants who, likewise, mainly came from Tamil Nadu and, according to the contemporary European ›race‹ perceptions, were classed as ›black‹. Plantation labour was gender-specifically divided and tea picking was almost exclusively done by women.⁶¹

To advertise the thus produced product in ›white Australia‹, ›King Tea‹ could only point out that the owners of the plantations were ›white‹. With regard to the tea workers, the advertising attempted to get by with the fabricated pointer to ›native labour‹. This became apparent when the



Fig. 55 – Be a member of the consumer society:
Every cup adds to the racist symbolic capital

⁵⁹ Cf. ›Sugar Labour Question‹, in: Cairns Post, 09.06.1911. For the ›Sugar Strike‹ see subchapter 5.4 ›Think the Matter out‹.

⁶⁰ King Tea advertisement in Cairns Post, 09.06.1911.

⁶¹ Cf. Joe Kempter: Die Teewirtschaft und die Teearbeiter, pp. 63 f.

›King Tea‹ advertisement clashed with an article discussing the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League's campaign to »induce Australians to give their first preference to goods of Australian manufacture«. ⁶² King Tea was the propriety of the Oriental Tea Company and, during the time of the First World War, had done its best to »keep King Tea all British«, i.e. obtaining their tea leaves from »the sunny hills of Ceylon and India only«. ⁶³ In what may be seen as an apologetic attempt for reconciliation in terms of ›race‹, labour and social acceptability, a report on the production flow of the company stated that »[w]hite men have charge of the estates and factories, native labour being used to the plants and pluck the young leaf as required«. Subsequently, it further elevated the proportion of ›whiteness‹ in King Tea by asserting that the tea was »specially selected for Queensland requirements« and »is imported direct from the East to Brisbane, and thus may be regarded as a Queensland packing industry, as the packing and blending is watched by a staff of trained experts in Brisbane«. ⁶⁴

In a same vein, two similar articles add King Tea's value of the support of »the local labour market« as well as the development of »one of Queensland's industries« and reported its success in making sure »Queensland workmen are employed«. ⁶⁵ Thus, though they could not claim to support the ›white race‹ and ›white Australia‹ by the cultivation of a wholly Australian product, they nonetheless adopted a documentation of their industry which drew on the same dimensions of class intertwined with nation. This was also referred to by the sugar industry when emphasizing its benefits for the Australian or, in this case, Queensland workers. A way of ›black labour‹ obfuscation was prosecuted by emphasizing the technological side of the tea business while skipping over the cultivation part. Very soon after they were »plucked«, the description of production has the tea leaves already »landed in Queensland« where the »final and most important step in their preparation« took place, with local workers applying their knowledge of the »art«, »experience«, »a carefully trained sense of taste«, and aided by »electrically driven machines«. Class and ›race‹ are further integrated in the advertisement via the accompanying graphical depiction of the tea drinkers who are ›white‹, bourgeois, golfing and conversant with the ceremony of tea drinking. ⁶⁶

⁶² ›Hughes Again‹, in: Worker, 19.02.1925; ›Advertising‹ for King Tea, in: Worker, 19.02.1925.

⁶³ ›Advertising‹ for King Tea, in: Northern Star, 12.12.1918.

⁶⁴ ›King Tea‹, in: Nambour Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser, 11.01.1929.

⁶⁵ ›King Tea‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 11.08.1928 (›local‹, ›industries‹); ›Help Ourselves‹, in: Nambour Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser, 03.06.1932 (›workmen‹).

⁶⁶ ›Advertising‹ for King Tea, in: Brisbane Courier, 17.06.1930.

For those opposing payments of governmental subsidies and protection against foreign sugar, the import of tea from countries like Java was a strong piece of evidence for the innocuousness of the sugar duties' removal and, accompanied by the expansion of the Victoria beet sugar industry, was thought to be a relief to the Australian taxpayer.⁶⁷ A seeming discrepancy between the protection of ›white‹ Australian sugar and the import of other ›black-grown‹ foodstuff was also invoked by some of the contemporary opposers of the supposedly higher importance of the sugar industry to Australian legislation. On the occasion of a renewal of the protectionist policy favouring Queensland cane sugar, a contestant of this legislation demonstrated its »full absurdity« by inviting the readers to imagine the case that someone »started to grow tea somewhere in tropical Australia« and that subsequently their enterprise was declared a monopoly and protected against the competition of »tea grown [...] by black labour« – an outcome he obviously thought highly unlikely.⁶⁸

The proximity of advertising for this ›white‹ product and the other ›black‹ products presented itself on many occasions. Another ›white Australia‹ lesson of the Queensland Sugar Defence Committee on the »substantial sacrifices« of the sugar growers and the necessity of the cooperation of Australian industries, in this case the jam manufacturers and fruitgrowers, was accompanied by a Bushells' advertisement depicting a ›white‹ woman and a ›white‹ man having tea. The ›whiteness‹ of the tea consumers is alluded to, not only in the drawing but also in the accompanying text. It states that the »colors [are] exactly where they ought to be« – dark pigments in the cup that is, not in the skin – and draws attention to the ceremony of tea drinking – a marker of civilization – which specifies that the ›cuppa‹ is served to the male tea drinker by »[c]harming hostesses«. In doing so, the advertisement not only obfuscates the tea leaves' origins in a country ›racialized‹ as ›black‹ and cultivated by ›black‹ workers and unambiguously marks its consumers as ›white‹ but also weaves in dimensions of class and gender by locating the tea drinkers within a bourgeois environment and narrating distinct role allocations.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ See ›The Sugar Swindle‹, in: Sunday Times, 04.01.1920.

⁶⁸ ›The Sugar Scandal‹, in: Sunday Times, 24.08.1930.

⁶⁹ ›The Truth About Sugar‹, in: Advocate, 11.12.1930 (›sacrifices‹); ›Advertising‹ for Bushells, in: Advocate, 11.12.1930 (›colors‹, ›hostesses‹). The »moral issue« of supporting the Queensland sugar industry, as a »white labour industry«, was also discussed in an article by the Queensland Sugar Defence Committee and juxtaposed with an advertisement for Bushells Blue Label Tea, which here left the origins of its tea leaves unmentioned – see ›The Truth About Sugar‹ and ›Advertising‹ for Bushells, in: Advocate, 04.12.1930.



Freshly Picked Tea has such Enticing Flavor

Young, tender leaves, picked fresh and cured slowly and gradually to impart their juicy sap.

That's what gives Bushells Tea such rich, enticing flavor.

Ordinary tea, with its life's essence scorched out by hasty, careless curing, is bound to taste weak and wishy-washy. The old coarse leaves must develop a harsh taste in the process.

You really pay no more when you use Bushells Tea because the young, tender leaves and the slow, careful curing yield you more rich cups to the pound.



You save money by using Bushells Tea. It is so pure and rich that a small pound goes more than 100 cups.



ONE Leaf out of SEVEN

There are three ways to start on the tea of most "brands" - the machine made and steam heated tea. They are all old and have little to do with the young, tender leaves of the tea bush. With this you avoid the life's sap leaves in your pocket of Bushells Tea. You get the richest tea in the bush. The only one that is so pure.

This tea was found almost to taste of blackberries.

Try it, when you buy tea. They are all old and have little to do with the young, tender leaves of the tea bush. With this you avoid the life's sap leaves in your pocket of Bushells Tea. You get the richest tea in the bush. The only one that is so pure.

Bushells • The Tea of Flavor

COFFEE!

The satisfying home-like homogeneity of the family table; the savory zest of the camp fire meal; the friendly glow of the cozy, intimate gathering; and the crowning touch of dignified hospitality.

And when it is Bushells Vacuum Packed Pure Coffee 'tis truly the drink of a thousand delights.



EASY TO MAKE... Use one teaspoonful for each cup of water. Boil for 5 minutes. Stir in one level spoonful of sugar. Serve. Let stand one hour before drinking. COFFEE BOTTLED IN COPPER-BOILED



"Isn't this Aroma Lovely?"

"It's just the freshest pound of coffee we've ever tasted. It's coffee packed the new scientific way. Bushells coffee is sealed in a vacuum with all its own natural aroma. No wonder it keeps so fresh! No wonder it is so much nicer!"

Ask for this new fresh coffee. It is ready at your grocer's in 1-lb. and 1/2-lb. glass jars. Useful jars, too. See the name on the jar. Bushells Blue Label Vacuum Packed Pure Coffee.

Now you're going to buy a jar. Quickly, too, to enjoy this new coffee, because it is ready to much faster and richer.

Bushells Coffee

Stays Fresh because Vacuum Packed



Also in 1-lb. 1/2-lb. & 1/4-lb. jars

Fig. 56 – Foreign flavour:
Tea and coffee from ›black‹-labour countries

A closer look at a number of Bushells' advertisements for both their tea and coffee shows that, on other occasions, the origins and production circumstances of their products are far from being veiled. At a time

the promotional campaign initiated by the Sugar Growers of Australia and meant to conciliate the Australian sugar consumers with the continued protection of the sugar industry against ›black‹-grown sugar, by reminding the readers of the sugar workers' families who were dependent on the ›white‹ production of cane sugar.⁷³ The campaign also drew attention, amongst other things, to the fact that the national sugar industry was the guarantor that profits were kept inside the country and contributed to the nation's wealth; furthermore it fostered ›white‹ employment in north Australia.⁷⁴

Placed side by side, it is obvious that – though some opponents of protectionist legislation in favour of ›white‹ sugar or advocates of free-trade and the importation of ›black‹ sugar zeroed in on an alleged contradiction of ›white‹ sugar and ›black‹ tea or coffee or cocoa – the interplay of sweetness and hot beverage and its consumption was by no means inconsistent in the eyes of the broad consumership. Both the advertisements are exemplary for their respective contribution to ›white supremacy‹ in accordance with commodity racism. The widespread presence – ›in countless homes‹ – of tropical products, had historically been enabled by ›cheap labour‹ on plantations employing slaves. After the end of the slave trade and the emancipation of the slaves, ›coloured labour‹ found expression in racist advertisements which drew on stereotyped ›blacks‹ and other ›non-whites‹ as symbols of servility, entertainment and exoticism.⁷⁵ Egalitarianism was found by the consumer in the superior positioning and ›racial‹ distinction from the utilized, denigrated and ridiculed ›coloured‹ representatives of the product. In the case of Nestlé's cocoa, the consumers form an equable sea of houses united in their benefitting from cocoa plantations overseas, their economic ›efficiency‹ enabling a worldwide distribution.

While this was in accordance with ›traditional‹ commodity racism, in the case of ›white‹ sugar consumption – and later with the preference of locally manufactured products – the special Australian position found expression. The sugar industry had been reformed into a ›white‹ industry not least based on the lack of settlement in the northern parts of the continent and the pressure by the allegedly imminent invasion of Asian intruders via or into this ›empty North‹. The advertisement reprinted here explicitly

⁷³ ›Now, Mr. John D. Valentine, please stick to facts on SUGAR!‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 09.05.1932.

⁷⁴ For the background and nexus of the newspaper campaigns in the nineteen twenties and thirties, see subchapter 6.3 ›Think the Matter out‹.

⁷⁵ For this and examples of ›blacks‹ in advertising, see Jan Nederveen Pieterse: *White on Black*, in particular pp. 84 f., 154-163. See also Anandi Ramamurthy, Kalpana Wilson: *Come and Join the Freedom-Lovers*; Malte Hinrichsen: *From Ecumene to Trademark*; and, in particular for cocoa, Emma Robertson: *Bittersweet Temptations*.

referred to the industry's success of fostering ›white‹ settlement in those places. It was thus made clear that indulging in Queensland cane sugar not only meant a financial support which guaranteed the survival of the industry but, against the backdrop of the ›yellow peril‹ from outside, also avouched for the survival of ›white Australia‹.

This being the case, it becomes obvious that though consumption and protection of ›white‹ sugar differed from that of other tropical products – like tea and coffee which, with little resistance, were imported from countries understood to be the locations of ›black labour‹ – both kinds of consumption turned out to be the two sides of the commodity racism coin. While the use of ›black‹ tea, coffee and cocoa endorsed racist consumption patterns characteristic for the British situation, the purchase of ›white‹ sugar conformed to the ambitions to keep Australia ›white‹. In the case of the latter, the financial and moral support of the industry was equal to pledging allegiance to the nation, and the (at times) higher than average retail price was overall willingly accepted, not least due to the propaganda of the sugar industry as the main defender of ›white Australia‹. While by consuming Queensland sugar the consumers acknowledged the special situation of Australia, the consumption of tea, coffee, cocoa and other products validated their standing in the ranks of ›white‹ consumers within the British Empire.

Consumption of tea, coffee and other imports located the Australian consumers in a broader amalgamation of imperial consumers who were able to draw on the advantages of producers employing ›cheap labour‹. At play in this exploitation of ›black‹ and ›yellow‹ cultivators, as mentioned in the case of tea, was not least the assumption of ›white‹ superiority in technology and knowledge, which supposedly enabled the latter to supervise and instruct the former. Expression of this inclusionist dimension of imperial consumption was impressively made touchable at the »monument to consumption« and the starting place of consumerism that was the London Crystal Palace of the Great Exhibition of 1851.⁷⁶

6.2 ›An Exhibition is the Best Mode of Advertising‹: Popularising ›White Australia‹

Commodity racism was organized in joint events at the exhibitions taking place from the latter half of the nineteenth century onwards. Exhibitions

⁷⁶ Thomas Richards: *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England*, p. 3.

in the Empire were numerous, and the colonies and, later, the Commonwealth of Australia were no exception to this. Initially called the »Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations«, the role model for all subsequent exhibitions was the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London.⁷⁷ It was considered a spectacle for all classes and established new conventions about advertising, consumerism, narrations of colonialism and nationalism and the localization of the colonies, their indigenous population and their settlers in history, geography and civilization.

Beside the spectacle of commodities, exhibitions in general shaped the understanding of nation, class and ›race‹ in the imperial and global world view. The intention to educate the lower classes was reflected in the Australian case. The notion that broadening the knowledge of the working class would result in the improvement of the whole nation found not least expression in the numerous appeals to extend the opening hours, lower the admission charges and support free transportation to the exposition grounds.

Exhibition stands did not only have educational value based on the progress of the ›white‹ technology but also regularly contrasted technological progress with showpieces from the indigenous cultures. Australian exhibitors eagerly distinguished themselves and their people from the aboriginal inhabitants, as it seemed »undoubtedly important to colonists in New South Wales to contrast with their own cattle, sheep, wool, tallow, meat, cloths and copper ›the murderous weapons of the savage‹, or Australian Aboriginal«.⁷⁸ Australian raw material, like minerals and woods, as well as the products of the colonies, like wool, flour and wheat, were then evidence of civilization and cultivation, i.e. of the ›white‹ success in occupying the continent and putting it to ›good‹ use. Spears and other hunting weapons invited to imagine the difficulties of this endeavour; the tools of the indigenous proved their ›backwardness‹, their localization at the lower end of the scale of humanity. Cultural artefacts and objects were seen as evidence of a colourful and resourceful, yet primitive, way of life, which could be conserved in museums and exhibition halls but would certainly have to give way to higher civilizations and superior technologies.

It was on the occasion of the Great Exhibition in London that a remark was made in the (British) ›Illustrated News‹ about how the »New South Wales contributions offer no sign of the Aborigines' work, *and probably the country contains no longer any trace of the people*« which could be

⁷⁷ ›Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations‹, in: Cornwall Chronicle, 29.10.1850.

⁷⁸ Peter H. Hoffenberg: Nothing Very New or very Showy to Exhibit, pp. 99 (›contrast‹), 107 f.

interpreted as New South Wales showing a wilful sign of the ›survival of the fittest‹ and the consequent absence of the indigenous population.⁷⁹ Local Australians, however, had a different take on this and used the chance to level criticism against the British government. With it, they demonstrated that their demise was still open to question. The statement was seen as evidence for the »misrule perpetrated by our home rulers«, more precisely they claimed that »this neglected part of the country« was by no means free of »the only men in the world who are allowed to destroy and rob Englishmen with impunity«, but the high figures of the »victims to our murderous foes« and the destruction of their property were tolerated »without the least preventive interference on the part of our Government, much less retributive«.⁸⁰

The 1851 Great Exhibition in London heralded the »era of the spectacle«.⁸¹ It paved the way for a vast number of similar events throughout the second half of the nineteenth and twentieth century in European countries, inter alia, Great Britain, France and Germany and their colonies, for instance Canada and Australia. Cane sugar and the corresponding machinery were on display in the India section. In this context, the »effects of a liberal policy in the cheapening sugar« were lauded.⁸² This had not least allowed for the spreading of sugar consumption through all the spheres of the British society which then had reached completion in the mid-nineteenth century. A comparison of developmental stages was at hand when the exhibition of a certain commodity was looked at in a colonial and a European context. At the New Zealand stand, the question of technology was less crucial; the »youthful readers« were encouraged to taste »specimen of sugar, obtained direct from the pure cane, not re-boiled or refined« but in its natural state.⁸³

Overall »Australasia disappointed« at the Great Exhibition – this was an opinion »shared by a variety of visitors and chroniclers, elite and common, Australian and foreign«.⁸⁴ Western Australia was fully occupied with entertaining a convict colony and had therefore no capacity for the ex-

⁷⁹ ›Original Correspondence‹ (letter to the editors, emphasis in original), in: Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer, 13.12.1851 referring to an article in the Illustrated Australian News, 24.05.1851 (›no sign‹); for a take on this as the sign of the suppression of Aboriginal presence, see Peter H. Hoffenberg: Nothing Very New or very Showy to Exhibit, p. 107.

⁸⁰ ›Original Correspondence‹ (letter to the editors), in: Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer, 13.12.1851.

⁸¹ Thomas Richards: The Commodity Culture of Victorian England, p. 3.

⁸² Anon.: A Guide to the Great Exhibition, p. 116.

⁸³ Anon.: A Guide to the Great Exhibition, p. 121.

⁸⁴ Peter H. Hoffenberg: Nothing Very New or very Showy to Exhibit, pp. 93 (›disappointed‹), 94 (›chroniclers‹).

hibition; the New South Wales exhibit was »by no means illustrative of the resources of the colony«. ⁸⁵ »Pressing local political and social questions« seemed of more urgent priority in the colonies than the overseas exhibition. ⁸⁶ In Tasmania, the abolition of transportation was seen as more pressing than its representation in London. »[S]end home something to forward our cause wonderfully«, suggested a speaker at a public meeting in Hobart, »one of the most polished rascals ever manufactured on the face of the earth [...] dressed in yellow, manufactured of colonial cloth; [...] chains of colonial metal« or rather »a female specimen [...] arrayed in the dress of the unwashed [...] with a short pipe [...] and a bottle of gin in her hand«. Since the inhabitants of Tasmania saw their situation rather as the ›dumping place‹ of some of the worst re-offenders rather than a location of colonial progress and prosperity, the exhibition of convicts »would speak much of [Tasmania's] condition«. ⁸⁷

Otherwise, lack of time and organization, as well as geographical disadvantages and absence of interest or financial means, were given as reasons for the poor display at the Australian court. ⁸⁸ Nonetheless, Australia did actually provide some articles and specimen for this exhibition and its successor, the relocated Crystal Palace in Sydenham. Their representation, however, was not cumulatively organized in an ›Australian court‹ but was rather divided up according to the individual colonies. The »sense of inter-colonial ›Australian‹ identity« was yet to be developed, the »Australasian group« was at that time comprised of separate areas for South Australia, Western Australia, New Zealand, New South Wales, ›Van Diemen's Land‹ (Tasmania); Victoria had »no place at all«, while Queensland was not yet separated from New South Wales. ⁸⁹

Despite image problems within the Australian colonies, and shortcomings in transportation and finance, the exhibitors were nonetheless able to provide local ›peculiarities‹, like wombats, black swans and other specimen of fauna and flora. ⁹⁰ Not only were colonial products – inter alia, gold, opals, wheat, barley, flour, maize, wool and preserved meats – provided

⁸⁵ ›Official Catalogue of the Great Exhibition‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 13.09.1851 (›plants‹, list of the colonial products provided).

⁸⁶ Peter H. Hoffenberg: Nothing Very New or very Showy to Exhibit, p. 101.

⁸⁷ ›Public Meeting‹, in: Colonial Times, 17.09.1850. See also ›Tasmanian Contributions to the Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations in 1851‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 01.03.1851.

⁸⁸ Cf. Peter H. Hoffenberg: Nothing Very New or very Showy to Exhibit, pp. 95 ff.

⁸⁹ Peter H. Hoffenberg: Nothing Very New or very Showy to Exhibit, p. 100 (›sense‹); ›Official Catalogue of the Great Exhibition‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 13.09.1851 (›group‹, ›Van Diemen's Land‹).

⁹⁰ Cf. Peter H. Hoffenberg: Nothing Very New or very Showy to Exhibit, p. 102.

to be shown in the mother country but also »native plant[s]« and woods as well as artefacts and photographs of its indigenous inhabitants. Here, too, a juxtaposition took place: photography, itself a cultural technique, was seen as the proof for technological progress and superior knowledge, which, on the other hand, portrayed the ›backwardness‹ of the other and, in the pictures of settlement and industry, (not at all objectively) depicted the civilizing success of the ›whites‹ in the Australian colonies. It was not least these very Australian exhibits that enabled the Great Exhibition to forge a bridge in the »human development as a gradual evolution from the Aboriginal Tasman to the middle-class Englishman«.⁹¹

In the spirit of the community of consumers, the guide commended the »English manufacturer« to whom credit belonged for his production of »the more important articles of daily necessity [...] cheaper and cheaper by them, till the very humblest and poorest begin to partake of enjoyments once only known to the richer classes of society«.⁹² In the same spirit, the exhibition was generally opened to everyone. The exhibition commissioners used the opportunity to propagate personal betterment in terms of education and culture: »It is the working class, to whom more than any other we owe this mighty show, who may derive the greatest improvement from it, and who ought to stretch a point to take all the advantage they can of so rare an opportunity«.⁹³ This message to the workers spread even as far as Australia. »[M]oney-club[s]« were established »at various inns in the town and neighbourhood« in order to finance the visit of the members to the exhibition that was »well calculated to improve the moral and intellectual condition of all classes«.⁹⁴ At this, community was functioning integratively so as to provide a joint advancement through education and collection of cultural capital.

Questions of admission to the exhibitions and their opening hours had been closely connected to the tradition of fairs since the Great Exhibition, enabling the working classes to visit exhibitions for educational reasons. This specific policy of the workers' participation was further fostered by governmental representatives, exhibitors, and pro-labour newspapers and unions alike. Reduction of transportation costs and admission fees, as well as extended opening hours, making possible a visit at the end of a work day, were thought to encourage visitation by the lower classes and evi-

⁹¹ Andrew Hassam: *Through Australian Eyes*, p. 22.

⁹² Anon.: *A Guide to the Great Exhibition*, p. 42.

⁹³ Anon.: *A Guide to the Great Exhibition*, p. 43.

⁹⁴ ›Working Man's Holiday in 1851‹, in: *South Australian*, 02.07.1850, also in the *Hobart Courier*, 24.07.1850, *Geelong Advertiser*, 29.07.1850.

denced the strong desire to include all Australians into the ranks of exhibition visitors.⁹⁵

This offer to the lower classes was more than a means of education: it invited the workers and their families into a social space in which they could share their ›racial prestige‹, accumulate racist symbolic capital by comparing the stagnation of the indigenous people to the technological advancement of the ›race‹ as members of which they could rightfully count themselves, and partake in exploring a world of boundless commodities to which otherwise they, due to their economic situation, would not have had access.⁹⁶

On the occasion of the 1879 International Exhibition in Sydney, Parramatta free-trade representative Hugh Taylor of the ›Sydney Morning Herald‹ appealed to the understanding of the exhibition as »so purely a national undertaking« whose costs were borne equally by »the poor and the rich«. Under these circumstances, it was »a gross injustice« and »a national wrong« to carry out the plan to »fix an admission charge which must on certain days [the opening day, the subsequent two weeks and »concert days«] deprive the former of a right they have actually purchased«. ⁹⁷ The ›Brisbane Courier‹ correspondent concurred and stated that the »additional charge on certain days is becoming more objectionable every week, especially to country people«. ⁹⁸ Therefore, it is little surprising that the »half-crown days« were those with the lowest attendance, the reduction of the admission to »the uniform charge of one shilling for adults [...] met with the instant approval of the public, and a large increase in the daily returns was the result«. ⁹⁹

Eventually, further reduction for the last days of opening was requested to allow for »large families« and »a large number of persons to pay the exhibition a second visit, who otherwise will not do so«. ¹⁰⁰ The symbolic value of the exhibition as a consolidator of the nation was not least mirrored in the visitor figures. The Sydney International Exhibition, which was visited by six thousand persons on average per day, had its highest number of visitors – more than twenty seven thousand – on »Anniversary Day« (today: Australia Day), the commemorative day of the First Fleet's

⁹⁵ Cf. Peter H. Hoffenberg: *An Empire on Display*, p. 213.

⁹⁶ For this, see also Wulf D. Hund: *Advertising White Supremacy*, pp. 48 ff.

⁹⁷ ›To the editor of the Herald‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 01.07.1879.

⁹⁸ ›International Exhibition‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 17.10.1879.

⁹⁹ ›The International Exhibition‹, in: *Maitland Mercury*, and *Hunter River General Advertiser*, 03.02.1880.

¹⁰⁰ ›The Sydney International Exhibition‹, in: *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 03.04.1880.

arrival and the beginning of British invasion, occupation and settlement of the Australian continent.¹⁰¹

For the Melbourne International Exhibition 1880-1881, the commissioners were »most desirous of opening the building at night [...] otherwise the educational advantages of the Exhibition would be lost to the working classes«. ¹⁰² Subsequently, an anonymous reader of the ›Argus‹ demanded that »before closing [...] every facility should be given to allow all classes of the community within its walls« and admission charges should be reduced by half. »[P]opular prices for our labouring population and their families« were meant to enable those rich in children and lacking in financial means to visit the exhibition several times and »take in the vast collection of articles exhibited«. ¹⁰³

Some asked how it can be explained that – though the commissioners »are so very much interested in the working-man seeing the Exhibition« – the highest admission, amounting to twice the normal price, was charged on Saturday. No better day could be chosen »to keep the working-man away«, for it was »the very day that the working-man can go without loss to himself« and the »only convenient day the working man can spare«. Others drew on the educational effect of the exhibition, in particular for the working class attempting to »improve their knowledge by inspecting the exhibits«, and maintained that the exhibition's only »raison d'être [...] is for the technical education of the working classes, their material progress, and the consequent advancement of civilisation«, thus identifying the exhibition as a means of advancement of the whole nation by tutoring the lower classes. ¹⁰⁴

Seasonal tickets and passes were sold, but admission to the exhibitions was in general not free of charge. Concessions of free admission had to be individually negotiated, as in the case of the »members of mechanical or working men's colleges of Sydney« to visit, inter alia, the »large and splendid collections of sugarcane from the Clarence River« at the Melbourne International Exhibition 1880-1881. ¹⁰⁵ On other occasions, tickets were donated as evidenced by the »friends« of a Victorian sheltered workshop and asylum, who extended their thanks to an individual for »defraying the expenses of the admission of the pupils to the Melbourne Interna-

¹⁰¹ ›The International Exhibition‹, in: Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser, 03.02.1880.

¹⁰² ›The International Exhibition‹, in: Illustrated Australian News, 06.11.1880.

¹⁰³ ›Cheaper Admission to the Exhibition‹, in: Argus, 27.04.1881.

¹⁰⁴ ›The Increased Charge at the Exhibition on Saturday‹ (five letters to the editor), in: Argus, 20.10.1880 (emphasis in original).

¹⁰⁵ ›Grain Show at the Melbourne Exhibition‹, in: Evening News, 05.03.1881.

tional Exhibition, and to the commissioners of the said Exhibition for free admission on another occasion«.¹⁰⁶

At the time of the Great Exhibition in London, public interest in Australia had been low, and efforts made by exhibitors remained chiefly non-committal.¹⁰⁷ Three decades later, not only had the public opinion about exhibitions changed but official proponents of such events were also openly encouraging them as a means of ›advertisement of the nation‹. »The chief object of the Australian colonies in holding exhibitions and in being represented at them« was summed up by the secretary for the South Australian royal commissions in the context of three exhibitions: they were meant »to advertise themselves«. He presumed that the inferior immigration figures to Australia and New Zealand, compared with the United States, were decisively affected by the lack of knowledge about these countries and for this suggested the organising of »a purely Australian exhibition« in the British capital. It was imperative that the attendance of those addressed was to be encouraged by all means. Therefore, it would »be wise to have free days when working men could visit it free of charge«, so they could inform themselves of the »positions and prospects of Australia«.¹⁰⁸

As a consequence, Queensland sugar was not advertised as a purchasable article – it was also not until the nineteen twenties that small amounts of raw Australian sugar were exported to the United Kingdom – but as a proof of prosperity and progress. Certainly, this was also advertising a potential area of work for labourers from the British Isles. It was at this point in time that the ›labour question‹ in sugar industry was moving towards the employment of ›white‹ workers and an increasing number of job offers for the Queensland sugar industry were published in particular in Britain. British newspaper reports, however, deferred possible migrants from recruiting in the sugar industry by replicating stories of failure and dissatisfaction with the work and living conditions of those working in the cane fields.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, it suggested itself that Queensland should take rectification into their own hands and educate the British public about the advantages of working with sugar cane and presenting themselves in the best and most prosperous light, offering chances of personal enrichment and social upward mobility.

¹⁰⁶ ›Victorian Deaf and Dumb Institution‹, in: *Argus*, 03.10.1881.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Peter H. Hoffenberg: *Nothing Very New or Very Showy to Exhibit*, p. 97.

¹⁰⁸ ›An Australian Exhibition in London‹, (letter to the editor by Richard E. N. Twopeny) in: *Argus*, 02.04.1883.

¹⁰⁹ See for example ›The Unemployed and Australia‹, in: *Liverpool Mercury* (UK), 07.04.1885.

Ambitions to exhibit sugar date back to the early trial stages of cane and beet sugar cultivation in Australia. The Melbourne Agricultural Show in April 1861 exhibited sugar beet (»silicious beet«) grown on experimental farms with the prospect of a profitable production. Next to it »sorghum saccharatum«, or sweet sorghum, was exhibited. This was an alternative sugar-containing crop, which did not prevail at all, though it had previously been successfully grown in North America after being introduced from Africa.¹¹⁰ In the same year, the first Queensland Exhibition exhibited some cane specimen, and »a good quality of rum manufactured from the same«, and thus documented the first experiences with cultivation and processing of sugar cane.¹¹¹

For the International Exhibition in London in 1862, Queensland provided its »best samples of colonial products«. They were less significant for their current quantity or quality but rather displayed the promise of a prospective prosperous colony. The exhibits mainly comprised gold and copper but also »silk, cotton, sugar, coffee, arrowroot, and many articles of like importance [...] as heralds of the future value of these productions« when »strong hands and willing hearts« would come and further the development of the »young but promising colony«. ¹¹² At the time of the International Exhibition, however, sugar was exhibited as well by Mauritius and the West Indies.¹¹³

The Queensland sugar planter providing cane for the exhibition was Louis Hope, the »father of the sugar industry in Queensland«, who had just planted the first commercial sugar cane and built the first sugar mill near Ormiston.¹¹⁴ With regard to future exhibitions, it was augured that Queensland will send »cotton of the finest quality, and sugar ad libitum«, given that there was »enough labour to cultivate then«. In general, the exhibition was supposed to provide evidence for the »rapid progress and boundless resources« of the Australian continent under ›white‹ domination.¹¹⁵ Of the medals awarded at the exhibition, however, it was only New South Wales that received one for cane sugar.

¹¹⁰ ›The Melbourne Agricultural Show‹, in: Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser, 04.04.1861.

¹¹¹ Henry Ling Roth: A Report on the Sugar Industry in Queensland, p. 31.

¹¹² ›International Exhibition of 1862‹, in: Courier, 17.07.1861.

¹¹³ Cf. ›The Building and the Arrangement of its Contents‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 14.07.1862.

¹¹⁴ Fredrick C. P. Curlewis: The Australian Cane Sugar Industry, p. 3; see also Arthur F. Bell: The Story of the Sugar Industry in Queensland, p. 8. For Queensland exhibits and sugar cane at the London exhibition, see Anon.: Official Catalogue of the Industrial Department, pp. 136 f.

¹¹⁵ ›Our Australian Colonies‹, in: Argus, 22.08.1862.

The Melbourne International Exhibition took place in 1866/67. The commissioner for Victoria, Redmond Barry, catered to the class-spanning dimension of the event, and encouraged the invitation of the builders' »band of their brethren of their respective trades to come from the adjoining colonies to visit us during the Exhibition« in order to educate the theoreticians about practical applications and to »impart a knowledge of commodities which may become of immediate exchangeable value«. ¹¹⁶ He thus alluded to the national community, comprised of makers and consumers of Australian goods, which converged beneath the same exhibition hall roof. The Central Board for the Protection of Aborigines provided a collection of Aboriginal artefacts which »illustrate[d] not merely what natives were able to make themselves, but also«, and here was the racist rub, »what they have been able to do under European direction«. The exhibits on display were by no means goods contributed by the Aborigines as individual manufacturers but were »forwarded from the different mission stations on the Australian continent« and were characteristic for the exhibitors' predilection of lumping everything ›Aborigine‹ together in order to subsume them under the label of ›native‹. ¹¹⁷

The Paris International Exhibition of 1867 augured well for Queensland as the »youngest [...] some day the most important« colony of Australia with its combination of »products of temperate and tropical climates«. The features were already so striking that New Caledonia, based on its similar offer of »sugar-cane, coffee, and cotton« but perhaps also as an act of belated symbolic occupation, »may be called French Australia«. ¹¹⁸ At the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, »[s]o far as Australia is concerned, it is still almost exclusively represented by New South Wales and Queensland« – the latter providing »collections of sugar, ingot tin, and copper ores«, which were »exceedingly fine«; the former exhibiting »several very superior samples of raw and refined sugar from the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and Clarence River growers«. ¹¹⁹ The developmental counterbalance was not far: the exhibition further featured a »centennial city [...] including exotic examples of humanity«. ¹²⁰

Exhibitions of Australian goods in the trade fair cities of nineteenth-century Europe did always contain this dimension: the Australian courts rep-

¹¹⁶ Redmond Barry, cited in Peter H. Hoffenberg: *An Empire on Display*, p. 213.

¹¹⁷ ›Opening of the Exhibition‹, in: *Argus*, 27.10.1866.

¹¹⁸ Eugène Rimmel: *Recollections of the Paris Exhibition of 1867*, pp. 329 (›some day‹), 142 (›sugar‹ etc., ›French Australia‹).

¹¹⁹ ›The Philadelphia Exhibition‹, in: *Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser*, 22.06.1876.

¹²⁰ Roslyn Poignant: *Professional Savages*, p. 191.

resented situational snapshots from the colonial frontier, reporting about the commercial and industrial development. The following Sydney exhibitions were the topic of a report to the Canadian Department of Agriculture »upon the resources and productions of the Australian colonies generally«. At this, in particular the progressiveness of Queensland »destined to become the most wealthy and prosperous of all the Australian colonies«, was lauded, not least because of its emerging sugar industry, which »in a few years [...] will take the place of Mauritius, Java, and the Philippines, and supply a large portion of the world's crop of sugar«. ¹²¹

In 1877, the ›Brisbane Courier‹ reported the display at the Sydney exhibitions of »a collection [of sugar] from the southern districts of Queensland«. At this time, sugar production had already been established as a commercial industry employing Pacific Islanders in the cane fields. Exhibited next to sugars from the West Indies, Cuba, the United States, Java, and Mauritius, it was found that »bulk sugar« was »not of higher quality in colour«. Methods of sugar processing were compared and, in summary, it was contentedly declared that »the sugars of this country are in quality fully equal to those of the oldest sugar producing countries«. ¹²²

At the 1879-80 National Exhibition in Sydney, all leading sugar districts were represented and the cane was described as »all well-grown and mature«. The latest technology was demonstrated in the process of sugar production by open boiling and vacuum-pan and was prized as was the quality of the exhibited canes. ¹²³ The exhibition guide mainly concentrated on the past difficult experiences in sugar cultivation in northern Australia but prognosticated a prosperous future for this industry now »firmly established in the colony«. ¹²⁴ This exhibition also comprised the representation of Aborigine-related topics in the South Australian Court. A lecture on South Australian Aborigines was read, ¹²⁵ paintings of Aborigines were planned to be displayed, and busts on loan from the Sydney museum were exhibited. ¹²⁶ More importantly, »several pictures of the extinct race of Tasmanian aborigines« and individual »portraits of the last male and female Tasmanian aborigines« were put on display as well as »a bust, life-size, of William Lanne, the last of the Tasmanian male aborigines« and »some ethnological exhibits, consisting of skulls of male and female aborigines, and

¹²¹ ›Canada and the Australian Exhibition‹, in: Argus, 16.02.1883.

¹²² ›Sugar at the Exhibition‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 18.08.1877 (›collection‹, ›bulk‹ etc.).

¹²³ ›Queensland and the National Exhibition‹, in: Clarence and Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser, 16.08.1879.

¹²⁴ Sydney International Exhibition of 1879: The Queensland Court, p. 3.

¹²⁵ ›Sydney International Exhibition‹, in: South Australian Register, 03.07.1879.

¹²⁶ ›Sydney Exhibition‹, in: Launceston Examiner, 19.06.1879.

casts of faces‹ and artefacts, tools.¹²⁷ The representation of some Aborigines as the ›last of their kind‹, with the addition of bony evidence, was only the first in a series of the Aborigines' construction as members of a ›dying race‹ that folded in the face of social Darwinism and were thought to, sooner or later, give way to their ›rightful‹ heirs, the ›white‹ Australians.



*Fig. 58 – From cane to crumb:
The sugar trophy in Melbourne*

Queensland sugar was exhibited at the Melbourne International Exhibition in 1880 (Fig. 58). The ›Argus‹ reported the completion of the »sugar trophy in the Queensland court [...] by the addition of some fine samples of sugar-cane, representing some of the different varieties of cane introduced into the colony from Java, Honolulu, Mauritius, New Caledonia, and the South Seas«. ¹²⁸ The official catalogue registered that the »growth of Sugar Cane and the manufacture of its products now rank[ed] amongst the leading industries‹ of the colony but also stated that the Mackay district, which later became one of the most important, was still »in its infancy«. ¹²⁹ The

¹²⁷ ›Sydney Exhibition‹, in: Mercury, 02.10.1879 (›extinct‹); ›Sydney Exhibition‹, in: Mercury, 30.09.1879 (›portraits‹, ›Lanne‹, ›ethnological‹). Another »object of curiosity and amusement« was the proclamation, informing the indigenous people of Tasmania about ›white‹ justice (see Fig. 11 in subchapter 3.2 ›None Suitable for Plantations‹), which was »intended to mete out justice to white and black alike« – ibid.

¹²⁸ ›Exhibition Notes‹, in: Argus, 07.10.1880.

¹²⁹ Anon.: Catalogue of the Queensland Court, p. 80 (›growth‹), 12 (›infancy‹).

exhibition was well-frequented, its visitor figures accumulating to more than ten thousand people on a not-too-busy Saturday.¹³⁰

As in Sydney, the Melbourne Exhibition showed a twofold display of superiority: technological progress found expression in industrial exhibits, like the sugar products and machinery, but ›white supremacy‹ was also measured by the distance to the indigenous inhabitants of the continent and evidenced by the display of the latter's cultural artefacts and images. The Queensland Museum provided a »collection of native implements and aboriginal curios, mummies from the coast of New Guinea, and a collection of Queensland spears, shields, swords, nullah nullahs, and other aboriginal curios«.¹³¹ The Tasmanian court again presented remnants of their ›extinct‹ Aboriginal population, photographs and a plaster cast of William Lanne and photographs of Truganini – allegedly the last native man and woman of the Tasmanian indigenous people, since »from an inspection of them an idea may be formed of the character of their race«.¹³²

At the 1881 Melbourne International Exhibition, three sugar growers from the districts of Herbert River, St Helena and Beenleigh, respectively, were awarded a silver medal for their cane »sugars«. A further silver medal for sugar went to the Queensland National Bank.¹³³ Further detailed information of the sugar awards distinguished the sugar merits according to production and quality: »refined sugars (loaf)«, »finest white coarse crystals« and »finest whites«, »vacuum pan sugars – finest whites«, »brewing crystals«, »grainy yellows«, differing »counters« and »orders«. The Queensland reporters were always careful to emphasize favourable comparisons with already established sugar industries. Overall, it was found that Queensland, though still »in her nonage«, could compete in the quality of its sugar with those from the long-time sugar producing countries; »in the majority«, its sugars showed »an equality of position with the best, including Mauritius« and augured for »a brilliant future for the plantations«.¹³⁴

On the occasion of the India court at the 1882 Melbourne International Exhibition, the labour question in the Queensland sugar industry was thematized. The promotion of »coolie immigration [...] in connection

¹³⁰ ›Exhibition Notes‹, in: Argus, 11.10.1880: »general public, 7,228; season ticket holders, 188; miscellaneous (commissioners, exhibitors, attendants, &c.), 2,969«.

¹³¹ ›Melbourne International Exhibition‹, in: Launceston Examiner, 30.12.1880.

¹³² ›The Tasmanian Court‹, in: Illustrated Australian News, 04.12.1880; ›Melbourne Exhibition‹, in: Mercury, 04.10.1880. For more information on Truganini under the perspective of the racistly constructed exhibition of her, see Antje Kühnast: In the interest of science and of the colony. See also Lyndall Ryan: Tasmanian Aborigines, pp. 268 f.

¹³³ ›Awards at the Melbourne Exhibition‹, in: Queenslander, 29.10.1881.

¹³⁴ ›The Melbourne International Exhibition‹, in: Queenslander, 12.03.1881.

with the valuable sugar industry of Queensland« was an important part of the debate. With the »Kanaka labour from various causes becoming scarcer«, new ›labour resources‹ needed to be tapped. Furthermore, the »fallacy of the objections made by white labourers to the introduction of coolie labour« was addressed and appeased with the calculations that »for every ten or dozen coolies imported, one or two white men would find employment«, enabled by the formers' opening of land and establishment of further industrial locations.¹³⁵ It suggests itself that the display of Queensland sugar under a ›class‹ perspective was not only advertising sugar as a commodity but also sugar as a promise of industrial and commercial expansion under suitable labour preconditions, i.e. affordable cane sugar for all produced by a prosperous industry with ›cheap and reliable labour‹.

The Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886 in London acknowledged a »growing demand for Australian goods«. This being the case, the presence of the Australian court became a matter of advertising nation and class, since »an exhibition is after all the best and cheapest mode of advertising – not only the wares themselves but the country which produces them and the kind of labour needed to increase its production«. It was further asserted that not »trade with Paris or London« should be sought on this occasion but the presentation of the colonies as progressing with prospects of prosperity. The latter was meant to »show to the world that in this ›infant city‹ [Melbourne], where but a few years ago King Billy, his lubra, and his picaninnies were camped, we have now not one, but scores, of fashionable shops, where the most fastidious can find the latest fashions at prices which, many instances, would compare with the shops of the metropolitan cities of Europe«. ¹³⁶ The progress towards a consumer community was here depicted as requiring not only the leaving behind but rather the replacing of the original inhabitants. Alleged primitivism had to make way for consumerism.

The latter had already firmly established itself in the midst of the new ›white‹ settlers. They represented the very progress the continent's original inhabitants had allegedly failed to accomplish during their long presence and which, in turn, supposedly identified their ›primitiveness‹. The sending of »some specimens of ›native humanity‹ to the London Exhibition« was discussed as well, but as »Australian blacks« were deemed too »unsightly« in particular in connection with »money and worse – drink – [being] thrust upon them«, the correspondent recommended »[c]asts of the native tribes properly exhibited together, with scientific description of

¹³⁵ ›India – Melbourne International Exhibition‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 22.07.1882.

¹³⁶ ›The Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886‹ (letter to the editor), in: Argus, 03.07.1885.

their various castes, habits &c.«.¹³⁷ ›Backwardness‹ of the native could be presented as a benchmark for ›white‹ progress – not in person, of course, but scientifically edited.

The Centennial International Exhibition at Melbourne in 1888 celebrated one hundred years of ›white Australia‹. It took place at a time when sugar trade between Queensland and Victoria was an import-export trade. The presentation of cane sugar from the northern part of the continent gave further cause to the deliberations about the »formation of a treaty with Queensland, under which South Australian wines, fruits, jams, bread-stuffs, and dairy produce will be admitted into Queensland free«, in return for sugar free of duty.¹³⁸ This also gave evidence of the value sugar had already acquired in comparison with other colonial products.

The Tasmanian court of the same exhibition devoted some of its space to the handling of Aborigines.¹³⁹ Accompanied by »a few notes« about the »[d]isturbed relations, [...] the kind intervention of Mr. Robinson [...] under whose direction] the remnant of the black race was [...] removed to Flinder's Island [...] and] although kindly treated [...] dwindled down to one-third of their original number [...] and] continued to decline rapidly in numbers [...] after their translocation to Hobart, until] notwithstanding the care of them shown by the Tasmanian Government there remained only two, a man and a woman«, photographs of said »King Billy Lanny and Queen Truganini« were exhibited.¹⁴⁰

Also put on display was an even more extraordinary exhibit, a »most interesting relic of the lost Tasmanian race«, a plaster cast of Truganini's head with the »addition of the real eyebrows« retained when casts were taken for the Hobart museum before her head was sent for scientific investigation to »certain local anatomists«. ¹⁴¹ But in close proximity, the visitors were actually able to »gaze on the mortal emblems of the last of a race«: in the natural history section of the Tasmanian court, Truganini's skull was exhibited surrounded by the painted reflections of the exterminated Tasmanian Aborigines which she was said to represent.¹⁴² The Aborigine-related displays – like Truganini's mortal remains that later became a permanent exhibit in the Tasmanian Museum – were more than a tribute to an

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ ›Intercolonial‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 30.08.1888.

¹³⁹ Cf. Wulf D. Hund: Negative Societalisation, pp. 77 f.

¹⁴⁰ ›The Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 01.09.1888.

¹⁴¹ ›Gossip of the Courts‹, in: Argus, 06.11.1888; ›Tasmanian Trout‹, in: Mercury, 09.10.1888.

¹⁴² ›The Tasmanian Court‹, in: Mercury, 02.08.1888.

extinct people: they were the »solid pieces of evidence for the widespread theory of the dying races«.¹⁴³

In the light of contrasting progress and regress, it was certainly not a coincidence that in 1904 – on the same day when the ›Australian Manufacturers Exhibition‹, featuring secondary products made with »Queensland Sugar«, opened its doors in the Town Hall of Melbourne – the »clean[ed] and mount[ed] skeleton« of »Truganini was placed in exhibition in a specially erected glass case in the Tasmanian room« of the Melbourne Museum, which also exhibited photographs of her death mask, her waddy and some of her former belongings.¹⁴⁴ Such coincidences were more than symbolical at this time. They illustrated not only the national confession turned self-conception of the ›white‹ Australians but also expressed that their prosperity was based on a policy of physical, as well as cultural extrusion and extinction of the Aborigines, and on the discrimination against all of the so-called ›non-white elements‹. For the sugar industry, this had led to a ›racialization‹ of the juridical foundations of sugar labour. This also found expression, in their conception of themselves, with regard to the self-representation at national and international exhibitions and expositions. After the accomplished transformation to a ›white‹ sugar industry and within a national context, the representation of the exhibit changed from a mere economic and progressive perspective to one conveying ideological means and emphasizing national interests regarding the sugar industry.

At London's Franco-British Exhibition in 1908, ten thousands of postcards and leaflets were distributed at the Australian court to attract potential settlers for the thinly populated parts of Queensland.¹⁴⁵ The Brisbane Exhibition of the subsequent year, celebrating the demi-century anniversary of Queensland's separation, was fully located within the debates about ›white labour‹ in the sugar industry and its possible demise without sufficient subsidies. The »sugar court« was a »well-arranged and extensive exhibit«, but, furthermore, it was »a striking object lesson as to the importance of sugarcane growing« with regard to its possible ruin. The cane sugar exhibits were, on the one hand, arranged on an evolutionary scale from the raw product to confectionery. On the other hand, the technological progress of sugar cultivation was evidenced by the display of several

¹⁴³ Antje Kühnast: In the interest of science and of the colony, p. 219.

¹⁴⁴ ›The Last of the Race‹, in: North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times, 18.10.1904 (Truganini); Anon.: Visitor's Guide to the Exhibition of Australian Manufacturers and Products, p. 6; see also ›Australian Manufacturers Exhibition‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 15.10.1904.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Peter H. Hoffenberg: An Empire on Display, p. 143.

cane setts and suitable soils provided by the Governmental Experimental Farm.¹⁴⁶ The Australian Sugar Producers' Association gave lectures and practical demonstrations, which »particularly to visitors from the southern States« – who were the fiercest contestants of an allegedly high sugar price and unnecessary protection of the industry – were »quite an education« and which they were asked to repeat at the next Melbourne show.¹⁴⁷

National exhibitions of Australian sugar after the transition to a ›white‹ industry and under the influence of the 1915 Sugar Acquisition Act were characterized by their task to not only educate about technological and work processes and innovations in the sugar industry. They were also accompanied by the desire to »enlighten[] people in the Southern States on the subject« of the industry as a ›white‹ industry and a means to maintain the ideal of a ›white Australia,‹ including the explicit exclusion of »coloured labour«.¹⁴⁸ In 1922, at the Brisbane Exhibition, the Australian Sugar Producers' Association was declared »one of the star attractions« and, in accordance with the Association's philosophy of educating in particular future consumers, announced to award prizes for the best two essays by one boy and one girl on the subject of »My visit to the Sugar Court and what I saw there«.¹⁴⁹

As in former exhibitions, the Australian Pavilion was an inherent part of the 1924 British Empire Exhibition at Wembley. The admission-free »Australian Cinema Theatre« showed »Industrial and Developmental« as well as »Scenic and Sporting Films«, among them a film about »Sugar Cane Growing«.¹⁵⁰ At the exhibition of the Royal National Association of Queensland in 1932, the »sugar exhibit« in the Department of Agriculture court not only showed the separate stages of sugar processing, thus demonstrating the arduous steps needed to be taken for the production of raw and refined sugar, but were also meant to educate, especially the southern visitors, about the endeavours of the industry.¹⁵¹

This was at a time when much opposition against the sugar industry and the protectionist policies against competition from foreign sugar came from the south, and the allegedly high sugar prices were seen as an unnecessary burden on the consumer. As such, the ›Sugar Court‹ at the exhibition became more than an advertisement for a technological achievement or mere economic progress: the presentation of Queensland sugar as the

¹⁴⁶ ›Sugar Court‹, in: Clarence and Richmond Examiner, 26.08.1909.

¹⁴⁷ ›Mulgrave and Habledon Farmers‹, in: Cairns Post, 22.11.1909.

¹⁴⁸ ›Sugar Producers in Conference‹, in: Queenslander, 03.09.1921.

¹⁴⁹ ›Sugar Court at Exhibitions‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 03.08.1922.

¹⁵⁰ Anon.: Catalogue Australian Pavilion, pp. 14 (›films‹), 28 f. (sugars, ›stages‹).

¹⁵¹ ›Sugar Court at Exhibition‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 05.07.1932.

product of ›white‹ workers and farmers with the financial and moral support of the ›white‹ consumers and under the protection against ›black‹ sugar, made cane sugar the evidence of the successful class-spanning unification in the name of the nation against the ›coloured races‹.¹⁵²

The ›moral‹ dimension of ›white‹ sugar was a major issue in the nineteen thirties. The sugar exhibit at the 1935 Brisbane Exhibition, »surpass[ing] all previous displays in its range and interest«, was considered to »illustrate[] very effectively the national, economic, and social importance of the sugar industry«. It was considered so »worthy of preservation as a permanent exhibit« that its situating at a central place in the city was suggested. The further description of the exhibit reports »a map of Australia made white sugar« as the central feature, and the »title of the exhibit is done in white sugar also«. Cane cultivation, harvesting and processing in the sugar factory were all demonstrated in the form of scale models.¹⁵³

At the opening of the sugar court at the Brisbane Exhibition, two years later, William Forgan Smith, the Premier of Queensland, cited the extraordinary deeds the Queensland sugar industry had done for the benefit of ›white Australia‹. Not only was it the »only country in the world where cane sugar was grown entirely by white labor«, but its superior knowledge and technology and the »higher standard in cultivation« also made the industry more efficient than that of »other countries of the world where racial mixtures of all kinds were employed in the sugar fields«. ¹⁵⁴ As a consequence of the sugar industry's strict take on its special labour demography, the ›racial purity‹ of Australia was secured by both the populating of the empty parts of the north and also the replacing of ›undesirable‹ labourers with ›suitable‹ ›white‹ workers.¹⁵⁵

The sugar court organized by the Australian Sugar Cane Industry at the 1938 Brisbane Royal National Exhibition was to the utmost characterized by the industry's contribution to the Commonwealth, and it being »the living embodiment of a great national ideal – ›White Australia‹«. ¹⁵⁶ To be sure no one missed out on the important message to the nation, promotion for the exhibition was accompanied by newspaper articles – here, for example, in the ›Courier-Mail‹ – about the significance of the sugar

¹⁵² For more information, see subchapter 6.3 ›Think the Matter out‹.

¹⁵³ ›Sugar Exhibit at the Show‹, in: *Queenslander*, 22.08.1935.

¹⁵⁴ ›Premier on Sugar‹, in: *Cairns Post*, 17.08.1937.

¹⁵⁵ Overseas, too, the Queensland sugar industry had already become a viable part of the Australian representation. A miniature Australian sugar cane field was to »form an important part of Australia's exhibit« at the 1939 Canadian Trade Exhibition in Toronto – ›Canadian Trade Exhibition‹, in: *West Australian*, 15.08.1939.

¹⁵⁶ ›Advertising‹, in: *Courier-Mail*, 08.08.1938.



Below is a typical "sugar" country - modern in every respect - and showing its way to the Cane Sugar Industry. On the left is virgin scrub country - the natural stage in the development of the Cane Sugar Industry.

Safeguarding a Priceless Heritage....

As early as 1860, before the Federation of the Australian Colonies, the desires and hopes of early pioneers were directed towards a sugar industry worked by white men and founded on high community standards. One of the first considerations of the newly constituted Commonwealth Parliament in 1901 was, in pursuance of its proclaimed policy of a "White Australia," to consider the question of coloured labour then working in the fields.

Legislation was passed for the repatriation, within a given period, of all coloured labour and so began the development of a great industry which was to become the living embodiment of a great national ideal—"White Australia."

To-day, the Australian Cane Sugar Industry is directly responsible for the establishment of a working population of over 100,000 white people in North Eastern Queensland—the largest population of working Whites in any part of the tropics, a virile, progressive people dedicated to the task of National progress and forming an effective barrier against aggression.

That the Commonwealth owes a racial debt to the Sugar Industry is certain. Converted by the Commonwealth to white labour in 1901, it was guaranteed the protection required for its expansion and maintenance. From the war onwards the Commonwealth assumed complete control of it and vigorously encouraged development. On the faith of the Commonwealth's assurance of support and protection, thousands of Australians have invested their all in the industry and have settled on the Queensland littoral.

Can the Nation as a whole forget its promises and ignore its obligation to the people who trusted their fortunes to the country's honour and integrity?

In the words of the late Donald Mackinnon: "There is a big Australian responsibility on those who are building up this part of our country. It is our vulnerable frontier, and we must be watchful lest, through misconception, we do them an injustice and discourage them in their important responsibility."

The AUSTRALIAN CANE SUGAR INDUSTRY

Fig. 59 – Keeper of the nation:
Sugar at the Queensland Royal National Show

industry for both the Commonwealth and its ›whiteness‹. Not only was the allegedly high price of sugar mathematically deconstructed, but also its financial value was underlined, its modernity emphasized and its faci-

tation of the population increase in the formerly ›empty North‹ stressed.¹⁵⁷ Below this plea for support of the cane sugar industry, the sugar court's announcement itself (Fig. 59)¹⁵⁸ narrated the story of the industry that had an inherent desire for ›whiteness‹ from rather early on – i.e. the time it had been considered fully established – and which then benefitted from the Federation's legislation against coloured labour. By means of this ›racial purifying‹ and the revealing of the class aspect of Labor's contribution to its transformation, the industry was then able to become the main catalyst of ›white‹ employment and settlement in the tropical parts of Australia. Underhandedly, the advertisement also ›resolved‹ the issue of the land title: with the Aborigines geographically displaced from the very soil that was turned into sugar fields, socially to the fringes of society, historically to the unwritten pages of historiography, and ›race‹-biologically to the brink of extinction, tropical Queensland – which constantly had to defend against (imagined) possessive Asian population policy not only the sugar industry but the ideal it stood for and the region it protected – had become a »Priceless Heritage«.¹⁵⁹

In the earlier stages of colonial displays and international exhibitions, raw and refined sugar and sugar cane, amongst other primary and secondary products, acted as benchmarks of technological progress, colonial contribution to the imperial produce and effective exploitation of imperial soils. Initially, the cane sugar provided was produced from the imported raw sugar, but with the cultivation of small amounts of their own sugar cane, Australia could establish the promise of a future production. With the sugar growing in commercially valuable numbers, cane sugar became an actual colonial product and could be presented as such at the exhibitions.

After Federation, the sugar industry was increasingly represented with regard to its national and ›racial‹ contribution to the maintenance of the ›white Australia‹ ideal. Internationally, exhibitions were used to advertise Queensland as a suitable place for (preferably British, otherwise European) settlement; nationally, exhibitions reiterated the legitimization and necessity for a continued protection of the sugar industry. Increasing dissatisfaction with the continued protection of Australian sugar against foreign competition, and the prolonged taxation of sugar for financial support of the sugar industry, influenced the sugar courts of the exhibitions. For those

¹⁵⁷ See ›What does the Sugar Industry Mean to the Commonwealth‹, in: Courier-Mail, 08.08.1938.

¹⁵⁸ ›Advertising‹, in: Courier-Mail, 08.08.1938.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. (›embodiment‹, ›heritage‹).

who could not attend the shows and exhibitions, the message of ›white sugar for white Australia‹ was further disseminated via another medium: the Queensland sugar growers courted the Australian consumers through educational advertising campaigns in major Australian newspapers.

6.3 ›Think the Matter out‹: Newspaper Campaigns for the Sugar Industry

In ›imagined communities‹, printed media – and in particular the newspaper – is at the heart of the nation and facilitates the latter's imagining necessitated by its anonymity and vastness. The nation, defined as an »imagined political community and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign«, needs a medium in which communality can be developed and exerted.¹⁶⁰ If this is so, it then lies in the hand of those imagining the community to implement the conceived boundaries and draw lines of membership. As the »newspaper implies the refraction of even ›world events‹ into a specific imagined world of vernacular readers«,¹⁶¹ the unfolding of ›white Australia‹ in the light of events like the Japanese victory at Tsushima, reports about population increase in the neighbouring Asian countries, and the faltering of ›white‹ supremacy in the eyes of science obviously had an effect on the Australian self-perception.

The medium newspaper had a special significance in Australia. Already in the eighteen eighties, international comparison showed that Australia had »an exceptionally high newspaper consumption« and that »newspapers were *the* source of local, metropolitan, interstate and world news«. ¹⁶² During the last decade of the nineteenth century, the number of newspapers and magazines almost reached six hundred, which theoretically translates to one newspaper for roughly five thousand people.¹⁶³ At the end of the twentieth century's first decade, the ›Sydney Morning Herald‹ reached a circulation of more than one hundred and thousand papers, the ›Age‹ issued one hundred and fifty thousand.¹⁶⁴ By 1933, the ›Sydney Morning Herald‹ had a circulation of more than two hundred thousand, the Melbourne ›Herald‹ and ›Sun‹ more than one hundred and seventy thousand respectively, the ›Argus‹ and the Adelaide ›Advertiser‹ sold almost

¹⁶⁰ Benedict Anderson: *Imagined Communities*, p. 6.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹⁶² John Arnold: *Newspapers and Daily Reading*, p. 255 (emphasis in original).

¹⁶³ *Cf. ibid.*, p. 255.

¹⁶⁴ *Cf. ibid.*, p. 256.

one hundred thousand newspapers each, and even the least selling of the leading dailies, the Brisbane ›Courier-Mail‹ sold more than sixty thousand issues; with the »rate of circulation growth far exceeding the rate of population increase for each capital city«.¹⁶⁵

News about the cane sugar industry of Queensland loomed large in these newspapers during the first half of the twentieth century and evidenced a nation-wide interest due to its exposed position in the ›white Australia‹ context. Throughout this time, advertising of solidarity for Queensland sugar accompanied the history of sugar consumption. While the sugar industry had virtually completed its conversion to a ›white‹ industry at the beginning of the First World War, it continued to exist in an area of tension – on the one hand, between national debates about the prolonged protection of the industry and the external endangerment of Queensland sugar by low-price sugar from the world market; on the other hand, as an important factor in the eugenic discourse on the politics of settlement.

In the light of opposition to the protectionist politics in terms of Queensland, cane sugar by some interest groups – other industries and politicians – first the payment of the rebate, subsequently the bounty, and eventually the continued protection of Australia's own sugar industry against cane and beet sugar from abroad, had to be regularly justified and advertised. The connection of protectionism, consumerism and racism found expression in the repeated invoking of the solidarity of sugar consumers unified in the desire to safeguard their nation for the ›white race‹. In this, economic deliberations were closely linked to the idea of the Australians' duty to the nation. »[I]s a ›White Australia‹ not worth paying for?« asked the ›Sugar Journal‹ and asserted that »[t]he man who says it is not is either a fool, a lunatic, or a traitor to his country«.¹⁶⁶ A decade later, the representatives of the Queensland sugar industry proclaimed in their pamphlet the slogan »No Sugar Industry, No White Australia«.¹⁶⁷ And still in the late nineteen thirties, it was maintained that »[n]o other industry possessed the same capacity to settle white cultivators on the soil of Australia's vast tropical areas«.¹⁶⁸ But however logical the sugar representatives portrayed this connection to be, it was not taken for granted but rather had to be constantly recounted and justified in order to be incorporated and adopted into everyday life. This happened not by chance – to the contrary, critics

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 258.

¹⁶⁶ Cited in ›The Sugar Duties‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 15.10.1912.

¹⁶⁷ Australian Sugar Producers' Association: White Australia's Great Sugar Industry ONLY Can Keep Tropical Australia White, p. 5.

¹⁶⁸ Sugar Industry Organisations: The Australian Cane Sugar Industry, p. 7.



Fig. 60 – Crushing money removal:
The costs of a ›white Australia‹

of protection and the stark demands for the importation of cane sugar at world prices necessitated these approaches whenever the dates of political negotiations approached.

»›White Australia‹ and sugar became inseparably associated years ago«, argued the ›Argus‹ and added that »the taxpayer who voiced the slightest objection to subsidising this form of industry was denounced as a poor Australian«. ¹⁶⁹ In doing so, the newspaper insinuated the link between consumption, racism and nationalism. Supporting the Queensland sugar industry, both ideologically by endorsing its governmental support and financially by consuming sugar, meant supporting ›white Australia‹. Its omnipresence was highlighted by the ›Northern Argus‹, which maintained that »behind everything is the slogan for White Australia«, and predicted that the favouring of nationally grown and produced products would eventually result in the desired »[d]efence by occupation«. ¹⁷⁰

Critics to the protection of the sugar industry and to the therefrom resulting allegedly high prices – at a time when the world sugar market could

¹⁶⁹ (Untitled), in: Argus, 28.10.1918.

¹⁷⁰ ›Queensland, the Sunshine State‹, in: Northern Argus, 27.11.1936.

provide the consumers with sugar at decisively lower prices – were numerous. In 1930, the ›Western Mail‹ expressed their opposition to the sugar price politics and the financial burden on the consumer, in a cartoon drawing on the technical method of sugar-crushing, here squeezing profit from the customers, and claimed that the embargo on foreign sugar maintained under the Sugar Agreement would unnecessarily extract money from the Australian consumers when overseas sugar would grant a much lower retail price (Fig. 60).¹⁷¹ With the ›Queensland Sugar Agreement‹ as moving power, the sugar capitalist, whose profiting from the current situation is symbolized by the cigar he is smoking, is haphazardly stuffing ›Australian Consumers‹ into a juice press, gathering sugar at a price which is identified as extremely overpriced by comparison with New Zealand sugar.¹⁷²

Post-war Australia saw the boycott of sugar by Housewives' Associations in the southern states, founded on the high retail price demanded for sugar.¹⁷³ Balancing economic disadvantages with ›racial‹ benefits, the housewives in their role as householders and purchasers challenged the value of the sugar industry for their everyday lives and even resorted to nation-jeopardizing postulations. During the sugar shortages of 1920 the Housewives' Association's membership figures and branch foundations surged when, by the means of public meetings and deputations, the Association effected the »release of large amounts of sugar [...] for distribution to its members«. ¹⁷⁴ The Association successfully protested against an »unfair distribution of white sugar [based on the governmental control over it], and the neglect of the majority of the community, namely, the women«. ¹⁷⁵

At the same time, the Association also criticized the financial and moral support of the Queensland sugar industry as a ›white‹ industry since, in their eyes, the on-going employment of Italians and their perceivedly large

¹⁷¹ ›White Sugar‹, in: Western Mail, 07.08.1930. The caption reads: »Sugar in New Zealand sells at 2½d. per lb. Australian consumers pay 4½d. per lb. as the price of maintaining a sugar industry in Queensland worked by white labour. Asked to renew the embargo on the importation of sugar grown in ›black‹ countries, the Scullin Government has referred the sugar question to a special board of inquiry«. As a side note, the cartoon is literally embedded in ›whiteness‹: surrounding the drawing a short story is published reminiscing about an idyllic island in the Atlantic, situated under the »northern sun« (given the author's biography probably one of the Orkney Islands), where the equally northern Inga, »the fairest maid in all the islands«, was following the way of the ›true woman‹ by catering to the every whims of Olav, and recounting their tragic love story – ›Torkill's Tower‹ by Joseph Storer Clouston, in: *ibid.*

¹⁷² This was not an uncommon stereotyping of a capitalist. See, for example, Ray B. Browne, Marshall W. Fishwick, Kevin O. Browne: *Dominant Symbols in Popular Culture*, p. 76 for the depiction of the capitalist as a »rotund, cigar smoking, top-hatted exploiter often crushing workers or feasting on their blood« by the Industrial Workers of the World.

¹⁷³ Cf. Judith Smart: *The Politics of Consumption*, p. 24.

¹⁷⁴ Judith Smart: *A Mission to the Home*, p. 221.

¹⁷⁵ ›Sugar Shortage‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 16.01.1920.

share in the sugar production as sugar growers reduced such ambitions to absurdity. The Italians were »getting the preference of the employment, to the exclusion of [...] our own Australian men«, complained one member of the Rockhampton Housewives' Association and referred to the »cry coming from Queensland for a White Australia«, thus implying that Italian employment in the sugar industry was opposed to the ›whiteness‹ of the Australian nation.¹⁷⁶ The Federated Housewives' Association fell in line with this reasoning. They would rather have the »black-grown sugar« embargo lifted than to continue supporting »an Italian sugar industry« in order to have sugar retailed at a price »that would enable workers to live decently«.¹⁷⁷

They continued to oppose the sugar embargo throughout the nineteen twenties and thirties with the reasoning that sugar could be purchased at a significantly lower price when imported from Fiji, Java, Mauritius or as beet sugar from Europe. This critique to the local industry may also have been the reason for the slow pace of the Queensland branch's establishment.¹⁷⁸ In any case, the Gordonvale Country Women's Association warned against »any interference with the Embargo and Sugar Agreement«, because steps into this direction were inspired by »women's organisations whose vision is so distorted« that they cannot see the »mean disaster to the Sugar Industry« which such a price reduction would cause.¹⁷⁹

Opposition to the current sugar politics also came from within the labour movement. The British Preference League emerged in the nineteen thirties from the Australian Workers' Union and agitated against supposedly large-scale employment of Italian workers.¹⁸⁰ Their campaign was supposed to »secure a reasonable proportion of British preference in the sugar industry so that foreign-born citizens and foreign standards of citizenship will not dominate North Queensland, thereby repudiating the ›White Australia‹ policy«.¹⁸¹ This dissatisfaction with the, in their eyes, insufficient employment of British sugar workers and the »rapid ›foreignisation‹ of Australia's sugar industry« also found expression in their stand on the industry's protection. The »best indication of the continually increasing danger to the White Australia Policy and the ideal of a British White Aus-

¹⁷⁶ ›Cost of Sugar‹, in: *Argus*, 12.04.1923.

¹⁷⁷ ›Housewives Oppose the Sugar Embargo‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22.09.1927.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Judith Smart: *A Mission to the Home*, p. 223.

¹⁷⁹ ›C.W.A and Sugar Price‹, in: *Cairns Post*, 27.08.1932.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. ›Italians in Queensland‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11.06.1930. See also Gianfranco Cresciani: *The Italians in Australia*, pp. 68 ff.; William A. Douglass: *From Italy to Ingham*, pp. 158 f.; Anthony Paganoni: *The Pastoral Care of Italians in Australia*, p. 48.

¹⁸¹ ›Foreigners‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18.06.1930.

tralia« was the finding by a deputation of the sugar industry which stated that thirteen per cent of the sugar farmers had »foreign or non-British names«. At stake was more than the distribution of power in the industry: it was about the social, cultural and ›racial‹ value of the Australian nation. The Italians in North Queensland »exhibit neither inclination nor ambition to become readily assimilated with the inhabitants of Australia«, and their »customs have become harmful to Australia's economic, cultural, and industrial welfare«.¹⁸²

The League suspected that the protectionist policies of the sugar industry would be to the benefit of the wrong people and considered the »growing influence of the foreigner in the sugar industry« endangering the »continuance of the embargo«.¹⁸³ The British Preference League of course supported the ideals of ›white Australia‹ but had a very narrow interpretation of the kind of settlement which should take place in the north of Australia. Therefore, the desire for preferential employment of British workers was not only a means of reducing unemployment but, as claimed by the League, »unless more Britishers are employed the sole purpose of the sugar embargo, which was to develop British population to support the White Australia policy in North Queensland, automatically disappears«; this, in turn, would determine the discontinuation of the sugar industry's protection.¹⁸⁴

The opposition by numerous influencers necessitated continuous ideological input in favour of ›white‹ sugar. The message, largely seconded in Queensland but in need of painstaking promotion in the other states, was that the embargo on ›black‹ sugar was important for more than for the mere »benefit of sugar growers and sugar workers«. What was at stake pertained questions of ›race‹ and class for the whole Australian nation. The protection of the sugar industry was considered to be »in reality the shield and protection of all the workers of Australia in all industries, warding off an invasion of coloured labour [...] which would degrade living conditions, destroy race, and increase crime«.¹⁸⁵

The subsequent newspaper campaigns, which drew on the image of the thus ideologically charged ›white‹ industry, were closely tied to the protectionist legislation in terms of Queensland cane sugar. As regulated in the Sugar Acquisition Act of 1915,¹⁸⁶ the Commonwealth had bought all

¹⁸² ›The Sugar Embargo‹, in: Canberra Times, 04.08.1930 (›foreignisation‹, ›danger‹, ›names‹, ›inclination‹, ›customs‹).

¹⁸³ ›Sugar Notes‹, in: Queenslander, 05.06.1930.

¹⁸⁴ ›That Coat of Arms‹, in: Cairns Post, 10.06.1930.

¹⁸⁵ ›Sugar and White Australia‹ (letter to the editor), in: Courier-Mail, 09.03.1934.

¹⁸⁶ See Sugar Acquisition Act of 1915.

raw sugar from the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and supplied this, and refined sugar, to the consumers at a statutorily regulated low price. On the occasion of the Sugar Agreement Act of 1920 the governmental acquisition was prolonged, and the retail price of sugar escalated from 3½d. per lb. to 6d. per lb. to balance out the losses of previous years' import of foreign sugar to make up for sugar shortages.¹⁸⁷ With the next expiration of the protection period in 1923, the newly elected government around Stanley Bruce renewed the Sugar Agreement only with changes to the initial agreement. The embargo against ›black‹ sugar from overseas was continued for the two subsequent years. The retail price of sugar was lowered from 6s. to 5d. and after three months to 4½ d.¹⁸⁸ Acquisition of sugar by the Commonwealth ended, instead a pool was formed to buy the raw sugar and distribute it to the refiners and consumers.¹⁸⁹

In particular the imminent end of the respective existing sugar agreements and the consequent rekindling of debates about protection compelled representatives of the Queensland sugar industry to provide the consumers with information on the desired continuation of the industry's protection and clarify some misunderstandings or misrepresentations of the processes in the sugar industry and its relevance to the Australian nation. These ›advernations‹ (informational advertisements) were not advertising in the sense that they represented competing concerns or established brands; in actual fact, they were political propaganda published jointly in the name of all members of ›sugar capitalism‹ in order to make the case for a ›white‹ sugar industry by drawing on different elements of ›white Australia‹.

»The Tide of Color rises while Australia sleeps« warned an advertisement in October 1930 in several major Australian newspapers (Fig. 61).¹⁹⁰ The advert neatly coalesced all the ›sugar issue‹ discourse strands addressed in the previous and subsequent sugar representatives' campaigns. All of them were meant to defend the protection of the sugar industry against other industries and facilitate the willingness of the consumers to

¹⁸⁷ Cf. Peter D. Griggs: *Global Industry, Local Innovation*, pp. 770 (Acquisition Act), 774 (Agreement Act); ›Sugar‹, in: *Western Mail*, 11.09.1930 (prices); Ronald Muir: *The Australian Sugar Industry*, p. 82; *Sugar Industry Organisations: The Australian Sugar Industry*, 11.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. ›Sugar‹, in: *Western Mail*, 11.09.1930 (prices).

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Peter D. Griggs: *Global Industry, Local Innovation*, p. 776; *Sugar Industry Organisations: The Australian Cane Sugar Industry*, p. 11.

¹⁹⁰ ›The Tide Rises While Australia Sleeps‹, in: *Argus*, 15.10.1930 and 23.10.1930; *Mail* (Adelaide), 18.10.1930; *Advocate*, 18.10.1930; *Mercury*, 18.10.1930; *Advertiser*, 18.10.1930; *Register News-Pictorial*, 20.10.1930; *West Australian*, 21.10.1930; *Western Mail*, 23.10.1930; *Chronicle*, 23.10.1930; *Mirror*, 25.10.1930; *Sunday Times*, 26.10.1930. For this advertisement and its nexus, see also Stefanie Affeldt: ›White Sugar‹ against ›Yellow Peril‹.



The Tide Rises while Australia Sleeps

THE color menace is a very real danger to Australia.

Asia, our nearest Continental neighbor, has a dense and rapidly increasing population.

In Australia, we have slightly over 2 persons to the square mile. In Asia, they have, in parts, over 300 persons to the square mile. All history shows that Asia must, from time to time, seek an outlet for its surplus population.

In the past, the Asiatic invasion has been to the west. From time to time, Europe has been overrun by Asiatic hordes, and in this way the pressure on Asiatic living space has been relieved.

To-day the position is different.

The European nations are ready and prepared to resist any invasion from the East.

Where, then, is Asia to turn? To the South, she sees millions of square miles of unoccupied land, some of it within a few days' sail. Is it not inevitable that, when the pressure on Asia reaches breaking point, the overflow must be in our direction?

Read these population figures and try to realize how almost impossible it would be for us to resist a concerted Asiatic invasion:—

COUNTRY.	POPULATION	Persons per Square Mile
China	457,587,000	
India-China	22,000,000	
Japan and Dependencies	52,492,000	
British Borneo	70,000,000	
India	247,000,000	
Siam	17,000,000	
East Indies*	11,981,000	
Philippines	17,748,000	
Australia	6,426,000	2.15

*Average 184.25

In view of the above startling figures, it should be made at any moment—possibly reported by the League of Nations—that some portion of our vast, but empty continent should be yielded as for settlement by Asia's surplus hordes.

Effective occupation is the only valid title by which any nation can hope to keep its territory intact.

At present our only bulwark is provided by the stalwart Sugar Workers in Queensland.

If this bulwark were to be demolished—as would inevitably happen should any retrograde movement in our part defeat Queensland's development progress—would overpowered Asia miss an opportunity to denounce our 'White Australia' policy and assert a claim to occupy a field by-*et* abandoned?

THINK THE MATTER OUT!

AUTHORISED BY THE QUEENSLAND SUGAR INDUSTRY DEFENCE COMMITTEE
121 COLLINS STREET, MELBOURNE

Fig. 61 – ›Yellow peril‹ versus ›white Australia‹:
Queensland sugar and the survival of the ›white race‹

financially and morally support the industry by purchasing Queensland sugar; further, they connected this reasoning to the contemporary debates about the endangerment of ›white superiority‹ by the increasing population and power of the ›non-whites‹. The announcement breaks down in

three parts: a visual representation of Asia looming over a nocturnal Australian continent apparently devoid of cities or settlement; a body of text supplying the reader with information about the population statistics of the surrounding (Asian) countries in comparison to that of Australia; the Queensland Sugar Industry Defence Committee's demand to »think the matter out« and draw the right conclusion from the presented figures.

The drawing is a direct reference to Lothrop Stoddard's ›The Rising Tide of Color Against White World-Supremacy‹, having its title as the slogan floating towards the northern shore of Australia. This most graphic of the ›Eat sugar to keep Australia white‹ advertisements uses images from the Australian societal archives of knowledge to represent one of Stoddard's protagonists, the ›Yellow Peril‹, in the form of an Asianized moon with stereotypical narrow eyes and Fu Manchu moustache, greedily staring at the north-east of the continent. The text body connected the alleged overpopulation of the neighbouring countries with the thinly populated climes of Australia and – following Stoddard's line of reasoning – identified the latter as the sought for refuge for »Asia's surplus hordes«. Remedial action was to be taken immediately, and the »only valid title by which [...] to keep its territories intact« was supposed to be »[e]ffective occupation« of the »vast half-empty continent«. This was an issue which involved ›race‹, class and indirectly also gender. »At present our only bulwark is provided by the Sugar Workers in Queensland«, claimed the Committee. There was little doubt with them that ›white Australia‹ and the sugar industry were not only closely intertwined, but the continued support of (almost exclusively male) ›white‹ workers in the sugar industry was also the stringent necessity for the maintenance of the former.

This advertisement was no unique case but stood in a larger context of several series of printed announcements made by the sugar capitalists. The sugar industry's appeal in the nineteen twenties and thirties for the continuation of consumer support in at least three major episodes of newspaper campaigns – simultaneously, similar information, or extracts thereof, were published in several more rural newspapers¹⁹¹ – was linked to the three

¹⁹¹ See, for example, the series published in the Advertiser (VIC): ›Australia's Rural Industries‹, 15.09.1922; ›Guarding a White Australia‹, 22.09.1922; ›The Truth About Sugar‹, 29.09.1922; ›National Wealth in Sugar‹, 06.10.1922; ›The Sugar Balance Sheet‹, 13.10.1922; ›Sugar Control and the Growers‹, 20.10.1922. Also published in September and October 1922 in New South Wales in the Barrier Miner, Singleton Argus, Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer; in Victoria in the Wodonga and Towong Sentinel, Alexandra and Yea Standard and Yack, Gobur, Thorntin and Acheron Express, North Eastern Ensign, Williamstown Chronicle, Horsham Times, Portland Guardian; in South Australia in the Border Watch, Northern Argus; in Queensland in the Cairns Post, Northern Miner, Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser.

main discursive skeins which can also be identified in the advertisement above. By invoking the trope of the ›empty North‹ in their announcements, the sugar planters referred to the aspirations to populate the northern part of the continent with ›white‹ settlers against the imminent Asian takeover. Advertisements emphasizing the ›moral duty‹ to consume ›white‹ sugar, and by doing so supporting the economy and the independence of the nation, took the same line as the ›Great White Train‹ and the broader appeal to consume ›Australian-Made‹ instead of imported goods. In the context of ›vindictive statements‹, price calculations and statistics were meant to refute allegations of overpriced sugar benefitting the growers at the cost of everyone else, which in particular came from consumers, politicians and industries in southern Australia.

While the series of articles in 1922 relied on extensive text-based information on the industry's contributions to the financial wealth and development of Australia and its vital importance to the maintenance of ›white Australia‹,¹⁹² the two advertisement campaigns in the nineteen thirties (the ones from 1930¹⁹³ and 1932¹⁹⁴) were more concise and contained elements of illustrations, taking a rather personalized approach to the education of their customers and to allegations from other industries or individual politicians. In the nineteen twenties, possibly additionally stimulated by the recentness of Stoddard's publication, emphasis was put on the danger from the outside; the 1930 campaign, in turn, tended to stretch the internal disruption of the Australian consumer-producer and producer-producer relations and the sugar industry's value to the nation besides matters of defence. The third large newspaper campaign was initiated in 1932. It surpassed the previous ones in distribution and conciseness. What did not drastically change were the tone of reasoning and the line of argu-

¹⁹² All articles published in the Argus (Victoria): ›A Great National Industry‹, 18.09.1922; ›Australia's Wealth in Sugar‹, 19.09.1922; ›An Ill-Protected Industry‹, 20.09.1922; ›A National Debt‹, 21.09.1922; ›Advancing Australia's Manufacture‹, 22.09.1922; ›So Australians Know the North‹, 23.09.1922. The same articles were published in the Sydney Morning Herald (New South Wales), the Mercury (Tasmania), the Register (South Australia) between 18.09.1922 and 23.09.1922.

¹⁹³ The thirteen-part educational excursus, called ›The Truth About Sugar‹, was published in November and December 1930 in the ›Advocate‹, and was subsequently also issued in book form – Queensland Sugar Defence Committee: The Truth about the Queensland Sugar Industry. Furthermore, the whole campaign, in slightly changed, unnumbered parts, can also be found, amongst others, in the Mirror, Examiner, Cairns Post, Central Queensland Herald, Morning Bulletin (Rockhampton), Nambour Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser in October and November 1930.

¹⁹⁴ At least fifteen different advertisements were published over the time from April to September 1932. They were simultaneously printed in the Worker, Brisbane Courier, Sydney Morning Herald, West Australian, Mirror, Advertiser, Argus, Examiner – thus reaching consumers in all states, with the (possible) exception of the Northern Territory.

ment to convince the readers of the importance of the Queensland sugar industry and its protection. Each of the advertisements was separated into two parts: a visual part with a large-print, one-line address and a text part with further information. All advertisements were also undersigned with the declaration that they were »[i]nserted by the Sugar Growers of Australia for the Information of the People«. Many of these advertisements also additionally depicted as a logo the outline of Australia and the sugar industry's explicit claim to be the catalyst to northern (›white‹) settlement (Fig. 62).¹⁹⁵



Fig. 62 – Sweet education:
The cane growers' campaign 1932

In contrast to earlier advertisements, ›class‹ and ›gender‹ found expression in these latter adverts as did ›nation‹. The sugar growers addressed fellow workers in the southern industries and their fear of losing their jobs. They reminded the southern producers of the possibility to lose northern customers and their risk to obstruct interstate trade by neglecting the sugar industry. ›School boys‹ were educated in order to pass the information of the industry's importance for ›white Australia‹ on to their fathers. This imbalanced perspective of gender is continued in an ad written by a ›sugar grower's wife‹ in which, because she as a woman is allegedly not capable of understanding much, her simplified explanations are used as a medi-

¹⁹⁵ Here, for example, the lower part of ›Let us Sugar Growers talk to you, fellow Australians!‹, in: Examiner, 13.04.1932.

um to convey the obvious need to preserve the sugar industry – this, of course, happened simultaneously to the outspokenly political actions of the Housewives' and Women's Association, and might have been a direct account of what the sugar growers' thought of their credibility. The nation was called upon as a community of sugar consumers and sugar producers who were dependant on each other: during the war time the producers had enabled the consumers to purchase sugar at a comparatively modest price, now, in time of a low price on the world market, the producers pleaded for solidarity and the payment of a higher price in the name of the ›white‹ sugar industry and the ›white‹ nation. The nation was also referred to in those cases when the advertisements were direct answers to parties or leagues. It became a community of producers and consumers, which was supposed to be self-reliant and protected from foreign crisis and influences. ›Cheap‹ labour and inferior products were meant to be kept outside to not negatively affect the employment and the Australian trade market.

From the start of the first campaign in 1922 – when the renewal of the sugar agreement came closer and public discourse about the necessity for the protection of the ›white‹ sugar industry surged – the ›empty North‹ trope loomed largest as the discursive motive for the importance of protection. The industry was declared »[v]ital to a White Australia« due to its ›racially‹ advantageous occupational capabilities. The »northern half« of the continent was seen as »the country's danger zone«. »Crowded Asiatic populations« were »comparatively near«; a »national neglect« in the form of ending the protection of the sugar industry would therefore become a virtual »invitation to invasion or gradual penetration« of the »empty territories«. Quoting the report of the 1912 Commonwealth Royal Commission the readers were reminded that the »ultimate [...] effective justification of the protection of the sugar industry lies beyond the question of industry or wealth production« but »must be sought in the very existence of Australia as a nation«. The »supreme value of the sugar industry« was evidenced not only through its contribution to the »enrichment of the whole Commonwealth« but furthermore by its fostering of employment and settlement in the thinly populated north.¹⁹⁶

The sugar industry was »[a]n Industry for White Men«, »worth the loyal support of every Australian who wants to see Northern Australia occupied by white men instead of yellow or black men«, stated another advert. The existence of the industry dissented with allegations of ›white‹ unfitness for fruitful labour in the tropics and disproved the »woefully mistaken

¹⁹⁶ ›A Great National Industry‹, in: Argus 18.09.1922.

assumption that the tropical north cannot produce and support as vigorous and capable a race of men, women and children as the south«. Instead, it was the expression of the successful conquering of the tropics, bringing forth »some of the finest types of Australian manhood and womanhood« – »real Australians« – and providing living space and employment for »many thousands of people« residing in »thriving townships set in a transformed and beautiful landscape«. ¹⁹⁷ The necessity for an »ideal Australia of the future« to be »populated from north to south« was answered by »the only great stable wealth-producer that had enabled Australians to live the lives of white men in the Tropical zones«. If, however, ›white‹ sugar labourers in these climes could not be kept in employment by rewards of appropriate wages and protection from »products of black labour«, the important industry would succumb to »industrial death«, and this would »leave[] the North empty to the other races by whom it is coveted«. ¹⁹⁸

In the same vein, cane sugar was an »Australian Industry for Australian People«, who all benefitted from its addition to the »wealth of every section in the community« and provision of employment to people along the east coast. Without the sugar industry, several of the towns in the northern parts of Australia »would be absolutely obliterated«. Again, support and protection of the sugar industry, »holding our Tropical north for the white race«, was seen as indispensable as »[e]very feeling of regard for the safety and prosperity of Australia demands that sugar production should be supported and extended as a white man's industry«. ¹⁹⁹

The discourse on the ›empty North‹ in the advertisements was couched in the coverage of the politics of the day. Here, support for the sugar industry in the federal parliamentary debates came, inter alia, from a nationalist senator who was also a sugar grower and the president of the Queensland Sugar Producers' Association. ²⁰⁰ In his speech for the consideration of the sugar agreement in early October 1922, William T. Crawford put the Queensland sugar industry into a historical context in the rectilinear development from a plantation-based industry employing slave labour via the ›sugar wars‹ between beet and cane to the nationally protected sugar industries in several European countries. Drawing on the particular geographical position of Australia, he claimed that the continent was »looked upon by envious eyes by the people of the over-crowded countries of Asia« and warned that, since the country was »rich in actual and poten-

¹⁹⁷ ›Do Australian Know the North‹, in: *Argus*, 23.09.1922.

¹⁹⁸ ›Guarding a White Australia‹, in: *Advertiser (VIC)*, 22.09.1922.

¹⁹⁹ ›National Wealth in Sugar‹, in: *Advertiser (VIC)*, 06.10.1922.

²⁰⁰ See Ann G. Smith: Crawford, Thomas William.

tial production, the day will probably come when we shall have to fight to retain it«. Due to these circumstances, the sugar industry was »of vital importance to Queensland, and of great importance to the whole of Australia«. The problem then becomes one that even outweighed the economic significance of the industry. It concerned the »settlement of tropical and semi-tropical areas by a white population living under standard conditions of life«, and »intimately associated« with it was »the question of national defence«. He fell in line with the ›empty North‹ discourse by claiming that without a northern landscape populated by ›white‹ people »the ideal of a White Australia« could not be maintained. The survival of the sugar industry as a ›white‹ industry, and the securing of ›white Australia‹ linked with this, were not only important for the country itself but had a rather imperial or even global perspective. Australia was »the only country in the world«, Crawford assured, »in which it is possible to largely increase a purely white population«.²⁰¹

Newspapers also provided space for direct responses by those pertained. For the proponents of ›white Australia‹ there was little doubt that the way to maintain the ›racial‹ purity of the ›white‹ nation and ward off foreign invasion, the »empty spaces in [... the] vast territory« had to be populated. Movements, like the White Australia League, urged that in particular the northern tropical climes were crucial in the defence of the continent, and that it was either the »British race [...] or the coloured races of other countries« who would »yield up its virgin treasure«. Therefore, »the White Australia League and the sugar industry [...] must go hand in hand«, and the decision whether to support the industry or not was »to declare for a White Australia or not«.²⁰² In the same vein, the sugar representatives declared their industry to be »occupying the tropical area, and, therefore, holding it for the white man«.²⁰³

The relationship between ›space‹ and ›race‹ not only raised questions concerning a ›racial‹-eugenic body culture,²⁰⁴ it prompted those of a political-economic bio-power.²⁰⁵ Here the ›empty North‹ posed a particular

²⁰¹ ›The Price of White Australia«, in: Cairns Post, 07.10.1922.

²⁰² ›The White Australian League« (letter to the editor by an organizer of the League), in: Northern Star, 24.02.1923.

²⁰³ Australian Sugar Producers' Association: White Australia's Great Sugar Industry ONLY Can Keep Tropical Australia White, p. 17.

²⁰⁴ Cf. subchapter 5.2 ›Life or Death of a White Continent«.

²⁰⁵ Cf. Michel Foucault: The Will to Knowledge, p. 139, according to whom the ›bio-power‹ not only compromised the »disciplines of the body« but also the »regulations of the population«; see also *ibid.*, pp. 140 ff. For biopower as a »management of life« and closely linked to »state racism« in Foucault's work as applied to the case of the Dutch West Indies, see Ann Laura Stoler: Race and the Education of Desire, pp. 34 (›management‹), 56 (›state‹), 80 ff.

bio-political challenge. It was about more than a mere policing of a certain population in a delineated area. Surely, the ›north‹, as a part of the Australian national territory, had precisely defined outward boundaries. But inwards they were flexible in terms of climate as well as geography. And its population featured in the discourse of the ›empty North‹ mainly by not being there. This was as much a symbolical as a racist fixation on ›whites‹, whose small number signalized a twofold legitimacy deficit. On the one hand, it was indicative of an incomplete process of colonization, which left a considerable part of the continent uncultivated. This ›wilderness‹ no longer had to be snatched from the original inhabitants by a prompt to ›go North‹ – the Aborigines were considered a ›dying race‹ anyway – but it could also not be left in its natural state (neither socio-philosophically nor pragmatically) because it would arouse ›foreign‹ covetousness. On the other hand, the ›emptiness‹ of this area was a political construct, which not only ignored the original inhabitants but also the bodies of workers coming from the Pacific Islands, Japan, China, Afghanistan, India, and others, who, by the way, had already been largely banished from the country. The ideological vacuum of the ›empty North‹ was then filled by ›white‹ sugar as a catalyst of ›white‹ settlement to ›rightfully‹ occupy the continent against claims of ownership from within (as the property of the original inhabitants of the continent) as well as from without (as the location for the dreaded relief of Asian surplus population).

The second strand of discourse addressed in the sugar advergations was the fulfilment of a ›moral duty‹ through the consumption but also through the other industries' processing, of ›white‹ sugar from Queensland. The sugar industry's »[c]laims and [v]alue« were inseparable from the maintenance of ›white Australia‹ – as was realized by the »Australian people«, who were »overwhelmingly in favour of protection«. Addressing the broader context of nationalist consumption, the article continued by stating that the »patriotic policy of Australian goods for Australian people applies to Australian sugar«.²⁰⁶ Sugar production was depicted as »[a]n Ill-Protected Industry« because its costs of labour and supply increased while the customs duties did not. A review of the sugar agreement was supposed to assure the sugar producers »Australian fair-play«.²⁰⁷ In order to encourage the »fair-minded people of Australia« to let »fair play and justice« prevail, a series of advertisements presented the »salient historical features of the Queensland Sugar Industry«, narrating its journey starting with the »absolutely necessary« »employment of cheap colored la-

²⁰⁶ ›An Ill-Protected Industry‹, in: Argus, 20.09.1922.

²⁰⁷ ›The Sugar Balance Sheet‹, in: Advertiser (VIC), 13.10.1922.

bor« (the Pacific Islanders) caused by the competition coming from »black grown sugar from the East and West Indies«, which not only forced the involved to »choose between the Kanakas and extinction« (of the sugar industry) but whose outcome also needed »no apology«. ²⁰⁸ After this short apologetic episode – in some newspapers it was skipped altogether ²⁰⁹ – the subsequent telling of the »National Period« lets the story unfold as a ›white‹ chronicle of sugar in Australia. It places at the beginning of their narration the pre-Federation »white Australia ideal«, which compelled the conversion of the sugar industry »from a colored to a white labor industry«. Its unique »capacity to plant white cultivators on the soil of Australia's vast waste northern spaces« made this conversion a »common national interest«, with the implementation of which Queensland »loyally complied«. The necessity of protection and subsidizing was then presented as a prerequisite for the full transformation of the industry. The latter was »continuously obliged to fight for its life«, due to the »ever-increasing burden of Australian wages and labor conditions«, while »[d]uring all that time [...] faithfully carr[ying] out its duty to promote the White Australia policy and realise the national ideal« in fostering »cultivation, settlement and effective white occupation« in the north. ²¹⁰

The maintenance of Australia's high standard of life was taken as an explanation for the specific situation of the sugar industry while the latter was firmly rooted in the concept of ›white Australia‹. ²¹¹ Even more than for its economic importance, the necessity to maintain the sugar industry was based on the »[m]oral [i]ssue« of ›white Australia‹. The tax-based investments of the population in the »defensive garrison of great present and potential strength« brought with them a »moral obligation« to those trusting the »nation's honor and integrity«. ²¹²

A joint advancement of the national community was invoked when »a typical Sugar-grower who wants his industry understood« argued that cooperation was needed »to make Australia richer and to keep her White«. In this context, the sugar workers as both the »keepers of [...] the Australians' northern gate« and the »customers« of southern goods deserved »a fair deal« in the »mutual trade«. ²¹³ The ›fairness‹ of the southern manufac-

²⁰⁸ ›The Truth About Queensland Sugar‹, in: Mirror, 18.10.1930.

²⁰⁹ The Advocate, for instance, commences its series with the ›National Period‹ – cf. ›The Truth About Sugar‹ (No. 1), in: Advocate, 27.11.1930.

²¹⁰ ›The Truth About Queensland Sugar‹, in: Mirror, 25.10.1930.

²¹¹ Cf. ibid.

²¹² ›The Truth About Sugar‹ (No. 7), in: Advocate, 04.12.1930.

²¹³ ›Let us Sugar Growers talk to you, fellow Australians!‹, in: Advertiser, 13.04.1932 and Examiner, 13.04.1932.

turers and their obligation to support the northern industry was recurrently addressed. The »30,000 families« who stood in close connection to the sugar industry were also the southern producers' customers, and to avoid unemployment for these families, the »fair price« granted by the Prime Minister's fixing of the raw sugar price could not be lowered any further. Thus, it was the manufacturers who were to tip the scales either in favour or to the detriment of all those northern people and with that the success of life in the tropics.²¹⁴ A fictional teacher called for his school boys to educate their fathers about the sugar issue. Learning the »facts« stated in the advertisement, they would »know more about the great Sugar Industry than many of our grown-up people know«. The ad further demanded the consumers to stick to the idea of ›white Australian‹ sugar despite the lower price on the world market as a national deed. Maintaining the northern industry meant maintaining the southern industries and »helping Australia«.²¹⁵

The stand on the sugar embargo issue was taken up in other newspaper articles as a decision either for, or against, ›white Australia‹. »Every pound we spent on Australian sugar«, reasoned the ›Mirror‹, »helps in some way to maintain the safety of a White Australia«. It also meant a »pledge to protect the white labor« and the »nearly 10,000 men« involved in the industry. Since the »whole principle of honouring a bond to our fellow Australians and of maintaining the ideal of a White Australia is bound up with the sugar question«, the consumption of Queensland sugar was more than an economic issue.²¹⁶ It was a question of loyalty to a ›white‹ nation and the invocation of a community of sugar consumers against ›black sugar‹, which comprised the affirmation of the ›Australian standard‹ in terms of wages and working conditions but also the faith in a superiority of its culture as well as the need to preserve it from foreign influences.²¹⁷

The appeal to the ›moral duty‹ of the Australian did not come from nowhere. On the one hand, its invoking of consumption of ›white‹ sugar tied in with other characteristics of Australianness, like mateship and giving a ›fair go‹, which addressed a desire for mutual support and egalitarianism.

²¹⁴ ›You, Southern Manufacturers, do you want to be fair?‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 19.04.1932, Advertiser, 20.04.1932, Mirror, 30.04.1932.

²¹⁵ ›I want you to tell your fathers these things about Sugar!‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 30.08.1932, Advertiser, 31.08.1932, West Australian, 31.08.1932, Worker, 31.08.1932, Mirror, 03.09.1932.

²¹⁶ ›The Truth About Sugar‹, in: Mirror, 30.06.1934.

²¹⁷ Which was not least repeatedly re-validated by celebrations of its milestones, like, for instance, the fiftieth anniversary of the erecting of the »first white sugar mill in Australia«, the North Eton mill – see ›First White Sugar Mill‹, in: Townsville Daily Bulletin, 13.12.1937.

This was historically grown and part of the ›white‹ (male) history of Australia from very early on. As an important component in the figure of the bushman who conquered the ›savage‹ continent and made it arable,²¹⁸ joint work and toil for the advancement of the nation thus featured in the myth of origin of ›white Australia‹. Not least because the return to the ›bushman‹ was closely tied to the country's anxiety about invasion and its need for defence and cultivation, it became an important trope in the literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a safe haven against industrialism, modernity and urbanization.²¹⁹ This ›standing by the mates‹ was also a large feature in the digger myths, both on the goldfield and the battlefield.²²⁰ On the other hand, the appeal to a moral obligation to stand in for the ›white‹ nation was possible as a consequence of the permeation of ›white Australia‹ into all areas of life. The omnipresence of references to the particular Australian situation – the last ›white‹ bastion, geographically remote in perilous surroundings – provided for a constant feeling of menace. Ideological solidarity and social cohesion was supposed to emerge in the light of these external dangers. This, however, necessitated the overcoming of internal tensions in a society that was by no means egalitarian and fragile in terms of class, gender and political orientation.

A large number of Queenslanders were employed in, or otherwise connected to, the sugar industry; for them the need for its preservation was self-evident. The southern states, in turn, were further removed from both the location and the context of the propaganda's object. ›Vindicative statements‹ – the third discursive strand of ›white‹ sugar adverbation – were increasing in number during the latter campaigns and explicitly concentrated on the fellow southern Australians, the southern industries and what the sugar planters declared wrongful rumours, circulated by politicians and influencers opposing the protection of the Queensland sugar industry. Expanding the importance of the sugar industry to issues beyond economy, connected the industry's financial calculations to the social and ›racial‹ framework of the Australian nation that was at stake should support no longer be granted. The sugar growers' stated the reason for their extensive newspaper campaign thus: »Persistent and injurious attacks [...] have compelled the Industry to defend itself by setting forth the actual truth of

²¹⁸ Cf. Kay Schaffer: *Women and the Bush*, p. 101.

²¹⁹ Cf. Richard Jordan: *Discovering the Australian in Ballarat*, p. 31. See also Elaine Thompson: *Fair Enough*; Ken Stewart: *The 1890s*; Russel Ward: *The Australian Legend*.

²²⁰ Cf. John Fitzgerald: *Big White Lie*, p. 63; Keir Reeves: 15 July 1851, p. 69; Kay Schaffer: *Women and the Bush*, pp. 29 f.; Dale Blair: *Dinkum Diggers*, p. 2.

its position«, and it appealed to the »Australian people for attentive consideration of its case«, asking for nothing but »fair play and justice«.²²¹

The cost of the industry's protection was counted against its contribution to the maintenance of ›white Australia‹. The industry was declared »[a] Fine National Asset«, whose »incalculable national and social value apart from its economic value« is based on its »successfully peopling and working the tropical north«. Its contribution to the economy and employment situation exemplified its inevitability for the society since »[w]hat Australian who loves his country and honours his race can contemplate the possible extinction of this great rural, tropical industry, with a consequent surrender of the right to a White Australia?«.²²² In contrast to other primary and secondary industries, which had »made splendid profits through high prices of the war period«, the sugar industry had to overcome »struggles and losses«. They apparently did so successfully since Australian wholesale prices demonstrated favourably with those in England and had saved the nation about 25 million pounds in expenses.²²³

»The Outlook for World Sugar« worsened with the increasing organization of the sugar-producing countries in order to balance supply and demand and to keep the retail price at a reasonable and profitable level, claimed the Defence Committee. Hence, the current overproduction-induced world price, undercutting the Australian price, not only theoretically endangered the survival of the Queensland sugar industry but that of other industries as well. Only by being embargo-protected, therefore, was the sugar industry able to withstand the (excluded) competition, and only by not giving in to the »covet[ed] white sugar at black prices« could the »passionate devotion to the White Australia policy« be entertained. The intertwining of ›white Australia‹ and the sugar industry was rooted in the times of Federation. Nothing but the latter's conversion to a ›white‹ industry and its encouragement to ›white‹ settlement would save the whole continent from »invasion by the teeming hordes of Asia« or from the »rising tide of color« for which currently »reason to fear [...] was] even graver« than in 1901. It was »universal knowledge that the maintenance of our white ideal and defence of the Commonwealth« stood and fell with the survival of Queensland cane sugar, and that the »White Australia policy

²²¹ ›We have something to say about the price of jam!«, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 16.05.1932, Advertiser, 25.05.1932, Mirror, 28.05.1932.

²²² ›Australia's Wealth in Sugar«, in: Argus, 19.09.1922.

²²³ ›A National Debt«, in: Argus, 21.09.1922.

and the defence of the nation afford[ed] supreme justification for effectively protecting the Queensland sugar industry«. ²²⁴

Vindictive arguments also addressed the issues of other Australian industries by highlighting the contribution of the sugar industry to the success of »local industries [...] as the jam-making, fruit-growing, condensed milk, confectionary and biscuit industries«, which had no need to rely on imported sugar and were able to export their products with profit. Paying a »fair price for sugar« also meant supporting the industries using Queensland sugar and financially seconding the nation's autonomy. ²²⁵ Also, on other occasions, the »unity of interest« by the »primary producers« was invoked. The head of a »great jam-making firm« assured his loyalty to the sugar industry and stated that any price for sugar on the Australian market would be paid because »we know quite well that we must pay a price that will enable the sugar to be grown by white labour, and we are quite willing to do this«. ²²⁶ Sugar was »dear to consumers because of dear importations« and because of the employment of »national policy [that ordered them] to employ only white labour«. Despite all the financial advantages, the »industrial aspects of the sugar industry are less important than the social«: with its transformation from »coloured to white labour conditions«, »[t]he sugar industry is a contribution of the first importance to the policy of a White Australia«. Protecting the sugar industry was justified with »the very existence of Australia as a nation« and should be supported by the »primary producers' « standing together »for fair treatment«. ²²⁷

The sugar industry put emphasis on its industry's uniqueness in terms of ›whiteness‹. Australia was the »unit producing the largest quantity of sugar in the Empire« and the only one employing exclusively ›white‹ workers. ²²⁸ But the ›white man‹ was not cheap to keep. Comparing the global production costs of sugar, the ›Townsville Daily Bulletin‹ found that »in Queensland (where labour is all white) the cost is put as high as 8 ¾ cents (about 3½d.)«, while sugar production in Hawaii costs about 2d., in the Philippines only 1½d., and in neighbouring Java, which has

²²⁴ ›The Truth About Sugar‹ (No. 5), in: Advocate, 02.12.1930. This perspective was seconded by several other newspapers, see ›Truth About Sugar – Fair Play and Justice‹, in: Central Queensland Herald, 02.10.1930; ›Truth About Sugar – Problem of National Defence‹, in: Morning Bulletin, 03.10.1930.

²²⁵ ›Advancing Australia's Manufactures‹, in: Argus, 22.09.1922 (misspelling in original).

²²⁶ ›Australia's Rural Industries‹, in: Advertiser (VIC), 15.09.1922.

²²⁷ ›Sugar Control and the Growers‹, in: Advertiser (VIC), 20.10.1922.

²²⁸ ›Sound System‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 26.11.1929. This argument was still used six years later, when the sugar industry was depicted as not only having helped to populate the tropical north but also having made the country the »only [...] in the world where cane sugar is produced by white labour« – ›The Australian Cane Sugar Industry‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 12.02.1935.

the »lowest rate of any country«, only 1d.²²⁹ The higher production costs caused by the ›whiteness‹ of the industry were, of course, recouped via the retail price of refined sugar and sugar-containing products. Were Java sugar permitted to enter the country, the sugar could have been sold to households for less than a third, saving the consumers £26 per ton of refined sugar.

Other advertisements concentrated on the »Industry's War Service to the Nation«, which was not limited to supplying soldiers for the »fight at the front« but also comprised a moderate retail price during the war years for the people of the Australian Commonwealth in comparison with those in England, Canada, the United States, Italy and France. Divesting themselves of profits, the sugar growers enabled the industries using sugar to both undersell competitors on the world market and raise the value of Australian industries.

Conclusively, this was contrasted with the contemporary allegations of ›greedy‹ sugar growers.²³⁰ Sugar growers realized »no immediate advantages from the [price] increases« and, instead, almost withered away in the area of tension between low prices and increasing production costs. A »fair price for raw sugar« after 1921 ensured the revival of prosperity in the sugar industry and was obtained by sugar cane farmers »of whom 90 per cent were British, and many of the remainder are naturalised British subjects«. This adjunct was not unimportant since in the face of debates about the protection of the sugar industry allegations were made that the subsidies did not reach the right ›white‹, i.e. British, but the wrong ›not-white-enough‹, i.e. Italian, farmers and workers, and that therefore supporting ›white sugar‹ was considered a farce.²³¹

With world-wide sugar supplies curtailed by the First World War, the global price had risen steeply and only Australia was spared. Now – after 1923, that is – the world market sugar price undercut the Australian and constituted a »menace to the existence of the Queensland industry« in the case of the abolition of protection. So, it was not only ›white Australia‹ that was perceivedly threatened by ›coloured‹ swamping but also was the »super production of foreign [i.e. coloured] sugar« supposedly capable of flushing away the ›white‹ sugar production. Both were closely intertwined in the sugar industry, and these circumstances therefore justified the continuance of protection.²³²

²²⁹ ›World Sugar‹, in: Townsville Daily Bulletin, 30.12.1929.

²³⁰ ›The Truth About Sugar‹ (No. 2), in: Advocate, 28.11.1930.

²³¹ ›The Truth About Sugar‹ (No. 3), in: Advocate, 29.11.1930.

²³² ›The Truth About Sugar‹ (No. 4), in: Advocate, 01.12.1930.

Besides the juxtaposition of Australian and world market prices and the compensation of losses during the war, the intra-Australian trade of goods was consulted by way of explanation. For interstate trade, cane sugar provided an impeccable exchange value for southern goods, and with this secured employment in both the north and the rest of society; exported surplus sugar paid interest bills in foreign countries. Importing cheaper ›black sugar‹ and dispensing with the Queensland sugar industry would therefore backfire on the whole economic balance of Australia.²³³

Prior to the major campaign in the last quarter of 1930, the Queensland Sugar Industry Defence Committee initiated a full-page advertisement in the ›Adelaide Chronicle‹ (Fig. 63), which combined all the legitimatory strategies used in trying to vindicate the protectionist policy.²³⁴ The Committee was founded in August 1930 as a reaction to the campaigns for the abolition of the sugar embargo and included William T. Crawford, president of the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, as well as several cane growers.²³⁵

In order to demonstrate the exchange value and trade counterweight of sugar to southern goods, the Committee graphically put in layers the commodities one on top of the other. The pyramid of consumption comprised foodstuff, like flour, malt, oat meal and dried and canned fruits as well as leather, pianos, machinery and chemicals. »Sweet are the uses of reciprocity« was the ambiguous caption to the drawing, and this reciprocal trade was supposed to find expression in cane sugar. Citing statistics from the sugar industry, the advertisement urged the importance of said industry not only for the cities, towns and families dependent on it but also for »prosperity throughout the Commonwealth«.

Anticipatory of the following, more extensive campaigns of the next months, this advertisement summarized the main topics of the ›sugar issue‹: nation, class and ›race‹. The community of Australian sugar consumers was supposedly conjured by their shared benefit during the war years when sugar could be purchased at moderate prices whereas other nations had to ration their sugar supplies. The producers of the primary and secondary industries were said to be joined in their ability to produce

²³³ ›The Truth About Sugar‹ (No. 6), in: Advocate, 03.12.1930.

²³⁴ ›The Slogan For To-Day‹, in: Chronicle, 18.09.1930. It was also published in the Argus, 07.08.1930, Brisbane Courier, 23.08.1930, Sydney Morning Herald, 27.08.1930, Advertiser, 13.09.1930, Register News-Pictorial, 13.09.1930, Examiner, 17.09.1930, Mercury, 20.09.1930, Adelaide Mail, 20.09.1930.

²³⁵ ›From the Capital‹, in: Morning Bulletin, 02.09.1930. The ›Morning Bulletin‹ actually stated the date of the establishment as September 1930, but since advertisements had already been published in August, in the name of the Committee, the foundation in this month seems to be more likely.

THE SLOGAN FOR TO-DAY

Australian Products for Australian Markets

Sugar is one of Australia's most important industries.

Its importance, however, is not generally recognised because the production of cane sugar is necessarily restricted to our tropical and sub-tropical areas, which are remote from the chief centres of population.

There are 8,000 sugar farms and 80 sugar mills in Queensland and Northern New South Wales. The value of the annual production of raw sugar is over £10,000,000 and directly and indirectly the industry provides employment for 30,000 persons, whose wages amount to £5,000,000 a year.

Many coastal cities and towns are wholly or partly dependent upon the sugar industry.

The industry represents permanent assets valued at £50,000,000. Money invested in the sugar industry and in public works in sugar districts, such as roads, railways, schools, harbor improvements, schools, &c., is paid for directly invested in the sugar industry as the capital represented by cane farmers and sugar mills.

The sugar consumed in the Commonwealth is conveyed to the refineries in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia in Australian ships, offered and manned by Australians.

Two-fifths of Australia lies within the Tropics. Of this vast territory only the sugar districts and some adjacent areas can be regarded as effectively occupied. In striking contrast, parallel latitudes in Northern and Western Australia are practically empty and unproductive.

Australia is the only country where cane sugar is produced by white labour, and is also the only country where European workmen in the Tropics have been successful. Outwitting the colony with regard to the foreigners in the industry, which arises from their concentration in a few areas, at least 90 per cent of the farmers and sugar workers are British.

The services of the sugar industry in maintaining the ideal of a White Australia are considerable.

In protecting our own sugar industry by excluding black-grown sugar by means of the embargo, Australians are protecting their own interests. If sugar from, say, Java, were allowed to come in and displace the product of our own fields and mills, the Javanese would be spending in their own country the good Australian money sent overseas to pay for this commodity. Not a copper of this money would return to this country for the purchase of any product of ours. The inescapable consequence would be that the millions of pounds sterling now spent by those engaged in the Australia sugar industry would be no longer circulated in this country. That surely would be a national calamity!

FACTS ABOUT SUGAR

Queensland depends almost entirely upon primary production, and therefore provides an extensive and lucrative market for commodities manufactured in sister States.

It can be truly said that Queensland sugar is exchanged for Southern goods, thus promoting reciprocal prosperity throughout the Commonwealth. (See illustration.)

Sugar purchased from other countries would have to be paid for in gold.

During the war, when sugar was rationed in Great Britain and many other countries, Australia had an abundant supply for both domestic and manufacturing purposes, and our exports of jams, jellies, canned fruits, condensed milk, &c., were worth many millions of pounds sterling.

While manufacturers who largely use sugar were paying from £60 to £160 (in 1920) per ton in Great Britain and up to \$137 in America, the Australian manufacturers were supplied at prices far below world's parity, and were thus enabled to undercut all competitors.

In 1920, when the Australian price of raw sugar was £30 6 8 per ton, the British Government bought 200,000 tons from Mauritian producers at £90 per ton.

All Australian Manufacturers of commodities containing sugar are, and always have been, supplied with sugar at world's parity for their export trade.

Any statement to the contrary is absolutely untrue.

Moreover, manufacturers using Australian sugar receive a rebate of £4 5/- per ton on the sugar contents of goods exported to Great Britain.

No bounty was ever paid to the Queensland sugar producers. Under the Excise and Bounty (so-called) legislation—repealed in 1913—£4 per ton EXCISE was collected, and £3 per ton REBATE returned on compliance with prescribed labor conditions, the net result being that the sugar industry was taxed to the extent of £2,682,329.

AUTHORISED BY THE QUEENSLAND SUGAR INDUSTRY DEFENCE COMMITTEE.

Fig. 63 – White barter:
Intra-Australian goods traffic

goods »with sugar at world's parity for their export trade«; whereas the sugar producers contented themselves with only small profits, if any at all considering the circumstance that the sugar industry, as they claimed, »was taxed to the extent of £2,692,329«. Lastly and once again, Australia was »the only country where cane sugar is produced by white labor, and is also the only country where European settlement in the Tropics has been successful«. This being the case, its »services [...] in maintaining the ideal of a White Australia are inestimable«, and the protection of Queensland sugar against »black-grown sugar by means of the embargo« and its maintenance as a ›white‹ industry was therefore the avoidance of »a national calamity«.²³⁶

The subsequent newspaper campaign of 1932 was characterized by its specialization. Other than the text-heavy advertisements of 1922 and 1930, some of the new adverts were direct replies to individuals or specific postulations. Suggestions to »import black-grown sugar« were answered by a fictional »Grower's Wife«. The change of gender in the person explaining the sugar issue was, of course, not by chance – it allowed for the introduction of a more informal and non-technical writing style. Moreover, it was a presumptuous attempt to pass off the protection of the sugar industry as a ›no-brainer‹. In reaction to a speech made in parliament favouring the abolition of the sugar embargo, shown to her by her ›husband‹ and considered »very silly« by her, the ›grower's wife‹ tried to explain the northern situation, which even women generally »not credited with logical minds« were capable of comprehending: switching from sugar to dairy products was out of the question, and the sugar industry was »necessary to Australia's economic and national life«.²³⁷ An answer to all sugar critics was directed to the »Fellow Citizens«. It discriminated the critique into three kinds: advocating the import of ›black‹ sugar, being ignorant to the truth, and demanding the reduction of the retail price. All of them had in common that they would let the industry »enter on a stage of gradual decay, if not instant destruction«. This would render impossible the trade between the north and the south of Australia and would sooner or later result in disadvantages to the southern industries.²³⁸

²³⁶ ›The Slogan For To-Day‹, in: Adelaide Chronicle, 18.09.1930. For the sugar sold under world's parity during the First World War, see also Ronald Muir: The Australian Sugar Industry, p. 81.

²³⁷ ›Now, didn't you talk without thinking, Mr Prowse?‹, in: Advertiser, 29.06.1932, West Australian, 06.07.1932. Of course, women were in fact regularly contributing to, or initiating discussions about, the sugar price and were acknowledged as active participants – see for example ›Sugar Reduction‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 15.09.1932.

²³⁸ ›There is an old adage about cutting off your nose‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 08.08.1932, West Australian, 10.08.1932, Advertiser, 10.08.1932.

Another announcement was an immediate reaction to the Henry George League through its spokesman, John D. Valentine, and their false representation of the sugar issue in the southern states. The League was a proponent of the allegation that the consumer had to pay the major part of the maintenance of ›white sugar‹ – »four times the world's price« – and protested against the embargo on foreign sugar.²³⁹ Valentine had just recently published his opinion in a letter to the editor: he claimed that »this ridiculous duty« on ›black‹ sugar had no need to be maintained any longer since the »yield and quality of [Australian] cane [...] can easily compete with black labour countries«. The tax paid on sugar was an »annual gift to the industry by the sugar consumers« and was a hindrance to the useful processing of sugar by-products, which not only would help expand the industry but also lower the retail price.²⁴⁰ The sugar growers' advertisement then countered these allegations of an exploitation by the sugar monopoly by putting Valentine on a fictional trial and citing as evidence the circumstance that sugar was sold to the export industries at import price.²⁴¹ The suggestion to abolish the sugar embargo made by the chairman of the chamber of agriculture, William W. Webb, was fiercely attacked, declaring the embargo a »mutual affair« from which both the northern sugar growers as well as the southern fruit growers benefitted. For the export, sugar was provided to the southern producers for »next to nothing«, and in return they should help to »pay Australian rates of wages« to the employees on the cane fields and in the mills.²⁴²

Several adverts addressed the assumption that the sugar growers were able to make large profits based on the protection against competition and their industry's allegedly preferential treatment. The sugar growers held against these allegations that all operations in the sugar processing had to be done »under tropical conditions, at tropical wage rates« and that the »real cause of city prices« was rather to be found with the retailers. In the same vein another advertisement explained the motivation to publish the sugar growers' statements in the newspapers with the »falsity and absurdity« of statements made about the sugar industry. In appealing to the unity of men and women, as well as consumers and producers, the sugar growers thought all of these incidents »very harmful to Australia as a whole«. Furthermore, »two false notions« were held about the sugar industry – the

²³⁹ ›Adelaide's Big Meeting‹, in: Advertiser, 30.07.1932 (›four times‹); ›Sugar Embargo‹, in: Mercury, 31.08.1932.

²⁴⁰ ›The Sugar Industry‹ (John D. Valentine), in: Examiner, 07.04.1932.

²⁴¹ ›Now, Mr. John D. Valentine, please stick to facts on SUGAR!‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 09.05.1932, Advertiser, 11.05.1932, West Australian, 18.05.1932.

²⁴² ›Dear Mr. Webb‹, in: Advertiser, 18.05.1932, Argus, 19.05.1932, Examiner, 29.05.1932.

bounty and the profits allegedly received by the sugar growers. The sugar embargo, it was asserted, was the only support the industry received from the Commonwealth; and, moreover, the same could be said in the cases of cheese, dried fruits, wines and other foodstuff produced in the southern part of the continent. The price, on the other hand, was purportedly not representative of the profit the sugar growers made, as most of it was »absorbed in the wages« which, in turn, were not least spent by the workers on goods from southern Australia. Part of the discourse of expenses in the sugar industry was the »Australian scale« of living and working as superior to that of other countries. Despite the »high wages, high freights, high taxes«, the consumers were able to purchase sugar at »very little more than the Frenchman or the German – with a lower standard of living – pays for his beet sugar«. ²⁴³ The Australian nation of sugar consumers was thus not only in the position to be self-reliant in terms of sugar at a moderate price; but through the consumption of their locally produced sugar, they also confirmed their superior state of life, even in comparison to the consumers in Germany and France, who not only were worse off in terms of work and living conditions but also had to subsist on the perceivedly lower-quality sugar from the beet root.

In addition to the announcements published in the newspapers, other educational activities by several local branches of sugar growers completed their campaigns for ›white‹ sugar consumption. In order to inform the consumers in these states about the circumstances of the Queensland sugar industry, northern sugar growers started visiting the southern states for an »extensive propaganda campaign to influence public opinion in the direction of continuing to foster the industry«. ²⁴⁴ Their findings showed that »anti-sugar propaganda in the south« negatively affected the opinion and that »the antagonism [...] is purely the result of ignorance«. ²⁴⁵ The Australian Sugar Producers' Association's Council decided to supply funds for an educational campaign in the south, »counteract[ing] the evil effects of the pernicious propaganda which is being carried on by the Melbourne Press« and which »completely ignore[d] the ›White Australia‹ ideal«, as it brought about a »purely temporary gain« for the south without taking into

²⁴³ ›Price of Sugar, eh?‹, in: Advertiser, 15.06.1932 (›tropical‹, ›real cause‹); ›The Sugar Industry gets no bonus or bounty‹, in: Worker, 06.07.1932 (›falsity‹); ›My Dear Fellow Countrymen‹, in: West Australian, 01.06.1932 (›false notions‹, ›absorbed‹); ›Sugar is comparatively dearer in Europe than here in Australia‹, in: Examiner, 17.08.1932 (›Australian scale‹ etc.).

²⁴⁴ ›Extensive Sugar Propaganda‹, in: Register, 10.01.1922.

²⁴⁵ ›Combating Anti-Sugar Propaganda‹, in: Western Champion (›propaganda‹); ›Propaganda Necessary, in: Morning Bulletin, 04.04.1922 (›ignorance‹).

account the repercussions for the whole nation, i.e. the encouragement of ›white‹ settlement in the north.²⁴⁶

The southern press regularly urged for the importation of sugar from Java to reduce the retail price of sugar and other foodstuff produced with sugar.²⁴⁷ The travelling northern sugar representatives then found evidence of misconceptions in the southern states regarding the destination of the money paid by people for the sugar but also sympathy upon disclosing the situation of the cane growers to the audience.²⁴⁸ In the same vein, an exhibition stand at the Melbourne Royal Show was meant to provide further hands-on information about sugar growing and benefits therefrom for the people of Victoria.²⁴⁹ In the early twenties, the Australian Sugar Producers' Association, besides organising booths for Queensland sugar at national and international exhibitions in Australia and overseas, also published a number of pamphlets attempting to obviate or counteract consumer boycotts and negative publicity by anti-protectionists.²⁵⁰

Prime Minister William M. Hughes weighed in on the debate of the financing of the ›white‹ sugar industry and, referring to the allegedly high prices of sugar, stated: »I am sorry to hear it suggested that the people of this country would rather become a race of mongrels than pay an extra pound for their sugar.«²⁵¹ He, a self-proclaimed »fanatic on the White Australia policy«, was certain that »you 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«; thus stressing consumerism as a means of contributing to nationalism and maintenance of a ›racially-exclusive community.²⁵²

Commonly alleged with greed for profit or putting money over nation, the sugar planters' invocation of their product's payment in kind was an expression of their ideological joining in with the ideology of ›white Australia‹. Initially preferring ›coloured labour‹ in their cane fields, emphasis on a successful ›whitening‹ of the sugar industry was later employed by the planters as imperative for ›white Australia‹. The justifications of the sugar capitalists were more than mere financial mathematics. Considering

²⁴⁶ ›Sugar Propaganda‹, in: Cairns Post, 27.02.1922.

²⁴⁷ See, for example, ›Price of Sugar‹, in: Argus, 06.02.1922; ›The Control of Sugar‹, in: Advertiser, 23.10.1922; ›Price of Sugar‹, in: Register, 24.10.1922; ›Sugar Prices‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 24.10.1922.

²⁴⁸ See ›Southern Sugar Campaign‹, in: Cairns Post, 11.08.1922 (sympathy).

²⁴⁹ ›The Sugar Journal‹, in: Cairns Post, 17.11.1922.

²⁵⁰ For the pamphlets, see, for instance, Australian Sugar Producers' Association: White Australia's Great Sugar Industry ONLY Can Keep Tropical Australia WHITE.

²⁵¹ ›Plea for White Australia‹, in: Singleton Argus, 25.07.1922.

²⁵² ›Mr. Hughes in Queensland‹, in: Argus, 11.11.1922.

their efforts as an implementation of the governmental bio-power, which endeavoured to populate the thinly settled climes, the planters claimed that they were carrying out a task of the state and were, therefore, rightfully receiving money from the government. At this, the employment of a ›white‹ worker in the ›empty North‹ was counted, at least partially, as an act of sovereignty. The necessity to defend and justify the protection of the sugar industry and the consumers' dissatisfaction with allegedly unnecessarily high prices continued to be of the essence during the nineteen forties. The line of reasoning followed that of former campaigns: the conversion to a ›white‹ industry at the time of Federation was cited, the competition by sugar made with »cheap coloured labour« substantiated the prolonged isolation of the Australian sugar market as did the industry's contribution to other Australian industries with their payment of »Australian wages«, and the ›white Australia policy‹ was still seen as »one of the strong reasons« for the embargo.²⁵³

The increase of the sugar price in the early nineteen fifties gave a new rise to the opponents of sugar protectionism. Remedial action was taken in the form of an excursion through the historical and contemporary importance of the sugar industry for the Australian nation: its peopling of the north, its cultivation of Queensland's soil, its contribution to Australia's export value, and its right to – considering all these benefits for Australia – be granted these »infinitesimal concessions« which secured the survival of the sugar industry.²⁵⁴ Australian sugar was further lauded as its price has »risen so slightly over the years« since 1915 and the industry on having been a »consumers' industry« ever since. Also, the ›empty North‹ discourse was still at hand: lowering the retail price of sugar was said to lead the sugar industry »to decline to the point of extinction« and this would produce »vast empty spaces in North Queensland, greatly reducing the defence value of this portion of the Commonwealth«.²⁵⁵ It was not until the last decade of the twentieth century that the embargo on foreign sugar was eventually lifted.²⁵⁶

Overall, the line of reasoning for the prolongation of the protection and the subsidizing of the Queensland cane sugar industry in the twentieth century emphasized the industry's monetary contributions to the wealth of Australia and material contributions to its autonomy. Moreover, it invoked

²⁵³ ›Sugar Notes‹, in: Cairns Post, 12.07.1944.

²⁵⁴ ›Sugar Price only 20% up on 1920‹ (by ›Sucrose‹), in: Townsville Daily Bulletin, 11.10.1952.

²⁵⁵ ›Cabinet ungrateful over price of sugar‹, in: Townsville Daily Bulletin, 06.03.1952.

²⁵⁶ Cf. Peter Griggs: Global Industry, Local Innovation, pp. 815, 834.

a community of sugar consumers by utilizing the ›white‹ population's anxiety about the ›yellow peril‹ in connection with the ›empty North‹ and its eugenic policies of settlement and additionally taking the purchasers of sugar up on their moral duty to the nation. In the mid-nineteen twenties, the strategies of ›advermatation‹ practiced in the case of sugar were drawn upon by another broad campaign in order to pledge allegiance to the Australian nation and the ›whiteness‹ for which it stood by racist consumerism.

6.4 ›Thousand Feet of Whiteness‹: Commodity Racism on Rails

It was a rainy Wednesday afternoon in November 1925. At half past three, a single sound from a »Gold Presentation Guard's whistle« gave the signal for departure.²⁵⁷ As the train left the railway yard and glided along the tracks away from Darling Island to its first destination, »hundreds of workmen stopped their labours to wave and shout encouragement«, »thousands of school children [...] vied with each other to give the loudest cheer«, and »every cottage was alive with its inhabitants waving handkerchiefs«.²⁵⁸ In this spectacular manner, the ›Australian-Made‹ Exhibition Touring Train was sent off on its six-month tour through New South Wales.

The train's organizer, the ›Australian-Made‹ *Preference League*, was desirous to strengthen the Australian nation by fostering immigration through the expansion of local manufacture and thus solving the problem of thin population and development by economic measures. Their pressing for industrial development enacted through a change in consumer behaviour was founded on a combination of the special geographical location and unsatisfactory stage of secondary industries in the country with conclusions for the status of defence in Australia.

Their greatest endeavour, the ›Great White Train‹, advertised both the connection of ›white‹ nation building with racist consumerism and the cross-class consonance of ›white supremacy‹. The campaigning train was a local approach to a wider appeal to Australians for fostering the consolidation of the individual states into the ›white nation‹ through the consumption of ›white Australian‹ commodities. It put in the mind of the masses

²⁵⁷ ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League: Souvenir of the Australian Made Preference League and the Great White Exhibition Train, p. 47 (›whistle‹); ›Great White Train‹, in: Northern Star, 12.11.1925.

²⁵⁸ William R. Bagnall: The Great White Train, p. 75.

the thought that they, by purchasing Australian goods, were able to participate in the fortification of a ›white bulwark‹ against the conjured ›rising tide of colour‹. The racist behaviour of the consumers was supposed to synchronize personal well-being with their own and the nation's ›white‹ identity. The absence of on-board purchase possibilities created the ecstasized perception that each and every man, woman and child attending the events surrounding the ›Great White Train‹ could immediately participate in these realms of consumerist ›whiteness‹ and could do his or her share to the viability of ›white Australia‹. Like commodity racism in general, the ›Great White Train‹ in particular provided an »ideological use value« even for those, who only were potential buyers of the praised commodities.²⁵⁹ The train was not only a publicity campaign for Australian-made goods but was also meant to be a symbol for the progressive ›white‹ character of the nation.

The connection between consumption and nation was, of course, no recent phenomenon. However, in the case of Australia, which previous to the establishment of their industries had to import all goods, the conversion to self-reliance was actively promoted by nationalist groups and advertisements. Previous to the Australian focus on local consumption, preference of product from the British Empire prevailed. Around the time of Federation, according with deliberations about a detachment from Britain the focus shifted to a more nationalist feeling. Instead of consuming products from the whole Empire, a »prosperous and progressive« Australia was seen as more benefitting to imperial interests.²⁶⁰

To remind its readers of the necessity for a change of mind, and in the context of the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League's pressing for a preference of Australian goods in the mid-nineteen twenties, the ›Singleton Argus‹ reprinted a composition by William T. Goodge, a contributor of poetical works to the ›Bulletin‹, who around the time of Federation questioned the true nationalist feeling of the Australian consumers. Satisfying the Australian who desires to advance his country, on the one hand, but gives preference to non-Australian goods, on the other, Goodge neatly interlinked consumption with nationalism.²⁶¹

But traditionally, ›Australia First‹ was also closely intertwined with the promotion »to keep our race pure«. Profits from goods produced and con-

²⁵⁹ Wulf D. Hund: *Advertising White Supremacy*, p. 54.

²⁶⁰ Cf. ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League: *Souvenir of the Australian Made Preference League and the Great White Exhibition Train*, p. 15.

²⁶¹ Cf. Goodge's poem ›The Patriotic Australian‹ in ›Australian-Made Goods‹, in: *Singleton Argus*, 28.11.1925. See also ›The Editor's Table‹, in: *Western Champion and General Advertiser for the Central-Western Districts*, 27.06.1899.

sumed in Australia were supposed to benefit Australians and substantiate the process to maximum possible self-reliance.²⁶² Others drew on this spirit, too. The motto of the ›Young Australian League‹ was »Australia First«; they favoured a ›white Australia‹, educated teenagers about it and toured the country with their own minstrel group.²⁶³ »We must have a self-contained Australia – we must have a ›White Australia‹«, this necessity for an autarkic nation has been connected to consumption strategies, at latest, during the distortion of the First World War.²⁶⁴ A social movement was formed which promoted the motto ›Australia First‹, calling to prefer first and foremost Australian and, only then, British-made goods.²⁶⁵



Fig. 64 – Promoting consumption for the nation:
›Australian-Made‹ Preference League's slogans

The ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League claimed to »know[] no creed and no party«, and its policies were considered »good for all classes of the community, because it advances the interests of all«.²⁶⁶ The siding with both the labour and the capitalist side of production found expression in their campaign slogans (Fig. 64).²⁶⁷ Their focus lay on the consumer as an agent for change. In drawing on the renowned picture of the carrier of circular burdens, the consumer was declared to be »the great Atlas who bears on his broad shoulders the industries of the world«.²⁶⁸

²⁶² ›A National Movement‹, in: Independent, 08.09.1906.

²⁶³ ›Young Australian League‹, in: West Australian, 28.09.1910.

²⁶⁴ ›White Australia‹, in: Register, 16.06.1919.

²⁶⁵ See ›Australia First‹, in: Advertiser, 24.01.1916.

²⁶⁶ ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League: Souvenir of the Australian Made Preference League and the Great White Exhibition Train, pp. 18 (›creed‹), 19 (›good‹).

²⁶⁷ Reprinted in *ibid.*, p. 88.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

At a time when the public seemed to prefer products imported from Britain, they attempted to focus the consumers' attention on the local manufacture. Their intention was to provide evidence for the capacity of the nationally produced goods to compete with and refute the superiority of imported products: only when »Australians really believe in themselves, then Australia's prosperity is assured« therefore the »killing of this delusion is one of the main functions of the league«. By »making this Commonwealth self-contained and self-reliant«, the »population problem« was supposed to be solved. As a »national movement«, its goal was to »attract to these shores the population we so badly need« by creating job opportunities for new arrivals based on a heightening of demand for locally manufactured goods and, consequently, production thereof. The League had a large agenda – it claimed that »preference to ›Australian-Made‹ solves the population question, the unemployment question and the question of decentralisation«.²⁶⁹

Despite the League's claim to be »based on a sane and practical patriotism – not the patriotism that hates or detracts other countries«, their reasoning was firmly rooted in the defence discourse of the ›yellow peril‹.²⁷⁰ This took the same line of argumentation the warnings about the ›Asian swamping‹ had done for years and which also allegedly necessitated the continuance of the ›white Australia policy‹. The proponents of ›Australian-Made‹ reasoned that Australians would be able to understand the danger they were in: »[w]hen they looked to the east and saw a small country with 40,000,000 of people, and then looked at the size of Australia and its six millions, they should understand that the people of that small country were not going to sit idly by if we did not populate«.²⁷¹ The League itself maintained that »[s]elf-dependence increases national safety«, and while the solution to the problem was an economic one, the problem itself was the survival of the Australian ›race‹.²⁷²

The League's intentions tied in neatly with the maintenance of ›white Australia‹ as they demanded the expansion of immigration restriction to manufactured products. »The public of the present day demand the rigid enforcement of a White Australia policy as applied to humans, to prevent

²⁶⁹ »Australian Made« Preference League, in: Singleton Argus, 28.11.1925 (›believe« etc.). For the League's objectives, see also ›Australian-Made« Preference League: Souvenir of the Australian Made Preference League and the Great White Exhibition Train, p. 102.

²⁷⁰ ›Australian-Made« Preference League: Souvenir of the Australian Made Preference League and the Great White Exhibition Train, p. 16.

²⁷¹ ›Great White« Train, in: Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate, 09.02.1926.

²⁷² ›Australian-Made« Preference League: Souvenir of the Australian Made Preference League and the Great White Exhibition Train, p. 19 (›self-dependence«).

the country from being over-run with colored foreign races«, stated the League and added that the »same policy should apply to foreign manufacture«. ²⁷³ The League drew on the necessity to defend the continent against foreign takeovers – a strategy so successfully embarked on by the invasion novels for almost half a century prior – and let the readers of the ›Singleton Argus‹ know that »any country with a large population, flourishing manufacturing industries, and prosperous development in pastoral and agricultural activities is a country whose defences are already more than prepared to meet the onslaught of the foe«. Furthermore, Australia's position in the global competition for civilization would be improved for »[s]uch a country is worthy of respect by all the nations of the earth«. Lastly, the unifying aspect of a community of nation-oriented consumers was evoked by their aim to »unite[] all classes and all sections, for [the League] seeks to benefit all classes and all sections, employees as well as employers, the people on the land as well as the people in the towns«. ²⁷⁴

The texts of William R. Bagnall, member of the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League and main organizer of the ›Great White Train‹, were also charged with the discourse of national defence known from narratives of invasion and legitimization of the ›white Australia policy‹. He urged that the »antipathy that exists in the mind of the people on the question of national security« needed to end and that Australians must take the future into their own hands since the »immunity from invasion« was until then only owed to the presence of the British Navy; with its reduction, Australia would be defenceless. The ultimate goal was to »build a new Britain in the southern seas, save from invasion«. The »era of perpetual peace among mankind has not yet dawned«, and Australia was »as precariously placed as any nation in the matter of security«, but »no form of defence is possible without all ramifications of industry being fully developed«. ²⁷⁵

At least one of the representatives of the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League, Wallace Nelson, who was the co-founder of the League and the official lecturer on the first tour of the train campaign, had previously been confronted with the ›black labour issue‹ of Queensland. In the context of the Pacific Islander repatriation, Nelson had been a »major advocate for a ›White Australia‹ policy against ›Kanaka labour‹«. ²⁷⁶ Already in 1892, he

²⁷³ ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League: The Great White ›Australian Made‹ Exhibition Touring Train, p. 4. In the original, the last quote is printed in small caps.

²⁷⁴ »Australian-Made‹ Preference League, in: Singleton Argus, 28.11.1925.

²⁷⁵ ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League: Souvenir of the Australian Made Preference League and the Great White Exhibition Train, pp. 23 (›antipathy‹, ›immunity‹), 26 (›new Britain‹), 27 (›peace‹, ›security‹, ›industry‹).

²⁷⁶ Wallace Nelson: The Story of the ›Great White‹ Train, p. 163.

had argued in the later spirit of the League in a lecture regarding »Free-trade, Protection and Land Monopoly« which gave »a word of warning to the workers«; he stated that the immigration of Chinese undercutting ›white‹ wages would force the ›white‹ worker to »accept the same reduced remuneration or starve«.²⁷⁷ He claimed that »the best way to help the Mother country was not to send our work to her, but to bring her workmen to Australia«.²⁷⁸ On the occasion of the ›Great White Train‹, Nelson gave a lecture titled »Australia's Factories are Her Forts«;²⁷⁹ this was based on the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League statement that »manufacturing industries are its greatest bulwarks«, and »every industrial enterprise [...] is doing more to defend the shores of the country than even its greatest ammunition plants can claim to do«. »Industry means progress. Progress means power. Power is security«, maintained the League, and this reasoning bore more than a small reference to the line of argument taken by the Queensland sugar industry involving the sugar plantations and farms as ›bulwarks‹ against Asian invasion.²⁸⁰ Still, in the years after the retirement of the ›Great White Train‹, the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League remained closely interwoven with the defence of the Australian continent and the sugar industry. In 1929, the Acting Minister for Trade and Customs, Francis M. Forde, instigated an investigation into the northern industries, amongst them the sugar production and also interlinked the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League's advocacy for products manufactured locally in Australia with the sugar industry of Queensland as an »excellent illustration of this point«.²⁸¹

To dispense their message, the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League issued a couple of pamphlets and even a cookery book.²⁸² But their most renowned project was the ›Great White Exhibition Train‹; on the occasion of which a comprehensive ›souvenir‹ was published in September 1926, containing several essays and promotional texts.²⁸³ Soon after their inception, the League thought up ways to encourage the Australian customers to spend their money, not on imported goods but rather on locally manufactured products. »[N]ationalism, patriotism, and pride of [... Australian] productions« were the ignition spark for the most spectacular, rail-

²⁷⁷ ›Free-Trade and Protection‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 12.01.1892.

²⁷⁸ ›White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald: 21.12.1925.

²⁷⁹ ›Great White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 03.11.1926.

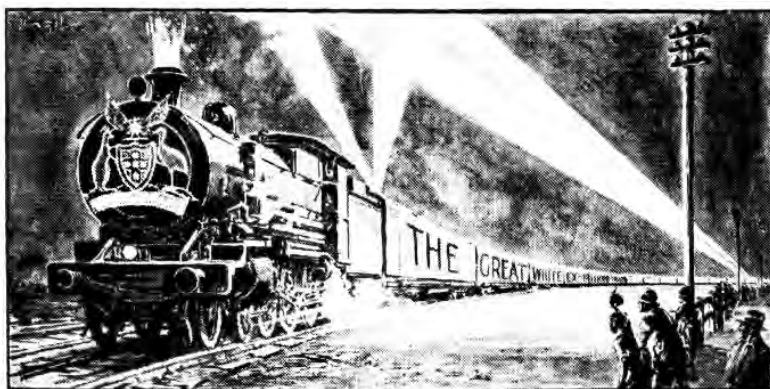
²⁸⁰ ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League: Why You Should BUY ›Australian Made‹, p. 4.

²⁸¹ ›New Tariff‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 30.12.1929 (›excellent‹).

²⁸² See ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League: The ›Australian-made‹ cookery book and housewives' guide and id.: Why You Should BUY ›Australian Made‹.

²⁸³ See ›Great White Train‹, in: Northern Star, 20.09.1926.

way-based advertising campaign.²⁸⁴ For this, it seemed essential to form a complementary interrelation between the towns and the rural districts which would encourage each other in growing and developing.²⁸⁵ To unite city and countryside, the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League organized the ›Great White Train‹ and sent on »a great mission – the breaking-down of the antagonism existing between the rural districts and the metropolis«, exhibiting the »emphatic refutation of the silly old lie that Australia cannot manufacture high-grade goods«.²⁸⁶



*Fig. 65 – Spectacular display on train:
The ›Great White Train‹ on its way*

The train as a promotional medium was not uncommon in the nineteen twenties. The ›Great White Train‹ was part of a broader conglomeration of railway-based advertisements.²⁸⁷ Before and after the two-part tour of the ›Great White Train‹, the ›Better Farming‹ trains, promoting agricultural techniques and appliances of the primary industries, and the ›Reso‹ (Resources) trains, attempting to bring city and province closer together

²⁸⁴ ›Great White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 11.02.1926.

²⁸⁵ Cf. ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League: Why You Should BUY ›Australian Made‹, p. 4.

²⁸⁶ ›The Great White Train‹, in: Singleton Argus, 03.12.1925 (›mission‹); ›The Great White Train‹, in: Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate, 12.01.1926 (›lie‹).

²⁸⁷ Five years after the ›Great White Train‹, Great Britain had its own train propagandizing political consumerism. In contrast to the appeal for ›white‹ consumption in Australia, the ›Buy British‹ campaign, whose posters the train featured, was easily combinable with the ›Support the Empire‹ campaign, and did not preclude the consumption of colonial products, for instance tea and coffee, as long as it improved the trade links within the Empire. For the British campaigns, see Stephen Constantine: Buy and Build; id.: Bringing the Empire Alive.

and including the visitation of local industry, were traversing New South Wales and Victoria to bring forth educational and commercial messages to interested visitors.²⁸⁸ Common was also the addressing of a broad audience, which included the invitation of school classes for demonstrations and lectures. Unseen before was certainly the broadness of the public's involvement. Thousands of visitors flocked to visit the train, cities hosted Australia-themed shopping events, the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League distributed postcards and other paraphernalia, and newspapers published numerous pictures of the train's glory (Fig. 65).²⁸⁹

The League's formula seemed simple enough: with the »industries of a nation [being] its life blood«, the increase in demand for nationally produced goods would lead to an increase of employment; the increased demand for workers would provide a pull factor for potential (European) immigrants; and this, in turn, would help populate the continent.²⁹⁰ Ultimately, this greater population was supposed to secure the continent against the alleged threat of Chinese and Japanese land-taking based on their ›surplus‹ population needing room for expansion. Following the line of argumentation in terms of the ›empty North‹, the official representatives of the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League put emphasis on the »national peril in leaving so many comparatively empty spaces in Australia« in the light of possible »Japanese invasion« as a »menace to higher civilization«.²⁹¹

Shortly before the eve of the ›Great White Train's‹ Christmas break from its first tour through New South Wales, the Melbourne ›Punch‹ presented its readers with an ›All Australian meal‹. Composed on the »basic criterion [...] that all the ingredients had to be produced on or from Australian soil« – and narrated not as a satire, but in a »very serious article« which attempted to »give every state a mention« –, the selection of the menu clearly depicted unification in consumption of those Australian states – the Northern Territory and Western Australia were left out – which were home to the majority of European population and would thus be considered prin-

²⁸⁸ For the ›Better Farming‹ trains, see for example ›Agricultural Education‹, in: West Australian, 05.07.1918; ›Better Farming Train‹, in: Advertiser, 23.03.1925; ›Better Farming Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 19.05.1927; for the ›Reso‹ trains, see ›Resource Train Leaves‹, in: Argus, 20.11.1922; ›Reso Train Returns‹, in: Argus, 27.11.1922; ›The Railways‹, in: West Gippsland, 25.03.1930.

²⁸⁹ ›Buy ›Australian-made‹ and Build Australian Trade‹, in: Northern Star, 22.09.1926. The postcards and many pictures in the newspapers had the train's inscription (›Buy Australian Made‹) and were made more readable by retouching or altering the picture to say ›Great White Train‹.

²⁹⁰ ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League, in: Queanbeyan-Canberra Advocate, 21.10.1926.

²⁹¹ ›The Great White Train's Tour through the Northern Districts‹, in: Singleton Argus, 28.11.1925.

cial to ›white Australia‹.²⁹² In the same vein, the manufacturing of goods and their national linkage had an explicit racist character. Besides providing employment and keeping profits within the country, products made in Australia were furthermore seen as being free of »sweated or coloured labour«, which was a feature of »products of foreign countries«. Thus, the ›whiteness‹ of the products was closely tied to its production processes as has been, and continued to be, the case with ›white‹ sugar.²⁹³ Of course, the companies exhibiting on the ›Great White Train‹ utilized this nationally benefitting approach to work conditions for the advertising of their products.²⁹⁴

»The train is more than a train, it is an exhibition«, cited the ›Northern Star‹ the League's promotional texts. »It is more than an exhibition; it is a demonstration of our capacity to do, not some kinds of work, only, but all kinds of work – to utilise, not some of our resources, but all our resources«.²⁹⁵ Some called the endeavour »a gigantic undertaking with the object of awakening in the minds of the country people an appreciation of the merits of the Australian article«;²⁹⁶ others, the »greatest enterprise yet launched by the manufacturing and commercial interests specially concerned«.²⁹⁷ Religionizing consumption, the train was described as »spread[ing] the gospel of preference for Australian-made goods«, »preach[ing] the doctrine of preference« and »convert[ing] the people to buy Australian-made goods«.²⁹⁸ In any case, the ›Great White Train‹ was a mobile version of interstate and international exhibitions. Travelling through the countryside to towns and villages along the rail tracks, it enabled visitors from rural districts to experience in miniature version the atmosphere of an exhibition in their closest-by city.

The outlook of the train regularly astonished the visitors and reporters. Besides sleeping cars, a dining car and power and water supply, the train consisted of fifteen semi-louvred vans. The displays were set up in the latter vans, which accommodated two or more exhibiting firms. The transitions between the compartments were bridged with planks, creating an almost seven-hundred-foot long promenade through the whole of the ex-

²⁹² Richard Beckett: *Convicted Tastes*, p. 106.

²⁹³ ›The Great White Train‹, in: *Northern Star*, 08.06.1926.

²⁹⁴ See ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League: *Souvenir of the Australian Made Preference League and the Great White Exhibition Train*.

²⁹⁵ ›Great White Train‹, in: *Northern Star*, 07.08.1926.

²⁹⁶ ›Great White Train‹, in: *Singleton Argus*, 01.12.1925.

²⁹⁷ ›Sydney Day by Day‹, in: *Argus*, 09.11.1925.

²⁹⁸ ›Great White‹ Train, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25.08.1926 (›gospel‹); ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League: *Why You Should BUY ›Australian Made‹*, p. 3 (›preach‹); ›Great White Train‹, in: *Northern Star*, 16.09.1926 (›convert‹).

hibition.²⁹⁹ »[S]peeches and matters of general interest« were broadcast to the public and the nearby towns via the on-board wireless radio station.³⁰⁰ Messages of ›white‹ consumptions were heard in New South Wales and Victoria; the radio waves travelled as far as nine hundred and fifty miles.³⁰¹ The train was »[i]lluminated at night, a long line of white cars brilliantly illuminated by electric light« and had searchlights that sent rays of light into the night sky, which were »visible for miles« and signalized the presence of the train.³⁰² The locomotive bore the inscription »Advance Australia« and the contemporary Australian coat of arms with kangaroo, emu and the southern cross.³⁰³ The inside and outside of the »›Great White‹ Exhibition Touring Train« were painted in white enamel.³⁰⁴ The whole of the train bore in great red letters the slogan »Buy Australian-Made« on the one side and »Australian-Made Preference League Exhibition Train« on the other.³⁰⁵

Not only was the physical appearance of the train the »outward and visible sign of the League«, but its message of »Australian Made« was thought to have a »mental effect of permanent advertising value« on the visitors and onlookers of the train.³⁰⁶ In the same vein, the label ›Great White Train‹ surely did have a ›positive‹ effect in terms of racist symbolic capital. The movement of preference for Australian-made products was seen as »a bold one« which »appeals to the consideration of every loyal Australian«.³⁰⁷ Though openly encouraging people from all classes and all ages to participate in the celebration of a technological advancement that was confined to Australian products only, the connection between the

²⁹⁹ Cf. »Australian-Made‹ Train«, in: Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate, 25.08.1925.

³⁰⁰ ›Great White Train‹, in: Singleton Argus, 28.11.1925.

³⁰¹ ›Transmitter on the Great White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 12.05.1926.

³⁰² ›The Great White Train‹, in: Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate, 12.01.1926 (›illuminated‹); ›Australian-Made‹, in: Singleton Argus, 24.10.1925 (›visible‹).

³⁰³ Cf. ›Exhibition Train of Australian Products‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 12.11.1925.

³⁰⁴ The white paint and enamel was provided by Lewis Berger & Sons – ›Altering the Coaches‹, in: Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate, 29.09.1925; ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League: Souvenir of the Australian Made Preference League and the Great White Exhibition Train, pp. 26, 66, 89. Curiously enough, the firm founder was a German, who founded his company in Britain. His son relocated the principal office for tax reasons to the United States of America and exported his paints to, amongst other countries, Australia, before setting up a paint-making factory there at the end of World War I – for the »Berger story« see ›Portrait of a Young Gentleman in Colour‹, in: Argus, 07.12.1954; see also ›Announcement by Lewis Berger and Sons‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 30.01.1920.

³⁰⁵ ›Altering the Coaches‹, in: Singleton Argus, 29.09.1925; Souvenir postcard, reprinted in John R. Newland: The Great White Train, p. 267 (›Touring‹).

³⁰⁶ ›Great White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 24.11.1925 (›sign‹); ›Sydney Day by Day‹, in: Argus, 09.11.1925 (›Buy‹ etc.).

³⁰⁷ ›Australian-Made‹, in: Singleton Argus, 24.10.1925.

train's ›thousand feet of whiteness‹ and the ›whiteness‹ of the attendants was less obvious in the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League's publications. Nonetheless, the print media shows that the contemporaries knew without any doubt what the exhibition was about.³⁰⁸

›To develop Australia‹, it went almost without saying that one needed ›white people to make and use white Australian made goods‹ and that, in parallel to the protected ›white‹ cane sugar and its Australian-shaped commodity racism, ›[i]f a man was a patriotic Australian he should not object to pay a little more for his Australian made goods‹.³⁰⁹ The visitors of the ›Great White Train‹ were ›keen to hear [...] how they can assist to ›advance Australia fair‹‹.³¹⁰ The ›Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate‹ proclaimed the arrival of the ›Great White Train, with its great ›White Australia‹ lesson of ›Buy Australian-made‹‹, thus directly connecting the message of the train campaign with the ›white Australia policy‹.³¹¹

The ›Great White Train‹ lecturer Bagnall headed his essay on the train with a motto – ›White Australia can only be assured by a large-scale policy of development and settlement ... It is a great ideal and it is in danger‹ – written by the Italo-British economic theorist Leo Chiozza Money, who had just published his work ›The Peril of the Whites‹, following in general the line of argument by Pearson and Stoddard. He referred to this motto as containing the ›obvious truth‹ – undoubtedly a truth affected by nationalist and racist arguing – based on whose appreciation the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League was enabled to exist.³¹²

Additionally, the schoolchildren, repeating and paraphrasing the lessons they learned during the visit of the ›Great White Train‹, retold the connection between the Australia nation as a ›white‹ nation and the consumption of locally manufactured goods by reproducing the earlier life motto of the continent ›Australia for the Australians‹. Furthermore, to preserve ›a ›White Australia Policy‹‹ stood against the continued consumption of ›foreign made goods‹; likewise, immigration fostered by the expansion of the local industries was depicted as a central feature to the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League's campaign. This, in accordance with the ›racially‹ exclusionist and nationalist immigration policy,

³⁰⁸ Cf. ›The Great White Train‹, in: Horsham Times, 15.01.1926.

³⁰⁹ ›Dinner at Bangalow‹, in: Northern Star, 29.09.1926.

³¹⁰ ›True Patriotism‹, in: Queanbeyan-Canberra Advocate, 08.07.1926.

³¹¹ ›The Great White Train‹, in: Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate, 09.02.1926.

³¹² William R. Bagnall: The Great White Train, p. 52. For Money in the contemporary discourse, see also ›Rising Tide of Colour‹, in: Canberra Times, 14.04.1928, which applied Money's and Stoddard's theories to the Australian situation and paraphrased the latter's prognosis that the ›day of doom for the hitherto invincible White Races is not far distant‹ if the politics of limiting the population were not reconsidered.

was rather European-focused, as workers and settlers from »England and abroad« were the preferred clientele.³¹³

In a whole potpourri of ›whiteness‹, which was effected by the arrival of the ›Great White Train‹ in Lismore, the readers of the ›Northern Star‹ found embedded the parole of the ›*white heart*‹. The mayor acknowledged in a speech »the master mind behind the original conception of the great white train«, which he thought a »splendid advertising medium«. At the same time, he emphasized the efforts of local manufacturers »to show the members of the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League, that we too, are not lagging behind in developing our local industries«. In this context, he evoked the vigour »of the sons and daughters of the hardy old pioneers, who blazed the trail«. He reminded of the several stages of settlement and the time of the woodcutters, who cleared the wilderness and with this made possible the »sugar cane days« with its plantations and mills. Apparently, in his memory, there had been neither Aborigines who helped with the construction of fields nor South Sea Islanders who harvested the sugar cane. Sugar seemed to have been a ›white‹ issue from the start: »Men came from the city to engage in the work of cane cutting«. Subsequently, he called on the listeners to emulate the pioneer days of their ancestors. In doing so, he blustered into a rhetoric which put on a level war and consumption – and thus declared the latter a service to the country: »We cannot forget with what spontaneous loyalty our men went to fight for the Motherland when in danger, and I insist that every true Australian will buy goods made by their own countrymen«. ³¹⁴

This bellicistic invocation to racistly connoted consumption was not by chance. It expressed, on the contrary, the general mood spread by the ›Great White Train‹ and was also a direct reply to the »official of the train« who, on occasion of the »final rally«, made a »lengthy address« to the great number of visitors (within the three-day-stop in Lismore ten thousand people visited the train). His message warned in particular against the ›Japanese peril‹, which could only be averted if the Australian succeeded »to people the country with our own flesh and blood«. Precondition for this was »employment« which, in turn, necessitated that the Australians agreed »to buy Australian-made goods«. This call to national consumption was stylized to constitute participation at a heroic defensive battle that was supposed to preserve »a great white Australia« for the »Australian race«.

³¹³ ›Prize Essay from Bungendore‹, in: Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer, 17.12.1926 (›Australians‹, ›White Australia Policy‹, ›foreign‹, ›England‹).

³¹⁴ ›Address by the Mayor‹, in: Northern Star, 27.09.1926 (›master mind‹, etc.).

For this endeavour »it may be possible that aggressive tactics will have to be adopted«.³¹⁵

The readers of the ›Northern Star‹ only had to concentrate their attention on the next page to be made aware of whereto ›aggressive tactics‹ in the consolidation of war and commerce could lead. Here it was reported, that three British merchantmen had ascended the Yangtze River at full speed and, in the course of this, had sunk Chinese ships, which caused the drowning of hundreds of people. When the Chinese attempted to enter the merchantmen, a British cruiser had opened fire. Later on, other warships had bombed the city Wahnsien and killed thousands of civilians.³¹⁶ The newspaper may have given a disapproving account of this incident. But the report was placed beneath a longer article about the improved armament of the Chinese, who at Wahnsien had made a good defence with their modern artillery. Furthermore, the influence of the communist would increase dramatically, and this would not least manifest in the attacks of British soldiers. The important city Hankow, for instance, »appears to have become completely ›Red‹, and the citizens [...] are frequently stoning British marine officers«.³¹⁷

Directly besides this biological-political conglomerate of a ›red-yellow peril‹ stood the praise of the ›white heart‹ – in an article on the ›Boys' Week at Byron Bay‹ that through the »Bright Healthy Young Australians« in the subtitle had already gotten the meaning which the camp's slogan phrased as the proclamation »Be British«. The education of the boys in terms of ›citizenship‹ proceeded accordingly. The parole ›Be British‹ turns up again in the maxim »›citizenship‹ meant Empire builder«. The adage »that citizenship was like charity« was linked to the suggestion that young people should choose the word »service« »as their life's motto«.³¹⁸

When the thus adjusted ›bright healthy young Australians‹, together with their unhidden persuaders, were visiting the ›Great White Train‹, they may not have known whereof it was spoken when it was explained to them that »*the way to keep Australia white was to have a white heart*« – but the request connected with this they understood only too well. ›Young Australia was feeling threatened by comparatively old nations. Japan had developed into a powerful empire and, at the Paris Peace Conference, had self-assertively demanded its ›racial‹ equality that could only be forestalled

³¹⁵ ›Great White Train‹, in: Northern Star, 27.09.1926 (›official‹, etc.). See also the sugar advertisements in the previous subchapter 6.3 ›Think the Matter out‹.

³¹⁶ Cf. ›Britain Blamed‹, in: Northern Star, 27.09.1926 (China).

³¹⁷ ›Chinese Well Armed‹, in: Northern Star, 27.09.1926 (›Red‹).

³¹⁸ ›Boys' Week at Byron Bay‹, in: Northern Star, 27.09.1926 (›Bright‹ etc.).

by the firm objection of the Australian Prime Minister. China, in turn, appeared evermore unpredictable, not least due to the increasing influence of the communists during the First United Front with the Kuomintang.³¹⁹

Moreover, Australia was not only up against the ›rising tide of colour‹ but was also concerned with the still fresh memories of the painful defeat of their own soldiers against enemy troops which, according to Australian perception, hardly deserved the description ›white‹. In Lismore, the mourning of the fallen of Gallipoli was not only kept alive by the public debate about the erection of a memorial for the dead soldiers. Also, during the stay of the ›Great White Train‹, the ›Pat Hanna's Diggers‹ were in town, and their ›entertainment‹ promised ›genuine Australian war touch‹.³²⁰ Under such conditions, ›citizenship‹ could only be located (with racist signs) between ›Empire‹ and ›nation‹. This allowed for the short-circuiting of ›whiteness‹ with ›Britishness‹ and the making of the ›Australian race‹ the guarantor for both. ›To keep Australia white‹ was thereby declared a heroic task which served not only the rescue of the nation but also the preservation of the Empire. Its accomplishment could only succeed if it was made both a habit and a matter of the heart. *Whole-hearted racism* was a moral quality, which penetrated the whole person and conducted each of their actions. Even the most despicable act of combat was provided by it, with an aura of unselfish dedication to the protection of the ›white‹ race.

The print media contributed to the dissemination of this message. Oftentimes, the newspaper coverage of the forthcoming arrival of the ›Great White Train‹ in the respective towns filled more than one page in the local issue. Besides pointers on when and how it was best to visit the train, schedules for the train's arrival and departure were listed, visiting hours, events and the broadcast programme were announced, the exhibiting companies and the local businesses advertised their products, traffic news informed of roadblocks and traffic diversions, pertinent literary and poetic works were published, and calls for the dressing of shop windows and the submission for essays were made.³²¹ At many times, there was an additional social component to the events surrounding the train. In towns

³¹⁹ Cf. Naoko Shimazu: Japan, Race and Equality; Edwin Pak-Wah Leung: Historical Dictionary of the Chinese Civil War, pp. 150-152 (›United Front, First‹) – my emphasis.

³²⁰ ›Pat Hanna's Diggers‹, in: Northern Star, 25.09.1926 (›entertainment‹); cf. ›Pat Hanna's Diggers‹, in: Northern Star, 27.09.1926; for the digger myth, see Graham Seal: Inventing Anzac. For the previous information, see ›Memorial Hall‹, in: Northern Star, 12.07.1922; ›Lismore Memorial‹, in: Northern Star, 12.05.1925; ›Dragged in Mud‹, in: Northern Star, 09.12.1925.

³²¹ See, for example, the issue of the ›Singleton Argus‹ of 28.11.1925 or ›Great White Train‹, in: Queanbeyan-Canberra Advocate, 21.10.1926.

like Scone and others, fundraising activities benefitted the local hospitals. The Dubbo District Hospital, for instance, was supposed to receive money from the revenues of a carnival organized on occasion of the train's stay.³²² The Red Cross Society organized refreshment booths.³²³

Everywhere the ›Great White Train‹ went, it attracted large crowds of people willing to stand in line for hours to visit the train and receive the message of Australian preference.³²⁴ It took one hour to see the whole exhibition on board the train and many visitors returned for a second or third time.³²⁵ Already after its first day in Newcastle, it was reported that almost four thousand five hundred visitors had seen the train, many became members to the League and signed »a pledge to at all times give preference to ›Australian-Made‹«. It was expected that the overall figure of visitors at this town would exceed ten thousand.³²⁶

The overall statistics for the train campaign vary from source to source. Upon the conclusion of the first tour in late May 1926, about two hundred seventy thousand people had visited the train that had toured for half a year on a course of two thousand eight hundred miles with sixty towns, and twenty thousand had enrolled as members of the League, stated the ›Sydney Morning Herald‹.³²⁷ The official ›Australian-Made‹ Preference

³²² Cf. ›Annual Meeting‹, in: Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate, 02.02.1926; for Lismore hospital, see ›At Byron Bay‹, in: Northern Star, 28.09.1926; for Murwillumbah ›Red Cross Society‹, in: Northern Star, 06.10.1926.

³²³ See ›Committee Meeting‹, in: Northern Star, 18.09.1926.

³²⁴ See ›Australian-made‹, in: Northern Star, 25.09.1926. Though the movement for the preference of Australian goods was explicitly »a non-party movement [...] which] was out to benefit every man, woman, and child in Australia«, political support came in particular from the Labor Party, which »was whole-heartedly behind the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League« – ›Great White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 17.11.1925. The cost of the first endeavour was calculated with £50,000, of which the government subsidized one tenth (£5,000) – ›Buy Australian-Made‹, in: Industrial Australian and Mining Standard, 09.07.1925, cited in Frank K. Crowley: Modern Australia in Documents, p. 405; ›Australian-Made‹, in: Singleton Argus, 24.10.1925. However, admission to the train was not free. A »small charge of 6d. would be made for admission to the train«, children had to pay half-price; in the light of the received governmental subsidies, this did not remain without critique – ›Great White Train‹, in: Singleton Argus, 14.11.1925; ›The Great White Train‹, in: Northern Star, 13.03.1926. The weighted average Australian wage for adult males in 1926 was between 90s. 10d. (domestic industrial group) and 111 s. 5d. (books & printing) per week; for females between 47s. 8d. (food, drink) and 52s. 10d. (wood & furniture; engineering; books & printing; other manufacturing) – see Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics: Official Yearbook 1927, pp. 525 (male), 529 (female).

³²⁵ Cf. William R. Bagnall: The Great White Train, p. 75.

³²⁶ (Untitled), in: Singleton Argus, 19.11.1925; ›Great White Train‹ on tour, in: Singleton Argus, 21.11.1925 (›pledge‹, members, figure).

³²⁷ See ›Great White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 15.05.1926. John R. Newland: The Great White Train, p. 267, estimates that altogether three hundred thousand people from over one hundred towns visited the train, which had covered about four thousand one hundred miles.

League figures for the first tour indicated a course of over two thousand miles with visits to sixty »large provincial towns« and costs of £20,000. £5,000 thereof was subsidized by the government, £7,000 was paid by the manufacturers in the form of rent for their space on board the train, and £4,000 came from the admission charge of visitors.³²⁸

After some retouching and repairing to have »the pristine freshness restored«,³²⁹ the second tour of the ›Great White Train‹ to the North and South Coasts commenced at the end of August 1926. It was planned to take three months and visit thirty towns and was eventually witnessed by more than eighty thousand visitors (North Coast).³³⁰ A further subsidy, half the first one, was paid for the second tour.³³¹ At the time of October 1926, »the message [...] – preference to ›Australian made‹ – has been delivered to 109,702 people in over twenty towns« on the second tour.³³² Nearly seven hundred thousand visitors in almost one hundred towns had seen the ›Great White Train‹ since its first departure in November 1925, claimed one newspaper, other sources estimate the number of visitors at half a million and the travelled miles at over four thousand five hundred.³³³

In the societal events accompanying the train, the entanglement of consumerism and nationalist ›whiteness‹ came full circle. The celebratory send-off for the second tour of the train in Sydney was concluded by the singing of ›Advance Australia Fair‹ while the train »moved slowly out of the yard on its northward mission«. At several dinners during the tour, »Advance Australia« was the toast of choice. In several cities, choirs of school children or bands welcomed the ›Great White Train‹ with ›Advance Australia Fair‹.³³⁴

³²⁸ ›The Great White Train‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 18.06.1926. »The smallest space an exhibitor could take was one-sixth of a truck at a charge of £3 15/ per week. The cost of the whole truck was £20 per week« – ›Industrial Association‹, in: Auckland Star (NZ), 02.02.1926. »Sales of space ranging from £99 for one-sixth of a truck to £520 for a whole truck« – ›The Great White Train‹, in: Horsham Times, 15.01.1926.

³²⁹ ›Great White Train‹, in: Queanbeyan-Canberra Advocate, 15.07.1926.

³³⁰ ›Great White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 09.10.1926.

³³¹ See ›The Great White Train‹, in: Barrier Miner, 23.06.1926. The payment of the subsidy was publicly criticized in the towns which opposed the implementation of the ›Great White Train‹ – see Week to Week‹, in: Windsor and Richmond Gazette, 16.07.1926 which reprinted an article of the ›Cowra Guardian‹.

³³² ›An Eye-opener for Queanbeyan‹, in: Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer, 26.10.1926.

³³³ See ›Message of Thanks‹, in: Queanbeyan-Canberra Advocate, 28.10.1926; ›A Desolate Scene‹, in: Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer; ›Great White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 02.11.1926.

³³⁴ See ›Great White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 25.08.1926 (›mission‹); ›At Byron Bay‹, in: Northern Star, 29.09.1926; ›The Great White Train‹, Northern Star, 02.10.1926.

The train campaign did not always meet with favour. This, however, was rather based on competition within Australia than on the general message of applying to manufacture the same restrictions that were made on human immigration. It was the circumstance that, though claiming to encourage national manufacturing, the exhibiting companies were almost exclusively confined to firms from the state capital. This one-sidedness of the badge of ›Australian-made‹ was held against the League, and the subsequent promotional overpowering of the rural business was criticized.³³⁵ The ›Great White Train‹ »would have the result of ›boosting‹ city business houses at the expense of country firms«, claimed a chamber of commerce and was seconded by another one.³³⁶

In Lismore, too, despite the ›Great White Train‹ being celebrated by a great number of citizens, vociferous protest stirred. A prominent resident identified the proceedings as a plot by a »small coterie of Sydney manufacturers« who favoured the development of a centralized metropolis. The Lismore chamber of commerce was judged as being »detrimental to local business people«. Arguing that the governmental subsidy to the establishment of the train was »spoon-feeding Sydney manufacturers«, debates in the chamber of commerce negotiated the compatibility of the exhibiting firms with the local commerce.³³⁷ Eventually, a motion to inform an inquiring chamber from a neighbouring town about the expected harmful factors for the local businesses was carried and investigation into who exactly was the sponsor of the campaign was decided.³³⁸ But the sources remained unidentified even by the Premier.³³⁹

The representatives of the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League, however, insisted on their campaign's encouragement of »prosperous manufacturing industries in country centres«. To substantiate their statements, they recited local business people from other towns, who confirmed a heightened desire to buy, based on the »whole-hearted enthusiasm for ›Australian-made‹« and increased sales revenues.³⁴⁰ But doubts remained, and the sense that behind the smokescreen of patriotic advertisement there

³³⁵ See ›Great White Train‹, in: Northern Star, 05.02.1926.

³³⁶ ›Great White Train‹, in: Northern Star, 20.01.1926.

³³⁷ ›Great White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 18.02.1926 (›detrimental‹); see also ›Great White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 05.02.1926 (also ›spoon-feeding‹).

³³⁸ Cf. ›Great White Train‹, in: Northern Star, 17.02.1926; see also ›Great White Train‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 18.02.1926; ›Great White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 18.02.1926; ›Great White Train‹, in: Brisbane Courier, 18.03.1926 (investigation); ›Great White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 18.03.1926.

³³⁹ Cf. ›Great White Train‹, in: Northern Star, 12.04.1926.

³⁴⁰ ›Great White Train‹, in: Northern Star, 05.02.1926 (›prosperous‹, ›enthusiasm‹); ›Great White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 19.02.1926; ›Great White Train‹, in: Northern Star, 19.02.1926.

was a promotional campaign of »great capitalistic concerns« increased.³⁴¹ With only thirty three of almost eight thousand firms in New South Wales being admitted to the train, those attending this »money-making, advertising stunt« paid to see »a few exclusive advertisements« which were pulled around the state under the pretext of national importance.³⁴² In addition, the truth content in the badge of ›Australian-made‹ was contested, since some »exhibitors showed articles which were entirely manufactured abroad, with the exception of a little joinery either for purposes of ornament or to contain the imported machinery«.³⁴³ Eventually, the chamber of commerce decided to organize a »manufacturers' week [...] in opposition« to the train's visit, which included the allotting of »window space« to local products.³⁴⁴ Other towns explicitly did not let themselves be influenced by the Lismore decision.³⁴⁵ And, eventually, even Lismore gave in, was visited by the train and had one of the most extensive newspaper features on the train campaign.³⁴⁶

The reply initiated by the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League connected anew the necessity to encourage Australian-made goods on the »home market« and consequently the employment of skilled Australian workers with the closeness of »teeming land hungry« populations in China and Japan. It thus unveiled their intentions to encourage the consumption of ›white‹ goods.³⁴⁷ In consequence of allegations to foster only the metropolitan businesses, the second maxim of the subsequent tour – besides ›Buy Australian-Made‹ – became »Shop in Your Own Town«.³⁴⁸

³⁴¹ ›Gleanings‹, in: Singleton Argus, 20.03.1926; see also ›Trainload of Salesmen‹, in: Northern Star, 19.03.1926.

³⁴² ›The Great White Train‹, in: Northern Star, 13.03.1926.

³⁴³ ›Great White Train‹, in: Northern Star, 17.03.1926; see also the letter to the editor by the North Coast Chamber of Manufacturers ›The Great White Train‹, in: Northern Star, 08.06.1926, which declared itself »not opposed to the train in principle, but to its composition« of »not truly representatives of the Australian manufacturing industries«. Even more enraging for the ›true whites‹, rumours had it that »foreigners« were employed on board the train. The »absurd canard« that »Chinese and Japanese cooks and stewards« would travel the country, hidden in the ›Great White Train‹, was declared a »gross misrepresentation«. It was refuted by the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League, which, by ascertaining that »every employee is a ›dinkum Aussie‹«, made obvious that the ›whiteness‹ of the ›Great White Train‹ was more than a hue – ›No Foreigner on ›Great White Train‹, in: Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate, 26.02.1926.

³⁴⁴ ›Great White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 13.05.1926; ›White Train‹, in: Northern Star, 12.05.1926 (›window space‹).

³⁴⁵ Cf. ›Parochial Lismore‹, Northern Star, 25.05.1926 (for Casino); ›Great White Train‹, in: Northern Star, 25.05.1926 (Kyogle's rely).

³⁴⁶ Cf. ›Matters set right‹, in: Northern Star, 20.07.1926; see issue of 22.09.1926.

³⁴⁷ ›Great White Train‹, in: Northern Star, 25.03.1926.

³⁴⁸ ›Two ›White Train‹ Maxims‹, in: Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer, 03.08.1926.

On the first tour, thirty-six »products [...] from machinery to milk chocolate, and from furniture to preserved fruits« were exhibited.³⁴⁹ All the exhibiting companies weighed in on the need for progress through patriotism and defence through industrial development, with an emphasis on the special Australian situation. Their products were deemed to be favourable to settlement in unsettling spaces. A windmill producer »stabilise[d] the water supply throughout the vast stretches of Australia«, with their mill so »absolutely suited to Australian conditions«, for those gaining a living off the soil. Hats were meeting the requirements of Australia's various »climates«, which also turned undesirable imports (rabbits) from »a pest into profit«. Other firms »have helped to build up the Australian sentiment«, fought »against foreign competition of the deadliest sort«, or sold the »spirit that made Australia's name«.³⁵⁰ The pledge coupon to enrol as a member of the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League – »Be a Good Australian!« – was followed by advertisements telling potential consumers that the firms did handle »no Chinese furniture«, that »a Good Australian« was constituted by them »when purchasing, buy[ing] Australian made«, and that they would »[b]ring [p]rosperity« to their country.³⁵¹ They could »prove patriots in peace« by thinking, speaking, eating and wearing Australian-Made.³⁵² The »Ten Points for GOOD Australians«, the plan the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League devised, pressed for financial, as well as ideological, support by the customers who, amongst other things, should »perform[] a duty« to his country by supporting the Australian industry, provide the means to help Australia become »a self-supporting country«, and not decline to use Australian products – for »the man who is ashamed to wear Australian boots, or an Australian hat, or an Australian suit of clothes made of Australian cloth is really ashamed of Australia«.³⁵³

Contrary to their ten-point manual for the »good Australians«, ³⁵⁴ which was rather androcentric in its demands, the train campaign was supposed to entice the whole population, no matter of which age, gender, class or political view. Besides being meant to bring together city and countryside by improving the public notion of the latter, and stopping the »drift« from the

³⁴⁹ ›The Great White Train‹, in: Horsham Times, 15.01.1926.

³⁵⁰ ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League: Why You Should BUY ›Australian-Made‹, pp. 5 (›supply‹, ›conditions‹), 7 (›pest‹), 8 (›sentiment‹), 9 (›competition‹), 20 (›spirit‹).

³⁵¹ ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League: The Great White ›Australian Made‹ Exhibition Touring Train, p. 13 (›furniture‹), 14 (›Good Australian‹), 15 (›prosperity‹).

³⁵² Ibid., p. 4.

³⁵³ ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League: Souvenir of the Australian Made Preference League and the Great White Exhibition Train, p. 106.

³⁵⁴ Ibid. or ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League: The Great White ›Australian Made‹ Exhibition Touring Train, pp. 3-8.

rural districts to the citted stretches of coast,³⁵⁵ the train campaign was also more than a »non-class movement [...] unit[ing] all classes in an earnest desire to develop the industries of Australia« and encouraging small businesses to participate in fostering consumption as an act of patriotism.³⁵⁶

The train's purpose was furthermore to provide those visiting with information which was overall class-spanning and gender-bridging. In the context of the train's preliminary advertisements, promotions directly called on women to visit the demonstrations on board the train.³⁵⁷ Several other products were directly advertised to female consumers.³⁵⁸ Palmolive, in particular, supported the women's fairness by offering that »school girl complexion«, the »clear pure colour« every Australian woman longed for.³⁵⁹ In addition, »ladies' afternoon[s] [...] given by the Australian-made Preference League« concluding with tea were held, and broadcasts were made on »How the Women Can Help to Build Australian Industries«. ³⁶⁰ Newspaper reports in several towns explicitly stated how crowds »of both sexes and of all ages gathered round« the train.³⁶¹

The presentations on board the train were twofold. Firstly, they exhibited achievements emphasising the newest and highest technological knowledge – like irrigational schemes, machinery for industrial processing and farming which were not useable for home manufacture and had mostly informative value. Secondly, home appliances, foodstuff and everyday objects which could be marketed to everyone. The events surrounding the stay of the ›Great White Train‹ were said to have educational value. The lesson to learn was recited on this occasion in another androcentric rhyme by Nelson.³⁶²

³⁵⁵ ›The Great White Train‹, in: Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate, 09.02.1926.

³⁵⁶ ›The Great White Train‹, in: Queanbeyan-Canberra Advocate, 21.10.1926.

³⁵⁷ See ›Are men interested in women's dresses?‹, in: Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate, 29.01.1926.

³⁵⁸ ›Back to School‹, in: Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate, 26.01.1926; ›Home Dress Making – and the Sewing Machine‹, in: Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer, 05.10.1926.

³⁵⁹ ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League: Souvenir of the Australian Made Preference League and the Great White Exhibition Train, p. 89.

³⁶⁰ ›Near and Far‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 20.05.1926; ›Great White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 20.10.1926 (›build‹).

³⁶¹ ›Great White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 15.05.1926.

³⁶² »He who buys ›Australian-made‹ | Helps to build Australian trade; | Inspires the skill and enterprise | From which great industries arise; | With factory workers who demand, | More of the products of the land, | Causing millions more to toil | On the ever-yielding soil – | Millions, who in turn must buy | The things the factories supply. | Till farms and factories far and wide | Grow and flourish side by side. | Thus shall our country one day be | Rich and powerful, great and free« – ›Australia's Manufacturing Achievements‹, in: Northern Star, 07.08.1926. See also John R. Newland: The Great White Train, p. 268.

Lectures were held, films were shown in the on-board cinema, talks in schools were organized, and demonstrations gave evidence of the new heights of product quality and technological knowledge. Apart from that, for the exhibiting firms, the tours also had promotional value. Though most of the goods could not be purchased on board the train, the producers' demonstrations of their goods induced orders for future supplies.³⁶³ The absence of shopping bags and the like – reminding of the absence of price tags at the exhibitions – can certainly be seen as furthering the virtual feeling of equality amongst the visitors since the assumption of ownership was postponed and at the time being merely imaginary.³⁶⁴ At some places, though, they »had the right to do business« in the morning hours in town.³⁶⁵



Fig. 66 – Picturesque presentation:
›Great White‹ Train and shopping weeks

Most of the manufacturers emphasized that their products were actually produced in the Commonwealth by providing models or photographs of the locations of their premises. Advertisements in the local papers heralded the coming of the respective firms and their products on board the ›Great White Train‹.³⁶⁶ Committees of »representative citizens and shop-keepers« were selected to accompany the stay of the train and be invited

³⁶³ ›Australian-Made‹, in: Singleton Argus, 24.10.1925.

³⁶⁴ Cf., for the price-tagless Great Exhibition, Thomas Richards: *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England*, pp. 38 f.

³⁶⁵ ›The Great White Train‹, in: Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate, 08.01.1926.

³⁶⁶ See for example ›Grainger & Falkiner‹, in: Singleton Argus, 28.11.1925; ›Mangrovite Leather‹ under ›Machinery‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 21.11.1925 or ›Sunshine Machinery and Engines‹, in: Singleton Argus, 26.11.1925.

to the on-board dinner.³⁶⁷ The ›Great White Train‹ cricket team challenged the local sports groups to games.³⁶⁸ Local businesses supported the train's visit and on their part advertised their products on location. In the towns where the train stopped, Australian-made shopping weeks were held, and only Australian-made goods were displayed and sold. The windows »created a truly Australian and carnival atmosphere«, they were adorned with »the League's slogans, stickers, show-cards, and large Australian maps, with flags and bunting«, »so that the lesson of the train is repeated in every shop window in every town«; and in each town, shopkeepers could win »a handsome shield [...] for the best dressed shop window«. It was made of »oak and silver« and was awarded to those who dressed their windows »revealing taste of a high order«. ³⁶⁹ Promotional posters were distributed all over town in shop windows and on billboards (Fig. 66).³⁷⁰

Particular attention was directed to the instruction of consumers-to-be. The train's radio station broadcast »[s]pecial verses and bedtime stories« for the »kiddies at the bedtime hour«. ³⁷¹ A visit of the ›Great White Train‹ was a welcome change in the school routine.³⁷² The integration of children into the ›education‹ about Australian products and consumption was in particular emphasized. Attaching »the highest importance to this aspect of its propaganda«, the official lecturer visited »all the schools in each country town, making short, bright speeches suitable to the age of the pupils«. ³⁷³ Nelson estimated that towards the end of the second tour about one hundred thousand school children had attended his lectures.³⁷⁴ Prizes for the best school children's essays were given away – all students under

³⁶⁷ ›Municipal Council‹, in: Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate, 25.09.1925; ›The Great White Train‹, in: Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate, 08.01.1926.

³⁶⁸ Cf. ›Great White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 11.01.1926.

³⁶⁹ ›Great White Train‹, in: Queanbeyan-Canberra Advocate, 21.10.1926 (›carnival‹, ›slogans‹ etc.); ›Great White Train on tour‹, in: Singleton Argus, 21.11.1925 (›lesson‹); ›Great White Train‹, in: Singleton Argus, 14.11.1925 (›shield‹); ›The Great White Train‹, in: Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate, 12.01.1926 (›oak‹, ›taste‹). See also ›Great White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 03.09.1926; ›Great White Train‹, in: Singleton Argus, 14.11.1925. For pictorial evidence, see ›Window Dressing Competition‹, in: Canberra Times, 21.10.1926.

³⁷⁰ Reprinted in ›Australian Made‹ Preference League: Souvenir of the Australian Made Preference League and the Great White Train, pp. 40 (›Great White Train‹), 41 (›Preference Week‹).

³⁷¹ ›White Train's‹ Wireless‹, in: Northern Star, 04.09.1926.

³⁷² ›Great White Train‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 16.11.1926.

³⁷³ ›The Great White Train‹, in: Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate, 12.01.1926 (›highest importance‹; Wallace Nelson: ›The Story of the ›Great White‹ Train in ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League: Souvenir of the Australian Made Preference League and the Great White Exhibition Train, p. 51. See also Wallace Nelson: The Story of the ›Great White‹ Train, p. 165.

³⁷⁴ ›Great White Train‹, in: Northern Star, 30.09.1926.

sixteen years of age were invited in a short text to share their view on the train and tell the readers »why Australians should always buy Australian-made goods and products«.³⁷⁵

Since at least some of the prized essays were reprinted in the local newspapers, more than having mere ›educational‹ value, the essays appeared as another underhanded advertising campaign. This was not least due to the circumstance that children were an apprehensive audience, and the message of the ›Great White Train‹ was a direct success with them. »›Australia for the Australians‹ if the community would buy ›Australian-made‹ goods«, proclaimed a fourteen-year-old boy in his prized essay, which persuasively linked the ›Great White Train‹ with the ›white Australia policy‹. Furthermore, by invoking the visions and pride the early settlers had of a future Australia, the achievements of the ›Great White Train‹ are again interpreted as the »thriving« and »prosperous« terminal point of an evolution of knowledge that could not only not have been achieved without the pioneers' and their descendants' »ambition« and industry. But it also leaves out those members of the population who – despite being involved in the ›development‹ of the country, like the Aborigines, the Pacific Islanders and all other ›undesired‹ yet exploited immigrants – are not counted amongst the producers of »Australian-made« goods.³⁷⁶

This reproduction of the alleged historical valuelessness of the ›coloured‹ population exemplified the successful implementation of ›white‹ culture in the education of the children.³⁷⁷ This mass integration of school children in the propagation of the connection between ›whiteness‹ and ›Australianness‹, at latest, indicates the social character of ›whiteness‹: by no means was it so ›invisible‹ and ›normative‹ that it would be self-evident, rather it had to be permanently reconstructed and not least distributed via the curriculum.³⁷⁸ At least under the conditions of a settler society in the immediate proximity of ancient Asian cultures, and with a new imperial self-conception, ›whiteness‹ was not an implicit unquestioned phenomenon but required permanent self-assurance and comprehensive propaganda. The winning essays, unsurprisingly, repeated the aims of

³⁷⁵ ›Competition for Children‹, in: Singleton Argus, 28.11.1925. For one of the prizes see: <http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/collection/database/?irn=167766>.

³⁷⁶ ›Prize Essay from Bungendore‹, in: Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer, 17.12.1926 (›Australians‹).

³⁷⁷ Along the same lines, fictional de-education of ›white‹ children served as an element of cultural, in addition to physical, extinction in the invasion novels – cf. ›The Coloured Conquest‹ (Thomas R. Roydhouse), in: Clarence and Richmond Examiner, 06.09.1904.

³⁷⁸ For the invisibility of ›whiteness‹ see Richard Dyer: White; Steve Garner: Whiteness, in particular pp. 34 ff.; Birgit Brander Rasmussen, Eric Klinenberg, Irene J. Nexica, Matt Wray: The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness.

the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League, confirming its fostering of the »loyalty and patriotism« of Australians to their nation and their products; their emphasis lay on »recognition and preference for ›Australian-Made‹ products« and listed the contributing exhibitors. But even more interesting is the impression the presence of the train left on the children. The ›Great White Train‹ »forms a striking picture of dazzling white, glistening in the sun by day and reflecting the illumination of hundreds of electric lights by night« (Fig. 67).³⁷⁹



Fig. 67 – *For consumption and nation:
The train campaign's pamphlet*

The memory of the ›Great White Train‹ was incorporated into the public memory and remained with it for decades after the train had been retired. »Childhood memories stay with us all our lives«, answered the ›Sydney Morning Herald‹ a request of one of the »nostalgic readers who asked

³⁷⁹ ›Prize Essay‹, in: Canberra Times, 22.12.1926 (›patriotism‹, ›recognition‹, ›dazzling‹). The picture is the cover of ›Australian Made‹ Preference League: Souvenir of the Australian Made Preference League and the Great White Train.

for information about the Great White Train of their childhood« and added that it was »remarkable how many of our correspondents ask about the Great White Train, which toured New South Wales in 1925-6«, but it forfeit the possibility for a farther-reaching, critical historical contextualization.³⁸⁰

As a product of the primary industry, cane sugar itself was not on board the ›Great White Train‹. But, then again, it did not need to be. Besides its ideological presence as the first product to be ›true blue‹ in the ›white Australia‹ sense, and being a precedent for national consumption, it was physically present in other products. Sweets, bakery and other products on board the ›Great White Train‹ contained Australian sugar and in any case evidenced its quality. Jellex »depends for its raw materials on the finest quality of Queensland cane sugar«; Tooth's Brewery advertised the fact that the »whole of the enormous amount of sugar used is grown and refined in Australia«; and Davis Gelatine »utilises many thousand tons of Australian sugar«.³⁸¹

Its contemporary medial presence and its protection against sugar from overseas had already established the local cane sugar as a truly Australian foodstuff. And despite its main refiner, the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, being located in New South Wales, public understanding was that sugar was a product of Queensland because the northern state was the by far largest cultivator of sugar cane. Additionally, cultivated over the years in the context of the ›whitening‹ of the sugar industry since the middle of the eighteen nineties, sugar was now not only an Australian product but also an explicitly ›white Australian‹ product, which did not need promotion as a commodity itself but whose importance for the nation was rather conveyed by informational texts in the newspapers.³⁸²

³⁸⁰ ›Geeves‹, in: Sydney Morning Herald, 02.12.1982. For contemporary reactions, see the several letters by children in ›Children's Page‹, in: Northern Star, 06.10.1926; ›Children's Page‹, in: Northern Star, 13.10.1926; ›Children's Page‹, in: Northern Star, 27.10.1926. After the tour the train was dismantled and used as a ›Better Farming Train‹ in New South Wales, educating the people of farming districts about technologies and processes of the primary industry – cf. ›A Desolate Scene‹, in: Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer, 26.11.1926; ›Farewell‹, in: Queanbeyan-Canberra Advocate, 02.12.1926; ›Great White Train‹, in: Mercury, 11.01.1927. Throughout the duration of the campaign, the possibility of organizing own ›Great White Trains‹ in Tasmania and New Zealand were debated but eventually discarded – cf. ›Come to Tasmania‹, in: Examiner, 22.07.1926; ›Great White Train‹, in: Auckland Star (NZ), 22.11.1927. At the end of 1927, plans to organize a ›Great White Train‹ exhibition in Wellington failed – ›No Great White Train‹, in: Auckland Star (NZ), 08.12.1927. In 1928, these thoughts re-emerged, and a ›Great White Train‹ was planned to travel both islands, advertising its secondary industry, but no further actions were taken – ›New Zealand Goods‹, in: Auckland Star (NZ), 08.05.1929.

³⁸¹ ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League: Souvenir of the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League and the Great White Train Exhibition, pp. 69 (Jellex), 91 (Tooth's), 123 (Davis).

³⁸² Nevertheless, there had indeed been plans in Queensland to organize a railway-based campaign through their state, as well. Having attended a demonstration of the »Victorian

With regard to the ›Great White Train‹, the prior campaigns for the consumption of ›white‹ sugar from Queensland in order to support of ›white Australia‹ – which had emerged and seized the consumers in the time after Federation and continued to prevail long after the ›Great White Train‹ was already retired – had only been the opening act to a broader campaign of consumer awareness for nationalist and racist consumption of Australian products.

In this context, Australian commodity racism was explicitly not based on the exploitation of ›black‹, ›brown‹ or ›yellow‹ labour, but on the exclusion thereof and on the reaffirmation of the supposed superiority of ›whiteness‹. It emerged at a time when ›white supremacy‹ was wavering, as evidenced not least by ›non-white‹ victories in war and sports and by scientific deliberations on the survival of the ›white race‹, and was largely influenced by the ideology of ›white Australia‹. Instead of unfolding its racist potential in the employment of stereotypical depiction of ›non-white‹ advertising characters, the propagandist advertising emphasized the value of ›white labour‹ and the social and ›racial‹ implications of its products.

As the campaigns for ›white sugar‹ and locally-manufactured products show, commodity racism in Australia shaped into more than mere nationalist consumerism. In contrast, for example, to the contemporaneous ›Buy British‹ and ›Buy Empire Good from Home and Overseas‹ campaigns,³⁸³ the Australian campaigns were not facilitating intra-Empire trade but pleaded for the production in the own nation of as many goods as possible. Here, more than economic independence was at stake – purchasing Australian products meant purchasing ›white‹ products. Also, other than the British campaigns, ›Buy Australian-made‹ unfolded a discriminatory potential by drawing on the exclusionist atmosphere of its time and on the Australian identity formed by outward demarcation. Both the initiatives to foster ›white‹ sugar consumption and preferred purchase of local

Better Farming Train‹ near Melbourne, the Queensland Commissioner for Railways publicly contemplated the possibility to employ such a vehicle with »demonstration cars to cover the sugar, cotton, and tropical fruit industry« on the tracks of Queensland. Given the huge area and its small number of inhabitants, however, the cost to cover the enormous distances would go beyond the constraints of available funds – ›Two Trains‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 26.06.1929 (›sugar‹). The ›Queensland Preference League‹, established in late 1925, organized events similar to shopping weeks and attempted to foster the consumption of locally manufactured commodities. One reader of the ›Brisbane Courier‹, however, thought the League should go paths similar to those the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League had taken and provide the children of the state with more information on »preferential patriotism« – ›Australian Preference‹, in: *Brisbane Courier*, 14.12.1929. Despite these efforts, the suggestions seem to have remained unanswered.

³⁸³ Cf. Stephen Constantine: *Bringing the Empire Alive*; id.: *Buy and Build*.

products legitimized their necessity with the special situation of Australia. It was the core of Australianness – egalitarianism, mateship and ›whiteness‹ – that was invoked and continuously reconstructed in contemporary newspapers, theatrical pieces, poems, songs, novels, public discourse and political debates. Based on this, the appeal for moral and financial support of Australian manufacture linked together the fears resulting from the geographical closeness and cultural remoteness of its neighbours with the notion of ›whiteness‹ and eugenic population policies in their society.

Filled with such pro-Australian ideology, the moral duty of consuming for ›white Australia‹ was understood, and willingly fulfilled, by the Australian consumers. These latter, enabled and supported by the nation, could see themselves as a community united in ›white consumption‹, independent of class or gender boundaries, and reinforced the stability of their ›whiteness‹ by purchasing ›white‹ products. Ultimately, Australian-made commodity racism and consuming ›white sugar‹ for ›white Australia‹ actually meant consuming ›whiteness‹.

7. Conclusion

›Sugar‹ accompanied the British history of Australia from the landing of the First Fleet (at latest) to the constitution of the Commonwealth (and far beyond). Despite the occasional shortage, its early allocation to convicts guaranteed a much faster spreading through society than it did in the mother country. This quickly created a broad community of cane sugar consumers. The belated domestic commencement of commercial cultivation saw the planters resorting to traditional notions of sugar workers and launched the recruitment of Pacific Islanders, who entered the country as temporary yet unfree workers. Subsequently, suspicions of slavery and debates about the composition of its largely ›coloured‹ workforce accompanied the prospering of the Queensland sugar industry.

Notwithstanding the labour movement's agency, pressing for the employment of British and European workers in the sugar industry, it was only with the Federation and its legislation, which detached the industry from its recruitment policies, that a demographic change to a ›white‹ industry was successfully effected. Though this nominally freed the sugar industry of its colonial associations, it was but the prelude to a deepened debate about its ›whiteness‹ and its role in ›white Australia‹. In this process, sugar served as the focal point of social relations and ascriptions.

The initial chemical blackness of the first specimen of Queensland sugar later rubbed off as social ›blackness‹ on everyone who showed ›deviant‹ behaviour, i.e. queried the integrity of ›white Australia‹ by employing ›non-white‹ workers, being ›not-white-enough‹ or impairing the ›white‹ workers' struggle for social justice. Its general division between colonial labourers and European consumers was upheld as long as ›aliens‹ worked the fields. Once the employment of the Europeans in the sugar industry increased, some of the consumers became the producers. Precisely because, as an important consumable good, sugar in post-Federation Australia concatenated production and consumption, it not only became the ›poster

food for ›white Australia‹ but also facilitated the emergence of a specific kind of consumerism.

At the time of Federation, consumerism in Australia was at the intersection of two discourses. On the one hand, the development of a national identity, which had been carefully created by both the establishment of Australianness and the call to defence against the nations and subjects who allegedly desired to challenge the British occupation of the Australian continent; on the other hand, western deliberations about ›white supremacy‹ on a global scale, which, though still wanting to place the ›white race‹ at the top, had to witness that its supposed superiority failed to prove well-founded in empirical observation. The former reflected the internal accentuation of ›suitable‹ features in persons considered ›truly‹ Australian – ›whiteness‹ and manhood loomed large in this context. The latter was the fear that the ›white race‹ would succumb to ›foreigners‹ and ›aliens‹, who were allegedly reproducing at much higher rates than the Europeans and were populating parts of the globe where ›whites‹ had yet scantily settled.

Consequently, ›whiteness‹ was held high in Australia as the principal feature of commonality and the sine qua non whose integrity had to be preserved even at high costs. Legislation and social action motivated by racism were meant to ensure the maintenance of the Australian society as a last refuge of the ›white race‹ in a geographically precarious location. In particular the exogenous threat of ›swamping‹ by Asian immigrants or invaders effectively created a concept of an enemy in juxtaposition to the Australian society, which was internally affected by intersectionality in terms of ›class‹, ›gender‹, ›race‹ and ›nation‹. Consumerism was a means for the broad interspersing of the everyday life in Australia with ›whiteness‹ that enabled a feeling of joint superiority, which could be experienced by all ›whites‹. ›Consuming whiteness‹ thus gave expression to keeping Australia ›white‹, on the one hand, and affirming the superiority of ›whiteness‹, on the other. It was in particular sugar in its doubly ›white‹ condition that was eventually considered the panacea of ›white Australia‹.

As in the other colonial contexts of Europe, ›whiteness‹ in Australia was a concept that emerged from situations of distinction, was constituted as a binding characteristic in society, and had to be defended against detrimental influences from the interior and exterior of the Australian society. ›Whiteness‹, at the turn to the twentieth century, was at the heart of national identity. Far from being invisible or the general norm in the Australian society, the inclusion and exclusion in terms of ›white‹ were constantly renegotiated. As a crucial element to the Australian national spirit, ›whiteness‹ was omnipresent: science fathomed its sustainability,

companies used it for advertising purposes, literature both celebrated it and warned about its vulnerability, newspapers reported about its shortcomings, politicians negotiated its preservation, and, last but not least, consumers debated and reconstructed it in the mundane and normalized activities of their everyday lives.

While Britishness was increasingly replaced by ›whiteness‹ as one of the characteristics of a ›true‹ Australian, Europeanness alone did not constitute a guaranteed admittance into the ranks of the ›desired‹ in all spheres of society. As the examples of the Italians and the Maltese show, the superficially biologicistic rationales – i.e. the purported historical infusion of African and Arabian ›blood‹ into the ›genetic blueprint‹ of the southern Europeans – was in actual fact supporting culturally discriminative behaviour, which targeted the allegedly inferior lifestyle of the unwanted competition. Then again, while in the context of ›white sugar‹ they were seen as being too ›dark‹ to be accepted as ›whites‹, in the broadened perspective of Australia being surrounded by people who were purportedly willing to conquer the continent by either clandestine immigration or hostile invasion, they seemed to be the perfect antidote to a ›black menace‹ and a ›yellow peril‹ in terms of population politics.

It was in particular the labour movement who construed ›whiteness‹ in these very narrow margins and, in distancing themselves from the ›coloured‹ labourers, substantiated the notion behind ›white Australia‹. This distinction was historically conditioned. Starting with the convicts, who made their first experiences of social inclusion in contradistinction to the original inhabitants of the Australian continent, and via the diggers on the gold fields, who put themselves in juxtaposition to Chinese miners and as such initiated their constitution as a class and movement to the strikes of the late nineteenth century, which targeted the employment and preference of Asian workers by Australian employers, the European workers of Australia acquired ›whiteness‹ and learned to emphasize it in their own interest. The struggle for jobs in the sugar industry had initially rather been an ideological one due to the absence of interest in employment on the part of the European workers. Once the jobs were emptied of their former occupants, however, the conflict was focalized on the circumstances of employment. The European workers newly recruited in the sugar industry had to overcome the traditional associations of the sugar workforce, i.e. allegedly being ›cheap and servile‹ labourers, and had to assert the value ascribed to them by the celebration of ›whiteness‹. Only after the sugar industry had additionally been freed of all these associations to the American sugar cane plantations, i.e. only after the European labourers were

employed under the conditions that were deemed appropriate for ›white‹ workers and were later declared to correspond to the comparatively higher Australian standard of living, the sugar industry could claim for itself to be the figurehead of ›white Australia‹.

When, after the Australian Federation, the consumers willingly supported the financial cost of the Queensland sugar industry in order to ensure the maintenance of their ›white‹ production, its perpetually emphasized global uniqueness was not simply the outcome of humanitarian deliberation about the unjust exploitation of ›coloured‹ workers. The ›white sugar‹ campaign was both an offer of evidence for and an invocation of the viability of ›whiteness‹. The Australian sugar farms with their ›white‹ planters and employees provided an, in their eyes, invigorating and auspicious answer to contemporary warnings about the equatorial areas being the domain of the ›black‹, ›brown‹ and ›yellow‹. The planters, who initially opposed the changes in their industry ostensibly for economic reasons, began to fall into line with this ›white Australia‹ ideology once the industrial struggle for improved conditions was settled. The success of the industry's transformation into a ›white men's industry‹ was eventually utilized by the sugar planters and capitalists to underline its prosperity and its importance for the maintenance of the nation. While, in turn, the emancipation from the colonial roots of cane sugar cultivation by the ›whitening‹ metamorphosis, precipitated by the employment of Europeans, enabled the sugar workers to understand themselves as fully ›white‹: biologically as born ›white‹, culturally as ranked ›white‹ and socially as paid ›white‹.

This was only possible because it rested firmly on the traditional hierarchy of ›races‹ which gave special value to ›whiteness‹. Historically, the racist discrimination between the different abilities of the people found expression along the lines of skin colour. This was translated into the labour hierarchy of sugar plantations, where the menial tasks were done by ›blacks‹ while the ›whites‹ were the supervisors of the gangs. In pre-Federation Australia, this ›colour line‹ was legislatively enforced by the confinement of Pacific Islanders to cane field labour while assigning skilled tasks to the European labourers, thus reducing unwanted competition. Because the earlier constitution of the ›white‹ working class as a ›class of their own‹ had happened not only based on ›race‹ in distinction to those deemed ›racial others‹ but also as a demarcation from the capitalists (the class which, in their eyes, enabled and fostered the presence of those ›others‹), the workers' pledge to ›whiteness‹ could be used as a discussional leverage against their purportedly ›race‹-betraying employers.

›Whiteness‹, however, was far more than a phenotypical description or a concept applied against non-Europeans. In its social construction, not only was it not a vested right but it also had to be earned and obtained. Behaviour deemed unruly, in particular if it seemed detrimental to the concept of ›white Australia‹, had as a consequence the taking away of this prestige. The consequence of this being that cane sugar, though in general succeeding in matching its ›social‹ colour with its chemical in the first decades of the twentieth century, was under the continuous suspicion of, in actual fact, occasionally being ›black‹ sugar. It could have been either cultivated or produced by those who were considered ›non-white‹. In a role reversal with their ›non-white‹ employees, it could be British-Australian planters who became socially ›black‹ by sticking to traditional ideas of plantation labour, which were considered undermining the Australian equality, and by insisting on the sugar industry's need for continued employment of Pacific Islanders to keep the industry from collapse. After the time of the demographic change of the industry's workforce, and during the subsequent strikes, this could be ›blackleggers‹, who were hired in the southern colonies in order to replace those labourers involved in the class struggle. During the first half of the twentieth century, this could also be cane sugar provided by Italian sugar planters who, in particular in the eyes of interest groups like the British Preference movement or the Housewives' Associations, were considered detrimental to both the ›white‹ industry and ›white Australia‹ and were furthermore deemed unworthy of ›white wages‹ financed via the consumers by taxes on sugar, as they were still regarded as being ›not-white-enough‹.

As such, ›white‹ was neither as clear-cut nor as invariable as it superficially seemed. ›Whiteness‹ as a marker of inclusion was a social ascription that could be accredited and denied as it was deemed fit. In turn, even people otherwise considered ›non-white‹ proved reconcilable with the idea of ›white Australia‹ when it became apparent that they did not succumb to the ›doomed race‹ theory but were, in the light of the ›race science's‹ findings, ›black‹ only on the exterior and inwardly ›Caucasian‹.

›Whiteness‹ showed its fallacious integrative power in the case of the original inhabitants of the Australian continent. Beginning in the last decades before Federation, Aboriginal Australians were incorporated into the programme of ›whitening‹ Australia as what later came to be known as the ›stolen generations‹, which were supposed to culturally and biologically merge into ›white Australia‹. This was also a process less motivated by humanitarian reasons but based on a social Darwinist reasoning supported by eugenic methods. As ›race science‹, at the end of the nineteenth century,

regarded them as predecessors of the Europeans, the original inhabitants of the southern landmass were considered generally ›advancable‹ in their status. The line of thought saw at least those Aborigines who, in the racial scientific logic, had ceased to be ›fully‹ Aboriginal capable of being brought up the ›white‹ and thus right way. The children of the Aborigines who beforehand were dislodged from their traditional countries, deported into reserves in favour of the agricultural land-taking or dwelling at the fringes of European settlements and sometimes even working for the planters or business people, were the targets of this desired ›absorption‹ into the ›white‹ society. After undergoing education and training, it was not uncommon for them to find employment as house maids to support ›white‹ women on farms and stations. The genotypical and phenotypical brightening was meant to be followed by cultural and educational enlightening at the (intentional or accepted) cost of family ties, history, tradition and heritage – but for the benefit of ›white Australia‹ and for the sake of ›racial‹ homogeneity.

Concurrently, ›whiteness‹ also enfolded its potency when, at the times of external endangerment by the so-called ›yellow peril‹ and in the light of possible hostile invasion, it cast a veil of equality over the social differences present in the Australian society. Overcoming internal tension areas in the context of ›class‹, ›gender‹ and ›nation‹ was the foundation on which the Australian colonies based their racist nation building to become the Commonwealth of Australia. ›Whiteness‹ was the identity-establishing basis on which the Australian society rested and which, promoted by the perceived pressure from outside, was extolled as virtue and aspiration.

Under these circumstances, the ›wages of whiteness‹ hard-won and earned by the ›white‹ sugar workers were complemented by ›profits of whiteness‹ and ›expenses of whiteness‹ for the whole society. The subvention of specific work for ›racial‹ reasons was reflected in profits which were the result of racistly motivated policies of market foreclosure and pricing. This brought about increasing encumbrances of the processing industries, the end-consumer and the taxpayer. The share of the ideological commitment necessary for the legitimization of these relations was initially unevenly distributed. Eventually, this was accomplished, if not jointly but along the same lines, with the support from governmental, entrepreneurial and union sides. The success of such an effort could be measured quantitatively by the unabated consumerist behaviour of the population. It would have nevertheless been hardly possible, had not its argumentation of the ›rhetoric of whiteness‹, on the one hand, unfolded in a climate which before and after the nation building was shaped by a broad basis of ›politics

of whiteness« and, on the other, had happened in an atmosphere which had been informed by a ›culture of whiteness«, in which a large part of the everyday manifestations of life were racistly connoted.

This being the case, racism at the end of the nineteenth century had not been the means but rather the motivation to transform the Queensland sugar production into a ›white« industry. Its historical 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 through the exclusion of discriminated against others as equal and thus constitute a community. The reference point for such a societalization was an altogether imagined category. Nonetheless, at the time of the First Fleet, it had already received scientific blessings and had, in the progress of the nineteenth century, been consolidated with the involvement of numerous sciences to form a universally accepted classification of humanity, according to hierarchically arranged ›races«. Applying this concept in order to understand themselves as equal posed a substantial challenge for a society whose social classes, according to the judgment of domestic politicians as well as foreign critics, opposed each other like two different nations. From the beginning, therefore, the social formation of the ›white race« was accompanied by a fear about its decay that was expressed in warnings of degeneration and led to demands for eugenics.

The situation at the colonial periphery presented itself as basically the same but was modified by the experience of its two-sided frontier. On the one hand, the violence of the land appropriation supported the solidarity of the colonists, on the other hand, they were thought prone to succumb to the violence of the circumstances or give in to the temptation of ›going native«. The colonists were thus not only the heroic occupants of colonial outposts of the so-called ›white race« but were also on probation and had to prove themselves successful in the face of (gender-specifically modified) apprehensions regarding their failure in extreme conditions.

In Australia, the part of the land declared the ›empty North« became the stage, and the development of the sugar industry the scenario, for such a spectacle. From the start, it was unable to follow a descended dramaturgy because slavery was officially abolished, and the process of colonization had been accompanied by racist claims and warnings. ›Black labour« was simultaneously considered both indispensable for a profitable production under tropical conditions and unacceptable for the opening up and retention of the continent for the ›white race«.

When the federational population policy pressed for the fostering of European settlement in the northern climes to support the latter processes,

sugar cane grown on small farms was identified as benefitting this process, as it enabled planters and their families to gain a foothold in agriculture and landholding. In order to generate ›suitable‹ migrational increment, advertisements for jobs in the sugar industry were not only published in the southern colonies of Australia, but recruitment offices in the northern countries of Europe were used to attract additional immigration.

Cane sugar itself was not free from a racist context when it arrived in Australia. Originating in a region northeast of the Australian landmass, sugar cane travelled via India and Persia to the Mediterranean. Travelling further westwards, it had acquired its characteristic as a plantation crop that was cultivated by the use of forced labour. After sugar cane had crossed the Atlantic, its plantation cultivation was in addition linked to slavery and thus shaped the association of forced, hence ›cheap‹, ›black labour‹ with the production of sugar. This was meant to be replaceable by ›white labour‹ – albeit only, on the condition of the deprivation of the European workers' rights, as convict labour.

Under these premises, the sugar cane setts had been taken to Australia, but when they eventually thrived, the convict system had already been abolished. The sugar production down under was therefore commenced following traditional patterns: as a plantation cultivation exploiting ›black labour‹. In search of a new location of labour recruitment, the planters turned to the islands of the South Sea. The arrival of Pacific Islanders as the sugar workforce in the latter half of the nineteenth century was accompanied by suspicions of forced labour and kidnapping. Both stood in the context of slavery and slave trade, which had been abolished in the mother country decades before, and which, it was then conjectured, were now to be implemented in Australia. Nonetheless, it was less philanthropy or the desire to amend crimes committed against the Pacific Islanders which brought forth regulations of recruitment and employment. The confinement of labourers from the islands to work in the cane fields was a means of protection on behalf of the ›white‹ agricultural workers who considered the ›blacks‹ unfair competition.

The presence of ›black‹ workers increasingly became a thorn in the side of Australia on its way to Federation, as it was not only seen as an economic problem affecting southern industries but also contradictory to the desired egalitarianism in Australia. The latter's understanding fed on elements of anti-aristocratic civism and socialist views of society, but owed its appeal mostly to the amalgamation of set pieces of contemporary racism. It also engulfed the conceptions of equality in the very same ›white‹ aura that coined all ideological conceptions, from the demands of

the women's movement to the labour movement, from the scholastic curricula to the directive of the reservations, from the programmes of the parties to the legislation of the individual states and the Commonwealth. This held true also when at the outset of the twentieth century, and due to the building of a nation based on racist legislation (the Immigration Restriction Act and the Pacific Island Labourers Act were two of the acts to be passed after Federation), the first step could be taken in the emancipation of Queensland cane sugar from its connection with a colonial plantation crop and the exploitative framework of slavery in which it was embedded in the West Indies. However, its transformation was, once again, not so much motivated by abolitionist deliberations as it was an element in a larger process of nation building that translated sugar cultivation into a new but still racist context.

The process initiated by the willingness to foster a demographic change in the workforce of the sugar industry by deporting the Pacific Islanders, and increasingly replacing them by ›white‹ workers, was the practical implementation of bio-power, which was caused by the threat in which Australia saw itself. The claim of ownership which the British asserted over the Australian continent necessitated their occupation of the landmass by settlement. However, the majority of the population was located at the seaside of the southern colonies, while the north – furthered by the initial conviction that the ›white race‹ could not prevail in tropic climes – remained thinly settled. The tropical north with its continued employment of ›coloured‹ workers in the agricultural industries, as well as the farms and plantations owned by non-European people, was, therefore, considered adverse to the interests of ›white Australia‹. Not only were they seen as the experienceable discrepancy between a racistly understood equality of all and the practical colour divide of the workforce and population; in the light of the exogenous endangerment of the Australian landmass, the presence of ›non-white‹ settlers was, moreover, seen as weakening the defence of the European-Australians, who were certain that the ›coloured‹ inhabitants would turn against the ›whites‹ and side with the Chinese or Japanese invaders. The slow pace of populating was meant to be accelerated by the fostering of agricultural employment. This being the case, the subdivision of the large sugar cane plantations during the phase of financial depression was the first factor in the struggle against the ›empty North‹, which was seen as being the gateway to invasion by Asian settlers.

The government-fostered employment of Europeans in the sugar industry was the last step in generating jobs by discouraging the recruitment of ›non-white‹ workers and, additionally, provided financial subsidies,

that allowed for an improvement of wages and work conditions. This latter, however, had initially only been nominal. It was not until the ›white‹ workers used their ›racial‹ distinction from the former sugar workers to discredit their own working conditions as inadequate for members of the ›white race‹ that they were able to transfer their racist symbolic capital, at least partially, into wages of whiteness. The latter, of course, were not least used for the purchase of Australian sugar and, later on, other products purported to support ›white Australia‹. The ›racial‹ equality substantiated by this event was thus based on the inclusivist element in the ›race‹-dividing, class-uniting ›whiteness‹ prevalent in the Australian society.

The uniting characteristics of ›whiteness‹ were shaped by a specific form of intersectionality of the categories ›class‹, ›gender‹, ›nation‹ and ›race‹, which was focussed on the character of the healthy, strong, justice-loving, national-conscious and ›race‹-proud male workers. It was he who pretended to protect the women of all classes from exotic temptations and disloyal imprudence; he allegedly needed to remind the capitalist class enemy of his duties to his nation and ›race‹; without him the individual colonies purportedly would never have overcome their egotistic partial interests in support of national unity; he was, therefore, also considered the guarantor of the ›racial‹ identity of ›white Australia‹; and, lastly, even the hope of the whole ›white race‹ supposedly rested on him.

And yet the ›worker‹ himself could by no means take for granted his manliness and ›whiteness‹. He had started out as a convict at the bottom of society and had to prove himself in his eventually won freedom against migrants from diverse origins. Furthermore, he was flanked by varying male class characters during the progress of colonization. The frontiers of civilization at which he had to prove successful in the cultivation of the country, as well as in the battle against the indigenous population, always stood in the centre of his probation (and, at the same time, he had to sow the seeds on which the women could survive and the children could thrive). Stationed in Queensland, he was able to benefit from the increased upward mobility that was enabled by the presence of a large group of ›coloured‹ workers employed for menial tasks. But, simultaneously, he felt threatened by their alleged undercutting and weakening of his position in the labour conflict which, as he successively asserted, he was only able to overcome by emphasizing his ›whiteness‹. As a bushman and pioneer, he had been ascribed the (romanticized) ›bush savvy‹ that was constituted by his prevalence against the rough nature of the outback, the alleged encroachments of the indigenous population and the lonesomeness of the bush. But with the growing urbanization, the ›uprooted‹ city dweller more

interested in leisure activities than the prosperity of the ›white‹ society formed the suspicious counterpoise to what was seen as the ›true‹ Australian. This was added by the circumstance that it was supposed to be the ›worker‹ and his family who were needed to ›conquer‹ the tropics and signal defence preparedness against purportedly encroaching neighbours.

In this atmosphere, the ›woman‹ had a tough time holding her own. For settlement in northern climes of Australia, her presence and her contribution to proliferation was inevitable. Yet – in contrast to the ›non-white‹ woman whose gender was overwritten by ›race‹ and her employability in the cane fields beyond doubt – it was considered uncertain for a long time to which extent it was possible for her to work and live in such an adverse climate. In the sexist zeitgeist, her pioneering work had mainly been narrowed to housekeeping. In the context of ›white Australia‹, her importance lay in her reproductive capability: she was to provide the appropriate progeny by bearing and educating the children. This eventually made her the weak point in the defence of the society. On the one hand, her increasingly politicized position and her role as householder made her a serious discussion partner regarding protectionism in terms of commodities. The progressive urban ›new woman‹ was even on the verge of forsaking her traditional role by pressing for her right to vote and work. This was seen as a masculinization of womanhood and as detrimental to the family-focussed position in society that she was ascribed. On the other hand, women were considered overly susceptible to the luring promises allegedly made in particular by Chinese and Japanese men. This made them potential ›race‹ traitors in the case of non-Europeans already living in Australia. But it constituted an even bigger threat in the event of Asian invasion, as they could voluntarily or forcibly compromise Australia's eugenic policies. The woman, presumably as morally frail as she was physically, with the help of the mind-weakening opium would fall prey to Asian temptations or to their overpowering violence and, carried matters to extremes, would not only be forever sullied in her reputation but would also not be available for ›white‹ procreation. According to a glut of political pamphlets and invasion narratives, she could only be saved from this shameful fate by the ›true‹ Australian man.

He was also the one to stand up against the ›capitalist‹. United in the labour movement and politicized in the Labor Party, he provided the opposition to the favouritism of employers for non-European employees. He was under the suspicion of prizing profit over ›race‹ and of starving of the ›worker‹. At a time when the immigration restriction had to be modified because Britain wanted to minimize any negative impact on their trade

agreement with Japan, his commercial relations with Asian business partners in Australia and overseas seemed to devoid the ›white‹ society of wealth and contribute to the enrichment of the ›others‹. Furthermore, he was seen as antagonizing the ›white‹ settlement in the north by preferring the recruitment of non-European workers or substituting Europeans with them. This was not only considered a manifestation of his self-enrichment and an affront to the ›worker‹ but was also undermining the ›white‹ population policy. It was only after Federation that his role model gradually changed until he was able to present himself as a defender of Australian commodities aiming for the maintenance of ›white Australia‹.

Nevertheless, the consolidation of the ›colonies‹ was anything but an undisputed programme. Instead, the elites of the individual colonies for a long time did their utmost to defend their sinecures and prevent an amalgamation. In the end, the problems of immigration restrictions turned the balance in favour of Federation. The demands for a more effective control of immigration directed the attention to the securing of exterior boundaries and thus reinforced the advance towards the Commonwealth. But on the way to Federation, too, Queensland proved to be a particular case. On the one side stood the representatives from the other colonies who considered Queensland's standing on the continued employment of the Pacific Islanders in sugar industry an obstacle to the fiscal and economic equality of the future states. On the other side stood Queensland itself, or in particular its financial interest groups. The insistence on the circumstance that without ›black labour‹ its sugar industry would collapse almost caused the exclusion of at least parts of Queensland from the merging of the colonies. The sugar capitalists supported the cause brought forth by the separationist movement to continue independently from the Commonwealth, and thus be able to maintain the recruitment of the Islanders for the industry. It was only the labour movement as a representative of the ›worker‹ who eventually tipped the scales in favour of Federation and, with this, of the ›racial‹ exclusiveness that lay at the heart of the ›white Australia‹ policy.

Against this backdrop, ›nation‹ and ›race‹ did well-nigh coalesce into a reciprocally conditional unity. Australia was ›white‹, and ›whiteness‹ was eventually indeed depended on Australianness as its warrantor. In this process, Australian ›whiteness‹ was eventually seen as the nucleus and guarantor of a world-wide ›whiteness‹. In times of eugenic debates and anxieties about degeneration, the Australian men – toughened by rural life and farm work – became the bearers of hope for the ›white race‹. They did not only stand the test in the day-to-day conquest of the bush but, at least in the realms of the British Empire, also as combat-ready soldiers.

In the course of the Boer War, but above all during the First World War, they became the ›diggers of the Anzac‹, who fought simultaneously for Australianness, Britishness and ›whiteness‹. In a nutshell, intersectionality in the Australian context was overly male-centred and class-focussed. It zeroed in on the ›bloke‹, who was willing and ready to face every enemy and every difficulty, and declared him the only one able to defend everyone and everything: the women of all classes, the capitalists, the nation and the whole ›white race‹.

The invasion novels, initially published at the end of the nineteenth century, identified this focus in fictive narrations, which pointed at the vulnerability of womanhood but also at the female susceptibility to foreign seduction. They unveiled the ruthlessness of capitalists who, for the sake of their profit, forsook their ›race‹ and either employed ›coloured‹ workers, or even did business with and enabled the establishment of business people from overseas. They found the saviours of ›white Australia‹ – many a time declared the last ›white‹ stronghold of the world – not in the ranks of the political decision makers, the plutocratic groups, the education elite and sometimes not even in the hands-on labour force, but in the traditional, elementary figures of the bushmen, who were brave and keen enough to outwit the invaders and restore Australia to its imputed greatness. In some cases, the portrayal was much direr, and in an eschatological scenario the ›white‹ bastion fell with hardly any hope for persistence of ›whiteness‹. Circulated both as books and as series in popular newspapers, the invasion novels laid the ideological ground for the basic anxiety that spawned ›racial‹ cohesion. This, in turn, served as a point of reference in the subsequent campaigns for the consumption of Queensland sugar as a service to the nation and its ›racial‹ integrity.

This act of consumerism to the benefit of the nation was influenced by the consumer culture imported from the mother country in the middle of the nineteenth century. But it had been adjusted to the conditions at the colonial periphery and had been modified accordingly. In this process, it had soon happened that the consumption of sugar was no longer seen as a mere gratification of the lower social strata signalling their participation in the colonial project (as it had initially been the case when the imported plantation sugar had been a welcome component of the convict rations during the time of transportation). Its production was scandalized in particular by the emerging labour movement, and was poignantly expressed as the antagonism between socially ›black‹ and ›white‹ sugar. As a consequence, this commodity, sought after and intensively used by all parts of the population, virtually turned into a ›nucleus of crystallization‹ of the

day-to-day debates about a ›white Australia‹ and its accompanying multifaceted cultural emanations.

The demand for doubly ›white‹ sugar was primarily confined to its production, but, at the same time, it began to politicize its consumption. The everyday consumption of sugar became a loyal act and a symbolic action. The utilization of sugar evolved into a constituent of the validation and reconstruction of ›whiteness‹. Whoever sweetened the tea with doubly ›white‹ sugar, contributed to the preservation of ›white‹ jobs in the tropical north of Australia. In this way, not only was its occupation by the Australians legitimated by the cultivation of cane, but the area was also guarded against vacantness and fortified as a ›white‹ bulwark against foreign desires. Whoever baked scones with doubly ›white‹ sugar, secured fair wages for ›white‹ workers. This allowed for the dispensation with ›black labour‹ which, in turn, enabled the elimination of what was deemed a persistent hotspot – the potential of ›alien races‹ to facilitate the degeneration of the ›white race‹ – and ensured the eugenically adjured keeping clean of the ›racial‹ corpus. Whoever prepared jam with doubly ›white‹ sugar, preserved, besides fruits, also the own entitlement to a country which had been promoted into the light of history reputedly only through ›white‹ labour and aptitude in the field of civilization. The history of sugar became the legend of the same ›white‹ ingenuity which initially brought the cane through dangerous shoals, cleared the wilderness and laid the ground for it to eventually successfully cultivate it.

In spite of that, consuming sugar as ›consuming whiteness‹ was not an intoxication that dissolved all the ›non-white‹ elements of the sweet drug into a ›white‹ fog of supremacist oblivion. They were not disposed of but displaced to the exterior, where, as permanent threat against this outpost of European culture, they iridesced in the colours of racist lightning at the horizon of ›white Australia‹. For this reason, ›consuming whiteness‹ coincided with ›doing whiteness‹ and answered, at least in this case, the question what consumers are actually doing when they are consuming: The Australian sugar consumers were engaged in the daily reconstruction of their labelled-as-›white‹ ›race‹.

On the one hand, this was without doubt a feature of ideological discourses. From the political parties to the organization of workers and sugar planters, from the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League to the Housewives' Associations, the subject of sugar was relentlessly problematized. Here, it stood in the context of a ›white‹ culture which in all fields from education to theatre, from sport to religion, from journalism to literature, from advertising to painting addressed the several dimensions of the ›race

question« and, right up to the singing of the national anthem, extracted a commitment to ›whiteness« from the Australians. The boundaries were, in this context, by no means definitive and often contested; whereat sexist, classist and ethnic lines played a major role, and even boundaries regarded as ›racial« proved to not be fixed for evermore. On the other hand, the consumption of sugar went beyond production, distribution and reproduction of ideological patterns. It was a social performance by which social antagonisms were continually sugar-coated. In the production and consumption of sugar, ›profits of whiteness«, ›wages of whiteness« and ›fees of whiteness« were varyingly allocated. Their social differentiation, however, was repeatedly overlaid as a result of its declaration as defence expenditure.

In this context, the consumption of sugar not only satisfied the caloric requirements or the craving for sweets. It also literally meant ›consuming whiteness«, an everyday activity that stretched from breakfast via food shopping, cooking, lunch, baking, afternoon tea to the evening desert and was, in between or afterwards, supplemented by readings or events that gave the ideological dimensions of silent consumption verbose expression. ›Consuming whiteness« was, therefore, not only the eating of existing social relations but also the reconstruction of social relations – a permanent process of ›white« self-assurance, in which, on the one side, words and pictures from diverse sources were condensed into a big narration that interwove small stories of individual heroic deeds in the context of settlement, development and cultivation of the country with the bigger drama of struggle (for survival) of the ›white race«; on the other side, ›whiteness« could be immediately incorporated whilst providing ideological self-affirmation as well as bodily satisfaction. Since ›consuming whiteness« had discursive but also dietary dimensions, the indulgence in sweetened tea during the reading of a newspaper article on ›white Australia« coalesced well-nigh casually with the core content of the race theories, which based their discriminatory image of humanity on the hierarchization of cultural proficiencies which were supposedly due to the differing physical conditions of the people.

All things considered, ›consuming whiteness« was an extensive form of ›doing race«, in which all sections of the population participated ideologically as well as bodily. In its centre stood a sugarmania whose quantitatively measurable consumption was in direct proportion to its claim to respectability – for members of the lower class in the community of Australians as well as for the former convict colony and the remote outpost in the league of ›white« nations. At the same time, the accompanying political debates and propagandist enactments testified to the nationalist

and racist charging of the ›doubly white sugar‹, whose production and consumption was not only supposed to ensure but also preserve identity. The indulgence in sugar was thus made a public duty and likewise contributed, as placarded by the sugar producers and attested by politicians, to the national defence.

›Whiteness‹ was, in this context, an intensively negotiated topos that was present in all levels of society. In sugar, it virtually took on crystalline form while for the whole culture it provided a racist aura. There were practically no aspects of life which were not shaped by it. To these also belonged the endeavour to repeatedly render it visible. Even the train that travelled the country to promote national products was painted white. At the stations it visited, celebrations of ›whiteness‹ took place on a regular basis. Genders, generations, classes and nationalities congregated to declare their collective belief in ›white Australia‹.

On each day the train sojourned in a city, its citizens consumed about one hundred and fifty grams of sugar per capita. By doing so, they not only demonstrated their will to keep unadulterated the ›white race‹ but also regenerated body and mind with the help of those crystals for whose double ›whiteness‹ they were willingly going to great expense. In a market society (at least in the eyes of its ideologists), there could hardly be any more lasting proof for the deep entrenchment and wide dissemination of the advocating of ›white Australia‹ than the day-to-day procession to the sugar bags in the grocery stores and the daily voting at the tills.

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Finally, as always, cheers to P. T. – requiescat in pace.

Epilogue

Wulf D. Hund

Saccarifying Whiteness

Producing and Consuming Racial Unity in Australia

›The Barron Gorge and Sugar Plains‹ is a part of those painting with which Arthur Streeton crucially contributed to the whitening of the Australian landscape.¹ In the foreground of this painting, a narrow ravine opens and reveals a broad plain stretching to the ocean.² The impressive vista combines natural beauty with human ingenuity because it is neither imagined nor paid for by an adventurous ascent. The artist has taken the train from Cairns,³ which, like the city, had been erected to, in the contemporary view, »turn[] into profit for the community [...] vast tracts of country that had lain waste and desolate since creation«. ⁴ Besides the spectacular line from Cairns to Herberton, there were several other railways which were

¹ Cf. Jeanette Hoorn: Australian Pastoral. The Making of a White Landscape. Fremantle: Fremantle Press 2007, pp. 239 ff.

² The painting from 1924 is reprinted i.a. in Okko Boer: Masters of the Heidelberg School. Sydney: Heidelberg Publishing Company 1998, p. 43. It can also be accessed at http://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/display_image.php?id=168226. A few years after its creation, the picture has been purchased by the Perth Art Gallery, and the press enthused about »the truth and beauty« of this opus »of the father of Australian painting«. The image description appreciates the view »to a wide and noble plain, which is mapped out in cane-fields« – ›Streeton's ›Barron Gorge‹, in: The West Australian (Perth), 7.4.1928.

³ Two decades later, an enthusiastic art lover toured the rail route to find the viewpoint – ›Forward's Lookout‹ – from which Streeton has painted his picture; cf. ›The Barron Gorge‹, in: The West Australian (Perth), 27.10.1945.

⁴ Quoted in Kevin Frawley: European Settlement. ›Jungle Scrubs‹ to ›Smiling Homesteads‹. In: Securing the Wet Tropics?, ed. by Geoff McDonald, Marcus Lane. Leichhardt: Federation Press 2000, pp. 48-68, p. 54.

frequently erected in the context of a local initiative and on whose »principal traffic: sugar« the local press reported extensively.⁵

In Streeton's painting, the sugar cane, in particular because it was represented primarily by the organized structures of the fields in which it grew, depicted the contrast to the unsubdued ›wilderness‹ and, with the conspicuous cultivation of the country, legitimated its possession. Moreover, it signalled the connection between ›culture‹ and ›race‹ to the informed observer. After all, sugar in its form as a doubly white sugar, refined white and produced white, had well-nigh become a symbolic plant of an Australia that understood itself as being ›white‹ and that successfully proved to be an outpost of European civilization in the Pacific. Obviously, art was thought able to contribute to the proclamation of this message. In any case, this has been supposed in the mid-twentieth century by an image description which remarks that »in his splendid ›Barron Gorge‹ [...], Streeton shows himself as an Australian through and through, who has the genius to convey to us on canvas a sense of his own intense racial consciousness« and shows us »that we are still essentially a race of pioneers«.⁶

As a matter of fact, the Australian cane planters had, at the time when the artist was conceptualizing his painting but after a long time of resistance, given their ›white‹ sugar top priority and proudly explained: »Australia is the only country in the world where cane sugar is produced by white labor«.⁷ Politics supported this condition and even the opposition leader explained »that he believed Australians were prepared to pay for sugar produced by white labor rather than obtain cheaper sugar produced by black labor«.⁸ The ›Sugar Journal‹ had already early on phrased this notion in the merely rhetorical question »is a ›White Australia‹ not worth paying for?« and unambiguously added: »The man who says it is not is either a fool, a lunatic, or a traitor to his country«.⁹

From such a perspective, it was no wonder that the protectionist guarding of the domestic sugar industry by an embargo on foreign sugar had been celebrated well-nigh as a symbol of racial purity. It was said to elu-

⁵ Cf. ›Feeders to the Railways‹, in: *The Queenslander* (Brisbane), 20.2.1909. At the time when Streeton painted his picture, the »network of railways connecting Cairns with the various producing areas in the Hinterland« served the exploitation of »mineral fields«, producing »£72,000 of coal, £60,000 of lead, £24,000 of copper«, »£103,274 of tin, and other minerals«. Also, agricultural products and »much valuable timber« were transported. Furthermore, »[t]he sugar production in the portion of the Hinterland nearer Cairns is very considerable. [...] The total area under sugar is 25,840 acres and the yield for 1924 was 67,100 tons« – ›The Port of Cairns‹, in: *Cairns Post*, 4.11.1925.

⁶ ›The Real Australia‹, in: *Western Mail* (Perth), 28.11.1946.

⁷ ›Sugar's 14 Points‹, in: *Cairns Post*, 9.10.1922.

⁸ ›Sugar Industry‹, in: *Recorder* (Port Pirie), 5.9.1930.

⁹ ›The Sugar Duties‹, in: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15.10.1912.



Arthur Streeton – *The Baron Gorge and Sugar Plains*:
Painted with »racial consciousness«

cidate »that Australia stands definitely, emphatically, and for all time for a white race although surrounded by a sea of coloured people«. ¹⁰ Dissatisfied housewives of the »Women's Non-Party Association«, who complained that they were paying dearly for the making of jam, received the reply from the »Queensland Sugar Industry Defence League« representative that »[h]e could not see the difference between buying black sugar, and bringing »niggers« to Australia to grow it«. ¹¹ The »Cairns Post« decided: »In paying the price [the Australians] do for our white-grown sugar, they are supporting the »white Australia« policy in the only way in which they can contribute to the carrying out of that policy«. ¹² And the Prime Minister explained in a general way: »I am sorry to hear it suggested that the people of this country would rather become a race of mongrels than pay an extra penny per pound for their sugar«. ¹³

At this point in time, the latter still resided in Melbourne because the new capital Canberra was still under construction. At the beginning of the design work, there had been several contests for the naming. In the pro-

¹⁰ »Sugar Notes«, in: Cairns Post, 20.6.1939.

¹¹ »Price of Sugar«, in: The Advertiser (Adelaide), 11.10.1930.

¹² »Sugar Inquiry«, in: Cairns Post, 6.11.1930.

¹³ »Plea for White Australia«, in: Singleton Argus, 25.7.1922.

cess, a Frederick J. Packard from Burra explained in early 1913: »I suggest ›White‹ as the name of the Federal Capital, as the Commonwealth is called a ›White Australia‹.«.¹⁴ The outspokenly racist suggestion did indeed have architectural connotations – the winner of the contest for the design of the capital drew his inspirations from the ›White City‹ of the World's Columbian Exposition 1893 in Chicago.¹⁵ One has to bear in mind that the architectural setting was not only the white-painted centre of ›civilization‹ but also included the fairway, on which were cleared for public viewing the so-called ›savages‹ whose denigration was supplemented by an anthropological section, scientifically demonstrating the supremacy of the civilized over the savages.¹⁶

To this complex scenario of racism, colonialism, nation building, capitalism and consumerism, Stefanie Affeldt devotes a competent as well as convincing analysis, which combines cultural-sociological perspectives with historiographical meticulousness to form a discourse-analytical, ideology-critical and iconographic investigation. Her argumentation is focused through a crystal whose history becomes intertwined early on with slavery: sugar. The sweet taste of the one necessitated the bitter misery of the others over centuries. In this process the European colonialism turned sugar into a mass product, which gradually became available for all social strata. Eventually, Adam Smith could not only class it with the ›Wealth of Nations‹ but also with the ›luxuries of the lowest ranks‹.¹⁷

Praxis, as it is often the case with euphemistic generalizations, did indeed deviate from this. This became apparent at the same time as the ›First Fleet‹ left England in order to colonize Australia. They had convicts on board and, on the way, loaded the stowage with some sugar cane setts. The situation of the lower classes was precarious enough to, on the one side, have held out the prospect of indulgence of a colonial product and, on the other, to be sentenced to its production. Sugar, of course, did not only denote the borderline between ›free‹ and ›unfree‹ but also between

¹⁴ ›Naming the Federal Capital‹, in: *The Register* (Adelaide), 1.2.1913.

¹⁵ Cf. John Wanna, Jennifer Craik: *Committed Cities and the Problems of Governance. Micromanaging the Unmanageable*. In: *Developing Living Cities. From Analysis to Action*, ed. by Seetharam Kallidaikurichi, Belinda Yuen. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing 2010, pp. 47-75, p. 50; Robert W. Rydell: *International Exhibition. Architecture*. In: *The Grove Encyclopedia of American Art*, ed. by Joan M. Marter. Oxford [et al.]: Oxford University Press 2011, vol. 2, pp. 601-606, p. 602.

¹⁶ Cf. Wulf D. Hund: *Negative Societalisation. Racism and the Constitution of Race*. In: *Wages of Whiteness & Racist Symbolic Capital*, ed. by id., Jeremy Krikler, David Roediger. Berlin [et al.]: Lit 2010, pp. 57-96, pp. 72 ff.

¹⁷ Adam Smith: *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. by W. B. Todd. 2 vol. (The Glasgow Edition of the Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith). Oxford: Clarendon Press 1976, vol. 2, p. 871 (V.ii.k.6).

›white‹ and ›black‹, which at this time had been conceptualized in the first race nomenclatures.¹⁸ However, the construction of races was only on the surface a theoretical business. To take effect, races had to be constituted as a social relation. This did not only mean that those who were racistly denigrated had to be synthesized into an undifferentiated entity and their social differentiation had to be declared negligible. It also included the racist upvaluation of those who in their own society occupied the lowest ranks and for a long time were suspected to not even be full-value humans themselves.¹⁹

Racism was, therefore, above all social action, which from the 18th century onwards was described as ›doing race‹.²⁰ For the members of the socially declassified groups, possibilities of affiliation usually opened up at the colonial peripheries earlier than in the metropolises. In particular in the settler societies this was enabled by the direct confrontation of all of their members with the autochthonous population. As the Australian example demonstrates, even temporarily socially excluded convicts could early on accumulate racist symbolic capital through their participation in the degradation, repression and extermination of Aborigines.²¹

The historical course of events was, of course, more complicated than it seems in the retrospective summary. The early participation of the convicts in the rationed sugar consumption, for example, which they compared to the conditions in the mother country and understood as a gratification, could already be compromised by the non-appearance of a ship and could result in the reappearance of the existing class boundaries upon the eventual sugar distribution. Even during times of uncontested sugar consumption, the convicts, in turn, were constantly threatened to be called

¹⁸ For an overview of the history of race thinking see i.a. Ivan Hannaford: *Race. The History of an Idea in the West*. Baltimore [et al.]: Johns Hopkins University Press 1996; Bruce Baum: *The Rise and Fall of the Caucasian Race. A Political History of Racial Identity*. New York [et al.]: New York University Press 2006; Francisco Bethencourt: *Racisms. From the Crusades to the Twentieth Century*. Princeton [et al.]: Princeton University Press 2013.

¹⁹ Cf. Wulf D. Hund: *Negative Vergesellschaftung. Dimensionen der Rassismusanalyse*. 2nd exp. ed. Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot 2014, pp. 119 ff.

²⁰ Recently, Steve Martinot: *The Machinery of Whiteness. Studies in the Structure of Racialization*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press 2010 has pointed this out with the formulation ››Race‹ is something that one group of people does to another‹ (p. 10 f.), thus alluding to the actional character of this relationship – ››White people ›do‹ race in the sense of ›committing‹ certain practices, actions, and attitudes‹ (p. 23) – and (by quoting Peter McLaren) emphasizing the significance of social exclusion of the discriminated-against in terms of identity formation of those discriminating – ››The excluded [...] establish the condition of existence of the included‹ (p. 24).

²¹ For this category see Anja Weiß: *Racist Symbolic Capital. A Bourdieuan Approach to the Analysis of Racism*. In: *Wages of Whiteness & Racist Symbolic Capital*, ed. by Wulf D. Hund, Jeremy Krikler, David Roediger. Berlin [et al.]: Lit 2010, pp. 37-56.

on to produce the sugar under forced labour and with that to be, at the least symbolically, located in the position as enslaved non-white workers. They were spared this experience but only because the plant did not thrive to well in the original settlements and because, when the plantation plant was eventually successfully grown in more northern parts, convict transportation had already been terminated.

By this point, sugar had become a product intensively used by all groups in the society whose production and consumption was closely intertwined with the ›white Australia policy‹ at the end of the 19th century. If the production and consumption of sugar constitute the material substratum of Stefanie Affeldt's study, the process of the constitution of whiteness provided the social milieu which determined both. The author examines the development of this entanglement in a both convincing and thorough discussion of copious primary sources. It is preceded by an outline of the problem and a pleasantly concise but precise presentation of the arsenal utilised for the investigation. It is to be understood, in the best sense, as a methodological set of instruments which has to prove itself throughout the whole course of the analysis (and not passed off as a set of general theoretical findings into which one merely has to locate the own material). At this, the central categories ›racism‹ (including the racist symbolic capital acquired with its help and the ›wages of whiteness‹ that could be claimed on its basis), ›whiteness‹ (as a specific objective of racist action within the scope of modern race theories), ›intersectionality‹ (as the basis for the social embeddedness and function of racist action), and ›consumerism‹ (as the everyday field of the constitution of racist communality) prove to be effective tools. With their help, Stefanie Affeldt succeeds in providing a convincing demonstration of the effectivity of historic-sociological racism analysis. Her investigation does not only approaches the topic ›whiteness‹ in an erudite, meticulous and complex manner with a rich source of material; but also supplies a contribution to the ›white Australia policy‹ that exceeds the previous studies by locating the topic within a broader cultural-sociological context.

The study begins with ›The Social Metamorphosis of Sugar‹, the historical transformation of a natural plant into a crop plant and a plantation plant. Subsequently, it is pointed out how in Australia the colonial frontier again and again created situations in which the depraved convicts could consider themselves a part of a ›white‹ community, in which the consumption of sugar came to be virtually construed as an everyday assurance that the inclusion was not a mere illusion. After that it shows that ›whiteness‹ was not a ›property‹ but had, especially in the cases of immigrants from

southern Europe, to be constantly negotiated in social disputes.²² Taking immigration from Italy and from Malta as examples, the author demonstrates the superposition of racist arguments, which at the same time can act comprising when directed outward and differentiating when directed inward. As opposed to ›black‹ and ›yellow‹ others, the southern Europeans were frequently accepted as ›white‹, only to, in the next breath, treat them as racially suspicious, at the least, when compared to northern Europeans or the English. Here, on the one hand, those arguments from the history of modern racism found expression which were directed against the lower classes or other nations. Italian and Maltese immigrants were attributed with numerous epithets spanning from social ascriptions, like laziness and criminality, to political qualification of members of foreign nations and to racist characterisations of people with an African or even apish element.²³ On the other hand, those others who had only just been simianized could, based on their adaptation to the warm climate or (as was the case with the Maltese) based on their status as loyal British subjects, be ranked amongst those Europeans who were especially suitable for settlement in the tropical ›empty North‹ and who with their ›white blood‹ were able to form a valuable bulwark against the onslaught of the ›Asiatic hordes‹.

²² Pertaining to this is, besides the disputes about the immigrants from Italy and Malta, also the debate about the settlement of Russian Jews. The ›Riverine Herald‹ (›Replacing the Kanakas‹, 16.2.1907) reports that the cane planters were urgently looking for workmen to replace the ›Kanakas‹, while South Australia debated whether fifty thousand Russian Jews should be settled in the Northern Territory; though one might, if possible, ›prefer to introduce Britishers into the territory rather than Russians‹. In this context, the ›Hebrew Standard of Australasia‹ (›Jews for Australia‹, 19.7.1907) wrote about the antisemitically founded suggestions to settle Jews in Queensland: ›From a Commonwealth point of view, Dr Macdonald contended that settlement of Jews would be a safeguard against an Eastern invasion. ›Japan‹, he said, ›may some day apply to a Rothschild for a loan of a few millions of pounds for the purpose of a war to capture Australia, and at such a crisis the existence of some thousands of Jews settled in the Commonwealth may be the determining factor to lead to a refusal of the required loan‹. Thirty thousand agriculturalists in Russia were prepared to emigrate to some suitable clime, and as sugar culture lent itself especially to experiments in co-operation, they would find a new home for themselves. Their presence would benefit Australia, because their social and mutual-aid instincts were just the qualities required for agricultural success‹.

²³ The range of the resentments was conveyed, inter alia, in a three-columned article in the ›Worker‹, written by the experienced unionist John Bailey. It was placed underneath the page-wide vignette ›The A.W.U. at Work‹, which, besides scenes from agriculture, mining, and railway construction, also prominently displayed two pictures of sheep shearing and sugar cane harvesting. The text took the view ›that the Britisher has the prior right in his own country of being employed in preference to foreigners‹. It was therefore deemed right that the unions and the cane planters would resolve the question as to what percentage ›British cutters‹ had to be employed for the harvest. Bailey disapproved of workers from southern Europe; they ›were low-grade Maltese and Sicilians, whose general physiognomy betrayed their recent descent, not, indeed from the organ-grinder man himself, but rather from the grotesque Simian that shuffled on top of the organ‹ – ›South Johnstone Dispute‹, in: Worker, 23.5.1928.

Racism manifests as a social process of inclusion and exclusion, which does not assert natural facts in human relations but first of all constitutes the very dissimilarity that is afterwards presented as natural. The impreciseness and flexibility of the races, which had been bewailed since the beginning of race theory, were neither freaks of nature nor caused by the inadequacy of science but were due to the character of the races as social constructions. Their unifying function (through the exclusion of others) was fragile, if only because central socio-economic and socio-political opposites had to be bridged. ›Whiteness‹ could therefore, as the author, in contrast to the traditional treatment of the ›white Australia policy‹, convincingly argue, not be understood one-dimensionally as ideological manoeuvre or political option. Instead, it has to be constructed as a cross-gender and class-spanning category in a tedious historical process.

For this, it takes an appropriate cultural ambience that allows for the production and reproduction of a racist self-consciousness. Poems and novels, theatrical pieces and movies, songs including the national anthem and a daily-published, widespread print media with reports and political cartoons provided the population with a multiplicity of ideological set pieces that were applicable for the confirmation, perpetuation and renewal of racist convictions. Their broad expressive spectrum ranged from hysteric narrations about the impending invasion of Australia by the ›coloured hordes‹ to the sonorous praise of the ›fairness‹ of the country, its conditions of living, its women, even its nature which condensed the Australian ideology into one epithet interlinking beauty, justice and whiteness: fair.

Following this discussion, the author clarifies that culture is an extensive nexus which extends into the most profane areas of everyday life and which, as ›mass culture‹, also includes the media of the ›culture industry‹ as well as ›commodity culture‹. The author, rightfully, interprets it not as a mere ›consumer culture‹ but connects it on principle with ›commodity racism‹. With this, the present study, analytically as well as symbolically (since the last segment of the chapter is devoted to the ›Great White Train‹, the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League's advertising train), heads for the eponymous finale. Here, tea is being served, an invitation to the world's fair is extended and eventually the propagation of whiteness on rails is being followed.

The teatime deals with a seeming paradox which contemporaries wanted to see in the circumstance that white sugar was used to sweeten black tea. They had a simple perception of consumption, which the author, already in the introduction to her study, approaches with a notion based on Michel de Certeau of consumption as appropriation (not simply as intake)

and with this as (re-)production. Certainly, the Australian sugar consumers did not behave as a »consumer-sphinx«; they pursued full-throatedly and frankly, as well as the longer the more concerted, with their plea for doubly white sugar the very same that determined their consumption of tea: the self-assurance of their white supremacist position. In this sense, the question »what do they make of what they ›absorb‹«²⁴ can be answered quite unambiguously: they reproduced ›whiteness‹. For this there were two different points of reference at hand, a colonial and a national, which, on the one hand, aimed at the participation of international exploitation and, on the other hand, at the striving for national race purity.

The visit of exhibitions that demonstrated ingenious and cultural efficiency consolidated such consciousness in a presentation of abundant accumulations of commodities. Jules Joubert, adept in exhibition trades, explained in a long letter to ›The Argus‹ »that an exhibition is after all the best [...] mode of advertising, not only the wares themselves, but the country that produces them«. Nevertheless, he warned about sending »specimens of the ›native humanity‹« to international exhibitions and urged to »let the ›black‹ remain among his kangaroos«. Instead, he recommended »[c]asts of the native tribes properly exhibited together, with a scientific description«. ²⁵ With this opinion, he was certainly not keeping pace with the times. The topography of the world fairs had already taking shape in the confrontation of ›white‹ culture with ›coloured‹ savageness; the very same which, at the reopening of the London Crystal Palace, was at first put on display in the form of half-naked figures made of plaster cast but which, at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia in 1876, led to the exposition of exhibits of Indian style of life as well as the erection of an ›Indian camp«. ²⁶ The organizers of exhibitions in Australia also took this path, in Sydney in 1879, they displayed »a bust, life-size, of William Lanne, the last of the Tasmanian male aborigines« and »some ethnological exhibits, consisting of skulls of male and female aborigines« and, by doing so, implemented the Darwinist message of races dying out. (Needless to say

²⁴ Michel Certeau: *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley [et al.]: University of California Press 1984, p. 31; by this the author shows en passant that Certeau's concept of the productive consumer does not only correspond with resistive but also with affirmative appropriation.

²⁵ ›The Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886‹, in: *The Argus*, 3.7.1885.

²⁶ Cf. Wulf D. Hund: *Advertising White Supremacy. Capitalism, Colonialism and Commodity Racism*. In: *Colonial Advertising & Commodity Racism*, ed. by id., Michael Pickering, Anandi Ramamurthy. Berlin [et al.]: Lit 2013, pp. 21-67, pp. 52 ff. (›Crystal Palace‹); Robert W. Rydell: *All the World's a Fair. Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916*. Chicago [et al.]: University of Chicago Press 1984, p. 27 (›Indian encampment‹).

that the first prize of the ›Sydney Morning Herald‹ for the best lyrical extolment of the ›International Exhibition‹ went to a kitschy poem in iambi pentameter, which relentlessly called upon God as advocator and guarantor of the colonization of Australia and implored »Thy blessing in this fair young land«).²⁷

Before this background, the representatives of the Queensland sugar industry learned their lesson and explained in numerous statements and advertisement campaigns: »No Sugar Industry, No White Australia«. Connected to this were costs for the consumers to which the Prime Minister explained in the statement that is preceding the study as an epigraph: »[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«. Also, and in particular in this context, in which not only racist symbolic capital is guaranteed and ›wages of whiteness‹ are propagated but also the broad mass of consumers are confronted with high sugar prices, racism reveals itself as a quite contested social relation whose boundaries constantly had to be re-adjusted. This included most diverse advertising efforts, which eventually also drew attention to the most obvious medium of progress, the railway, staged and set in motion as the ›Great White Train‹.

It propagandized the theory that they who hope for a ›white‹ Australia and wanted to protect it »from being over-run with colored foreign races« had to protect it from ›foreign manufacture«, as well. Manufacturers who utilized sugar for the products did certainly not forget to mention that it was produced in Australia, using nothing but ›white‹ labour. Moreover, it sweetened cake and tea, which were served everywhere the train stopped and invited visitors. Its consumption, already intimately associated with ›whiteness‹ and the politics of ›white Australia‹, was the blueprint which the ›Australian-Made‹ Preference League used to request the purchase of local products. In this context, too, doubly white sugar functioned as a symbol of an imagined racist collective, by whose consumption ›whiteness‹ was thought to be well-nigh physically reproducible.

Sugar had become an ideological crystal that precipitated Australian racism en masse. Its politicized and racialized consumption developed into a paramount example of ›consuming whiteness‹ as ›doing whiteness‹ – a process with which the Australians assured themselves day in, day out about their whiteness, which spanned boundaries of national origin, differing class membership and binary sexual identities and welded them into

²⁷ ›Sydney Exhibition‹ and ›Sydney‹, both in: *The Mercury*, 30.9.1879.

a racist community. ›Whiteness‹, as Stefanie Affeldt emphasizes again in her summarizing conclusion, was quite an »intensively negotiated topos«. Besides the impressing, nuancedly analysed and masterfully unfurled wealth of material, it is in particular its action-oriented penetration that constitutes the outstanding sociological harvest of her study. Like only very few investigations, she demonstrates that racism is not a mere ideological context of delusion or even solely a collection of prejudices but marks a process of societalization in which highly diverse actors with all kinds of interests are intensely participating.

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All translations from sources other than English are mine. All italics and emphases are in the originals unless stated otherwise. All Internet sources have been verified on 13.08.2013.

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- The Advertiser (VIC)
- Advocate (TAS)
- Alexandra and Yea Standard and Yarck, Gobur, Thorntin and Acheron Express (VIC)
- Alexandra and Yea Standard, Gobur, Thornton and Acheron Express (VIC)
- The Argus (VIC)
- Australasian Chronicle (NSW)
- The Australian (NSW)
- Australian Town and Country Journal (NSW)
- The Australian Women's Weekly (NSW)
- Bairnsdale Advertiser and Tambo and Omeo Chronicle (VIC)
- The Ballarat Courier (VIC)
- Barrier Miner (NSW)
- Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer (NSW)
- Bendigo Advertiser (VIC)
- Border Watch (SA)
- The Brisbane Courier (QLD)
- The Bulletin (NSW)
- The Bunbury Herald and Blackwood Express (WA)
- The Canberra Times (ACT)
- Cairns Morning Post (QLD)
- Cairns Post (QLD)
- Camperdown Chronicle (VIC)

- The Capricornian (QLD)
- Central Queensland Herald (QLD)
- Chronicle (SA)
- Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser (QLD)
- Clarence and Richmond Examiner (NSW)
- Clarence and Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser (NSW)
- The Coburg Leader (VIC)
- The Colac Herald (VIC)
- Colonial Times (TAS)
- The Cornwall Chronicle (TAS)
- The Courier (QLD)
- The Courier (TAS)
- The Courier-Mail (QLD)
- The Daily Guardian (NSW)
- The Daily News (WA)
- Daily Telegraph (NSW)
- The Darling Downs Gazette and General Advertiser (QLD)
- The Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate (NSW)
- Empire (NSW)
- Evening News (NSW)
- The Examiner (TAS)
- Frankston & Somerville Standard (VIC)
- Geraldton Guardian (WA)
- The Herald Sun (VIC)
- The Hobart Town Courier (TAS)
- Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser (TAS)
- The Horsham Times (VIC)
- Illustrated Australian News (VIC)
- The Independent (NSW)
- Industrial Australian and Mining Standard (VIC)
- Kalgoorie Western Argus (WA)
- Launceston Examiner (TAS)
- The Maffra Spectator (VIC)
- The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser (NSW)
- The Melbourne Argus (VIC)
- Mercury (VIC)
- The Mercury (TAS)
- The Mildura Cultivator (VIC)
- Mirror (WA)
- The Moreton Bay Courier (NSW/QLD)
- Morning Bulletin (QLD)
- Morning Post (QLD)
- Morwell Advertiser (VIC)
- Nambour Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser (QLD)
- The North Australian (NT)
- The North Eastern Ensign (VIC)
- The North Queensland Herald (QLD)

- The North Queensland Register (QLD)
- The North Western Advocate and The Emu Bay Times (TAS)
- Northern Argus (SA)
- The Northern Miner (QLD)
- Northern Standard (NT)
- The Northern Star (NSW)
- Northern Territory Times and Gazette (NT)
- The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News (WA)
- Portland Guardian (VIC)
- Portland Guardian and Normanby General Advertiser (VIC)
- Queanbeyan Age (NSW)
- Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer (NSW)
- Queanbeyan-Canberra Advocate (NSW)
- Queensland Figaro (QLD)
- Queensland Figaro and Punch (QLD)
- The Queenslander (QLD)
- The Register (SA)
- The Register News Pictorial (SA)
- The Richmond River Times and Northern Districts Advertiser (NSW)
- Rockhampton Bulletin (QLD)
- Singleton Argus (NSW)
- South Australian Register (SA)
- Sunday Mail (QLD)
- Sunday Times (WA)
- The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser (NSW)
- The Sydney Herald (NSW)
- The Sydney Monitor (NSW)
- The Sydney Morning Herald (NSW)
- Townsville Daily Bulletin (QLD)
- The Townsville Herald (QLD)
- Traralgon Record (VIC)
- Warragul Guardian and Buln Buln and Narracan Shire Advocate (VIC)
- Warwick Argus (QLD)
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The ›white Australia policy‹ has so far largely been discussed with regard only to its 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.

