

# White Nation

## Fantasies of white supremacy in a multicultural society

### **Chapter 1 Evil white nationalist 1: The function of the hand in the execution of nationalist practices**

I will argue that there is a dimension of territorial and, more generally, spatial power inherent in racist violence that the categories deriving from the concept of 'race' cannot by themselves encompass. While such practices are 'informed' by racist modes of classification, I will maintain that they are better conceived as nationalist practices: practices which assume, first, an image of a national space; secondly, an image of the nationalist himself or herself as master of this national space and, thirdly, an image of the 'ethnic/racial other' as a mere object within this space.

#### ***Racism and the Question of Practice***

The work of the French sociologist Pierre-Andre Taguieff gives a clear idea of the magnitude of the field of definition: racism as attitude, racism as ideology, as prejudice, as xenophobia, as naturalization, biological racism, ethnic racism and more either compete or coexist with each other in a variety of combinations vying to give a proper description of the 'essence' of the phenomenon.

Despite the important insights it has allowed, this general and dominant tendency to define racism as a mental phenomenon has continually led to an undertheorisation of the relationship between the mental classification involved and the practices in which they are inserted, between what racists are thinking and what they are doing.

In *The Logic of Practice*, Pierre Bourdieu criticizes what he sees as the intellectualist reduction of 'the logic of things' into 'things of logic', and the treating of practical knowledge as if it has no other reason to exist than an intellectual one. I think Bourdieu's critique is of immense importance for sociology of racism. When one examines the categories sociologists used to qualify racist beliefs. They are categories of everyday practice, produced to make practical sense of, and interact with, the world. What is the relation between practices in which racial classifications are used and the classifications themselves?

Trouble with the concept of 'racist practices' or with 'racially motivated' practices is that the belief in races or ethnicities, even the belief that there is a hierarchy of races or cultures, is not in itself a motivating ideology. One can believe that there is a White race or a Black or a Yellow race. One can even believe that the White race is superior to the Black and Yellow race. There is nothing in this belief, however, that requires one to act against members of the supposed Black or Yellow race. As soon as I begin to worry about where 'they' are located, or about the existence of 'too many', I am beginning to worry not just about my 'race', 'ethnicity', 'culture' or 'people', but also about what I consider a privileged relationship between my race, ethnicity and so on, and a territory. My motivation becomes far more national than racial, such practices are better conceived as nationalist practices than as racist practices, even if racist modes of thinking are deployed within them.

#### ***Racism and Power***

Sivanandan stresses that 'racism is about power not about prejudice'. Likewise, in the United States, black militants such as Carmichael and Hamilton see racism as 'the predication of decisions and policies on consideration of race for the purpose of subordinating a racial group and maintaining control over that racial group'.

What was more important than any ideology of essentialisation was the more general process whereby one group of 'White' Australians felt empowered, and were in a position, to subject another (Arab-Muslim) group of Australians to such harassment. It is to stress the importance of phenomena such as these compared to the mere expression of prejudices that Sivanandan, Carmichael and Hamilton want to reserve the term 'racism' to describe these phenomena and give them the negative stigma they deserve.

#### ***On nationalist practices***

Unlike nations of inferiority, undesirability certainly implies, and propels, action. The subject acts because he or she sees in the scarf, through whatever it may symbolize to him or her, a harmful presence that affects their own well-being. Most humans perceive ants as a different species, and certainly as an inferior species. Yet, just on the basis of this belief, they do not perceive them as 'undesirable' or as 'too many'. They do so only when these ants are seen to have invaded spaces where humans find their presence harmful such as in their houses or on their plates. And it is only in such situations that practices of violence are directed against them, as primarily *categories of spatial management*.

#### ***The homely imaginary of nationalist practices***

As it is well known to be the case, return to a former state of affairs, a return to what the nation 'uses to be'. The discourse of 'home' is one of the most pervasive and well-known elements of nationalist practices.

Strangely enough, however, it has become part of an anti-racist common sense to consider 'go home' statements as mere 'racism'. When nationalists feel that he or she can no longer operate in, communicate in or recognize the national space in which he or she operates, the nation appears to be losing its homely character.

### ***The imaginary of the nationalist manager and the Other as Object***

The discourse of home, because it conveys a relation to the nation rather than some kind of objectivist definition of it, clearly implies not only an image of a nation that is one's own, but also of a self that occupies a privileged mode of inhabiting it. This is evident in the very categories used by the nationalist which treat the 'other' as an object to be managed (in the space of the nation), while treating the self as spatially empowered to position/remove this other.

**Bodily sense of scale:** the very idea of an object being imagined as big or small, like 'too many' or 'too few', implies that it is imagined against a wider space which defines its size.

Here we can also see that it is imagined in relation to the imaginary size of the classifier's national body. It is in this sense that, within nationalist practices, the mode of classification used always implies an imaginary relation, to the nation.

As the two formulations "I belong to the nation" and 'this is my nation' imply, there is at least a dual mode of belonging to the national home that we need to understand.

**Passive belonging:** The nationalist who believes him or herself to 'belong to a nation' in the sense of being part of it, means that he or she expects to have a right to benefit from the nation's resources, to 'fit into it' or 'feel at home' within it.

**Governmental belonging:** The belief that one has a right over the nation, involves the belief in one's possession of the right to contribute to its management such that it remains 'one's home'.

It is clearly this governmental belonging which is claimed by those who are in a dominant position. To inhabit the nation in this way is to inhabit what is often referred to as the **national will**.

### ***Conclusion***

A nationalist practice of exclusion is a practice emanating from agents imaging space such as they perceive themselves to be the enactors of the national will within the nation. It is a practice orientated by the nationalists' attempt at building what they imagine to themselves as spatial managers and that which is standing between them and their imaginary nation is constructed as undesirable national object to be removed from national space.

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## **Chapter 2 Evil white nationalist 2: the white nation fantasy**

How do some people inhabiting the nation manage to take up such a managerial position within it and not others? Clearly, not all those within national space feel the nation to be their own to an equal degree. The extent of one's governmental belonging within national space is a question of cultural entitlement.

### ***From citizenship to practical nationality***

As in most nations, citizenship in Australia is the main formal indicator of national belonging. Formal citizenship can reflect a practical mode of national belonging only in the ideal situation where the formal decision to include a person as a citizen reflects a general communal will. In a representative democracy where the power to grant citizenship is delegated to the state, there is an important, and historically growing, incompatibility between the state's formal acceptance of new citizenship and the dominant community's everyday acceptance of such people. This is especially so when there is a clearly dominant culturally defined community within the nation. In such cases, the acquisition of formal citizenship does not give any indication of the level of practical national belonging granted by the dominant cultural community. This is largely because the basis of communal acceptance remains determined by questions of cultural descent far more than by state acceptance.

The either/or, inclusion or exclusion conception of national belonging is paradoxically less present in everyday popular conceptions of the nation than it is among social analysts. People strive to accumulate nationality. They recognize themselves as more national than some people and less national than others. They are also recognized by others in a similar fashion. It is because of the above that practical nationality is best conceived as a form of national 'cultural capital'.

In much the same way, practical nationality can be understood analytically as the sum of accumulated nationally sanctified and valued social and physical cultural styles and disposition (national culture) adopted by individuals and groups, as well as valued characteristics (national types and national character) within a national field: looks, accent, demeanor, taste, nationally valued social and cultural preferences and behavior, etc.

The aim of accumulating national capital is precisely to convert it into national belonging: to have your accumulated national capital recognized as legitimately national by the dominant cultural grouping within the field.

Migrants arriving in a new nation can accumulate nationality by acquiring the language, the accent, duration of residence, mastering of national-specific cultural practices, etc - in other words, by assimilating. The extent to which they can actually accumulate national capital is linked to the cultural possessions and dispositions. It can be argued that the accumulation of national capital does not only lead to quantitative differences in belonging, but also to qualitative ones. Clearly those who aspire to dominate the field are those who accumulate governmental belonging. It is governmental belonging which gives one not only the position of cultural dominance within the field, but also, as we have seen, the power to position others within it. This tends to make governmental belonging a field in itself which shares the characteristics of what Bourdieu called the 'field of power'.

### ***Guardians of the national order: the field of whiteness and the white national aristocracy***

Being 'male', 'European, of British descent, of Irish descent, protestants, catholic, rich in economic capital or 'a good sportsman', or having a 'white skin', an aussie accent of blond hair, all of these operate as national capitals in the sense that their possession allows the person who owns them to claim certain forms of dominant national belonging. Having blond hair is valuable, but if one has blond hair and an 'east European accent', this does not make one more national than having brown hair and an Australian accent. Thus we can say that the Australian accent is more valuable than the blond hair as a national capital. The totality of such struggles to determine and accumulate what is really Australian, or what is 'more' Australian, gives the Australian field of national power its particular historical characteristics. It is in this field that I propose to call the field of Whiteness, and those who aspire to occupy it and assume a governmental position within it, and consequently within the nation, I will call White Australians.

Whiteness, is an everchanging, composite cultural historical construct. Whiteness in opposition to Blackness and Brownness, was born the same time as the binary oppositions coloniser/colonised, being developed/underdeveloped, and later First World/Third World was emerging. In this sense, White has become the ideal of being the bearer of people yearn to be so. It is in this sense that Whiteness is itself a fantasy position and a field of accumulating Whiteness. It is by feeling qualified to yearn for such a position that people can become identified as White. At the same time, to be White does not mean to yearn to be European in a geographical sense.

I refer to the field of governmental power in Australia as the field of Whiteness because such a White Australian persona, the cultural descent of the North European tradition of domination, constitutes the ultimate ideal of the field: what all processes of cultural accumulation yearn to be, with more or less success, in order to dominate the field. Whiteness is also better than Europeaness for our purposes because certain Europeans, particularly dark-skinned Europeans have to struggle to valorize their Europeaness in Australia. The fact that during the interview the Lebanese Christian woman invoked a definition of Australia as a 'Christian country' can allow us to analyze her action as proceeding from a belief that her own Christianity was convertible into more governmental Australianess than the Islam of the other Australian whose religion has no value whatsoever as far as governmental belonging is concerned. Her Christianity made her more White.

The dominant always aim to naturalize the field itself by naturalizing the positions of all those who are located in the field. It is in doing so that the dominant tend to construct themselves into an aristocracy vis-a-vis other subjects: into subjects whose rich possession and deployment of the dominant capital appears as an intrinsic natural disposition rather than something socially and historically acquired. No matter how much national capital a 'Third World-looking' migrant accumulates, the fact that he or she has acquired it, rather than being born with it, devalues what he or she possesses compared to the 'essence' possessed by the national aristocracy.

The aristocracy logic ultimately aims to establish that only those who have the innate capacity to dominate can really be said to possess enough capital to dominate the field. To maximize one's governmental belonging, there are further specific elements that need to be accumulated: it is those elements that constitute what I have called Whiteness, and it is only by naturalizing its hold on this Whiteness that a group can achieve aristocratic status.

National subjects not only struggle to accumulate and position themselves in a dominant position within the field, but also to position others where they deem them to belong. Consequently, to constitute a national aristocracy, a group needs more than just a sense of dominant homely belonging to the nation by birth. It also needs to have a dominant and essentialized sense of governmental belonging, for it is precisely the maximization of governmental belonging that constitutes the logical and of aristocratic domination in the field.

### ***The 'white nation' fantasy***

Nationals with high degree of governmental belonging don't need to secure personal violence for national purposes. They are leeches for them. In this sense, those who engage in such personal violent acts feel that they have lost this special relation to state power. They feel that the state is no longer doing their violence for them. They feel that their governmental, national belonging is threatened or in decline. Nevertheless, they think they have a legitimate claim to represent the national will embodied in the state. This is why they feel that they should take matters back into their 'own hands' as it were.

A national fantasy is the very way nationalists inhabit, experience and conceive of their nation and themselves as nationalists. The nationalist in this construct is always a nation-builder, a person whose national life has a meaning derived from the task of having to build his or her ideal homely nation, a national domesticator. This is why the most vocal nationalists are often people who feel unfulfilled in other fields of social life. Nationalism becomes the means of giving one's life a purpose, a sense of possibility when no other areas of social life provide it with this purpose.

While we, as social analyst, may recognize that this fully domesticated national home is a fantasy space, unattainable by its very nature, nationalists never perceive it as such. It is precisely the belief that this homely domesticated space can be achieved that drives them to pursue it. If this was the case, however, how do nationalists reconcile the belief in the possibility of this homely domesticated space which 'keeps them going' with the practical fact that they never reach their goal (which subconsciously they don't want to reach as it would mean their 'death'?) Rather than disturbing a domesticated space which does not and cannot actually exist, the other is what allows nationalists to believe in the possibility of such a space eventuating. It helps them avoid having to face the impossible nature of what they are pursuing, the traumatic kernel of the real, by constructing the other as that which stands in the way of its attainment. It is in this sense that the other is necessary for the construction and maintenance of the fantasy.

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### **Chapter 3 Good White nationalist: The tolerant society as a White Fantasy**

In this chapter, I want to examine more closely what it means to practise tolerance.

Tolerance or toleration emerged as a state policy with an anti-discriminatory intent, aimed at regulating relations between various religious communities.

What is striking about the early periods of state-advocated tolerance is how often they remain, very much like today, marked by intolerance. In England, the Toleration Act introduced in 1689, while easing some of the penalties imposed on dissenting clergy by the 'Clarendon Code' of the 1660's, coexisted with a whole series of discriminatory practices against Nonconformist who continued to be shut out of public offices, both civil and military.

#### ***Australian tolerance and multiculturalism***

The dominant discourse of tolerance in Australia for the past twenty years has been the one associated with the state-sponsored multiculturalism that emerged in the early 1970s. It was the emerge of multiculturalism in the midseventies, or so the story goes, that ushered in the truly pluralist 'cultural egalitarian' era where migrants were only allowed, but were also positively encouraged to keep the cultural traditions of their home country alive. As an ideology, multiculturalism, everyone was told, was both the description of a reality (the existence of cultural diversity in Australia was a fact) and an attitude that needed to be promoted (Australia should accept this diversity and see it as something positive). Australia had moved from being an intolerant to being a tolerant society.

As in all tolerant societies before it, however, multiculturalism has remained marked by continuing intolerance, prejudice and racism.

#### ***Tolerance and Power***

There is something intolerable about the concept of 'tolerance'. For if one concedes or promotes a power to tolerate, one equally concedes a power not to tolerate. Where we empowered an agent to be tolerant, we empower him equally to be intolerant.

From this perspective, we can now understand that the coexistence of tolerance, and intolerance in 'tolerant' societies was no due to the fact that tolerance was somehow not forcefully implemented. Rather, it is that those who were and are asked to be tolerant remain capable of being intolerant or to put it differently, that the advocacy of tolerance left people empowered to be intolerant. Those addressed, by the discourse of tolerance see in the very address a confirmation of their power to be intolerant. To say of someone that he or she is tolerant always implies a 'rider' (He/she is tolerant for someone who has the power not to be). It seems that the ones who are concerned by the call to tolerate can only be the same people who feel entitled to engage in intolerance: those we have analysed as belonging to the White dominant culture. All statements in the range of 'I don't mind if more migrants come to this country' or 'I don't mind if people speak Arabic in

the streets' are emitted by people who fantasise that it is up to them whether people speak Arabic on the streets or not.

### ***Tolerance, National Space and Power***

King argues that 'to tolerate generally means to endure, suffer or put up with a person, activity, idea or organisation of which one does not really approve'. Enduring is coping with something over which one has no control. Tolerance, contrary to this, always presupposes a control over what is tolerated.

In this discourse of limits that makes clear that those who tolerate imagine themselves to be in the position of spatial power. They are part of 'our' nation, but only in so far as 'we' accept them. The tolerated are never just present, they are positioned.

Like the 'evil nationalist' engaging in exclusion by categorising the other as undesirable, the 'good, tolerant nationalist' engages in inclusion by categorising the other, if not as 'disairable', at least as 'not that undesirable', as in the 'there's only a few of them anyway' above. If racist violence' is better understood as a nationalist practice of exclusion, 'tolerance', in much the same way, can be understood as a nationalist practice of inclusion. Both are practices confirming an image of the White Australian as a manager of national space.

### ***Tolerance and intolerance: Beyond good and evil***

Australian discourses of tolerance often express their intolerance of those who are seen not to respect the unity of Australia or its democratic values and institutions. If that is the case, people committed to tolerance are people who are also continuously practising the exclusion of legitimised objects of intolerance. If we listen carefully to what such people say, we find that in fact they are only practising exclusion to the extent that they believe that those they want to exclude have transgressed what they believe are their limits of tolerance. Those who are not tolerated are precisely those who trespass beyond the spaces allotted to them and develop a will of their own.

Despite the tragic power these events, tolerant racist is far more pervasive historically, from slave societies to societies structured by the exploitation of ethnic/racial industrial, domestic and cultural labour and 'value'. We are yet to hear of the slave owner who wanted Black to 'go home'

If we re-examine Bob Hawke's call for tolerance quoted earlier, we can now see more clearly its limitations and its sterility as an 'anti racist' statement. We now know that when he says 'my fellow Australians', he can only be having a dialogue with those fellow Australians who feel capable of being intolerant, that is, White Australians. It is not about making the powerful less so, it is about inviting them not to exercise their power. It invites those who have been uncharitable to be charitable, but it does not remove from them the power to be uncharitable. On the contrary, it indirectly consecrates and reproduces the White fantasy that animates this whole process.

### ***Tolerance as White fantasy***

Multicultural tolerance is presented as the result that of a mere choice of policy made by enlighten people, mystifying the important fact that it is , as well, the product of the increased power, the resistance and the struggle of migrant Australians. Because the White Nation fantasy is dependent on the staging of the ethnic other as an object, it cannot help but mystify this element which would put it face to face with the will of the ethnic other. We find this denial in the discourse of acceptance, which has always been present along with the discourse of tolerance within Australian multiculturalism.

The accepting enunciation 'You're Australian', becomes similar to the 'You're a grown-up now) directed from parents to teenagers. Not only does the identity becomes granted - that is, it can be withdrawn - and a power relation is drawn between those who do the accepting and those who are accepted, but also, as importantly a question mark is put over the suitability of this identity and its genuineness: if it goes without saying that the migrant is Australian, there would be no need to say it. Acceptance translates into doubt.

Tim Fischer, declared: "The national as a whole had much to gain from the diversity of a population who consider themselves Australians first". This is a classical tolerant statement where the other is welcome, but within limits, of course. Here the limits are set by Tim Fischer: swear allegiance to Australia first.

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## **Chapter 4 White multiculturalism: A manual for the proper usage of ethnics**

Carnivale is also constructed and used to legitimize 'multiculturalisme' as something valuable. The theme of cultural enrichment is one of the key themes of Australian multiculturalism. Its main emphasis is the recognition of the value of the various cultures present in Australia and the value of the interaction between them. For the White Australian articulating it, the discourse of enrichment still position him of her in the centre of the Australian cultural map. The multicultural fair itself has, changed dramatically over the years. Initially

securely positioned in the role of 'feeder', migrants have increasingly become willing to be touring subjects wanting to be enriched themselves.

### ***The stew that grew and the Anglo who just could not stop cooking***

While everyone throws in their ingredients, one person is allowed a monopoly over cooking from the beginning of the story until the end: the White Australian Blue. Whatever minimal agency the ethnics who put in their ingredients have, their will is only activated following a request by Molly. Luckily Molly thought of this, otherwise those ethnics would have kept on just sitting there feeling 'tired' and 'hungry'.

While the dominant White culture merely and unquestionable exists, migrant culture exist for the latter. Their value, or the viability of their preservation as far as White Australians are concerned, lies in their function as enriching cultures. It is in this sense that the discourse of enrichment contributes to the positioning of non-White Australians within the White nation fantasy.

The Aboriginal people have to wait for an a posterior declaration that they are the 'taste of Australia' by a White Australian, judging from the pictures, they do not even stay around to eat from the stew. 'Thank you for enriching us with what can make our national cultural production distinctively Australian. Now please go back to your bush so we can enjoy being enriched without you annoying us with your presence!

To have a multicultural society you need many cultures. Left to themselves, however, these cultures are bound not to mix or at least not to mix properly without leading to ethnic tensions and wars. For the mix to work, it has to be guided by a White essence, that most valuable of all ingredients, the democratic-tolerance-freedom-of-speech ingredient that only the White aristocracy really knows how to throw into the Australian stew.

### ***Getting the mix right: Measurement and numbering pathology***

His worry is to ensure that the recipe is always followed: 'no one dominant ethnic group among migrants'. For of course, one dominant (white) group among non-migrants is not a problem since that group, imbued unlike others with democracy, tolerance and the principle of freedom of speech by its very essence, is not predisposed to create ethnic tensions. It is only predisposed to solve them through numbering, measuring and mixing.

As all of the above intimates, this White multiculturalism, by being concerned with the acceptance, positioning and numbering of otherness in order to maximize its value, is a practice that aims at creating and managing an 'economy of otherness' - a system of producing and regulating the value of otherness to maximize the homely feeling (the taste of the homemade stew) of the White Australians positioned at its centre.

### ***Productive diversity: the production of ethnic surplus value***

Diversity is always assumed to be a diversity among employees, among those who need to be managed, those who need to be ruled. It is never conceived as a cultural diversity that needs to be promoted among employers, managers and rulers. Those are free from any recommendations concerning their own diversity and how productive or unproductive it can be.

Within this fantasy, it is because some benefits are derived from the objects of multicultural toleration, or at least from the act of toleration itself, that we tolerate them - go to the trouble of dominating them through tolerance - and accept them within our sphere of influence. Rather than involving a negative evaluation of its objects, tolerance is guided by a process of evaluating both the benefits accruing from the act of toleration and what is perceived as negative and needs to be endured. For a fantasy to provide a solid basis for the construction of the White national self within it, it has to be well grounded in social reality. The fantasy of the White manager is grounded in a social reality where non-White Australians are clearly under-represented in the political, social and economic managerial class.

### ***The practical logic of white multiculturalism: on the dialectic of inclusion and exclusion.***

As a set of mechanisms and rules which maintained the foreignness of the migrant worker while physically entrenching them as a structural component of production in the economy, the guest-worker system was chiefly a process aimed at maximising the exploitation of migrant labour. It put in place mechanisms through which migrants had to be physically positioned inside the nation, but, at the same time, also had to be symbolically kept foreign within. It is those mechanisms which laid the ground for the peculiar position of migrant labour in these early periods of high exploitation.

The exclusion of migrant labour was not total, since obviously its aim was not to drive them outside social space, but to drive them to the point where it was precisely their inclusion (as cheap labour) that became viable. The anti-immigration discourse, by continually constructing the immigrants as unwanted, works precisely at maintaining their economic viability to American employers. They are best wanted as 'unwanted'.

White multiculturalism activates a dialectic of inclusion and exclusion, similar to the above, in order to position Third World-looking migrants in the permanent spatial in-between where their will is excluded, while their exploitable 'savage' body/culture is included.

The closest the non-White middle class come to political participation is in the closed circles of welfare politics, or, more precisely, the politics of regulating and distributing 'multicultural' welfare funds made available by the White state. The very nature of this 'political' involvement reproduced the paradigm of tolerance and acceptance by promoting a conception of multiculturalism as something granted, a kind gesture White Australians in which were good enough to engage.

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## **Chapter 5 White national zoology: the pro-Asian republic fantasy**

### ***Who is afraid of Asia?: on the whiteness of the dominant pro-Asian discourse***

Multiculturalism is presented as a central component of Australia's new international identity. More specifically it is conceived as important in allowing the Australian nation as an international body to reorientate itself and assume a non-Eurocentric posture and identity, and to imagine itself as an independent international subject in Asia rather than in Europe. I will argue that despite the apparent centrality of multiculturalism in this drama of bodily re-orientation, maturity and independence, pro-Asianness remains primarily a discourse from within the White nation fantasy. Maturity is essentially an evolutionary discourse. If Australia has matured, even if it has matured 'because' of multiculturalism, an essential continuity between the immature and the mature Australia has to exist as a necessary condition of possibility of any utterance concerning national maturation. This continuity cannot be other than that of an Anglo-Celtic White Australia. A break with the monarchy is an important part of its discourse on maturity. Behind this need for a break is a very old and powerful White nationalist discourse, that Australia has had no civil war, no war of independence. Within this discourse, like the teenagers who have not had its symbolic violent rebirth, 'Australia remains an unborn living being yearning for its normalizing 'violent' adult beginning. This is why no matter how many people argue, and with good reason, that we are already independent regardless of the monarchy, they will not be heard by those who need such a break.

While many cultures were deployed on the stage to 'show off' the diversity of Australia, very few non-White Australians were part of the managerial decision-making team. Multicultural Australia did not come to represent Australia, it came to be presented by White Australia. It should be clear from the above how, rather than being imagined as an essential part of the national body, multiculturalism is imagined as an object performing a function for that body.

### ***Otherness and the presentation of the national Self in international life***

One can also take the less obvious example of oxen and donkeys, whose owners might both use them for a 'practical' task and derive prestige from owning them. What is important is that, in all of these cases, even though it is the animal and its characteristics (beauty, strength etc) that are 'on show', it is really the owner that is exhibiting himself or herself through the exhibited otherness that they possess.

In all cultures, political and religious elites tend to accumulate and flaunt their rare and precious objects from faraway places in order to gain prestige and to display their knowledgeability. Everyone, from Renaissance princes and cardinals to Chinese emperors, owned collections of exotic animals, objects and even people. The above example should give us sufficient insight into the general structure of the practice of exhibiting the self through the exhibition of the otherness. Essential to this structure is a relationship of power between the exhibitor and the exhibited. What fascinates more than the exotic otherness is the capacity of the exhibitor to control and exhibit it.

The dominant information made available about the nation, whether by government agencies or tourist bureaus, plays an important part in creating particular impressions of what the nation is like. Other national symbolic productions such as literature, art and film also play an important role. On the whole, a nation's symbolic front plays a far more important part in its presentation than it does for individuals or smaller teams. As imaginary nations are 'homes' for their nationals, they constitute private spaces more like what Goffman refers to as 'back region'. Like all 'homes' they have the equivalent of the 'living room', which is that part of the private space that is available to the public gaze of those allowed in it. I think that the equivalent of the 'living room' for nations is tourist space. Tourist space is precisely that part of national space that is made available to non-nationals in order to experience the nation. It is so arranged as to minimise the capacity of the tourist to see anything other than what the host wants the tourist to see. There have always been specific areas in which nations are allowed to exhibit themselves and their products before the rest of the world. The Olympic Games present such an occasion. The colonial world fairs were far more important when tourism was not as generalised a practice as it is today. It is, in fact, in those fairs that we find the roots of multicultural exhibitionism.

### ***Zoology and the colonial art of collecting otherness***

One of the distinguishing characteristics of colonial nations was the possession of colonies, and it is here that we find the national exhibition of human otherness at its best.

As I have already argued, what makes the exhibited an extension of the exhibitor is that it is primarily an extension of the latter's power: it comes to exist as it does because of the exhibitor's power over it.

### ***Multiculturalism, Zoology and 'Ethnic Death'***

One can detect a characteristic competitive preoccupation with 'number'. In Australia, we are one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world or we have x cultures living here together, is a typical introduction to the collection. This discursive form is also played out in everyday life at the level of streets or neighbourhoods, with their proud cosmopolitan White residents boasting about the x number of different ethnic restaurants they have. The logic of enumeration reaches its climax in the process of enumerating/exhibiting the number of Aboriginal languages Australia has.

The fact that multicultural policy 'allows' non-Anglo-Celtic ethnics to 'maintain their culture' does in no sense make it less of a fantasy of total control.

Zoo: concepts of how animals should be presented to the public in a zoological garden are constantly changing in the direction of more natural surrounding and greater liberty for the animals and special exhibitions or situations are created to demonstrate the animals 'normal way of life'.

Here again we are faced with the 'ethnic object with no will' that is the core of all White fantasies of the nation. When people are positioned within such spaces of fantasy, they are 'killed', such that no will can emerge from them: they exist through the collection and for the collector.

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## **Chapter 6 Ecological nationalism: Green parks/white nation**

The national 'home' fantasy is in many ways a secular version of one of the oldest fantasies of domestication available to us and which is primarily an ecological fantasy of domesticated nature: the garden of eden. Its chief characteristic as described in Genesis is that it was an priori domesticated space.

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## **Chapter 7 The discourse of Anglo Decline 1: The spectre of cosmopolitan whiteness**

### ***The logic of national-spatial disintegration***

Pauline Hanson's discourse clearly embodies a fantasy of herself as someone with a unique managerial right over national space. Thus, when she states: "I am not saying that I want all Asian immigration to cease. There has always been an Asian presence in Australia and there always will be", she immediately adds: 'All I want is the balance restored'. Pauline fantasy of a balanced nation is also an fantasy of herself as someone with a prime responsibility as far as restoring the balance is concerned. For Hanson, Asians as a 'presence' in the balanced nation are not a problem. This is why she can credibly claim that her discourse is not racist. According to her logic of what racism is, if she had a problem with Asians as a race, she would be opposed to any kind of Asian presence. She certainly has an unshakeable belief that it is a White Australian like her who ought to be in control of the Asian numbers.

What bothers Casey is not really the fact that there are Chinese or Asians coming to Australia, it is the fact that they are coming in a process that appears to him as beyond his control. It is this loss of a capacity to control that constitutes the main element of his 'racism'. For him, racism is when one explicitly declares their hatred and opposition to Asian migration. He, on the other hand, was merely 'a concerned citizen'. Casey is not the normal nationalist who aims at maintaining the control of this nation. He is a worried nationalist who perceives that things are already on the way to being out of control. Hanson claims however, that all she wants is the balance restored, this clearly means that she perceives that the balance has already been lost. They do not, however, speak of restoring the balance; they speak of maintaining it. Hanson-like fantasies, on the other hand, are propelled by a fear of having already lost control.

No matter how much it is maintained that multiculturalism reflects the 'reality' of Australia, the visible and public side of power remains essentially Anglo-White. At the same time, Australia, myth makers and icons, old and new, are largely Anglo-White. Angloness remains the most valued of all cultural capitals in the field of Whiteness. That is why the discourse of decline appears at this descriptive level as an exaggeration.

### ***The rise and fall of the 'anglos' as an white national aristocracy***

To maximise one's governmental belonging, there are further specific elements that need to be accumulated, and it is only by naturalising its hold on those elements that a group can achieve aristocratic status.

While Australians, Canadians and so on felt mostly part of the Empire and minimally as if they had a right to that Empire, only the upper-class British felt it to be innately their Empire.



To be an Australian national aristocrat, one only had to be born into this new cultural identity. To feel that one had the right to take a governmental posture towards Australia, one no longer needed to be born to socioeconomically defined upper-class family. One's Anglo-Celtic background was a necessary and sufficient national capital. That is, by removing any class qualifier from the Anglo-ness needed to assume a governmental position vis-a-vis Australia, it paradoxically removed all social qualifiers and transformed this Anglo-ness into an essence. It is as such that Australian Anglo-Celtic Whiteness became itself the aristocratic national identity. In the post-colonial Australia of the mid-1960s onwards, coming from an Anglo-Celtic background was enough to make one feel that one had the capital to maximise both homely and governmental belonging as an innate right.

White multiculturalism constitutes the White Eurocentric quest for a distinctive form of Europeanness begun by the Australo-British. Following the colonial 'we are here as British' and the Australo-British 'we are British Europeans who have been changed by the Australian environment', we now have 'we are cosmopolitan Europeans who have been changed by migration, have become multicultural and are turning to Asia'. The crucial difference, type is no longer simply any White person, but necessarily a classy one.

Pauline Hanson and her supporters, who see the 'cosmopolitan intellectuals' as the real enemy. Ordinary Australians do have a common enemy, but it is not Aborigines, Asians or people any particular colour, race or creed. Our common oppressors are a class of raceless, placeless cosmopolitan elites who are exercising almost absolute power over us; like black spiders above the wheels of industry, they are spinning the webs of our destiny. We can only escape these webs by organised action. This neurotic sense of disempowerment should not, however, lead us to dismiss the actual loss and disempowerment from which it has resulted. As far as cultural politics is concerned, whatever forms of inclusion and 'democracy' White cosmopolitanism grants to ethnic people, it takes away from the more insular White working- and middle-class people, who are perceived as unable, by definition, to appreciate and value otherness, let alone govern it. It is interesting to notice how the discourse of decline is constantly wavering between reassuming a governmental posture (asking questions about what is good and not good for the nation) and an interested posture (with questions à la 'What about us from a British background?')

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## **Chapter 8 The discourse of Anglo Decline 2: The role of 'asians' in the destruction of the 'white race'**

A fantasy's capacity for adaptation means its ability to sustain itself despite the change in the practical social reality in which it is grounded. In so doing, it offers the subjects who inhabit it a relatively stable and viable sense of themselves - in this case, a credible and continuing sense of White dominance.

### ***On being swamped by Asians***

I have the identity of those who are middle class and who are in power, in material terms, I may be not much better off than the Aboriginal of Hungarian family next door, at least I have an essence/identity which gives me, unlike my Aboriginal, Arabs, Hungarian or Chinese neighbours, the possibility of accumulating more capital. I belong to the 'race' of those who rule, even though I am not actually ruling. This means that I could rule'. Identity embodies, in this case, a principle of hope that ensures the viability of its adoption.

It is here that we encounter one of the main causes of the crisis exhibited by the discourse of decline. If there is one thing that the development of multiculturalism and the recent wave of Asian migration to Australia has entailed, it is the diversification of the middle classes. The Asian middle and upper classes make being an upper-class Australian no longer a strictly White affair. By the same token, there can no longer be a privileged essential link between being White and the national dreams of social mobility.

The tourist and the 'Asian' investors- just as much as the Asian doctors, students and bank managers'- take away from these White Australians their capacity to experience their Whiteness as a privileged essence. They rob them of its potential and, in the process, rob them of their aspirations of social mobility on the basis of this identity. The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. They forget to add that the rich are becoming Asian and the poor are becoming Australian. Alan, experiences the arrival of the Asian middle class not just as something that has thwarted his desires for social mobility, but, probably on the basis of reversal within the nation.

The subject's crisis is clearly a governmental crisis. He no longer sees the state as enacting his will. It is a yearning for a nation where migrants 'knew their place' and where the subject's Whiteness yielded a clearer sense of conceiving Australia as his home. The order of things (in the nation) is no longer his order of things, the language (of the nation) is no longer his language, and there is no coercive apparatus, no National Father, no God, no Other, to use Lacan's term, willing to impose and guarantee his language and his order.

### ***White neurosis and fears of disintegration***

Having identified the national order as their own, national aristocratic subjects experience the loss of governmental belonging as a loss of the national reality that has acted as their support.

For Blainey, the overwhelming trait which makes the Asians a threat to the predominance of White Australians is a negative one. It is their lack of rationality, compared to the rational White Australian, which constitutes them into such a dangerous 'unthinking matter' inexorably moving to overtake Australia and which no reasoned argument can stop. For others, however, what makes the 'asian' a threat is that they are 'too good'.

Ultimately, the most distinguishing feature of the loss of national reality is the fear of the other turning the tables and reversing the imaginary master-slave relationship that constituted the basis of the nationalist governmental fantasy.

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**Chapter 9 The containment of the multicultural real: From the 'immigration debates' to white neo-facism**