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HISTORICISING WHITENESS: FROM THE CASE OF LATE COLONIAL INDIA

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Abstract

It has been a while since critical race and whiteness studies have disseminated the now-familiar notion that whiteness is not a given but a social construct. The idea, however, is yet to be fully explored, with many untouched areas and methodologies of potential importance. This paper is a humble attempt to make a contribution to the field from the perspective of colonial history. Drawing on a historical case study on British Indian society from the late nineteenth century onwards, it firstly focuses on the oft-neglected social world of white colonials of 'respectable' standing, enquiring what defined their whiteness and under what material conditions it was to be acquired. This is to be followed by an examination of how these whites differentiated themselves from, and in turn controlled the lives of, the so-called 'domiciled' population, members of which were of white descent, permanently based in India, often impoverished and frequently (if not always) racially mixed. Such a two-level approach to the people of white descent is to reveal that the colonial invention of whiteness depended *both* on the securing of a 'bourgeois' social milieu for middle-class whites *and* on the vigilant control of the impoverished domiciled. The paper shows the complex ways in which the insidiously unsound nature of such a construction of whiteness repeatedly posed a political challenge to the colonial racial order. The case of colonial India may be taken as a vivid example of how whiteness may come charged with inevitable self-contradictions and ambiguities, and with those counter-measures that seek to contain the socio-political unrest resulting there from.

Introduction

Ruth Frankenberg has influentially argued that, whilst white people's racialisation of their non-white counter-parts has long been subjected to research, the former's own racial identity, or 'whiteness', has often escaped critical examination. It is upon their privileged extra-racial or racially non-problematic status that the hegemonic power of whites rests. In her words, 'whiteness makes itself invisible precisely by asserting its normalcy, its trans-parency, in contrast with the making of others on which its transparency depends' (Frankenberg 1997: 6). What has been lacking is to 'race' the quotidian lives of white individuals or communities, and unfortunately, this concomitant failure in displacing the unmarked status of whiteness has also been a common feature of the scholarship on colonial racism. As Ann Stoler has pointed out, studies of colonialism have long construed white, colonising communities exclusively as abstract agents of the economic and political projects of colonialism. In other words, it is chiefly for what they *did* in the public sphere that white individuals and their communities have been treated: what they *were* or sought to *be*, or their clandestine and yet obsessive preoccupation to construct some indubitable racial prestige at the

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domestic as well as public realms, has not attracted due attention (Stoler 1996; Stoler 2002). Drawing on my historical research on colonial Indian society from the late nineteenth century onwards (1858-1930), this paper aims to address the subject of whiteness with a view to stimulating wider debates on race, particularly those in colonial and postcolonial studies. In her study on colonial South Asia, Mrinarini Sinha has graphically carved out the gendered structures of socio-political order, by addressing not just men's subordination of women but also how both British and Indian men constructed *their own* masculine identities through complex processes of colonial politics (Sinha 1995). While this paper primarily concerns itself with race, it will draw on Sinha's methodological insights in order to suggest one meaningful way of studying whites *as white*, thereby historicising their whiteness, in the same way that she seeks to 'give masculinity a history' (Sinha 1999).

It is at two interconnected levels that this essay will engage with the question of whiteness in late British India. First, it will focus on white colonials of 'respectable' standing. What defined the bodily and moral constitutions that made them a 'ruling race'? How were these constitutions to be built not just into themselves but also into their offspring? Secondly, the essay will discuss how these whites differentiated themselves from, and in turn controlled the lives of, the so-called 'domiciled' population, members of which were of white descent, permanently based in India, often impoverished and frequently (if not always) racially mixed. This two-level approach to the people of white descent will be undertaken in ways that will introduce a historiographical argument, derived from my empirical research, that 'to be white' had fundamentally to do with both class origin and place of upbringing, as well as with race itself. On the one hand, while inventing and preserving their own whiteness through clinging (if not always successfully) to the social and cultural milieu of the imperial metropole, the colonials of higher social order never welcomed the existence of their less-privileged domiciled brethren whose lives seemed too irrevocably rooted in the colonial land. Consequently the former excluded the latter from their tightly guarded sphere of status and privilege, despite the (mostly) British origins they had in common[1]. On the other hand, however, this exclusionary attitude had ambiguously been coupled with an inclusionary impulse of peculiar sort: since the colonial authorities feared that the increasingly visible pauperisation of the domiciled might disgrace white racial prestige in the eyes of the native subjects, they sought to control the latter's lives through a politics of welfare and education. Thus the reproduction of whiteness can be said to have depended *both* on the securing of a 'bourgeois' and metropolitan milieu for middle-class whites *and* on the vigilant control of the impoverished domiciled. The paper will describe these historical processes at some length, but its aim is not so much to subject them to elaborate empirical analysis as I have done elsewhere [2], as to relate them to broader issues that may well be relevant to critical race and whiteness studies in general.

White Colonials as Civilising Agents

In order for the British to govern several million subjects of the post-rebellion India, the importance of military dominance was unquestionable, but equally significant, so it was perceived, was to establish and maintain an unequivocal racial identity for white colonials. In the wake of the 1857 Mutiny and of the subsequent transition from Company to

Crown rule the following year, the imperial authorities deemed it necessary to circumscribe the image of a new white community, and this entailed a clarification of criteria for membership. In its Report, the Select Committee on Colonisation and Settlement (appointed in 1858) officially declared that all settlers should originate from the 'respectable' layers of British society and subsequently belong within limited occupational categories of prestigious order. They should form a small cadre of governors and high-ranked civil servants (running what was known as the most prestigious bureaucracy in the world), military officers, capitalists (factory owners, merchants and planters), professionals (scientists, doctors and lawyers), missionaries, and philanthropists. According to the Committee, only these groups would be able to uphold the 'dignity' of British's civilising mission in India. In their respective domains of activity: administration, commerce, science, and spiritual uplifting, these select members of the British nation were to realise its proclaimed imperial mission to modernise and civilise this allegedly 'backward' part of the globe (Mizutani 2005, 24-28).

Such a fashioning of white people as civilising agents was deeply implicated in those structures of social precedence that had been shaped by the ideas of 'race' and 'class' much characteristic of the Victorian and Edwardian eras. First of all, whiteness was to be constructed in ways that went hand in hand with the contemporary notion of racial difference, which increasingly cast the difference between Britain and India in a Social Darwinist contrast of 'civilised' versus 'backward', or 'evolved' versus 'degenerated' (see Metcalf 1995). Thus, being white in India meant, first and foremost, being a member of the conquering, imperial race. Second and no less importantly, the reorganisation of whiteness was also predicated on certain ideas and practices concerning the ways in which social distinctions had been perceived and articulated *within* white British society. According to Benedict Anderson, it was the feudal and/or early modern iconographies of class, where the obvious dissimilarities between the aristocracy and the common populace were considered to be as absolute as those of heredity, or of 'blood', that informed the development of colonial racisms (Anderson 1991, 150). One offshoot of such a vision, as David Cannadine has shown, was India's British colonials' romanticised self-image as a sort of super-caste, reigning, as it were, at the top of a finely-graded, immobilised structure of pre-modern feudal hierarchy (Cannadine 2001, 41-57).

Attention to these racial and class-based ideas of whiteness is important for our understanding of the chauvinistic ideologies of the British bourgeoisie and their peculiar incarnations in the colonial context, but it alone would not be sufficient for revealing a whole picture of whiteness in colonial India. For white supremacy was to be nurtured not solely through positing certain racial qualities that supposedly made up the colonisers' constitutions: rather, it was to be defended by addressing, if not so proudly, the insidious dangers of white racial degradation. The nineteenth-century idea of race did assert the superiority of whites at the conceptual level, but there still remained, at the practical level, the question of how the supposed bearers of such superiority actually led their lives in the overseas colonies whose natural and social environments often widely differed from that of Britain. Thus, instead of being allowed to behave just as they willed, white colonials found themselves tightly bound by certain social codes and cultural conventions which severely restricted their private as well as public lives. Defining themselves as civilising agents did not mean that they had been given unrestricted freedom. This tendency towards stricter social self-discipline was not triggered simply by a Puritanical penchant for self-moralising, but also by a penetrating fear that, without sufficient vigilance, the British might easily lose those racial qualities that had made them 'white'. Rather surprising as it might sound by our present standards, only a cursory glimpse into the colonial archive would suffice to show the extent to which middle-class Britons had been ridden by anxieties over an irrevocable 'degeneration' of their own physical and mental constitutions supposedly caused by immersion in the Indian environs. The British did certainly believe in their racial superiority as whites but at the same were convinced that only certain self-imposed limitations and socio-cultural norms would save them from metamorphosing into an impure, weaker, and, therefore, 'non-white' being.

As Mark Harrison has demonstrated, the medico-scientific circles at the time were increasingly hostile to the optimism of the preceding decades and were strongly inclined towards a view that the white race was not so constituted as to 'acclimatise' (e.g., adapt to the tropical environment) (Harrison 1999). Uncontrolled exposure to the Indian surroundings and inhabitants would only incur changes of inimical sort. Such influential scientific authorities as Edward Tilt and Joseph Fayrer generally agreed that, after the third generation, the British racial stock would either go extinct or prolong its existence at the expense of becoming something fundamentally altered (Harrison 1994, 36-59; Mizutani 2005, 30-32). The same scientists also considered 'miscegenation' (e.g. the interbreeding of people regarded as different racial types) as yet another mode of racial degeneration, rather than as a positive measure for creating a part-white hybrid race adapted purposefully to the tropical climate. It is notable that such an anti-miscegenation sentiment was frequently expressed by way of comparing the British model of colonial settlement with its Portuguese counterpart. The supposed failure of Portuguese colonialism was ascribed to what was seen as an endemic prevalence of inter-racial breeding observed in Portugal's South American territories. Furthermore, it was also argued that the same mistake of allowing miscegenation to prevail had been committed by the Portuguese in the Subcontinent as well before the British came to power in the eighteenth century; that the present descendants of Portuguese setters were almost always tinted by native blood, which had made them far from being 'healthy' or 'vigorous', and hence utterly unsuitable for the sacred tasks of colonial ruling and civilising.

Clearly, the British should not follow the Portuguese way. In fact, these reactions against miscegenation served to stigmatise not just 'Luso-Indians' (people of Portuguese origins) but, indirectly, also 'Eurasians', the mixed-descent people of India most of whom actually had British blood on the paternal side. By the mid-nineteenth century, the British lamented that the miscegenation of Britons with natives or with Eurasians was engendering some unretractable traces of hybrid offspring in whom the 'worst points' of both the white and non-white characteristics were frequently combined (Mizutani 2005, 33-39).

These ideas on environmental influence and miscegenation had been closely linked up with certain social practices and cultural conventions. For white males, miscegenation increasingly became a risky business, as the strong stigma attached to it by that period would easily harm their social credibility and career prospects (though, as will be explained later, many men of lower-class origins did continue to marry into the Eurasian population). Moreover, the mid-century arrival of middle-class women not only made miscegenation much less in demand but served to create a white domestic space that reproduced the strict sexual morality of Victorian Britain (Sinha 1995; Whitehead 1996).

As for environmental influence, residence in European hill stations in Northern India was encouraged as an alterative to the plains, because the physical and social environment of the latter were believed to drag down the white race into the bottomless depths of racial deterioration. Ultimately, a periodical rest for adults (especially white women) and the entire education for children *only in Britain* (and not in any parts of India) were regarded as essential not just for hygienic but also for social reasons.

The hill stations, as Dane Kennedy has shown, did assume a degree of ideological and practical significance as an institution for reproducing, from within India, the whiteness of the British (Kennedy 1996). This did not mean, however, that these idealised white enclaves ('Little England') were to be fully utilised for procreating any substantial white population so that India would have a self-sufficient supply of white blood. This eventual dismissal of the hill stations is shown by the extent to which British parents historically preferred to send their India-born offspring directly to the metropole rather than to the schools the Indian hills harboured. Elizabeth Buettner's recent book tells us how they tended to dismiss 'European schools' in India as a possible substitute for families and schools in Britain lest their own children, especially boys, might end up sharing for the rest of their lives the extremely limited socio-economic prospects that usually awaited lower class whites and mixed-descent Eurasians after graduation. In fact, the idea of sending off children for a course of upbringing in Britain was articulated not just as a desirable option but as a sacred duty: a duty most parents did actually faithfully discharge, despite the psychological and financial sufferings such parent-child separation could easily impose (Buettner 2004).

Each member of the British nation was supposed to be in India *only as* a self-conscious agent of imperialism or as his dutiful wife, and the reproduction of such agents of colonial rule would always depend on the metropole for its supply of those men and women who embodied the ideals of the bourgeoisie. The construction of whiteness was to be done neither naturally nor in a piecemeal fashion, but required a heavy set of social rules and, above all, the material resources that made it possible to follow them. These rules were demanding for all the men, women and children involved, and even for the wealthier members of the middle class, being white was nothing less than a burdensome business with many hazards to circumvent and fragile constitutions to jealously protect. Their fear of 'going native' was a real one, not least when their offspring were concerned.

Uncivilised Whites

It was in yet another sense, however, that whiteness was seen as caught up in danger. While the aforementioned anxieties concerned the paranoid care of self on the part of the bourgeois, there were other concerns as well, especially concerning the 'non-bourgeois' elements of colonial white society. Despite its official wish to be contrary, British India's white population was not at all homogeneous but was divided in both class and racial lines, and it is on this division that the following section will focus.

Among the 150,000 odd Britons in late nineteenth century India, nearly half were those who would be more aptly called as 'poor whites' than civilising agents. Many of these arrived in India as subaltern soldiers or railway workers. They suffered not only from the class prejudice of India's white society but from the crude fact that the colonial economy did not require their labour except in very limited arenas. They often became unemployed after the army or the railways discharged them, and, in the absence of the money that would have brought them back to Britain, got stranded in India. From the perspective of the ruling classes, their mere existence was seen as imminently injurious to white racial prestige. Usually drawn from the working class, these whites were expected to possess neither the hygienic norms nor the culture of self-discipline that their middle-class counterparts cherished in India.

Ever since the era of the East India Company, British authorities had officially been against the colonial presence of any substantial white-working population, and this attitude had been faithfully readopted by the new regime: thus it was only blatantly against the official intentions that a substantial group of impoverished whites made their presence felt in the colonial context. Naturally, as Kenneth Ballhatchet has argued, the visible existence of subordinate whites was perceived as nothing but a problematic source of political disorder (Ballhatchet 1980, 121-2).

Their presence was captured and represented by official and non-official publications alike as a 'danger' to the church and the state, not least because of its poor reflection upon the British and their institutions in the native perception of them. It was at this juncture that the colonial authorities felt compelled to implement measures either to eliminate or put under control the presence of white subalterns. Works by Kenneth Ballhatchet and Douglas Peers on the control of the sexuality of white subaltern soldiers, those on European prostitutes by Philippa Levine and by Harald Fisher-Tiné, all testify to the degree to which the colonial authorities were eager to control the lives of poorer members of white society (Ballhatchet 1980; Peers 1998; Fisher-Tiné 2003; Levine 1994). More generally, David Arnold's study of the European Vagrancy Act (1869, 1871, and 1874), a law which allowed the police to capture and repatriate 'loose whites', demonstrates the colonial state's anxiousness to sweep away the existence of any 'unfit' whites, and thereby to maintain the prestige of the colonising community as a whole (Arnold 1979).

These measures, how-ever, were never good enough for erasing the poor white question. Nor were they successful in stopping these white people from permanently residing in India across generations, making themselves known as 'Domiciled Europeans'. Still less were these measures able to prevent them from merging into the mixed-descent 'Eurasian' population (existing as a group since the early nineteenth century[3], and numbering at least 150,000 by the 1930s) through miscegenation: in the absence of any substantial numbers of working-class white women, a number of poor-white men married Eurasian women. Taking a cue from those studies on impoverished and socially marginalised whites, my own historical research has focused on the colonial attitudes towards those of white descent who became domiciled, if often involuntarily, in India.

Domiciled Europeans and Eurasians were discrete from one another in that the former were of unmixed white descent while the latter were not. However, as Arnold has rightly pointed out, for the governing classes these differences were often inconsequential and the two groups were actually seen as constituting the same problematic (Arnold 1979, 106). The rationale for this curious bracketing was that, in spite of their having British blood, neither of them were regarded as presenting the right kind of whiteness to Indians. Domiciled Europeans were purely white but were seen to be far too indigent and uncivilised to be genuine members of the ruling race. Meanwhile, an overwhelming majority of the Eurasian community were also severely impoverished and illiterate. Both were too unrefined and/or hybrid to be regarded as authentically white, and it was in this context that they were often seen as of one piece and were collectively referred to as 'the domiciled' as opposed to those whites who did live in India but were emphatically *not* domiciled there.

Unlike the middle-class whites who desperately remained in touch with the metropolitan centre, the domiciled were characterised for their immersion in the social and cultural influences of the colonial periphery. Whether one returned Home or made India his / her home was not at all a simple matter of personal preference but much hinged on the (un)availability of money and one's class position that underlined it. Such class origins of domiciliary difference were readily transposed to a racialised image of Domiciled Europeans and Eurasians as 'degenerate', as though their pauperisation was due to some innate predispositions. Despite their white descent, the domiciled were at times seen as a 'race' apart, deprived of their white elements and gone degenerate beyond redemption.

The domiciliary distinction drawn within the white community had its material consequences too: it found itself inscribed not just in racist and classist stereotypes but also in the socio-legal arrangements concerning the allocation of white privilege and status, especially those regarding the recruitment of colonial civil service officers. From the late nineteenth century onwards, the domiciled were excluded from the higher ranks of the colonial civil service (a process which in itself was one of the major causes for their impoverishment) on the grounds that their education was inferior to that imparted by schools found in the metropole. Thus, since 1870, in contrast to the home-educated Britons who were categorised as 'European British subjects', the domiciled were counted just as one of the many 'natives of India'. Such an arrangement effectively made it clear that Domiciled Europeans and Eurasians were expected to be content with a typically Indian standard of living, making their claim to be recognised as 'British' a misguided and illegitimate one.

Such an exclusionary attitude of the bourgeois Britons towards their domiciled kin seems somewhat counterintuitive, given the strong tendency of colonial and postcolonial studies to associate social exclusion solely with the racialisation, or 'othering', of the colonised subjects. Yet it does point us towards one important form of modern social exclusion that at first glance might appear irrelevant to the colonial construction of racial categories: namely the social-evolutionist and (later) eugenicist form of exclusion that 'discovered', in London and other industrial cities of Britain, 'unfit' populations, such as the 'poor', the 'mad', and the 'infirm' (Himmelfarb 1984).

The way in which the very category of the domiciled came into being in colonial India tells us convincingly that such a class-specific mode of exclusion is not irrelevant to the concerns of colonial studies, and by extension, to those of critical race and whiteness studies at large. It is significant as it presents us with one instance of how the bourgeois anxiety about what were seen as alien or 'dangerous' classes manifested itself, in the altered context of colonisation, as an urgent problem of 'whiteness'. What we may learn from such concern with white identity is the extent to which the making of whiteness was at its roots a highly ambivalent and unstable process, whose self-purifying mechanisms almost necessarily entailing a contradictory effect of producing, and simultaneously excluding, those who were white, 'but not quite'.

'European Pauperism' and the Ambivalence of Imperial Civilising

Exclusion, however, was in some ways always connected with a certain, if equally contradictory, mode of inclusion. To grasp the fuller picture of whiteness in late colonial India, one would have to see how the demand of securing racial order made it necessary for the authorities to come to terms with the excluded, instead of consigning them to oblivion and negligence. Just as the poor in Britain were not simply alienated but were simultaneously made an object of intense reformist interventions, India's domiciled population soon attracted a great deal of attention from the state and private social reformers, with its chronicle pauperism and illiteracy becoming highly publicised and politicised. However, it would be too simplistic to see the colonial focus on the domiciled poor as a mere, unmediated replication of European class attitude. For it was also out of some distinctly colonial concerns that the impoverishment of India's domiciled population was identified as an urgent problem.

Given the almost racist attitude with which middle-class whites regarded Domiciled Europeans and Eurasians, one may naturally wonder whether or not the former ever considered disowning the latter completely, while allowing them to merge into the native masses without trace. Such a view was not entirely absent, with some commentators actually advocating a complete exclusion of some (if not all) sections of the domiciled population. The dominant view, however, was that such was too unpractical an option and that the British had to take seriously the question of the domiciled as one of their own. However, this call to responsibility derived not so much from some kindred sympathy for an impoverished kin, as from a mixed sense of embarrassment and alarm. It was not because they saw the domiciled as their own kind, let alone their equals, that the white ruling classes threw their lot in this struggle to 'rescue' the latter: rather, they had only been forced to realise that the pauperised existence of the domiciled not simply became publicly noticeable but, because of its very visibility, emerged as a menace to colonial white prestige. Impoverished as they might have been, Domiciled Europeans and Eurasians were 'white' by descent (racially white, whether unmixed or mixed), by language (English), and by religion (Christianity). While they were considered not as civilised as home-educated Britons, they were at the same time neither seen as 'Indian' nor regarded themselves as such. Moreover, from the perspective of colonised natives, the domiciled were not their natural allies in their struggle against imperial domination: if anything, they merely appeared as collaborators of colonial rule or as a parasitic community that desperately sucked white privileges without any regard for the interests of colonised natives. Such historical circumstances made it impossible for the non-domiciled Britons to desert their domiciled counterparts. Consequently, what we witness from the end of the

1850s right up to the close of colonialism were numerous social reform measures addressing the problem of so-called 'European pauperism'. These measures did not so much seek to solve as conceal, or make less visible, the pauperisation of Domiciled-European and Eurasian people. What was at stake was the spectacular visibility of such pauperism and its negative political implications. A brief look at some of these countermeasures may be helpful.

Colonial authorities found education as one of the most effective measures to control white pauperism. It was Bishop Cotton in Calcutta who, with the support of the Viceroy Lord Canning, started an almost century-long struggle against the pervasive illiteracy among domiciled children. Cotton's efforts to create schools were continued by successive governments and social reformers, resulting by the turn of the century in a network of 'European schools' and in a code that standardised and regulated their educational and administrative policies.[4]

What is notable is how, in the evolution of this comprehensive edu-cation scheme, more and more attention was paid to the poorest of the poor domiciled children: it was increasingly made explicit that the education these schools provided would be first and foremost supervisory and disciplinary in kind, rather than being academic-oriented. Only the state control of its children would be able to prevent a further pauperisation of the domiciled community. It was out of this belief that both state agents and private philanthropic circles combined their efforts.

It was increasingly obvious, however, that the mere provision of a comprehensive education system did not prove as effective as its enthusiastic promoters had hoped. Not only was it impossible to integrate all children and thus to make them literate, but it was extremely difficult to find suitable employment even for those who did actually get schooled. By the beginning of the 1890s, it seemed increasingly clear that the British could not solve European pauperism unless they directly and specifically addressed the condition of the poorest section of the domiciled (which increasingly constituted a majority).

Upon this realisation, in 1891, the colonial government appointed the Pauperism Committee to enquire into the extent and nature of the indigence penetrating Calcutta's domiciled population. In the same spirit, about two decades later, a similar committee, the Calcutta Domiciled Community Enquiry Committee (1918) was launched (albeit not by the government this time but by a non-official initiative) to solve such a problem that had appeared almost unsolvable and yet could not be left unattended to.

Characteristic of such urgent attention to pauperism was a typical bourgeois representation of the pauper as both physiologically and psychologically 'unfit'. In a colonial rendering of such a theory, Domiciled Europeans and Eurasians in Calcutta collectively entertained a 'false' kind of self-image. On the one hand, it was argued, they fallaciously imagined themselves to be essentially one and the same with better-off, home-educated Britons. This allegedly had an effect of making the former too proud to set their hands to manual labour whilst spending recklessly to satisfy their vain need for pretence, even in the midst of life-costing impoverishment. On the other hand, the domiciled were supposedly inclined towards a habit of thinking that they were naturally superior to their native neighbours. This allegedly led the former to employ the latter as domestic servants, not only increasing their poverty through the expenses involved but making their children as helplessly dependent, spoiled and vain as themselves. All these confusions in terms of class and racial identification combined to cause the pauperisation of the domiciled. What followed from such an observation was a proposal to remedy European pauperism through curing domiciled persons of their 'defects of character'.

The quasi-psychological theory of the domiciled character did indicate certain 'innate' dispositions but also looked to environmental influence. By way of a curious fusion of biological determinism and social constructivism, the family and the community were identified as the sources of mental as well as physical degeneration. In other words, the plight of the domiciled community would not be solved unless its members were relocated from urban centres such as Calcutta, where most of them lived. Moreover, in yet another sense was this idea of collective removal appealing to the colonial ruling classes: even when unable to change the racial constitutions of the domiciled, or to find them employment, it would at least erase the politically undesirable *sight* of European pauperism. It was out of these concerns that, throughout the late colonial period, British philanthropic circles considered several schemes that would not simply discipline Domiciled Europeans and Eurasians, but also, in varying ways and degrees, removed them from their urban residences.

These schemes included the participation of youths in military and marine training; the establishment of agricultural communes in the unpopulated countryside; and emigration to British 'setter colonies' such as Australia and New Zealand. Under these schemes, social isolation and discipline would supplement one another as a means to transform the negative attitude of the domiciled towards manual labour and humble living.

One might add that such efforts found crystallised in St. Andrew's Colonial Homes, whose reputation among the British in India was nothing but phenomenal. Established in 1900 at Kalimpong near the Eastern Himalayas by a Scottish missionary Rev. John Graham[5], this orphanage-like institution provided its 500-600 domiciled inmates with a complete boarding-school education. In this highly acclaimed institution, the everyday lives of domiciled children were strictly supervised and regulated, so that they would take up domestic work by themselves, while simultaneously 'unlearning' their infamous dependence on servants as well as their allegedly characteristic disinclination towards menial labour. In the meanwhile, the Homes offered a curriculum which emphasised industrial and agricultural knowledge for boys and domestic skills for girls, preparing them for such careers as farming, marine piloting, and soldiering. The Homes served not only to conceal the potential perpetrators of European pauperism through their thorough institutionalisation, but also to perfect the process of such politically significant concealment by sending its graduates away from India as emigrant farmers or menial labourers.

To what extent is the example of these measures of control useful for our effort to demystify whiteness? My argument is that, with qualifications, the reformist measures on India's Domiciled-European and Eurasian populations can be discussed in ways that address the broader question of whiteness, and this, particularly in regard to the complex relationship between whiteness and the notion of 'civilising'.

Those various measures directed at India's domiciled population had been strongly influenced by the metropolitan discourses and practices regarding the indigent inhabitants of the British Isles. As we have observed above, such importation was no less than a mere duplication of metropolitan class control but was motivated by colonial demands for racial order. While recognition of this difference is of great significance, the very fact of such cross-continental continuum of philanthropic knowledge and practice is interesting in its own right.

It indicates, for one, that the ensuing question of modern pauperism was not simply confined to the urban areas of the United Kingdom but travelled far overseas, forcing colonial white societies such as the one in India to practice a similar (if not the same) kind of class politics. Careful attention to such a global diffusion of social control measures may contribute to widen the scope of colonial and postcolonial studies, which have thus far tended to restrict themselves to the theme of how the colonisers ruled the colonised, with a relative indifference to the parallel process Othering o_f_, and subsequent control of, subordinate populations within European societies (Moor-Gilbert 1997, 129: see also Cooper and Stoler 1997; Stoler 1996; Stoler 2002).

While the idea of 'civilising' did increasingly become perceived as a colonial business of converting native subjects overseas, it never actually ceased to be an enduring domestic concern. Even in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Britain still embraced within itself 'barbaric' populations yet to be 'civilised' (Himmelfarb 1984; McClintock 1995). At a time when colonial India's domiciled population had been discovered as an 'unfit' element of the community, in the metropole too, intellectuals, social reformers and the state authorities were anxious to civilise the indigent classes through social measures including sanitary reform and education in which Social Darwinism was increasingly influential (Davin 1987; Semmel 1960).

At the same time, however, the history of 'European pauperism' in India suggests that the reference to class is not sufficient for explaining such internal civilising. 'British social history' (especially the kind covering the modern age) would be enriched by introducing colonial and postcolonial perspectives: for, in the age of empire, even what seems to be no more than a straightforwardly domestic question of civilising might be connected with colonial social formations. The ways in which the Domiciled-European and Eurasian poor were identified in India as a special social category never simply derived from the bourgeois conception of pauper management alone. Neither were the proposed countermeasures mere emulations of those class politics that had already been practiced in the metropolitan centre. Such discourses as those on the dependence on native servants, the 'false' sense of superiority over natives, and the mesmerising impact of the Indian climate and environment, addressed colonial problems, serving to harden the internal differences of India's white population into racial ones. Accordingly, the civilising of Domiciled Europeans and Eurasians entailed different concerns from that directed at the pauper populations in the United Kingdom. Under imperialism, it was not just class but race that defined the terms on which the internal civilising of 'degenerates' was conducted.

Ultimately, however, even such efforts to compare race and class, and determine which was more important, may turn out to be counterproductive, if not completely futile. After all, as Susan Thorn's work on British missionary activities has shown, any representation of the 'other' within the missionary discourse of civilising since the late eighteenth century on was to some degree racialised and classed *simultaneously* (Thorn 1997). Stereotypical images of the indigent and of the colonised natives hybridised one another and became mutually interchangeable, creating such contradictory figures as the 'white negro' (referring, for instance, to the impoverished Irish people in London).

Perhaps, the characteristically ambivalent (un)-whiteness of Domiciled Europeans and Eurasians were to be located only within such conflations of class and racial otherness within the vast imperial space penetrating both metropole and colony, and to that extent, the equally characteristic ambiguities of those colonial efforts of civilising the domiciled community may be seen as reflecting a wider context, enabling us to rethink what civilising meant in modernity. Furthermore, this in turn invites us to question who 'whites' were: while they may be readily defined as civilising agents, the notion of civilising itself was in fact an equivocal one, and to this extent, their identity was no less ambiguous, with its historical roots traceable to both bourgeois and imperial cultures.

Concluding Remarks: Historicising Whiteness

It has been a while since critical race and whiteness studies have disseminated the now-familiar notion that whiteness is not a given but a social construct. The idea, however, is yet to be fully explored, with many untouched areas and methodologies of potential importance. This paper has been a humble attempt to make a contribution to the field from the perspective of colonial history. It has shown that the case of colonial Indian society can be taken as providing a vivid example of how the construction of whiteness may be charged with inevitable contradictions and ambiguities, and with those countermeasures that seek to contain them. Whiteness in such a context is not simply about white skin colour or about cultural norms, but is closely linked with the state's construction of 'populations', involving legislative and social measures for biopolitical intervention. Such measures produce not only normalness but also forms of ambiguous identity against the backdrop of which such normalness is in part constructed.

The ambiguity of mixed-race identity in India has been identified and universalised by some social theorists as representing a certain 'personality' supposedly typical in racially divided societies (Park 1928; Stonequest 1935; Gist and Wright 1973). However, such a-historical abstractions may lead one to overlook, and therefore unintentionally repeat, the past representation of mixed-race people as having a unique psychological disposition. Based on my historical research, my argument is that their identity cannot be fully explicated without referring to their troubled relationship to the colonial construction of whiteness, which effectively attached to them a label of being psychologically abnormal. As Lionel Caplan has rightly argued, India's domiciled community were nothing but 'children of colonialism', with their fates largely determined by how the ruling whites treated them: and even the condition of the 'Anglo-Indians' in post-colonial India would not be fully understood without due reference to the colonial past (Caplan 2001).

In this sense, the problematic category of the domiciled can be construed properly as a subject of postcolonial studies. And yet, while its characteristic ambivalence can be seen as a moment of 'hybridity', so influentially formulated by the prominent postcolonial theorist, Homi Bhabha (Bhabha 1994), it would be necessary to carefully combine the postmodernist privileging of radical ambivalence with rigid historical contextualisation. To read India's domiciled community as an example of incommensurable 'inbetweenness' may well be applicable where they had actually been given an intermediary socio-economic position, as Laura Bear argues to have been the case in railway employment (Bear 1994; see also Arnold 1983).

However, it was especially as a concrete historical problem that the existence of Domiciled Europeans and Eurasians recurrently presented itself, and not necessarily as a metaphysical otherness that deconstructed colonial categories with its uncategorisable ambivalence. What is crucial to note is that such an urgent politicisation of domiciled identity was triggered by an eminently alarming fact that an increasing majority of the community were not even inbetween but ranked among the most indigent of all social groups in India including the native poor.

The inscription of such indigence in the colonising scene came as a serious blow to the supposedly extraracial status of the British, or to their whiteness, which should have rested precisely on the invisibility, and therefore normalcy, of the white community as a whole. To reconstruct such a process of marking off, and simultaneously civilising, the pauperised populations of white descent may carry us a step forward in our contemporary interventions to demystify whiteness: it is by disclosing such internal struggles involved in its very making that whiteness is to be dragged down from its universalised ascendancy, with its true historical particularities exposed to our eyes.

Author Note

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Endnotes

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[1] Not every member of the domiciled population within the British territories of the Subcontinent was originally of British descent, with some having initially descended from the Portuguese, Dutch or French colonials, merging at a later stage into the British-descent communities.

[2] Much of this essay will draw on the author's doctoral dissertation (Mizutani 2004). Because of its specific focus on the analysis of whiteness as well as for the sake of stylistic simplicity, it will use the empirical findings of the dissertation without referencing them, except for those contained in a published article (Mizutani 2005) which itself is a revised version of one of its chapters. The author has been revising the whole dissertation to publish it as a book. Any comments and enquires will therefore be extremely valuable and welcome (he can be contacted at smizutan@mail.doshisha.ac.jp, or mizutani_s@hotmail.com)

[3] For a history of the formation of the Eurasian community, see (Hawes 1996)

[4] For a historical account of the institutional evolution of these schools, see (D'Souza 1976)

[5] For a biography of Graham, see (Minto 1974)