

## WHOSE TURN IS IT? WHITE DIASPORIC AND TRANSNATIONAL PRACTICES AND THE NECROPOLITICS OF THE PLANTATION AND INTERNMENT CAMPS

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### Abstract

The bordering of the Plantation Camps of the 1860s and Internment Camps of World War One (WW1) through the racialised biopolitical and necropolitical relations of the state of exception have controlled local shifts from the position of non-white and white 'objects of labour' to 'political subjects' or citizens of the nation. The borders of the Camps are violent colonial techniques that re-affirm an anglophilic form of white diasporic and transnational power. This process of instituting borders of control "outside the law" has operated to strengthen white anglophilic sovereignty and its participation and embeddedness in a "global" colonial project.

These camps became permanent "exceptional" spatial arrangements that diversified but also continued the effects of the dislocation of Indigenous Australians. These camps continued the violent mechanisms that attempted to control Indigenous people's "life and death" and that in Mbembe's words have "civilize[d]" them as providers of free labour (see Perera 2002: para 11; Mbembe 2003: 14).

### Introduction

A few years ago I visited the National Archives in Canberra looking for files on women who were interned during WW2. I had no clear evidence of this

occurrence in relation to women of Italian origins other than shared oral histories from my hometown in Italy, where it was known that women and children had been interned in Australia. It was striking that the first file that came into my hands was that of a civilian internee from Palestine, a Prisoner of War (POW) who in 1946 had died at the Tatura Internment camp number 3 in Victoria. Her name is tallied among the 128 POWs of Italian origins who died in the camps during War World One and Two (WWI and WWil) who are memorialized in the Ossuary-Sacramentum of Murchison for Italian War victims (Azione Cattolica Italiana: 108).

What I have come to call the F-file contains traces of this woman's racialised and ethnicised embodiment as a female prisoner of war of Italian origins. The geopolitics of the time immediately connects this subject to an imperial Britain and its pre-war relations with Italy that allowed Italian migration to Palestine, and to a white diasporic and transnational Australian politics that during WWII negotiated to intern Britain's civilian enemy aliens. (Moore and Federowich 2002; Saunders and Daniels 2000; Lafitte 1988).

She was captured and interned in Palestine and transported to Australia where she was then separated from her husband and interned at the Tatura camp with her two children. After becoming seriously ill she spent the last 5 years of her life attempting to get permission to return home to Palestine with her family. The Australian military

declared in the F- file that it did not make decisions to repatriate "sick" prisoners of war, but it followed British orders from authorities in Palestine. That is, her life and death in the camp was considered to be outside Australia's national jurisdiction. This file, moreover, attempted to distance the military bureaucracy running this camp from a possible link to her death. As if prisoners who were forcibly removed from their colonially adopted 'home'<sup>2</sup> country, separated from relatives, imprisoned and taken care of in a foreign camp, unaware of their futures, could be simply 'regulated' on foreign soil and on Britain's behalf without 'implicating' the host military institution. This is a distance that the National Archives of Australia today still insists on maintaining, arguing that in Internment Camps, like Loveday in South Australia, POWs died "due to illness and infirmity brought on by old age" while also simultaneously stating that "...there were several deaths by suicide, and at least one homicide..." (see N.A. Fact Sheet: 107).

But to follow this 'negation' in the narrative of the military and the National Archives would divert us too much from the biopolitical and necropolitical power of the Australian Camp. During WW II, as it has already been documented, POWs were carefully 'selected' by the Australian authorities to provide much needed labour in rural areas (Cresciani 1988; Saunders and Daniel 2000). Yet this did more than provide labour. It also allowed the white diasporic and transnational nation to negotiate with its natural ally Britain and with enemy countries. That is, this 'imprisoned' labour provided a stronger bargaining position to the white diasporic nation-state (see Moore and Federowich 2002). POWs were forcibly removed from their 'colonial' presence in Palestine and put into Australian camps. Here, through the state of exception, POWs were racialised

and ethnicised through sexually differentiating practices that expected men to work on farms and women as domestic workers. But the woman who was the subject of this F-file could not work and she did not want to return 'home' without her children. The biopolitics and necropolitics of the Australian camp declined her last wishes to go to Palestine with her children. Apparently, it considered these children to be essential to sustain the white diasporic and transnational relations of the nation-state, its attempt at participating in western reconceptualisations of white colonial sovereignty that ended in war disputes.

Whilst my interest is in gender relations, and specifically the internment of women of Italian origins, I will focus in this paper on historicising the techniques of the Camp. What will be foregrounded are the ways the bordering of the plantation camps in the late 19th Century and of the internment camps in WW1, reiterated diasporic and transnational practices that exercised power "outside the law" (Mbembe 2003: 23) over relations of labour within the colonies. These camps, as colonial spaces, enacted the suspension of the "control of the juridical order" and were embedded in biopolitical and necropolitical relations that controlled racialised and sexually differentiated relations of labour. The plantations and internment camps denied indentured labour the possibility of becoming citizens and removed citizenship from Northern European labourers who, through the camp, became 'enemy aliens'. The formation of the internment camps as war technology, re-asserted shifts in white diasporic and transnational relations that were committed to an anglophilic form of white sovereignty both locally and globally.

### **Thinking through White Diasporic and Transnational practices**

What do I mean by anglophilic or white diasporic and transnational political practices? Robert Cohen's descriptive typological work has introduced a discussion of an imperial diaspora or colonial diasporic formations in the Australian colony "at the service of Imperialism" (Cohen 1997: 67). What interests me about this project is the attempt to develop the idea of a diasporic form of self-government that identifies with specific notions of a homeland while implementing a global mission:

An Imperial diaspora...is marked by a continuing connection with the homeland, a deference to and imitation of its social and political institutions and a sense of forming part of a grand imperial design whereby the group concerned assumes the self-image of a chosen-race with a global mission (Cohen 1997: 67)

This Imperial project and global mission in Australia thus relied on the production of a diasporic form of self-government that was/is linked to British homeland and has had "deleterious effects [on] the Indigenous population" (1997: 74). Cohen argues that this produced racialised, self-governing, diasporic formations that have "attempt[ed] to cling to a unified British home through a number of practices such as economic links, or support during world wars and the Korean war or sport events" (1997: 76-77). These diasporic practices are then multiple and historically located but most importantly are imperial (diasporic) formations that have been based on dispossession. They have also informed the ways (self) governmental institutions have been developed and have been operating in Australia.

This diasporic maintenance has produced a racialised link between Britishness and whiteness. The combination of Cohen's historical work on the self-governing Imperial diaspora with Moreton-Robinson's notion of patriarchal whiteness allows for a more complete understanding of how Imperial diasporic practices institutionalized an anglophilic form of "white power" (see Moreton-Robinson 2000; 2003; 2004a; 2004b). Moreton-Robinson conceptualises and links patriarchal whiteness to a colonial "transplantation" process in Australia which has brought:

...an English form of whiteness to its shore. English cultural, religious, political and economic values shaped the new colony (2000b: 78-79).

This English "Whiteness" that I call diasporic whiteness operates as "a regime of power" that exercises a political hegemony or sovereignty that in Moreton-Robinson's words derives: "from the illegal act of possession and it is mostly manifested in the form of the Crown and the judiciary..." (2004a: 9). In this case, the Crown and the Judiciary are examples of diasporic institutions derived from colonial processes. So in line with Moreton-Robinson's call to critique and position diasporic discourses in relation to their effects on the "positionalities, multiplicities and specificities of Indigenous subjects" (2003: 28), I want to discuss patriarchal whiteness particularly as a manifestation of historical white diasporic relations. That is, its very existence is dependent on diasporic processes that maintain anglophilic colonial identifications with 'home' through existing institutions such as the state, its legal apparatuses and for the purpose of this paper through the establishment of the "Camp".

Osuri and Banerjee's article '*White Diasporas Media Representations of*

*September 11 and the Unbearable Whiteness of Being in Australia* (2004) marks and defines colonial or white diasporic relations that are embedded in "global and the local" formations (2004: 152). They show how colonial white diasporic relations are reiterated locally through a call for international "diasporic relationships" and alliances in times of crisis (2004: 159). These alliances operate at specific times to re-affirm a "national but also translocal" Western space (2004: 157). Their critical analysis of how diasporic whiteness is re-asserted through the media becomes part of a decolonizing project that undermines the "nativisation" of the diasporic "settler... based on the attempted erasure of Indigenous populations" (2004: 159). So, in effect, the term 'white diaspora' works to undermine the colonial occupancy or sovereignty of the colonial subject in Australia.

I read these white diasporic relations with the West as practices that encapsulate but also move beyond the anglophilic maintenance discussed above. So for me, Osuri and Banerjee's project alludes to a local and global politics that is produced by diasporic relations with British Imperial and transnational colonial relations of whiteness. The concept of diaspora is therefore associated with transnationalism (Whalbeck 1998: 10). In this sense, transnational colonial practices can be conceived as being based on anglophilic relations of whiteness that are not limited to relations with Britain. These 'anglophilic' colonial transnational relations of whiteness have relied on numerous types of affiliations, across a wide range of zones, and have been motivated by temporal or ongoing political, social, corporate, hybrid, individual and collective forms of relations including Imperial and colonial (see Schiller 2005; Spoonley, Bedford and Macpherson 2003; Sheffer 2003; Wahlbeck 1998; Tplolyan 1996; Gilroy

1991; Hall 1993).

I use the terms 'anglophilic' here in agreement with Joseph Pugliese's call to "critique the disembodied use of whiteness as a racial category" where "the analysis of race is disarticulated from the analysis of ethnicity" (Pugliese: 2002: 149). It seems to me that the practices of Australian colonies and the post-1901 nation of identifying, as Marilyn Lake has pointed out, with specific transnational discourses on/from "white men" (see Lake: 2005; 2003), cannot be detached from particular colonial forms of loyalties, even when transnational.

Without denying the post-colonial status of the U.S., the Australian connection with certain discourses from the U.S. discussed here shared an anglophilic transnational preference for the arrival of British migrants via an overall a grave concern for controlling and limiting Indigenous and non-indigenous movements and labour relations. In the remainder of this paper I want to discuss the ways white, diasporic and transnational colonial practices operated "outside the law" to produce relations of labour that asserted an anglophilic white colonial sovereignty which was embedded in and participated in global relations.

### **The Production of the State of Exception**

The Australian "Camp" has become an ongoing feature of white diasporic and transnational relations. The "Camp", historically has taken many shapes that have been interconnected by the ongoing colonial attempt to create "a rupture in the indivisible Indigenous category of blood/law/land, of country, that 'map imprinted in the ancestry of their blood' " (cited in Perera, 2002: para 18). In this way then, the multiple camps, within their own specificities, have continued to impose a British colonisation and

disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty. This is a proximation of white diasporic and transnational colonial practices that control Indigenous subjects by suspending the law. This state of suspension locates its "inhabitants outside the law" yet under its directives. As Agamben's explains:

...exception does not subtract itself from the rule; rather, the rule, suspending itself, gives rise to the exception and, maintaining itself in relation to the exception, first constitutes itself as a rule (1998:18).

So the Camp's "prisoners" are excluded from the nation but are also "brought even more firmly under its control by virtue of their exclusion from its laws" (Perera 2002: para 11). With their "state of exception" these camps have sustained the power of a white anglophilic sovereignty to institute Indigenous sovereignty as something which has lain outside its imposed colonial jurisdiction and which needed most control and regulation (see also Hussain and Ptacek 2000: 5; Tsonis 2001; Wadiwel 2007).

But it is not only the "Camp" that embodies the state of exception. Each Australian colony itself was conceived as a space where the juridical order could be suspended. Mbembe's work on the necropolitics of colonies argues that the racialised space of the colony was

...the location par excellence where the controls and guarantees of judicial order can be suspended the zone where the violence of the state of exception is deemed to operate in the service of civilization (2003: 24).

The power to suspend the law creates in Mbembe's words "a terror formation" (Mbembe 2003: 12) within the Australian colony and its camps. This "terror formation" is based on the way the

suspension of the law is enmeshed with a racialised form of necropolitics or "the ultimate expression of sovereignty ...to dictate who may live and who must die" (Mbembe 2003: 11). The necropolitical power of 'white sovereignty' again, historically has set up the colony and its camps, in Osuri's words, as spaces:

...where the racialised state attempted and still attempts to kill, expose to death, save, incarcerate and legislate Indigenous lives and bodies. These forms of necropower are familiar to us through various practices against Indigenous Australian bodies such as massacres, the reserve system, the attempt to breed out racial characteristics, the stolen generations, Indigenous deaths in custody... (2006: para 5).

Indigenous people were regulated as non-citizens, who were restricted and controlled by the state of exception. In Veronica Brodie's life-story *My Side of the Bridge* she recounts how under the directive of the Protection Board in South Australia in the 1950s, Aboriginal people were treated as if they:

...didn't exist in Australia for the white man, nor for the government. We weren't citizen and we weren't counted in the census. Yet during that same time it suited them to push our men out and send them off to war, even though they weren't allowed to vote. Which meant that if you went to war, but you didn't exist, then they didn't have to pay you afterwards. They fought for a country they weren't recognized in (Brodie 2002: 80).

This sense of "non existence" within the white nation and the expectation of having to provide unpaid labour and go to war signals the nation-state's application of the state of exception. The colonial process of "(dis)locating" Indigenous people "outside the nation" as "non-citizens" who are forced to

provide unpaid labour under the tutelage of the Protection Board is permeated by the biopolitics and necropolitics of the state of exception. And I use biopolitics here with reference to Agamben's critique of Foucault's discussion of "natural life" as "included in mechanisms and calculations of State power, and politics turns into biopolitics" (cited in Agamben 1998: 4). For Agamben, the state of exception of the Colony and its camps become the "rule", the "realm of bare life" that "excludes it and captures it within the realm of political order" (Agamben 1998: 4-9). The Protection Board, is "fought" and "resisted" by Brodie who refused to be told where to live and to be prohibited from returning to her Country. She refused to be a source of free labour, or to support Indigenous soldiers participating through war practices (voluntarily or involuntarily) in the maintenance of white diasporic and transnational relations.

### **Indentured Labour and Terror Formation**

This ongoing "terror formation" intersected with the colonial constitution of a "mobile, unencumbered and expandable labour force" in the tropical areas of the Queensland colony. (Saunders 1982: 16-17). In the 1860s, white diasporic and transnational relations affected the introduction of South Sea Islanders as Indentured labour for the new sugar industry. In the mid-nineteenth century the development of the so-called "Second Atlantic Economy" (Gabaccia 2000: 59) was dependent on mass migration and on a "new colonialism" that was linked to intensive indentured migration. After the abolition of slavery within the British Empire the usage of indentured labour from European and selected countries within East, South and Central Asia became a common 'colonial' practice:

...whether free or under contract [indentured labour] poured into the labor-starved regions of South America, the British West Indies, the Spanish Caribbean, and North America (Pratt 2003: 209).

At its initial stage the introduction of indentured labour for cotton and sugar plantation camps in Queensland followed the practice of developed within the British Empire. The racialised space of the Queensland colony at the time was politically driven by a (diasporic) colonial desires to join the exploitative but profitable British and European colonial trades. A number of large pastoralists with local and British investors, and with the support of the local colonial government, attempted to respond to a high demand in Europe for sugar and to fill the gap created by the banning of slavery in the U.S. (Saunders 1982: 21; Megarrity: 2006). It is worthwhile noting that this initial stage was accentuated by the presence of a number of British capitalists/property owners, including ex-British army servicemen, (such as Captain Louis Hope) and people who came from other colonies or who had travelled to other colonies and gained a knowledge of this colonial industry (such as John Buhot from the West Indies) (see Ryan 2006; Mackay City Council 2002). Overall, but not without political opposition from local missionaries, human rights activists and organised labour (Irvine 1992: 73), it was conceived by the British colonial authorities that indentured labour was a necessary replacement for slavery in order to compete with other colonial sugar producers in Fiji, Java and South Africa. This strategy produced an extremely 'labour coercive' system in Queensland (Graves 1993: 5).

These racialised discourses were informed by white diasporic and transnational networks that, as Marylin

Lake explains, operated across the “US, Canada, New Zealand, Kenya, South Africa, Rhodesia and Zimbabwe, where zones where colonial relations attempted to prevail over Indigenous sovereignty. These networks operated through a racialised knowledge that privileged the positioning of a “white man” by displacing their British identification (Lake 2003: 352). But for me this “displacement” did not limit the anglophilic colonial power of this knowledge when it came to discussions of indentured labour. The canefields or plantations in tropical areas were conceived through British colonial discourse as spaces that the white man was not fit for, and during this historical period the “white man” is the British coloniser. Without denying, as Doug Munro (1995) points out, that a portion of indentured South Sea Islander labour was located outside the canefields, these camps were naturalised by these anglophilic white networks as spaces to be inhabited by the “colored races” or not-white subjects. White diasporic and transnational discourses carefully selected (through prior colonial knowledge) the South Sea Islanders as ‘essentially’ apt for the harsh conditions of the camps. Megarrity’s long but detailed summary discusses the intermixing of various racialised discourses that naturalised their presence in the harsh conditions of the camps situated in tropical areas:

...the perceived unsuitability of white men to do Queensland’s ‘rough work of civilization’ in the hot tropical sun was unquestionably influenced by popular and scientific opinion ... In the late nineteenth century and well into the 1900s, it was the ‘...opinion that the European cannot [colonise] the tropics, but must inevitably fall [...] a victim to the influence of their deadly climate’. Having originated in a temperate zone, Europeans were believed to degenerate in physicality, health

and morale when exposed to the unfamiliar, alien world of the tropics. Labouring work in tropical regions was seen as especially inappropriate for whites. (Megarrity 2007: 3).

This racialised differentiation of “white” and “colored” spaces and its focus on the “nature” of the tropics, naturalised the location of South Sea Islanders as labourers of the plantation camps of these areas. But it also naturalised the harshness that these workers were expected to overcome while employed. It implied somehow that the ‘problem’ was associated with the “rough” environment and not the working conditions offered to them.

The conceptualisation of this space as a state of exception also draws from the U.S. experiences of slavery. Its racialised commitment to ‘whiteness’ pointed out that it had not been possible to transport back the high numbers of “African-origin slaves” who had been in the Southern States for a long time (Megarrity 2006: 5; Lake 2003: 359; Gabaccia 2000: 59). This transnational colonial knowledge accompanied the growing opposition in the colony of Queensland to employ Chinese labour already available in the country (Megarrity 2006: 2) and the growing commitment to create a British “white” colony with European labour (Galassi 1991: 44). This white diasporic and transnational knowledge thus affected the conceptualisation of an indentured labour force, which could be contained in plantation camps and denied access to “citizenship”. The Camp operated in Agamben’s words as a “dislocating localization” (Agamben 1998: 175) that accommodated indentured labour as a non-white adaptable, removable or mobile labour force which could be transported back to its home country after delineated period of ‘indentured labour’. The disallowing of “naturalisation” or access to citizenship was officially enacted in

1867 with the introduction of the *Aliens Act* which allowed “British naturalisation to become “accessible” within six months to “any alien being a native of a European or North American state” and restricted South Sea Islanders from becoming naturalised (cited in Irvine 2007: 30). The “Camp” as “the state of exception”, embodied these subjects as “coloured” indentured labour with no rights to citizenship, and located in “rough” spaces where everything is possible.

Thus, the racial embodiment of non-white indentured labour, through these white transnational discourses, segregated these workers from the juridical and political system available to white citizens. So they were to become “bare life” (Agamben 1998: 47) abandoned or working in the camp:

...who has been banned is not in fact simply set aside the law and made indifferent to it but rather abandoned by it, that is exposed and threatened on the threshold in which life and law, outside and inside, become indistinguishable. It is impossible to say whether the one who has been banned is outside or inside the juridical order (1998: 28-29).

In the plantation camps, it is recounted that new arrivals or so-called “new chum first indentured labourers” especially were subjected to continual forms of control over almost every hour of their existence, through perpetual work, restrictive living arrangements and very poor wages (see Evans 1988). Here, white diasporic and transnational relations through the state of exception exercise biopower and necropower control over life and death.

But the camp also exposed these lives to the point of death. It has been rightly pointed out that not all South Sea Islander workers were the subject of

violent racialised methods of recruiting, but the act of “suspending the law” was visible and especially forceful at the beginning of the recruitment process before more settled procedures were created in the late 1880s (Shlomowitz 1989:589-590; Munro 1995:610-611). In the 1860s, a number of South Sea Islanders were subjected to harsh recruiting methods that included bribery, arson, kidnapping murder and even massacres (like the one recorded in the voyage of the *Carl* in 1872,<sup>3</sup> see also Saunders, Evans and Cronin 1988). For Mbembe, any historical account of the rise of modern terror needs to address slavery in plantations:

...which could be considered one of the first instances of bio-political formation...[Including] the power over the life of another person...Relations between life and death, the politics of cruelty and the symbolics of profanity are blurred in the plantation system (2003: 21).

While I do not want to conflate indentured labour with slavery, one can assume from the previous discussion on white transnational knowledge that the conceptualisation of the plantation camps in Queensland were clearly connected to ‘slavery’. And it is the racialised necropower that operates within the state of exception of the plantation camps that connects these forms of labour.

Although the death rates decreased over the years, the change of environment and exposure to unfamiliar diseases, the hard work, poor living conditions and low quality of food all contributed to ‘deaths’ in the camp (Moore 1989, Munro 1995, Shlomowitz 1989). New recruits were especially susceptible to the new environment and exposure to new diseases, but moreover their lives were being subjected to

harsher conditions. Lyndon Megarrity details that:

First-time recruits were generally paid a wage of around £6 a year. After the end of a three year contract, the recruit had a number of options: they could return home, sign on for another period of indenture (roughly £6 to £12) or negotiate a short-term agreement for higher wages. The conditions for first-time recruits were extremely exploitative, especially when it is considered that white ploughmen were earning up to £66 per year in the 1870s (2006: 2).

These subjects therefore faced a harsher life and consequently high exposure to death.

It has been noted, meanwhile, that a lot of 'uncertainties' existed about the causes of deaths occurring inside the plantation camps. Shlomowitz analysed official death reports from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and noted that:

...many deaths occurred in the plantations which were far removed from the nearest governmental medical officer ... in those cases the officials had to determine the cause of deaths from employer's reports (Shlomowitz: 1989: 594).

Although it is not possible to verify all the causes of these deaths, this last finding suggests that the plantation camps operated in a state of exception. Here, the indentured labourers 'death reports' were clearly distanced from the jurisdiction of the colony and from medical regulators. They were "banned", made to live in spaces where everything was possible, at the mercy of plantation owners. The owners may or may not have responded to their health concerns, a form of necropower that determined life and death.

### **The Borders of Whiteness**

By the 1890s, a number of geopolitical colonial shifts indicated this anglophilic colonial form of "whiteness" associated with the rise of the plantation camps needed to be renegotiated. A number of transformations in capital and labour relations led to the renegotiation of whiteness, as Theo Goldberg explains:

...whiteness, in short needed to be renegotiated, reaffirmed, projected anew. To be sustained it had to be reasserted...It is from this point on from the point at which labour needs shift, racial conceptions transform, capital formation and modes of accumulability alter, moral dispositions and cultural conceptions turn, that state racial design is reconceived (Goldberg 2002: 176).

Local, national and international opinions moved to completely ban the use of indentured labourers. Since the late 1880s, local debates on the subject of indentured labourers began to urge for their forced removal from the plantations, the colony and from the newly formed nation. The colonial government of Queensland under the leadership of Griffith since 1885 legislated to limit their employment and aimed at completely banning their arrival. Instead they sponsored the introduction of white European farmers and domestic workers particularly Northern Italian agriculturalists and domestic skilled labour with the view to introducing small crop farms (Moore 1985; Douglass 1995). What also needs to be considered is that such shifts were tied to the workers' growing resistance against poor treatment. By the mid 1890s, workers were increasingly difficult to recruit. Their experiences of "life and death" in the camps resulted in them seeking different employment opportunities, as a result becoming

harder to retain in the plantation industry (Munro 1995: 609). So the creation of the nation-state in 1901 institutionalised white diasporic and transnational relations to respond to these changes,

In 1901 the immediate implementation of the *Immigration Restriction Act* (IRA) first and within a few days the *Pacific Islander Act* (PIA) re-affirmed the project of consolidating whiteness. In Moreton-Robinson's words these policies:

...made Anglocentric whiteness the definitive marker of citizenship; and a form of property born of social status to which others were denied access including indigeneous people. Through political, economic and cultural means Anglocentric whiteness restricted and determined who could vote, who could own property, who could receive wages for work, who was free to travel, who was entitled to legal representation and who could enter Australia (2004: 78-79).

This whiteness was re-asserted through Britain's diplomatic intervention against the original immigration restrictions based on 'colour'. Its involvement over the application of the *South African Natal Act* to restrict entries to the country via a dictation test strengthened Australia's maintenance of diasporic links with Britain (Digby 1911: 81; Martens 2006). But again, the "anglocentric" whiteness sought by the IRA and PIA also re-affirmed transnational links between the new nation and the U.S. In the newly formed Parliament, as Marilyn Lake (2005) explains:

Australia's Federal Fathers, notably Alfred Deakin, H.B. Higgins, and Edmund Barton- looked to the United States for instruction in the relationship between 'national character' and what John W Burgess at Columbia University

called 'ethnical homogeneity' (2003: 354).

For example Deakin in September 1901 openly "praised those who drew up the Australian constitution for improving on the American model" (Lake 2005: Chapter 13):

Our Constitution marks a distinct advance upon and difference from that of the United States, in that it contains within itself the amplest powers to deal with this difficulty in all its aspects. It is not merely a question of invasion from the exterior. It may be a question of difficulties within our borders, already created, or a question of possible contamination of another kind. (cited in Lake: 2005).

So these new legislative Acts and the Constitution overall were embedded in local and transnational colonial knowledge that formalised the bordering processes of white sovereign power. The Constitution was conceived to regulate Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations including those of labour, to re-establish an anglophilic white diasporic and transnational nation-state. This discursive knowledge attempted to establish, in Perera and Pugliese's words, "a monocultural anglocentric Australia" embedded in a global project of whiteness (Perera and Pugliese 1998: 49).

### **European Labour and Migration**

But the IRA was also part of a European alliance. In the historical context of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a realisation about the impossibility of establishing a colony solely constituted by white British labour resulted in a diasporic and transnational agreement between the new federation, Britain and other European countries to help fulfill the Western

project of colonisation abroad. An expansion in colonial Atlantic economy had already affected the creation of indentured labor for plantation camps but it now shifted towards the creation of a selected 'white' European labour force. Mass migration from selected European countries had been supported and encouraged by a number of events that included first the abolition of slavery; second the growth of the racialised formation of the nation-state, in post-Imperial U.S. and Federal Australia that were concerned with maintaining restrictions against Indigenous subjects and sought to populate through the introduction of white European migrants. (Gabaccia, 2000 58-59) But also thirdly, as Gabaccia argues, this demand for European labour was sparked by the spread:

...of industrial capital...from its earlier concentration in the cities of Northern Europe and Great Britain to those of the Americas, and to plantations and mines in newer colonies in Africa and Asia. This new migrating capital created millions of unskilled jobs around the globe (Gabaccia 2000: 59).

The call for the provision of European labour was based on *a priori* conceptions of the role of the West abroad. More specifically with the ways European countries such as Italy had recently or historically conceived of themselves as superior white colonial Empires that had endorsed in specific ways the practice of 'white European colonisation, and had advantaged economically, politically and socially from the formation of the West abroad including in Australia.

Countries like Italy shared an idea of the 'superior white West'. Since the late 1860s, Italy had attempted to establish colonies in North Africa including Eritrea. In 1883, Italy also signed a *Treaty of*

*Commerce and Navigation* with Britain which enabled Italian subjects and labour to enter, travel, reside and acquire property in each other's colonial dominions (see Cresciani 1982: 83). In 1887, it signed the first "Mediterranean Agreement with Britain" which supported British presence in Egypt while gaining support for Italian presence in North Africa (Clark 1984: 48; Palombo, 1994; Cunsolo, 1990; Spadolini 1994). Most importantly, Italy had a large pool of labour available to migrate. Its industrialisation and nationalism displaced local economies and led to the formation of a large and mobile labour force wanting land ready and available for countries like Australia or the U.S. (Gabaccia 2000; Verdicchio 1997; Gramsci 1995). Their individual selection and presence became part of a racialised call to form a 'white or Western alliance' abroad in a moment of colonial need and expansion (Hall 1992).

So while Indigenous people and South Sea Islanders were historically excluded from citizenship and positioned 'outside' the nation, these Northern European migrants were to be included as 'white citizens' of the nation. These transnational European relations were reliant on biopolitical regulatory practices that limit and control the political identifications of European subjects. The shared 'values' represented a demand and expectation to assimilate and provide political loyalty to the white anglophilic sovereignty and its white diasporic and transnational relations. The construction of the assimilable white migrant subject utilised these subjects' "whiteness" and 'skills' to set up the Commonwealth of Australia. This focus on their skills and provision of labour attempted to minimise their self-identifications as white sovereign subjects. I do not intend to deny the colonial relationship between

white Northern Europeans and Indigenous subjects here, rather I focus on the historical expectations of the white sovereign power. The IRA gave preference to the racialised category of Northern Europeans from "British Isles, Germany, Denmark and Sweden," but Northern Italians joined this list (Galassi 1991: 44). The arrival of migrants of Italian origins allowed on the basis that they would be Northerners, limited the arrival of 'Southern Italians' who were racialised as "non-white, non-Europeans, immoral, criminal and racially contaminated through racial miscegenation" (see Pugliese 2002; Palombo, 1999; O'Connor 1996).

The other value given to these subjects racialised as Northern Europeans, as Nicolacopoulos and Vassilacopoulos argue:

... [was] measured by [the] potential for involvement in production and consumption through the alienation of...labour (2004: 46).

The IRA at first and then secondly the demand for assimilation operated as a racialised and ethnicised sexual ranking system. What Rey Chow calls "biopoliticised economic relations", describes the manner whereby "the very humanity attributed to the ethnic is itself subsumed" by "capitalist economism's ways of hailing, disciplining and rewarding identities constituted by certain forms of labour" (Chow 2002: 32). Subjects identified as Northern Europeans were therefore expected not to make political claims against Australia and to assimilate as 'white workers' in ways that sustained hegemonic white sovereignty and its transnational relations. This period preceded the 1920s focus on Southern European labour.

### **The internment Camps**

But the IRA and assimilative practices could not offer political immunity from other diasporic and transnational political practices. During and after WW1 Australia's decision to ally itself with Britain's political interest in this war aligned it with major political shifts in Western colonial relations (i.e. Britain and Australian relations with Germany and the Austrian-Hungarian Empire; with conflicting European colonial relations during the fall of the Ottoman Empire; with Asian-Pacific relations through Papua New Guinea and so on). This realignment reiterated a politics of security that in Burke's words was:

enormously powerful, embedded in hegemonic discourses and institutions that are deeply and vigilantly entrenched (Burke 2007a: 85).

This 'security concern' was based on existing fears, but also represented the established white diasporic and transnational war relations, affecting any subjects living in Australia. Specifically it targeted subjects identified as being of German, Austrian-Hungarian and Lebanese origins, now and formally categorising them as "Enemy Aliens". The "drive to expel socialism and communism" as Fisher explains, meanwhile affected the "Fractious workers, Irish nationalists, Germans, industrial radicals and Bolsheviks, [who were] immediately targeted by punitive laws..." (Fisher 2002: 2). The introduction of the *War Precautions Act* and later the *Unlawful Associations Act*, *Aliens Registration Acts* and the *Naturalisation Act*, embodied the immediate capacity to control any European migrant subjects:

The Unlawful Associations Act 1917 allowed authorities to imprison persons obstructing the war and

summarily proscribe associations doing the same. Anyone attending prohibited organizations, meetings or possessing their literature could be punished as severely as those who wrote or distributed forbidden material...those charged with opposing the war were prosecuted under its provision. The Censor's Office... seized correspondence and referred cases on to the military and civil authorities. ... (Fischer 2002: 2-3).

Issues of national, transnational and local security therefore came to centre stage early in the 20th century and nobody was spared. Everyone was now treated "as potential British enemies — in Australia" (Curtis 2006: 1).

Thus, white European subjects (previously embodied through the IRA as politically loyal white subjects of German and Austria-Hungarian origins) were now perceived as 'Enemy Aliens'. Their 'whiteness' could not provide assurance that oppositional non-anglophilic diasporic and transnational political practices would be formed. The (self) protection of white sovereignty through its European relations could not be guaranteed. In Derrida's words "the calculable" had become "the non-calculable":

...An always perilous transaction must thus invent, each time, in a singular situation, its own law and norm, that is a maxim that welcomes each time the event to come (Derrida 2005: 150-151).

The "calculable" arrival of selected white European migrants was now constructed as part of the non-calculable. Political loyalty was not "calculable" anymore. The fear of a complex combination of "non-assimilable" political demands and conflict, testified to the limitations of

assimilative practices but also of the white diasporic and transnational relations of war. The nation-state in effect jeopardised the "European" relations that it had created since 1901.

Enemy Aliens categorised as 'high security risks' in WW1 were removed from the body of the nation. White diasporic and transnational relations through the establishment of internment camps produced the immediate:

...remov[al...[of] people and often all traces of them from concrete territory...and to seize control of the territory they had formerly inhabited" (Naimark 2001: 3).

The racialised discourses of the Australian Internment Camps distinguished them from British formations. But from the outset, as in the case of plantation camps, Internment Camps were developed from a British model of internment that stressed the diasporic 'nature' of these technologies of war. For example, the *War Precautions Act and the Aliens Restriction Acts* were based substantially on the British models that were varied to suit the 'local' formations (Saunders 2003:28-29). These came to affect 6,890 Germans and 1,100 Austro-Hungarians including people from Serbia, Croatia and Dalmatia. So while the racialisation of 'non-white indentured labour' in the 1860s formally located many of these subjects within the camp, in WW1 subjects who were racially embodied as assimilable 'white Northern Europeans' like Germans were 're-arranged' in the camp as a 'security' threat'. Through the internment camp these people were racialised and ethnicised as the 'most dangerous' and as "disloyal natural born subjects of enemy descent and as person of hostile origin or association" (cited in Saunders 2003: 28). And by this, I do not mean to suggest that all

interned subjects were historically considered white, but rather that the majority of internees from German background were racially re-arranged or removed "from valued colonists to the hated Hun" or as "stranger[s] within our gate" (Saunders 2003: 38).

In the internment camps, their access to the law was cut off as they were effectively excluded from the legal system. Thus in the camp they became what Agamben calls "bare lives" at the hands of military rule, that re-instates these subjects as enemies. This interdiction through the state of exception of the camp deprived them of political rights as white European subjects altogether. The internment Camp bans them from political rights:

...the ban involves a declaration of what both exists, yet it is forbidden to exist, within the legal sphere...The ban settles upon the life of the political subject that is suspended within this zone. (Wadiwel, 2006: 155).

They are therefore banned from life as white European citizens. That is they are banned from the 'legal' privileges that white European migrants have accessed and that has distinguished them from 'othered' racialised subjects defined as 'non-white' or as non-Europeans, as Indigenous, indentured labour, Southern Europeans and so on.

The internment Camps set up during WW1 re-iterated in specific ways the biopolitical and necropolitical relations associated with Indigenous dispossession and the positioning of South Sea Islanders as indentured labour in plantation camps. In this case, internment substantiated the "terror formation" of the "state of exception". In light of this, it is important to note that one of the "official" "first war cemeteries to be established in Australia" was the

"German War Cemetery" in 1958 at Tatura where 191 internees are buried (Hammond 1990: 15-154). Yet, in a similar fashion to the narrative adopted by the National Archives for the F-file discussed in the introduction of this paper, when discussing deaths which occurred in the Internment Camps of WWII the reader is told that in the cemetery:

...Neat headstones are set into well-kept lawn to mark the final resting place of internees and prisoners of war who died accidentally or from natural causes during both World War 1 and 2 (1990: 153).

Here these words represent deaths as "accidental" events that are associated with the so-called "futility of war" (1990: 154). It is the accidental nature of these deaths and their positioning as isolated war events that I have problematised here. Such positioning denies the ferocity of the state of exception and its enmeshment in the necropolitical power that, as Mbembe reminds us, operated within the "state of exception" of colonies (2003: 24). But prior and during the war this colonial technique was intensified to produce immediate and efficient systems of mass control. The camps of WW1 were produced, according to Naimark's reading of Zygmunt Baumann's work, as:

...a product of the era...it insists on identifying ethnic groups and concretising difference and otherness with the goal of banishing it... (Naimark: 2001: 8).

The necropower of internment camps operated to enable the "...remov[al] [of] people and often all traces of them from concrete territory..." (Naimark: 2001: 3). What struck me about the list of names of people who were buried in this cemetery is the disproportionately high number of German civilians who died in

WW1 compared to WW2. It confirms the necropolitics of these specific camps that targeted "enemy aliens," removing them from citizenship and exposing them to death.

Here again, like in the 1890s, white diasporic and transnational alliances with Europe were called upon so that certain Southern European subjects of Italian origins (who were not considered enemies) could replace German workers. Indeed, the increased arrival of 'Southern Europeans' and women of Italian origins during the 1920s was set in motion by these violent events - the development of the internment camp (see Palombo: 2002).

### **Conclusion**

I want to end by quoting Perera's work that outlines how the Camp is:

...the site where the prisoner of war camp meets the long term aims of colonial assimilation/annihilation in the forms of the outstation, the penal camp and the mission. This Australian camp takes varied forms, beginning with Tru-ger-nanner and the Bruny Islanders at Wybalena and moving across the spectrum of places where Indigenous people have been removed from their country and confined...The characteristics of the Australian camp include unpaid labour by children and adults and control over domestic and sexual life (for example, the regulation of marriages according to degrees of 'caste' and colour), as well as the genocidal forms of reeducation aimed at eliminating the Aboriginality of their inmates (HREOC, Kidd) (Perera 2002: para 19).

The invention of this "meeting space" or "terror formation" has dislocated Indigenous Australians from country, attempting to lock them "outside" the white nation and inside violent mechanisms of "life and death" control. These biopolitical and necropolitical processes have been enacted to suit the 'global' aims of a certain transnational form of sovereignty. The establishment of the plantation camps for South Sea Islanders, racialised as 'coloured' indentured labour, non-citizens and the internment camps for ex European allies, white citizens and sources of labour, racialised as German Enemy Aliens in WW1, re-affirmed the global aims of white anglophilic sovereignty.

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### Notes

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<sup>1</sup> I borrow this term from Suvendrini Perera essay 'What is a Camp'.

<sup>2</sup> I use the term 'home' carefully as her presence in Palestine was interlinked to colonial arrangements between Italy and Britain.

<sup>3</sup> Notes from the logbook of this voyage are available at: [www.janesoceania.com/carlogbook/index.html](http://www.janesoceania.com/carlogbook/index.html)